



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2024

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 13 February 2024

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 13 February 2024

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 1.00 pm, acknowledged country and read prayers.

SENATE VACANCY — ELECTION OF VARUN GHOSH

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [1.01 pm]: I advise that a joint sitting of both houses was held on Thursday, 1 February 2024 and that Varun Ghosh was elected as a senator of the commonwealth Parliament.

BILLS

Assent

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following bills —

1. Electoral Amendment (Finance and Other Matters) Bill 2023.
2. Western Australian Marine Amendment Bill 2023.
3. Guardianship and Administration Amendment (Medical Research) Bill 2023.
4. Legal Deposit Amendment Bill 2023.
5. Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2023.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

PAPERS TABLED

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

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION

Tenth Report — Annual report 2022–23 — Government Response — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [1.05 pm]: Members, I advise that in relation to recommendations contained in the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission's tenth report, which was tabled on 12 October 2023, no response has been received from the government by the required time.

COST OF LIVING

Removal of Notice — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [1.05 pm]: Further, I inform members that in accordance with standing order 144A, the private member's business order of the day that appeared on the last notice paper as "Pressures impacting WA households" has not been debated for more than 12 calendar months and has been removed from the notice paper.

COOK MINISTRY — RECONSTITUTION

Statement by Premier

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Premier) [1.06 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the reconstitution of the ministry that occurred on Friday, 8 December 2023. Hon Hannah Beazley, MLA, member for Victoria Park, was appointed as the Minister for Local Government; Youth; and Minister Assisting the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. Hannah brings new energy and perspectives to the cabinet and is a welcome addition to my ministry.

A minor reallocation of portfolios between some ministers also came into effect. Hon Reece Whitby, MLA, added the Energy portfolio, working alongside his existing responsibilities as Minister for Environment; Climate Action and allowing him to spearhead Western Australia's progression as a renewable energy powerhouse. Hon David Michael, MLA, has taken responsibility for the Mines and Petroleum portfolio, working alongside his existing responsibilities as Minister for Ports. Industrial Relations will be overseen by Hon Simone McGurk, MLA, while Racing and Gaming will be led by Hon Paul Papalia, MLA. I have also taken responsibility for the development of Western Australia's hydrogen industry, working in tandem with my State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade portfolio.

For members' information, I now table documents detailing the changes to ministerial responsibilities and the administrative arrangements for the representation of ministers between the houses.

[See papers [2637](#), [2638](#), [2639](#) and [2640](#).]

PREMIER'S STATEMENT*Presentation*

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Premier) [1.08 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the WA Labor government agenda for 2024. Before I begin, I would like to thank each and every Western Australian. Whether they are raising children at home, operating machinery at a Pilbara mine site or caring for patients in our hospitals, everyone has a role in our state's prosperity.

Government is also central to ensuring that we build on this prosperity and ensuring that the path ahead is clear so the next generations can be afforded the great opportunities that WA offers. Over the last seven years, this has been an incredibly productive government. We have used our time in office wisely, building infrastructure for the future, from Metronet to schools to housing; creating education, training and job opportunities for our children's future; building the foundations for a clean energy future; and restoring the state's finances to ensure that we do not burden future generations with debt and using the strong financial position to help all families through cost-of-living pressures. We have not wasted a moment, and we will not waste a moment in 2024 either.

As we all know, this is the final sitting year of the forty-first Parliament of Western Australia. Importantly, this team, this WA Labor government, remains hungrier than ever to continue its work, continuing the work of taking this state forward, building on Western Australia's hard-earned status as the most successful state in Australia, confronting the challenges of the current global economic cycle and ensuring that we make WA a place that is always—always—fair, prosperous and full of opportunity. We are excited for 2024 and another year of delivery, and, importantly, delivery of more housing and more cost-of-living support for Western Australians, because we recognise that the pandemic was a shock to the global economy, and the ripples of that continue to be felt right across our state.

It is incredible to recall that the first case of COVID-19 reached our shores almost exactly four years ago to the day—four years! In WA, we are proud of the fact that our response has been acknowledged across the world as exemplary. Our response resulted in the best health outcomes for Western Australians. It saved hundreds, if not thousands, of Western Australian lives, and it was the best health response that led to the strongest economic outcomes for Western Australia. Western Australia's employment reached a new record high of 1.57 million people in 2023, but, like the rest of the world, we, too, experienced shock waves from the pandemic, just as we, too, were affected by Vladimir Putin's cruel and unjust invasion of Ukraine, which exacerbated world economic disruptions caused by the pandemic—supply chain disruptions, inflation and the Reserve Bank's subsequent interest rate rises. But we are getting through the thick of it, and because of our economic success, our careful management of the state's finances and our cost-of-living support, there is no better place on earth to be than Western Australia.

There is also plenty to be optimistic about. The good news is that inflation is easing. Perth's inflation rate fell to 3.6 per cent in 2023, the lowest rate of the mainland states. The good news is that wages are increasing. Wage growth in Western Australia is climbing faster than inflation. The good news is that building approvals are increasing once again, while costs of construction are stabilising. There are major signs of confidence in Western Australia, and I am not just talking about our record exports and our ongoing delivery of surpluses. Slowly but surely, we are repaying the Mt Everest of debt created by the previous Liberal–National government.

This confidence is in the streets of our towns and suburbs and in small businesses. Indeed, in the last two years alone, we have seen 15 383 small businesses created in WA. That is right—more than 15 000, but it should be noted that one-quarter of our small businesses are located in regional WA. Each one of these new small businesses is a gesture of faith in our state, and, in return, the WA government has put its faith in local businesses. It is backing innovators with grant funding, removing red tape through changes to the planning system and supporting small businesses through the hard times with electricity credits. We do this because we know that every good idea, every next big thing, starts with something small. If we need an example, we can just look at our mining industry. Look at the thousands of other businesses and innovators the mining industry now supports. Businesses like Portable PPB, which was the winner of last year's WA Innovator of the Year award, is bringing disruptive technology into the gold industry. This humble business in Canning Vale is driving efficiencies in gold exploration not just in WA, but abroad as well.

We know that, here at home, we can innovate and we can build things that work well for us. For nearly a century, we built and maintained nearly all the rolling stock and train engines at the Midland Workshops. As we know, over time, that was reduced to practically nothing and was closed by the Liberal–National government in the 1990s. The same political parties got back into government in the next decade. We saw bigger hurdles put in front of trainees and apprentices. TAFE fees were hiked up by over 500 per cent in some cases. Course enrolments plummeted and the number of students doing apprenticeships collapsed. That is the Liberal and National Parties' legacy: the end of railcar manufacturing and massive hikes to TAFE fees.

This meant that suburbs like Midland and others were stripped of not only pride, but also hope and a pathway to a better future. When we came into office, we wanted to change that, but when Labor first proposed building the next generation of railcars locally for Metronet, we were criticised—too expensive, too idealistic, too difficult. I say to that, "Where are the voices now?" As we prepare to commission the first C-series railcar into the network, we

have proven those voices wrong. WA Labor's policies have created jobs and training opportunities and have restored the pride that Midland once held in its rail craftsmanship. Not only that, the iron ore sector is replicating that model for its vast fleet of wagons. That was a shift facilitated by this government through our local manufacturing investment fund. Local company Gemco Rail will build 100 rail wagons for Rio Tinto in the next six years. It will also repair and refurbish key wagon componentry at its new facility in Karratha. Industry is forming around the rail industry once more. I look forward to catching the first Metronet C-series train with some of those local rail workers in the near future, along with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, who pioneered this policy for Western Australia.

Our resurrection of local railcar manufacturing has coincided with the resurrection of quality training. There has been a massive investment in our TAFE campuses across the state, including the Metronet trade training centre, which opened last year. We have three Aboriginal apprentices working on the Metronet WA railcar program. All three are undertaking a four-year certificate III in engineering—mechanical trade (fitting) at TAFE and keeping busy on the workshop floor to build our C-series railcars. It is not only an opportunity for the apprentices to gain skills and develop their careers, but also a chance to connect with communities as role models for other young people looking for employment in the rail industry. We have examples of this all over the state. Access to quality training has never been easier with fee-free qualifications for skill sets at TAFE. There were nearly 39 500 fee-free course enrolments recorded in 2023. Enrolments for 2024 are ongoing, but we have already seen a record number of applications to study fee-free courses. We have seen a 29 per cent increase in applications compared with this time last year.

Labor understands that a person will carry a skill for life. Labor understands that more apprentices and trainees are needed to boost local industries and sectors faster, and Labor understands that vocational education and training is vital to grow and build the capability of the construction workforce. Last year, it launched the highly successful wage subsidy scheme to help small to medium-sized businesses employ more aspiring tradies. At last count, this had helped get 300 apprentices and trainees into a job. Half of those positions were allocated to the construction sector where they were desperately needed. In 2024, we are confident that Western Australians, no matter their age, disability or location, will continue to upskill in record numbers, because no-one should be barred from opportunity.

Beyond this, our state is spawning new businesses that are broadening our economic base. There are also those that are either building on or leveraging our traditional economic strengths like the rare earth refineries under construction in the goldfields and midwest regions or those refining the various materials required for battery manufacturing, helping WA to work its way up the value chain. For decades we have been experts at finding, extracting and exporting the raw products. Now, increasingly, we are refining, or even manufacturing the actual batteries in some cases. Even more dramatic breakthroughs are on the horizon as we look to galvanise our role in the rapidly growing green steel industry.

The innovation that we have applied in the mining sector is being applied to other parts of the economy. WA has world-leading capabilities in areas such as robotics, remote operations and radioastronomy, which have the potential to drive huge economic benefits. The stories of ingenuity and diversification across our state are boundless. We see it in energy, defence industries, agriculture and the medical sciences, and it is not all by accident or chance; the government has actively supported these sectors because we know that they are integral to our future. My vision is to fortify the economy through diversification, because my vision for our state and our home has always been about the future—a bright, prosperous and diversified future.

Our state must comprise strong industry and quality jobs to take us through to the next century with the kinds of jobs that pay well, restore pride and give our younger generation a great sense of self-worth. That is what I was afforded and it is what most in this chamber were afforded. Our young people should also be given the same opportunities. Granted, it is harder in some places than in others, but what has stuck with me when visiting places like Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley is meeting the crew that helped build the new Fitzroy River Bridge six months ahead of schedule in one of the most remote regions in the world. The bridge construction was an opportunity for locals, and more than 240 worked on the project; it changed lives. One man I talked to has leveraged his experience working on the bridge to springboard into a permanent, well-paid job in the mining industry. Others are keen to apply the skills they gained on the bridge to work on the next road project. By the way, we also heard from locals that there was a dramatic drop in crime thanks to the project. Why? It is because of people having pride in their work and having something to work towards. That is happening on projects all over the state.

Tara is a 43-year-old mother of five children and a local Wadandi Yamatji Noongar woman. Tara had no previous work history, but she joined the Yaka Dandjoo program on the Bunbury Outer Ring Road project in late 2021. She now operates rollers and water carts on the Bunbury Outer Ring Road project, our largest regional road project in a generation. In addition, her husband and son have since completed the Yaka Dandjoo program and also gained employment on the project. Tara said the following about upskilling —

I learnt to not live in the past, but to live and look forward to our future dreams, which can come true. No one knows what tomorrow brings, but I just take one day at a time, and I am so thankful to be where I am today

There are many stories just like Tara's, and their stories are why we have also been bringing regional road maintenance crews back in house. That means more skills, more jobs and more pride in our regional communities. They are delivering the biggest package of transport infrastructure works in our state's history. Once again, this program has delivered other transformational infrastructure projects that will enter the delivery phase in the coming years, like Westport, which is a new container port to support our trade growth for the next century and beyond, or the upgrade to the south west grid to power Western Australia into the renewable energy future. I know there are doubters amongst some members of the opposition about our energy transition, and perhaps they have some apprehension about climate change in general, but I will say this: ignore it at your peril, because we are at the precipice of an enormous economic opportunity, and Western Australia is fundamental to the green energy transition and the global fight against climate change. Yes, we have a responsibility to decarbonise our state, but our resources are so great that we arguably have an even bigger responsibility to help our neighbours decarbonise as well. We will do all we can, as a responsible government, to clear the hurdles for industry to assist in that endeavour.

The energy transition is also an economic transition, and our state is poised to become a renewable energy powerhouse. Western Australia is the strongest economy in the nation and I want it to stay that way. A pipeline of projects worth \$318 billion is under development. The potential for Western Australia's future growth and success is huge, but to deliver it we need to streamline our environmental approvals and make them more efficient. We will achieve that this year with amendments to the Environmental Protection Act, which will help to clear the path towards our renewable energy goals. Green tape cannot unnecessarily hinder the innovators, risk-takers and investors that we need to take our economy to the next level. Our policies and regulations need to be in tune with the realities of doing business in WA. This year, we will overhaul our environmental assessment regime. We have already boosted funding by \$18 million to streamline approvals. From a legislative perspective, we will make some sensible changes to enable simultaneous assessments, which will cut assessment time frames by months. This will enable the Minister for Environment to direct the Environmental Protection Authority to assess projects or proposals of state significance within a specified time frame. We will also expand the EPA board to nine members. The intention of these reforms is simply to streamline approvals while ensuring strong environmental protections.

In clearing the way for our major energy projects, we will also put our decarbonisation targets into law. Our commitment to decarbonise our economy and reach net zero emissions by 2050 will be locked into law. It will ensure that the state's commitment to climate action is enduring and consistent. It will ensure accountability. As the economy transitions, it will also enhance investor and business confidence, and accelerate investment. Our Climate Change Bill will also facilitate the transport and storage of greenhouse gases.

In Western Australia, we live among the most beautiful landscapes in the world, and they must be protected. At the start of this year, the ban on logging in south west native forests began. This policy builds on the legacy of the Gallop government's decision to end old-growth logging in 2001. It means that an additional 400 000 hectares of karri, jarrah and wandoo forests will be protected into the future. To coincide with our efforts to preserve more of our forests, we will also enhance our urban centres by creating more housing. Like our approach to cost-of-living pressures, we are pulling out all the stops, or, to borrow a well-worn phrase from the Minister for Housing, John Carey, we are pulling every lever to increase supply.

All Western Australians deserve the opportunity to own or rent their own home. Any Western Australian who finds themselves outside secure housing should have a safe place to stay. We have thrown a lot at it—a massive \$2.6 billion towards housing and homelessness measures in the last budget—and we are steaming towards 2 000 social homes being delivered. That is right: nearly 2 000 social homes! Just last month, Minister Carey announced a further \$47.6 million in new funding to enable the continuation of 15 critical homelessness services across WA.

As a dad living in Kwinana, I know that rental prices are high and the current market is white hot. In recognition of this, the government has partnered with the Western Australian Council of Social Service to assist private renters—those who are not eligible for commonwealth rent assistance, such as families that are privately renting but are falling into arrears because of a range of different personal circumstances—to keep a roof over their heads. Our \$24.4 million WA rent relief program will help financially vulnerable WA tenants remain in their private rental homes.

For some, this may involve the payment of arrears. For others, support will cover part of their future rent costs for up to three months' rent, up to the value of \$5 000. Further to that, we have offered incentives for short-term accommodation owners to convert their property to the rental market. This year, we will build on this by passing laws to improve the rights and protections of renters in Western Australia. These changes to the Residential Tenancies Act will address a range of issues facing renters. The laws will include limiting the frequency of rent increases, more flexibility for pets and minor modifications, and banning rent bidding—just to name a few highlights. They will also balance the needs of landlords to ensure investment in housing continues. Our tenancy reforms will be complemented by our reforms to the short-stay rental accommodation market. The new laws aim to level the playing field between traditional accommodation providers and short-stay rental accommodation. They will provide the state and regional local governments with better tools to manage the sector and, most importantly, provide more supply to the housing market. Short-term rental accommodation will continue to play an important part of Western Australia's tourism offering, but the aim of increasing the supply of long-term rentals is the priority right now, because more supply means a more stable rental market for everyone.

Our protected entertainment precincts have been in place for a year now, keeping dozens of violent offenders out of popular destinations. Our enhanced banned drinkers register is preventing more problem drinkers from accessing alcohol in the regions. Our Home Safe program, which was recently extended, is keeping unaccompanied kids off the streets and diverting them from the youth justice system. Also, off the back of recruitment campaigns, there are more police officers than ever before.

Earlier today I announced that our government will introduce new laws to criminalise assaults on retail workers. Someone stocking shelves at a local grocery shop or a teenager working an after-school job in a fast-food store should not be subject to violence at work but, sadly, many are. That is why our new laws will increase the maximum penalty for assaulting a retail worker to seven years' imprisonment. This is part of our commitment to keeping the community safe.

That serious commitment will be further bolstered this year through a complete overhaul of Western Australia's firearms laws. Unfortunately, there have been a number of high-profile gun incidents during recent years. Each of those demonstrate the need for these important reforms. Western Australia is the last jurisdiction to rewrite its firearm legislation since the Port Arthur massacre. Our reforms will strike a balance between legitimate, responsible gun ownership and enhanced public safety.

We are a government that prioritises the health and wellbeing of Western Australians everywhere. That is why this government is focused on delivering a world-class health system. We are strengthening our health system by investing in hospitals, increasing our health workforce and building the new women's and babies' hospital. Just this year, we started construction on 40 additional mental health beds at Fremantle Hospital. We started construction on Western Australia's first children's hospice, Boodja Mia, in Swanbourne. We also announced that the new patient transport coordination hub, or PaTCH, would be rolled out broadly following a successful trial. PaTCH addresses one of the underlying causes of ambulance ramping. It is part of the Labor government's \$487 million investment in improving access to emergency care. This includes four major reforms: the Western Australian virtual emergency department; a state health operations centre; introducing new, dedicated teams in hospitals to address unnecessary discharge delays; and reducing the number of long-stay patients awaiting aged care or NDIS support.

There are positive signs. Things are heading in the right direction. The latest figures show that ramping hours were reduced across the state by 21 per cent in 2023. In December last year, ramping hours were reduced by 44 per cent compared with those in December 2022. Momentum is already building in 2024. My government is getting on with the key tasks of addressing the cost-of-living pressures, tackling housing supply and ensuring access to world-class health care. This year, we have already seen the success of our free public transport period over the summer holidays, with an increase in patronage of over 40 per cent compared with the same time last year. We have now committed to free public transport for school students, as well as free travel on Sundays for everyone. We made a groundbreaking agreement on public education funding between the state and federal governments. We started work on 40 additional mental health beds at Fremantle Hospital. Work has already started on the new film studio in Malaga. That is a key plank in our economic diversification policy and will create new jobs for Western Australians in the screen and arts industries. Nearby to that, we are extending the heritage tram in Whiteman Park to the new Metronet station, our second big battery in Kwinana is making great progress, and an immense array of work is happening in our CBD, including the new Causeway bridges, the CBD university campus, the Aboriginal cultural centre and a new vision for the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. We are transforming our state for the benefit of Western Australian families and future generations and I look forward to working with each of you to bring our state forward. Just as we have done in previous years, we will always do what is right for WA.

[Applause.]

Consideration

The SPEAKER: The question is —

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [1.36 pm]: I take this opportunity to recognise the Premier's Statement and look forward to responding to many items that are in my portfolio and have been brought up with me by many constituents in both the regions and Perth. I firstly recognise the volunteers who have worked over the summer to ensure our safety. I particularly recognise local volunteer firefighters, who have had a particularly difficult summer. We have had an increasing number of fires. We know that as soon as those firefighters see smoke or get called out by a group text, they are there, and they will work until the fireground is safe. This year, we have seen several incidents, some of which have had devastating consequences. I particularly acknowledge the Stead family in Esperance, who lost their son Harry during a fire near the property. The whole community stands with them in their grief, knowing that Harry was doing his bit in protecting his community. I thank all our public servants, who I do not think receive the recognition they deserve. I certainly recognise our teachers, nurses and police, who have all worked hard, despite the challenges that this Cook Labor government has put in front of them. It was good to see the Labor Party getting out over the Darling scarp last week on its trip to Albany.

Mr R.H. Cook: The member for Kalgoorlie gets across the Darling scarp quite a lot, actually.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, there are exceptions. It was good to see the Labor Party out and about in the regions. I think it was good, too, for some government members who did not fly to Albany to get out there and see what happens on the ground. It was good to see the Minister for Transport at the CBH Group site in Broomehill. It was good to see the minister and Minister Papalia have a doughnut or a sausage roll.

Ms R. Saffioti: My biggest regret would be not having the doughnut.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That was in Bannister, in one of our quality establishments. It was good to see them out there. I hope that they took note of the condition of the roads between Broomehill and Cranbrook, which carry a massive amount of road transport. There are some real challenges there with the condition of our regional roads.

I would like to start on a positive note and recognise the new minister, the member for Victoria Park, and congratulate her on her transition. I would also like to thank the Minister for Transport on the School Bus Services. I was on the Public Accounts Committee with the members for Bicton, Darling Range, Cottesloe and our honourable member here, as well, the member for Mirrabooka.

Ms M.J. Hammat: You remembered Mirrabooka!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is right!

There was also our new minister, the member for Vic Park. We did a fair bit of work on that and I appreciate that the minister has seen fit to increase the conveyance allowance. I want to thank Adelaide from the minister's office and Anthony Cattai from School Bus Services for their help with some of the bus runs and other challenges that we have seen along the way. They have helped me and some of these families work through some of the issues. That is very much appreciated, because school buses are important to regional families and we cannot underestimate that. As far as I am concerned, the ability to look at the community, social and economic factors is very important, so I just wanted to put that out there, minister. I appreciate that.

Something else in the minister's portfolio that I think was a summer highlight was the United Cup tennis tournament in Perth. Not many people realise that this event is among the top 10 world tennis tournaments, in terms of prize money. A lot of people underestimate it, but it was great to see the WA crowds flock to that tournament this year. The attendance numbers went up by around 30 000 from, I think, around 46 000 spectators to somewhere around 76 000. That was a great highlight, from my perspective, on the sporting landscape, along with the World Rugby sevens event, which was also held here over the summer. That was a fantastic event as well.

They are some of the positives that I wanted to highlight before I moved into somewhat negative territory. It was good to see the Premier and several other members at Middleton Beach having a bit of a dip in the cool waters of the Southern Ocean, but while he was in the region I would like to have seen the Premier come to the Katanning saleyards to talk to the farmers, transporters and other people affected by the live export issue; that would have been nice. That is something I will be talking about a bit later on in my contribution.

One good thing about the Labor Party going to Albany was that it has taken the opportunity to build on some fantastic royalties for regions projects. There have been further renovations at the Albany Surf Life Saving Club; the member for Albany built upon a fantastic royalties for regions project that I was involved with as chairman of the Great Southern Development Commission. I am disappointed that the Minister for Energy; Environment is not here today because he was out at The Gap with, I think, the Premier and the member for Albany, building on another fantastic royalties for regions project. I remember being there when Hon Albert Jacob opened the new facilities as part of a \$6 million government contribution. It is good to see the new toilets as part of the government's spending. It is a great tourism highlight. I wanted to mention those few things about the visit to Albany. The opening of Hon Louise Kingston's office last week was also a highlight.

I hope government members got a taste of what regional voters are feeling. They are not happy with the attacks on farming, fisheries, forestry, marine parks and electoral reform—the list goes on. I want to reiterate that the people of regional Western Australia are worried, and I am worried for regional Labor Party members because the tide has well and truly turned. The people of regional Western Australia understand what is going on. They understood electoral reform when the former Premier said that it was not on the agenda. The level of anger in the community is rising. This government's failure to acknowledge the issues that confront people in the regions is quite concerning, especially the challenge facing people in the Warren–Blackwood electorate after the government decided to cut off the forestry industry at its knees. We will see what happens in March 2025.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They haven't seen such a hardworking member in years.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Relax.

I will continue with what is happening with our schools, which is very concerning. Already, within the space of two weeks, we are looking at teacher shortages in some remote and regional schools. Of course, I know that the Minister for Education will probably stand in response to a Dorothy Dixier and tell the chamber that there is a teacher in front of every classroom. I can assure the minister that the cracks are starting to appear.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am very concerned about the health system in regional WA.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Madam Acting Speaker, I am not taking that interjection.

It is very concerning that there is only one MRI machine north of Perth. I look forward to the Minister for Health addressing that issue. Many of our bigger regional hospitals do not have an MRI machine. The people of regional WA are very concerned.

The lack of housing in regional areas, which I will talk about later, is another issue, and it flows through the whole public service in regional areas. The challenge of getting people into regional areas because of a lack of housing is a real problem that has not been addressed. Yesterday, I received another email from a constituent in Munglinup about land being allocated and the Departments of Education and Communities agreeing to build a house on that land, but the rug was pulled out only months ago. It was decided to allocate a house in another place, which left that community stranded. It is trying to attract good, quality teachers and principals.

On another positive note, it was great to be with the Minister for Education when he opened Henley Brook Primary School, which has 194-odd students. It was very nice to see that brand new \$31 million school. I am glad that the education minister is in the chamber because I do have some concerns. I went back to my contribution to last year's Premier's Statement debate in which I expressed concern that the ATAR participation level was 32 per cent. We have seen it now drop to 28 per cent. When the Minister for Education first came to office, he spoke about diverting the focus on university entrance and early offers and the like, but we have seen a four per cent drop in ATAR participation, and that is very concerning. In times ahead, I look forward to hearing what the minister is doing to improve the participation level.

The Carmen Lawrence-led review *Facing the facts: A review of public education in Western Australia* has 46 recommendations, which I am sure the minister is taking on board. The recommendations succinctly outline the problems encountered by our teachers, principals and support staff. I am very supportive that this was —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am not taking interjections.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Minister! Thank you.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It was good to see the Carmen Lawrence-led review put out those recommendations that give the minister something to go on to support metropolitan and regional students. Of course, together with those findings, the November 2023 review authored by Viviane Robinson and Peter Hamilton called *Understanding and reducing the workload of teachers and leaders in Western Australian public schools* supports the Lawrence review findings. The report states —

While the salary and conditions of employment, such as the amount of programmed non-teaching time for teachers, are relevant to the attractiveness of teaching as a career, our analysis indicates that *the problem goes to the more fundamental question of whether the job of teaching as currently performed and organised is doable and sustainable.*

We conclude that it is not, and that some long held beliefs and expectations will need to be challenged and changed.

As far as I am concerned, commissioning a review of this nature reveals a lot about the Department of Education's thinking processes. The brief being so targeted means that the department knew there was a problem; it just did not know how to fix it. Let us hope that it takes notice of those two reviews.

Certainly, as the minister knows, workloads are an increasing issue and are causing retirements, resignations and career changes. That is no secret. In the opinion piece in *The West Australian* on 31 January 2024, the president of the State School Teachers' Union of WA, Matt Jarman, pleaded with the government to address the crisis in classrooms, which is now real and present. He said —

... 86 per cent of members who responded to the union's survey said they had considered quitting the profession in the past four years.

ATAR participation is down to 28 per cent, and 86 per cent of teachers are thinking about their futures. The opposition has been trying in vain to alert this government to these teacher support issues. I welcome the minister recently signing up to the federal funding.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I look forward. I notice that the Grattan Institute's report pointed out that one in three Australian children are struggling with reading. I welcome the minister enlightening us about the conditions attached to that

funding because I know that some other states are looking at phonics and explicit instruction as part of their programs to improve reading. I look forward to being enlightened about what this state is doing and whether that was a condition of the minister signing up.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister! Thank you.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am also looking forward to the budget because, as we know, Esperance Senior High School is once again being treated like a second-class citizen. I very much look forward to the budget to see where Esperance Senior High School will sit. I must say that I have heard the Minister for Education say, “Watch this space”.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have heard him say “Watch this space. We’re going to be cutting red tape”.

Dr A.D. Buti: We have! We started last year!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I just want to talk to the minister and the chamber about the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia. The minister has gone out and said, “Look at this, we’ve brought in 103 international teachers.” That is good. However, the Teacher Registration Board is making life very difficult for some people. I have had several retired or semiretired teachers ring me. They say they would be happy to come on board to teach but for the challenge of dealing with the Teacher Registration Board. They are being put through the mill. They have to log 20 hours above their teaching commitment a year of formal professional learning, such as professional reading. For professional engagement to demonstrate currency, a teacher needs to have taught for a minimum of 20 days a year during the period of their registration. The list goes on.

We have teachers out there who are actually prepared to come into the mixture, but the Teacher Registration Board guidelines make it so difficult. We also have over 500 people in the system with limited authority to teach. They are not actually fully qualified, yet they can teach in a classroom without necessarily being supervised. Somehow, they seem to be able to come into the system without too many headaches. The minister said he would cut red tape. The Teacher Registration Board is an opportunity for him to improve the situation and get teachers at the coalface.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is normally a courtesy that the other side listens to this debate in silence, which we did for the Premier’s Statement. I ask that government members do the same.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): There is no point of order. Member for Roe, please continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: If I can, I will move on to a couple of other areas that concern me that relate to commerce. I think we have some real issues in the commerce portfolio, as we saw demonstrated over the weekend. Some households have issues such as pipes bursting, and, of course, there are also challenges facing the building regulator. I look forward to seeing the response from this government. Up until now, we have had a very minimal response from this government about how it is going to help protect innocent people who have been caught up in this. The situation at Shenton Quarter is another building scenario. I think we are looking for some leadership from the Minister for Commerce.

As I said, there are people who have been struggling with a pipe issue. The building regulator has apparently created a website for people to put their names on; however, there does not seem to have been a lot of action on top of that. I am certainly looking forward to the Minister for Commerce coming forth with some solutions to help out those innocent families who have been caught up in those building scenarios. I am looking forward to seeing some leadership from the Premier in that space as well, because we are certainly finding that these families are really having a challenge in cutting through.

I will leave the health side of it to others to speak about. As I pointed out earlier to the Minister for Health, it is very concerning that, north of Perth, we have only one magnetic resonance imaging machine. We have seen the recent publicity around the MRI machine going back up to Geraldton, so I implore the health minister to look at the number of MRI machines around the state.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 27.]

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER — PHOTOGRAPHER ACCESS

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Members, I wish to advise that press photographers will be present in the gallery from 2.00 pm today to obtain footage of the first 20 minutes of question time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GST DISTRIBUTION

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

Before I ask my question, I wish all members the best for 2024. I also put on record my thanks to the emergency services and other response staff who battled to keep Western Australia safe over a difficult summer.

I refer to the comments of the Premier's Treasurer today about the GST in that she will continue to fight to make sure it is protected and hopes to reassure Western Australians by saying she has full confidence and a 100 per cent commitment that Prime Minister Albanese will not change the GST deal. I also note the taskforce established by his predecessor, as Premier and Treasurer, who was so concerned about the deal under federal Labor that he established a specialised taskforce of Treasury fairness fighters, claiming that a threat to our share of the GST was real. When the Premier's Treasurer makes these comments, is she naive to trust the word of a Prime Minister who has proven time and again that his promises mean nothing in the face of east coast pressure, as witnessed by his recent backflip on stage 3 tax cuts?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I will always stand up for WA. I will always do what is right for WA. We have a guarantee from not just the government, but also national cabinet that WA's share of the GST is locked in. This was confirmed at a meeting of national cabinet last year. It continues to be the case because Anthony Albanese leads the first government since John Curtin that actually gets Western Australia. That is why he is here so often. That is why he has already brought his cabinet to Western Australia twice. Our fair share of the GST is an important victory of this Labor government, with that outcome achieved under the previous leader, Premier Mark McGowan. We know that Western Australia's share of the GST could have gone as low as 30 per cent under the deal that you guys locked in when you settled for the deal. It was the WA Labor government that brought about the new arrangements that will never see our share of the GST go below 70 per cent, and that is a guarantee that we can all stand by.

GST DISTRIBUTION

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

I have a supplementary question. If the Premier believes that the GST deal that was established under the federal coalition government is safe, has he taken steps to disband the group of fairness fighters?

Dr A.D. Buti: How's Barnaby doing?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Tired and emotional, I gather.

We will continue to make sure that Western Australia gets its fair share. It does not matter whether it is around the GST, road infrastructure funding, national infrastructure funding or commonwealth grants, we need to make sure that we continue to fight for Western Australia's fair share. I place on the record my thanks and congratulations to the Minister for Education who, a fortnight ago, was the first state education minister in Australia to lock in the full Gonski resourcing entitlements for Western Australian students. Western Australia is the first state in Australia that will have its public school students funded at the same level as other students across this country. I am immensely proud of that outcome, and it is one that I know Western Australian parents are equally proud of and pleased about.

GST DISTRIBUTION

3. **Ms C.M. ROWE to the Premier:**

I refer to WA's hard-fought GST deal, which was achieved through the advocacy of the WA Labor government.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house how the Cook Labor government has secured this deal into the future?
- (2) Is the Premier aware of anyone trying to undermine WA's fair share?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) Let me use my first proper question of the day to welcome everyone back to the forty-first Parliament and to the last year of this Parliament sitting. Once again, east coast commentators have been trying to drag down our fair share of the GST. Those east coast commentators enjoy their comfortable lifestyle over there thanks to the engine room of the nation's economy—Western Australia. They are whipping up ways to try to dismantle WA's success and our fair share of the GST. It is incredible that after everything the state of Western Australia has done for this nation, those people are still trying to bite the hand that feeds them. Those east coast commentators have no idea about the realities of the Western Australian economy and WA's contribution to the nation. Today we have a fair share of the GST. It is a deal that means we get 70¢ back for every GST dollar. It has been breathtakingly labelled as corrupt by some east

coast commentators. Those same commentators attempt to undermine WA's hard-fought success and our mining industry that delivers jobs and opportunities for all Australians. If it were not for our determination, endeavour and great leadership, the resources boom that we continue to enjoy would not have been enjoyed under those on the other side. Their activities and commentary are undermining investment in Australia and undermining not just Western Australian jobs, but also Australian jobs.

I am happy to say that Western Australia's share of the GST is guaranteed; it is locked in. That is a public guarantee, a written guarantee and a national cabinet guarantee. It is a guarantee that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese stands behind. This agreement was achieved because of the relentless advocacy of this WA Labor government. We know that the Liberal and National Parties locked us into a dud of a GST deal. In 1998, former Liberal leader Colin Barnett said that the GST would be great for Australia and Western Australia. He said in 2006 that the GST deal was sensible and a good piece of economic reform for WA. However, under that deal, which the Liberals and Nationals put together, our share of the GST would have fallen to 10¢ in the dollar. That is what would have happened if not for the 2018 agreement secured by the WA Labor government.

Those commentators overlook a range of issues that I want to put on the record. For the purposes of helping those opposite, we are also educating those on the east coast. For instance, under the fair share deal, WA will receive 70 per cent of its population share of GST in 2023–24, which is still by far the lowest rate of all the states. The next lowest state is Victoria, which will receive 92 per cent. No other state would even contemplate the idea of their share going down to 70 per cent. No state is worse off under the GST reforms. Under the 2018 GST deal, WA has gifted more than \$13 billion in GST to other states and territories. We have sent \$13 billion to the east coast in the past five years. WA Treasury estimates that the cost to the commonwealth of the GST reform is less than half of the increased company tax collections received by the commonwealth as a result of our strong mining industry. Anything it loses in GST it gains in company tax. Our successful export industry is the backbone of the national economy. WA may have only 11 per cent of Australia's population, but, members, we carry the nation.

Our GST deal is secure under my government. East coast commentators can keep typing away on their keyboards, sipping their chardonnays and choking on their foie gras, but nothing will get between my government and our fair share of the GST. That is my guarantee, because we will always do what is right for WA.

RETAIL WORKERS — ASSAULTS

4. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to legislation to be introduced into state Parliament this week that will amend the Criminal Code to insert a new provision with higher penalties for those who assault retail workers, including by hitting, throwing objects at or spitting on a worker.

As one of the catalysts of this decision was research from the McKell Institute that highlighted that assaults on workers in WA had increased by 38.8 per cent between 2014 and 2022, why is this legislation not being expanded to cover all assaults, given that violent family assaults have gone up 48 per cent and non-family assaults have gone up 30 per cent since the Labor Party came to power?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

This law reform is being driven by retail workers; they petitioned the upper house. Over 9 000 retail workers said to my government that they want better protections—that they want to feel safe in the workplace and that they want a government that will back them. We are doing just that. We will stand by workers because no worker deserves to have to go to work on a daily basis under the threat of assault. They should feel safe and protected in their workplace. Sadly, we know that 90 per cent of Western Australian retail workers will experience some form of physical or verbal abuse. Do not forget that these are often young people who work in fast-food outlets, at supermarket checkouts and in bottle shops—obviously, they are over 18 years of age in that case. We need to do what we can to stand by them. We need to do what we can to ensure that they have protections and that we reflect our disgust at people who assault retail workers through laws that establish harsher penalties—and there will be. The maximum penalty under these laws will go from 18 months' imprisonment to seven years' imprisonment. The maximum fine will go from \$18 000 to \$36 000. These are important law reforms that are about saying to retail workers, "We've got your back." I am immensely proud of these new laws. We will bring them in as soon as possible. We will make sure that we stand up for Western Australian workers.

RETAIL WORKERS — ASSAULTS

5. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Can the Premier guarantee to the people of WA that these more severe penalties will actually be imposed by our court system?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

The Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Vasse, said just a short while ago that we are seeing an escalation of crime in Western Australia. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is that we saw a 53 per cent decrease in dwelling burglaries in 2023 compared with 2016. There has been a 26 per cent decrease in motor vehicle theft, a 20 per cent decrease in property damage and a 33 per cent decrease in drug offences. I am very pleased to say —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: The other point the opposition talks about is youth crime. In 2016–17, there were 6 593 offences committed by people aged 10 to 17. In 2022–23, there were 6 278, so youth crime is actually going down. It is true to say that we are seeing an increase in the reporting of family and domestic violence, but, of course, that is a unique part of our system. We want people to report incidents of family and domestic violence. We know that the police force now treats those accusations of alleged offences with much higher priority, so they gain greater prominence and therefore people are further encouraged to seek the protection of the law in relation to family and domestic violence. That is a good thing. It is sad that we continue to see high rates of family and domestic violence in our community, but it is great that we now see more cops on the beat and a reduction across a whole range of areas of offending. This is a record that we should be pleased with, but it is a record we will continue to make sure we see further improvements on, and we will do that by continuing with our record recruitment of police officers.

METRONET — PROJECTS

6. **Ms J.J. SHAW to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record investment in transport infrastructure across Western Australia, which is creating thousands of local jobs.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the progress of key Metronet projects, including the Morley–Ellenbrook line and the Armadale line transformation?
- (2) Can the minister outline how this compares with the records of the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Swan Hills for that question. It has been a big summer period for Metronet and public transport. We have just emerged from the summer of free public transport, and we have also seen a number of milestones met along the way. I was with the member for Butler just before Christmas when we went on the first test train on the Yanchep railway line. The member for Butler would agree that rapid progress is being made on the Yanchep rail line and we are seeing some incredible stations at Alkimos, Yanchep and Eglinton. Progress is being made and it is very much nearly completed.

With the Armadale rail line transformation, we saw how quickly the existing stations were demolished. The existing railway lines were ripped up and the new viaduct is being built. All those who can see the work know that a big thanks is owed to all those workers who have been out there in the heat over the past month in particular delivering this transformational project. There are sections of elevated railway there and a lot of work has been done in Byford through to Armadale, Cannington and Victoria Park.

The Ellenbrook railway line is nearing completion and again progress has been made on the stations, the rail track is being laid and the overhead pantograph is being set up. We had an exciting announcement on the weekend. As part of the Ellenbrook railway line, we will create an improved visitor experience at Whiteman Park. One of the things about Whiteman Park is that it is very big, and we want to make sure that visitors and Western Australians alike can experience the many, many different beautiful museums and experiences in Whiteman Park. As well as the incredible Whiteman Park station, we are connecting Whiteman Park into Whiteman Park proper. We asked all the companies we are working with to contribute to the project, including ACCIONA Construction, Alstom, Arc Infrastructure, BMD Constructions, Georgiou Group and Laing O'Rourke. We are working with North Metropolitan TAFE, Minister for Training and Workforce Development. Those who have been training in Midland will come out and help weld the track. Again, it is a great experience for those undertaking rail courses at North Metro TAFE. We will see a great connection.

One of the best aspects of this project is the heritage tram connection, as I said, whereby we are combining the old and the new—the brand new Whiteman Park station with the old tram. It is the tram that ran on

the Inglewood line. Tram number 66 will be the first tram that runs on the line. We are combining the old and the new. Unlike the Liberal Party, which just discards older assets, we combine the old and the new. We are very proud of that combination.

This is the biggest transformation of the public transport system in the state's history. The opposition believed that we should not have an Ellenbrook rail line until 2050 and we should not build the Yanchep extension until 2031. Although it committed to the Ellenbrook rail line and Metro Area Express light rail, it completely abandoned its commitments. Over the Christmas period and during the "Summer of Free Public Transport", people were very willing to use our public transport as a cost-of-living measure, not just on the free Sundays but also because of the two-zone fare cap. This is making sure that Western Australians have an affordable way to travel around our community. The progress is there to see. This is a very exciting year for Metronet, everybody.

ELECTRICITY — OUTAGES

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

I refer to the extended power outages that impacted more than 30 000 people across Kalgoorlie and other areas of the goldfields, the wheatbelt and parts of the Perth hills in January. Will the Cook Labor government commit to an independent review of the outages and the forward planning and response by government, Western Power and Synergy?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

As I have reported, both in public utterances and to the media, we will certainly look into the circumstances that led to the outages experienced in the Perth hills, the wheatbelt and Kalgoorlie. Everyone knows the reason why those outages occurred. It is because we had unprecedented weather systems. There were supercell storms, which wreaked unprecedented havoc across those power networks. The outages experienced across the wheatbelt and Kalgoorlie were because we had five transmission towers taken out by that supercell system. It treated those 50-metre towers like tinfoil, severing the entire system.

There was an unprecedented set of circumstances. The last time we had a single transmission tower outage was more than 35 years ago. This was an extraordinary event and one which had a devastating impact on not only the communities directly impacted but those who live around them. We know, for instance, that Kalgoorlie was not impacted by the storms, but it was impacted significantly by the outages.

Those are significant pieces of power infrastructure. As a result of that, it took us a week and a few days to repair them. I am immensely proud that our power crews were able to restore substantial power to the Kalgoorlie community within 28 hours. It was an extraordinary outcome, and I am very proud of the work —

Mr R.S. Love: It would have been a lot less if the generator had been working.

Mr R.H. COOK: There is a reason for that; that is, essentially, we had a complete failure of the system. Once the generators were started, they tripped automatically because the demand on the generators was too great. We had to reroute some of the power —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Can we have some order please? If the Leader of the Opposition wants the opportunity for a supplementary question, perhaps we will wait for this answer to conclude.

Mr R.H. COOK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is important information and it is technical information. The Leader of the Opposition will have to sit in silence if he is going to understand it. We had a complete blackout, so those generators automatically tripped when they were turned on. We had to reroute power via the Northam line, which allowed enough power to go into the system to create enough electricity so the generators would not trip. That enabled them to restore the power within 28 hours. It was an outstanding outcome, and I am very proud of the work that those workers did to bring that back together.

It was highly impactful for not only the people who live in the community, but the small businesses there as well. The reason the Minister for Energy was onsite a couple of days later and why I paid a visit after that was to reassure the community that we will continue to make sure that we invest in our south west interconnected system to build resilience and to make sure it is more reliable, particularly for those communities at the edge of the grid. The fact of the matter remains that as climate change continues to have an impact on our lives, coastal communities, wooded communities and edge-of-grid communities will continue to be challenged by severe weather events. That is why the Minister for Energy continues to review what else we need to do to ensure the system is reliable. That is one of the reasons why we have invested so heavily in the south west interconnected system. In November last year I announced more than \$700 million of investment in the south west interconnected system to continue to build system resilience from that particular incident through to other edge-of-grid communities to the north.

We need to continue to make sure that we invest properly in and support those communities.

One of the other issues that occurred—I will not go on for too much longer—is we saw a significant impact on the communications infrastructure, particularly around mobile phone access. We will have to learn from that, and we hope that Telstra and the federal government, which is responsible for telecommunications, take those lessons on board and seek to find ways to make those communication systems much more resilient. This was an unprecedented weather event. It could have led to Kalgoorlie and some of the wheatbelt communities along that line being cut off for literally weeks. Mercifully, we were able to largely restore the power inside 28 hours and were able to rebuild that trunk line within, I think, nine days. Also mercifully, we now have power going to those communities so that they can continue to enjoy the benefits of the south west interconnected system.

ELECTRICITY — OUTAGES

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

I have a supplementary question. In that reply, the Premier pointed out that the government would carry out an investigation.

- (1) Can the Premier confirm whether there will be an independent review of the circumstances?
- (2) Will the Premier provide details to the house of those investigations and the terms of reference?

The SPEAKER: I point out that there were two parts to that supplementary question, which is not allowed. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to keep that in mind for future questions.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) The review will be undertaken in the usual way. Obviously, Energy Policy WA will have an involvement in that and obviously we will involve Western Power and Synergy in that discussion, and the Minister for Energy will make sure that it is thorough.

HOMELESSNESS

9. Dr K. STRATTON to the Minister for Homelessness:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to providing support to vulnerable members of our community, including people experiencing homelessness.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's significant funding for homeless services across Western Australia has provided long-term certainty for critical programs across the state?
- (2) Can the minister advise how this government's record spending in housing and homelessness initiatives has had a real impact on our community?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for her question and commitment to supporting social housing and homelessness services in her electorate.

- (1)–(2) As I have said many a time, our state government is very cognisant of the pressures that are currently being faced in the housing and rental markets. That is why this government has taken unprecedented measures to not only drive and boost housing supply, but also provide relief. That includes, of course, our record investment of \$2.6 billion over four years on social housing and homelessness services and also on a range of other measures, including our rental relief scheme and our changes and reforms around short-term rentals.

It was my pleasure in January this year to announce further assistance to key services in the homelessness sector. We recognise that there are pressures. Every state is facing the same pressures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic radically reshaping our housing and rental markets. That is why I was very pleased to announce nearly \$50 million in new funding into key areas. The first was actually locking in and backing in key government initiatives that we had announced and that had been funded by grants. That included Boorloo Bidee Mia, the great work of the previous minister, and Koort Boodja, both of which provide transitional accommodation for rough sleepers. It includes also \$7.8 million to continue the HEART effort, which is the outreach teams that have been expanded to Joondalup and Midland. The government has provided \$5.4 million for the Safe Perth City initiative, which includes return-to-country functions, and, for the first time, locked-in funding for the Passages Youth Engagement Hub in the Peel area.

We also provided an additional \$13.4 million for 10 key services, which is a lift in the baseload funding of 23 per cent. That was for Uniting WA's St Bart's Tranby Engagement Hub, the Foyer Oxford organisation, the Beacon accommodation, St Vincent de Paul's Fusion Australia Perth's youth accommodation and Accordwest's Collie crisis accommodation.

This also provides additional funding of \$900 000 for the by-name list, which is critical as we seek to get more rough sleepers onto that list, to assist those efforts. Of course, all that continues our work around the supported landlord model. While it does not get much media attention, I am pleased to report that since January last year, as part of this new innovative program, 75 homes have been purchased, supporting

115 people who were previously rough sleeping. We will now continue to expand that program into regional Western Australia with the first in Geraldton, where I announced \$5.2 million in funding. It is substantial work and major reforms.

But I say this: contrast that with the opposition. It is clocking up now to seven years—seven years! It wants to be a serious alternative for government, and in seven years, it has not announced one social housing policy. I repeat: in seven years, not one social housing and not one homelessness policy has been announced, but it will knock everything. Hon Steve Martin has mastered the art. Any measure we announce, he condemns it, criticises it, and says it is useless. I point to what he said about our rental relief scheme. The rental relief program is an important addition to the measures that we have provided to address cost-of-living pressures for WA families. We are extremely grateful for this amazing program. Do members know what Hon Steve Martin called a cost-of-living measure to assist renters in need? He called it “a bad joke”. That is his level of analysis. That is the opposition’s level of policy commitment. Every initiative that we release and announce, it criticises or condemns, yet it has nothing to offer the Western Australian public. There is a very clear line between this government and its ambitious reform agenda to boost housing supply, and an alternative that has no policies and is not fit to govern.

LIVE EXPORT — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

10. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:

I refer to the federal Labor government’s recent backflip on a key tax reform election commitment that set a precedent. Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Given this backtrack on a significant election promise, what specific measures has the WA government taken to exert pressure on federal Labor to reconsider and reverse its election commitment on the live sheep export ban?

The SPEAKER: Just before I give the Premier the call, we had a number of interjections while that question was being asked. I would ask people not to interject. It is important that the minister and all of us are able to hear the question clearly, and the interjections are unwelcome. Premier in response, please.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I take it from both the public commentary from the member for Vasse, the Leader of the Liberal Party, and now the commentary from the Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA, that neither party supports the Albanese government’s tax changes. Neither of these two branches of the Liberal Party and National Party actually supports a fair go —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: — for a tax system that will make sure —

The SPEAKER: Premier! I have just had, when you have only spoken for 15 seconds, two demands from the person who asked the question for you to answer the question. None of us will be able to hear the answer if he continues to interject like that. Can we just hear the Premier in response? The member’s interjections provoke other people to then interject, and then if members really want to hear an answer to the question, it becomes almost impossible.

Mr R.H. COOK: Let the record show that they do not support the tax cuts featured in the Albanese government’s statement from the other day that will soon go to Parliament. The member for Vasse’s political party—I do not know what the member for Roe’s political party thinks, because they keep stumbling around planter boxes in Canberra!—will vote for it, and the member for Roe should be supportive of these sorts of changes.

They are things that benefit Western Australians to deal with the cost of living. There is no better way to relieve the cost-of-living burden on middle and lower income earners. It is a very important measure to put in place.

On live sheep exports, obviously members have seen the devastating impact on both our biosecurity and animal welfare, which potentially could have resulted from the live sheep industry experiences of the last few weeks. I think that was an opportunity to reflect on it. Nevertheless, we have made it clear to the federal government that it should be taking into account the impact this will have on Western Australian farmers. It will have an impact of around \$126 million for the industry overall and the loss of around 400 jobs. Obviously, it will have not only a financial impact, but also will produce anxieties within farming families who are working out how to reconfigure their businesses in the face of these issues. I thought of all days, this would be the last day the member would bring into this place issues around long-distance live animal exports.

LIVE EXPORT — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

11. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. How will the Premier tackle federal Labor’s arrogance in refusing to release the panel report and to reconsider the live export ban to defend Western Australian farmers and their livelihoods?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I have used both my opportunities to speak with the Prime Minister on these things in formal opportunities. We have made a formal proposition to the federal government review. The Minister for Agriculture and Food has also been in constant contact with her counterpart in Canberra to make it clear what Western Australia's attitude is on these things. We will continue to advocate for Western Australian farmers. Our agriculture industry is an important part of our economy.

Mr P.J. Rundle: When's it going to release the report?

Mr R.H. COOK: When will the federal government release it? I do not know. That is a matter for the federal government. The member would be better off getting his colleagues in Canberra to ask that question. I know that the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Jackie Jarvis, will be raising these issues regularly with her federal counterpart.

AMBULANCE RAMPING — PATIENT TRANSPORT COORDINATION HUB

12. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's delivery of initiatives to reduce ambulance ramping and address its underlying causes.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the new patient transport coordination hub will work with the state health operations centre to improve access to emergency care for patients across Western Australia?
- (2) Can the minister advise how these investments in emergency care will reduce ambulance ramping and provide the best possible patient experience?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Bicton for the question. As we know, the Cook government is absolutely committed to improving flow in our hospitals and improving access to health care for Western Australians. Early signs of success for many of our reforms include the state health operations centre. Over the last six months, we have seen a 32 per cent reduction in ramping on the previous year. The state health operations centre forms part of around half a billion dollars' worth of reforms that we are investing in our health system. That is on top of more staff. It is on top of more beds. We are determined to continue on this trajectory of improvements and lifting the performance of the health system. The state health operations centre is a real game changer for pre-hospital care in Western Australia. Any reform that is going to tackle some of the congestion issues that we see in our hospitals has to deal with the front end, what happens inside the hospital and what happens when people are discharged—whether it is aged care, mental health or disability. The SHOC deals with the front end. It coordinates all the factors that need to be coordinated in managing where a patient goes and where the flow needs to go. It coordinates all the inter-hospital transfers. It has a bird's-eye view of all the ambulances and all the beds available. Much of that investment in SHOC is real-time data that will tell us on a screen what beds are available and where we need to move people. That also includes regional patients who are coming in for ICU, for example. What happens now is that staff have to call various hospitals. In country hospitals or regional towns, they have to call each hospital or go through the WA Country Health Service command centre. We will relieve them of that burden so that they can spend more time on clinical care. We also announced the Patient Transport Coordination Hub, or PaTCH, which will reduce waiting times for interhospital transfers for many patients and reduce the administrative burden on nurses and doctors, because nurses and doctors currently do that work and make those calls. We are taking that away from them and freeing them up to provide more time for clinical care. Of course, last year we announced the WA Virtual Emergency Department, which was developed with clinicians. These proposals, SHOC and WAVED, were developed by clinicians. We have supported them with funding and the structural support that they need. We have a relatively small trial with St John Ambulance that provides virtual care in an emergency. We will soon expand it to general practitioners and paramedics on the scene, and there is a lot of excitement about that. We took some time to develop the WAVED approach and model, because it has to be patient-centred and patient-focused. It also has to do what we want it to do, which is to avoid those unnecessary ED admissions. The feedback from particularly patients and aged-care staff and clinicians has been extremely positive, which is fantastic. We will continue to roll that out. These are fundamental and important reforms that will help deal with the front-end emergency part of our hospital system. For too long it has been fragmented and difficult to navigate for both patients and clinicians. This will provide that system coordination and lift in performance that we will continue to see in our health system.

TELECOMMUNICATION OUTAGES

13. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I refer to widespread power blackouts in my electorate of Central Wheatbelt, the goldfields and Perth hills in January, which resulted in the complete loss of power and, in some cases, water, fuel supply and telecommunications for multiple days.

- (1) Has the Minister for Emergency Services briefed the Premier on the unacceptable risk to lives and communities as a result of telecommunications failures and lack of access to 000 that occurred during this prolonged outage?
- (2) When will this government deploy more standalone power systems to the wheatbelt to ensure that our communities are not faced with another summer of sweltering heat, with no power, fuel, water or mobile connection?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. As I said in my earlier comment, we will obviously review the situation with respect to those outages and continue to learn from them. Over the last seven years, under the guidance of the former Minister for Energy, Western Power has been bringing to bear many microgrids and standalone systems as part of the overall effort to build resilience into the system and to help those, as I said, who are edge-of-grid and experiencing unreliable power as a result of that. In addition to that, I note that the member mentioned the impact on telecommunications. That is fundamentally a question for the federal government to resolve, although I note that it has engaged Hon Alannah MacTiernan to review the Optus outage and the impact that had on communities. I am sure that will be considered as part of that review.

We will certainly stand ready to work with the commonwealth to make sure that we have much more resilient telecommunication systems. In particular, we want to work with Telstra to understand why it did not have backup systems for its transmission towers and why its systems were not more resilient in the face of a catastrophic loss of power, as we saw in that particular situation, but we will continue to make sure that we work with the commonwealth and work with Telstra to ensure, to the best we can, that the telecommunications in those regional areas in these situations is much more resilient.

TELECOMMUNICATION OUTAGES

14. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. I note that the Premier mentioned the word “review” several times. Would he agree that despite recommendations from the Wooroloo, Cascade Scaddan and Corrigin and Wickepin bushfire reviews that improving the resilience of regional telecommunications networks should be a priority for the state, absolutely nothing has changed under this state or federal Labor government?

The SPEAKER: That was a comment at the end and it is not acceptable to add that comment.

Point of Order

Ms M.J. DAVIES: With respect, at the beginning of my question was “would he agree”.

The SPEAKER: Yes, and your bit at the end was a gratuitous comment.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Telecommunications—particularly mobile telecommunications—remain an absolute priority, particularly in situations in which residents are facing the impacts of bushfire. We know that information is one of the key things they need to be able to keep themselves safe, so we will work with the federal government around these resilience issues. It is incredibly important. As the member knows, there is nowadays a wide range of communications opportunities through the deployment of retail satellite communications systems, so that may provide a way forward in relation to these things as well.

Again, we will continue to work in this space with the commonwealth to ensure that we have a much more resilient telecommunications system in the context of bushfire or power outage events.

TAFE — FEE-FREE COURSES

15. Dr J. KRISHNAN to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:

I refer to the Cook Labor government’s significant investment in affordable training, which has seen strong demand to study fee-free courses in 2024. Can the minister outline for the house how this investment is allowing Western Australians to study for a diploma of nursing for free; and can the minister advise how this free course compares with the cost increases that were delivered by the Liberals and the Nationals WA?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am very pleased to address these issues. Not only is the state government’s commitment to vocational training—particularly through subsidised and, importantly, free courses—providing opportunities for students, young people and anyone wanting to improve their skills, it is also making a huge impact on the industries and sectors that we know need a supply of skilled labour. That is nowhere more the case than in our health system.

I was very pleased recently to be joined by the Premier, the Minister for Health and the members for Bateman and Willagee. As august as that company was, we were even more pleased to be with a group of students who were

studying for their diploma in nursing. They will end up being qualified as enrolled nurses in our health system, and that will provide huge opportunities. There was a wide range of students there. They were engaged in their third semester of study, so they will be finishing up at the end of this semester, and they were surrounded by world-class facilities. It was great to see that environment and be able to meet some of those students.

As the member implied in his question, it is particularly exciting when we start to talk to these students and understand exactly what benefit they are getting from our fee-free program. Under the previous Liberal–National government those students would have had to pay more than \$10 000 for their qualifications—\$10 000! I do not know whether the shadow Minister for Health is paying attention to this—I can see that she is talking to one of her colleagues, so I am not sure that she is—but being asked to pay \$10 000 for a diploma to qualify as an enrolled nurse is an absolute outrage. We did not just pay the price for that when members opposite were in government; we will be paying the price of the increase in fees that the previous government added to our TAFE system for years to come, because there is a pipeline effect. It creates a disincentive in the market for people to participate in training. We do not just have a blockage straightaway; we have a blockage when we do not have people qualifying or enrolling in apprenticeships, and three or four years later, we have a lack of tradespeople. That is the real damage that was caused: not just immediate damage, but damage for many years after.

It was also a real pleasure during that visit for me, the Premier, the Minister for Health and the local members who were there to meet some of the lecturers. The lecturers I talked to that day are also practicing nurses. I met someone who was a nurse in ICU; I met someone who was a practising nurse in surgery; I met a practising midwife. They practice as well as lecture, so they do both those jobs. That means that our TAFE students are being taught by people with real-life experience. They work in hospitals day in, day out and are able to impart their experience and communicate their enthusiasm for their work to those students. It was a very, very positive interaction, and I am proud of it. As I said, under the former Liberal–National government, it cost more than \$10 000 to complete that course. Under the previous government, if a person wanted to do a Diploma of Anaesthetic Technology and Practice, it would have cost them \$8 000; a Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education would have cost \$7 000; and a certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice would have cost \$6 000. Under this government, all those courses are free—thanks to not only the state government, but also our positive and cooperative relationship with our federal counterparts. We are grateful for the new five-year agreement with the Albanese government. I am proud of the work we are doing on fee relief and infrastructure upgrades, both the physical infrastructure and new equipment. It is good for students, good for industry and good for Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: The member for Vasse with the last question.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS — RIGHT TO DISCONNECT LAW

16. **Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:**

I refer to the right to disconnect law, passed by federal Parliament, that forbids employers from contacting workers after hours with penalties including jail time, that has the potential to lead to —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms L. METTAM: — workplace breakdowns, productivity losses and the reduction of other flexible conditions.

- (1) Does the Premier support the introduction of these laws and believe that it is in the best interests of Western Australia?
- (2) Will the Premier guarantee that there will be no adverse outcomes for WA businesses that are required to operate across multiple states or time zones?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) We have now had six questions from the opposition and I think every one of them has been about the federal government—every one of them!

Mr R.S. Love: What about the power situation?

Mr R.H. COOK: The power situation—okay; I will give you that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: On one hand, opposition members raged against the storms that impacted WA, and in the next stage they raged against the federal government —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you did not ask this question. I ask you to cease interjecting, please.

Mr R.H. COOK: Federal Parliament makes the decisions that it makes. Western Australian companies will manage those laws and act in a commonsense way. We know that Western Australian companies will continue

to lead this country and its economy, and it will continue to make great investments on behalf of the people of Western Australia to create great Western Australian jobs. The decisions made by federal Parliament are essentially a function of Canberra.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS — RIGHT TO DISCONNECT LAW

17. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. I thought you were going to stand up for WA.

The SPEAKER: Sorry.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Member for Vasse, you are a habitual offender in this regard. If you preface your supplementary questions, I will sit you down. It is the first day, so I will be generous. I will let you ask a supplementary question if you want to ask it.

Ms L. METTAM: Why does the Premier support such a policy given its risk to industry productivity and our ability to deal with the east coast?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I note that the member's first question invited an opinion, which is not within the standing orders. The supplementary question was ruled out of order. It is disappointing that at this stage of the election cycle, the standard of debate in this place has not improved. The other thing the member tried to do was to verbal me, which is perhaps the lowest form of political debate, but not entirely without precedent or expectation. I did not say that I supported these laws. I said that they are a matter for the federal Parliament, and that is what it is.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.55 pm]: Now, where was I? While the Minister for Education is in the house, I want to recognise that there is a nasty fire in the Esperance town site that is also threatening buildings at Esperance Senior High School. I want to wish the best of luck to everyone fighting that fire.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Is that now?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It is right now, along with another fire that is about four kilometres from my farm.

Dr A.D. Buti: You should go. Seriously.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Regardless of that, I will move on to a couple of other subjects that I want to wrap up. Welcome back for the year, Deputy Speaker.

As I did with my question to the Premier, I want to focus on live export. This subject is obviously close to my heart. I have a very clear understanding of what our sheep producers are going through, throughout the state. My electorate of Roe has more sheep than any other electorate in the state. Live export also certainly affects the likes of the member for Central Wheatbelt and many others, including the member for Moore. We are very concerned that, as we brought up in question time today, the federal government is dictating policies to our state. Since 2018, the industry has made radical improvements. Mortality rates, the way sheep are put into feedlots and transferred onto ships, and their conditions have improved. I have been on one of those ships to see the ventilation system and so forth, and sheep are handled very well.

Over the last few weeks, we have seen how the federal government, federal minister and federal department are dealing with things. The federal minister commissioned a panel report. Farmers, supply chain operators and many others turned up last year in good faith to put in their submissions and talk about how the live sheep export business is so important to their occupation or business. They turned up in good faith, but the federal minister cannot even be bothered to release the report, which he has now had for several months. I thought he was going to wait until federal Parliament finished last year and release it straight after that, but that did not happen. We are now in mid-February, and we still have not seen the release of the panel report. Members can understand why Western Australian sheep growers and supply chain operators are very upset at this debacle and how the minister is treating Western Australian sheep growers. I point out that this has an intrinsic value to the confidence and supply of sheep within the state. It has a large impact on industry confidence and the price of sheep in the saleyards and the like. It is understandable why sheep growers and supply chain operators in Western Australia get upset when the federal government deals with this industry in the way it has. What we are seeing now is quite frankly a pattern of the Premier or our WA state government not standing up to federal government decisions and policies that affect Western Australia—whether it be the cashless debit card or Qatar Airways. The Middle East wants more chilled meat, but the federal government cancelled out the ability for Qatar Airways to take that meat across.

The number of skilled migrants has dropped from over 8 000 back to 2 750. We have heard very little from the Premier and ministers on that. Apparently, according to today's announcement, the GST is all sorted now, but there are still the industrial relations laws and the right to disconnect. That is going to have a massive effect on businesses right throughout Australia. This is an opportunity for this Premier and state government to actually stand up and be counted.

In light of that and the importance of the live export industry to Western Australia, the sheep growers and the communities and businesses within my electorate, I would like to move an amendment.

Amendment to Question

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and that this house condemns the Cook Labor government for its failure to stand up for Western Australia's interests in the face of live export bans, its failure to stand up to the federal Labor government and its policies that are harming the people and businesses of WA

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [3.01 pm]: I am very pleased to rise to speak to the member for Roe and Deputy Leader of the Opposition's amendment about live exports. As the member mentioned, it is now February 2024 and we have had months of uncertainty in an industry that underpins so many of our communities and is an important contributor to our state's economy. All we have heard from this government are hollow words.

I take the point that the member for Roe made about the vigour with which we saw the Premier respond to the Dorothy Dixer. I might point out that we do not hear Dorothy Dixers from the government about live export, so we can tell it is not important at all. The government was going to take up the fight on the GST. It is to the point that a GST “fairness fighter” contingent has been assigned within a department somewhere in the government to make sure that that fight continues and that the Premier is well armed whenever he stands to speak to the Prime Minister. This is despite having had a rock-solid promise from not just the Prime Minister, but also the national cabinet, that there would be no change.

To me, that GST “fairness fighter” contingent is somewhat superfluous. Perhaps we could shift that across to something that the national cabinet does not support—yet this government says that it does—that is, the live export industry, particularly for our sheep farmers. We want more than hollow words and placations from the state government to make our industry feel like it is being heard. Nothing has changed, except that the industry itself has continued to go into decline because of the loss of confidence and attacks from its own state and federal governments. That is what is happening. Labor has form for this. In 2011, the then federal Minister for Agriculture made the disastrous decision to shut down the live cattle trade; that still has ongoing ramifications for our nation that are in the courts as we speak. The Labor government made an ideological decision instead of one based on facts and understanding and did not take advice from its own departments. In the interim from 2011 to now, we have seen people pushed to the brink of financial and emotional ruin, and, in fact, there were suicides in that industry right across the nation in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland.

I note that the now federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Murray Watt, was very quick to point out at a Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association conference late last year that the government has absolute confidence in the live cattle trade and that no changes will be made to that industry; it is just the Western Australian live sheep export industry that does not have the confidence of this minister, and I have to ask why. Why is there a lack of support from our federal government that purports to understand Western Australia and be on our side? I conclude that, as a good Queenslander, he understands the value of the live cattle export industry in Queensland but has absolutely no interest in understanding the dynamics—social, financial or any other means—of the sheep industry here in Western Australia. Shame on the state Labor government for not taking up the fight at every opportunity. It needs to put on the record support that is more than standing and responding to questions that we as an opposition put to keep this issue on the agenda. We need to make sure that the state Minister for Agriculture and Food is walking into state cabinet and saying that we need to do more, because the industry is under enormous pressure.

I will not go on about the complete debacle of the *MV Bahijah*. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will comment on that. Needless to say, it has been a complete and utter disaster. The federal government and the department had more than enough time, after that ship was directed to turn around, to talk to their state counterparts to come up with a plan. We did not need to see an entire boatful of sheep and cattle hanging off the edge of Fremantle while we waited for a response. That was completely unacceptable. Again, we saw the government wash its hands and say that it was a commercial issue and a matter for the exporters. It did not see it as a risk to our agricultural industry and our export relationships, and it did not step in to support that sector to make sure that we got a better outcome than the one we are still seeing being played out today.

This is not the first time I have seen, essentially, the gaslighting of the industry, in that it is neither the fault nor the problem of federal or state governments. Complicit in that are the Prime Minister, the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and our state minister, because she does not push back when these comments are made. As a result of oversupply, we have seen prices fall and a loss of confidence in the industry. These ministers

have essentially removed themselves from taking any responsibility for their decision, which they announced federally and agreed to at a state level, by saying that this is an oversupply issue. That loss of confidence has knocked the industry, and we have seen prices at the saleyards drop from multiple hundreds of dollars a head for sheep and cattle to potentially \$1, if we are lucky, and if farmers are not shining up the bullets and digging holes. I am not exaggerating; farmers will be forced to make these decisions in the coming weeks and months if federal government members do not bring certainty into the system. They have just washed their hands of it. It is another issue! It has nothing to do with us saying that we will shut down the industry! That has not rocked the confidence of our farming community and the businesses that rely on it at all! Note the sarcasm, please, Hansard. It is, I think, a complete disaster. Again, these governments, at both state and federal level, show that they have no real interest in agriculture.

I note the Premier's Statement today, which we are responding to, and I look forward to contributing on other issues later in the week. Last year we had a significant budget surplus, and a section of the Premier's Statement was about economic diversification, which is something that we hear bandied about by governments of all persuasions, but the previous Premier and the now Premier seem to make it a bit of a catchcry. It has been said to me on a regular basis in my electorate—where this is not just an academic argument; it is people's livelihoods—that their businesses are reliant on this industry. It is not just farmers, but also the trucking supply industries, the agents, the wool classers and those involved in the wool industry, the businesses that then operate in those communities, our grocery stores, and all the service providers in the wheatbelt. It is a cornerstone of the economy in that area. Governments talk about economic diversification. Why are we taking away something that is already generating income and stability, and creating drought resilience when we have just been through one of the hottest summers I can recall? Why are we taking away those options for price stability and all the things that we know that having that option on the table creates? Why are we taking that away? It will be taken away from the community, with a big chunk of money pulled out. I do not see this government sailing over the Darling Range to try to replace that chunk of contribution and what removing it will do to start unpicking the social and economic fabric of our communities. I simply do not see it doing that in the wheatbelt. I see it operating in Collie, where we are transitioning an economy. I see the government paying lip service to transitioning an economy where it has shut down the industry associated with the old-growth forest. I see nothing from our state government that acknowledges this will have a significant financial and social impact in the wheatbelt. It is causing problems right now. I have seen absolutely nothing from this government.

Sadly, it has been left to shires like those involved in the North Eastern Wheatbelt Region of Councils. We had NEWROC in Parliament House last week and it has written to the state and federal ministers about the specific impact this decision will have in its corner of the wheatbelt. Whatever the numbers are in the Econisis report, *Live sheep by sea trade policy: Impact on the NEWROC economy*, we can multiply that, because this is only a small number of shires: the Shires of Dowerin; Wyalkatchem; Nungarin; Trayning; Mt Marshall, which is Beacon and Bencubbin; Mukinbudin; and Koorda. They have worked together because they have seen that this issue needs addressing for their communities. They want the government to be armed with all the facts, right until the moment that the axe is swung and there is no point of return. They will fight, like the National Party, the Liberal Party and our federal colleagues will fight, to make sure that the decision is made knowing it is doing it to the detriment of these communities, and that there was an alternative to allow this legitimate industry to continue.

I will read directly from the letter written to Hon Jackie Jarvis in May 2023. I have the report and I am happy for anyone who would like to read it. I am sure members will find it has rigour and demonstrates just how important this sector is, particularly to the electorate of Central Wheatbelt and by extension the broader region. The letter states —

The NEWROC wishes to express our support for the live sheep trade by sea. Our purpose is to work together for successful communities, and we have two long term goals in our strategic plan (out of four) that are relevant to our support for the live sheep trade by sea;

1. A stable to increasing population in the ... communities and
2. Industry growth and diversification.

The agricultural sector in the NEWROC district has consistently had the highest number of businesses. Agricultural businesses across the seven local government areas contributed \$408m to the Western Australian economy in 2020/21 of which \$37m was from the sheep industry.

Bearing in mind, this is just a small group of shires. The letter continues —

During the 2020/21 financial year there was 402,574 sheep in the ... district, and 180 businesses involved in the industry.

That is 180 businesses in those shires that will see some form of economic impact as a result of this disastrous decision. They rely on the sheep industry; it is not just our farmers. The letter further states —

... transport carriers, wool classers, shearers, stock agents ... all of whom will be impacted by the phase out of live sheep exports by sea which will reduce industry growth and diversification ... will most certainly affect their bottom line, their viability and potentially their presence and valuable contributions in our communities, including our population.

I heard the member for Roe in his contribution earlier talking about volunteers and how hard they have been working over this summer on emergency services and responses. Where do members think those volunteers come from? They are people who have jobs and contribute to their communities—those who pitch in to make sure that we remain safe. This will undo and unpick these communities. We do not have a lot of fat in these systems. Outside of Northam, York and maybe Merredin, most of my communities have a population for the entire shire at the 500 to 700 people mark, and that would be generous. Taking away 180 businesses, along with the flow-on to our schools, our hospitals systems and our other businesses, will have a catastrophic effect.

At some point the state government will have to realise that there will be an economic impact for it. There will be, because the government will be required to step in where these self-sustaining economies were taking care of themselves. The state government is being short-sighted in not putting the full weight of what it can and what I have seen it do when it cares deeply about an issue—or when it wants to be seen to be standing up to the federal government. There is quiet from the backbenchers, hollow words from the Premier and a reluctance by the government to engage on the issue except when the member for Roe or the Leader of the Opposition or anyone from this side of Parliament raises it. It means that the government is not committed to that industry, and anybody who says otherwise is playing politics.

My communities deserve more. They deserve more from their state and federal government representatives, particularly when they have significant power, a budget surplus and a platform to advocate on behalf of their state and the industries that are important to it. In addition to what the member for Roe talked about, there is much economic and social evidence of the changes that have been made by the industry to respond to what was seen as an unacceptable state of affairs. It has done everything that was asked of it by the government and regulators—over and above—yet this government sees fit to continue to support a federal shutting down of the industry. I do not want to be cynical, but I suspect that when members of this government talk to their colleagues and constituents in electorates like Fremantle, they will claim success in shutting down the live export industry. They do not say that when they are in my electorate. They use very carefully worded press releases and commentary to make sure that there is no risk to the meagre support they have in my area. But we are not stupid in the wheatbelt, the great southern and the midwest. We understand that this government does not support the live export industry, and it has an opportunity to step it up. It is a state election campaign year. This industry supports many, many people who are just as important as anyone anywhere else. They rely on an industry that might not be the sexiest or getting great support in the polls in *The West Australian*, but, by goodness, it most certainly is not the worst. There will be a significant diminishing of the communities I love, which work very hard to make sure they contribute to the state's economy and Western Australia more broadly.

It is time for the Premier and his Minister for Agriculture and Food to do more. I was devastated to read the comments from Hon Jackie Jarvis, who has essentially washed her hands of the matter and put her hands up in the air. This was as far back as March 2023; she said —

“I have pushed the issue as hard as I can, but we are now at the point where Murray Watt has said that this is happening,” ...

“We have to agree to disagree.”

Our minister has given up. What action has been taken? What correspondence has been exchanged? What advocacy has been done? We certainly do not see that minister standing proactively in the Parliament on this issue. She did not last year except when this side of the house raised it.

Once again, the agricultural industry has every right to feel like it is under attack or at least abandoned by its own government. I dare say that other industries are looking on and, when this finally occurs and the industry is shut down, if that is what happens, they will be nervously sitting there thinking, “Gee, are we next? What happens if we are on the Greens’ ideological agenda to shut everything down that does not align with their views, and the Labor Party are chasing votes in those inner-city seats?” What will happen to them? There are some unattractive industries in Western Australia, but they all contribute. They do good work, yet this industry has been abandoned by its government. It has done everything that has been asked of it to meet the expectations of the regulators and of governments.

I once again put on the record my support for the live export industry. I thank the member for Roe for his continual advocacy and our team for their continual fight for this industry, because that is what we will do right to the very end. I want every Labor MP to know exactly what that decision will mean when it finally comes through and this government releases the report and we see the demise of an industry that supports so many in our community.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.21 pm]: I would like to take the opportunity to contribute to this amendment to the motion that the Premier’s Statement be noted. The amendment really outlines an urgent issue for Western Australia. It states —

... that this house condemns the Cook Labor government for its failure to stand up for Western Australia’s interests in the face of live export bans, its failure to stand up to the federal Labor government and its policies that are harming the people and businesses of WA.

In taking note of the wording of this amendment, I would say that this is a condemnation of not just the Premier but also various members of the government who are tasked with making sure that the arguments for Western Australia are well known and well prosecuted in Canberra and elsewhere. It is about not only live export, although that is the issue that has been most spoken about, but also a range of other issues that I will touch on in the 20 minutes or so that I have to speak on this matter.

As the member for Central Wheatbelt has just been explaining, we know that the minister has been very quiet in standing up, supposedly, for Western Australia's live export industry in this regard. She has been very quiet indeed. Freedom-of-information documents that were obtained indicate that when the investigative panel was in Western Australia and in the lead-up to that, over a number of weeks there was no written communication between the state minister's office and the federal minister's office regarding the issue of live sheep trade. It is incomprehensible to me how the minister could have been standing up for Western Australia and at the same time not communicating directly with the federal minister. I think she made some comments in the media that that was misleading and she had spoken to him. Where are the records, in the diary or the office, of those phone calls? We could find nothing. Usually, we could find a trace. It appears that Canberra had radio silence from the minister in Western Australia.

It is not unknown for state members of Parliament to be on the TV in states outside their area. I quite often see Treasurers from other states, for instance, expounding to their audience the need, in their view, to undo the GST deal or to get whatever they are after for their state, such as improved emergency services support. I very much doubt that anyone in Sydney or Melbourne has seen on their TVs our Minister for Agriculture and Food stridently arguing the case for the retention of the live sheep export trade in Western Australia. If someone could provide me with any evidence that that has occurred, I will gladly view it, because it would be a rare example of that minister standing up for the trade in Western Australia.

As I said, this amendment talks about a number of other issues that are affecting Western Australia and the ability of our industries to prosper. Why is that important? Well, nearly half the goods manufactured and made in, or exported from, Australia come from Western Australia. It is a huge contribution from roughly 10 per cent of the workforce of Australia and hugely important in making sure that both the federal and state governments have healthy budget surpluses. It is not the state government that makes surpluses; the heavy lifting for that is done by our industries and workforces in sectors that the government fails to support. Those sectors have enabled the government's expected revenue increases. We heard the Minister for Training and Workforce Development's views on the government's record in TAFE training places, but what we have not heard from her is what she has been doing to stand up to Canberra in the face of the 67 per cent cut in the skilled migration list. Prior to that cut, the Premier said that he expected the number of places to increase from roughly 8 000 to in the vicinity of 10 000. That shows the inability of this government to make sure that Canberra is listening to it. Work is not being done to ensure that the state government's message is being heard in Canberra. That is evident not just in the live sheep export issue but also with the skilled workers cap under the state nominated migration program.

We have also seen a situation develop in which the federal government intends to establish its own environmental protection authority and duplicate the approvals process when our resources and other sectors seek approval for something that triggers measures under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Traditionally, there was cooperation with the state government. In the past, the state agency undertook the investigation and report, which was then approved by both the state and federal ministers. The federal government trusted our system to generate the investigation and report on which both governments would make the decision. In the previous Parliament, a change was made to the environmental protection legislation that paved the way for a dual approvals process. The change meant that not only would the state and federal governments cooperate on the investigation and report, but also the state would have delegated powers of approval, thereby cutting the red and green tape that is strangling industry in Western Australia. Far from that happening under the federal Labor government, we are seeing a reversal of that sensible reform and the imposition of a whole new layer of unnecessary environmental green tape for the approval of any project in Western Australia that has some significance under commonwealth law, whether that be under the EPBC act or within the commonwealth's jurisdiction. That is another area in which this government has been silent—absolutely silent—in addressing that issue and that threat to our industry going forward.

We have seen the imposition of an industrial relations agenda by the federal Labor government that is not in accord with the interests of the Western Australia workforce. It will also lead to a situation in which industry will be hamstrung in its ability to continue to drive forward those great mining and agriculture and oil and gas industries that are the engine room of the economy of our country. Those industries will continue to be hampered by these new industrial imposts that seem to be driven by the Greens and Labor with a long-held ideological viewpoint. We know all about Labor and its ideology. We saw that at the start of this term of government when an attack on regional representation took place despite that not being on the agenda. It had been on Labor's agenda for 130 years; it just did not tell us about it prior to the last election. I have seen some things come by in this current Labor government that have been on its agenda for a long time, and it has not really been upfront with Western Australians about what they will mean for the state and our industries going forward at a time when the world increasingly will

rely upon our ability to get approvals for developing mineral industries, especially critical minerals, and the raw fuel of LNG to allow countries such as Japan to keep their lights on and their industry going forward into the foreseeable future.

My party, the National Party, has made a commitment towards a net zero target for the state by 2050. That has been long held. We do not dispute the need for sensible change in carbon emissions, but we also understand that part of that is enabling our industries to support the world in that transition. Although we hear these words being said by the Premier in this place, we do not see actions on the ground when dealing with the federal government that would enable that to occur. Instead, I think we have a looming crisis in terms of business and industry being able to get the approvals needed to move ahead and develop those projects to fuel not only the development of Western Australia but lead to the decarbonisation of other areas of this country and this state.

I do not think there is any evidence that the federal government holds any of those views. I do not see any evidence that the state government has been able to convince the federal government of these needs. We have a federal resources minister who says these things, but I doubt very much that she holds sway in cabinet over people like the federal environment minister and others who are ambitious and have been in Parliament for a long time and have embedded themselves in the Canberra system over many years and who have a much stronger voice in the caucus room and cabinet than the voices from Western Australia.

Perhaps it is a weakness of those voices from Western Australia in the federal Labor area that led to the preposterous situation in which the Premier of the day, our new Premier, the member for Kwinana, as one of his first acts, as an admission of his lack of profile compared with his predecessor, proposed to establish an embassy in Canberra. I would love to know the status of that embassy. We have ministers here who can probably update us on the status of the embassy—on how many staff are employed there, how many contacts they have had with officials in Canberra and what runs they have on the board, or, whether it is, like so many other things with this government, just an announcement with a budgetary figure and a whim, a wish and a hope that something might happen just by making an announcement and a budget allocation. That will probably not work. I doubt that the embassy will work.

I do not know how close it is to Parliament House and I do not know what it has achieved, if anything, or the time lines that the Premier has on seeing improvement in his ability to influence the direction of policy and discussion in Canberra. I have not seen any evidence that we have ministers in this chamber who are able to get onto the people in Canberra and ensure that the needs of Western Australia are known, whether that be the state Minister for Agriculture and Food or any of the state ministers involved in areas such as industrial relations, immigration and skilled visa lists, and of course environmental approvals.

Another matter of concern is looming, with the federal government considering what it might do about Aboriginal cultural heritage. We saw the disastrous foray of the Western Australian government into Aboriginal cultural heritage with its naive legislation. It was a disaster. It was such a disaster that within six weeks of being implemented it had to be pulled. There is a very real risk that there will be federal intervention in that area. We have seen how that could stymie development and growth in our mighty export industries. A clear example of that happened, not through the intervention of the federal government per se but through interpretations of cultural heritage and songlines, which was the initial situation with the Santos decision. It led to industry and the sector having no clarity about how they could go ahead seeking approvals. In the end there was a Federal Court decision, which provided a level of hope that sense may be brought into the discussion. The federal government continues to support organisations that helped lead to that delay. The judgement was scathing of persons involved. I do not need to go through all the details of that, but it is known that the Environmental Defenders Office uses its taxpayer-funded position to deliberately throw off the rails projects that will benefit Australia. If that is the sort of thing we are going to see from this federal government into the future, with its foray into legislation and a new system of interpretation and interaction with Aboriginal cultural heritage, I think we will be back where we were in July last year.

I think the member for Roe has done a great service to the house in bringing forward this amendment. He is a passionate supporter of the live sheep export industry because his electorate has some of the largest flock numbers in the state. The member for Central Wheatbelt similarly represents areas where the sheep industry is an essential part of the rural landscape and farming communities. It may not be known that the electorate of Moore has a large number of people who are concerned about the future of the industry. Many producers in my electorate may be on land that is not of high agricultural value, but for which sheep play a vital role in enabling the improvement of that country and the further development of communities and industry. If we take the sheep out of the equation, we will have a much-depleted industry.

What I do not think is understood about the live sheep trade is that this is one component of the sheep industry and if it were taken away, we could well see a collapse in the industry because it is an essential part of a very hard element of the sheep industry to market here in Western Australia. Live sheep is not a product that our supermarkets require, but sheep are required if people wish to grow a considerable amount of wool and make use of the stubble and summer grazing areas that are available in the wheatbelt and midwest as a result of the role that sheep play in the crop system. It is an essential industry in many parts of the state, including mine, and many people are very, very disappointed by the lack of support being shown here in Western Australia by the minister and by the tepid support

that the Premier has given. It is easy enough for members to get on the front page of *Farm Weekly* and say that they support the live export trade, but it is harder for members to show their faces in the eastern states and make that case. I do not think anyone in Labor is doing that. I think the member for Central Wheatbelt highlighted that, secretly, most Labor members would be happy to see the demise of the live sheep trade. That would solve the problem for the Labor Party. I think that the philosophy espoused by the federal minister is the secret view of many Labor members of this place. It would be interesting to hear what Labor members tell their constituents when they talk to them about the live export industry.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [3.41 pm]: On behalf of the government, I am happy to respond to the amendment that has been moved by the opposition. It is an interesting amendment because it condemns the Cook Labor government for a decision made by the federal Labor government. Members of this place know that I very strongly support our regional communities because I not only live in one, but also am from one. I was born in Northam and my grandparents were sheep and wheat farmers in Narrogin. Although I cannot claim to know whether the sheep would have been bound for live export—because I am not 100 per cent sure—I know that my pop Jack Bates used to load up many a sheep-carrying truck. I suspect that back in the 1970s and 80s, most of those sheep would have gone to Robb Jetty. They might have been bound for live export—they could have—but I know that, as a wheat and sheep farmer, his stock was regularly sold on the market. Even as a young fella into my teenage years, I used to attend some of the sales with my grandfather in Narrogin, mainly. I do not think we went to Katanning, but I know that it has always had big saleyards.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Come to Katanning.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member might take me to some other places and lead me astray!

I have great empathy with farming families because I was a regular visitor to the farm at Narrogin in Yilliminning and to Boundain in the Narrogin Valley. I know about the hard work that my family was engaged in as farmers, particularly with their stock. I also acknowledge that this is a polarising issue. I accept that. Although in all the contributions of opposition members there was no comment about the current situation of the ship that has been off the —

Mr P.J. Rundle: I did.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: You did; sorry. It is off the coast of Western Australia at the port of Fremantle. It has certainly, in many respects, put a focal point on the industry more broadly. I honestly do not think anybody in this place would not understand that a person living in a rural and regional community—particularly those reliant on the health and wellbeing of the farming industry, be it in grains or stock—knows of the impact that those viable operations have on the economies of the immediate towns and broader regions. It is very important for all Western Australians and members of Parliament to understand where their food comes from, what is grown in our agricultural regions, and the grain growing and stock raising in our regions. Everybody needs to continually remember where that comes from. I refute the view put quite often by members opposite that they are the only ones who understand the importance and impact of rural and regional farmers, grain growers and stock raisers. I quite honestly think any normal Western Australian should understand where their food comes from, and importantly, where our export markets came from and arose. We know that there are changes in climate and rainfall across the state of Western Australia, like the whole of the country and the globe. We know there has been a drying climate for decades. The science says that the impact of climate change is not only here and real, but more recent reports detail the very grave concern that the tipping point of global temperatures may already have been reached and the impacts that will have into the future. It means that all industries—it does not matter whether it is rural or regional industries, food manufacturing, grain growing or stock raising—face the same threats. Governments will face these challenges going forward. I assure the house that the Western Australian government has put its strong value of our agricultural regions and farmers very clearly in this place, as the Premier did, including late last year. The federal government has embarked upon a policy initiative that it seems it intends to implement. As we are aware, the federal minister announced a review, in which various interests made submissions, including the Western Australian government. The Western Australian government's submission made it clear that if the federal Labor government, or any federal government, intends for a phase-out to go ahead, that there is an absolute need to significantly work on supporting farmers in any necessary transition. That has been made clear. It also needs to be done in a reasonable timetable.

I do not know, member for Central Wheatbelt, whether we are at the stage that Collie is with its transition or Manjimup is with its experience with old-growth forest. I do not know whether we are at that stage with live sheep export. We may be and, if we are, any government will need to have a very strong policy that supports transition. We have made it very clear that our view is that we strongly support the new animal welfare measures that were implemented. They relate, of course, to the northern summer live export ban. We strongly believe that is working and is appropriate. It is interesting to bear in mind that the situation we saw off the coast of Western Australia more recently was a result of concerns about the health and wellbeing of the animals on that ship. We recognise that our sheep industry plays an important role throughout rural Western Australia. It absolutely strongly supports and underpins many of the businesses that operate in rural and regional Western Australia. It supports jobs and job growth in our regional and rural communities. It supports businesses and government enterprises that exist in those

places as well, such as the services that are provided in education and health. One of the great things that the Minister for Transport has implemented, which has driven jobs back to the regions, is in Main Roads Western Australia. She made sure the workers returned. It is very interesting that when members on the other side were in power, they oversaw the drift of regional jobs away from the regions because they did not stand up and support them at the time, which meant the loss of road workers, for example. This Minister for Transport has returned that very specific policy. I am not going to get all excited but, for this opposition, during its time in Parliament including when there were National Party ministers in the previous government, they allowed the rail system to decline in their electorates and their regions. They allowed rail lines to be shut or decommissioned. There was not a whimper. Those members, including one or two who might still be in this place, were part of a cabinet that allowed that to happen. I know that during the Barnett–National Party alliance, sometimes they were not even around the table because they used to vacate the field. We know it is a factual thing that a number of National Party cabinet ministers would vacate the cabinet if the issues got a bit too hot and testy.

Ms R. Saffioti: Did they stand up for them?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: If members are talking about standing up, they did not stand up—they walked out! They left the table bare. On this sort of thing about standing up, they should have a look at their own record. I have given two examples. I could give more but I am not going to.

I want to touch on Premier Cook's commitment to making sure that Western Australia's interests are at the forefront of the interface with Canberra. Already he has highlighted very strongly and he has charged ministers that, over this coming year, they will be meeting regularly, visiting Canberra. The best time to visit Canberra is not during the holidays. It is not a good time to go over there when no-one is there. Of course, when the federal Parliament is sitting, that is the time to go. I assure members that a number of ministers will be visiting Canberra, continuing to put Western Australian interests and businesses first and forefront on those visits. I think that this is an important point. Let us put aside the COVID years when the borders were closed, but post that period, we saw very little of the Morrison government, including government ministers, here in Western Australia. In the nearly two years since the election of the federal Albanese government, there have been two federal cabinet meetings here, I think there is another one scheduled in the next couple of weeks, and my understanding is that there are regular visits and connections between various ministers and their federal counterparts. That includes Minister Jarvis in the other place and the conversations that she has with the federal agricultural minister, Hon Murray Watt. I know that she has regular conversations with that federal minister. The member's assumption that the minister is mute on this matter and on matters relating to the interests of Western Australia is wrong. She has and continues to put Western Australia's position and interests very strongly.

In my view, this is another important matter. This is an important debate. Do not get me wrong; I like it when we debate issues about regional Western Australia and the importance of our agricultural region and others, because I think it reminds us of the important role that those industries play, not only now, but in the history of our state. Our state has a very proud history in agriculture and associated industries that have made many of our towns and bigger regional centres prosperous. But, like any place that is challenged, we need to look at things so that when we need to respond to change, whether it be climate change or a change in economic circumstances, we can support those communities in their resilience.

Whatever is the fallout, if you like, of the federal government's policy position, as a government, we will absolutely continue to support the sheep industry, and we will support it if and when a clear transition plan or major financial support is required. We have a history of supporting communities that have been impacted by transition factors, particularly in regional areas. The member for Central Wheatbelt highlighted two examples of this government's response to factors that have impacted on communities going forward. We are seeing the transition that is occurring in Collie, with substantial support and investment by the government to assist that community in its transition from coal, and, of course, we have also had various packages, including the first packages that came in this place when the then Gallop government made the decision to end old-growth forest felling. This government actually has a very strong track record. I ask those members opposite who talk about standing up and use selective examples in their arguments: where were they when the rail system was under threat in their own regions? They did nothing when they had the power and the positions to do something, because they were in government. A number of them were sitting around the table in the cabinet and could and should have made very strong decisions on and advocacy for matters associated with rail in their areas. They also sat back and allowed a large number of government workers to be lost from regional Western Australia in the water, Main Roads and agricultural department areas. Those are three key areas in their electorates, and they not only did nothing at all to try to protect those jobs, but actually sat on their hands and closed their mouths or vacated the chamber or the cabinet room when such matters came up.

Members opposite do not have any track record in this, but I can assure them that the Cook government will continue to listen to and work and consult with the sheep industry and farmers, because we value them and recognise their importance to the Western Australian economy, regional economies, regional businesses and regional towns, and the people who live there. That is an important factor that I want to highlight to the house in responding to this amendment. We will not be supporting this amendment.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (6)

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

Noes (44)

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

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.05 pm]: On behalf of the people of Canning Vale, Gosnells, Huntingdale and Southern River, I rise to make a contribution to what is a fantastic Premier's Statement. Members would be aware that the Premier gave a personal shout-out to a fantastic business in Canning Vale, which is in my electorate. I would like to also place on the record my congratulations to Portable PPB and the work it has done as WA Innovator of the Year 2023. It is a fantastic business in my electorate. I would like to give a special shout-out to Simon Bolster, Peter Williams, Dr Mel Lintern and all the staff and team of Portable PPB, which is metres from Nicholson Road train station in Canning Vale.

In his address, the Premier also spoke about the fact that our trains will be running soon. It is looking more and more likely—although trains will run on the Morley–Ellenbrook line before they do on the Thornlie–Cockburn Link—that trains will run on the Thornlie–Cockburn Link in 2025. The Premier also spoke about the importance of the local manufacturing of railcars and the importance of the rail line in connecting my community and allowing people to have the public transport that they seek.

I sought permission from the Speaker to bring this gift into the chamber. I was at the opening of Thornlie train station in 2005, at which Paul Andrews, the then member for Southern River, was presented this gift by the then fledgling Metronet team. I would like to share it with the chamber. It was given to me by Gim Andrews because Paul has passed away. At the opening ceremony on 7 August 2005—like I said, I sought permission from the Speaker before bringing in this metal rail pike—this metal rail pike was presented to the local member and the local community. It was passed on to me, and I look forward to taking it to the opening ceremonies next year for the Thornlie–Cockburn Link, the Nicholson Road train station and the Ranford Road train station. I say that with great, great excitement.

The Premier spoke about how it is so important that we continue to stand up for Western Australia and work on easing cost-of-living pressures, boosting our housing supply and strengthening our health system. It is important that members understand how we will do that. It is also important for my community to have conversations about the importance of those things.

Sometimes people ask me what I envision for the communities of Southern River, Canning Vale, Gosnells and Huntingdale in years to come. I have already mentioned trains running on the Thornlie–Cockburn Link in 2025. Bus routes will connect families and bus stops will have shelter and seating. The eight-lane Ranford Road Bridge is almost ready to open; I drove over it today. The community can see that it is close to completion. The \$80 million Nicholson Road flyover, funded in 2022, is next to the Nicholson Road station. The women's and babies' hospital at Fiona Stanley Hospital will have two new multistorey car parks, which the Liberal Party is currently opposing. There will be a fully functioning youth plaza at Sutherlands Park, which I will expand on soon, and a footpath along Barrett Street so the community can enjoy the Bush Forever space—if fewer people choose to dump rubbish there. The government is also providing free or affordable training pathways into the careers and industries of tomorrow.

I would like to expand on a number of cost-of-living initiatives and things available to my community. On behalf of the City of Gosnells council and its awesome staff, Lotterywest and the Western Australian government, I invite my community to a free movie night to see *Sing 2* in Canning Vale on Friday, 1 March. We are aware that the cost of going to the movies is making it tougher for families. This is a free event. Come and join the council, the community and me at Auckland Parade Reserve. It is on Friday, 1 March 2024, from 5.00 pm. Auckland Parade

Reserve is a wonderful local park and outdoor cinema. There will be kids' fun activities. Please come and enjoy it. I thank the council, Lotterystart and Perth Airport for their funding and support. I thank the WA government and the local council for supporting free and affordable events for all families in our community.

Addressing the cost of living is a major priority of the Cook government. I would like to speak to the seniors in my community who might be eligible for the cost-of-living rebate that is paid to people who have a Seniors Card. It is allocated in July. Last year, in 2023, we indexed and increased it, and there will be another payment in July this year. The deadline is coming up at the end of March. My office will be more than happy to run through the application process with seniors. The seniors' cost-of-living rebate is available to everyone who has a WA Seniors Card. Single seniors will be paid \$104 into their bank account. Couples will receive \$156. It will not say Terry Healy on their bank account statement, but it is a very important payment from our government to seniors. The important thing is that not everyone who has a WA Seniors Card is registered for this important payment. If people are unsure, they can contact the WA Seniors Card team or my office at terry.healy@mp.wa.gov.au, and we can walk seniors through the process. The deadline is coming up; at the end of May, seniors must have applied to be eligible for the July 2024 payment. I would like to see every senior in my community register for this payment so it can be provided to them. If people have any questions, they can contact the Seniors Card team or my office.

I take great pride in and am excited about inviting my community to a free event at my electorate office. Spider-Man will be at my electorate office on Monday, 8 April, from 4.00 pm until 5.30 pm. I am aware that these days the cost of taking families out makes it difficult. People who came last year know that we have done *Frozen* in the last couple of years. This year, Spider-Man will be at my office for free family photos. One meeting room in my office will become a movie cinema. There will be a colouring-in room. As we did last year, this year we will have four face painters. Mums, dads and families know that one of the stresses of going to a kids' event is the amount of time spent in a face-painting line. This event is free. People can google "Terry Healy" and "Spider-Man" and register online or go to my Facebook page. It will be on Monday, 8 April 2024, from 4.00 pm until 5.30 pm, and I invite all families and young people—boys and girls—to come and enjoy the Spider-Man event with us.

My office has started receiving a number of hard copy and digital petitions supporting this government's investment in new multistorey car parks at Fiona Stanley Hospital. One thing I would like to do is commend the Minister for Health for the investment that this government continues to make in health services for everyone. My daughter was born at Fiona Stanley Hospital. My other daughter was born at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. That is a common story across my electorate.

Unfortunately, another common story across my electorate is of people struggling to park at Fiona Stanley Hospital. For those unsure about the difference between Labor and Liberal as we approach the election in a year's time, Labor committed to building two multistorey car parks at Fiona Stanley Hospital and the Liberal–National position is to cancel that. I would like to thank all the community members who have started returning petitions in support of the work that we are doing locally and that Hon Stephen Pratt in the other place is doing. It is great to see that work and support coming through.

This Wednesday, 22 May, is National Simultaneous Storytime day. On that day, all across the country—at 10.00 am Western Standard Time and 12 noon Eastern Standard Time—everyone in Australia will be reading the same book. Over the last couple of years, we have provided a number of free books. My office is aware of the costs facing families these days, so it has 15 free *Bowerbird Blues* books for any teachers, parents, people part of childcare centres, homeschoolers or grandparents looking after kids on that day. This book will be available for National Simultaneous Storytime. It can be downloaded for free; people can go to my website for all the information. If someone wants to recommend it for their child's classroom, or they are eligible as a teacher—like I used to be—or a childcare worker, please contact my office to go into the draw to win one of the 15 free *Bowerbird Blues* books.

I would like to introduce the chamber to two special characters. My electorate, and most of Western Australia, has been taken over by *Bluey* madness. I am just like Roger Cook. He is a dad of two kids and I am a dad of two kids—just like Bandit. I have to say that people are absolutely loving Hammerbarn right now. This is Jeremy. For those who have not seen the Hammerbarn episode, he is a husband. Not everyone is able to get to Bunnings at 7.00 am to fight through the crowds. These are \$19 retail and are now being resold for over \$100, given the demand. My office has a free program available. All people have to do is share the Facebook post to enter, and they could get themselves one of the free Jeremys or Hecuba—with a beautiful little moustache. I am aware that many families are really struggling. They cannot afford to bid online for these things and cannot afford the crush and rush at the Bunnings' Hammerbarn. I want to make sure that my community knows that we will always make sure that there are fun and free family —

Mrs L.A. Munday: Are they popular?

Mr T.J. HEALY: I was at Bunnings' Hammerbarn on the first day when there was a limit of four *Bluey* gnomes per person. That has now dropped to two. It actually reminded me of the toilet paper craziness of the COVID pandemic. It has been very intense. The member can also enter the competition, if she would like—share and like the Facebook page. Again, we will make these *Bluey* gnomes available so that the member's and others families can enjoy them.

I am very honoured to have some amazing, young student leaders within my electorate. Hon Roger Cook, Hon Rita Saffioti and I can do our jobs better when we are advised by active, engaged young people, and I would like to thank the people within my electorate who serve on their student councils or as faction captains and in all the roles that they do.

I will give a very special shout-out to each of them.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr T.J. HEALY: I take great pride in informing the chamber and the Parliament of Western Australia of the student leadership of Ashburton Drive Primary School. I would like to say thank you and congratulations to Lyla Harrison, Asbah Hossain, Kaycee Hiko-Kita, Dhinali Madurapperuma, Caitlin Mansveld and Toby Pearson. I also say congratulations to our faction captains: in Murchison, Steven Cox; in De Grey, Brandon Blurton; in Fortescue, Marley Reichelt; and in Gascoyne, Aalyiah Hallet. Thank you for your service.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Bletchley Park Primary School in Southern River, and I would like to congratulate our student councillors and the leadership team. Our head girl is Dakota Drury and our head boy is Gavin Bhullar. Our councillors are Levi Achariam, Sean Loh, Troy Chappell, Aila Fitzgerald, Tyson Ng and Siena Coldham. Our faction captains are, in Fraser, Noah Marinescu and Indiana Mussell; in Farmer, Jayden Godecke and Matilda Jancey; in Strickland, Max Kuzimski and Milania Farmer; and in Bradman, Evan Truscott and Geordie Chen. Thank you for your service.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Caladenia Primary School in Canning Vale. I had the great honour of being at the student elections last year. It was hotly contested as more than 80 persons put their names forward, and I say thank you to each person. I congratulate the successful nominees of that election: our head girl, Ebony Lankowski; our head boy, Lucas Chen; our councillors, Lily Adams, Audrey Sun, Nuoya Li, Alexis Limbert, Eboni Richards, Mason Bathgate, Nandhan Suresh, Max Andreazza, Jonah Grey and Jineth De Silva; and our music captains, Yina Liu, Jazz Sran and Charan Thota. Thank you. Our red faction captains are Alex Zhang and Sloka Juvvadi, and the vice captains are Samantha Walker, Kashvi Kattakola, Jasper Chou and Vinon Sararasinghe. Our green faction captains are Ethan Gould, Amanda Tsekos, Nilesha Senthuran, Victoria Cao, Alex Mill and Dave Godika. Our blue faction captains are Zach Sasidharan, Grace Samuell, Isabella Wojciechowicz, Cassie Chapman, Andres Martinez and Braxton Needle. Our gold faction captains are James Grocott, Shaurya Dave, and the vice captains are Alyssa Simmons, Amy Zhang, Dulain Abeynayake and Zac Martellotta. Thank you for your service to our local Canning Vale community.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Campbell Primary School in Canning Vale in my electorate. I would like to say big congratulations to the families, the staff and especially the students. Our councillors are Orlando, Rylan, Gurmehr, Abigail, Jeevan, Salma, Taleen, Ella, Denzel and Jeffery. Thank you. To our faction captains Jorja, Parlokjot, Blake, Drayke, Brendon, Athena, Mahizha and Demiana, thank you for your service to our community.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Canning Vale College, a school that is shared by me and Yaz Mubarakai as the local members of Parliament. I congratulate the college captains, Nidhi Matta and Sam Mamootil, and the year 12 councillors, Alana Patterson, Ariana Carot Collins, Ashley Vujcich, Ella McGoldrick and Grace Lillywhite. Thank you. Our year 11 councillors are Ana Hall, Eva Carot Collins, Jayden McGoldrick, Oliver Birrel, Sofia Bashir and Samantha Herbert. Our year 10 student councillor is Keona Latiff; our year 9 councillors are Chloe Drew, Lisa Writer, Lina Ichigaya and Rhyley MacPherson; and our year 8 student councillors are Cooper Loos, Emily Martin, Mila Gibbs, Rayna Yudistra and Theresa Benny. Thank you for your service to our community.

I issue my great congratulations and appreciation to the students of Excelsior Primary School in Canning Vale. I thank the student councillors, Ethan Forbes, Hasrat Batth, Ayumi Chu, Bhani Kaur, Myah Silva and Katelyn Tan. I thank the faction captains for Lacerta, Thomas Bainbridge and Tia Wulff; for Phoenix, Zachary Craig-Martin and Surmeet Kaur; for Delphinus, Jad Damoni and Ashili Chan; and, for Pegasus, Eric Zeng and Sophie Mosey-Weate. Thank you for your service.

I take great pride in announcing the successful leadership team of Huntingdale Primary School in my electorate and I say congratulations to our student councillors Janayah Blackwood, Rafa Al-Sumaidae, Owen Desmond, Nate Sorensen, Lincoln Muncey, Amelia Kelly, Tomo Snelling and Holly Blacker. I also say congratulations and thank you to our faction captains. For Acacia they are Ruby Hodge and Jackson Howarth; for Banksia, Martha Ah-San and Kalinda Keys; for Hovea, Kaylee Humphreys and Brandon Zilko; and, for Zamia, Isha Sygaco and Tallara Fitzgerald. Thank you for your service to our community.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the leadership team, prefects and captains at Providence Christian College in Southern River. I congratulate our two captains, Indiana Tyrer and Ewald Prinsloo, and our prefects, Maisey Baker, Katelyn Burrows, Nicola Joubert, Rakiyah Kellahan, Josiah Kee, Asher Lim, Liyakha Mpofo, Aliane Ndayishimiye, Ameleigh Ramirez, Isaac Samuel, Ian Sharma and Grace Tantiprasut. Thank you for your service to our community.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership team at Southern Grove Primary School in Southern River. I commend the student ministers of Southern Grove Primary School. I look forward to working with you. Congratulations to Levi Brown, Kim Patricio, Sanjana Balaji, Chrystle Manlutac, Imogen Smith, Natalija Camprag, David Howe and Sean Wang. Congratulations to our captains, Charlotte Mansillas, Max Brady, Hiba Ismail, Nashe Marimbe, Reece Good, Kamsi Obinwa, Ivanka Mawire and Ariel Chidukwani. Congratulations and thank you for your service.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Southern River College and our student council: our year 12 head prefects, Katie Russell and Logan Gwilym; our deputy head prefects, Amelia Dillon and Adam Khurram; and our year 12 councillors, Nicole Whitte, Saira Mohammadi, Puneet Singh, Alex Cooper, Chloe James and Lila Tregoning-Boden. I acknowledge the year 11 student leadership and councillors: Kaeden Amos, Freya French-Cain, Hayley Verco and Rebecca Kwa. Thank you for your service.

I take great pride in informing the chamber about St Munchin's Catholic School. It is a school that Chris Tallentire and I share as local members of Parliament. I say congratulations to our student captains: Ruby Gardiner, Pavya Tharmarajan, Lona Wani, Oliver Chien, Stacy Kuto and Sandra Chan. I also congratulate our sport captains: in Clarke, Luxanna Suthakaran and Sophie Torregoza; in Canning, Mary Ma Awn Awi and Rocco Mullumby; in Limerick, Abbie Tyson and Kobe De Glanville; and in Carmody, Sherien Jeyakumar and Hailey Joseph. Thank you for your service.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Wirrabirra Primary School in Gosnells. It is a school shared by Chris Tallentire and I as local members. I say congratulations to our head girl, Latiah Woods; head boy, Xavier Cook; and our councillors, Leo Lian, Tyler Bennell, Takiah A, Henry Kunzli, Sienna Ryan, Esmeralda de Haan, Lahairoi Abeza, Verity Kimbar, Layla Mafarji, Samia Azam, Declan Quayle and Perry Irwin. Thank you for your service to our community.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership team at Australian Islamic College. It is a school shared by Chris Tallentire and I as local members. I would like to congratulate our student councillors in class 6A: Abdur Rahman Mohammed and Arfa Khan. In class 6B, I congratulate councillors Maytham Ali and Aala Aleem. In class 6C, I congratulate councillors Sultan Attar and Johara Jones. Thank you for your service to our community.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the leadership team at Gosnells Primary School. It is a school shared by Chris Tallentire and I as local members. I congratulate our head girl, Ella Grace; head boy, Charlie Mitchell; and councillors Charlotte Carthew, Tiana Nilo, John Bron, Sarvesh Siva Subramanian, Ana Bosnjak and Viraaj Mahajan. Thank you for your service to our community.

I would like to inform the chamber about Gosnells' best postman. Victor Lynch from round 25 in Gosnells recently finished his leadership as a local postie. I would like to give a shout-out to Colin Ahearn, who wrote to me and allowed me to write to the Australia Post CEO informing them of the best postie. These are Colin's words —

Here is a guy that is super efficient at his job, extremely personable, extremely reliable and extremely trustworthy, He has always gone the extra mile to make sure our parcels are placed well so as not to be in plain sight, and avoids lawns where he has been asked to. Gets along with each neighbour in our street ...

You would not believe the amount of people that absolutely rave about Vic, his service, his personality, his caring for doing the job right. The post I put up on our local page had 459 reactions and in excess of 80 comments ...

... every comment about Vic praised him ...

On behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia, we also say thank you to Vic.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the Gosnells citizen of the year, a resident from my electorate, Jennifer Keys. Congratulations on behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia. She has served in a number of roles, be it the Huntingdale Junior Football Club, Auskick, Hammers Softball Club or a running group. She is also a champion of the future Charles Hook Park, as well as our local school, and I say thank you to her for her leadership.

I also extend my congratulations to our local Gosnells youth citizen of the year, Syeda Maisara Muzaffar. Ms Muzaffar is a volunteer in a number of organisations and a well-deserving recipient of the Gosnells Youth Citizen of the Year Award. On behalf of Western Australia and on behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia and Gosnells, we say thank you.

I inform the chamber that at its recent annual Cadet of the Year Awards, RSLWA nominated two people for significant awards. First, the RSLWA Trustees' Award for Cadets WA went to our own Gosnells Police Rangers unit. I congratulate Senior Sergeant Pyper Kent. I thank her for all the things she has done in our community. Also of note, Hon Mark McGowan received life membership of RSLWA. It was wonderful for Minister Papalia, Minister Beazley and Mark McGowan to congratulate Pyper. On behalf of the Gosnells community, we say congratulations.

I say congratulations to new Order of Australia Medal recipient Aunty Millie Penny for her leadership as one of our local leaders and local Indigenous elders. She has made invaluable contributions to our local Gosnells and Aboriginal community. She has worked with Telethon Kids, providing health and other amazing research. We say thank you on behalf of the community.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [4.35 pm]: I am going to give this a good go. I do not have much of a voice, but I will make a good start and keep sipping water! This is the first time I have had an opportunity to recognise the new Premier and new Deputy Premier, so I take this opportunity. It might seem like a long time since they were both elected to those roles, but I am incredibly proud to be part of the team that they are leading, and I look forward to taking the party into the next election with them. It is fantastic.

Part of my excitement about that is to try to make sure that the Premier brings forward two policies that I am particularly keen on, and I know he is very aware of them. One is to bring forward the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill. Of course, it is now six years since the review was done and we have been waiting and waiting while WA has slipped backwards in animal welfare standing from an Australian perspective. The review puts us in a position to draft a new bill that will be absolutely groundbreaking. I am really, really keen to see that happen this year. The second policy direction was recently announced in the WA Labor platform. That is the commitment to introduce an independent office of animal welfare. I really look forward to working with the Premier in the coming months to give some shape to that and provide some ideas on how it might look so that we can get ready to be in a position to back that into existence.

I turn now to a subject that I have spoken about in this place many times and I will continue to speak about because I think it is something that the Western Australian government has not yet really addressed with the level of seriousness that it deserves. As our world population heads towards 10 billion in 2050, of whom 32.8 million will be Australians, we are faced with both challenges and opportunities in how we will provide people with healthy, affordable, accessible and sustainable food. I will be long gone, as will many of us here, but our children are going to be part of this future and it is absolutely essential that we turn our attention to what we are doing now to provide for this population into the not-so-distant future. If we think 2050 is a long way out, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is making projections around scarcity of food by 2034. That is 10 years, folks. We in Australia are not immune to that. We already know that food and drinking water in Australia are not assured. If we look at some of the stats to which I will refer later, we see that it is not a given. Proper healthy food and access to water are still not available throughout Australia, and that situation is going to decline. The demand for protein will increase. Members might wonder why I am talking about protein, but it is one of the building blocks of life; if we do not have protein, humanity will end, as will everything else on this planet in fact. As the demand for protein increases, we will have to find ways to supply it that have less environmental and social impacts. It is important to note that if we were to increase livestock production to meet projected global demand, we would break this planet. In fact, to supply the population that is anticipated to be on this planet in 2050 with protein in the way that we eat it at the moment, we would need not one planet but three and a half planets. Just think about that for a minute: we will need three and a half planets the size of earth to feed the population if we do not get it right immediately! That is not that far in the future.

I am about to launch a social media campaign to outline why I am so passionate about the future of food in this country and the world, so I will refer to some of the slides that I will put into that pack when it comes out. I have already mentioned that access to healthy food and water is not guaranteed in Australia. In 2023, about 370 000 Western Australian households had inadequate access to food. Do not forget that figure—370 000. That is more than a quarter of a million! That is a significant number of Western Australians who do not have the right food or enough food. How does this impact on the planet? Why am I talking about food? Who cares? Well, up to 37 per cent of global emissions, including greenhouse gases, come from the food we eat and how it gets to us. We are completely fixated on energy as a solution to climate change, but it is not the solution on its own. We have to work with the agricultural sector and consumers across the world to reduce global emissions and greenhouse gases. It will not work if we focus solely on energy. Energy is important—I am not saying that it is not—but we are missing the elephant in the room at the moment. Food production currently accounts for 70 per cent of the world's consumption of fresh water. Three-quarters of the world's fresh water is currently taken up by agricultural production processes. Thirty per cent of food produced is wasted, between the time it is produced and the time it is consumed. Seventy per cent of our water is going into this and we are wasting 30 per cent of what we are producing. It is unfathomable that this is going on and that we, as a state and a country, do not have a strong position on tackling food security and the links between climate change and food.

The current system for food production drives a loss of biodiversity, pollution and deforestation, is responsible for immense animal cruelty, directly impacts on species loss, and creates human and animal sickness. I will talk a bit more about that because I heard a very interesting presentation from our Nobel prize-winning Barry Marshall some time ago, and I would like to share the information that he gave me with the house. I am sure the Minister for Health will be aware of what I am going to say. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization has calculated that the hidden cost of growing and supplying food for humans back in 2020 was \$A15.35 trillion. That is not what it cost to buy a steak, grape or pie; that was the hidden cost of transport, fuel and deforestation. It was

the cost to the globe. As I have said already, Australia will become home to 32.8 million people. If left unchecked, the demand for simple animal-based protein will increase by 60 per cent. I have already told the house that three and a half planets the size of earth will be required if we do not shift from our reliance on animal-based protein and look at some alternative proteins. If someone wants a steak on their plate in 2050, it will cost them \$A382. WA's Nobel prize-winning professor, Barry Marshall, predicts that in 2050, 80 per cent of human deaths will be linked to zoonotic disease—that is, diseases that are transferred from animals to humans and sometimes back. I say that again—80 per cent. Do members understand the significance of 80 per cent of deaths being linked to the transfer of disease between humans and animals?

Australia has some of the strictest guidelines to protect us and help us develop resistance, but the problem we have is that humans still develop resistance to antibiotics. It does not matter what we do. This resistance continues. Barry Marshall is looking at how we can develop new antibiotics to fight this fight. We need to look at the cause. The cause is the conditions in which these animals are kept—that part of the supply chain and the food production system. That is where the problem lies. We should not try to breed cows that do not have disease. We should put them in places they can live without contracting and spreading disease. Diseases linked to intensive animal production include COVID-19, swine flu, influenza A and the Hendra virus. More diseases are expected to develop more frequently and more rapidly. It is batten down the hatches, guys! Zoonotic diseases are on the increase, and rapidly.

Future foods must protect the planet and provide food for everyone. Farmers, scientists, entrepreneurs, innovators and governments are key to achieving a sustainable food system. Creating alternatives to our animal-based sources of protein is therefore critical. I would like to define what I mean by alternative proteins. I am talking about alternatives to meat and animal-based products. Alternative proteins are not just plant-based proteins. There are proteins that come from cultivated, or lab developed, meat. These come from a more recently introduced process called precision fermentation. There are other things that I am not all that fond of thinking about—insects, for instance. There are many different forms of alternative protein. We have the alternatives. We just have to start to develop them, refine them, make them consumer ready, support them as governments and individuals and use them.

More alternatives are coming onto the market all the time. In the USA, I was fortunate enough to see a business that stems from NASA. It is a company that was created to develop food for astronauts in space. Members might be amazed to know that this food is developed from air. This NASA-based company has developed air protein. It develops protein fit for human consumption from CO₂. Wrap your heads around that one!

Printing meat is also starting to happen. With the speed at which change is coming, Australia is behind the eight ball. Western Australia has a huge opportunity to get behind these things and benefit enormously from the export potential. We were listening in this place to the Nationals arguing against the stopping of live exports and asking, "What are our farmers going to do?". Let me tell you, massive market opportunities are available. As a government, we just need to get behind our farmers and lead them into these new and diverse technologies.

Is alternative protein just a name? Is it just something other than an animal? No. It is about the benefits of alternative proteins over conventional proteins. To start with, alternative proteins use less land and water. I have given members the figures—70 per cent of water, massive amounts of land, and deforestation. Alternative proteins use less land and water, and emit significantly less greenhouse gases. Most have less salt, less fat and way more fibre. In fact, the Food Standards Australia New Zealand is looking very closely at these issues. When we talk about obesity epidemics and jokingly talk about ham being off the high school or primary school menus, we are talking about a product—processed meat—that has been recognised by just about every major medical and health authority in the world as being behind some forms of cancer and other forms of obesity and ill-health. We cannot say that we do not know that this is happening. It is happening, not only in our backyard, but all over the world. Alternative protein does not use antibiotics; therefore there is far less chance of antimicrobial resistance. Finally, and for me the most important thing, is that it is free from animal cruelty.

What are the opportunities for Aussie farmers in this space? The alternative protein sector is expected to grow globally into a \$65 billion Australian market by 2034. Where are we? What are we doing in this space? Which part of the market are we getting? The CSIRO is working hard. The department of agriculture and food needs to be put on notice that it needs to do things differently. Our state needs to do things differently. It needs to show leadership in that space. We have been overtaken by Victoria, which has a whole-of-government perspective on it. The federal government is also looking at it from a whole-of-government perspective.

I have written several times to the three key ministers involved—the Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy, the Minister for Agriculture and Food and the Minister for Climate Action—and raised the issues. The starting point for this is not rocket science, despite the fact that I mentioned NASA! It is, in fact, the need to sit down together and create a strategy that deals with this immense challenge that we are going to face, and the immense opportunity that our farmers have of maintaining a clean and green global reputation.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: A number of sources, including the European Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have estimated that our current global

food system, from farm to fork, contributes up to 37 per cent of greenhouse gases and 70 per cent of the world's fresh water and biodiversity and animal species loss. Food wastage across the value chain creates pollution and animal cruelty. I highlighted this 10 minutes ago. I am saying it again because I do not think people understand, I do not think they listen and I do not think they get that this is a crisis occurring in our own backyard.

We have the way forward. The COP28 conference was held in December 2023 and a number of my colleagues attended. For the first time, parties came together and a declaration was signed by 134 countries, including Australia, recognising the need to work together to mitigate climate change, and the huge role transforming food systems will play in doing that. I will read a quote from the declaration that those 134 countries signed, including Australia. I think it is important that you hear it. It states —

We stress that any path to fully achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement must include agriculture and food systems. We affirm that agriculture and food systems must urgently adapt and transform in order to respond to the imperatives of climate change ...

[We need to] Revisit or orient policies and public support related to agriculture and food systems to promote activities which increase incomes, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and bolster resilience, productivity, livelihoods, nutrition, water efficiency and human, animal and ecosystem health while reducing food loss and waste, and ecosystem loss and degradation.

If growing populations and the environmental impact of our current food production and processing systems are not enough to concern us, we also need to factor in rising concerns about food security and food supply chain vulnerability that we have experienced during the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine. It is hard to have this conversation in Australia because we are a bloody big country. We grow a lot of food and we have got a lot to offer, but we have to have the conversation. We suffer from an obesity crisis in this country. There are many problems coming our way. We have an opportunity for our farmers that we have never before seen in this country.

The challenges facing food systems, globally and in Australia, mean that food security and livelihoods for present and future generations are under threat. In Australia, access to healthy food and water is not a given. The Australian *Foodbank hunger report 2023* states that three million people—that is 37 per cent of Australian households—had inadequate access to food. How shameful. This is a developed and wealthy country. That is just shameful. I know that committees of previous Parliaments have researched food security and found that dreadful things are happening, particularly in our rural and remote regions.

What are we doing about all of this? Alternative proteins are not the only agritech solution to these issues. I focus on them because I believe that they are a critical part of meeting the growing food demand and creating sustainable food systems. Alternative proteins include proteins that are plant based, use precision fermentation or are cultured. There are many others on the horizon. Alternative proteins offer a low-emission source of protein. They use less land and water than conventional protein production and they do not use antibiotics. A challenge for all food and production processing systems, whether traditional or alternative, will be to incorporate renewable energy solutions along the value chain.

Australia has a well-deserved reputation for its work in transforming its ag systems to be more sustainable. I would like to give a shout-out to the good work being done by Farmers for Climate Action and the many in the broader ag sector for their genuine actions to decarbonise their operations. Food Frontier, the peak body for the alternative protein sector, says that in the combined global context of climate change, growing food security, nutrition-related public health concerns and the ongoing disruptions to supply chains, the future of our food system is not guaranteed by sectoral decarbonisation alone. Agriculture cannot do it alone and it will not work if it remains business as usual. This is my addition to the quote. There are numerous opportunities for partnerships between agribusiness and the AP sector. While supporting efforts by the ag sector to transform sustainably and thrive, it is also important to support the development of protein sources and their industry.

This is not a competition between traditional and alternative production. There is room for everybody to be part of the food system's transformation. Alternative proteins are part of the supply-side solution to providing sustainable, healthy and affordable food choices. There is widespread recognition that APs are one opportunity, as recognised by the European Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and many countries, including Singapore, the USA, Canada, China, Denmark New Zealand and Australia. There are many opportunities out there for our farmers to strike good partnerships and make good deals. Australia is recognised as a quality, safe and green food producer. WA leads Australia's production of the major grains used in plant-based proteins, including wheat and oats, and we already have a major and growing market for pulses. WA has access to the largest and growing markets for APs in South-East Asia as well as strong supply chains and existing trade relationships. We also have excellent R&D academic institutions that we could leverage to progress the sector's adoption of other major grains like canola, barley, pulses and lupins. Lupins are a massive industry, by the way.

The number of AP companies in Australia was 30 in 2023 and 56 per cent of the AP products in supermarkets were made by Australian manufacturers. In 2019, there were fewer than 90 plant-based meat products on the supermarket shelves. In 2023, in just four years, there were 300 on the shelves—300. Food Frontier also indicates that although

there are currently three commercial-scale plant protein fractionation facilities in Australia, at least another 10 are needed, and they are needed now to meet the demand for plant protein ingredients like isolates and concentrates. Australia could host up to 20 of these facilities, including a number in WA, to capitalise on our grain and pulse production, given the expected future domestic and global demand, much of which is focused in South-East Asia. Just look at companies like Wide Open Agriculture, which recently announced it had secured exclusive distribution right across Europe for the lupin protein. That is a Western Australian company. I am very proud to say that the Minister for Agriculture and Food has been talking to, and continues to talk with, Wide Open Agriculture, and I am sure she is supportive of its work. I have so much to say that I do not even know where to start!

Another challenge to the alternative protein sector is that consumers need to understand the product. We really need to work on the health of the product and making sure that consumers understand what they get when changing from an animal-based protein source to a plant-based or alternative protein source. Much like processed meat products, I think there are a range of health benefits regarding protein, fibre, salt and sugar content depending on the product. The George Institute for Global Health—if members do not know of it, it is a world leader in this space—stated in a 2023 media release that its FoodSwitch database could access Australian supermarkets and compare the nutrient content and nutritional quality of plant-based meat analogues and their equivalent meat products. The types of meat products and plant-based meat analogue equivalents studied included burgers, meatballs, mince, sausages, bacon, coated poultry, plain poultry and meat with pastry. Using the government's health star rating, researchers found that, overall, plant-based meat analogues had a healthier nutritional profile compared with the equivalent meat product and their energy content was marginally lower.

I have spoken about what should be happening. I also want to make a couple of concluding comments. Doctor Simon Eassom, the executive director of Food Frontier, sent me some words to add to this speech. Simon writes that Western Australia has the nation's only dedicated food minister and a wealth of agrifood capabilities. We have a unique opportunity to lead the way in establishing a future food system that is sustainable and resilient in the face of global challenges around climate change, food security and diet-related diseases. Complementary proteins can offer existing industries and regional communities added value, as well as economic benefits and position the state to capitalise on the growing global demand for diverse protein sources.

While this government could be doing many things, I will finish by telling members what I have been doing. Clearly, I spend a lot of time and energy promoting the role that future food systems can play in addressing the state's climate change outcomes. I will not back off from that. I will continue to press the key three ministers who lead this agenda to raise their sights from an energy focus to incorporate one of the greatest threats to climate change that we should be across. I have been linking alternative protein businesses into WA-based opportunities. I give great thanks to the WA Collie Just Transition fund, the Pinjarra Food Innovation Precinct, the staff at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development who have been helping with this and various agricultural connections I work with. They are fantastic—thank you. I am connected with international and national innovators and peak bodies to promote this work.

By the way, I have just received information from an acquaintance based in America who is the director of a new startup that focuses on gathering capital and buying into major supermarket and other chains. The startup has just bought major shares in McDonald's and a couple of other big chicken ranges. McDonald's is now 100 per cent cage free in everything it does; it was slipping badly. The purpose of his new venture—I have to check the name, but it is something to do with accountability—is to buy up shares and then make sure that companies meet their environmental, social and governance requirements. It is magic to see. I am very proud of him and the work he is doing.

I have been championing the new industry sector to WA Parliament and to our consumers in Western Australia. I have been briefing ministers on the opportunities presented by the alternative protein sector. I will continue to research progress around the world to highlight emerging trends and good practice. I have had several interns working with me. I am shortly going to release a paper on government responses that should be looked at with what is available globally, what is available in Australia and what lessons we should be taking from all models. The paper will look at what governments could do and what our government should be doing. This journey for me is not just about my passion to improve the lives of humans and animals. It is also a journey related to saving this planet. If people do not start to take a serious look at food security and food safety, I do not know where we are going to find the other three and a half planets we will need to get our food from. We better start looking now. I guess that is what Elon Musk is doing in some respects. My final message is that we should support the development of this fledgling industry wholeheartedly and with great passion. It should not just be me standing in this Parliament, alone.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Lilburne): Thank you very much, member for Maylands, for your very valuable contribution. Member for Burns Beach.

MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach) [5.06 pm]: I, too, hope my voice will make it to the end of this speech. I am battling a bit with the flu myself.

I rise in response to the Premier's Statement made earlier today. I have had a very interesting summer. For those who know—great. For those who do not know, I am an old clubby—an old surf lifesaver. I think this year will

be my forty-third season on the beach. I am currently a patrol captain and proudly the patron of my local club, Quinns Mindarie Surf Life Saving Club. I am also a patron of Surf Life Saving WA—one of many. On our first patrol this year, we rescued a senior who had a major spinal injury from the surf. What appeared to have happened is he was bodysurfing and he was dumped right on the shore edge. It would appear he really took the force to his face and the top of his neck. From my discussions with him, he felt a large crack to his neck and, straight afterwards, could not feel his arms. Straight away, we secured his head and neck. We then placed him on a spinal board and lowered him to the ground. Then we placed him on the back of our all-terrain vehicle. Still securing his neck, we slowly walked him off the beach to our first aid room. After a quick chat on our radios, four paramedics and an ambulance turned up to our little surf club. Their attendance was made quicker by the beach emergency number or BEN number.

Let me unpack this rescue. The ATV was from a joint funded state government grant. That is how we got it. The spinal board was funded with a Lotterywest grant—fantastic. The first aid equipment in the club first aid room was from a small election commitment from—guess who?—the local member. The ambulance and paramedics were from the state government funded contract and the BEN number was from a Labor government initiative and project. It works. The patient spent three nights in ICU at Joondalup Health Campus. Our work stopped him from becoming a paraplegic. It stopped him from having surgery and gave him the opportunity to return to his family for the best opportunity of recovery. I would like to recognise this great outcome by naming my fantastic patrol members who are here in the place: Shaun Cleaver, my vice-captain; Darren Thyssse; Naomi Walker; Melanie Gray; Nathan Smith; Noah Cleaver; Aiden Gray; Phillipa Holding and Kenzie Douglas. They are part of a great team and almost like extended family. Thank you guys—job well done.

We had a very successful rescue, but members may not know that throughout the Christmas period, over 60 people drowned across Australia. In Western Australia, we lost eight people. We normally make up 10 per cent of the Australian statistic for drowning, but this year we are well above that. I was brought to tears when I heard about the tragic death of the two youngsters in the Swan River. On reflection, too many kids from our culturally and linguistically diverse communities make up victims of drowning. It is a crime. They were not aware of how safe it is between the red and yellow flags on our beaches. For those who do not know, no-one has drowned in WA between the red and yellow flags for over 125 years—no-one.

How do we fix this? I pondered that question with some very experienced people—members of the community and members in this place. The key thing that seemed to consistently come up is that we need to teach our kids to swim. Simply put, whether through swimming lessons at school or VacSwim, we think that this is the only way we can address this horrific statistic. More people drowned over the festive season than were killed on our roads. I cannot put it more simply than that. Every child here in Western Australia needs to be taught to swim. It should be a right, not a privilege, and it should not be based on postcode. It seems that in some postcodes, every kid knows how to swim; in other postcodes, none do. I cannot get my head around that.

When I was not patrolling on the beach this summer, I returned to my old craft. I re-volunteered to be a firefighter once again. I volunteered with the Quinns Rocks Bush Fire Brigade. It has been refreshing to go through my third time of requalification. I think I have forgotten more than some of these kids have learnt, but that is another issue. I turned out to all the campaign fires in the northern suburbs and more throughout the summer; it is not over yet. I was at the Mariginiup fire in Wanneroo and was working when the horrific ember attacks tried to destroy the homes and bushland surrounding the area. I recall that the embers were so thick that they were attacking my face shield and eye protection and making their way behind my glasses, interfering with my vision. My firefighting colleagues thought it was pretty wild. I was pretty angry; it showed I was getting old because I needed my glasses! I want to give a big shout-out to Tracy from one of my successful local businesses, the Glasses Lady. Tracy was made aware of my problem. We arranged an appointment and within seven days she managed to put together a pair of prescription safety glasses, which I now wear religiously as part of my PPE.

I turned out to the Lancelin and Carabooda fires. Most recently, I was at the Chittering fires. The Chittering fires were probably one of the most interesting ones for the summer. It is not over yet; I say that again. After finishing my abalone patrol at the surf club, I went down to do some maintenance at the fire station. It was a long day! Just as I turned up, I got a tap on the shoulder asking me to turn out. As a result, I ended up back at Quinns Rocks on the 3.4 large four-wheel drive fire appliance. On arriving at Chittering, we were deployed to asset protection, which was basically protecting houses and sheds. We drove up one of the hillsides, cut our way into the paddocks surrounding the home, and with a couple of appliances and a team of career firefighters, we defended the house. With some textbook work and a bit of sweat, we beat the fire and we saved the home, the sheds and all the infrastructure. Happy days.

A short time later, after refilling our tanks and having a bit of a break and some cold, fresh water, we were tasked to move to the head of the fire. I must admit that I stood in awe at some of the skill sets of our volunteers, particularly the driver of our 3.4 appliance. I will not mention his name because he will probably be absolutely embarrassed by it, but he drove the truck up the side of the hill to the top. The hill was so steep that all the alarms were sounding inside the truck because the gearbox had started to overheat. This was not unusual on this particular day as it was bloody hot. Pardon my language!

After doing some preliminary work at another residence, we were joined by a small bulldozer. The Chittering fire was burning in gullies and they were really steep—too steep for normal firefighting to take place. As a result, there were four Helitak water bombers working the fires; we were just protecting assets at this stage. A short time later, we were tasked with fighting the head fire, which was unusual, because it was moving fairly fast. As a result, I watched the bulldozer go over the edge of a steep gully in front of us; I then watched as we followed it down a steep incline in front of the fire and I thought to myself, “This could get interesting.”

A few minutes later my crew and I were on the hoses. The flames were high and the smoke was thick, but we calmly went about our job. As we held our ground, I could hear the Helitaks dropping water all around us. I could hear their sirens, warning us that they were about to drop their water, and then I heard the water hit the ground. On one occasion, I heard the siren and looked up and made direct eye contact with the pilot. He gave me a thumbs-up, I turned my back, and he dropped his water. Seconds later I was covered in ash and smoke; wearing my personal protective equipment, I calmly returned to fighting the fire shortly afterwards.

If someone were to ask me: “Is the emergency services levy worthwhile?”, I would tell them that, if they were to ask the people whose houses we saved—whom I do not know—they would definitely say yes. I know my fellow firefighters—both volunteer and career—definitely would say yes. I look at my personal protective equipment, our fire trucks and all the kit that I have, and I can honestly say, hand on heart, that every dollar that goes to our brigade is well spent.

I have learnt a lot this summer. It has been refreshing to see the way in which the Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Stephen Dawson, and our Premier have got behind the fire services community and provided the funding to fight fires. More importantly—this is a very important point—they have also provided the funding for recovery after incidents. I have to say that our Premier and our Minister for Emergency Services have done a great job and need to be recognised for it. It is about having the right people in the right place, with the right kit, doing the right thing. We can do lots.

That is enough about my summer, because I was supposed to take a break! Let us talk about the Cook Labor government and what it has done over recent times. Since 2017, when I was first elected, we have created more than 250 000 jobs. We fought COVID and won, despite the great economic shocks that that illness brought to our community. I thank the Premier, both in his former role as Minister for Health and, more importantly, as the current Premier. I also thank all the other ministers who helped us in that space. I thank them for that.

Arguably, the biggest issue in my community is cost of living; it is hurting people. It is hurting my seniors, it is hurting my pensioners and it is hurting my families. I can tell members that the \$1 400 household electricity credit that every household has received since 2020 has been a real benefit to my community. It means that seniors can put fuel in the car so that they can go to the doctor. It is an extra feed that mums and dads can put on the table for the kids, 100 per cent. Little things mean a lot. Capping public transport fares at two zones is great; I love that. The government has also made public transport free for students travelling to and from school; that is a godsend. Making public transport free for families on Sundays is also making just that little bit of difference.

With regard to health, we definitely have an outstanding investment record. I appreciate the \$10 billion of new funding we have seen over the last three years. Some would say that WA has the highest funding per person of any state in the country. That really matters to me. It means that we have more than 571 new hospital beds. More importantly, it has resulted in the new mental health ward at Joondalup Health Campus. I remember that when we were first elected to government, a group of political students from one of the local high schools referred to there being no mental health facility for young people in the northern corridor. At least 25 beds have been put aside for kids and young people at this new facility. That is a seriously good thing.

I reflect on my time as a police officer. The new body-worn cameras and protective body armour and the investment in mobile devices has made police work a lot safer. It is a lot safer than when I was on the ground—not that anyone shot at me. They did, but we did not have protective body armour when it happened. I reflect on the additional 1 100 police officers. No-one can accuse this government of being soft on crime—no-one. We have managed to get back and maintain our fair share of the GST. We heard the opposition ask questions about it today. It is ours; it is there, secure and locked in. Heaven help anyone who even tinkers with it. We have regained the state’s Aaa credit rating. That will save us the millions of dollars we lost under the former Liberal–National government—millions of dollars that might mean more opportunities to help my constituents. We have invested nearly \$34 billion in infrastructure that will benefit our community and my electorate for years to come. This investment will not help our kids or their kids but maybe their kids in the years to come without increasing debt. That is important. The train lines will be around for hundreds of years. The best example is the Fremantle line. How old is that line?

We have diversified the economy, which is a flash way of saying that we have found more jobs for our kids! We can say it any way we like, but in diversifying our economy, our kids have a future. The Cook Labor government has been a part of that. I will not talk about the brilliant job this government has done to abolish TAFE fees. Today we heard that the \$6 000 enrolled nursing course is now free. My son did a trade at TAFE, and I think he got a bill for \$4 000 after completing his trade qualification. Some courses are now free, and that helps families and battlers.

Labor governments build and fix rail infrastructure.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: We restarted the Fremantle rail line after it had been shut down, which was absolutely run-down. I remember one of the old orange diesel trains catching fire in Subiaco years ago on a hot day like today. It was a Labor government that built the Mandurah line. I remember the howling and carry-on in this place about that, but it has been nothing but a success. Now, our Cook-led Labor government has built 72 kilometres of new rail line, with 23 new stations. This is great infrastructure for our children, and it is here to last and here to stay.

After listening to the Premier's Statement today, I look forward to this year's agenda. The government has a fearless approach to putting jobs, the cost of living and the safety of families, the community and my constituents first. I feel proud that the Cook Labor government can deliver better outcomes as we go further down the legislative agenda this year. I note that the Minister for Police is here. I look with interest at the firearms legislation and other legislation that will be put before this place. It is well and truly overdue. With that, I thank members for their time.

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [5.25 pm]: I rise today to add my reply to the Premier's Statement. It is an absolute pleasure to provide my third reply as a member of the Cook Labor government. It is such a privilege to represent my electorate every day and be part of a government that I know cares for our communities. It is a government that cares about the impact of cost-of-living pressures and understands what it takes to have an effect on these issues. Importantly for me, this government continues its record of delivering for the goldfields and investing in the region's future.

The Kalgoorlie electorate started 2024 with some challenges. I was there throughout it all, supporting my community, and working night and day alongside emergency teams and key stakeholders. I saw the tremendous efforts of everyone pulling together in the same direction. In amongst this, I was able to reach out to the Premier and ministers, who supported me and provided tangible outcomes and real solutions.

I will start with the power outages. As we know and as the Premier mentioned earlier today, a freak weather event brought down five large transmission towers, which crumbled like tinfoil. The Western Australian electricity network is one of the largest isolated systems in the world, and that comes with unavoidable challenges from weather events and other disruptions. Weather caused the power to go out in the goldfields and backup generators to falter. Due to Western Power's and Synergy's mammoth efforts, the generators started working and kept Kalgoorlie–Boulder powered while the towers were being repaired. We know that freak weather events will become more common, so we need to strengthen the network. Within days, Premier Roger Cook came to the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder and pledged that it will get next-generation backup power generators. The Premier said that the existing faulty system, comprising two gas turbines in West Kalgoorlie, would be exchanged for a more reliable system. He said —

“We are committed to doing everything we can with regards to creating a more resilient system.”

...

“We want to make sure that we do everything we can to ensure this doesn't happen again and that we stand by the people of Kalgoorlie ...

Let me be clear about this: the Cook Labor government will secure new, next-generation technology generators. The generators will deliver the short-term and medium-term resilience that Kalgoorlie–Boulder needs, but that was not all that was announced. The Premier also committed to delivering a long-term solution to rebuild and maintain the resilience of Kalgoorlie's power supply for a long-term renewable energy future. Considering the disruption caused by the power outages, the government doubled the power outage payment to \$240, a fabulous gesture that was gratefully received by my community. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition chose to politicise a national disaster instead of stepping up to help. I was not focused on politics; I was focused on helping the people of Kalgoorlie–Boulder.

In early 2024, another challenge happened, and that was an increase in antisocial behaviour in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. I absolutely understand and appreciate that it has been a tough time for businesses and community members. I attended the roundtable meeting at the Kalgoorlie–Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which hosted more than 75 business representatives. The forum raised a number of concerns, which I immediately fed back to the government, specifically to the Minister for Police. Thankfully, the minister is in the chamber. Within two days, the minister was in Kalgoorlie–Boulder, and he was back again a couple of days later. The minister committed to ongoing collaboration with the Kalgoorlie–Boulder community to address concerns about antisocial behaviour.

Importantly, he brought Operation Regional Shield to Kalgoorlie–Boulder. The operation is an overt, targeted effort to suppress and disrupt antisocial behaviour in the region. Enhancing police efforts in Kalgoorlie–Boulder will not only significantly increase the visibility of the police presence, but will also provide tactical support to disrupt antisocial activity. The Minister for Police also said that the liquor enforcement unit will address community concerns about sly grogging—the practice of supplying alcohol to those on the banned drinkers register—and ensure that the recently enhanced register is enforced.

Liquor enforcement unit staff from Perth have been meeting with licensees to get the liquor accord up, running and collaborating to get better measures around liquor regulation management. The Cook Labor government has also funded extra return to country services to provide transport for displaced people to get them back to their communities and homes. I cannot emphasise this enough: this activity demonstrates that this government is listening to, engaging with and acting on community concerns. I welcome the additional police presence and foot patrols throughout the CBD and thank the Western Australia Police Force for its swift response.

Antisocial behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. I would like to talk about a couple of instances in which businesses saw immediate results. City News Kalgoorlie newsagency co-owner Tania Parkes has experienced daily cases of theft and abuse during the past few months. In an article she said that she experienced “everyday theft; everyday abuse”. The article continued —

Ms Parkes said the increased police presence in place since Wednesday had discouraged antisocial behaviour in Kalgoorlie’s CBD.

“The police presence has made a big impact for us,” she said.

“This week has probably been the best week we’ve had in many years on the street as in (the lack of) antisocial behaviour.”

A local clothes shop manager said that she was pleased with the response of the WA police and the minister to quell antisocial behaviour. She continued —

“It’s really good that the police are going above and beyond for our town,” she said.

“It’s good to see that people are coming in here like they used to, shopping around and feeling comfortable.”

...

“I’ve been threatened, it’s not nice and it’s a bit overwhelming when you don’t know what to do in that situation,” she said.

“But all that has settled down and we are very comfortable right now.”

These are the facts. There is no simple solution to antisocial behaviour. I am working with the Kalgoorlie–Boulder Chamber of Commerce, the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder, retailers, key stakeholders and the community. It needs everyone working together. I understand this: it is what I do and it is where I live.

The Leader of the Opposition flits in and out of Kalgoorlie–Boulder and thinks he knows what is going on. It is shameful. He said that the only reason Operation Regional Shield was deployed was the pressure the opposition put on. Again, that is shameful. He called me an “ineffective” member. Really? For listening to my community, acting swiftly, getting the Minister for Police and Premier to hear our concerns and getting the Cook Labor government to bring actual results to Kalgoorlie–Boulder, I am “ineffective”? I would not say that those actions align with that.

I would now like to discuss a key initiative that has made a big impact on the cost of living in the goldfields. I have previously discussed in this house the highly successful regional airfare zone cap, which provides affordable airfares for regional residents. At a time when a return fare from Kalgoorlie costs over \$1 000, residents are able to book a flight and pay no more than \$199 each way. This has been wonderfully embraced by goldfielders. The high cost of airfares affects every resident in many different ways. It affects some people because of regular medical appointments in Perth or, for others, an unexpected family emergency or because they are just trying to run a small business. Since we introduced the scheme 18 months ago, well over 30 000 capped airfares have been booked between Perth and the goldfields. This has saved regional Western Australians thousands and thousands of dollars on flights and helped ease cost-of-living pressures.

A few locals have told me how it made a difference to them. According to my notes, Yogi stated —

“This affordability has allowed me to visit my daughters, who attend boarding school in Perth, more frequently. The capped fares have made a meaningful impact on my ability to maintain a closer connection with my kids, fostering a stronger family bond”

According to my notes, Karen stated —

“The capped airfares give me an affordable choice regarding the medical care I receive. Instead of paying \$1 130, I just had to pay \$399. It was big help”

I have another case from my notes —

“I have utilised the residential fares on several occasions. These fares have allowed me to attend family gatherings, sneaky shopping trips, medical trips and most importantly visit my aging parents regularly. Without the negotiated resident fares, I would not have been able to make as many trips to Perth as I have in the past 12 months.”

I know these initiatives mean so much to our community. I am proud that the Cook Labor government and the Minister for Transport put in the hard yards. This initiative is the first of its kind in Australia and has been a major success.

Accommodation options are very important to the growth of the goldfields region, and, as a member of the Cook Labor government, I have advocated strongly for this, including organising for the Minister for Planning to attend a key stakeholder roundtable in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. I was grateful to see the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder awarded \$4 million through the Cook Labor government’s infrastructure development fund. This will enable an extension of the main sewerage network to service 69.9 hectares of undeveloped land near the airport. The land includes a 17.2 hectare site that the city recently sold for the development of a 400-dwelling residential and lifestyle village, featuring one, two, three and four-bedroom homes. This announcement means that we can unlock the constraints to get new housing to the market quicker. Residential land supply in Kalgoorlie–Boulder also received a major boost with the release of 28 new single residential lots and one grouped housing lot as part of stage 4 of the GreenView estate development at Karlkurla. These projects demonstrate the significant investment by the Cook Labor government in housing and land supply, and I am delighted that we are delivering these priority initiatives to Kalgoorlie–Boulder.

In 2023, it was an honour to have Minister Winton in Kalgoorlie–Boulder to present the Goldfields Women’s Refuge with a Lotterywest grant of \$450 000. I then presented the refuge with another \$100 000 in November last year. These grants will support additional temporary accommodation in the form of townhouses, which will double the capacity of the refuge with 72 beds, providing independence and security for the women and children accessing the refuge. Our region relies on the wonderful work of the Goldfields Women’s Refuge, and I wish we did not need it, but, thankfully, it is there to support women and children who are escaping family violence and to provide crisis accommodation. The additional accommodation is crucial for us, and I am very proud to be part of a government that prioritises preventing family and domestic violence in our community and keeping families safe.

Last week I visited the highly anticipated basketball stadium in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. The steel structure is going up, and it is fabulous to see. It is a massive project, and everyone is working hard towards the new stadium being ready before the end of 2024. On completion, it will feature two additional indoor courts. One will be a show court with tiered spectator seating. The upgrades will also include refurbished existing courts, seating for more than 1 000 spectators, separate women’s and men’s home-and-away team change rooms, offices, a function room, kitchen and first aid areas. It is safe to say that the thousands of goldfields community adults and children who love basketball are very excited to see this stadium progress. I was proud to advocate for this stadium to the Cook Labor government, which provided \$5 million to build it. Kingsbury and Lord Forrest Parks in Kalgoorlie–Boulder will be unified into a central youth precinct. When the previous Premier and I announced \$2.2 million for a youth precinct, I was reacting to strong community feedback that there was a lack of youth facilities in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. Lotterywest then provided an additional \$2.1 million last year, and the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder added a further \$1.83 million to this exciting project. The youth precinct project will consist of a skate park upgrade, a pump track, a play scape, a multipurpose sports court and fitness zone, and the renovation of Lord Forrest Park into a major youth hub. The transformation of the Kingsbury Park site is an important project for Kalgoorlie–Boulder and will provide a much-needed hub for young people and their families living in the community.

I will now talk about one of my favourite projects, the Karlkurla nature playground. The land has been cleared and construction is underway. The new park will be ready in March or April this year. Nature brings out the best in children—everyone knows that—and what better way to take advantage of this than to build a massive nature playground in the beautiful setting of the 200-hectare Karlkurla Bushland Park? The Cook government is funding \$600 000 towards this project, with the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder contributing a further \$400 000. This will be worth waiting for and I cannot wait to see the community enjoy all the new facilities. As we know, sports play an important role in regional Western Australia. It can bring communities together, contribute positively to community identity and a sense of space, promote social interaction and inclusion, and play an important role in providing opportunities for physical activity and improved health outcomes.

Anyone coming to the goldfields loves the newly sealed track at the Eastern Goldfields BMX Club. I was proud to deliver on this \$70 000 election commitment and I love seeing the club being enjoyed. We now have the best track in regional Western Australia. BMX is not just for the kids; parents love it too. The Eastern Goldfields Hockey Association was awarded \$70 000 last year through the Cook Labor government’s night lights program. What a difference the new lights have made to the hockey stadium in Kalgoorlie–Boulder! I was honoured to switch on the new lights for the first time. It is such an awesome sporting club and I am thrilled to see the players and supporters benefit from this funding. Let us not forget other parts of the region and the Leonora multi-facility court project. What an absolute joy it was to see the finished basketball and tennis courts in Leonora! This marked the delivery of a \$100 000 election commitment to resurface the courts. Thanks to the Shire of Leonora for leading this project and putting on new lights. The courts can now stay open later in the evenings, as was requested by the community.

I will stay on the topic of Leonora. In November last year, I joined the Minister for Regional Development; Seniors and Ageing to officially open the ageing-in-place village in Leonora. This is an exciting project for not only Leonora, but also the northern goldfields. It provides a modern independent living village for our senior residents to remain in their community while being supported by local and visiting wraparound services. The project was funded through a \$3.5 million allocation from the Cook Labor government’s regional aged accommodation program and a \$1 million contribution from the Shire of Leonora.

The Cook Labor government is truly the party for regional Western Australia. The government is getting on with delivering on issues that matter to the people in Kalgoorlie–Boulder and the wider goldfields area. I am proud that it is doing what is right for WA.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.42 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in reply to the Premier’s Statement for the final year of this term. It is clear from listening to the speeches of all members so far that, as the member for Kalgoorlie said, this Cook Labor government is doing what is right for WA. It is getting on with tackling the big issues, providing cost-of-living relief to our constituents, boosting housing supply and continuing to build a world-class health service for all Western Australians. I will not be traversing too much of that ground, however, because other members have covered that adequately. Instead, I propose today to work through talking about some of the incredible volunteers in Cockburn who make all the services that we rely on tick, whether it is schools, hospitals or community centres. All those types of services rely on both paid staff and volunteers, whether they are board members or just people who come in and do a couple of hours a week helping out with programs. I will use my contribution today to acknowledge some of those people.

Firstly, I want to give a shout-out to the member for Collie–Preston, who is not feeling very well this week, but tells me that she is tuning in online. It is good to know that I have an online audience of at least one person who is paying attention.

Ms C.M. Rowe: She said she was tuning in; she didn’t say she was paying attention!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: All right, member for Belmont. That is a fair correction.

Ms C.M. Tonkin interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: No, no. I said, “My audience online”! It is good to know that there is some life in the chamber as well, because I know what it can be like—we all know what it is like here! It is only the first sitting day of the year! I think we all know what it can be like around here.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Where there is life, there is hope!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Where there is life, there is hope, yes!

I will get on with discussing some of these fantastic volunteers and also some people who are employees who work in my electorate providing services that we all rely on. The first person I want to acknowledge is Michael Piu. I am really fortunate to have Michael as a constituent who lives in Coogee, but he would be better known to many members in this place as the CEO of St Patrick’s Community Support Centre in Fremantle. Michael is just a consummate professional when it comes to running a service like St Pat’s. I think it is one of the standout service providers in the Perth metropolitan area. It provides really important essential services for things like homelessness and homelessness support, but it has also been doing really innovative work in that space. It does the standard work to provide social housing options and homelessness supports for people, but it also does really innovative and new work, and Michael has been about driving that. The example I give that is the program Djenabidet Kalleep, which is Noongar for “footpath home”. The program is a trauma-informed Aboriginal-centred and co-designed service that was rolled out at the end of last year. It is a dedicated program where Aboriginal people who are at risk and who have experienced trauma can access lived-experience peer support and other culturally appropriate services. I understand that it is the first program of its kind, and it is a credit to Michael for driving that service.

I also acknowledge that under Michael’s leadership St Patrick’s received a \$7.5 million grant from the state government at the end of last year. It was announced by the Minister for Housing; Homelessness at the end of last year. That \$7.5 million will go to a total \$12 million project that will demolish St Patrick’s existing out-of-date and end-of-life homeless social housing support accommodation and replace it with 28 newly built social housing accommodation options. As members can tell, that organisation is doing innovative and important work that is attracting significant state government funding because the state government has confidence in the work that St Pat’s is doing. I say thank you to Michael. You are a credit to Cockburn and you are a great leader in the housing, homelessness and community services sector in Western Australia.

On the topic of community services, I also want to acknowledge a few people associated with the Yangebup Family Centre. Anyone who has listened to my any of my contributions will know that Yangebup Family Centre is very close to my heart. It is one of the first places I visited when I became the candidate for Cockburn, and I was very impressed by the work done at the YFC and the diversity of it. I particularly acknowledge Samantha Williams. Sam is manager of Yangebup Family Centre, and she always looks for new and exciting things that the centre can do. She not only oversees the centre’s existing programs, whether that is occasional care or the Community Eats program it runs once a month, but also looks for new opportunities and new grants that might be available or new services in the community that need to be delivered. Sam was really the driver behind an election commitment I made towards building a new nature play area at Yangebup Family Centre and to renovating the bathrooms. That was \$150 000 commitment I made before the last election that I am really pleased to have delivered on. The new nature play area looks fantastic. It has really given the centre a lift. It is all because of the advocacy that Sam does for the centre. I also want to acknowledge that Sam lobbies not only on behalf of the centre; she is one of those

community members who also lobbies on behalf of the sector. I note the Minister for Community Services is in the chamber and I hope she does not mind me saying this, but Sam is one of those people in the sector who always sends me the Linkwest budget submission. She always takes the time to not only welcome me to an event but also talk to me about the challenges that are facing the sector more broadly. We cannot always deliver everything that everybody wants, but I am really grateful, and I know the minister is really grateful, to have people in our electorates who advocate for change in their sector in a really respectful and constructive way, and Sam is one of those people. Thank you, Sam, for all the work that you do in Cockburn and for our Yangebup Family Centre.

The next person I would like to acknowledge is Jo McGillivray. Jo is the children services coordinator at Yangebup Family Centre and is a local Cockburn resident. As her title would suggest, Jo oversees all the children's programs at the centre, whether that is the occasional care program, the pre-kindy program or all the way through to the less frequent events like the dads' and kids' pizza night. I went to that last year; it was the first time for me to go there as a dad, which was really great. Jo does so much work across a range of activities. She is one of those personalities that is very warm and welcoming. As soon as we walk into the family centre and we are met by Jo—or Ms Jo, as she is known by the kids—we feel like we are in a safe place. We are in a place of warmth and support. That type of attitude can be more important in a facility like the Yangebup Family Centre than the quality of the infrastructure. It is important to have people who really make it a place where everybody feels welcome. Jo, thank you for all your work for Yangebup Family Centre and the community. I know that the parents, the kids and everybody who comes through just absolutely adore her. I am looking forward to introducing William to the pre-kindy service at Yangebup Family Centre in a few years.

I also want to acknowledge Tracy Pearson. Tracy is one of those people who is seemingly everywhere in my electorate. I raise her now because Tracy is a committee member with Yangebup Family Centre. I am sure members in this chamber know those members of the community who, when we go to an event, are there wearing one hat and then we go to another event and they are wearing another hat. It turns out that these people are doing the volunteering for 90 per cent of the community. It is like 10 per cent of the community is doing all the volunteering for 90 per cent of the community. Tracy is one of those people. I found it quite confusing when I first became the Labor Party candidate for Cockburn because I went to Beeliar Primary School P&C and met Tracy there and chatted with her. The next day I had an event at Yangebup Family Centre and she was there but not in her primary school capacity; she was there because she is a board member of Yangebup Family Centre. I lately found out that she is also on the board of the Beeliar Community Association, which is the residents association for my area. I think that is fantastic.

I always tell a story here. I compare people like Tracy to my mother. My mother was the secretary of my high school P&C for about two or three years after I graduated and she had no more kids at the school, because she loved the school and she wanted to be involved. I think no-one else put up their hand to be secretary, so she kept doing the hard yards. Tracy is clearly one of those people. She is involved in everything—Beeliar Community Association, Yangebup Family Centre, and Beeliar Primary School. She is everywhere. She is always working hard. I really want to acknowledge Tracy for all that volunteering because, like I said, I think 90 per cent of the community rely on people like Tracy, who seem to do the volunteering everywhere on behalf of everyone else. Thank you, Tracy.

I also want to acknowledge Leah Vagel, the president of the Harvest Lakes Residents Association in Atwell. Leah is again one of those people who, when you come to a residents association meeting or an event, is always there with a friendly smile, is always positive and constructive, and is always looking for the next thing that she can do for her community in Atwell. Last year, Harvest Lakes Residents Association held a bike maintenance workshop, an artist-in-the-park event and its annual Christmas concert. The annual Christmas concert is a huge deal—thousands of people come down, there are food trucks and there is a stage, with acts going on all night. It is a really incredible event. I acknowledge Leah. As I am sure other members have found, sometimes community associations have only three people doing all the work. Leah is one of those people. She puts on so many events throughout the year for Atwell, without any kind of remuneration. I am really pleased that this government has been supporting Harvest Lakes Residents Association for the last few years with Lotterywest funding to support the annual Christmas concert. It was great to be down there to hand over the certificate and announce the funding with Leah. I wish her the very best. Her son always introduces himself to me as “Bob” whenever we meet, but he has the same name as my son. It is very cheeky of him, because he thinks he can trick me into not knowing his name. I give a shout-out to Leah and also to little Bob.

I want to acknowledge Carissa Garza, another president of one of our residents associations. Carissa took over the role of president of Beeliar Community Association at a time when there were concerns about whether the association would be able to continue. She has refocused the organisation and struck a new sustainability agenda for the association and our neighbourhood. In many ways, I think she has reinvigorated the community association. There are a couple of initiatives that Carissa and Beeliar Community Association run, including regular clean-up days around the suburb. That is really significant because Beeliar abuts Thomsons Lake Nature Reserve, which is a Ramsar significant wetland in my electorate. Keeping the bushland around the Thomsons Lake reserve and the wetlands in pristine condition is very important. Carissa's clean-up events have contributed to keeping not only the suburb tidy but also the wetlands in a healthy condition. I recently went along to an event that Carissa ran down

at Beeliar Reserve, at which the association hosted an organisation known as Bottle Top Hill. I know that some other members are familiar with that organisation, such as the members for Bicton and Bateman. Bottle Top Hill educates people on options for recycling plastic, and particularly all the various types of bottle tops. As I am sure members know, we are told to take bottle tops off bottles and to put the milk carton or whatever it is in the recycling and to throw the lid in the bin. Bottle Top Hill is a great organisation that is educating people that there are actually places to send bottle tops to be recycled into all sorts of things. The organisation shows examples of bowls or plates that kids can use and that sort of thing. It is really interesting stuff. Carissa had Bottle Top Hill come down and there was a good turnout. It was a pretty hot day and icy poles were being handed out, which is always a good way to entice people. The session was really eye-opening for me. Thank you, Carissa, for taking over as president of the residents association in Beeliar and really giving it a new life under your watch.

On the topic of presidents of residents associations, I also want to acknowledge Maggie Zentner. I have spoken about Maggie before in this chamber. She, again, is one of those people who is just everywhere. She is always advocating for her community of Yangebup. I acknowledge Maggie particularly because she recently stepped down as president of Yangebup Progress Association. She had been the president there for a number of years and had pushed many different projects in our community. For example, she was one of the advocates for putting fencing around the playground in Nicholson Reserve in Yangebup. This was really important. There is a playground on Osprey Drive, a busy road through Yangebup. There were concerns from the community that it was an unsafe place for kids to play because they may run out onto the road. Maggie spoke to me and the City of Cockburn about funding to fence that playground. I was able to make a commitment and deliver that with the city. I know it sounds like a small project, but these small projects are what matter to people and make a difference to the community, to safety and to people enjoying the facilities around Yangebup.

Maggie has also been involved in some mural projects around the electorate. Most noticeably, we now have a beautiful mural along the noise wall down Spearwood Avenue through Yangebup. It had previously been covered in graffiti. When I have driven past since the mural was put along the wall, I have seen very little, if any, graffiti. Maggie was the person who kept pushing the council and kept pushing me saying that we need to do something to give it a lift. She succeeded in that.

Maggie recently ran for the City of Cockburn council. Unfortunately, she was not successful, but I say to Maggie that if you get knocked down, you get back up again. That has always been her philosophy. That has always been the way she has approached things; she has always kept giving it a go until she succeeds. There is no doubt, Maggie, with your determination and energy, you will continue to succeed on behalf of our community. Thank you, Maggie.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I now turn to the Cockburn Community Men's Shed. This is a fantastic facility, which is located in Cockburn Central. I know many members in this chamber have men's sheds in or near their electorates. They are great places for men, particularly retired men who may be looking for extra purpose in their life, to find a community that is supportive with things they can do and contribute to, and find friendship and support and talk about issues like mental health that might be a little more challenging for them. I would like to acknowledge in this respect Mike Murphy. Mike is the chair of the board of Cockburn Community Men's Shed, and he was, until recently, the coordinator of the shed as well. He was wearing two hats for a period. On several occasions, Mike stepped down from the coordinator role, I think at least twice, and a new coordinator was appointed. The coordinators did not last longer than a month or a few weeks, and Mike stepped back into the breach and took on the role again. It goes to show how big Mike's shoes are when a couple of people found them quite difficult to fill.

Mike sends out great chatty emails with updates about the shed. He is not afraid to include reprimands for anyone who has left equipment in the shed in an undesirable state or anyone who has been using equipment in an improper or unsafe manner. He is never afraid to give a warning in the email, but he always finishes his emails with what could only be charitably described as a bad dad joke. There is always one at the bottom of each email. I always enjoy getting them. Sometimes they are pretty good; sometimes they are not, but that is the nature of bad dad jokes. I thank you, Mike, for your efforts. Mike and I have been dealing with the saga of the mezzanine level for a while now, but we have been pressing on and making progress. I was pleased to make an election commitment to install an accessible lift for the mezzanine level for the shed. We still have a while to go before we can get the mezzanine level up and running properly, but I am sure we will get there. I give a very big thank you to Mike for his work.

On the topic of men's sheds, it is really fitting that the member for Dawesville is sitting in the Speaker's chair at the moment because I also want to acknowledge the new coordinator of the Cockburn Community Men's Shed, who is a bloke called Rob Winchester. He told me that he was an enthusiastic supporter of the member for Dawesville when he and his wife, Lynn, lived in her electorate. I am getting nods from the Acting Speaker to confirm that. It is in *Hansard* that the Acting Speaker is nodding in agreement that what Rob told me was true. Rob has moved into the Cockburn area. I am sorry, member for Dawesville, that is two gains for me and two lost for you! It is all part of the great Labor movement.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): We have two great people, so that is good.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Thank you.

I have not had the chance to meet Rob yet. We have just spoken via email and over the phone. We are catching up later this week for a coffee. I always present a toolbox filled with gourmet goodies that the men's shed uses for its raffle on open day, which is coming up soon. I want to put on the record my best wishes to Rob on starting his position as the coordinator of the Cockburn Community Men's Shed. I acknowledge that I am really looking forward to working with him over the next few years.

Next on my list is Fiona Campbell, OAM. Fiona recently received the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the performing arts through music. Fiona is a long-time contributor to the performing arts in Western Australia, Australia, and, indeed, internationally. She is a highly respected mezzo-soprano opera singer and a broadcaster. Anyone who occasionally tunes into ABC Classic might have caught Fiona presenting the program. She is also currently the creative director of Perth Symphony Orchestra. For many years she has been an accomplished musician and worked with major orchestras like the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and also for overseas orchestras. In addition, she has been a contributor to arts management in Western Australia and around the world. Congratulations, Fiona, on receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia. I also want to acknowledge that Fiona did another really difficult job in her life, which is being the mother of one of my electorate officers, Alex. I reckon she did a great job raising Alex. He is a great electorate officer to me, but that must have been hard work, so well done on that, Fiona! I am really glad to see her acknowledged in the Australia Day honours list.

I would like to turn now to a couple of people involved with the Coogee Community Garden. It is good to have the member for Fremantle in the chamber because I think, from memory, that because of the electorate changes, the Coogee Community Garden will be just on the other side of the street in the member for Fremantle's electorate. I would really like to take the member for Fremantle to the garden and introduce her to some of the people involved with it because it has come together over the last three years since I was elected. When I was first elected, it was essentially a vacant patch of land. It now has a shed, a gazebo and a lot of trees. It is on my list, but I will mention now that the member for Fremantle and I will make time to go there and meet some of the people, because it is a great group. The reality is that the Coogee Community Garden would not exist if it was not for two people in particular. The first is Karen Moulton, the chair of the community garden. She is also the chair of the Coogee Beach Progress Association—the residents association. I respect that Karen is absolutely professional in the way she runs those organisations. I have been to the Coogee Beach Progress Association a couple of times. I have not always been given the warmest welcome because I am sure members know that from time to time there is a contentious development in the electorate and members have to front up to the meeting to face the music. Karen has always given me a fair hearing and a fair opportunity to answer questions and put my case. She has always been constructive about issues like the Coogee Beach–Cockburn pedestrian crossing that we installed there. I really appreciate the mature and professional leadership that Karen has brought to the Coogee Beach Progress Association. I particularly mention her extraordinary work on the Coogee community garden. Like I say, it has sprung out of the ground over the last three years, and it would not have happened if it was not for Karen doggedly putting in grant applications or arguing with the City of Cockburn. I know that she hassled my predecessor, Hon Fran Logan, for years to make sure that land—I think it was maybe Water Corporation or Western Power land—was transferred over to enable the garden to come together. Karen, thank you for your efforts for Coogee. The garden is such a credit to you, and the Coogee community generally, and I really thank you for your efforts.

The second person who has been essential to the garden's development is John Ivey. John is also a resident of Coogee and secretary of the Coogee community garden. John is the gardening expert. That is not to suggest that Karen does not know a lot about gardening, but John seems to know everything about gardening, and he has a can-do attitude towards everything. He is the one who arranged for the glass house that was donated by Coogee Common to be transported carefully over to the garden. He is always there supervising at the weeding and busy bee days, telling people to do this, or not to do that, and identifying what particular plants are. People like me need to be kept under a tight leash because we are just as likely to pull up something that is supposed to be in the garden as we are to pull up a weed, so John is always there telling me what to do. I also note that John's father-in-law is a gentleman known as Gavan Troy. To members who know the history of this place, Gavan was a member of this place many years ago. I think it was for Swan Hills, but I could be wrong. I apologise if I got it wrong, but he was certainly member for one of the hills electorates a few decades ago. I had the pleasure of meeting Gavan recently, and it was great to catch up with someone who sat in this chamber during a very different period in time.

That is it for me. I know that every electorate has volunteers and community members who are doing those extra hours, putting in that unpaid time and doing it for the love. I am very proud of those individuals in Cockburn doing that work. Many community services such as the Yangebup family centre, the parents and citizens associations or the Coogee community garden would not happen or function if not for the efforts of those people. I conclude by saying a sincere thank you from me, because I reckon the best part of our job is getting to meet these people and trying to help them with their projects. Standing up here in Parliament is a great privilege, but the best part of the job for me is trying to connect these people with grants and finding ways through local or state government agencies. I am always happy to assist them.

MR H.T. JONES (Darling Range) [6.12 pm]: I rise in response to the Premier's Statement for 2024 and outline what I think of it. I echo the member for Cockburn's remarks about volunteers. Probably the most satisfying part of my role is meeting and hopefully assisting volunteers in the electorate. Quite often, the volunteers are across a number of organisations and spread themselves very thin, but they are very much appreciated.

I also start by acknowledging the preparation and training of both our career and volunteer emergency services personnel, especially during this recent fire season, which is still ongoing. The conditions in February are extremely hot. I am sure the volunteers and career firefighters are always on tenterhooks about having to react to a fire and possibly putting their plans on hold because they are on standby. There are nine volunteer fire and rescue or bush fire brigades in Darling Range, and also the Serpentine Jarrahdale State Emergency Service. I acknowledge their efforts throughout 2023 and the preparation and training they put in, let alone actually attending incidents. It is also worth mentioning the Salvation Army Emergency Services WA unit and the Rapid Relief Team. Both organisations provide food, nourishment, conversation and emotional support to firefighters on the fireground. Firefighters often come back covered in soot, hot, dehydrated and in need of some sustenance as well as emotional support.

Since 1 November, brigades in Serpentine–Jarrahdale have responded to 95 incidents, which is a large number of incidents. That includes 10 large bushfire emergencies, including the one in Jarrahdale and Keysbrook. The fire was known as the “Serpentine Complex” fire, which started on 4 November. It refers to seven separate fires across the Murray–Wellington, Darling Range and Mandurah electorates. It threatened Jarrahdale quite significantly. Had it not been for the efforts of the firefighters, including 15 aerial assets, and favourable wind conditions, Jarrahdale could have been seriously impacted by the fire. It was a real wake-up call for people who live in Jarrahdale to make sure that they formulate their bushfire plan, act on the warnings that come, and are not too blasé about it. Brigades from as far south as Denmark and as far north as Muchea attended the fire. There was also a fire in Keysbrook, which started on Christmas Eve. That burned through and required attendance from brigades for the next few days. Obviously, that took firefighters away from their families over the Christmas period. They took it in their stride and attended when they could, foregoing their family time. I want to thank those firefighters and again the emergency support personnel who supported the people on the fireground for their dedication and commitment over that period. It is also worth mentioning the farmers in Keysbrook, Hopeland, Mardella and Serpentine. As farmers do, they pride themselves in being self-sufficient. They were out there fighting fires that did not necessarily impact their own properties, but helped out their fellow neighbours. They put in a sterling effort over those few days under very trying circumstances. One of the mental stresses that is not always remembered is the loss of livestock and its impact on not only farmers but also firefighters. I know that the members from Jarrahdale were particularly upset by the loss of livestock on the fireground.

Turning to the Premier's Statement, he mentioned that he is doing all he can, as is the government, to make sure that Western Australia is fair, prosperous and full of opportunity. He is doing that through outstanding economic management, allowing the government to introduce cost-of-living relief measures in this period. We know that people are doing it tough. The government is also investing in infrastructure. I am probably a bit biased but I think the south east area of Perth and the metro area is getting the lion's share of infrastructure spend after years of neglect by the Liberal government.

Dr A.D. Buti: And great local members!

Mr H.T. JONES: That is right; great advocacy from the member for Armadale.

Dr A.D. Buti: When you came on board it all changed!

Mr H.T. JONES: It has all happened coincidentally. It is quite stark. If members go north of the river, it is like a different world to the south. I am glad to see that we are finally getting some investment, particularly in transport.

I was also happy to hear about and will reiterate the fee-free TAFE training. It was quite remarkable and shocking really to hear the quoted figures from the minister before that to become an enrolled nurse under the Liberal Party cost \$10 000. Now, with the fee-free training program, it is free. That takes away a disincentive for people who want to enter the nursing profession. We all know that we need nurses. Removing that financial impediment is a great thing for the state and the Department of Health. Similarly, we all know that child care is in demand. Under the Liberal government, it cost \$7 000 to study for a diploma of early childhood education, but under the Cook Labor government, again, that course is free. That is a cost-of-living measure for not only the students who undertake that training and join the workforce, but also the parents of children who attend day care centres. Those parents are then able to pursue their own careers or training and possibly earn a higher income. One or both parents within the family can now work and earn more money to help them cope with the increased costs of living and housing.

We all know that the former Liberal government shut down the Midland railway workshops. I am glad to know that we are now manufacturing railcars in Bellevue. It is a great achievement for industry and for apprenticeships and skills in WA. I understand that Rio Tinto put in an order for a great number of rail trucks; I cannot think of the exact number. Again, that is upskilling WA and producing things in-house, which is awesome.

We had a summer of free public transport. There were 6.2 million SmartRider boardings during the first four weeks of that program, which is a 40 per cent increase on last year. The Armadale line was shut during that time. That

demonstrates the uptake of public transport. It also shines a light on the bus replacement services. Before the shutdown was announced, a lot of naysayers talked about the bus replacement services. I can say with my hand on my heart that I have had no complaints through my office about the bus replacement services since the line has shut down. Almost half a million more people are travelling to the city than during the same period last year, with savings of up to \$370 a person across the entire period, which is a great cost-of-living measure. We also have the ride to school free program, which allows school students to travel from home to school and back for free. Presently, 300 000 students have SmartRider cards. They can travel for free. As an example, that is a cost saving of about \$560 for a family that has two children attending school. There is a free school bus service in regional WA and the conveyance allowance has doubled. The two-zone fare cap is bringing down prices for people across the metropolitan area. Seniors also travel for free during off-peak times.

Just before I was elected, the Public Transport Authority announced that it was going to expand the public transport area to Jarrahdale, which is a great thing. There was some concern about the school bus service being discontinued, and that decision was delayed for 12 months, but the school bus service in Jarrahdale has now ceased and Transperth is servicing Jarrahdale. I acknowledge that there have been some teething problems, particularly with the bus stop at Kingsbury Drive, and also some concern from parents about the time that their children are arriving at school. My office has fielded quite a few concerns, and Chris and Harry in my office have dealt with those concerns; they are liaising with the minister's office to try to get an understanding. I suppose we are waiting a little to try to make sure that the service is bedded down before we make any knee-jerk reactions, because every change impacts someone else. We are just getting a feel for how the buses are travelling and making sure that the schools are happy. I understand that some students were getting late notices because they were arriving five minutes late for their first class. We will allow it to bed down and then, if needed, we will be talking to schools or the Public Transport Authority, through the minister's office, to try to make adjustments.

We did have a win, though. I think the member for Roe earlier heaped praise on the Minister for Transport for the School Bus Services inquiry and the fact that the service now has more flexibility for families, particularly in regional areas. I was on that inquiry and there were many examples of families for whom decisions about where their children could go to school did not make a lot of sense. The member for Roe observed that School Bus Services is now more flexible in its decision-making, which has had a big impact on families, particularly in the regional areas.

We also had a win in our office. There were families in Bedforddale who needed to get their children to school at Kelmscott Senior High School, John Wollaston Anglican Community School, or Armadale Senior High School. We requested, through the minister's office, that School Bus Services modify its routes. Those families are now satisfied and their children are travelling to school on free bus services.

I would now like to talk about the Byford rail extension. It was a momentous decision to invest in the Byford rail extension, something that the Liberal Party did not support. It thought that Byford would not need public transport until 2050, despite projections of a population increase there. In 2021 there were 32 000 people in the Byford area; it is expected that there will be 95 000 by 2046. The government has forged ahead with the Byford rail extension. It is a \$1 billion project, of which I think about \$300 million is state government money; I will check that later in my contribution.

I want to acknowledge the impact that that project is having on the people of Byford, particularly along the rail corridor. Some properties will have land acquired, including properties in Darling Downs, because it will be necessary to widen the rail corridor. Some residents have concerns about noise walls and security around the principal shared path that will be constructed. I have told them that I am advocating on their behalf to the minister and that we are trying to get the best solution we can in respect of noise walls to protect their lifestyle. The residential lifestyle blocks in Darling Downs are usually one to five acres in size, so they may not ordinarily qualify for a noise wall because the actual residences are further away. I am speaking to the minister to try to come up with a solution that will provide noise abatement and security for those residents. The residents of Darling Downs will not necessarily benefit from the rail extension because they will still have to travel to Armadale to catch a train, but it is something that they are bearing for the benefit of the wider population.

Dr A.D. Buti: Although they might have less traffic on the road.

Mr H.T. JONES: That is a good point, minister; yes, there should be less traffic on the road.

That brings me to another point. The Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale is quite a car-heavy area. The 2021 census revealed the percentage of households in the area that had three or more vehicles, not including motorbikes, scooters and heavy vehicles. The national average is 18.8 per cent whereas the average in Serpentine–Jarrahdale is 34.1 per cent. That is quite a large number of vehicles, and the basic reason for that is that public transport has been neglected in that area for a long time. The Byford rail extension will reduce the number of cars on the road. Families may sell a car because they no longer see the need for that car. For example, someone who works in the city might sell a car and make do with one family car.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr H.T. JONES: Another area of concern with the Byford rail extension is dust. Over the Christmas period, particularly in the height of summer, Byford, with the easterly winds, is the windiest place on earth. I received a lot of complaints about dust and sand blowing onto properties on the west side of the rail corridor. I did a bit of doorknocking; I did not take the usual break because I wanted to engage with the residents to make sure that they were heard. I took the action that they required, which was banging on about the dust and sand with MetConnx Alliance and the minister's office. They were already taking measures, but I re-emphasised that we needed more dust suppression. The speed limit on construction sites has been reduced to reduce the amount of dust blown up by vehicles and there is a contingent operation of water carts. If people drive past the works, they will see water carts everywhere. Indeed, one resident complained that there were too many water carts. He was concerned about the amount of water that was essentially being wasted from evaporation; the other 99 per cent of people were very much appreciative. Shade cloth has been installed on boundary fences and dust-suppressing crusting agents are being used to reduce the amount of dust that is produced. They have also commenced trials with a surfactant that infiltrates the soil and reduces dust liberation from the surface. It provides a bind on the sand that continues to do its job of suppressing dust and sand when vehicles drive over it. The winds have abated a little since Christmas, but dust is an ongoing issue about which I field calls and emails. I thank the residents and acknowledge what they are going through—the impact of dust, sand, noise and vibration on their lives. A team went out to properties before works commenced to assess the state of buildings, such as cracks et cetera. At the end of the project, residents will be able to make a claim if vibrations have caused damage to their property.

Another issue with the Byford rail extension is the closure of Larsen Road. Again, that decision had to be made. Larsen Road crossing is not far from Thomas Road Bridge. Construction of the dual-lane bridge over Thomas Road commenced two years ago. It is quite a massive structure. Larsen Road is not far from that. There was no room to build a bridge over the rail at Larsen Road. That would have required knocking down many houses and impacted Marri Grove Primary School. The profile of the land did not permit tunnelling underneath the ground. The decision was made to close the Larsen Road crossing. A pedestrian crossing has been maintained and, again, I acknowledge the impact that has had on residents, particularly because of the childcare centre on the eastern side of the crossing and a primary school on the western side. Parents have to walk across the pedestrian crossing or park on one side and decide where they will walk. There is that impact and an impact on other residents, including me, who used the Larsen Road crossing to get to South Western Highway.

When the project is complete, there will be a crossing at Clara Street, which is further south in Byford. That will be at grade and there will be a crossing to get across the line. Also, Sansimeon Boulevard will be connected through Evans Way and onto Abernethy Road. The closure of Larsen Road will not be insignificant, but it will be almost insignificant; people will soon forget about crossing at Larsen Road in their vehicles and will find other ways to get across. Some issues were raised about why Sansimeon Boulevard was not connected in advance, but that could not be done, because trucks need to come to the train station worksite. The imperative is to get the train station built, so I ask residents to have patience. I admit and believe that residents have shown great patience so far and are getting used to the new way of getting around Byford.

Once the Byford rail extension is in place, it will be a boon for the area. It will be a cost-of-living measure. People will be able to go to work in the city for under \$5. It will give people who cannot drive—young people, people with disabilities, people with medical conditions, elderly people and people who choose not to drive—the option to get on public transport and go where they need to. As I mentioned before, that will reduce the number of cars on the road and the traffic.

The other thing we are doing in the area is the Tonkin Highway extension. I think I mistakenly gave these figures before for the Byford rail extension. The Tonkin Highway extension is a \$1 billion project; \$315 million is provided by the state government and the rest is provided by federal funding. That project will address difficulties with local roads in the area. The shire does not have the ability to fund all the roads it needs to, because it has quite a small rate base. The Tonkin Highway extension will improve the throughput of trucks in the area. Hopkinson Road, in particular, has an issue, and Tonkin Highway will essentially replace Hopkinson Road and make the area safer and easier for Byford residents to transit. I might stop talking about transport here because I am running out of time.

I will mention the Byford and Districts Country Club, which was recently awarded club of the year. Byford has had a country club since 1957, but it relocated to its new premises in Linton Street North in 2017. It is an example of an organisation that received grant funding to get it off the ground, but since then it has demonstrated, through a great business plan, that it is self-sufficient. It is making money and ploughing money back into the community. It currently has more than 13 000 social members, but it had about 300 social members at the other premises. It serves an average of 3 000 meals a week and hosts hospitality students from Byford Secondary College, Armadale Senior High School and Arrow Training when students pursue their cert III and cert IV in hospitality.

In November 2023 and a couple of weeks ago, the country club hosted an EasyBeatz disco, which is a disco targeted at people with disabilities. My son and I went to the one a couple of weeks ago. It was a great event. The club dedicated an area to people with disabilities so they could enjoy a disco, be themselves and have a great time. They were all very comfortable and safe and it was a great event. The general manager of the country club, Ray Carey, has had an awakening about inclusion. He has been making a whole heap of changes in and out of the club such

as more ACROD parking out the front than is required. He is also changing the doors that go out to parts of the beer garden. They are quite heavy. He is replacing those with electric doors so that people with disabilities can go out and eat, as well as us locals carrying five pints. There is a benefit there.

It invests money back into the community. It donates \$1 000 monthly to local groups. It also made a donation of \$5 000 to the Mundijong Centrals Junior Football Club last month, allowing it to buy brand new jumpers. It also recently donated its outdoor furniture to the Byford Baptist Church and the Lightweight Motorcycle Club, which was looking for outdoor furniture.

I quickly want to mention Byford Secondary College. It has 14 000 students. Paul Jones is the principal. The school's median ATAR has recently improved from 60 in 2019 to 80.25 in 2023. In four years, the median has gone up by a score of 20 in the ATAR, which is a great achievement. Last year, Jaxon Wood received an ATAR of 99.7. Jaxon along with Ellie Birch, Matthew Durrant and Sebastian Matthews all achieved ATARs of above 90. I give congratulations to Sophia Oliveira for being selected for a scholarship by the Australian–German Student Exchange to Germany for 2024–25. Byford Secondary School will also be hosting the second Careers and Enterprise Expo from 21 to 22 June. It attracts businesses from the area to offer guidance to students from all around the area on the jobs of the future.

I am sorry, I do not have time to talk about Roleystone Community College. I will have time in the future.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr H.T. JONES: Yes, I will do it then.

I quickly want to mention the backpack drive. Dandelions WA did a great backpack drive. I think they got 16 000 bags out this year, and I distributed some in Darling Range and Armadale. I want to shout-out to Lisa Gale and the other members at Speedy Spanners who donated a whole heap of backpacks and equipment. I understand that the Serpentine Jarrahdale Lions Club, which I am a member of, has not decided on the amount yet, but will make a cash donation to Dandelions to recognise the work that it does.

With that, I will take my seat.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [6.43 pm]: I rise to respond to the Premier's Statement and acknowledge all the exciting work that is going on in the electorates. It is really heartening to hear about the particular projects that members hold dear and the future plans that they have. It is all very exciting.

I wanted to focus my response on my attendance and observations made at COP28. The conference is held under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It was held in early December and concluded on 13 December in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. I think that was an excellent choice of venue. When I committed to going, I mentioned this to some people in Western Australia. They said, "Why would we be having a climate change conference, a COP event, in an OPEC country? Shouldn't we have it in Fremantle instead, or Copenhagen or somewhere like that—somewhere with a 'green' perspective?" However, I really think it was a great decision and that the presidency of COP28 by Dr Sultan Al Jaber was actually really enlightening and powerful. It forced everyone to face the reality of the amount of fossil fuel use that is still ongoing and that we are so heavily reliant on. It forced us to face that reality, and so, to that extent, I would say that the United Arab Emirates was an excellent venue choice.

I also acknowledge the assistance that the federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen, was able to afford myself and the member for Bassendean. He ensured that we had accreditation to attend the conference as what was known as the overflow delegation, but it was actually a fantastic accreditation level.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It is interesting that the minister raises that. This is directly related to climate change issues. The minister raises the flight over in an Emirates A380 when we hit a pocket of turbulence and the plane descended very rapidly for only a matter of seconds, but, basically, if one did not have a seatbelt on, one hit the roof. That was the case for one of our former colleagues, Alannah MacTiernan, who suffered severe injuries in a similar situation, and there were indeed a number of people on that flight who suffered severe injuries. Planes have sophisticated stuff that helps pilots navigate around turbulence and do all sorts of things, but there are times when there is clear air turbulence that they cannot see and the likelihood of that happening increases with climate change. This is yet another consequence of climate change.

The event was held at what is known as Expo City Dubai, which is where Dubai hosted the global expo in 2020. It was a massive event in massive infrastructure, which was necessary, though, because, according to the information I have, there were about 85 000 delegates from 197 countries in attendance. It was really quite an education for me to see how a United Nations event is organised, and I have to say again how well the UAE organised this event and accommodated everyone. A range of interests were present at the conference. There were people in the green zone who were perhaps more involved with companies that provide parts of solutions to tackle climate change. There were manufacturers of wind turbines and desalination equipment and all sorts of things that we would expect in and around the whole area of sustainability to get us on the journey towards a clean energy future. It was fantastic.

When the conference began, a fantastic initiative was announced on day one, and that was the creation of what is known as the loss and damage fund, which aims to support the most vulnerable countries in the face of climate-related disasters. That fund has already received pledges to the tune of \$792 million. The conference got off to a very positive start, which was fascinating to see. The momentum was building for the final communiqué to talk about the phase-out of the use of fossil fuels. Then it is fair to say that I could feel, in this massive venue, an action in all the conversations going on. Various countries, particularly the OPEC and the OPEC+ countries, started to chip away a little bit and call for things to be wound back and not to have in the communiqué any mention of a phase-out of fossil fuels. It was thanks only to the presidency of Sultan Al Jaber that, in the end, the final communiqué did refer to the phase-out. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said —

“To those who opposed a clear reference to a phase out of fossil fuels in the COP28 text, I want to say that a fossil fuel phase out is inevitable whether they like it or not. Let’s hope it doesn’t come too late ...

Bear in mind that the most recent reports tabled are about the scientific realities of worsening climate change, and they show that 2023 was the hottest year on record, and that we are well and truly at 1.4 degrees Celsius above the average relative to the pre-industrial era of 1850 to 1900. There was such a momentum there that at times it was heartening. It was also a cause for optimism. Another thing that I found particularly positive is that 50 oil companies were represented, and they committed to zero methane omissions from their operations by 2030. Some would say that for these oil companies to reduce methane emissions—knowing that the potency of methane is 21 times the greenhouse effect of CO₂—would perhaps not be too hard for their processing facilities to bolt on to various refineries and things. It showed their sense of obligation to be seen to be tackling things.

I note that the member for Maylands mentioned the issue of agriculture and food production and the fact that 134 countries signed a declaration pledging to tackle the climate impacts on the food industry. That was a massive thing. As I said, the member for Bassendean and I were there. The Western Australian Minister for Environment, Hon Reece Whitby, was there, and a number of Liberal Party politicians were there as well, including Ted O’Brien, who I believe is a member of the House of Representatives. He was very keen to talk about how nuclear power would help Australia. It did not really seem to be going too far because of the costs and the time involved for action, and the reality is that we now have so many renewable projects that are far cheaper and quicker to install. That was interesting.

A total of 60 countries made a commitment about air conditioning, which accounts for seven per cent of total emissions. This was in Dubai, where everything is air-conditioned. We have had quite a heatwave this summer here, but air conditioning in Dubai is an essential part of life, so much so that even when going to the metro, the station is air-conditioned and it is only when the train pulls in and its doors open that the station’s doors open so that people are not exposed to the outside. How that goal can be met was tackled as well. A total of 35 countries committed to recognising clean hydrogen certificates. This is a very important thing, because there is exciting discussion going on in Western Australia about the use of green hydrogen. There are other grades of hydrogen, and I note the work of Andrew Forrest on this, but essentially the commitment is to make sure that the hydrogen used is true green hydrogen; in other words, it is manufactured from renewable energy with the hydrogen and oxygen split using renewable energy as the source energy. That is essential for green energy.

I want to mention many other aspects. Green steel was also a focus. The Liberty Steel Group and Sanjeev Gupta, who would be known to quite a few people in Western Australia, hosted a big event in a magnificent steel building in Dubai called the Museum of the Future, which is a giant eye-shaped building made of steel. It is worth googling just to see an image of it. The message is the need to make sure that the steel is manufactured in a way that is not reliant on coking coal and the emissions intensity that comes with it.

Perhaps one of the most heartening things for me was the visit to what we might call the Dubai solar park—its official title is the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park. This is an incredible facility. The wealth in the United Arab Emirates is there, we see it constantly, whether it is the cars on the road or the construction of hotels and whatever. Bear in mind as well that the place did not really exist 60 years ago, so what has been built out of the desert is absolutely remarkable. The Emiratis have a sense that they can do anything; they can achieve things. As part of that spirit, they have built this massive solar park with a concentrated solar power system. This is one of those towers. It can be seen from miles away. When we were driving out to it, I thought it must have been some sort of gas flare because I could see it on the horizon from 30 kilometres away. It is this tower that mirrors reflect light into. This heats a salt substance in the tower that gives off heat to provide the boiling water for the steam to drive turbines that produce enormous amounts of electricity. Checking my figures, I think the amount is in the 700 megawatt range for the whole solar park, and there are plans to take that to something approaching the 5 000 megawatt range. The concentrated solar tower produces electricity in the 100 megawatt range. It is enormous technology. The Emiratis delight in testing new technologies. There is no fear of being an early adopter. They want to invest their wealth in the energy systems of the future. They also have massive photovoltaic arrays with different levels of technology. As photovoltaic technology advances, they have been installing more and more of the newer systems at this solar park. When people are in Dubai and they feel that everywhere is air-conditioned and wonder what the energy cost is, they can feel that there is a way forward in the future, and it will be powered by

renewable energy. That is clearly what the UAE's agenda is. But there is no doubt that United Arab Emirates still makes massive amounts from fossil fuels at this stage. The whole global reliance on oil, especially for transport, is incredible. It dominates all.

As a personal response to what I was seeing, when I came back from the UAE, I made a commitment to buy an electric vehicle. I feel that we do not want to be shackled to the importation of oil from overseas. It just does not make sense. I have to say I am very happy with my electric vehicle. It is a BYD Atto 3. I really think it is a great opportunity for us as members of this place to be involved in the transition and to show the community we can do things with just a tiny bit of modification such as changing daily driving habits and plugging in at night. At the moment, I have not even bothered to upgrade my electrical system. I could upgrade for faster charging at home, but I am just using a 1.5 kilowatt an hour trickle arrangement. I think it is sometimes called a "granny trickle" or something, but it does the job with the amount of driving I do. If I were doing longer distances, I would probably then go to a charging station and plug in for a faster charge there, so there are certainly ways around things.

In the brief moments that I have left, I want to say that when I was visiting all these pavilions, nearly every country was represented—there were 190 pavilions, so 190 of the 194 nations were represented—and I think nearly every country said that they were in some way unique. The Climate Change Bill will be debated in this place very soon. All countries see their role and their abilities as unique, and I think sometimes that needs to be tested and investigated. I think it was fascinating to see how a province in Canada, Saskatchewan, and countries that form member states of the European Union are all tackling this together and we are all on the journey, all believing that we are just a little special and a bit different.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Member for Thornlie, you can have an extension if you like.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I will not take the extension, but I will conclude by saying that this is a very important global journey that we are all on together, and it is of direct concern to our constituents. I know our constituents sometimes leave us to navigate the matter and expect us to make the right decisions on it, and if we do not, the consequences will be dramatic. These are exciting times and I look forward, I hope, to attending the conference at the end of this year in Baku in Azerbaijan, another big oil producer and a nation that is in the OPEC+ group. From what I could hear at the conference, Azerbaijan was really prepared to show strong leadership in combating the challenges around climate change. I shall conclude my remarks there and commend the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Education)**.

House adjourned at 7.02 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS — STAFF

914. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Child Protection:

Can the minister please advise, in relation to the working with children check screening unit:

- (a) How many Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff were employed, on average, in the unit in each of the following years:
- (i) 2019;
 - (ii) 2020;
 - (iii) 2021;
 - (iv) 2022; and
 - (v) 2023 to date?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

The Department of Communities advises:

- (a) On average the standard FTE allocation in the Working With Children Screening Unit (WWCSU) were as follows:
- (i) 2019 48.8 FTE
 - (ii) 2020 47.3 FTE
 - (iii) 2021 38.5 FTE
 - (iv) 2022 39.0 FTE
 - (v) 2023 38.3 FTE (as at 30 September 2023)

Temporary additional FTE were engaged to implement recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General in 2019. The Working with Children Check Screening Unit (WWCSU) returned to standard allocation once recommendations were implemented.

From 2019 to 2023 the number of Working with Children Check applications and completed applications have increased annually.

FOSTER CARE — SERVICE PROVIDERS

919. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the Department of Communities foster care program:

- (a) can the Minister please list the non-government service providers who manage foster care;
- (b) how many children does each provider listed in (a) care for;
- (c) is there a requirement for non-government employees to meet the same benchmarks as departmental staff with regard to workload management of child protection case allocation numbers;
- (d) if yes to (c), how are the caseloads of non-government employees monitored; and
- (e) if no to (c), what accountability is placed on the non-government providers regarding case load management?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

The Department of Communities (Communities) advises:

Communities is reforming the child protection system including the commissioning of new Out of Home Care (OOHC) services which will see \$217 million invested annually in the OOHC sector from 2024–25. On 13 October 2023, 16 OOHC providers, including five new Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, to deliver OOHC services were announced. Communities and the sector are in a transition period to support the successful transition of some children and carers to new providers.

- (a)–(b) As at 29 November 2023:

Non-Government Service Provider	Number of Children
AccordWest	10
Foundations Care Ltd	35
Key Assets WA	99

Life Without Barriers	89
Lifestyle Solutions	11
MacKillop Family Services	24
MercyCare	50
Parkerville Children And Youth Care Inc	30
Salvation Army (WA) Property Trust	0
Uniting WA	14
Wanslea Family Services	84
Yorganop Association Inc	111

- (c)–(e) The workload management Industrial Relations Order does not apply to non-government employees. Each non-government service provider manages their own workloads in accordance with their internal workload management policies and procedures to ensure the quality of the services they provide. In addition, there are a range of quality standards applicable to out of home care Service Agreements, including the Better Care, Better Services Standard. Better care, Better Services Standards outlines Safety and Quality Standards to ensure organisations are child focused and accountable and that people working with children and young people are well supported. The department undertakes regular service reviews, alongside contract management meetings with each agency within the term of the contract, in which carer and employee supports are considered.

COMMUNITIES — RESPONSIBLE PARENTING AGREEMENTS

924. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Child Protection:

- (1) For the period 1 June to 31 August 2023, how many Responsible Parenting Agreements has the Department of Communities implemented?
- (2) How many of the Responsible Parenting Agreements listed in (1), originated from a referral from another State Government department, and how many were referred by each department?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

The Department of Communities (Communities) advises:

Communities deliver a range of services in partnership with other government agencies and community services organisations to support families with complex needs. Programs from the Early Intervention and Family Support (EIFS) Strategy and Target 120 have increased targeted referrals for families with children and young people engaged in risk taking or challenging behaviour, or families requiring parenting support, therefore reducing the need for Responsible Parenting Agreements (RPA).

As intended, RPA's are only used on a last resort basis by Communities when every effort has been made to engage the parent/s on a voluntary basis in early intervention and support programs, and where it is in the best interests of the child.

- (1)–(2) During 1 June to 31 August 2023, there were four RPA's implemented. The four agreements did not originate from a referral from other State Government Departments.

COMMUNITIES — RESPONSIBLE PARENTING AGREEMENTS

925. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) For the period 1 June to 31 August 2023, how many Responsible Parenting Agreements has the Department of Communities implemented?
- (2) How many of the Responsible Parenting Agreements listed in (1), originated from a referral from another State Government department, and how many were referred by each department?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 924.

CHILD PROTECTION — SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

929. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Child Protection:

- (1) By region, what is the number of sexually transmitted infections reported to the Department for the following periods:
 - (a) 2020–2021;
 - (b) 2021–2022; and
 - (c) 2022–2023?

- (2) Have any children contracted a sexually transmitted infection while in the care of the CEO and, if yes, what are the numbers by region for the following periods:
- (a) 2020–2021;
 - (b) 2021–2022; and
 - (c) 2022–2023?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

The Department of Communities (Communities) advises:

- (1) The Department of Health notify Communities of confirmed cases of a notifiable sexually transmitted infection for children under the age of 14. The below answer refers to the total number of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) for all ages reported to Communities.
- (a) North Metropolitan Region – 1
South Metropolitan Region – 3
Goldfields Region – 2
Kimberley Region – 14
Midwest Gascoyne Region – 5
Pilbara Region – 5
 - (b) North Metropolitan Region – 1
South Metropolitan Region – 7
Goldfields Region – 3
Kimberley Region – 5
Pilbara Region – 2
South West Region – 1
 - (c) North Metropolitan Region – 3
South Metropolitan Region – 3
Goldfields Region – 1
Kimberley Region – 8
Midwest Gascoyne Region – 1
South West Region – 1
- (2) Through the Mandatory Reporting Interagency Training Group, Communities works to address sexual abuse, early onset of sexual activity and STIs. This group is delivering increased education around mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse, indicators of sexual abuse including STIs, harmful sexual behaviours and managing disclosure and reporting pathways into Communities.
- Symptoms of STIs take time to appear. Therefore, infections may already be present in children who come into the care of the CEO. The below answer refers to the total number of children in the care of the CEO with a STI.
- (a) North Metropolitan Region – 1
Goldfields Region – 1
Kimberley Region – 2
Midwest Gascoyne Region – 1
Pilbara Region – 3
 - (b) North Metropolitan Region – 1
Kimberley Region – 2
 - (c) North Metropolitan Region – 1
South Metropolitan Region – 1
South West Region – 1

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

931. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to family and domestic violence incidents, and I ask how many family and domestic violence incidents were reported and responded to by the Department of Communities as a result of police involvement in each of the following periods:

- (a) 2016–17;
- (b) 2017–18;
- (c) 2018–19;
- (d) 2019–20;
- (e) 2020–21;
- (f) 2021–22; and
- (g) 2022–23?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 932.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

932. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to family and domestic violence incidents, and I ask how many family and domestic violence incidents were reported and responded to by the Department of Communities as a result of police involvement in each of the following periods:

- (a) 2016–17;
- (b) 2017–18;
- (c) 2018–19;
- (d) 2019–20;
- (e) 2020–21;
- (f) 2021–22; and
- (g) 2022–23?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

The Department of Communities advises:

- (a) 2016–17; 49,023
- (b) 2017–18; 43,273
- (c) 2018–19; 45,130
- (d) 2019–20; 47,235
- (e) 2020–21; 46,343
- (f) 2021–22; 43,513
- (g) 2022–23; 46,733

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

933. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to family and domestic violence incidents, and I ask how many family and domestic violence incidents were reported and responded to by the Department of Communities as a result of police involvement in each of the following periods:

- (a) 2016–17;
- (b) 2017–18;
- (c) 2018–19;
- (d) 2019–20;

- (e) 2020–21;
- (f) 2021–22; and
- (g) 2022–23?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 932.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT — PATRONAGE

945. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to public transport patronage and I ask, for each Sunday between the following dates what were the total number of trips taken on public transport:

- (a) From Sunday 5 June 2022, to Sunday 4 September, 2022, inclusive; and
- (b) From Sunday 2 May 2023, to Sunday 22 October, 2023, inclusive?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

The boarding numbers below include journeys taken with SmartRiders, cash tickets, joint ticketing (public transport covered by event ticket), and Perth CAT and Free Transit Zone journeys.

- (a) 145,850; 73,614; 88,819; 171,939; 158,114; 150,858; 75,760; 141,937; 93,622; 155,976; 98,796; 100,594; 103,333; 89,352.
- (b) 2 May 2023 was not a Sunday. The data provided starts from Sunday, 7 May 2023: 131,423; 123,131; 175,131; 116,086; 108,315; 102,559; 133,367; 133,435; 171,297; 188,691; 152,498; 127,611; 176,403; 202,792; 127,710; 189,210; 148,976; 134,122; 131,067; 147,069; 167,640; 123,412; 183,182; 132,620; 135,032.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT — PATRONAGE

946. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to public transport patronage and I ask, for each Sunday between the following dates what were the total number of smart rider trips taken on public transport:

- (a) From Sunday 5 June 2022, to Sunday 4 September, 2022, inclusive; and
- (b) From Sunday 2 May 2023, to Sunday 22 October 2023, inclusive?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

- (a) 60,204; 47,556; 58,505; 67,831; 60,745; 55,278; 48,866; 62,648; 63,346; 61,072; 65,442; 65,730; 69,241; 58,881.
- (b) 2 May 2023 was not a Sunday. The data provided starts from Sunday, 7 May 2023: 83,692; 80,727; 86,328; 81,295; 67,138; 72,050; 88,653; 86,603; 88,869; 81,626; 88,018; 89,952; 88,145; 106,955; 92,009; 92,476; 93,967; 77,081; 94,441; 99,617; 85,124; 91,309; 101,942; 95,710; 75,524.

HEALTH — NURSING HOME GRANTS

947. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the State Government's plan to give residential nursing homes grants of up to \$1825 to take elderly patients fit for medical discharge out of public hospitals and into "respite" care, and I ask:

- (a) How many grants have been awarded;
- (b) What is the total value of the grants;
- (c) How many nursing homes have received grants; and
- (d) How many elderly people have been moved from public hospitals into private nursing homes under this grant scheme?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

Data as of 7 February 2024:

- (a) 58 claims finalised with a further 113 to be awarded on completion of patient stay/invoicing processes.
- (b) \$127,100 total expenditure to date on finalised claims.
- (c) 13 aged care providers have signed onto the grant agreement with a combined total of 88 nursing home sites.
- (d) 171 patients discharged from hospital, saving an estimated 2,952 bed days.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS — WAIT TIMES

948. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Minister's media statement of April 26, 2023, entitled "ED reforms to include alternative care pathways and new targets and specifically to the Minister's statement that "For patients presenting to emergency departments, the new targets are for hospitals to admit 80 per cent of patients within six hours and discharge 80 per cent of patients who do not need to be admitted to a ward within four hours", and I ask:

- (a) Since that announcement, what percentage of patients presenting at public hospital emergency departments and requiring admission have been admitted within six hours of presentation; and
- (b) Since that announcement, what percentage of patients presenting at public hospital emergency departments and not requiring admission have been discharged within four hours of presentation?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a)–(b) This information is publicly available on the WA Health website's Emergency Department Monthly Report.

LANDS — RESIDENTIAL LOTS

949. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) The Minister has stated that there is "an inventory of approximately 782 residential lots across regional WA." Please list the number of lots available in each of the relevant regional towns/localities (the number of lots in each place)?
- (2) By location, how many of those lots are available to develop now (can be sold to a buyer for immediate construction of a dwelling post any local planning and building approvals)?
- (3) By location, how many of those lots still require connection to services including power, water, and sewerage?

Mr J.N. Carey replied:

Please refer to the answer provided to LA Question on Notice 950.

LANDS — RESIDENTIAL LOTS

950. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) The Minister has stated that there is "an inventory of approximately 782 residential lots across regional WA." Please list the number of lots available in each of the relevant regional towns/localities (the number of lots in each place)?
- (2) By location, how many of those lots are available to develop now (can be sold to a buyer for immediate construction of a dwelling post any local planning and building approvals)?
- (3) By location, how many of those lots still require connection to services including power, water and sewerage?

Mr J.N. Carey replied:

- (1)–(3) The inventory of 782 residential lots across regional WA was current as at 18 October 2023 and is point in time data, with lots available across all regions of WA. DevelopmentWA is constantly creating, contracting and selling lots across WA.

All lots created and sold are serviced with power and water to the requirements set by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) as part of the subdivision process. The provision of reticulated sewerage is dependent on availability within the town and environmental health factors.

LANDS — RESIDENTIAL LOTS — REGIONAL

951. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) The Minister has stated that as part of the \$166 million regional land booster programme that 626 lots have been released to the market covering 89 projects in 78 regional towns. Please list the number of lots released in each of the relevant regional towns/localities (the number of lots released in each place)?
- (2) By location, how many of those lots sold still required connection to services including power, water and sewerage?
- (3) By location, how many dwellings have been constructed and are occupied or are ready for occupation?
- (4) By location, how many dwellings are under construction?
- (5) By location, how many lots are yet to commence construction?

Mr J.N. Carey replied:

Please refer to the answer provided in LA Question On Notice 952.

LANDS — RESIDENTIAL LOTS — REGIONAL

952. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) The Minister has stated that as part of the \$166 million regional land booster programme that 626 lots have been released to the market covering 89 projects in 78 regional towns. Please list the number of lots released in each of the relevant regional towns/localities (the number of lots released in each place)?
- (2) By location, how many of those lots sold still required connection to services including power, water and sewerage?
- (3) By location, how many dwellings have been constructed and are occupied or are ready for occupation?
- (4) By location, how many dwellings are under construction?
- (5) By location, how many lots are yet to commence construction?

Mr J.N. Carey replied:

- (1)–(5) The Regional Land Booster program is a \$116 million program to facilitate development-ready industrial, commercial and residential lots across Western Australia. As at 31 January 2024, 652 lots have been sold in 82 towns across all regions of Western Australia.

All lots created and sold are serviced with power and water to the requirements set by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) as part of the subdivision process. The provision of reticulated sewerage is dependent on availability within the town and environmental health factors.

The lots are sold to private purchasers, ready for the purchasers to commence the process of securing the relevant approvals for the construction of their dwelling through the local government. The State Government does not collect data on private dwellings commenced or under construction.
