

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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## **PREMIER'S STATEMENT**

### *Consideration*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton)** [2.51 pm]: Before the lunchbreak and question time, I was talking about education and the failure of the Minister for Education and Training to adhere to any claim she has made over the last four years, particularly in her electorate, where she promised to enhance spending on the large high schools. As a result, she has cut \$22 million from those schools, which are, without doubt, some of the best, if not the best, public schools in our city and educate more than 5 000 children. Excellent!

I would now like to get on to my new shadow area of planning. It is new to me. It is a very important area. It deals with probably the most important issues for businesses and households—that is, what they can and cannot do on the land upon which their houses and properties are built.

**Mr D.T. Punch:** You've just realised that?

**The SPEAKER:** Member!

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes. I heard the comment. I do not think the member realises this.

The planning system here has evolved. It has some flaws. I have to congratulate the Minister for Planning for the green paper that she commissioned by Evan Jones and co. It is an excellent one. All I do is ask her to implement it in full—not to have a study or a working group. The planning scheme has significant failures and the way it is being implemented and impacted by the minister is creating chaos. I know that members opposite like to say that we do not like buildings and high-rises. The reality is that in our eight and a half years, we made a large number of changes, specifically to facilitate infill developments, particularly with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority and the development of those types of urban renewal projects, which I think should be the increasing focus. We did more to revitalise the city of Perth, which is our most important city, and make it a world-class place to visit and live than any other government in history. That is an area in which this government has let the state down. Go into the city and look. What investment has been made in the city under this government's watch? By the way, the Museum is one that I signed off on as Treasurer. It was not this government. It is part of the \$40 billion of debt that members opposite decry. In other words, when they decry the \$40 billion of debt, they should decry and complain about the Museum that is about ready to open. We revitalised the city like no other government. We need to continue that. This government does not have a plan, but it talks a lot.

More importantly, the system needs to be reformed. The Minister for Planning is creating chaos throughout our suburbs. The member for Cottesloe highlighted what she has done in Subiaco and Nedlands. What she is doing there is pure bastardry. She is destroying the livelihoods, the future and the house values of those people for no good technical reason. In Wanneroo east, she is making changes that are necessary. In Stoneville and Parkerville north, where a large development is pushing into the fringes of the city in an area where it should not be considered, particularly because of bushfires, she is saying that she cannot do anything. In Nedlands, she is overriding them and saying, "Do it." Up there, she is saying that she cannot do anything. She is acting in a capricious manner. She is destroying the livelihoods and futures of those communities. She is also destroying community support for infill developments and confidence in our planning system. The only conclusion I can come to is that she is doing it out of spite and for political motivations. We need a planning system that is clear, long term and fair. The local community needs to support it. We need infill development, but not at all costs. Importantly, we need to start focusing on the city of Perth. It is our capital city. It is where people visit and do business, and this government has left it to decay. We need a change of government to once again revitalise Perth and make it no longer Dullsville.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren-Blackwood)** [2.56 pm]: I rise, as everyone else has in this first week of Parliament for 2020, to make my reply to the Premier's Statement. I have been taking note of some of the speeches that members have made. I thought the member for South Perth did a very good job of his speech. He made the point that it would be the last speech—we held our breath when he said that—he would make as a member of Parliament on the Premier's Statement.

**Mr T.J. Healy:** Not you, too!

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** No, I am not going to do that.

**Mr T.J. Healy:** So what are you saying?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I am going to tell the member that a few people who sit behind me will also be making their last address in Parliament on the Premier's Statement. As the rot sets in over this year, other members, as they chime in with commentary, will be sitting on the edge of their seats, waiting to fall off the other side as we get to the 2021 election. They will be busily signing notes saying "Merry Christmas" and "Happy Birthday" to all the

people in their electorates. I can see the member for Jandakot is busily writing his. There will need to be a lot of those and they will have to land hard, because we know that the pendulum is starting to swing back this year. As night turns to day, this will be the last opportunity for a bunch of people who sit behind me to make a contribution to the Premier's Statement in the Parliament of Western Australia.

I want to get on to an agenda, however. First of all, a couple of statewide issues and a couple of national issues are worth mentioning, and they have already been mentioned by many members. In the national sense, I am talking about the terrible droughts that have been occurring on the east coast over the last 12 months or so and the challenges that those communities are facing. Indeed, there has been very strong support for them from the people of Western Australia in the plight that they are going through. Of course, in recent times there have been the terrible tragedies from bushfires that have been described to me as unprecedented and the challenges that those communities are going through in responding to that and rebuilding. In a quirky sort of way, floods in some of those communities are also causing some challenges. I highlight that to say that, as a community and a state, we are thinking of them. Volunteers from Western Australia have also taken the time to go over east and engage in that, and I think that is absolutely outstanding.

Many of my colleagues, and I am sure other members of Parliament, have made donations, whether it be through dinners in Parliament or whatever it might be, to support fundraising for funds to go over east and support those communities, because we know that one day it will be our communities and we will be looking for support from others. They are going through a terrible set of circumstances, which is something that we are all thinking about. That said, I think that we have had a relatively good season. I live in a part of the world, in my electorate, where we fear bushfires over the summer period. Although we have had a number of fires, the response has been quick, and most of those fires have not turned into anything substantial. My colleague the member for Roe had fires in his electorate, which just touched on the northern boundary of my electorate in the Stirling Range, and were some of the most significant fires. Katanning is pretty close to the member for Roe's house. I saw pictures of that that were quite substantial. Again, some of the fires that were in some of the southern suburbs of Perth were fairly substantial, but I think that we have largely dodged a bullet.

We are not out of the fire season yet, but I must say that one of the most significant things in Western Australia is the policy settings, which have come from the Liberal-National government and is now clearly supported by the Labor Party, for the level of prescribed burning that occurs in our state forests to ensure that we actually reduce the fuel loads to a sufficient level so that it takes much of the risk away from those landscape-level fires, which is a significant threat that actually exists. We all have sections of reserve in our community, which from time to time needs to be burnt, but in the south west, in particular, if those landscape-level bushfires get a run-up, they can be devastating. A bit of prescribed burning happened in the north of Denmark—the community that I live in—late last year. It actually had a bit of criticism. But living in Denmark now, with that area having been burnt, gives one some comfort that there certainly is a level of protection.

I spoke to a very senior politician in our party over east who said that Western Australia seems to get this stuff right compared with the policy settings they have over there. I reiterate to the government of the day that ensuring we keep a level of policy support for the level of prescribed burning to take some of the risk away from the community is really important. In these times, the fires over east give us some reflection about the importance of that. It is not hard after a while finding out that we can lose sight of that, and even in my community there is some debate about it, but it is something that I strongly support and something that needs to be a fundamental part of what we do. Investments that we made in government and investments that the government is making now to ensure that we meet those burning targets is very critical.

Regarding the cyclone up north going through Karratha, once again, we feel for the community. A bit of a rebuild is happening up there. The rains are quite welcome in the context of the cyclone that went through. But one point that attracted a lot of criticism from the government—it talked about wasted spending in royalties for regions—was the Pilbara underground power project. Having that project in place now and having underground power in communities such as Karratha and Port Hedland means that when those cyclones go through, they are able to get things back up and going quickly. Not too many people sitting up there in Karratha now would not have been happy to have underground power, which we know is quite a natural part of the south and south west in metropolitan Perth, but it would take a bit of effort to install in a place such as Karratha.

Another statewide trend, and probably a national trend, is how water issues are being elevated in importance. The security of water supplies to communities is important. Denmark is one of those communities, having one of the highest rainfall areas in the state. Many communities, such as the member for Roe's electorate, the wheatbelt and south west electorates, are somewhat under stress. Ensuring that water remains front and centre in town municipal supply security is critical, as are supplies for irrigation. The south west irrigation districts—I have Manjimup and Pemberton in my area—are realising that water is a challenge, and the importance of good, transparent regulation around that is critical; hence, things like the water resources legislation, which needs updating, has to be on the

table. We made efforts when we were in government, but we were not successful, and I know that the Minister for Water has the same challenges. He stood up in August 2017 and said, “I’m going to do this because you couldn’t,” and we still have not seen it. I hear from industry that it is unlikely to occur in this term of government, so that certainly has to be put on the agenda as soon as possible. Water supplies are challenging and the member for Roe has been on that case, but the more general point is that it is important to elevate water’s status as a key resource within our community right across the board. We made efforts during our term to put out a state water strategy and to research where water was and was not, to support the agriculture sector in particular, but water has to have the status that it deserves in a dry climate like Western Australia where it is such a critical resource to us. I have not seen that, and I think that if a message were to go to the government, it would be to raise the status of water because it is a touchy point for all of us.

Much of the discussion about the economy on this side of the house accurately reflects what is happening in our communities in that people are doing it tough. It is the Achilles heel of the government. It is one thing to look at the finances and respond objectively to the state’s financial situation; it is another thing to respond to the economy. The economy is in such a state that people are finding it hard to get the level of work that they need. Wage growth is not there. We are seeing some unfortunate behaviour in Perth and in my electorate with the use of meth and other drugs. A lot of these things are symptomatic of a tough economy, and focusing on the economy is critically important. We would like to see some discussion about the strategy that the government is taking with the economy, but we understand that it cannot control everything in that space. There should be some discussion about what might be put in place to give the economy some sort of stimulus at a point in time to acknowledge that people are in fact doing it tough.

In the broader area of agriculture, the coronavirus is something that we cannot control and the reality is that with our links to China, in particular, it is going to have an impact on us. It is having an impact on us in tourism, and it is going to have an impact on us in agriculture. How long that will last is a bit of an unknown, but certainly there are threats that are out of our control, which only reinforce the challenges that we have with the broader economy, and put things under somewhat of a stress. I think there are some bumpy roads coming ahead in the short to medium term. We want to see the government put strong strategies into place and invest accordingly. This is a unique time in our economy in Western Australia and some decisions need to be made and specific actions need to be put in place in response to that.

In the agricultural space, there are some threats. The live trade issue is a threat for the industry in Western Australia. This government is seen as a threat to that, because it wants to shut down live trade. We do not see that as acceptable. We see that there are processes in place to support that and to ensure that we have the best animal welfare standards. Indeed, Western Australia is coaching other countries in animal welfare issues. Another threat that sits there is the banning of glyphosate. The Environmental Protection Authority reported on its assessment of glyphosate. If members are not familiar with the word “glyphosate”, it is Roundup, which is widely used in the agricultural sector in gardens, and it has been deemed to be okay. We are seeing signals from this government that that is something that it is concerned about, and that is a threat to the agricultural sector.

There is ongoing pressure on supermarkets, which have monopoly power, which is the power over supply, and we are seeing that play out in the dairy industry.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I have a number of dairies in my electorate —

**Ms M.J. Davies:** And eggs.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** It is playing out in the egg industry as well. A number of dairies in my electorate are somewhat under threat. Big organisations can put pressure on a small supplier because it does not have as many choices, because an isolated market like Western Australia makes that very challenging. Where the markets do not play out and are not level, the government has to have some sort of intervention, and I am not seeing the government putting strategies on the table for those two examples. Again, threats, as we move into the last year of this Parliament. We certainly want to see signals that that will be on the improve.

I will talk about some of my shadow portfolio areas. A lot of changes are happening in the energy space. One of the strong examples is the issue of microgrids and some of the renewable energy battery technology coming into play. For the first time, we are now seeing technology that can offer solutions for some of the real challenges in regional areas, particularly fringe-of-grid areas, reliability of supply and meeting demands, when long lines go down. Technology is there now to resolve that in a carbon-positive way.

As we move through some of the debates in the next couple of weeks about some of the reforms the Minister for Energy is putting in place, we need to keep in mind that we should allow scope for innovation and third-party investment in that technology in Western Australia. We need to allow for that technology to hit the ground in the areas that need it with innovations that solve many of the problems we have all grappled with—even when we

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 13 February 2020]

p576c-596a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

---

were in government—with solutions that are now available that were not before. I am talking about charges such as the headworks charges, that great negative play on regional development. A person on the fringe of grid who wants to extend and build something that needs energy has to pay a big headworks charge to support upgrades to get the capacity to that point. I understand why that happens. The cost of how it all works has to be shared, but it does not play out in Perth, it plays out in regional Western Australia on the fringe-of-grid areas as a big suppressant to economic development. Technology is now moving into the space where it is becoming an asset in those areas where it can supply solutions to the broader energy network. We need to make sure that the regulatory environment is in place for those things to happen in such a way that regional Western Australia can be an asset rather than a liability to the networks and ensure that it can play its role. As an adjunct to that, it must support regional development in doing so. Technology is starting to provide solutions that it did not have before. We hope the government will ensure that some of those intractable issues that emerged in the past can be solved with technology as it comes to the table.

My other shadow portfolio is Aboriginal Affairs. I take great interest in this area. I must say that I do not ask a lot of questions on the area. I hold a personal view that it is not a space that I particularly want to politicise. I am keeping informed through a range of meetings. I go to the Yule River meeting at Hedland every year and ask the government questions on notice about some of its activities in this space. As a member of Parliament, when I come to do my retirement speech I do not want to look back at my time and say that we have not shifted the dial. I will do my bit, whether it be from opposition supporting the government or from government, to do the things to make sure we do. A lot of things have happened, but I do not think that, collectively, we have done a good job. We saw recently the announcement about where we are at with the Closing the Gap targets. As the Premier said today, there is not a lot to be positive about. On the surface, it does not seem to be hard but it is very challenging. I am putting on the table once again, in a quiet sort of way, my support in getting some action so that we do not see the level of suicides we have seen in the past, and we see improvement in education and domestic issues and challenges, particularly in more remote areas where there is crowding in houses and some of the social consequences that come from that. We need to do better in that space and anything that results in maybe doing something differently, will, in the main, have my support.

I will not go into Treasury deeply, but, clearly, government having a better outcome with GST and iron ore prices has been a windfall and has made the Treasurer's commentary easier.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** As the shadow Treasurer said, if the GST replacement had applied during the previous government's time, it would have been running surpluses in the last part of our term. As mentioned in debates on the last day or so, the Nationals have recently been disappointed about where royalties for regions sit in the game. We had a meeting in Denmark recently with the Minister for Water about Denmark's water supplies in a community that is very sensitised to that, and a government decision. It was the right decision; it was on our agenda at some time to build a pipeline from Denmark to Albany. However, the community was not told that it was under some water stress. The water minister told the community that the state pays a subsidy to the Water Corporation to supply water to maintain the uniform pricing tariff, which is about \$20 a kilolitre. It was said as though it sounded like a gift to the community. "Be quiet; listen to us; you get a subsidy here. We'll do this, so be happy." On the other side of that argument when members opposite came to government, Denmark lost a wastewater recycling project. The wastewater from the wastewater treatment plant in Denmark, which currently spills into the Wilson Inlet, has been redirected to municipal ovals, the golf course and the WA College of Agriculture. The amount of \$15 million was canned by this government and this minister. The subsidy we talked about down there is now paid out of royalties for regions. The subsidy the minister was telling the community was a gift to the community from the government is the very reason Denmark lost its wastewater recycling project. Denmark wants to see water recycling play its part in reducing the high cost of water and easing the challenge of providing those supplies. It was a good meeting to have and I support the minister, the Water Corporation and the Department of Water in going down there. However, with regard to those subtle messages, I think sometimes the community needs to be brought up to speed with what is happening behind the scenes in this government.

I will pick out my topics because I think I will run out of time if I am not careful. There have been some fairly big impacts on retail. Across my electorate from Denmark to Margaret River in particular, the summer retail season has not been too bad, but some of the inland areas have done it tough. In a retail sense, last winter, almost across the board, was one of the worst it has had. Denmark and Margaret River have probably experienced some of the best they have had. Retail is cyclical, which makes it challenging; nevertheless, there has been a broader impact on retail.

In Manjimup we are seeing some investments come onstream on the back of our SuperTowns initiative, a project this Premier did not like when it was rolled out. However, investments have fundamentally changed the status of Manjimup as a community that wants to see investment and is now getting it. A site has been purchased in Manjimup

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 13 February 2020]

p576c-596a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

---

for a hotel development. The same investor is investing in apartments. Investment is going into a distillery, a brewery and a backpacker hostel in the town and recently the Power Up Electricity Museum has opened, which is fantastic to see for those who have not seen it. Stuff sitting in sea containers for years was mobilised under the SuperTowns project, and is now an asset to visit. All investments are welcomed while knowing there is a bit of a tough backdrop. Now we are seeing that Manjimup is a destination rather than a thoroughfare. It is not just an industrial centre that supported heaps of towns around it. My colleagues, the Leader of the Nationals in Northam, and the member for Roe in Esperance, are all seeing the benefit of those past investments.

I see that the Minister for Tourism is now in the chamber. I railed pretty hard about the Busselton Margaret River Airport project. Melbourne flights are not far away. I think 25 March is when the first plane will land. The member for Vasse, who is an advocate for that airport, is also here. On 25 March, when the first plane lands from over east, sadly, the people who get off the plane will walk into a tin shed. The lounge is a tin shed, and that is sad. The City of Busselton has secured an airline visit three times a week for three years, which is not an insignificant commitment—but tourists will land and go into a tin shed. I do not want the flight arrangements to fail; nor does the member for Vasse. We do not want it to fail. We want it to be the starting point of some vibrancy for the tourism sector in the south west. Here is a solution: I know that \$10 million was sitting in the Minister for Transport's portfolio—hopefully it is still there—that might support that. Certainly the Minister for Regional Development said if we got the airline, she would pay for the upgrade of the terminal. But she reneged on that, so that was a backflip. Here is the solution for the Minister for Tourism. He has the Collie Futures fund. He is prepared to pay for people in Collie to be taken on a bus all the way to the Greenbushes mine, nearly 100 kilometres way. What about putting \$10 million from the Collie Futures fund into the Busselton terminal upgrade as a benefit for the region and support what the minister has been railing hard on—that is, all the trails that go in and around Collie and the tourism assets that Collie has? Why not support sharpening the point of the airline that will be bringing people in from the eastern states, to get into the tourism assets that we have and assets that the government has been promoting and investing in? Why not take money out of the Collie Futures fund to do that? That would be a really good discussion to have with the people of Collie, and something that actually can make a difference. There are decisions about Collie that the government has backflipped on; I mentioned one of them yesterday. The \$30 million that the government was going to use to build a biomass energy plant, and the \$30 million for a solar farm in Collie were all reneged on. In fact, the government did not even go to market to see whether there was any interest. It did not even go out to market to test it. I would have thought Collie would have liked that, because it is used for energy production. It has the transmission lines. That would have been a good investment. It did not do that, it reneged on it. Put \$10 million from the Collie Futures fund into the terminal upgrade at Busselton, and make sure that it is a good experience and promote the hell out of Collie as a destination for people to come in and land. There is a solution.

What do we reckon Bridgetown thinks of the idea of trucking people from Collie up to Bridgetown? It is not that happy, because the Shire of Bridgetown–Greenbushes, the Shire of Boyup Brook, the Shire of Donnybrook–Balingup, the Shire of Nannup and the Shire of Manjimup have been working hard to say, “Righto, how are we going to plan for and manage this big influx of a workforce into Greenbushes?” They have been managing that with the South West Development Commission on its side. That planning is going into auditing of housing and all the assets that the community has to make sure that it can support that. Now, right out of the blue, the government is strongarming Talison Lithium to say that it wants it to employ people from Collie, “and by the way, we’re going to pay for a bus to go pick them up.” I find that deplorable. It is totally in conflict with any sort of regional development focus that those portfolios should have.

There are a couple of other issues. A youth mental health services program has been run by a general practitioner down south. It is called the 3 Tier Youth Mental Health Program. Sadly, it came to an end at the end of December last year. It was supported by a bunch of schools. I made a grievance to the Minister for Health and I got him to meet with a range of people. Unfortunately, the government has not been able to keep that going. That is a program of early intervention in mental health areas, and we are seeing a big emergence of challenges, particularly in Margaret River and in and around my electorate for reasons I described before: partly to do with the economy and partly to do with a range of other issues; nevertheless, on issues that are emerging. Having early intervention at a school level is fundamental and really important. It is happening in the Peel region—a three-tier mental health program. It is under review now to check out where it is at and how well it is going. I am confident that it will be positive. It is just a shame that we did not get some bridging funding to keep it going at the end of last year. But the Shire of Manjimup has chosen to fund it. The Shire of Manjimup is choosing to fund an early intervention youth mental health program in its shire, because government is absent in this space. It is a bit like what is happening across the wheatbelt, where shires are funding doctors to keep them in their communities. It is so fundamental to them that they are choosing to stump up and put their money on the table to make it happen. That is sad, in an environment in which these challenges are emerging everywhere we look. This early intervention bit is hard to invest in, but it is really important. When the current Minister for Tourism was in opposition, I remember him talking about early intervention strategies in the context of corrective services. In principle, he was quite right. When we

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

---

take that stuff to Treasury, it does not particularly like it because we cannot demonstrate that we are getting bang for our buck. It wants to see the acute response. These areas are hard to invest in, but they are so critical. I encourage the government to look at that.

Yesterday the government responded to the parliamentary inquiry that I triggered and I was involved with. It was very pleasing to have the support of the member for Swan Hills in getting it up in the committee. It was the inquiry into the regulation of short-stay accommodation in Western Australia—the Airbnb issue, as it has sometimes been described. I am really happy with the government response. There is still work to be done; it is complex. The government needs to work through some things that we did not have the resources in our committee to resolve, or put up recommendations. In the most part, that is in and around mechanisms of how to get a registration process up for those unregistered, and particularly un-hosted accommodation providers, and indeed how we can force or leverage online programs to have a registration number for registered accommodation providers. They are all the things that we talked about that the established accommodation providers were raising with us—strong for me out of Margaret River and Denmark—and I am really pleased to see the response. We will be monitoring this. The outcomes are yet to be seen; they are not entirely visible yet, but certainly the commentary so far is good. A statewide registration scheme is supported. There is recognition that no-one wants to target those mum-and-dad providers who rent out the back room. They are not sensitised to anybody: they are not sensitised to the established accommodation owners, they are not sensitised to me, and they are, in many cases, pensioners who are making a few extra dollars from a couple of spare rooms that they have. That is a good thing to have. We are ensuring that the settings are, in a regulatory sense, a light touch, but we touched on those areas that make a difference to ensure that if someone has invested millions of dollars, in some cases, in established accommodation in those tourism towns, and they are registered—they are meeting all the compliance requirements for occupational health and safety, fire and insurance and all those things that are important—there is no unregistered provider up the road doing it without having to meet all those requirements. I understand the commentary from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia that this is over-intervention. I do not agree with it, but I understand it, and I think a light touch is the approach the government is taking, which is on the recommendations of the committee. I am looking forward to there being a bit of a positive outcome in the accommodation space as it applies to Airbnb and those online platforms.

I want to close in the last 30 seconds on a comment in a media release from Mick Murray, the member for Collie–Preston, in the lead-up to the last election. He said —

Let me be clear—Royalties for Regions will continue under a McGowan Labor Government ... Labor is determined to see Royalties for Regions spent wisely to maximise the benefits for the regions.

What he did not add to that is that it was going to be used for budget repair and to pay for a uniform pricing tariff for water in Western Australia. That is the greatest con that we have seen from this government in this term of government, and it will pay for that at the next election.

**MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton)** [3.27 pm]: I look forward to presenting my fourth response to the Premier's Statement for this Parliament. It is a good stocktake of the three years until now. What we will see in the rest of the year is a run down towards the next election. I was going to start the address off with the old Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times"; however, I did a bit of research and discovered that it is not Chinese.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** It's not a Chinese curse.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** It is not Chinese. Exactly, member for Girrawheen.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** Robert Kennedy's speechwriter had heard of it.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** Yes; there you go. All those people thought it was a mystical, amazing old Chinese curse, and it was not. It was tracked back to England in the 1930s, but that is as far as it goes. We would all be familiar with the phrase "black swan events". It is quite appropriate for Western Australia of course to have black swan events, and no doubt recent events in China are, in my book, black swan events. What has happened in China will cause quite a bit of uncertainty for a few months and maybe quite a bit longer. This is a big issue for Geraldton because of our crayfishing industry. Geraldton Fisherman's Co-operative exports about 60 per cent of Australia's lobsters, and these days 97 per cent of them go to China. It is quite an amazing operation that takes a lobster off the ocean bed in the morning, and 24 hours later it is on a plate in China. Unfortunately, the Chinese market closed on 26 January due to the coronavirus. The virus is the sixth of these type of viruses that we have had in the last few decades. We have had severe acute respiratory syndrome, the Middle East respiratory syndrome, Nipah virus, Zika virus and the Mexican swine flu. As *The Economist* noted the other day, it will not be the last. The local Indian community, many of whom are medical people, invited me to see a film not that long ago about the outbreak of the Nipah virus in Kerala state in India, which is where a lot of them come from. That also originates from bats. It was a three-hour subtitled film, which was pretty hard going to watch. In that particular case, they did not know

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 13 February 2020]

p576c-596a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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where the virus came from and in the early days, with crowded hospitals and everything, it was looking absolutely terrible, but they got on top of it. That example gives me hope that the measures that China is taking on this virus will be effective. Of course, it follows the devastating impact from the African swine fever on the Chinese pig herd for farmers and consumers. The hope is that soon the numbers of people being diagnosed with the infection will peak and go into decline.

I have been to China five times since 1995 and I am a keen reader of Chinese history. I am always amazed at how the country has performed since the reforms of Deng Xiaoping. China has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and it is expected to be the largest economy in the world by 2030. History tells us that the Chinese are very stoic and get on top of problems, despite great suffering. All we can say is that we hope this virus can be beaten in a couple of months; if not, the consequences for a lot of regional Western Australia will be quite dire. I find the photos of empty streets in Wuhan quite eerie. If the virus continues to spread, decisions will be taken to not reopen factories and businesses at the end of the new year holidays, which could have quite a severe impact. The other day I read about two car plants in Korea that have just been shut down because they cannot get some of their components from factories in China.

It is clear that wild animal markets are a problem. I, and I am sure a lot of other people, will welcome the government in China getting serious about this trade and putting traders out of business. One good thing that will come out of that will be less impact on endangered species throughout the world.

Finally, I will quote former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd from *The Australian Financial Review* the other day; he said —

“What I find striking is the level of complacency about the potential impact on the global and Australian economy given the impact of the virus on China,”

I think that is very true. I think a lot of people are watching this situation with a great deal of concern.

When our lobster market closed, our processors immediately stopped receiving and fishermen stopped catching. The lobsters being held in the tanks can stay there for a couple of weeks, but then a decision will have to be made on whether to process them or try to sell them live. I have noticed that the fishermen have been quite calm and rational about this situation. The market closed on 26 January and, obviously, they will not have any income until the end of March at the earliest. They have said to me that it is just like SARS. They remember quite clearly what happened 20 years ago with SARS. Then, of course, we had the race to fish. As soon as they were clear to fish again, they went out and caught as many crays as they could, and the price crashed when fishing resumed. This time they are looking very carefully at how to start off again and at some kind of probable extension in time for their quota this year. There will not be a mad rush to fish, so the price will not crash to \$10 a kilo like it did previously. I attended a Western Rock Lobster Council meeting in Geraldton yesterday, and I expect the council will take a set of well-thought-out measures to the minister soon to hopefully ease back into their markets. I would like to congratulate the fishermen and the fishing bodies for their logical, rational and well-managed processes and consultation.

I, too, want to talk a bit about the bushfires that, thankfully, this year have been mostly in the eastern states. I would like to acknowledge and pass my sympathies on to those who have lost friends and family, particularly the families of the firefighters. I spent 25 years as a member of my local brigade, and every time I saw that vision of fires from the east, I was glad that where I lived there was none of that sort of country to fight fires in. The east has had a run of dry years, which has resulted in very dry conditions, which coupled with high temperatures and strong winds causes devastating conditions. Personally, I do not have any trouble accepting that greenhouse gas emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and nitrous oxides are leading to higher temperatures worldwide. In the last 12 months, the world has seen other shocking fires. There were fires in Siberia last year that burnt an area the size of Belgium, also massive fires in Brazil and most years we see massive fires in Indonesia.

A point frequently made in the greenhouse debate is that people should accept the science, which I do. That is why the view being put around by the Greens at the moment that Australia will have some kind of effect on the outbreak of these fires by reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions while the rest of the world continues on its merry way increasing its emissions is ridiculous. I challenge the Greens on that. Di Natale said it, and I am sure Mr Bandt, or whatever his name is, would agree with him. Give us that science or show it to us, because I actually do not think it exists. The Chinese are building new coal-powered power stations. So are the Indians. Even the Japanese are building 21 more coal-fired power stations. After Fukushima, they decided to phase out nuclear power and replace it with coal.

Another point that has been made strongly by many people who fight fires is that the phasing out of commercial logging in native forests and turning them into national parks is making the job of fighting fires much harder. Loggers have the skills and equipment, and they put in tracks to make hazard reduction burning and back-burning much easier, but, unfortunately, we are fast losing these skills and capabilities. It was interesting to see strong support

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 13 February 2020]

p576c-596a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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for that position from the forestry division of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union the other day. It recently declared that locking up native forest has an impact on our ability to deal with fires.

Australia has done a huge amount of work on fire research, including fuel reduction burning, housing design, and how communities can be put in fire-prone places more safely, but a lot of this research has been ignored or forgotten. Earlier, members spoke about the Eyre Highway. I think we surely will have to have a decent firebreak either side of the highway where it is heavily treed because we really cannot afford to have the Eyre Highway closed for 11 days. I look forward to seeing the federal government's royal commission report, and I suggest that this will be one report that should be read and implemented.

On energy, Geraldton has quite a bit of renewable energy. I had a proponent in my office the other day who was looking for support for geothermal production of energy. Apparently, it is potentially quite reasonable in Geraldton. Although we built the first stage of the 330-kilovolt powerline from Pinjar to Three Springs for potential renewable energy, we need stage 2, which will cost about another \$170 million.

I would like to touch on a couple of agricultural issues. About a year ago, regional WA was shocked at two incidents of serious cattle losses due to a lack of water on a couple of stations—Noonkanbah in the Kimberley, where maybe 1 000 head were lost, and Yandeyarra in the Pilbara, where probably about 1 200 were lost. On 5 January 2019, Minister MacTiernan was quoted on the ABC as saying that the livestock compliance unit was investigating Noonkanbah and would release a report in the coming weeks. To my knowledge, and that of other people I have asked, no report has yet to see the light of day and no action seems to have been taken against those responsible. Farmers have regularly said to me that if the government is serious about animal welfare and wants to impose higher standards on industry, it will only be taken seriously if it is seen to have taken action on the incidents on these two stations. I call on the government to release these reports so that systems can be put in place and tragedies like these do not happen again. It is also sad to see this level of mismanagement on stations when nearby companies like Hancock Pastoral are investing large amounts of capital to turn their properties into what the properties potentially are—the real engines of a strong, viable northern beef industry. I will also echo the comments of the pastoral industry on the Fitzroy River for the government to come up with some kind of water allocation for the Fitzroy. There is potential to come up with a win-win solution for all the people of that region that could involve hundreds or possibly thousands of jobs.

Another concern that is now being discussed almost daily in the media is the dire state of the Western Australian dairy industry. I had quite regular contact with the industry when I was the shadow minister, and attended a couple of its dairy innovation days. Our local dairy industry is small, but it is focused on being best practice and being as efficient as possible. They are very hardworking people, and it is potentially a valuable niche industry in Western Australia. The industry has never really recovered from the damage that Wesfarmers and Coles did when they decided that milk should be sold in their shops for \$1 a litre. This is apparently how a free market in dairy works; a duopoly tells the industry how much it will pay. I find the government and ministers' inaction and disinterest in this industry baffling.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia's biannual economic forecast for Western Australia was released in January. Reading it, I think it quite accurately reflected what I have picked up around the state and in my electorate of Geraldton. It describes the economy as flat and states that the total hours worked in WA has remained flat since 2012, despite a nine per cent increase in population. Business investment has dropped 90 per cent over that period with the end of the resources boom, and the domestic economy has shrunk by 15 per cent. The report warns against relying on a fresh round of investment in the resources industry to turn WA around, pointing out that the value of the planned projects is just 20 per cent of those constructed between 2010 and 2013. Half of the planned projects are still awaiting final investment decisions, including Scarborough and Browse, but I think most of us are quite confident that they will be approved. Average household income is no higher today than it was in 2012, while in the past five years, expenses like electricity, water, property rates charges and childcare have all increased by more than 20 per cent. As others have said, the housebuilding market is very flat, or, in the case of Geraldton, extremely flat. Western Australia continues to just struggle along in the wake of the resources boom that occurred during the Barnett years.

The government is fond of criticising the increases in land tax that happened during the Barnett years, so I dug out the interstate comparison in the Department of Treasury's Overview of State Taxes and Royalties 2018–19. In the categories I would most likely expect to be charged, out of eight values, Western Australia was lowest in five of them and second lowest in three of them. Spare a thought for South Australia, whose land taxes are mostly double what is charged in Western Australia. I would also like to see the methodology that proves that the increases in land tax by the Barnett government led to the falls in house prices at that time. I think a lot of other factors were present at that time, and since most residential owners do not pay land tax, I do not think it had much of an effect on house prices.



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p576c-596a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
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I was quite encouraged by a press release I received the other day about the government's proposed rail access reforms—in particular, changing the asset valuation method and requiring published standard offers, better protection from unfair discrimination, increased transparency and making the regulatory process more efficient. I consider that the regime under which the CBH Group had to try to negotiate with Arc Infrastructure was ridiculous. How can a company be charged an amount to access a 100-year-old railway line that is worked out on the value of a brand-new line? How can the state lease out a line and then be powerless to do anything about it if the lessee will not use it or hand it back? I encourage the government to do all it can to make the regime fairer and to work to get as much freight as possible onto rail.

**Mr D.R. Michael** interjected.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** I know that the government is trying to fix the situation as it is, and I am being encouraging and saying that to whatever extent it can, it should push it as hard as it can. There is potential there for a lot of improvement; that is what I am saying.

There are a couple of local issues. One is aluminium can recycling. One of my constituents has a successful local business in Geraldton that has taken him 17 years to establish. He has built special cages that he takes to businesses like pubs and clubs. He dumps them outside; they fill them up with aluminium cans; he picks up the cans, takes them away, crushes them and puts them into bales and sends them to Perth. He gets about \$1 000 per tonne for his aluminium cans, and he passes a percentage of that back to the places where he leaves the cages. Unfortunately, he has been refused approval to be part of the new recycling scheme.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** This component is about 15 per cent of his business. I think this is really unfair. I have written to the minister about it and I am waiting for a reply. Here is a person who, over 17 years, has probably done more for recycling aluminium cans in Geraldton than anyone else has. They call aluminium cans "solid energy" because it takes so much energy to create an aluminium can. I think it is amazingly unfair that he gets left out in the dark when he has done so much to develop the industry.

I refer to power issues. In summers in the midwest we get a lot of power issues, and this is another summer when we have had quite a few. We get a combination of dust, no rain, humidity and dew, and it causes arcing, pole-top fires and blackouts. But a newer problem—once again, I will acknowledge it came in, I think, in 2013—is that the people fixing the lines delay re-energising them until they have met a certain set of fire danger criteria. I understand why they are doing that, but it means that the thing is fixed up and ready to go—we had this problem this year in Dongara—and then they sit for a day waiting for the gauges and dials to tell them it is okay to switch it back on. I say there has to be a better way. We cannot have towns of 3 500 people, or Kalbarri, which has 7 000 people in the summer, just left without power for days on end. It is unthinkable. We cannot do that.

We have very good work teams to fix the lines, but, unfortunately—once again, it was when we were in government—the communications local liaison position was abolished. That person's job was to go round and talk to people and try to sort out their power problems. We do not have anyone doing that job now. Another problem which flows on from that is if I report a power problem here at five o'clock, say, I will not have any idea of when it is going to be fixed until sometime the next day. The work crew goes into the office at seven o'clock; that is when the office opens and that is when one is contacted to say when the power is going to go back on. If someone has a business—in this case, the brickworks—they do not know whether to ask their staff to come to work or say that there is no work for them to do because there is no power. It is quite a serious issue. I am told that our brickworks is sort of hanging by a thread now, which is a great disappointment. It has been there a long time. The Minister for Energy has told me that he will come up and attend a public forum convened by the City of Greater Geraldton about this, and I look forward to some useful exchanges and outcomes. It is not a lynching squad; it is just an exchange of views and knowledge.

I spent most of the first month of this year doing a detailed stocktake of the expenditure of the previous government, the Barnett government, in Geraldton, so no matter which way we look at it, Geraldton appears to have done its fair share of budget repair. On average, on specific projects, the Barnett government spent \$51 million a year, and the current government has been spending about \$38 million a year. However, that includes the provision of \$73 million for the extensions to the hospital, and a peg has not even been put in the ground yet, but I am assuming that that will go ahead. The previous government spent \$57 million on school buildings and this Labor government has spent \$550 000. The previous government spent \$36.7 million on TAFE buildings; the current government has not spent anything on those. The previous government spent \$9.3 million on emergency service facilities and Labor has spent \$2.3 million. The previous government spent \$3 million on heritage buildings and Labor has spent nothing. The previous government spent \$20.5 million on crisis housing and housing; Labor has not spent anything. It is a pretty similar story for sports facilities, beach erosion, major roadworks, the port and sewerage. That work will become public, so people are welcome to look at it and tear it to pieces. Of course, the figure that I worked on is the figure that appeared in the budget for that project, because, as is often said, if it appears in the budget, then it is real money.

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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Not included in that work was, as I mentioned before, the 330-kilovolt powerline to Three Springs, which, at \$419 million, was Western Power's biggest investment for 20 years. This reinforces Geraldton's power supply but it was not built exclusively for Geraldton. Having looked at the totals and the range of projects that we did during our eight and a half years, it is actually quite an amazing list, and I am very proud of it. Thank you very much.

**MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen)** [3.50 pm]: The Premier's Statement demonstrates that he still has the drive and passion for the task at hand and that he places the interests of Western Australians very much at the forefront. He knows that our ambitious agenda is a work in progress. That said, the McGowan government has achieved much, but there is still much to do and we cannot rest on our laurels. I was particularly pleased to hear the Premier's reference to climate change policy, which compares favourably to the head-in-the-sand approach of the federal government and Prime Minister Scott Morrison. As an aside, members might be interested to know that the Western Australian government under Premier Dowding was the first state government to have a climate change policy, and I was one of the authors. To still be having a problem addressing climate change at a federal level some 30 years on is somewhat perplexing.

We have a big year ahead and I will reflect on some of the issues that we will face in this chamber this year, and also some local issues of concern. We have certainly had an eventful summer.

I echo the words of other members to our many thousands of brothers and sisters in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria affected by bushfires: our thoughts are with you—likewise to the first responders, who are not only courageous, but work to the point of exhaustion. All Australians must be mindful that the psychological scars will not be as easy to address as the reconstruction of a house, a bridge or a school. Reminders of trauma will linger for many months, and even years. It will significantly incapacitate some, irreparably change the outlook on life for many, and inconveniently resurface unsolicited and unannounced. A royal commission will not do much to assist those people. What will assist is the ongoing allocation of funds raised for the medium and long-term needs of those affected by post-traumatic stress disorder. What will help is the presence of professionals within affected communities to make themselves available for counselling, as well as for the general community to conduct community-wide training in psychological first aid. This will enable others to recognise the toll of trauma in peers, neighbours or loved ones and urge them to seek professional help.

Closer to home, the fires in Yanchep required a massive effort to contain fires raging over four days and requiring another week of hard work to mop up. In the areas of peat, the fire is still alight underground. I am told that it is one of the largest fires ever in the City of Wanneroo, with a fire front of 15 kilometres running as far as Woodridge in the Shire of Gingin.

Earlier this week I received a briefing from emergency management personnel at the City of Wanneroo so that I could ascertain whether any issues needed addressing before the next major incident and which I might mention in this speech. As members are aware, in fires of this magnitude the Department of Fire and Emergency Services assumes responsibility as the incident manager. It is, however, all hands on deck, including local government brigades and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The firefighters worked in record-breaking heatwave conditions with Perth sweltering through three consecutive days above 40 degrees. More than 6 000 homes were at risk and had been saved, despite 13 000 hectares of bush having been burnt. One residence and a petrol station were destroyed and a number of other structures and power and phone infrastructure were affected. Fencing and, of course, wildlife and parks and reserves suffered loss and damage. Hundreds of residents were evacuated or displaced with hundreds of homes being inaccessible for up to six days. By and large the integrated nature of the operation worked very well. The local government considered that at a command level a more inclusive approach would be welcomed, allowing more reliance on its local knowledge and expertise. Over the years this has been a common complaint and concern. I mention it only so that incident managers continue to be cognisant of these concerns. However, I am told that on the fire ground, optimal and constructive relationships between personnel occurred. I would like to raise a few issues in the hope that action can be taken.

As some members are aware, the area of the fire was littered with ordnance. During World War II pilots training at Pearce airbase would practise dropping unused shells in the vicinity. The effect of this is that fire crews are restricted to main roads and tracks to avoid the ordnance. It might be appropriate to make renewed representations to the commonwealth to request the clean-up and removal of that ordnance.

Animals could not be kept at evacuation centres. Smaller domestic pets were housed at council pounds, but the fees were waived. More problematical, of course, were horses. There was an incident in which three children on their own refused to leave their home under threat unless they could take their three dogs. Consideration should be given to reimbursing local government from the emergency services levy for the boarding of such animals. Better still would be to establish an online register in advance, as happens in some other states, so that people can volunteer to foster animals in emergencies.

While on the subject of volunteers, large incidents such as this one motivate others to volunteer to become firefighters. I understand that at Wanneroo dozens of people came forward but, of course, they cannot be deployed until they have been adequately trained and provided with personal protective equipment. However, to capitalise on the momentum of those volunteers, consideration might be given to additional ad hoc funding to local governments in these circumstances to put on additional training and to purchase the additional personal protective equipment after events like this.

Of particular concern were several incidents in which children were at home by themselves and crews had to run the gauntlet of the fires to ensure that they could be evacuated. I note that it was school holidays. Also, a blind man was at home by himself and his family were unable to reach him as the roads were blocked. Likewise, aged care residents were told by management, which was monitoring the situation closely, that there was no need to evacuate. However, some individuals received text messages suggesting that they should evacuate. The issues around vulnerable people who are isolated in their homes is a difficult one.

Finally, an issue raised in Keelty reports 1 and 2, and the Ferguson report, is the very real issue of a lack of coordination of communication in traffic management. That responsibility in this instance was divided between the City of Wanneroo, Main Roads Western Australia, the Shire of Gingin and the police. How is it that it is still not sorted?

Overall, the provision of water bomber aircraft, the allocation of every available appliance and crew and the experience and expertise of those managing the incident thankfully resulted in no lives lost and minimal property losses—an excellent outcome for which all those involved deserve our thanks and appreciation. More broadly, Australia-wide recent events starkly demonstrate the need for more fire bombers to be placed in Australia permanently. With climate change, fire seasons in both the southern and northern hemispheres are starting sooner and ending later. There is no longer the neat demarcation of being able to relocate and deploy a water bomber aircraft in the off season from northern to southern hemispheres and vice versa in line with chronological seasons. Now there is an overlap. For example, some of the most destructive wildfires in California in the last decade have occurred in its winter and fall: in Butte County in November 2018; Sonoma in October 2017; Napa and Sonoma in September 2015; and Ventura County in November 2018 and December 2017—the list goes on. Similarly, analysts in Canada observed that wildfire activity is increasing and fire seasons are getting longer. We can no longer anticipate that water bombers will be available when needed. We do not need a royal commission to know that. Although the federal government has already made a commitment to aircraft, an audit of whether that commitment is sufficient when fires are concurrently a threat in different states needs to be done.

Finally, on the devastation of fire, it is timely to make sure that we understand the disaster provisions of our insurance contracts. This applies to not only fires, but also cyclones and floods. *Choice* magazine is campaigning for a standardised definition of fire insurance. Its investigations have found that there is no standard definition of fire across insurance policies, which means that individual insurance companies are free to define fire however they like and those definitions can give them leverage to deny claims. When is a fire not a fire? According to *Choice*, a number of major insurers exclude damage from heat, ash and smoke if the home has not caught fire and the damage was not caused by a burning building within 10 metres. That means that scorching caused by a burning bush outside a person's home, for example, may not be covered. It found the worst examples of confusing fire definitions and exclusions in the policies of AAMI, Apia, Virgin Money, QBE, Coles, GIO, Youi, Budget Direct and ING, which are not small fly-by-night companies. *Choice* is starting an online petition to the federal government to pressure insurers to treat people fairly, especially since the banking royal commission. I, too, agree with *Choice* that this shonky loophole needs closing.

Throughout its term, jobs have been the focus of the McGowan government. I am delighted that this remains a priority in the Premier's Statement. I am gratified to hear that the McGowan government's commitment to pass industrial manslaughter laws will be met with the bill being debated in the chamber shortly. After all, having a job is one thing, but coming home safely at night to one's family is a fundamental right. I will discuss that issue at length during the second reading debate of the bill.

Just as workplaces need to be safe, workers need to receive a fair day's pay for their work. For that reason, I congratulate the McGowan government and Minister Bill Johnston for holding an inquiry into wage theft and committing to act on the 28 recommendations of the report released last December.

Wage theft, as we all know, is the systematic and deliberate underpayment of wages and entitlements to workers. The inquiry found that wage theft is occurring in Western Australia. The forms of systematic and deliberate underpayment identified included unpaid hours, non-payment of wages or allowances for work performed, underpayment of wages and entitlements, unauthorised or unreasonable deductions, and non-payment of superannuation.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 13 February 2020]

p576c-596a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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Cafes and restaurants, contract cleaning, retail and horticulture were all identified as areas in which the likelihood of wage theft is higher. It is no coincidence that many of the employees in these industries are from migrant and refugee backgrounds, which makes this exploitation even more unconscionable.

Not only does wage theft have a significant impact on workers through financial hardship, it also impacts on businesses that do the right thing by creating an unfair competitive disadvantage for employers that correctly pay their employees.

The report concluded that the lack of detection of noncompliance and enforcement of employment laws, the intention of some employers to maximise financial return, the vulnerability of some workers and a lack of knowledge of employment conditions by both workers and employers were all factors as to why wage theft occurs. As I said, there were 28 recommendations. They included the establishment of a wage theft website to give information to Western Australian workers on their entitlements, which might be under a federal or a state award. That website would advise workers how to seek assistance, how to report wage theft anonymously, and how to seek unpaid superannuation. Also recommended was the development of effective information and education campaigns in consultation with unions and employers.

It goes without saying that there needs to be greater engagement with the commonwealth on various issues to address wage theft, including measures to facilitate cooperation between state and federal inspectors. Likewise, a labour hire licensing scheme needs to be actioned in Western Australia in consultation with the commonwealth, which has already committed to a national labour hire registration scheme for the horticulture, meat processing, cleaning and security industries—but it needs to go further than that.

The McGowan government has undertaken to give further consideration to wage theft being criminalised for the most serious forms of exploitative conduct in the national industrial relations system. I am delighted that shonky bosses will now be put on notice. Workers deserve and should expect the protection of the law, just like everyone else. Wage theft is fundamentally exploitative and unjust.

Speaking of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, I am delighted that following amendments the Small Business Development Corporation will be permitted to investigate and ensure contractors pay their subcontractors. This is an area in which small businesses are placed at a disadvantage. Additional laws, I understand, are being contemplated following the report by lawyer John Fiocco titled "Security of Payment Reform in the WA Building and Construction Industry".

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** These days a subcontractor can further subcontract work out. In the case of insolvency, those at the bottom of the pyramid are left high and dry with no redress because they have no legal relationship with the principal contractor. The Fiocco report endorsed the conclusions of an earlier report authored by John Murray, who noted that the most effective way that payments can be secured from misuse and the risk of head contractor insolvency is by implementing a cascading statutory trust scheme. It was concluded that only such a statutory trust would secure the payment of all subcontractors, including the most vulnerable who are at the base of the contractual claim.

I am heartened by the Minister for Commerce's pledge last year which reflects this approach. An article in *The West Australian* on 22 February last year titled "Attorney-General John Quigley promises laws to protect subcontractors' pay" states he pledged in February to introduce legislation this year to implement Fiocco's recommendations of a 15-day "pay or explain why not" deadline, cascading statutory trusts to protect payments down the food chain, and "an efficient and quick adjudication system" The article states —

In the decades since cascading statutory trusts were first proposed and now, he said, "we have had difficulties ... with insolvencies, subcontractors suffering when large contractors become insolvent and they are left swinging in the breeze".

Next on the job front is procurement framework reform. The Department of Finance is currently undertaking this. However, in my view, it should include an examination of the current requirements for contractors to employ apprentices. This is essential—first, to make sure our young people are given every opportunity to acquire skills, and, allied to that, to maintain the skills base which is diminishing post-boom as tradies leave Western Australia.

However, the requirement to employ apprentices is, as understand it, honoured in the breach. Large contractors are using the same apprentices concurrently on a number of large jobs. In other words, this distorts and subverts the very intention to ensure genuine and numerous apprenticeship placements and opportunities.

I will conclude with a number of local concerns. The first of these is a lack of a security patrol regime in the City of Wanneroo. The effect of this gap is the expectation of the community that police will address matters in

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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the absence of security patrols. The city does have rangers, but they are not on patrol after midnight and their role is limited to enforcing by-laws, litter and illegal dumping, abandoned and off-road vehicles, unauthorised signs and the like. Residents are referred to police for hooning, antisocial behaviour, noisy parties and neighbourhood disputes. As members would appreciate, these are all priority 4, if even crimes at all, and, accordingly, police attendance would be available only after all the high-priority matters, such as serious assaults, family violence, an offender currently being on the property and so on, are dealt with. The effect of this is that minor, but nevertheless trying, matters get little attention. In the past, parts of my electorate have been in the City of Stirling and I strongly support the excellent work done by its security patrols, whose work is described on its website as —

**We're committed to providing a strong sense of safety in our community by operating security patrols 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.**

The City's security patrol officers:

- Monitor and report suspicious activity and antisocial behaviour
- Attend community disturbances such as noisy parties
- Conduct regular patrols of crime hotspots
- Report damage and vandalism in our streets.

In addition to the reactive work done by these City of Stirling patrols, a strong evidence-based crime prevention component has been based on firsthand information acquired by these patrols. I fully endorse the City of Wanneroo, which now covers a distance of over 658 square kilometres, adopting a similar approach. The current model simply is not working.

Now I turn to road infrastructure. To the north of Girrawheen, major interchanges are being built at the intersection of Wanneroo Road and Joondalup Drive and the intersection of Wanneroo Road and Ocean Reef Road. South of these intersections is Gngangara Road, which is the preferred route for a heavy volume of trucks coming from the east. These vehicles fail to observe speed signs and make crossing the road impossible, by either cars or pedestrians, some of whom are schoolchildren crossing to attend Madeley Primary School. The surrounding residential streets are used as rat runs to a light industrial area not otherwise easily accessible. Ultimately, it should be the subject of similar treatment to the intersections I have just mentioned, with the road being linked to Whitfords Avenue and Mitchell Freeway. This would certainly open up light industrial areas, enabling more local jobs and businesses to expand. Further complicating factors include the need to acquire properties to permit the final plans to be implemented and the fact that it is a joint responsibility of both local and state governments. In the meantime, as a matter of urgency, a number of remedial measures need to be put in place, and I am currently working with residents, the Minister for Transport and the council to progress these.

Yet another road that demonstrates that problems arise when state and local governments disagree on an approach is the eastern section of Landsdale Road. Traditionally, the road was almost semi-rural and the speed limit was 60 kilometres an hour. Now it is very much built up and although the 60-kilometre-an-hour signs have been taken down and the default position is that it is now a 50-kilometre-an-hour zone, it is not readily known or understood by residents and those using the road. Long-suffering resident Shane Pope has been campaigning unsuccessfully for some time. In an email, he put it to me thus —

The City of Wanneroo ... has previously requested for this road to be reduced to 50km/h which was not approved under the MRWA speed limit policy due to the high 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds which I understand as signage alone will have minimal effect on vehicle speeds.

Unfortunately this has left local residents with a 'fully built up' road ... that operates at 71km/h and the CoW will not construct LATM —

That is, local area traffic management —

measures along the road because their policy dictates that they can only assess roads based on the posted speed limit. This has resulted in the MRWA speed zone policy and the CoW LATM policy being in contradictory conflict ...

And he goes on. We are basically talking about a couple of signs, and the amount of correspondence and research that Mr Pope and I have done is incredible to have this amount of argument over a road. As he rightly points out, this section of road is near where students cross to go to Carnaby Rise Primary School, Hardcastle Park and Landsdale Early Learning and Enrichment. I am hopeful it can be resolved, but sometimes the amount of time taken on these issues is inversely proportional to the amount of work that is required for its resolution.

Finally, I want to quickly raise the vexed issue of school parking. Although all of us are familiar with these kinds of issues, which arise frequently, this week I was confronted with a new issue in this regard. A mum advised me

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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that she does a school drop-off with a child with a disability. That child needs to be walked into class but does not have a physical impediment to walking. She told me that in Western Australia, eligibility for an ACROD permit is limited to persons who are unable to walk and always require the use of a wheelchair, someone whose ability to walk is severely restricted by a permanent medical condition or disability, or someone whose ability to walk is severely restricted by a temporary medical condition or disability. This child has none of those. Surely some commonsense can be brought to bear, as it is in Victoria and New South Wales, especially when I see many instances on a daily basis of the permit system being rorted. This is a case of a legitimate need that falls outside that category.

On that note, like the Premier and the rest of the McGowan government who will be working assiduously to fulfil our agenda, I, too, will be doing so. I hope the next time I speak, I can report progress on some of the issues that I have raised.

**MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton)** [4.17 pm]: Delivering—that is what the McGowan Labor government is doing for the people of the electorate of Bicton and right across WA. This government is continuing to deliver on the commitments that were made before the 2017 election. We are keeping our word. As we begin 2020, we on this side of the chamber do so with optimism, energy and focus. Over the past three years, our state has seen both hard times and good times. We on this side of the chamber greeted both with equal vigour, and we are well prepared for whatever is to come in 2020 because we are a united team.

My contribution to the Premier's Statement today will be one of reflection, as well as looking forward. As we move into 2020, I believe it is important we spend some time looking back at where we have been in preparation for navigating the road ahead of us. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Premier, ministers and all my caucus colleagues for their incredible efforts and achievements throughout the past three years, and I thank them today for their positive approach to leadership, policy reform and the delivery of our commitments. It is a privilege to serve my electorate here in Parliament as part of a diverse, dynamic and cohesive team. It is as important to me as it is to them that we remain mindful of who we are here to serve and the enormous responsibility that comes with that service. I would also like to acknowledge and commend the Premier and my colleagues who have spoken before me and thank them for their thoughtful and positive contributions to the debate. Although many on this side of the house waited patiently for their opportunity to speak, at least two important facts have already been established by those on this side of the house who did get the chance. I thank the member for Wanneroo for her articulation of these, and I quote —

... we said what we would do, and we are doing what we said.

She also said that the McGowan Labor government means sensible and stable government. As I look back over the time since the 2017 election, I see many great things that this government has delivered in my electorate of Bicton and across our vast state—things that are making both an immediate and a long-term positive difference to the people of Bicton and beyond. We have delivered to our schools. The recent rollout of the school's maintenance blitz funding is helping to improve the physical appearance, safety, access and amenity in schools across WA. Delivering on school maintenance was made possible because we are also delivering on budget repair. The school's maintenance blitz funding is tangible evidence of this government's commitment to good financial management. The McGowan government's careful, diligent and disciplined approach to the state finances means that every public school across Western Australia has received funding for vital maintenance works. All but one school in the electorate of Bicton is more than 50 years old, with at least two local primary schools having been built over 100 years ago. As we all know, ageing buildings require lots of work to keep them viable and fit for purpose. In all, \$724 624 has been committed to the school's maintenance blitz funding in the electorate of Bicton. Further, the two public hospitals that serve the needs of my constituency, being Fiona Stanley Hospital and Fremantle Hospital, have, between them, been the recipients of \$1.815 million of the hospital maintenance blitz.

The McGowan government is delivering science labs across the electorate of Bicton, with Bicton Primary School running its lab successfully throughout 2019, and plans are well underway for science labs to open in Attadale and Palmyra Primary Schools by 2021. We are preparing our kids for the jobs of the future by investing in science labs; science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and coding. As I mentioned earlier, many of my local public schools are ageing and can no longer cater adequately for the changing needs of their communities or meet community expectations as facilities of learning. Richmond Primary School will celebrate its centenary in 2021 and, quite frankly, its administration building was looking every bit of its almost 100 years. That is until just over \$700 000 was committed to updating the building to incorporate contemporary features while maintaining the heritage exterior. It was a pleasure to attend the official opening late last year with the Minister for Education and Training, and join in Richmond Primary School's community celebration of its now fit-for-purpose administration building. Attadale Primary School opened its purpose-built early learning centre in 2019. It was wonderful to be at the official launch of the new school site-based early learning centre, and to see the facility in action with all the wonderful opportunities it opens up for the children.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 13 February 2020]

p576c-596a

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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Melville Senior High School is the only public secondary school in the electorate of Bicton. I was proud not only as the local member, but also as a parent and active member of the school's parents and citizens association, to see the completion and opening of its performing arts centre, which was committed to prior to the March 2017 state election. My daughter has just commenced year 7 at Melville Senior High School, so I was recently at the school simply as a parent at the parent information session for the incoming 2020 cohort. This was the first event to be held in the new performing arts centre, so I can personally attest to the excellence of the facility. I look forward to attending the official opening of the performing arts centre later this month. All of this school building and maintenance activity means work for local businesses and more jobs across the electorate of Bicton and beyond.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Melville Senior High School principal, Phil White, and staff and students on recently winning the Leadership Excellence Award at the Governor's School STEM Awards. It was a fantastic achievement and recognition of the school's dedication to excellence in the academic areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, alongside broad interest areas and disciplines embraced at this truly comprehensive public high school. As mum to a son who recently graduated from Melville Senior High, and a daughter who recently graduated from Palmyra Primary School—now commenced at Melville Senior High—I add my personal gratitude alongside those of the constituents of Bicton for the maintenance works, new builds and facility upgrades to the Melville, Bicton, Palmyra, Richmond and Attadale Primary Schools and Melville Senior High School.

At the conclusion of 2019, my son joined thousands of other young people right across this state who concluded their secondary schooling years. For him and his cohort, future work opportunities and further study options have become a necessary focus. The WA graduating high school class of 2019 and their parents are looking for direction from the higher education and training sector, and to government for reassurance of job growth and employment stability. I, along with the parents of high school graduates in the electorate of Bicton, was relieved and excited to hear the announcement on Monday, 14 October, that the McGowan government was reducing TAFE fees by 50 per cent. The announcement went on to explain that TAFE fees for 34 high-priority qualifications would be halved from 1 January this year. The fee reductions have made training more affordable for thousands of students and follows the Lower Fees, Local Skills policy that saw the TAFE fee freeze introduced by the McGowan government in 2017. The two-year initiative is designed to stimulate training in growth areas, supporting the WA economy. This exciting announcement for school leavers is another benefit of the McGowan government's budget surplus, which continues to deliver ongoing benefits across WA. This significant reduction in TAFE fees for selected high-priority qualifications at the commencement of this year's courses makes training more affordable for thousands of students, to the great relief of parents as well as the high school graduates of 2019. The \$53.5 million Lower Fees, Local Skills policy will ensure Western Australians can get the training needed for the jobs of tomorrow, supporting the WA economy. We will do this by capping maximum annual fees for targeted courses at \$400 for concession students and youth, and \$1 200 for non-concession students.

The Lower Fees, Local Skills policy means 50 per cent fee reductions to courses that align with emerging skills shortages, the state's economic diversification strategy, and important sectors of the local economy. These include aged and disability care, Metronet, civil construction, defence and cybersecurity, hospitality and tourism. This is already proving to be a winning strategy, with early data showing enrolments have increased by up to 84 per cent in the targeted courses. TAFE fees skyrocketed under the previous Liberal-National government, overseen by then minister for training, now the Leader of the Opposition, which led to some courses increasing by as much as 510 per cent, having a devastating impact on the sector and putting TAFE out of reach for many young people. The McGowan Labor government's Lower Fees, Local Skills policy is our commitment to right this wrong by making targeted courses affordable, and is part of our overall job-creating strategy. We are investing in job-creating projects across WA as well as in the people we need to build them.

Our school leavers deserve the best possible chance to get into training, or pick up an apprenticeship or traineeship. By reducing fees by 50 per cent, we are making training more affordable for students wanting to do courses that lead to in-demand jobs in WA. The skills that are now in short supply are learnt at TAFE and training institutions, and by reducing fees we are creating opportunities for young people to launch their careers by getting the skills that employers want, without expensive course fees. This, in turn, leads to more local skills and more local jobs. TAFE can also be an important alternate pathway to university. This is a great example of how the McGowan Labor government is leading the way in job creation, job security and career pathways for Western Australian school leavers.

Small business and medium enterprises are an incredibly important employer. SMEs represents around 97 per cent of all businesses in Western Australia, from manufacturing and business services to retail, hospitality, transport and so much more. This sector is a significant employer and job creator. This government is continuing to deliver for the small business owners of Bicton and beyond. As someone with a small family business, I know firsthand how important it is that small business owners have access to resources, opportunity and support. In some parts of

my electorate, income from small business ownership is the primary source of income for over half of the local population. I acknowledge the Minister for Small Business for his leadership in this area with the work that is being done in the procurement space through our commitment to local content on state government procurement via the implementation of the Western Australian Jobs Act. The small business owners of Bicton want the best opportunity to secure work and grow their businesses. The WA Jobs Act sets out the government's commitment to ensure that the \$27 billion spent annually on state government procurement maximises opportunities for local businesses and creates more jobs for Western Australians. The Western Australian industry participation strategy sets out the pathway to this opportunity. There is a renewed confidence amongst the small businesses of Bicton, a sense that our economy is on the up under this government's leadership.

Likewise, the changes to payroll tax have been another welcome announcement for the small business sector in my electorate. The delivery of payroll tax relief for WA businesses has long been called for by the sector. Our announcement on Thursday, 31 October 2019, proved once again that this government listens. This tax relief is made possible only due to the McGowan government's careful budget management, resulting in a payroll tax cut for nearly 12 000 small and medium businesses in WA, with around 1 000 businesses in Western Australia no longer being liable for any payroll tax, while also cutting payroll tax liability for an additional 11 000 businesses. The lifting of the exemption threshold to \$1 million over two years is music to the ears of the many small business owners of Bicton. These changes will provide \$170 million in tax relief over four years, with reduced costs for businesses expecting to lead to their ability to expand and create more jobs. By reducing the payroll tax burden on Western Australian small and medium businesses, we will lower the costs associated with the hiring of additional staff, and provide an opportunity for those businesses to reinvest. It is timely to note that \$535 million has been invested by the McGowan government in recent weeks to help stimulate the WA economy and create jobs for Western Australians, with the raising of the payroll tax threshold an important part of this investment. This is being made possible because we are delivering on budget repair, resulting in a budget surplus two years earlier than expected, a net debt of \$4.5 billion lower than forecast under the previous Liberal-National government, and WA is the only state where debt is declining. Good financial management is important to the people of my electorate, I know this because when I knock on the doors of Attadale, Bicton, Melville, Palmyra and East Fremantle, I am told repeatedly that this government is doing a great job managing the books—much better than the last lot.

Another area I am personally very proud that the McGowan government is delivering on is preserving our environment and building healthy and resilient communities. We are taking the challenges of climate change very seriously. As a long-term community environmental advocate and former health and fitness leader, it is in these matters that I am most emotionally connected and engaged. Wetlands keep our water cleaner, our air clearer, plus contribute to mental and physical wellbeing and provide a home for a diverse range of animal and plant life.

We came to government with a commitment to protect the Beeliar wetlands by stopping the Perth Freight Link. Roe 8 was to be the first stage of this flawed road project. This commitment has not, and will not, change. We said that we would do this and we are doing what we said. I also made a personal commitment to the people of Bicton to protect the open spaces adjacent to the Attadale foreshore, the Swan Estuary Marine Park shoreline, the internationally significant bird migratory routes, and the regionally significant bushland-wetland linkage from Alfred Cove to Point Walter. I am therefore personally proud that it was the McGowan Labor government that delivered on protecting important local open space by refusing to sell the crown land at Alfred Cove for the purpose of an artificial wave park. This has resulted in the continuous use of the crown land and the land adjacent as a vital natural buffer zone between the river and land. I take this opportunity now to recommit to the people of my electorate that I will continue to do all that I can as their local member to protect our local natural environment now and into the future.

The connection between a healthy environment and healthy humans is unmistakable. Healthy ecosystems provide the shelter, food, clean air and water that sustain all living organisms, including us. Climate change is real and as we bear witness to the devastating impacts of previous climate inaction, we know that a business-as-usual approach is not an acceptable option. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its third assessment report, concluded —

Overall, climate change is projected to increase threats to human health, particularly in lower income populations, predominantly within tropical/subtropical countries.

That summary went on to state —

Climate change can affect human health directly (e.g., impacts of thermal stress, death/injury in floods and storms) and indirectly through changes in the ranges of disease vectors (e.g., mosquitoes), water-borne pathogens, water quality, air quality, and food availability and quality. The actual health impacts will be strongly influenced by local environmental conditions and socio-economic circumstances, and by the range of social, institutional, technological, and behavioural adaptations taken to reduce the full range of threats to health.



Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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Broadly, a change in climatic conditions can have three kinds of health impacts:

- Those that are relatively direct, usually caused by weather extremes.
- The health consequences of various processes of environmental change and ecological disruption that occur in response to climate change.
- The diverse health consequences—traumatic, infectious, nutritional, psychological and other—that occur in demoralized and displaced populations in the wake of climate-induced economic dislocation, environmental decline, and conflict situations.

There is no more compelling example of these impacts than this summer's devastating bushfires—off the back of years of drought—on the east coast of Australia, and those that closed the Eyre Highway and burnt vast areas of WA's Stirling Ranges, a biodiversity hotspot that supports over 1 500 plant species. At least 87 of those plant species are found nowhere else in the world.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** I am incredibly proud of the McGowan Labor government's willingness to tackle the challenges of climate change in the face of the Liberal federal government's complacency and inaction.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Dawesville —

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Dawesville, you have been doing so well.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! Member for Dawesville! Minister! Member for Bicton, carry on, please.

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** Finished?

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** Mate, I'm just getting started.

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** Although we urgently need leadership at a federal level to make any big impact, it is clear that will not be happening under a Morrison-led federal government. We therefore recognise that we cannot afford to wait for change at a commonwealth level. We also acknowledge that the state has an important role to play. That is why the McGowan government is taking action in a multi-pronged approach that includes the development of a new climate change policy that recognises Western Australia's vulnerability to impacts of climate change and our need to create a better environment for future generations. Our state is particularly exposed to impacts from national emissions policies because of its energy-intensive, resource-based economy. The actions needed to combat climate change present us with economic and social challenges but this Labor government cannot and will not be mired by the apathy and inaction of the Liberal federal government when it comes to action on climate change.

A number of climate-related initiatives are already underway in WA, including measures to enhance renewable energy, including renewable hydrogen; to develop strategies to secure our water supplies to offset a significant decline in rainfall, including recycled water and desalination; to accelerate the uptake of electric vehicles; and to unlock our state's significant carbon sequestration potential. A state climate policy will draw together and build on these measures. Consultation on climate change issues has formed an integral part of the policy development, with the calling for public comment on climate change issues and opportunities following the release of an issues paper last year. Public feedback by submission was sought on the issues and questions outlined in the issues paper to help inform the development of the state's climate policy. Further, in March last year, the McGowan government announced a Chief Health Officer inquiry to investigate the implications of climate change on health, including more frequent and intense weather events. The aim of the inquiry is to review the current planning and response capacity of the health system in relation to the health impacts of climate change, and make recommendations for improvement with respect to climate change mitigation and public health adaptation strategies. The statutory inquiry was a key recommendation of the climate and sustainability forum held in July 2018 and also one of the key priorities within the sustainable health review final report. The final report is expected by March this year. Its findings will form the basis of a new, coordinated health and climate change framework for WA, reflecting changes in climate science and national policy. Together with this government's achievements in landfill diversion and waste reduction, notably the ban on single-use plastic bags, introduction of the three-bin food organics and garden organics system and the upcoming container deposit scheme on 2 June, this government is taking action. It is evident that under the leadership of the McGowan Labor government, our state's precious natural environment will remain a top priority.

Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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Two-thirds of the electorate of Bicton is blessed to be bordered by the beautiful Swan River, and we are incredibly fortunate to have several active and dedicated environmental community groups, including the Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group, the Bicton Environmental Action Group, the Friends of the East Fremantle Foreshore, Melville Senior High School's sustainability group, the Friends of Attadale Foreshore and Santa Maria College's eco sisters. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many community volunteers dedicating their time, knowledge and skills to care for the natural places throughout the electorate of Bicton. I greatly admire the commitment of these individuals who go about their activities of weeding, planting, rubbish collection, revetment work, citizen science data collection and many more important actions, despite rain, mosquitos or heat. It is a real joy to work side by side with some of these awesome individuals when my time allows. It is wonderful to know that some of these groups have been successful in receiving funding through this government's river care community grant program and natural resource management funding. I am proud to be a member of a government delivering the kind of environmental action my community expects.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to represent the people of the electorate of Bicton in the Parliament of Western Australia. It is an enormous privilege, one that I never take for granted. I am proud of what I have been able to deliver so far for my communities in my role as the member for Bicton, and I look forward to working hard, engaging with my local communities and achieving more for Bicton in 2020.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore)** [4.41 pm]: I would like to make a contribution and respond to the Premier's Statement. In doing so, I would like to start by paying tribute to the many firefighters right throughout Australia who have been so busy battling those flames we have seen in the eastern states, in the area south of Kalgoorlie, and also in my electorate at the end of last year. A very difficult fire started at Yanchep then ran into the lower part of my electorate, affecting many rural subdivisions at places such as Sovereign Hill, Woodridge, Guilderton and Redfield Park, for instance. I would like to pay tribute to all those who were involved in fighting those fires, but also in providing support to the people who were evacuated from those areas and went to evacuation centres in Quinns Rocks and Gingin. I visited the Gingin centre on a number of occasions. I was very impressed with the dedication of Red Cross and other officials who went there and gave of their time, even so far as looking after people's pets for them and making sure that the dogs that showed up had water and food and were kept separate from the cats. I thought that was a great effort on their part.

The Minister for Emergency Services went to that evacuation centre in Gingin, as did the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. I thank all those officials for doing so. There were other fires, including at Mogumber, which happened to start around about the time that the Gingin fire was coming to an end. We were all very excited that the big plane arrived at the Pearce air base, and that was going to put out the Gingin fire and then the Mogumber fire, but in fact, they took it to Collie. We did not get to see the pink foam spreading over Moore, but it was exciting to think that those type of resources were being made available for the fight. The Mogumber fire had a pretty disastrous effect on a number of landowners, including one farmer who lost virtually all their farm being burnt. I think 3 500 out of 4 000 acres of property was burnt. Considerable losses were incurred, some of which may not be insurable. I know that the minister is here, although he is probably deep in conversation with the member for Roe at the moment, but my constituent in the Mogumber area has queried whether an announcement of \$75 000 towards fire-affected farms and businesses made federally would be available in Western Australia and what the process would be if it was. If the minister at some point would explain that to me, that would be good. I do not have time for it now, unfortunately.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** I was just explaining that to your colleague.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Good; that is great. I see the member for Roe there. I think he asked a question about this the other day. No doubt we will get that answer, because my constituent would very much like to have a feeling about that.

The member for Geraldton today asked a question about Western Power outages in his electorate. The power outages that affected his electorate are not unique to his electorate. My electorate surrounds his, and for many days, people from as far south as Mooliabeenee, which is between Gingin and Bindoon, all the way up to Yuna, north of Geraldton, were without power. Something in the order of 2 900 households were affected. Of course, we know that they get compensation—\$80 for an outage—but that seems to be a pretty small amount of money considering the effect that it has upon them when the power is out, and considering that power outages are generally longer than they were in the past because of changes in protocols that Western Power have about re-energising lines on days of high fire danger. That means that it might be several days after a repair is made before the line is re-energised, which means instead of being out of power for one day, constituents may be out of power for three, four or five days. The \$80 outage payment is inadequate in those circumstances. Moreover, customer safety is also at risk because of the dependence on mobile phones for telecommunications. Just to provide a bit of context on that, I had a farming property in Badgingarra with a very long landline that led to an exchange. There were quite a few problems with that landline and Telstra removed it and installed a digital service to a mobile tower as my

landline equivalent. My research officer had similar issues on their family farm. A number of people do not have landlines, they now have phones that have been installed by Telstra that are not considered mobile phones, but they actually are. People have generally become very reliant on mobile phones. I dare say that many people now do not even have a landline and when they lose power, the telephones go out very quickly. I have heard of repeated problems with telephones in the electorate of Moore in the last year, or last number of years really, but it has been very bad in the last few months. Many towers are causing problems. Calls are dropping out and many other towers that have back-up batteries, which are stated to run from five to eight hours, virtually go out as soon as the power goes out. In one case in the town of Greenhead recently, Telstra informed my office that batteries had been replaced, yet the same thing continues to happen as soon as the power goes out: telecommunications drop out. For a lot of people, as I said, they become reliant on those mobile phones, but moreover, Western Power tell people to keep in touch about what is happening via the app and online services, which they cannot access due to mobile phones being out. Also, a number of shires and local government authorities use the mobile phone services as a communication tool regarding fire harvest and vehicle movement ban information, which is sent out by text message. That has become very common. Without text message services, those communications are lost, and in many circumstances, the DFES communication systems are located at the same sites as those towers and are also running out of power. It is causing all sorts of communication problems for the firefighters.

That has been reported to me by the firefighters themselves. A few weeks ago, I attended a debrief on the Mogumber fire and someone asked whether the fire brigade could have access to a plug-in point at the tower because they could then take a generator with them to keep those communications going in an emergency. It is something they would like looked at in the future.

We know that the telecommunications and power situation has become dire. There has been no improvement in the situation over the years that I have been involved in state Parliament or before that, when I was a local government shire president. We had a lot of power supply problems throughout the Shire of Dandaragan as well. I note that today the minister spoke about the silicon coating of powerlines that has taken place in the last five years—well, that has been going on for much, much longer than that. I know some areas where it has had to be reapplied because the silicon has now deteriorated. That happened on the Kalbarri line in 2014, when there was a series of disastrous power outages in Kalbarri. I think that line had been silicon coated in 2008 and the expectation was that the silicon would have a lifespan of 11 years or so, but it did not last even half of that time. The silicon is not actually a cure for the situation and a lot more attention needs to be put towards maintenance. We see this cycle time and again; we read it in *Hansard* and see the efforts of local members and communities to highlight the problem, then an effort is made to make a better maintenance program, and for a while there are no problems, but then that falls away again.

I would like to talk about health. Fortuitously, the Minister for Health has showed up. We are still very interested to see the minister. He promised in about 2017 that he would come up and look at some of the facilities in my area that I have concerns about. We are coming towards the end of this term of government, so it would be lovely if he could come up to Green Head and Leeman, for instance, to see what is up there. I did communicate with the minister about the situation in those towns, and he has undertaken to see that the current arrangements with Silver Chain are reviewed to ensure that the services that the towns need are being offered. I have no problem with Silver Chain. It does the job that it is asked to do; it is the contract that needs to be reviewed. Also telehealth is not available at that centre because the bandwidth is not sufficient, which we have had confirmed. We need the bandwidth to be improved so that people in Green Head and Leeman can join the twenty-first century and have access to reliable health services.

There is another town that has had a few problems in the related field of dental health services. I asked the Minister for Education and Training a question about the removal of the dental van service in Kalannie. Members may know that schools are provided with dental services by a dental van that travels to various schools. The dental technicians look at students, assess their needs and do fillings and other things. If something really complex is required, they will write a referral for the student to go to an orthodontist or a more appropriate source, but basic dental services can be undertaken in those vans. The town of Kalannie recently lost access to a dental van and people are being asked to travel to Dalwallinu to access those services. Heading east, Kalannie is the last school before Beacon, so it has a large catchment area. I think it is unreasonable to ask those parents to drive to Dalwallinu. When I had children at school, the dental van used to come, the kids would leave their class and go to be assessed by the dentist, and then they would come back to class. At some stage later, they might go back for treatment. It would be back and forth like that. I do not know how that would work if people had to arrange to drive up to 100 kilometres for each child, presumably missing a whole day of school, to see the dentist. I think that is very unreasonable.

For the life of me, I cannot see why a service that has been there for all these years suddenly needs to be withdrawn. Has a group of schools suddenly appeared and the dental van is required elsewhere? Why is the dental van no

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p576c-596a

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Mr David Templeman

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longer showing up in Kalannie? In fact, in my electorate the number of schools has decreased. A couple of years ago, we lost schools at Buntine and Latham and, more recently, not in my electorate but just south, Ballidu lost its school; students from that school now go to Kalannie. There are very few schools in that area now, so it does not seem a big ask for the dental van to go to those schools to help look after the dental health of those students. I remind members that a number of families who immigrated from the Philippines live in the town of Kalannie, and they are not necessarily rolling in dollars. I know the common view of farmers of members on the Labor side of politics is that they are all millionaires and drive LandCruisers, but I can assure members that the townspeople of Kalannie are not necessarily in that group and they would find it quite difficult to pay for the trip to Dalwallinu. I asked about the cost of transport. It is quite clear in the answer I received that the payment for travel has to be made by the parents and there is no assistance to parents for that. I think that is really quite unreasonable.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price):** Excuse me, member, before you go on. Members, a number of conversations are going on around the chamber. Can you keep it down or take it outside, please?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Thank you. I have lost my place. I want to quickly raise the matter of the road system in my electorate. At the moment, as members may be aware, the project to extend Tonkin Highway is underway; it is called NorthLink. That will open very shortly and link the southern part of my electorate at Muchea straight through to airport. People will be able to travel at 110 kilometres an hour from Muchea to roughly about Ellenbrook and then continue at 100 kilometres an hour down the road to the airport with no traffic lights whatsoever. It will be a tremendous boost for the area. I expect that the industrial park the Shire of Chittering has designated for the area where Tonkin Highway will terminate and join Great Northern and Brand Highways at Muchea will be an important driver of the shire's economy going forward over the years. In the time that I have been a member of Parliament, well over \$400 million has been spent on the section of Great Northern Highway in my electorate from Muchea to Wubin. That is certainly a much better looking road; it was a terrible goat track before. It was very dangerous, but it is now a much more manageable and trafficable road. Of course, we look forward to the Bindoon bypass finally getting underway. I still have some constituents with issues that need to be resolved.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Their circumstances need due consideration by the Department of Transport and Minister for Transport to ensure that they are not unduly impacted by that road system.

Toodyay Road is very important to road safety of my electorate. I asked some questions of the Minister for Transport to try to get some clarity on a range of sections of that road. I asked that minister a very detailed question. In fact, I got a reply that did not tell me very much. I do not seem to have it here, but, basically, it said that planning is well underway on the road. That is great, but I would like to see a safe road to Toodyay developed and delivered. Toodyay Road has been the scene of many devastating fatalities, many since I was elected. I really feel that, of any road in the state that needs urgent upgrade, Toodyay Road is that road.

I would like to thank the Minister for Road Safety and the Minister for Transport for their efforts on improvements of Indian Ocean Drive and the Brand Highway. That has made a considerable difference to safety. We will see what difference it makes to the record of serious accidents. Certainly, it has a much safer appearance, and people feel safer travelling on the road now than they did a while ago at least with the construction of the road. Driver behaviour is a different issue, which we cannot necessarily change overnight, but stronger police enforcement is something that is often asked for by my constituents, and I would hope that that continues to be at the forefront of the mind of the Minister for Police and the Western Australia Police Force itself. The police can have a presence on that road to ensure that people's behaviour is more moderate. I would suggest that sometimes they need to be out there at night a bit more. I see a lot of police presence on the road in the daytime; a lot of the very bad behaviour occurs later at night, and I do not see as much police presence on that road at night-time.

The Northam–Pithara Road is a road I mentioned here in Parliament the other day. That road is a link between the Great Eastern and the Great Northern Highways. As the name suggests, it runs from the town of Northam—the larger seat where the member for Central Wheatbelt has her office and base—up to Pithara, which is just outside Dalwallinu. It picks up the Great Northern Highway and the Great Eastern Highway as a link and obviates the need to go through to Perth, down Greenmount and back out through Muchea to get to the Great Northern Highway from the Great Eastern Highway. It has the potential to be a very important link, but at the moment it is in terrible condition, especially the section in my electorate, from Pithara south, which is very narrow and has a terribly high shoulder drop-off, so much so that if someone had a small vehicle, I think they would get stuck, belly up, if they went off the road. Of course, a driver has to do that if a road train comes towards them. This is the issue that needs to be addressed. There was a program in place prior to this government coming in for that road to be upgraded. This government, despite its claimed commitment to safer country roads, pulled the expenditure on that road.

I hope that it remains somewhere on Main Roads' list of priorities and that it will be addressed, because it is a serious safety concern.

Another very common use for that road is that it acts as the ambulance transport route for transfers between Dalwallinu District Hospital, which really only has a basic level of service, down to Northam Hospital, which is the main regional hospital in that area. A lot of ambulance transfers occur on that road in very difficult circumstances, sometimes late at night. It is a very dangerous road, and it needs to be addressed.

I think the member for Geraldton and I would share a common interest in seeing work being done in the midwest on the road networks. There have been calls from shires in my electorate for improvements to the route that runs from Dongara up through Northampton. At the moment, the town of Northampton has all the heavy traffic on the North West Coastal Highway running smack bang through the town. It has a very, very narrow street in the middle of the town, with sharp corners. The verandah of the pub has been known to be taken out as road trains cut the corner going through the town. There is a lack of visibility because of that corner. It is very worrying from a pedestrian point of view as well.

The survey for the route of the Northampton bypass was done many years ago. It is supported by the shire and the community, and I think that project should be given significance by the state. I understand that Main Roads is looking at bringing triple road trains all the way down from the north to Muchea, just as it would be able to do on the Great Northern Highway with the completion of the Bindoon bypass. In order to do that, the Northampton bypass is a necessary precondition. This is highway number one—part of the national highway network. I understand that the federal government would fund 80 per cent of that. If the state was to make it a priority, present a plan and seek funding, I am sure it would be well regarded. I urge the state government to look very closely at the issue of the Northampton bypass, as it should all the road networks around Geraldton and down to Dongara.

The community at Dongara is interesting. It has the Brand Highway going through town—just on the edge of the town at the moment. If that road was to shift away from the town, it may have an effect on the town's economy as a tourism town, so it is looking at plans to extend Indian Ocean Drive all the way to Dongara. At the moment, it terminates about 22 kilometres south of Dongara and joins the Brand Highway at that point. It is looking very seriously at routes that would enable Indian Ocean Drive to come all the way to Dongara, which would ensure that the tourist route and the tourist traffic were separated from the heavy traffic all the way to Dongara. Then we will see what happens with the route that might continue further north in the Greenough and Geraldton area and also in the Shire of Chapman Valley and Northampton before it gets to the Northampton bypass. Whatever happens, whatever route is selected, the Northampton bypass is virtually unchanged by any of those considerations further south.

The Shire of Chapman Valley also has grave concerns about the safety of the Chapman Valley Road that runs out to Nabawa, Nanson and Yuna. That road is narrow. It is a mixed route for tourists, locals, school buses—even bicycles occasionally appear on that road—and a lot of road trains. The community also has grave concerns about safety on that road, so that is another area that I believe should be seen as an important investment from the government for road safety, because we know that our roads are getting busier. As more and more traffic heads to the Karratha area with developments up there, we would expect to see a spurt of road train traffic heading up the North West Coastal Highway because of that. We know, too, apart from this hiatus that is happening at the moment because of the coronavirus, that the route from Perth up to Kalbarri, at least, is very popular with Chinese tourists. The little white cars with the "No Birds" signs on the back until very recently have been very, very common on the road. That mix of traffic between international travellers, holiday-makers, residents and heavy traffic could be a lethal mix if there is not proper investment and it has not been properly separated and taken care of.

While I am talking about the issue of visitation from China, Pink Lake, which is in my electorate, is an area that has become a magnet for Chinese tourists. I went up there about a year or so ago and it was obvious that there was a problem. People were parking right on the main road and wandering on the road; there are no toilets and there is very little signage. People were just stopping anywhere along the road and walking onto the lake verge. Pink Lake is actually in a food-producing area—betacarotene is produced in that area. A very large lease is held by a commercial entity there and it is important that its health is protected not only for its environmental and tourism aspects but also its food production aspects. I have urged this, and I am glad to say that a degree of state involvement has now come to the fore in terms of planning to properly address, along with industry, those tourist interaction issues, including traffic and a lack of facilities. I think that some advances have been made. There are some very colourful signs to advise people not to use the bush as a toilet. It is interesting to try to communicate that in many languages! I leave it to members' imagination what those signs might look like, but it is about as basic as one could imagine.

The town of Port Gregory is just up the road. Tourists travel all the way to Port Gregory from Perth, which would be at least a six-hour trip if the driver never stopped, but when they get to within 300 metres of Port Gregory, which has toilets and a shop where they can buy an ice-cream and a drink, unfortunately they do not know the lake is there and they turn around and go back to Geraldton or Perth. The community of Port Gregory should be able

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 13 February 2020]

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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Shane Love;  
Mr David Templeman

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to benefit from Pink Lake and its attraction to tourists. Also, the Port Gregory community would very much like someone to dredge the sand that now surrounds the jetty. It is sometimes a landlocked jetty at low tide. One side is almost virtually permanently landlocked. They have been trying to get a dredge to come there for many years. It is about time that that happened. It seems to be a bit of an anachronism to see the lovely concrete jetty, the ramps and everything around it, all encased in sand.

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

*House adjourned at 5.11 pm*

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