



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2024

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 8 May 2024

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 12 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

BRACADALE DOG PARK

Petition

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.01 pm]: I have a petition that has been certified by the clerks and signed by 40 petitioners, as well as some nonconforming petitions and some other signatures. The petition is in the following terms —

PETITION TO TERRY HEALY SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL TO INSTALL MORE LIGHTING & PARKING AT BRACADALE DOG PARK

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

We, the undersigned, support Terry Healy's request to Gosnells Council to install more lighting and parking at Bracadale Dog Park in Canning Vale

The new Bracadale Dog Park is being enjoyed by many furry friends and their humans ...

We now ask the Legislative Assembly to support Terry Healy's request to Gosnells Council.

I have 40 signatures in the first tranche of petitions and 86 online. I also have a number of nonconforming petitions. As discussed, this is the first, and historic, time that dogs' paw prints have been accepted on a petition. I have not counted them amongst the official signatures, but 20 dogs put their paw print on this. Thank you, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I hope they all did it voluntarily!

Mr T.J. HEALY: By their humans, authorised in suit.

[See petition 53.]

BILLS

Returned

1. Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.
2. Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Safety Levies Amendment Bill 2023.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

BILLS

Notice of Motion to Introduce

1. Appropriation (Recurrent 2024–25) Bill 2024.
2. Appropriation (Capital 2024–25) Bill 2024.

Notices of motion given by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)** on behalf of Ms R. Saffioti (Treasurer).

SPORT AND RECREATION — REGIONS

Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [12.04 pm]: In rising, I acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery—I am pleased that you have given permission, Speaker—my wonderful constituents from Mandurah. Representing Cycling Without Age are Geoff and Lisa Kelly and guests. It is great to have them here. Cycling Without Age is a magnificent organisation. It is wonderful to have them here and I am going to be enjoying their company for lunch shortly.

It gives me great pleasure to provide the house with an update on the latest funding distribution for the regional athlete support program, which is helping our future sporting stars who are based in our regions to realise their dreams. This government has just committed more than \$2.6 million over the next three years to provide vital assistance in developing athletes in regional areas and creating a high-quality daily training environment for talented athletes and coaches in sports talent development pathways. The program, administered by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, continues to ensure that investment goes into regional sport academies and talent development centres and the delivery of regional-specific sport programs across Western Australia. The funding provides specialist services to support athlete and coach development, all while allowing athletes and

coaches to receive specific support while remaining at home, rather than having to travel to Perth. The South West Academy of Sport, Peel Regional Academy of Sport, Midwest Academy of Sport and Great Southern Sports Talent Association will share this much-needed support, which will stretch out to 2025–26.

Within the regional athlete support program is the regional talent development network grants program and the regional athlete travel subsidy scheme. The latest funding round for the regional talent development network grants program will support three talent development centres and two regional sporting projects, and includes ongoing funding to the four regional sporting academies. Organisations sharing in over \$180 000 of one-year funding in 2023–24 are the WA Basketball Federation; Swimming WA, for the Northern Swimming Academy in the Kimberley and Pilbara; Esperance District Recreation Association; Goldfields Sports Development Foundation; and Broome Sports Association. The focus in this round of funding is upskilling and further accreditation for high-performance regional coaches; skill enhancement; and sessions to support the social, emotional and physical development of local athletes, such as on nutrition, recovery and mindset. The regional athlete travel subsidy scheme assists regional Western Australians with out-of-pocket travel and accommodation costs when competing in regional, state and national championships or events. Over the last two years, the Cook government has contributed over \$280 000 in supporting 628 athletes from across regional Western Australia. This program continues to have a significant impact in developing our next generation of state, national and international athletes. I congratulate all those who continue to drive the great outcomes being delivered. I also thank all members who continue to support the young athletes in their regional areas. Thank you very much; it is very important support.

CULTURE AND THE ARTS — EXHIBITIONS

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [12.08 pm]: I take this opportunity to highlight some of the work of our state cultural institutions. Since opening, Boola Bardip has welcomed 1.7 million visitors, recording satisfaction rates of 97 per cent. It was named the best major tourism attraction and best cultural tourism attraction in Western Australia, and was highly commended in the national awards. Last year's *Discovering Ancient Egypt* and the current *To the Moon* exhibitions have been outstanding. I encourage members to get along and have a look. Exhibitions like these have seen Boola Bardip welcome 381 698 visitors since the start of the financial year. The Western Australian Maritime Museum is showing the amazing *James Cameron—Challenging the Deep* exhibition, supported by a sell-out appearance by James Cameron. This event has contributed to the 157 000 visitors who have attended the WA Maritime Museum this financial year.

Our regional museums have exceptional exhibitions, including *Pila Nguru: Art and song from the Spinifex People*, a wonderfully poignant exhibition featuring vibrant paintings that supported Australia's first successful mainland native title claim. Elsewhere, a museum project at Bandyup Women's Prison is supported by the Department of Justice, while new *Such was life* films, featuring the goldfields, have been launched on the Wanderland collections tourism portal and shown on the SBS.

The Art Gallery of Western Australia is enjoying a momentous year, from the front cover of the national newspaper *The Weekend Australian* for the exhibition *Look, look. Anna Park*, another triumph for the art gallery's curatorial initiative with the Simon Lee Foundation Institute of Contemporary Asian Art to *Yhonnie Scarce: The Light of Day*, Aboriginal truth-telling in its purest form, with works drawn from the Tate, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, alongside our own from the state art collection; *The West Australian Pulse 2024*, which attracted 10 000 people over its opening weekend to see the works of our aspiring young artists; and *Rural Utopias*, with works from across Western Australian regions alongside some of our collection greats. The previous financial year saw an amazing 437 960 visits to the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

Finally, the State Library of Western Australia has a diverse range of exhibitions, including *Liquid Gold: A Taste of WA Brewing History*, which was very successful. The State Library works with 232 local public libraries statewide to meet the needs of communities and address the challenges of digital and social inclusion. As we know, libraries are our most used and valued cultural services, with 600 000 members making 13 million visits in person and online annually.

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.11 pm]: Western Australia is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse states in Australia, with a wealth of cultural traditions and community festivals brightening our vibrant multicultural society. The Cook Labor government is proud to support our culturally diverse community associations maintain valuable traditions and showcase their cultural heritage through community events and festivals. One of the privileges of being the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests is that I get to attend many CALD community festivals throughout the year.

The beginning of 2024 has been particularly busy, with major community festivals and events taking place all around our state, from the Chinese lunar new year celebrations in Northbridge to the Vietnamese Tet Festival

in Girrawheen; Harmony Week events; NAARI, celebrating women; Holi, the festival of colours; the first-ever Perth Italian Festival in the heart of the city; and many smaller events in between. Western Australians have been spoiled for choice.

On a single weekend in April, the Premier attended Banglar Mela, organised by the Bangladeshi community and I had the pleasure of attending the Sikh Association of Western Australia's Vaisakhi celebrations and the Multicultural Eid Carnival at Burswood Park, hosted by the Australian Arab Association. On the same weekend, I was also represented by my parliamentary colleagues at the Buddha's Birthday and Multicultural Festival, hosted by Buddha's Light International Association of Western Australia; the Baisakhi celebration by Sikh Gurdwara Perth; and the Festival of Chariots organised by the Hindu Association of Western Australia. This is just a small snapshot of the huge number of community festivals and events that the Cook Labor government supports.

Throughout 2024, 34 community festivals, celebrations and events will be supported by the Cook Labor government through the Office of Multicultural Interests' community grants program for more than \$264 000. It is particularly inspiring to see how these events have grown in popularity over the years, now attracting thousands of people from across the community. It is important to note that most of these events are organised by CALD community associations that are run by volunteers who put in many unpaid hours to share valuable cultural experiences with us all. The Cook Labor government recognises the importance of these events in creating a vibrant multicultural society and the hard work and resources needed to make these experiences come to life. I congratulate and thank all these community associations for their commitment to delivering these festivals and celebrations.

WATER CORPORATION — INFRASTRUCTURE

Statement by Minister for Water

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Water) [12.14 pm]: The Water Corporation manages more than 35 000 kilometres of water mains across 2.6 million square kilometres in Western Australia, making it the largest water utility in the world in terms of the geographical area serviced. It is impressive then that the rate of leaks and bursts in Perth remains the lowest of any Australian state capital city, at less than half the average frequency of other major metropolitan utilities. That is because our government and the Water Corporation invests in maintenance of this vital infrastructure and carries out replacement and renewals programs to minimise disruption to services and inconvenience for residents.

The 2024–25 state budget will include an extra \$79.9 million to improve the reliability of critical water infrastructure to help support growth in our regions and in the Perth metropolitan area. It can be easy to forget about what happens beneath our feet, but under the Water Corporation's five-year pipeline renewal program, priority sections of water and wastewater mains will be replaced to mitigate the risk of future blockages, leaks and bursts, and support population and economic growth. Also, \$39.5 million will be invested to re-line wastewater pipes in the Perth metropolitan area and regional WA, using trenchless technology where possible to minimise the impact on communities by reducing the need for extensive excavation. The technology works by winding a plastic spiral inside the existing pipe to re-line it. The remaining \$40.4 million will be used to renew priority sections of water pipes in some of Western Australia's older suburbs, many of which have been in service for the last century. Perth's sandy soil profile means that some leaks may not be immediately visible on the surface, so replacing ageing sections of piping will help preserve our precious water and reduce disruption to the community. Leaks can be caused by numerous factors, including the location and age of the asset, pipe material, soil conditions, tree roots or nearby construction. This is one of the many ways our government is continuing to invest in a pipeline of works that are critical to ensure the state's water supply reliability for the future.

LAND AVAILABILITY — REGIONS

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [12.16 pm]: I rise to update the house on the Cook government's investment, providing a significant boost to unlock development-ready land for housing in Western Australia's regions. In the 2024–25 state budget, our government will allocate almost \$35 million to provide land for housing in key regions and towns, such as the Kimberley, Karratha and the goldfields. This substantial investment represents our commitment to facilitating the growth of strong and vibrant communities in regional Western Australia.

I am proud that our budget being handed down tomorrow will deliver for our regional communities and brings the Cook government's total investment in housing and homelessness to \$3.2 billion since 2021–22.

Through initiatives like unlocking residential lots in stage 5 of GreenView at Karlkurla in Kalgoorlie and allocating funds for new lots at Karratha's Madigan at Baynton West, we are taking concrete steps to address housing demand and support social and affordable housing initiatives. Additionally, with investments in projects like the extension of Tanami Drive in Broome north, we are not only expanding housing options, but also improving infrastructure to enhance the quality of life for residents. These developments align with the government's broader vision to drive economic and social growth across regional Western Australia. I am grateful for the support and advocacy of our hardworking local representatives, like the members for Kalgoorlie, Kimberley and Pilbara, who have been

essential in advocating and shaping these initiatives. Across government, we are working hard to ensure that Western Australians have access to safe and secure housing. I am pleased that this \$35 million commitment that will be handed down in tomorrow's budget will contribute to strengthen regional communities across Western Australia.

ANZAC DRIVE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE — KALGOORLIE–BOULDER

Statement by Minister for Lands

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Lands) [12.18 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the Cook government is making a significant boost to unlocking industrial land in the goldfields. We are driving a significant investment of \$20.8 million to expand the Anzac Drive Industrial Estate in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. This marks a major milestone in our commitment to bolstering the region's industrial and economic landscape. This investment will not only create hundreds of local jobs, but also provide a substantial boost to the goldfields economy. As part of this year's budget, these funds will facilitate the development of 22 new industrial lots, complete with essential utilities such as power and water infrastructure. A new highway intersection with Anzac Drive will be constructed to accommodate RAV10 vehicles, enhancing connectivity and accessibility for businesses operating within the estate.

Over the next decade, the expansion of Anzac Drive West is projected to deliver a total of 61 general industrial lots, attracting over \$200 million in private sector investment and generating more than 700 construction jobs. Once fully operational, the estate is expected to sustain over 850 permanent jobs and inject upwards of \$300 million annually into the Kalgoorlie–Boulder economy. This investment is a clear example of our government's commitment to fostering economic growth and job creation in regional Western Australia. By investing in key infrastructure projects such as the expansion of the Anzac Drive Industrial Estate, we are laying the foundation for long-term prosperity and opportunities for the local community.

I am grateful for the efforts and advocacy of the local member, Ali Kent. We went out to visit the site when I made the announcement. I want to acknowledge her advocacy, which has been important in bringing about this significant investment. Together, we are working to create an environment in which businesses can thrive, driving economic prosperity and job opportunities for the goldfields.

URBAN GREENING GRANTS PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [12.21 pm]: The Cook Labor government is committed to creating cooler and shadier communities through a major uplift to Perth's urban canopy. Tree canopy reduces the significant health and economic impacts caused by the urban heat island effect and is critical in providing better environmental outcomes. Here in WA, we have seen how an increase in canopy can provide critical habitat and ecological linkages for native species, better rainfall retention, and reduced stormwater run-off, leading to a more sustainable water cycle. We also know that increasing tree coverage can help relieve cost-of-living pressures by providing shade to homes in the summer, lowering electricity bills. These are just a few reasons the Cook Labor government is investing \$3.75 million to increase urban tree and vegetation canopy in the Perth and Peel regions.

In partnership between the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Western Australian Local Government Association, the Urban Greening grants program will support local governments planting trees and understorey vegetation. Recently, I awarded over \$635 000 in round 1 grant funding under the program. Funding will go towards planting more than 9 000 trees and close to 30 000 understorey species between May and July. Recipients of the grant reflect a diverse range of local communities such as Belmont, Joondalup, Rockingham—Acting Speaker (Mrs M.R. Marshall)—and Waroona. I am reliably informed that the member for Southern River is very excited about the number of trees coming to his community—1 100 trees—to make it even greener and more environmentally friendly than before.

I am also pleased to advise the house that a further \$2.27 million will be made available through the fund's second round, which will open next month. Once this funding has been allocated, it will complement work led by the Minister for Planning, who is developing an urban greening strategy to promote and enhance tree canopy and greening throughout the Perth and Peel Regions. This strategy will reflect our government's firm commitment to empowering local governments, private landowners and the broader community to care for our state's environment and protect its biodiversity. It will also build on our record of strong and sensible climate action by ensuring communities are adequately protected from increasingly harsh and severe weather.

EARLY YEARS PARTNERSHIP

Statement by Minister for Child Protection

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Child Protection) [12.23 pm]: I rise today to update the house on the Cook Labor government's continued commitment to the Early Years Partnership, reinforcing our government's strong belief in ensuring that all children in Western Australia have the opportunities and supports required to reach their potential, regardless of postcode.

Last Friday, the Premier and I, alongside Minderoo co-chair and founder Nicola Forrest, announced a funding boost to the Early Years Partnership of \$34.6 million in this year's state budget. This partnership is a unique 10-year

collaboration between the state government, the Minderoo Foundation and the Telethon Kids Institute, and promotes new ways of working to help children aged zero to four get the best start in life. It is also a great example of how this government is taking a whole-of-government approach to supporting children and families, by bringing together key agencies and working with community to deliver place-based solutions.

The Cook government's commitment of \$15.6 million builds on the state government's existing investment into the Early Years Partnership and, with an additional \$19 million investment from Minderoo Foundation, it will deliver 24 priority projects supporting significant progress on the implementation of community plans. The four partner communities of Armadale West, central great southern, Derby—which includes the communities of Mowanjum and Pandanus Park—and Bidyadanga have led the development of their own community plans, identifying key priorities to improve children's wellbeing and school readiness, because they know what their children and communities need most. In the central great southern they knew they needed access to child dental health services. Derby needed the construction of an early learning and family centre. Armadale identified that it needed more child and maternal health checks and Bidyadanga needed accommodation for visiting early years and family support service providers. Altogether, this announcement in this year's state's budget will support some 24 priority projects in those communities.

Across Western Australia, one in five children are considered developmentally vulnerable, which means they are not fully developmentally ready to start school when they enter kindy. By working together with communities, we can create an impact for all children across these communities. The Cook government is grateful to the Minderoo Foundation for its generous support, as well as the local leadership and advocacy of the partner communities and Aboriginal community controlled organisation partners in Armadale West, central great southern, Derby and Bidyadanga Aboriginal community.

CARERS RECOGNITION ACT COMPLIANCE REPORT 2022–2023

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Community Services) [12.26 pm]: Today I rise to table the *Carers Recognition Act compliance report 2022–2023*. The report is produced by my ministerial Carers Advisory Council and outlines the performance of public health and disability services sector service providers against their obligations under the Carers Recognition Act 2004.

Under the act, the term “carer” refers to people who provide unpaid care and support to someone in their lives, including someone living with disability, mental or chronic illness or who are frail aged. The person they care for may be a relative, friend or neighbour. Carers provide vital support such as assisting with shopping, cooking, booking appointments, transport and managing bills and finances. Our government recognises the often challenging experiences of carers but also the incredible contribution they make to people's lives and to the community. Their value to our society and our economy cannot be overstated. In WA, there are an estimated 320 000 carers. Nationally, unpaid carers are estimated to provide over 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care—that is, over 42 million hours every single week.

As the Minister for Community Services, I am passionate about continuing to highlight the important role that carers play in our community. I am pleased to advise the house that the report produced by the Carers Advisory Council was complimentary to service providers and noted their continued dedication to recognising and supporting carers. In particular, it is pleasing to hear the council note that more carers are being included in advisory panels and groups across our health system, which will ensure that carers with lived experience can influence the design and delivery of services.

There is always more work to be done to recognise and support carers and I will continue to work with the Ministerial Carers Advisory Council to ensure our government continues to make carers a priority. As minister I have given direction to the community sector organisations, through the Supporting Communities Forum, to explore ways they can improve their recognition and support for carers.

The Cook Labor government is committed to supporting carers and provides funding of over \$1 million a year to Carers WA to deliver those important support services to carers. I look forward to reporting on further improvements across the sector that aim to ensure we are best supporting unpaid carers in advocating for their family and loved ones and supporting carers in their very important caring role.

I now table the report and commend it to the house.

[See paper [2814](#).]

THERAPEUTIC GOODS LAW APPLICATION BILL 2023

Second Reading

Resumed from 7 May.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.29 pm]: I rise to support the Therapeutic Goods Law Application Bill 2023. The commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act governs the import, export, manufacture and supply of therapeutic goods across Australia. It is designed to ensure that therapeutic goods are safe and

effective for use by consumers and that they are manufactured and supplied in accordance with high standards of quality. The Cook government has claimed that this bill will assist it in tackling the increased misuse of therapeutic vaping products and non-therapeutic vapes and that the act will support these imminent reforms, as well as improve regulatory oversight of all therapeutic goods in Western Australia. We certainly hope that this bill will assist with that effort.

The Council of Australian Governments conducted a national competition review of drugs, poisons and controlled substances legislation, and a report was returned in 2001. Included within the report was the following recommendation —

That all Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions agree that all States and Territories adopt the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989* by reference into the relevant legislation.

The national law has been implemented in all jurisdictions except Western Australia, so the bill's purpose is to, firstly, apply the national law and legislative instruments as laws of the state and, secondly, amend the Human Tissue and Transplant Act 1982 and the Medicines and Poisons Act 2014. To enforce this act in Western Australia, the Therapeutic Goods Law Application Bill 2023 was introduced in November last year. It was referred to the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review under Legislative Council standing order 126, with a report to be handed down by 27 February 2024.

The bill seeks to extend the reach of the national law to cover individuals within the state who are not currently subject to its jurisdiction due to constitutional limitations. At present, the national law applies to corporations and sole traders in WA that engage in interstate operations; however, it does not have the power to regulate individuals who are not involved in interstate activities. This means that there is a significant gap in the regulation of therapeutic goods within the state, as these individuals can still manufacture, supply and import therapeutic goods without adequate oversight and regulation. The proposed bill seeks to address this issue by extending the reach of the national law to cover all individuals within the state who are involved in the manufacture, supply and import of therapeutic goods. This will ensure that all therapeutic goods sold within the state are subject to the same high standards of quality and safety as those sold elsewhere in Australia.

As I have stated, this legislation was introduced in the other place and went to the uniform legislation committee for consideration. The disallowance mechanism in the bill will provide a level of parliamentary oversight and scrutiny to ensure that amending acts and instruments will not come into effect until parliamentary scrutiny has occurred. It will enable WA to keep pace with future changes to national therapeutic goods regulation and will enable the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation to scrutinise all relevant legislation to provide a fair and reasonable amount of parliamentary oversight.

The uniform legislation committee is certainly pleased that the minister has supported the issues that have been raised and that amendments have been made. The opposition commends the bill to the house and supports it going forward.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [12.34 pm] — in reply: I rise to conclude the second reading debate on the Therapeutic Goods Law Application Bill 2023. I thank the member for her contribution to the second reading debate of the bill. The interest from members in both chambers reflects the importance of providing regulatory schemes that promote and support quality therapeutic goods for our community.

As outlined in my second reading speech, the WA government is committed to supporting national reforms and cooperation to tackle the increased misuse of therapeutic goods, in particular therapeutic vaping products, as well as non-therapeutic vapes. The application of the commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act in WA will support these imminent reforms, as well as improve regulatory oversight of all therapeutic goods in Western Australia. It is important that all therapeutic goods commercially manufactured in WA are subject to the same regulatory requirements. Anything less risks potential safety issues for those purchasing therapeutic goods, such as herbal medicines and vitamin supplements, from sole traders not currently regulated in WA. Adoption of the commonwealth act will ensure that Western Australian consumers will have protection from substandard therapeutic goods in the same way as applies to consumers anywhere else in Australia.

As outlined in my second reading speech, the mechanism in part 2 to apply the commonwealth act is based on a model developed by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office and used in previous acts to introduce national uniform legislative approaches. The process of disallowance in this bill is based on applied laws mechanisms that are already in place in WA, such as the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2022. These applied laws mechanisms have been the subject of detailed review by the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review. Recommendations by this committee have been accepted in refining the applied laws model that we see reflected in this bill. Notice of a disallowance motion is to be given in a house within 14 days of tabling and either withdrawn or agreed to within 30 sitting days after notice is given.

In relation to further scrutiny, the WA Parliament will also have the opportunity through referral to the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation to undertake detailed review of any amendments to the commonwealth act before applying those amendments. The WA Parliament will then be able to disallow amendments and further modify the commonwealth act to suit the needs of the WA therapeutic goods sector and community. A similar

process will be in place for any subsidiary legislation created under the commonwealth act. This will bring Western Australia into line with the adoption methods used in other jurisdictions and safeguard WA's participation in a nationally harmonised, contemporary regulatory framework to provide certainty and protection for the Western Australian community.

Minor technical consequential amendments are required to two WA acts: the Human Tissue and Transplant Act 1982 and the Medicines and Poisons Act 2014. These amendments are to ensure that any references to the commonwealth act also include the WA applied therapeutic goods law to ensure that there is no legislative gap. There will be no impact on the functions or operations of those acts. The bill as presented and amended does not contain any WA modifications, as it simply seeks to extend the existing commonwealth regulatory framework beyond constitutional limitations and across sole traders within WA.

This bill will ensure WA's alignment with future reforms in an efficient and appropriate manner. It also reaffirms the government's ongoing commitment to participation in national reforms to tackle vaping in our community, particularly among vulnerable children and teenagers. It will ensure a consistent national approach and uniform standards to protect the health of all consumers, while continuing to support medically prescribed access to vaping devices as needed.

I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Ms A. Sanderson (Minister for Health)**, and passed.

**BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION AMENDMENT
(SEX OR GENDER CHANGES) BILL 2024**

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 April.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.39 pm]: I rise to speak to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024, which has the purpose of introducing sex identification into Western Australia. I am not the lead on this bill. The lead in this house is the member for Central Wheatbelt and the shadow Minister for Justice, Hon Tjorn Sibma, in the other place. The irony has not been lost on me that this bill is the highest priority legislation of this government. When we have record levels of domestic violence, violence out of control, unacceptable health sector waitlists, striking frontline staff and an unprecedented housing crisis together with profound cost-of-living pressures, it is astounding that this government's number one priority is to revive legislation primarily pertaining to the abolition of the Gender Reassignment Board. I would have assumed that before the budget we would have dealt with the legislation that has been called for and has been proposed regarding coercive control or GPS tracking for family and domestic violence offenders, but apparently not. It is an interesting choice of priorities, given that this has been flagged a number of times.

The Liberal Party will be opposing this legislation, which goes well beyond the simple dismantling of the Gender Reassignment Board and replacing it with a more respectful and streamlined administrative process. Concerns have been raised with me about the legislative process itself. Critics argue that the process of reforming our gender recognition laws has lacked significant public consultation and did not adequately consider the views of various stakeholders. This perceived oversight has led to a broader discussion about the role of public engagement in the legislative processes, with some suggesting that a more inclusive approach could have been facilitated for better understanding and, possibly, broader support for all the changes. The legislation will provide for gender on demand on the basis of a declaration to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages from a single medical practitioner that the applicant is receiving appropriate medical treatment. What will be determined to be appropriate medical treatment, though, and how will that vary from individual to individual or from treating practitioner to treating practitioner? Those are questions that we would certainly like answered.

Of great concern to the community is that the bill will mark the end of exclusively female spaces and services; this issue has also been raised by a number of stakeholders, including the LGB Alliance. It is important to highlight that this opposition is not a face-off between women and trans people, but rather a universal recognition of the importance of single-sex spaces and the risks that biological males can pose to women and girls. The rationale for single-sex prisons, bathrooms, change rooms, sports rooms and so on is based on an understanding of the biological sex differences between men and women, and the value placed on protecting and progressing women's dignity, safety, fairness and equality. Single-sex spaces are particularly important for victims of male-induced violence and trauma. Despite the government's assurances, there are no exclusions in the bill to prevent a cohort of restricted persons from making an application to change their gender. Further, the list of restricted persons will not encompass those with records of offending against women. This in itself could be considered problematic, as the perpetrators

who wish to find a way to get closer to their victims could simply change their sex to bypass certain legal protections designed to safeguard women. We have seen this issue raised in Victoria. This creates significant safety concerns, highlighting potential gaps in the legislation that might allow individuals with harmful intentions to exploit the system. It underscores the importance of having robust safeguards and comprehensive background checks in place before permitting changes to legally recognised gender, ensuring that the policy does not inadvertently create loopholes that could be exploited by individuals with a history of gender-based offending. This concern calls for a careful balance between advancing the rights of transgender individuals and maintaining protective measures for all citizens, particularly vulnerable groups.

For a topic as important as this, this legislation fails to properly provide details on the specific treatment associated with these legislative changes. New South Wales took great care to define what constitutes a sex affirmation procedure for the purposes of outlining who qualifies for the change of sex provisions, while Queensland still defines the reassignment of sex by the undertaking of sexual reassignment surgery. In a similar sense, South Australia takes care to define that clinical treatment does not require invasive medical treatment and may include counselling, though it also defines that a sufficient amount of appropriate clinical treatment cannot simply be based on counselling, unless it is equal to the prescribed period. In the bill put forth in this place, there is no attempt to define what it means to receive appropriate clinical treatment, despite that being the defining point of these changes. For the safety of those receiving treatment, especially given the growth in accessibility of gender treatments and medical opinions, we should not be leading a definition that dictates the scope of change of sex decisions out of this bill.

In relation to under-18s, for the safety of our children we must also consider the provisions around over-12s accessing the Family Court for the purpose of making changes to their gender under the legislation. In Victoria, these changes on a child's birth certificate can only be made by a parent, whether that be through the courts or through Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria. The only exception remains when there are parental deaths or other reasons a parent does not exercise parental responsibilities. Similarly, New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland do not have provisions to allow children to apply to change their birth classification without parental consent. In a sense, it is unclear why Western Australia will be going further in allowing our court system to design the rules around our children's gender identity without the consent of their legal guardians. Similarly, it is also unclear what the potential administrative, financial and legal burden may be of this change to the legislation. The WA Family Court has suffered from significant backlogs in recent history, and we must also ensure that disharmony between the wishes of parents and the choices of their children does not cause issues from the court system's case load point of view because of long-term consent issues in families.

As I previously mentioned, there is also uncertainty around whether this legislation will do enough to protect against serious offenders, other offenders and prisoners using the broad and undefined nature of these provisions to gain access to those of another gender in their designated spaces. We need to ensure that restrictions on offenders as abstractly outlined in this bill will properly protect victims of crimes, especially from those who have perpetrated sexual or gender-based violence. We must ensure that these perpetrators are not allowed to access gender-restricted spaces regardless of any changes they wish to make to their gender identity. We must put victim safety first and we must protect those who have experienced sexual assault, domestic violence, gender-based violence or sex discrimination from being accessible by those who have previously perpetrated these crimes. In that sense, the Liberal Party believes it is necessary to take further precautions and prevent these changes being utilised by those who have committed gender-based crimes. Amendments will be moved in the other place in this regard.

This government has also yet to set out proper finite rules around the use of gendered spaces in relation to this community. As it stands currently, corrective services operates on a case-by-case basis when it comes to trans prisoners, with decisions around their placement and welfare left up to the discretion of the superintendent. Further, we do not have clear and widely known parameters around the use of gender-based spaces such as bathrooms, refuge shelters, change room showers, hospital wards and gendered camps for children. The Premier stated that this bill is about everyone deserving the respect and dignity of being recognised as themselves. We must extend this to every person's view in the Western Australian community and ensure that this legislation is as good as it can be.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Ms L. METTAM: I therefore encourage this place to look further into defining the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024 with a greater level of specificity and to make a well-defined, black-and-white decision on the protocols that we need to use going forward. This is a debate that will impact on all in the Western Australian community and we should make sure that we have legislation that follows on from the change —

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Members opposite have all the opportunities in the world to respond. They do not need to interject on the Leader of the Liberal Party's speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs M.R. Marshall): Thank you, member for Cottesloe. There is no point of order, but I will ask members on the other side to please listen to the Leader of the Liberal Party.

Debate Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: This legislation aims to align Western Australia's gender recognition laws with those of other Australian states, yet it appears that the government has overlooked crucial measures that other jurisdictions have implemented to effectively define and manage the scope of similar laws. This oversight could have broader implications affecting overall community welfare, not just individuals directly. The lack of comprehensive foresight of the legislation's broader societal impact is another issue. We need to include specific provisions that will ensure the safety and privacy of community members, especially in gender-designated spaces. Adding provisions to define the scope of this access is not only about inclusivity; it is also about maintaining safety standards and addressing public concerns. The absence of clear government directives leaves these decisions to the discretion of individual organisations, which could lead to a patchwork of policies and potential discrimination.

This is a substantial legislative change with far-reaching implications for all residents of Western Australia. I appreciate that this bill was introduced to Parliament as soon as it could have been, within that three-week time frame, but it is imperative that this legislation undergoes further —

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: I look forward to the member's contribution.

It is imperative that this legislation undergoes further discussion and refinement to address these critical issues comprehensively. I urge the government to send it to a committee for further examination in the other place. The government must take the time to consider these aspects thoroughly to ensure that the legislation is effective, equitable and reflective of the community's needs. This approach will safeguard the interests of all Western Australians, ensuring that the changes are beneficial and harmoniously integrated into Western Australia.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.52 pm]: I rise to speak to the second reading debate on the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024. I start by thanking the Attorney General, his staff and the parliamentary secretary for the briefing we had on Friday. The opposition has not had a significant amount of time to consult or work through the details of this bill. I was unable to attend on Friday; they organised a briefing for me on Monday, and we are debating this today, so I think the government should allow a little latitude on how the opposition comes to the house to put its views.

I note that the responsible shadow minister is Hon Tjorn Sibma in the Legislative Council. For the purposes of this debate, I advise that the Nationals WA has afforded its members a conscience vote on this legislation, as it does on every piece of legislation, but particularly when it comes to matters like this one. I also note that the Leader of the Liberal Party has spoken about the Liberal Party's position.

Before I get to the substantive matters of the bill, it would be remiss of me not to mention that the opposition will move amendments to this legislation. I noted during the last sitting session that the government had brought a significant number of bills that to this place that it then amended. That is not a record that I would be proud of if I were in government. There is some merit in the Leader of the Liberal Party's suggestion to make use of our parliamentary system and the committee process, including the Standing Committee on Legislation, to examine bills of this and any other nature. We should use the mechanisms available to allow the public, experts and members to interrogate policy. If it is not the intention of the government to allow policy to be investigated or debated, legislation should at least have a rule run over it to make sure that its clauses actually deliver its intentions.

That is the purpose of the Standing Committee on Legislation, of which I am a former member. We have said previously that that committee has had very little to do.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is quite difficult for me to make my contribution with the Minister for Police talking at the top of his voice.

Mr P. Papalia: You've got better hearing than me!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have pretty good hearing; my ears are pretty blocked at the moment and I am not feeling at the top of my game, but I can hear the minister!

It would be remiss of me not to note that we will move amendments to this legislation. Again, this process gave the opposition little time to consult and to form a reasonable view on the legislation. Given the numbers in both houses, we can assume that whatever we say will be disregarded anyway and that the legislation will pass as the government and minister intends it to. I am going to assume that the government will refuse to send this to a committee for review, because it has refused to do so on every other occasion, believing itself to be infallible. There was one occasion when the government allowed legislation to go to a committee, and the committee found that the government had introduced the legislation into the wrong house.

I know that the Law Reform Commission of WA was asked to look into this issue in 2018. When the government came to power, it asked the Law Reform Commission to look into legislation that needed to be amended or addressed in respect of equal opportunity, and any historical issues that need to be addressed. Quite a lot of pressure was put onto the Law Reform Commission to move at pace, as was noted by the commission's chairman, Dr David Cox, in the commission report's foreword. The commission produced the report and the chairman noted that it had to bring in, and was very grateful for, additional support to deliver the report in a timely manner. The report was delivered in November 2018.

It is now May 2024, so there has been plenty of opportunity for this piece of legislation and potential amendments to have been considered. It could have been brought to the Parliament for a committee to consider it and for all parts of the community to have had their say, outside the Law Reform Commission. The commission itself said that although it had a lot of submissions, it had a very short time frame within which to conduct its inquiry. I am not for one moment disrespecting the Law Reform Commission; I think it does a very good job with the resources it is provided with to review legislation. My point is that the government could actually have moved a lot earlier and used the processes of the Parliament to give everyone a fair opportunity to look at what has been produced.

I daresay this is an inclusion on the list of, "We promised we would do this. We're now at the pointy end of the second term of government and we haven't done it. We must get it done." I think it is sad for the people whom this legislation will impact that it has taken so long to get here and that there was not a better process for dealing with it through this Parliament. This legislation is very important to the communities, families and individuals we are talking about; it is worth noting that. It is not surprising, but it is disappointing.

I understand that a referral to committee motion will be moved in the Legislative Council, and it has my full support on that. It is something that should be done. Again, it would have to be within a very short time frame because the government presumably wants to pass this legislation before the end of the sitting year, when Parliament will be prorogued.

I turn now to the substantive matters of the bill. I will start by providing some context for the legislation, including the work of the Law Reform Commission that I mentioned earlier. I want to be very clear about what the legislation will seek to address. I am also very conscious that many people will follow this debate—individuals, families and friends who have been on a journey with a loved one—and for them it is not an abstract conversation. Although I will endeavour to make sure that my language and terminology is contemporary and inclusive, I apologise in advance if I make a misstep during the debate. I am happy to be corrected along the way.

I read with interest the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's paper and I appreciated the clarity and explanations provided in that report on language and terminology and how it would apply in that context. I also note that for many people, this is a very personal matter. We are talking about something that is deeply personal. Indeed, what can be more personal than someone's identity—how they identify, how they present themselves to the world and how they are acknowledged by that world? If members think that this is inconsequential, I ask them to think about how this will flow on to how individuals in the community gain identification documents and access appropriate health care and education, and how they map their way through the legalities of formal identification, whether that is here in Western Australia, more broadly in an Australian context or potentially internationally. There are some legal and institutional considerations, but there are also some very personal views, as there always are when we discuss issues like this.

Individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community grapple with a world of heteronormativity in which the dominant view is that sex, gender and sexual orientation are all congruent, and that there is not a grey area or an opportunity for a diverse interpretation of feelings or how one identifies. As I consider myself to be someone who continues to learn, is open to challenge and takes time to understand how we do what we do in this place in the Parliament, I think it makes a real difference for people in our community to acknowledge that although there might be that dominant view, there are certainly those in our community who do not and have never felt part of that, and they do not see themselves reflected in some of the decisions we have made. There are many ways we do our job in this place to make sure that we are inclusive and that we look after the whole community. We do it through the advocacy of projects and funding. We bring the views of our constituents, reflect their needs in Parliament and make sure that our decisions reflect and respond to the needs of our state. I think we always need to take the time to lean into and learn about issues that mean the difference between a person being able to live their best and most meaningful life as a productive citizen or being marginalised, erased or forced to hide or shade their identity in our community. I think they are things that we as a microcosm of our broader society need to be cognisant of when we make decisions like this. We all bring different hats into this house, but at this very personal level, I think we all have a responsibility to be better at this. Some of us do it much better than others.

Much has changed in our society in the consideration of gender, sex and identity, and we should ensure that our institutions, legislation and debates reflect this change. Much has changed in my lifetime. But I acknowledge that for some people, not enough has changed. Even since 2000 when the Gender Reassignment Act was introduced to set out how individuals could legally change their gender, there has been considerable change in the way that we have this conversation as a society and a community. We are now in the year 2024. As I understand it, all other

jurisdictions in Australia except New South Wales have made the same or similar changes as the ones that we are discussing. The crux of the legislation is to disband the Gender Reassignment Board and thereby dispense with the current requirement to undergo surgical intervention to be legally recognised by the board as a particular gender or sex. I note here that the High Court of Australia has previously already said that a person does not need to surgically change all their gender characteristics to be recognised as having had a reassignment procedure. However, they must have altered their gender characteristics sufficiently through either a medical or surgical procedure so that they can be socially identified as their preferred gender. That is still unacceptable from the perspective of the community we are talking about. Many will say that they do not need to go through surgical intervention; in fact, they say that it will create more problems for them than it solves.

Preceding the Victorian debate on the same issue, *The Conversation* published an article written by Bianca Fileborn, Hannah McCann, Matthew Mitchell and Priya Kunjan, three of whom disclosed in that article that they had all been advocates for the changes that they were reporting on. They noted that —

A person’s access to legal documentation that accurately reflects their identity should not depend on first having to undergo body modification procedures. In some cases, these may be unwanted and may also cause unwanted effects such as sterilisation, given that “sex affirmation surgery” requires modifying reproductive organs.

TGD —

That is trans and gender-diverse —

people also have diverse needs: some need or want to use surgery to help affirm their identity, others do not. Moreover, surgery is expensive, tightly regulated by medical practitioners, and often inaccessible for many TGD people.

It is unfair and discriminatory for appropriate legal documentation to be offered only to those who want and/or are able to access these surgeries for financial, social or other reasons.

The current process in Western Australia requires an individual to apply to the Gender Reassignment Board for a gender recognition certificate. Before someone can apply to the board, they will need to have undergone a reassignment procedure and met other eligibility criteria. From a legal perspective, an individual who changes their gender will be officially recognised as their reassigned gender in all matters in Western Australia; they will be protected against discrimination on the basis of their gender history under the state discrimination law; and they can ask the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for a birth certificate—my notes are not quite right—with a completed application form that reflects the changes.

That is a legal perspective. We all have these rights, and many of us take for granted that we have access to a birth certificate that reflects how we see ourselves. From an individual perspective, perhaps an extract from one of the case studies included in the Law Reform Commission review most eloquently explains why there is a need for these changes. I think it is worth reading this. It would not have been easy for some of these individuals to contribute. This contribution was provided by an anonymous family, and I want to take the time to put this on the record in Parliament, because, for me, when I read these stories, these are the people we are talking about. This is not an abstract conversation. You can bring it back to a very individual level. The case study reads —

‘We are a family of five that live in [regional Western Australia]. Two of our children attend Primary School. When we moved to [regional Western Australia] 6 years ago we have a clear memory of a then three-year-old [A] telling us “it would be easier if I was a girl”. This has not turned out to be a passing phase. For the last 2 years [A] has been more direct and we have been told daily: “I am a girl”.

As parents we simply want our children to be healthy and happy. For this reason, we have stopped quietly gatekeeping [A’s] choice about ‘girl’ toys and clothes. We are listening to our child and in doing so we have seen [A’s] confidence grow. We now know that letting [A] be who [A] wants to be is making our child simply ... happy.

After much careful consideration, time and consultation with the school and mental health professionals locally and at the Children’s Hospital’s Gender Diversity Service, [A] decided to start the 2018 school year as a girl.

[A’s] experience, and many of the stories we have read and heard, have shown us that gender identity is not determined by your private parts but how you think and feel. For some people, anatomy assigned at birth and their gender identity do not align.

But there are alarming statistics, which make us fearful for our child. For adults who don’t feel they conform with their sex assigned at birth the rates of attempted suicide are 40%. However, when a child is able to choose their gender and is supported by their family, friends, school and community that statistic decreases by 93%.

In spite of the growing body of research that clearly highlights the importance of people, including children, being able to determine their gender the current legislation prevents [A] at her current age from

changing the gender marker on her birth certificate. [A] is born in NSW where the requirements state she must have surgical reassignment before being able to change her gender marker on her birth certificate. While we can't change her birth certificate currently in NSW we are hopeful that by telling our story that WA might lead the charge with legislative changes that allow children to determine their gender rather than requiring them to undertake medical interventions such as hormones or surgical reassignment to 'prove' their gender and change their birth certificate.

As parents of transgender child and seeing how living as [a] girl our daughter can be her true self we find incredibly arbitrary and oppressive that despite the fact that [A's] mental health professionals, the school, friends and family all recognise [A] as a girl and she uses the female personal pronouns in every aspect of her life she is not allowed to change her gender markers on all relevant documents pertaining to her identity. [A] is also very upset by the gender marker on her birth certificate and asks us what are we doing about ... it ...

For others who are reading and following this debate, there is another case study in the *Project 108: Final report: Review of Western Australian legislation in relation to the registration or change of a person's sex and/or gender and status relating to sex characteristic* by the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia. That is about a 13-year-old. Their family goes through how much school and life he is missing out on because of the added stress of having to attend and deal with all the challenges that come with managing the difference between what he sees and feels himself to be and what he was born as. It is having a profound impact on him. The family finished that contribution by saying that he would like to be able to go through the process of changing his gender on legal documentation without feeling like he is being judged, and without having to prove himself, because he is having conversations ad nauseam with the medical fraternity, with his psychiatrist, with schools and with people who feel they need to understand him better. That is pretty challenging for a kid. I imagine it is fairly challenging as an adult as well.

The process to apply for reassignment, as I have outlined, is onerous and involves a lot of people for such a very, very personal decision and very formal issues. Under the changes there will no longer be a board to manage this process; rather, the applicant will submit the prescribed documentation to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for approval. There will be prescribed documentation that individuals will be required to provide. This, as has been foreshadowed by the previous speaker, involves working with the medical professional who the individual presumably already has a relationship with, so the treatment or advice that they are receiving will pertain to their particular circumstances. I think that is appropriate. I go to the doctor for a number of things. I do not particularly want to explain those things to another health professional, and I certainly do not want to be told by a board that issues me with documentation that allows me to then access other information or privileges as a member of our community, that I need to go and do that in very personal and private circumstances. It is a lot.

The feedback we have had about the Gender Reassignment Board is that some people find it traumatic to go through the process, whereas others have found the people involved in the board to be very empathetic. Everybody's experience is different, but the proposed changes mean that there will be a streamlined process. Applicants will not go in front of the board; they will make an application as an adult directly to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

There will be different rules for different cohorts. Obviously, children between the ages of 12 and 18 and children under the age of 12 will be treated differently. We can go through in consideration in detail how the government reached the age of 12, what the mechanisms will look like, and how they will accommodate for the fact that there is a likelihood, particularly for minors and children, that there will be children in care or not with their parents. There will be parents or guardians who do not necessarily agree. How will that be resolved should the occasion arise?

There will be restrictions, as we would expect, on how many times an individual can apply for changes to be made, both as a young person and in the lifetime of an individual. There will be some flexibility for the registrar, as I understand it, in some circumstances to overlook or set that aside if there needs to be a change. There will also be powers for the registrar to revoke or remove changes from the register, should they have been accessed in a fraudulent way.

Some of this is detail that we are going to have to take to the government if it is not prepared to send this bill to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Will it do the work to make sure that there are no loopholes or unintended consequences? My understanding is that some of these processes were modelled on how people can change their names legally in terms of the requirements for the registrar or the individual in charge of the Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Again, these will be questions that we ask during consideration in detail either here or in the Legislative Council.

I would like clarification from the Attorney General—I think I had it, but I was in a haze of a cold on Monday when I was getting the briefing from the parliamentary secretary—that once the gender change is approved and the birth certificate is issued, that document will be separate and different from the information that will be collected and held on the register. The register will always be a historical record; although that information will not always be provided in full unless the individual involved or certain prescribed people within the act are allowed

access to it. I have heard comments about the impact that this may have on the loss of historical documentation or how information is collected by the state about our population. My understanding from the briefing is that the document will remain and the changes will be noted; however, the documentation that will be provided to the individual is the document that will reflect their gender identity.

Mr J.R. Quigley: If I may briefly interrupt, you are correct. The register will stay unaltered. What we talk about is the extract of the birth certificate.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That is right. Lots of things get put forward in this debate. I think it is really important that, if this legislation is not going to go to a committee in which those questions can be asked more fulsomely, we can at the very least make sure that for people who do have concerns in this debate, that those concerns can be taken off the table immediately.

I would like the Attorney General to provide some comment on the debate surrounding the proposed changes as they pertain to the erosion of women's rights or risks to women's safety. This was raised by the previous speaker. It is being discussed in the community. I do not believe that the legislation is in conflict with the right or ability for women to feel safe in women-only spaces, but there are those who make that argument. It would be naive not to think that that is something that could potentially make it more difficult for this debate or some of the furphies that get raised in and around discussions like this. Can the Attorney General address them or at least provide guidance during his reply?

My view is that society continues to adapt to create safe and inclusive spaces for everyone and that it is a chicken and egg situation. I think some of the issues are definitely raised to stall progress on some of these matters; however, there are some who have, rightly or wrongly, real concerns. I do not think these changes elevate or escalate the risk that women face on a day-to-day basis. The fact is that there are individuals who are female, male, intersex or they identify as male, female and non-binary already without the government providing them with a piece of paper. For the broad majority of the public, they are moving around in the community without people's knowledge or understanding, using some of those spaces that people are putting up as a reason to not progress.

With regard to access to women's only spaces and the moral and economic debate around sport and the muddling of a very simplistic male and female view of the world, I think that frame is going to continue to shift and evolve incrementally—it always has. I think the debate, understanding and critique of views on sex, sexuality and gender identity will be dealt with appropriately both at a societal level and, when required, at a government level; it always has. What is fact is that LGBTQI+ identity has historically been criminalised, pathologised and made invisible by both medical and legal institutions, and by Parliament. They have been exposed to or have increased risk of exposure to institutionalised and interpersonal discrimination and marginalisation. We have spoken about it on a number of occasions while I have been a member of this Parliament; it is a historical fact. For me, that community is what we are talking about today, not some of the “would”, “could” and potentially “might” down the track because the broader community deals with challenges like that every day regardless of someone's gender or sex.

The Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's review received over 500 submissions, despite the very short turnaround time and pressure that was applied for the report to be created. It then sat, Attorney General, for a long time before it came to this Parliament for debate. The review recommended amending processes to reduce the marginalisation and distress that is induced by having to prove something that is deeply personal, which will be unlikely to impact others and will no doubt make it easier for individuals to be happier and more productive members of our society. It is a less intrusive and less traumatic pathway to have official documentation that identifies individuals correctly and to assist them to navigate the life that many of us take for granted. From my perspective, this piece of legislation has very clear support from me. As I said, the Nationals WA have a conscience vote on this and I look forward to consideration in detail. I have a few questions around some of the details. They are really around the clarity of process. Again, I thank the Attorney General's team for providing me with the briefing. I hope that, at the end of this, there is an easier and less traumatic process for the community that we are all talking about today.

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [1.21 pm]: I rise to speak in support of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024, a landmark piece of legislation that will change the lives of many people in our community. It will change our community too, making it a kinder and more inclusive place to live. I think we all win when we create spaces that are safe for everyone.

My contribution will be brief and I want to first tell members why I am standing in support of this bill. The seat of Nedlands is home to many Pride organisations, including TransFolk of WA, which has been a significant advocate for the change before us. At a community level, the seat of Nedlands, sitting inside the federal seat of Curtin, had the highest yes vote in Western Australia for same-sex marriage in the 2017 Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey, so I know that I live in a community that is progressive and inclusive. That is something the Liberal Party might want to keep in mind as we approach March 2025. As a social worker, I have always observed that when we make policy, legislation and services in our community more inclusive for a particular population, we actually make them safer and more inclusive for everyone. Such changes allow us all an opportunity to learn to develop greater empathy and understanding for others as we all navigate the world. I have also been a researcher for many years.

This bill, and some of the chatter around it, has raised some really curious questions for me—questions essentially about hypocrisy and questions about the contradictory expressed faith values of those being pre-selected by the Liberal Party and their expressed attitudes to the LGBTQIA+ community. Why do those who purport a faith that, from my understanding, promotes kindness, tolerance and love, actually turn to speech and stated policy that is in fact hateful, intolerant, exclusionary and, frankly, ignorant?

I am also beyond curious—I have to say bewildered, even—about other people’s obsessions with others’ genitals! I just do not get it. There is very little diversity. We have to look hard even for the cis women pre-selected as candidates by the Liberals on the Legislative Council ticket. Perhaps I have answered my own question: these attitudes of exclusion are not hypocrisy; they are the baseline standard that we can expect. I stand here personally because I love many people—my family and friends—who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, and I am honoured to use my voice in some small way for them today. I also live with two young people who are almost casual in their acceptance of their friends who identify beyond the binary. They are so comfortable and have no issue using pronouns that are also beyond the binary. I also note I have two cis children—a son and a daughter—and we have gender-neutral toilets at home! We have done since they were born. They were toilet trained in gender-neutral toilets. I grew up with gender-neutral toilets at home and I think I have turned out okay. My children are kind and inclusive, so I think it is safe to say that using gender-neutral toilets is kind of working out for them as well.

Finally, I stand here today as a proud member of the only party—the WA Labor Party—that has not just the will but also the ability to do what is right for our LGBTQIA+ community. We are also the only party that has LGBTQIA+ representation across all levels of our party, including here in Parliament. Currently, Western Australia is the only jurisdiction where a board determines a person’s application to change sex. Abolishing the board is a long-overdue amendment to give dignity and authenticity to people who want their true identity represented on their documents. These documents come with us throughout our lives. They tell strangers, bureaucracies, organisations and even other countries, something of who we are. They are at once official and deeply personal. I know this myself because every time I go to renew my children’s passports, I have to show their father’s death certificate. It tells the bureaucracy something that is deeply personal about my and their lives. It is therefore important to note that in a survey of trans individuals submitted to the Law Reform Commission, an overwhelming number of participants were in favour of removing the board as part of the gender affirmation process. According to participants, the current board process causes confusion, stress, anxiety and unnecessary delays, and is viewed by trans and gender-diverse people as gatekeeping or policing their gender identity by the state.

Others will talk more about the process. I want to note these are really important changes to the way that Western Australia treats trans and gender-diverse people in our state. It is the work and advocacy of many people and stakeholders who have seen this legislation come to be. That includes TransFolk of WA; Rainbow Futures WA and I give a particular shout out to Misty Farquhar; Equality Australia; Living Proud; Equal Voices; Pride WA; and Rainbow Labor, including the really hard work of current president Avery Wright. I also give a particular acknowledgement to Dani Laidley. I can count on one hand the number of books that have ever made me cry. Her book *Don’t look away* is one such book. For anyone who is committed to having greater empathy and understanding of the lived experience of a trans person, I would highly recommend reading Dani’s book. It tells the story and her experiences of growing up in the wrong body and the journey it took her to display to the world who she really is. It is a really moving and powerful story. I would well recommend it to some of our Liberal Party colleagues, if they do have any interest in understanding or empathy.

Finally, I thank the Attorney General and his staff who, once again, have delivered legislation that makes Western Australia a safer and much more inclusive place for all of us. Thank you, Attorney General.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.28 pm]: It is a pleasure to rise today to speak on the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill which, as the member for Nedlands said, is making Western Australia a safer, fairer and more inclusive place. I thank the Attorney General for bringing it to this place.

I would like to firstly acknowledge my guests in the Speaker’s gallery. They are scholars and alumni and Laura Potts, the communications manager, of the Fogarty Foundation. I am grateful to the Speaker for giving me permission to host them in the Speaker’s gallery today.

My comments on this bill will be relatively brief. I really want to reflect upon the way that the Leader of the Liberal Party is consistently failing the test of leadership in this place at the moment. It is going on and on, in just about every issue. She failed the test of leadership with the incident in Willetton recently. Rather than treating that as a tragedy and as an issue that should be dealt with with great sensitivity, she could not be quicker to bring it into this place with her colleagues in the opposition and seek to score political points from it. Of course, we have seen the Leader of the Liberal Party do that on issues before. She did it with the tragic case of Aishwarya Ashwath, and she has done it on many other cases. Another example of the Leader of the Liberal Party failing the test of leadership is on this bill, and the issue of gender reassignment and gender-affirming care in our health system. I want to go to the announcement by the Leader of the Liberal Party on 22 April that a government under her would ban the use of puberty blockers. Firstly, that announcement is ridiculous because it shows that the Leader of the

Liberal Party does not understand what the role of a minister should be in a government. It is not the role of the health minister to make decisions about treatment and clinical matters. That is not what the health minister does. Those decisions should be left to clinicians and experts, and we should not have politicians interfering in those decisions. I am very grateful that we have a Minister for Health who knows that and has consistently shown that in the way that she has applied herself to the health portfolio. God forbid if the member for Vasse were ever to become the health minister, because she apparently thinks it is perfectly fine for a minister of the Crown to get down into the micromanagement of clinical decisions. It is a disgrace and it shows that she is not ready to be a minister of the Crown, let alone the Premier of this state.

I will say that her statements are not true, because the announcement made by the Leader of the Liberal Party relies on *The Cass review: Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people* in the UK, which is ridiculous for very many reasons. The Cass review did not recommend a ban on puberty blockers. It simply did not say that! It is misinformation to argue that it did. We know that this is not really about the Cass review or clinical best practice; this is about the Leader of the Liberal Party pandering to the ideologues and the Christian far-right conservatives who really run the mob in the Liberal Party. We only have to look at the pre-selections that have been done to know that Hon Nick Goiran continues to run the party, and that it is a party that has been taken over by a bunch of conservative, evangelical entryists. The Leader of the Liberal Party is shamelessly pandering to that group in an effort to hang on to her leadership. I suspect it will all be for nothing, and that she will not be the Leader of the Liberal Party by the end of the year—or certainly by the March election—because Basil Zempilas will have taken it off her. I am not sure that that is an improvement, unfortunately. In any event, her efforts to pander to that part of her party are very disappointing. I will quote from a statement from the Leader of the Liberal Party in which she said —

Once the research is completed we will review the ban to determine if it should be maintained, modified or potentially extended to under 18 years of age.

I think it is telling that she does not say there that, “We will review the ban to determine whether it should be lifted.” She says it will be determined whether it should be maintained, modified or extended. From the outset, she is prejudging what the outcome will be of this review that she will authorise. Later, she states —

The overriding concern here is for the safety of children, history cannot record that we knew about the potential for long-term harms from these treatments and did nothing to prevent them ...

The Leader of the Liberal Party sounds like an anti-vaxxer there! This is exactly the kind of nonsense trotted out by anti-vaxxers during the pandemic: “All these vaccines—we don’t know what the long-term effects are.” We know the best evidence, though, which is that multidisciplinary teams should offer sensitive gender-affirming care to children and adults who need it. Finally, in support of that, the Leader of the Liberal Party is fond of quoting from the Australian Medical Association, so I thought I would quote the AMA back to her. This is what the AMA had to say about her announcement —

The care of gender-diverse young people in Western Australia is delivered by highly qualified expert paediatricians, paediatric endocrinologists, and child and adolescent psychiatrists who deliver quality care for each patient as an individual. These expert clinicians work in a multi-disciplinary team setting, using a family-centred model of care.

The AMA goes on to cite the great research and work done at Perth Children’s Hospital. At the end, it states —

We know that transgender and gender-diverse people experience high rates of discrimination, violence and barriers to accessing healthcare. These would be worthy of the attention of any current or future government. Seeking to reduce access to a highly specialised, responsibly provided type of care administered to a vulnerable patient group is not.

That is a direct message from the AMA to the Leader of the Liberal Party basically saying, “Stick to your knitting. Do not come in here over the top of clinicians, telling them you know what is right. Leave it to the experts.” If the Leader of the Liberal Party is so keen to listen to the AMA, this is an issue that she should listen to it on. I will not say that the Leader of the Liberal Party is a transphobe or ideologue, because I think that would suggest that she actually has a position that she is committed to on this. I think she is a weather vane, and she goes wherever she thinks the base of her party is leading her.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [1.35 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024 second reading debate and of course lend my support to the bill. Many of the issues raised in the Law Reform Commission report, which is the genesis of this bill, cross both of my portfolios—not only the Attorney General’s portfolio, but also the portfolios of health and mental health. I was not going to make a contribution, but hearing the comments of the Leader of the Liberal Party, who is the shadow spokesperson for health—let us just be clear about that—and some of the misinformation and comments that she made, compelled me to get to my feet to respond. I know that the Attorney General will systematically deconstruct her arguments around what this bill will and will not do.

Let us be clear, this bill is about reducing the burden of process and trauma on an already vulnerable group of people. It does not determine whether a person has access to toilets, sports groups, classrooms or hospital wards, as she mentioned. Equal opportunity laws and acts are in place that already protect people's access to those. This is a challenging issue and there is a debate in the community. It is not a particularly healthy debate, and it can get very heated on both sides. I acknowledge the contribution from the member for Central Wheatbelt, which was very thoughtful and genuinely felt, and I think it summarised many of the issues very well.

This debate is not aided in any way by hysterical terms. This debate is about process. This is a bill about a process for someone being able to determine their gender. There is a rigorous process that they have to go through. There was consultation through the law commission, but it will not meet the expectations of all advocates, and we acknowledge that. However, this is the right process for this time, and the appropriate one. This process will allow people to identify in the way they live their lives. Many of those advocates would say this is not a medical issue, and I acknowledge that, but there are some rigours, checks and balances in this process. This debate is not aided when we see how disingenuous the Leader of the Liberal Party is when she couches her arguments in terms like "safety", "threat" and "violence". This is a bill about a process; that is what this is. It is not about women's safety, threats to women or any perceived violence; it is a bill about safety. As I said, a number of laws are in place that protect people's equal opportunity rights.

I will not claim to have any personal experience on this issue. I will not pretend to entirely understand it. I am on my own journey, as many of us are, and I do not always get it right. I can be clumsy with language, like the member for Nedlands, but I am aided in that journey by my 17-year-old daughter. It is a learning for many of us. Many things have changed, and are changing, in the world. Fundamentally, we want people to live their best lives, be happy and have a sense of wellbeing and belonging in our community. If we, as government, can pass a law that aids people to live their best lives and have a sense of wellbeing in our community, it is incumbent on us to do that. That is one of the reasons why I support this bill.

We have seen two major policies come from the Leader of the Liberal Party: introducing nuclear power and banning puberty blockers. She is really touching the hearts and minds of the broader Western Australian community there! She comes in here and criticises the government for not dealing with issues that broadly impact the Western Australian community, yet the only two policies that she has been able to make public so far are introducing nuclear power and banning puberty blockers. I agree with the member for Cockburn that she does not feel deeply about this issue. She is an opportunist who will use vulnerable people for her own political gains and to progress her own political fortunes. All that she is doing with her position on this bill and on puberty blockers is pandering to her colleagues in the right of the party. We have quite rightly seen who is in charge of the party and who will be writing its policies leading up to the next election. I fear for the community of Western Australia if "The Clan" and Nick Goiran are, in any way whatsoever, in charge of women's reproductive rights, health care and our legal system. That is a real possibility with the Liberal Party. He is still there because he believes so deeply about these issues, and he will continue to prosecute these issues and his extreme beliefs through the candidates the party selects to be elected to this place. It is critical that we protect vulnerable people in our community.

The so-called ban on puberty blockers is based on the idea that the Western Australian system should undertake the recommendations contained in the Cass review. The Cass review contained very few conclusions that are relevant to the Western Australian system. It is a highly specialised, multidisciplinary service that is led by clinicians who work with families as a family unit. The decision to use puberty blockers is made after hours of consultation with mental health clinicians and experts, endocrinologists, psychiatrists and a whole multidisciplinary team, and those decisions are made as a family. Probably about 60 children in the entire state are undertaking this treatment, and a range of other treatments or supports are given to families who are on the journey of exploring a child's gender identity. A range of other options are available; it is not the only one. It is appalling to somehow distil this down to a single issue that highlights how vulnerable families are.

When the Leader of the Liberal Party was asked a couple of weeks ago why she did not attend the march that was organised around the country to condemn violence against women—she was formally invited and did not attend—her response was that she is not a decision-maker. She said, "I am not a decision-maker, so that is why I did not attend." We know that she is not the decision-maker. She is making it abundantly clear who is making the decisions. It is not the Leader of the Liberal Party but Nick Goiran and the extreme right-wing religious zealots who are preselected to represent the broader community, but the community is not with them. This is a leaf out of the playbook of Scott Morrison, and it did not work for him. The community does not want politicians who will create division and pick on vulnerable people. They want politicians who will make sensible decisions to support the community and ensure that vulnerable people are looked after—that is why I am proud to stand on this side of Parliament—and we will continue to do that.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [1.43 pm]: I rise to support the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024. This is a very important bit of legislation. It will make it easier for people who want to change their gender assignment on various bits of documentation so that their import documentation can accurately reflect who they are. It will do away with the Gender Reassignment Board, which is a very archaic and very intrusive process and requires people to go before an impersonal board and basically justify

their existence. They must demonstrate surgical or medical invention before they can get their documents changed. Doing away with this process is well overdue. This bill will establish a much simpler, much less intrusive and more user-friendly process, and it will allow people to get on and live their lives how they want to and how most of us are able to.

Importantly, the legislation will also allow people to not just have the designation of male or female but also choose non-binary as an option, and that is important for a lot of people in the community. Gone are the days when there were just two sides to a coin and people were either male or female—we now know that that is not true. Allowing people to have the designation of non-binary is important for many people in the community.

It has been a long road to get to this point in Western Australia, and I compliment the people who have really worked hard to get this legislation to where it is. When I was Minister for Youth, I had the privilege of working with TransFolk of WA, which was a really important advocate on this issue and taught me a lot. I pay tribute to the then chair Hunter Gurevich, who worked really hard during his four years as chair of that organisation. While he was studying to be a doctor, he worked hard in his own time to represent his community. I am really pleased that when I was Minister for Youth, I gave TransFolk of WA its first funding, which enabled it to engage a paid employee for the first time. I really want to pay tribute to TransFolk of WA for the work it did on getting this issue to where it is.

I also give a shout-out to Emily Wilding, who is a councillor in the Town of Bassendean, in my electorate. She has been a great advocate for this change, and she has assisted me to understand some of this legislative change's important issues. My understanding is that Emily, a transwoman, is certainly the first trans person to get elected to the Town of Bassendean and one of the first trans people to get elected to local government in WA, and I congratulate her for that. In the year in which she was successful, she topped the ballot in the Town of Bassendean. I congratulate Emily for the work she does as a leader in my community and as a leader in the trans community.

I also want to specifically give a shout-out to Misty Farquhar from Rainbow Futures. She is a great advocate on not just this issue but also all issues relating to law reform for the LGBTQIA+ community. Misty is not only a leader in that community but also one of my constituents, so I want to give her a specific mention today. She knows, as she has told me, that more reform needs to be done in this area, and I look forward to working with Misty to see some of those other areas of law reform come to fruition.

I also want to compliment Rainbow Labor, in particular, its current president, Avery Wright, and her predecessor, Paul Benson, for the work they have done within the Labor Party to advocate for these issues. The overwhelming membership of the Labor Party supports these changes, but just goodwill is not always enough to get an issue to the point of changing the law of the land here in Parliament. It requires a lot of energy and effort, and I congratulate Rainbow Labor for the work it has put into this issue.

Finally, I congratulate the Attorney General for bringing this legislation to Parliament. When it comes to high achievers in this place, we have to give the Attorney General credit, time and again, for bringing legislation that really moves the dial for people in Western Australia, particularly for people who may not otherwise have a loud voice in Parliament. I thank the Attorney General for the effort he has put in.

I wanted to say a few things about the members opposite in the Liberal Party. I will keep it brief. The Liberal Party was once quite accepting of individual freedoms, personal liberty and the like. To now hear its members consistently adopt positions that really attack the rights of individuals never ceases to amaze me. For example, the Liberal Party of today is not the party of Malcolm Fraser, Richard Court and the like. The Liberal Party of today is run by extreme right-wing religious zealots. We saw that today from the Leader of the Liberal Party and the position that she has taken to oppose this legislation.

A lot of things in life are complicated. Some take a lot of money to resolve and some are really complicated. On issues like this, we can make a whole lot of people happy by letting them live the lives they want to live. We do not have to spend a lot of money; we just have to let people get on and be who they are, yet the Liberal Party will not do that. On so many issues, it seeks to divide people and inflict pain on people who often do not have a loud voice. It has let its party be not only infected, but also taken over by people with extreme right-wing religious views. It is a great shame, and it is a real threat to Western Australia continuing to be a great place to live.

I want to congratulate Rainbow Labor, Rainbow Futures WA and TransFolk of WA, and I congratulate the Attorney General for introducing this really important legislation.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [1.51 pm]: I do not have a lot of time in which to speak. This is an issue that I have been arguing for, as reported in *Hansard*, since 2013. I am looking at the back of the Attorney General's head saying, "Thank you, Attorney General." It has been 11 years of waiting for me, personally.

I suppose the other point that I would like to make is that sometimes when we sit in this chamber and debate bills that are intensely personal, it breaks my heart that we do so without lived experience. I look forward to the day when I sit in this chamber—remember, I am retiring at the end of this Parliament so it probably will not happen during my term—when people and trans folk in this chamber can actually speak from their lived experience in support of bills of this nature.

As the Minister for Health pointed out, the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024 is a process bill. It is so much more than processes for people who live with the impact of not being recognised for who they are. It is an integral part of their physical and cultural make-up that they have been denied for the extent of their lives. We are seeking to change that. We are taking an opportunity to bring reality and truth to the lives of many people in our community, and in particular people in my electorate of Maylands, which includes the suburb of Bayswater—“Gaylands” and “Gayswater”—who are very proud to support this long-overdue change to our law.

I also wish to mention that a number of organisations have lobbied hard alongside me but also with other members of this house. They have been mentioned, but I would like to thank Rainbow Labor and Paul Benson. I have seen much of them over the years as they have fought hard for these changes. I thank Misty Farquhar from Rainbow Futures WA. I also thank Pride Western Australia, which has been very outspoken on this legislation, OUTinPERTH, TransFolk of WA and Living Proud. All these groups have been vocal in this space.

This is not the end of the journey. This government has a responsibility to do more than it is currently doing. We need to look to the future and the changes that still need to be made. We have committed to banning sexual orientation change efforts or what we call gay conversion therapy. We need to move that forward. We need to change the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 to stop people being discriminated against in employment due to their sexuality or gender. We also need to make sure that gender-diversity services have sufficient resources to cope with demand and to deal speedily with people’s lives, not delay the process. I have had people in my office saying that it has taken 12 months from identifying that they wanted to access gender-diversity services and being able to get into a service.

I say thank you very much to the Attorney General and all those groups that have lobbied so hard and so long for these changes. It does not surprise me that the Liberal Party is not supporting this bill, because, let us face it, it did not support marriage equality, stopping gay conversion therapy, changing the then Equal Opportunity Act or gender recognition. Really, what does it stand for? Not many people in my community would take that position. Get real. Get with the modern world and stand for the people whom you are meant to be representing, not the religious right, who seem to control the party.

MR S.N. AUBREY (Scarborough) [1.56 pm]: I apologise for reading from my laptop; I was in the middle of finalising my speech on the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024, which I thought I would give after question time. I did not intend to speak today, so I will keep my remarks short—hopefully four minutes short.

I am grateful to so many people who have worked on and advocated for this reform. I am grateful to the Attorney General and his team for delivering this reform. I am grateful to my colleagues, my allies in the Labor Party, who have stood up today to defend the LGBTQIA+ community from the vitriolic hate of the Liberal Party. I am grateful to have grown from the shared experiences of the transgendered people in my life whom I call friends, and some I see as family, including Avery Wright and Jaime Page from Rainbow Labor, Danielle Laidley and Donna Leckie. As revealed in our interview with the ABC, we refer to ourselves as the three musketeers. Their stories, passion and shared experiences have help me grow as an individual.

I have already shared my personal story in this house—that as a gay man, I suffered much of the same inequity and trauma experienced by many in the LGBTQIA+ community. This bill and the abolishment of the Gender Reassignment Board is a significant leap forward, but it is too far for some and not far enough for others. As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, I want our community to have what it needs to feel safe and equal in our state. I want all our planned LGBTQIA+ reforms passed in this term. As the member for Scarborough, I want several of my schools upgraded now. I want coastal erosion protection and planning in place now. I want the West Coast Highway upgraded and much more now. I want us to continue our strong health and economic management of Western Australia.

As a younger member of this house, I also want to see more housing diversity and more opportunities for housing for young people in WA. I want greater action on climate change now. As someone who is neurodivergent, I want to see immediate support and early intervention for neurodivergent kids in schools now. As one of the youngest members in this place, I want greater access to housing for young people. I want WA to be a leader in the world on climate action and to be a renewable energy superpower now. As someone who has experienced coercive control and domestic violence, I want to see gender-based violence eradicated now. As someone who has supported family members through homelessness, I want to see an end to homelessness now.

There is always more work to be done; the fight is never finished. This is Ben Chifley’s light on the hill that guides the Labor Party. It is not an easy fight. Our opponents do not fight fair. They will use our community as a platform to spread fear and hate to cause division in an attempt to gain power. We have seen this method used throughout history in various forms. Infamous world leaders have found ways to blame marginalised sections of society for the suffering of the masses, using mass communication methods to spread propaganda, lies and fear and using politics of fear and division in an attempt to overthrow democracies and convince people to vote against their

better interests—people like Trump and the Mexicans; Hitler and the Jewish; Abbott and the boat people; Morrison and trans athletes; Dutton and Indigenous Australians; Hanson and Asians, Indigenous Australians and basically all minorities; and the Leader of the Liberal Party, Libby Mettam, and the trans community of WA.

I recognise the call of the LGBTQIA+ community—one of my communities. I want to tell its members that I will continue to fight as a member of the only party that has delivered LGBTQIA+ reforms for Western Australia. The Western Australian Labor Party is the only party that has promised to deliver LGBTQIA+ reforms and sustainably deliver progressive reform doing what is right for all Western Australians.

I commend this bill to the house.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1925.]

CHERIE TOOVEY — RETIREMENT

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Before I start on anything else, I want to make a statement. Many members will have been impressed by education presenter Cherie Toovey, who, after 24 years of serving our Parliament, has decided to retire.

Cherie joined the WA Parliament on 10 May 2001, initially as a casual employee and then later becoming a permanent employee. In 2006, Cherie was the winner of the Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-Tourism's Golden Guide award. In June 2016, Cherie became an education presenter and administrative assistant, whereby aside from delivering tours she became the Parliament's primary contact and ambassador for booking education tours. Cherie excelled at making great first impressions, and her thorough and thoughtful management of customer inquiries always inspired people about their upcoming tour.

Cherie's smiling face has welcomed thousands of visitors to Parliament, and she has taken the Parliament's "Pop-Up Parliament" education program all over the state as part of the regional outreach program. Cherie is a passionate educator, and her tours exude her dedication and commitment to Parliament and to the democratic process. Cherie delivers the education tour program to a wide audience, inclusive of students with special needs, providing an excellent tour experience. She adapts her tour delivery for community groups and senior groups who all leave with a far better understanding of the workings of Parliament.

Thank you, Cherie, and thank you for your dedication and commitment.

[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: I think the applause says it all, so on behalf of the members of this house and your colleagues, Cherie, I acknowledge and commend your many achievements. Cherie finishes in October 2024, but she commences a period of well-deserved leave as of today. We all wish you a long, happy and healthy retirement.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR — HON JOY BURCH VISITORS — ROXANNE HIRSCHAUSEN AND BYFORD SECONDARY COLLEGE

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.03 pm]: I also acknowledge a special guest in the Speaker's gallery, Speaker of the ACT Parliament, Hon Joy Burch. Welcome today, and also to your grandson Hunter. On behalf of the member for Darling Range, I acknowledge the Aboriginal and Islander education officer Roxanne Hirschausen and students from Byford Secondary College's Follow the Dream program to the public gallery today.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PRIME MINISTER — VISIT

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

I refer to the latest prime ministerial visit to Western Australia, which your colleagues have reportedly labelled as tone-deaf and unhelpful. Did the Premier take this opportunity to request the Prime Minister resolve the ongoing debacle surrounding the former detainees who have been released, in order to keep Western Australians like Mrs Ninette Simons of Girrawheen safe?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

First of all, I disagree with the member's characterisation of the Labor Party's view of the Prime Minister coming to this state. No-one gets Western Australia like Anthony Albanese. In the two years he has been our Prime Minister, he has come to Western Australia 20 times. That is more than the last four Prime Ministers combined. We are delighted to welcome the Prime Minister to Western Australia, where he spoke to a jam-packed room of businesspeople who were keen to hear from the Prime Minister about his plans for Australia and Western Australia.

Ms R. Saffioti: The Leader of the Liberal Party was there.

Mr R.H. COOK: There was so much interest that even the Leader of the Liberal Party was there and, like us, she heard the important announcements he made about ongoing work with Geoscience Australia to assist our resources industries make further discoveries, particularly around critical minerals and rare earths, and also the government's generous contribution towards Westport, which it acknowledged was a transformative piece of economic export infrastructure. It wanted to be part of that important project to continue to ensure that Western Australia is the engine room of the nation's economy.

The Prime Minister continues to come to Western Australia and continues to understand. His vision for the country completely complements ours—that is, an economy that is diversified and seizes the opportunities of the energy transformation so that we can continue to assist the world decarbonise. We share that vision. He wants to bring manufacturing back to Australia. We are very proud of our record of manufacturing our own railcars for both public transport and iron ore. We are making sure that advanced manufacturing comes to WA and that we can be part of the critical minerals and battery energy manufacturing supply chain.

This is a Prime Minister who gets Western Australia. This Prime Minister understands what he needs to do to continue to support Western Australia and to create great Western Australian jobs and make sure that we remain the engine room of the nation's capital.

PRIME MINISTER — VISIT

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

I have a supplementary question. Is the Premier disappointed that the Prime Minister has refused to visit Mrs Simons given the terrible events that occurred to her under his watch?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

The incident that Mr and Mrs Simons experienced was horrific. It was violent. It was in their home, where they should feel safe, and it was traumatising. Our hearts go out to that family. I noticed that other members of government have reached out directly to that family, but as the Prime Minister observed today, the reason that these detainees, unfortunately, were released in the community are twofold. One is that the High Court found that the federal Morrison Liberal government's laws were flawed and faulty and did not stand up to scrutiny. The other issue that the Prime Minister expressed some frustration about is that the Liberals and Nationals, combining with the Greens, opposes the new laws that the government wishes to put in place to keep the community safe. Once again, we see the Liberal Party completely fail the community when it comes to community safety. We know that only a Labor government will put in place the laws and make the necessary hard decisions to ensure that we can keep Western Australians safe.

COST OF LIVING — RELIEF PAYMENTS

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

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to supporting Western Australian households.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house how tomorrow's state budget will provide cost-of-living relief to Western Australians?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house how this government will be able to deliver these measures?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. Before I answer it, may I place on the record my thanks to Cherie for her incredible service to the people of Western Australia and the Parliament of Western Australia and also acknowledge the Speaker of the ACT Parliament—lovely to have you and to meet you earlier today.

- (1)–(2) The WA government continues to do everything we can to keep money in the pockets of local families, workers and seniors. Although our economy remains strong, we know that there are Western Australians who are doing it tough. Since I was elected, I have always been committed to making sure we keep our economy strong and we support those who are struggling.

WA is not unique in relation to these cost-of-living winds that are buffeting Western Australian families today. Those who have been around long enough would have seen the very difficult financial restraint we exercised upon coming to government nearly eight years ago. We have turned that around and now we have taken Western Australia from the weakest economy with the highest debt burden in the country to one of the strongest economies in the country with the lowest debt burden. Our efforts have worked. Thanks to all those difficult decisions that we made earlier, we are in a position to support Western Australians when they need it most.

I want to go through some of those measures. One of which I am most proud is the support that we are providing for families through the WA student assistance payment. We know that navigating the school years is financially tough on any family, and our WA student assistance payment offers \$250 per high school student and \$150 per primary school student. Today I can confirm that payments covering 250 000 students have now been paid. That is nearly \$50 million in assistance so far in that initiative alone—\$50 million

back into the pockets of Western Australian families, to help them deal with the cost of living. Backing our school package, earlier this year we made public transport free for school students, saving a family with two kids around \$560 a year. In regional WA, we have more than doubled the transport allowance for students without access to a free orange school bus service—the biggest increase in two decades.

There is also help for those who have worked their whole lives and are now facing challenges in their senior years with rising costs. To assist with this, the budget will provide every eligible regional pensioner travel card member an additional \$100 back in their pocket every year. That is an investment of more than \$20 million and it ups the card value to \$675 a year. At the same time, we are giving the Seniors Card program a \$6.3 million boost for customer support. Everyone also knows that our regional airfare cap scheme has been boosted, and we continue to stand by members of the regional community who have to frequently travel by air to the major cities for medical attention.

In tomorrow's budget there will also be support for those in the early stages of their career. We are providing bonuses to give apprentices the tools they need, when they need them most, and we are supporting employers to help them take on more building and construction apprentices. This will have a direct impact on the number of homes we are building and will create an uplift in the level of housing stock. While we have been able to offer these cost-of-living relief measures, we have also kept fees and charges down. We have a track record of keeping fees and charges below inflation. As power bills on the east coast have risen by more than 25 per cent over the last year, ours have remained steady. Along with our great lifestyle and economy, WA's affordability is why more people are migrating to Western Australia, and I am sure the Treasurer will have more detail on that tomorrow.

There is one thing I can promise: we will not be increasing power prices by 90 per cent, like the Liberals and Nationals did. We understand that Western Australians are enjoying one of the strongest economies in the country, but we also appreciate that many Western Australians are doing it tough. We will stand by them, we will make sure that we get people into jobs, and we will help those who are doing it the toughest.

STATE BUDGET 2024–25 — COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

279. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the government's fascination with spending additional billions of dollars on Metronet while our housing market is in crisis, our health system is on life support, and violent crime continues to be out of control.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! I would like to hear the question in silence, please.

Ms L. METTAM: Will the Premier give a guarantee to the Western Australian community that tomorrow's budget will prioritise a significantly higher allocation of funds for frontline services and the priorities that Western Australians expect, as opposed to cushioning more budget blowouts in a mismanaged project?

The SPEAKER: The Premier. I think I know the answer to this question!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. As we have become accustomed to her questions, they are full of falsehoods and mistruths, and to the member I say: one more sleep to go!

STATE BUDGET 2024–25 — COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

280. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Can the Premier explain why the government's top priority remains a \$12 billion project while Western Australians do not have appropriate housing, first-class health care or adequate protection from crime?

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Landsdale, I determine what is a supplementary question, not you.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

We are proud of our housing policies, through which we have put more than \$462 million back into housing. That includes a commitment of \$400 million to fund 5 000 new social and affordable homes, more than 2 100 of which have already been built and 1 000 that are under construction or under contract. Can the member indicate, by way of interjection, what her housing policy is? It is nothing.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Premier, it would appear that you have only provoked interjections from your own Minister for Housing! If you could please not ask for any more interjections.

Mr R.H. COOK: I was trying to address my point to the Leader of the Liberal Party.

The SPEAKER: Yes, it was a rhetorical question, but move on.

Mr R.H. COOK: So passionate is the Minister for Housing about social and affordable housing, he is difficult to keep down!

We have also funded more than 4 000 new nurses and more than 1 600 additional doctors. The health workforce has grown by nearly 30 per cent, so that is a significant contribution to our health services.

What members will see tomorrow is a government that is solely focused, completely focused, on issues that matter to Western Australians. They will see cost-of-living relief, a focus on housing, and significant investments in health care. We want to continue to make sure that we put Western Australians first. We will do what is right for WA and we will make sure that Western Australians enjoy the fruits of a government that continues to manage the finances properly and put Western Australians first.

STATE BUDGET 2024–25 — GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

281. Mr T.J. HEALY to the Treasurer:

I refer to the release of the WA Labor government's eighth state budget tomorrow.

- (1) Can the Treasurer advise the house what this government's longstanding commitment to responsible financial management has meant for Western Australia?
- (2) Can the Treasurer advise the house how this government's financial management compares with that of the previous Liberal–National government?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Southern River for the question; obviously the Liberal and National Parties do not want to ask me a question about the budget! Thank you.

- (1)–(2) It was great to see the Leader of the Liberal Party there today, listening to the Prime Minister give a speech and clapping and supporting the federal Labor government! She was on my table, too, which was quite awkward! But it was great to see the Liberal Party there, supporting Anthony Albanese as he outlined his agenda for this budget and for the nation. It was great. I mean, I would not go and see Peter Dutton speak, for example, but I am glad she came to see Anthony Albanese speak! I am glad that she came to see at least one federal leader speak, and this time she chose Anthony Albanese, as opposed to the federal Liberal Party!

Let us reflect on the budget tomorrow. As the Premier outlined, our major focus has been the cost of living. This budget is consistent with the theme of the previous seven budgets: getting the state's finances back on track; moving from a Liberal —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Oh, would you listen? Honestly. For someone who has done nothing and has no policies, you do talk a lot. No policies. She asks about housing. What is your policy on housing, apart from opposing every housing development in the state?

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So you oppose it? Well, tell the people of Byford. Would you please listen? You oppose housing developments. You want more housing, but you oppose any housing developments. Tell the good people of Byford and across the metropolitan area just how much you oppose public transport. We know you are going to increase the price of public transport to achieve 50 per cent cost recovery, because that is what the member for Cottesloe said. We know that you will reverse the caps on public transport fares that we introduced. We know that, and we will tell the good people of Western Australia what you will do about the cost of living. As the Premier outlined, when you were last in government, all you did was increase the cost of living for Western Australian families. There were massive increases in electricity—household electricity costs were up by 90 per cent; household water, seven per cent every year. Remember TAFE fees? There was a 500 per cent increase. You basically made it unaffordable for people to train in this state. It is the most shocking statistic that we have. Members opposite basically made it impossible for young people to get training in this state. They should hang their heads in shame. There was a 500 per cent increase in TAFE fees. Actually, household fees and charges grew by \$2 100 for a representative household under the previous government. Not only did it do that, but it also took the economy into recession. It lost the AAA credit rating by not one but both ratings agencies and had exponential growth in debt from about \$5 billion to a forecast \$43 billion.

This eighth budget is very similar to the previous budgets when we deliver responsible financial management. We are creating more jobs and opportunities throughout Western Australia, and we are delivering record spending in areas like housing and health. This is very much a budget for the times as we address the major challenges out there, delivering cost-of-living support and making sure that we continue to invest in health and housing and continue to grow jobs and the economy for the state.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES — PILBARA

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

Last February, Karratha resident Kristie Grabenhofer's son, Machlan, tragically ended his life following a battle with mental health, highlighting the critical need for dedicated mental health services in regional Western Australia. With Karratha lacking the long-promised step-up, step-down facility, residents are forced to rely on emergency telehealth services out of Perth. Following her loss, Kristie has campaigned for there to be local residential mental health services, including a petition attracting over 2 600 signatures.

When can the Karratha community expect the establishment of proper mental health services in the Pilbara?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

It may have escaped the member's attention, but the Minister for Mental Health is sitting just behind me. For the purposes of question time, that would have been —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: For the purposes of Parliament, that would have been a great opportunity for the member to ask the question of her. But I am very happy to receive this question because under the WA Labor government, we have seen a significant expansion of mental health services in regional Western Australia, including the step-up, step-down facilities in Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton, and we are keen to develop step-up, step-down facilities in Karratha and Port Hedland. For a range of reasons, including opposition from some in the local community, we are trying to work with the local community to find a suitable place and to get that facility open as soon as possible. I am passionate about this. Having the opportunity to have mental health services in the communities in which people live will significantly increase their effectiveness and particularly when it comes to step-up, step-down facilities, they allow people to be able to transition in and out of acute or community care in a way that significantly supports them on their mental health journey.

I would also add that as part of our Geraldton Health Campus upgrade, we are significantly increasing the number of mental health beds, including acute beds, at Geraldton hospital. No government has backed regional mental health services as significantly as ours, with significant investment and rollout of services.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES — PILBARA

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

I have a supplementary question. Nine years on, this project still appears to be going back to the drawing board.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! I just remind the Leader of the Opposition that the opportunity is for a short, sharp question, not a statement.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Okay. It is back to the drawing board for this project nine years on. Will the Premier personally intervene to make sure that this project is delivered to the people of the Pilbara?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the supplementary question. I apologise, member for Kalgoorlie; we also built a step-up, step-down facility in Kalgoorlie, so my apologies for my oversight of that one.

If it has been nine years since this project should have been developed, why did the member not do it when he was in government? We are absolutely committed to seeing this facility developed. The residents of Karratha deserve it, in the same way that they deserve all the health and mental health services that we fund in that region.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

284. Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's delivery of initiatives to address pressure on emergency departments.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on this government's \$827 million investment in emergency access initiatives in tomorrow's state budget?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this investment will deliver an expansion of the WA virtual emergency department alongside a new mental health co-response model?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Cockburn for the question. We have, over the past few weeks, but certainly over the past couple of years, really invested in reforms to our health system and how we deliver care, doing things differently, not doing things the same way that we have been doing it for many, many decades. Reducing ramping has been a priority of this government, and I am very pleased that I have been well supported by the cabinet and the Premier with the establishment of the Ministerial Taskforce on Ambulance

Ramping that I chaired. It has accepted and supported a range of reforms across the system that are aimed at reducing pressure from the front door of the hospital all the way through the hospital, to addressing the barriers to timely discharge, and discharging members of the community into more appropriate care, like aged care, Hospital in the Home, disability supports and mental health step-downs.

In the budget that will be handed down tomorrow by the Treasurer, we have already announced that we will spend another \$47 million to expand the WA virtual emergency department. That will see a doubling of the virtual emergency department, which is currently co-located with St John Ambulance State Health Operations Centre. There are clinicians, emergency consultants, nurse practitioners and nursing staff in that call room, triaging, supporting and providing online virtual consults to people to either fast track them through to an inpatient or specialist service, or provide in-reach services with a nurse practitioner in their home to provide them with the care that they need at home.

Anyone who has taken an elderly relative to a busy emergency department understands that that is not the best place for them. Long hospital stays generally result in a deterioration of elderly patients and large tertiary hospitals are not the best place for them. We have had lots of good feedback and evidence from patients and families that this is a much-preferred service for their loved ones.

The other cohort who are frequent visitors to emergency departments is those experiencing a mental health crisis. We know that after hours, often the only available support is the emergency department. This doubling of the WA virtual emergency department will more than double the number of staff. It will also include authorised mental health practitioners. When I say “authorised”, they are registered under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and under the Mental Health Act. That will provide a new mental health co-response and it will be a health-led response. The police will be called in situations in which there are safety concerns for the patient or for people around them as required, but the primary response will be health practitioners, and that is the most appropriate response. That is the model that clients, consumers and family have all said to us is what they need. Someone will call 000, they will be sent through to the WAVED, they will be triaged by a mental health clinician through that emergency department, an ambulance may be dispatched, and someone may be brought into the inpatient system, but that ambulance will have a trained paramedic and also a mental health practitioner. They will have powers under the act to prescribe and also refer people into both inpatient and community-based services. This is a really important model that we are launching with this budget. I want to thank all our partners, in particular St John Ambulance, for their support in this model.

We are also seeing \$8.6 million for an expansion of the geriatrician-led virtual care services. That is also known as Co-HIVE —community health in a virtual environment—and is run by the East Metropolitan Health Service. It forms part of the WAVED response and allows aged-care facilities to ring a geriatrician out of hours, any time of day, and get expert consultation for their frail, elderly resident. As part of that, we are also expanding the nurse practitioner-led residential care line, which connects with Co-HIVE. The geriatrician can dispatch a nurse practitioner to provide care, prescribe, order scans, and provide the care that the patient needs in their residential care home.

Also new to Western Australia will be the co-funding of a trial of extended care paramedics with St John WA. This is a really important career pathway for paramedics in Western Australia. They operate in other states and territories and, recently, national health ministers agreed that they should be registered under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. They will be AHPRA-registered extended care paramedics with a broader scope of practice to treat people in their homes including to stabilise and treat wounds, and to provide prescriptions and imaging when required. This is just one of the many, many reforms that we are undertaking in our health system at a rapid pace. It has been delivering really, really important gains, including a significant reduction in ramping hours by 40 per cent over the last two years.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY — WATER CORPORATION — ASSETS SHUTDOWN

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

I refer to a report in *The West Australian* on 29 April that the Water Corporation was required to shutdown assets at least 13 times between December last year and March this year because electricity demand exceeded the supply capacity of the south west interconnected system grid. In addition, other manufacturers were also required to reduce electricity usage for the same reason.

- (1) Is this not further proof that there is simply not enough electricity generation capacity in the SWIS network?
- (2) What steps is the minister and his government taking to ensure that we have an adequate and reliable electricity supply for the SWIS next summer?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

- (1)–(2) Thank you, member for Cottesloe. I welcome the question and I hope the media have their pens at the ready because the opposition has just indicated that it is in favour of a massive increase in power bills for

Western Australians—another one! They were not satisfied with the 90 per cent increase under the former government. Now they are signalling very clearly to every Western Australian householder that they are in favour of a massive increase in household charges for electricity. I will tell the member why. The system in which there are large users like the Water Corporation and other companies is called a demand response system. There is an agreement. This is a market facility in the federally administrated market operation that we have in Western Australia. It allows major users to receive an income by reducing their energy demand. It is an accepted part of the system. It does not happen just here in Western Australia. It happens in the United States and the United Kingdom, and it happens across —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: It happens across the European Union. It happens in New Zealand, Canada and Germany. It happens in the national electricity market in the eastern states, and in France, Italy, Japan and South Korea. It happens worldwide. It is an accepted method of operating an energy system that has large and extraordinary peak demands. We had an extraordinary summer just gone. The previous peak in demand was back in 2015. In the summer just gone, we had six or seven peaks in a row. Nine years ago, we had one peak, and now we have just had six or seven peaks. That is an extraordinary situation. It does not happen every summer. It does not happen every year. The member is saying that this system is wrong, that we need —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: It is not what the member said. It is not mismanagement; it is the careful and mature operation of the electricity market. The alternative, member, is massively overbuilding our capacity and spending billions and billions of dollars on generation for the one day in a summer that may or may not happen each year. That is the Liberal Party's position.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: They do not believe in normal market operations. They do not believe in demand-side management in which the supply to some of the big users is dialled down to get through the peaks, which is a normal operation across the world: "No, that is outrageous, we cannot have that. What we need to do is to spend billions and billions of dollars on generation, transmission and storage that we may or may not need once in a blue moon." That is the member's solution.

The headline has been written for the press. The Liberals do not believe in the system and the way that energy markets across the world are managed. They want a massive overinvestment in generation and other capacity and Western Australian households will be paying for it. The previous Liberal government wanted to sell off Western Power. We saw what happened in the eastern states with its increase in energy prices. What the member wants happens nowhere on the planet. He wants massive capacity so that once in a blue moon, we do not have to ask a major energy user to dial down their use to get through a rare massive peak day. That is the news folks: massive power bill increases for all Western Australians under their policy.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please members!

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY — WATER CORPORATION — ASSETS SHUTDOWN

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

I have a supplementary question. Is the extraordinarily high number of times that major customers have had to shut down to reduce electricity demand further proof that the Cook Labor government is simply mismanaging the renewable energy transition?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

The short answer is no. I could give the member the long answer about his nuclear energy plans, but I will go there another day.

SCHOOLS — CAPITAL WORKS

287. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's \$1.6 billion investment in school infrastructure in the upcoming state budget.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this record investment will deliver both new and improved infrastructure at public schools across Western Australia?
- (2) Can the minister advise what this will mean for students, teachers and families across Western Australia?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for Landsdale for her question. She has long been an advocate for quality public education in Western Australia. Before I get onto the substance of the member's question, and with regard to teachers, it is fantastic that there has been an in-principle agreement by the executive to put to the members this fantastic offer that we have made. It goes to us respecting the value of teachers and principals and our public education system. I thank the Minister for Industrial Relations for the way that she has negotiated that agreement. Thank you very much.

I am glad that the member asked me this question. Last week, I had the pleasure of joining the Premier, the member for Jandakot and Hon Stephen Pratt, MLC, at the fantastic Piara Waters Senior High School to announce another significant investment in public education. We announced that in tomorrow's budget that the Treasurer will bring down—a fantastic budget; only one more sleep—we will be investing a further \$410 million in Western Australian school infrastructure. We are also committing to a \$1.6 billion investment over the forward estimates in infrastructure in our public school system. That means we will be building on WA Labor government's record \$4.4 billion education infrastructure investment since 2017—phenomenal! No government previously has achieved such an investment in our public education infrastructure. This list is long, but I will try to keep it short because I do want to break the record that the Minister for Health might have just set. It includes \$88.4 million for three new public primary schools to open in 2027; \$73.2 million for stage 2 of the Piara Waters Senior High School development; \$28.4 million towards the construction of two new primary schools within Wellard East and Wungong; \$26.5 million for a double-storey block at Caversham Primary School; \$21.8 million for the relocation of Mount Hawthorn Education Support Centre to Lake Monger Primary School; \$15 million for fast-track planning for a new secondary school in Brabham; \$2.4 million for planning for a number of schools including Como Secondary College and also, member for Roe, Esperance Senior High School; and a \$12 million investment for new two-storey modular classroom block for Highgate Primary School.

Since 2017 when Labor was returned to government in Western Australia, we have opened 32 new primary schools with two more to open in 2025, while 10 new high schools have also been built. I mentioned the investment in Highgate Primary School and the enrolment pressures. There has been great local advocacy there by the member for Perth. Last Wednesday, 1 May, I noticed there was an article in *The West Australian* titled "Supersizing the city" in which the Lord Mayor of Perth talks about his unashamed desire for more residents in the City of Perth to be achieved through an increase in plot ratios, including a 152 per cent increase in Claisebrook and a 62 per cent increase in East Perth. The Lord Mayor said —

We all know that having more people living and working in the city supports business, supports a vibrant capital city and community."

I could not agree with him more. However, I think some of those people living there might have children who need to go to a primary school. We as a government are prepared—ready to go. We will create a fantastic new primary school in East Perth. The only thing stopping us is the City of Perth. The Lord Mayor keeps saying that maybe the minister should be taken away from negotiations. Does he not understand that I am not freewheeling on this? This is the government's position. We are solid behind what we believe is right for East Perth and the state of Western Australia. We are ready to start this fantastic investment in East Perth. The Lord Mayor and the City of Perth talk about a partnership. What are they bringing to the partnership? Nothing. We are prepared to invest over \$100 million in a public primary school in East Perth, plus unlock the potential of up to \$27.5 million on a block of land that we will return to the city, which at the moment can be used only for a car park. Once again, I ask the City of Perth to come to the table and work in partnership with us because this is a government that is prepared to invest in infrastructure for public schools, whether they are in the inner city, outer part of the metropolitan region or the country area. We stand here on a great record and tomorrow's budget will confirm that.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK

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

Over a thousand locals protested in Esperance on 28 April 2024 in disgust at the government's proposed south coast marine park. Does the Premier acknowledge that the current unrest in Esperance is a direct result of the disingenuous and contrived consultation process undertaken by his government?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

No.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK

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

I have a supplementary question. The Minister for Environment is taking no notice. What will it take for the Premier and his government to realise they cannot stampede over locals whose lifestyles and livelihoods are at stake?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Of course, the opportunity to establish a marine park in Western Australia is an important one to continue to make sure we preserve endangered species, preserve stocks of particular fish species and ensure our recreational and commercial fishers can fish into the future. It will make sure we preserve the stocks we do have so that not only people's children but also their grandchildren will have the same opportunities to fish that we all take for granted today. But, of course, we cannot take it for granted. This requires science. This requires careful consideration. This requires responsible policy settings that will enable the sustainable preservation of our fish stocks to protect what the member says is about lifestyle and livelihoods. That is obviously the reason the Minister for Environment is working closely with the community, consulting on aspects of this important policy initiative to ensure we get the balance right. We accept that people do not necessarily get everything they want every time they go into these processes. However, I think everyone would agree that preserving our fish stocks so we can have a sustainable fishery for both recreational and commercial fishers —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr R.H. COOK: I think we can all agree that preserving our fish stocks to make sure they are sustainable for future generations is a central part —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: It is a central part of what we should be doing in government. Think for a moment, Madam Speaker, had we not been so careful in managing our rock lobster fisheries all those years ago, what would have happened to that fishery? What would have happened to the livelihoods of those people who are now part of a globally renowned conservation fishery, regarded as the most sustainable in the world? It has produced wealth —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr R.H. COOK: It has produced wealth right across the community and, of course, sustains many people in the member for Geraldton's electorate. To suggest this is some sort of flight of fancy by the Minister for Environment is absolute rot. This is obviously a careful policy process that the government is stepping through. Agencies are working together to achieve the outcome that we want, which is to make sure that we leave this environment —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: — in as good as if not a better state than when we found it. That is what we should all be uniting behind. The only people who are standing between now and that goal are the Liberals and Nationals. We know that in government they have no regard for the environment —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sorry—order, please. Your interjections are incessant.

Mr R.H. COOK: Under my government, we have significantly increased the conservation estate, working closely with traditional owners and recreational users and commercial operators in the estate. Of course, our marine parks are no different from that. The Minister for Environment and Minister for Fisheries will continue to consult their stakeholders to make sure we find a balance. It is not about picking winners or losers. It is about working together for the best possible outcome for the community, the environment and industries that depend upon that marine environment.

ENERGY NETWORK — STANDALONE POWER

290. Mr K.J.J. MICHEL to the Minister for Energy:

I will just get my question back! I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to building resilience and security across Western Australia's energy network.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what this government delivered for standalone power systems means for communities in regional Western Australia?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government is harnessing Western Australia's local manufacturing capabilities to deliver more standalone power systems?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Pilbara. It is a relief to get an intelligent question about energy. Thank you for that. This government, as we know, is the true government of the regions. It is a government that really looks after the people on the land, the people in remote communities —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: We support the people who rely on energy supplies. We are investing millions of dollars to ensure power to the people in remote, end-of-line situations, on farms—it is usually a farm property where there can be one or two customers at the end of a very long, skinny, vulnerable powerline. At the moment, they are at risk of losing that energy, that electricity, by fire, farm machinery colliding with a power pole in the middle of a paddock, storms, or tree branches falling down. It is a very vulnerable situation. We appreciate that and we want to change that. We want to ensure that right across Western Australia, people in the regions have reliable power, whether it is Horizon or Western Power network areas. We also believe in decarbonisation. We also believe in reducing our emissions from producing electricity. The standalone power systems are the way to go. Farmers who were given standalone power systems—I think this started in the Esperance region after the fires down there back in 2015—had some trepidation at first because of that sense of not being connected by a long line back into the grid. They thought: how is this going to work? The member for Roe would know that those who received standalone power systems love them. They swear by them. More and more farmers are putting up their hands saying, “We want one too.” Standalone power systems offer 90 per cent or more renewable energy from the sun. The grid energy never gets to that proportion of renewable power. Standalone power systems have solar power backed by battery, which is backed by generator if it is needed. I am told often that the only time someone starts the generator is to make sure it still works for maintenance reasons. They are very reliable and successful. Horizon Power has rolled out 56 of these units since 2021. The Premier and I were at a local manufacturer the other day and we announced that this state budget will deliver \$18.4 million to roll out a further 50 standalone power systems for the regions—most of them in the Esperance region. I am sure the member for Roe will be celebrating with us tomorrow for the budget announcement on that. Most of these standalone power systems will be in the Esperance region, and some will be in the midwest. They allow us to remove overhead powerlines, which reduces costs for consumers, creates a pipeline of work for local manufacturers and reduces maintenance costs for operators as well.

Of course, this comes on top of our decarbonisation efforts, in which we are exiting state-owned coal-fired energy in Collie in a responsible way by 2030. We are not going to rush there and rip the cord out. We are doing it responsibly. We are investing \$3 billion in wind power and battery storage. There are enormous things happening to our network in Western Australia. We are investing in huge batteries that are some of the biggest on the planet. We are removing those old power poles that have stood in paddocks for generations that are risky and unreliable. We are doing things for the network both in Perth and the south west and right across Western Australia to make sure we have decarbonised our network to reduce emissions but also to bring reliable power to people in the regions. We are overwhelmingly —

Mr P.J. Rundle: I’ll tell the people of Bremer Bay you’re coming down to see them.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: — the party that represents the people of the regions and their interests.

HOSPITALS — NORTH WEST CENTRAL ELECTORATE

291. **Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the recent Murchison country zone Western Australian Local Government Association meeting and discussions around key health projects that have been significantly delayed, including the Meekatharra Hospital upgrades.

- (1) Can the minister provide an update on the Meekatharra Hospital upgrades, including the current status and project time line?
- (2) Has the project now moved past the design phase?
- (3) Has the estimated total cost of the project increased?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I can provide a very firm commitment to the member and to the chamber that the government remains rock-solid behind these regional hospital developments—all of them. There is no question, we are in a very challenging —

Mr P.J. Rundle: What about Tom Price? Geraldton?

The SPEAKER: Sorry. Member for Roe, please do not interject.

Ms A. SANDERSON: There is no question that we are in a very challenging construction environment and we are working through those challenges. We have directed the agencies to prioritise that work to ensure that we can commence as soon as practically possible. No government has committed more than this government on regional health infrastructure—none!

HOSPITALS — NORTH WEST CENTRAL ELECTORATE

292. **Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Health:**

I have a supplementary question. When will construction of the Meekatharra Hospital commence, or will this project be forgotten like the Tom Price Hospital has been?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

The member opened the door, so I will walk through it. The member mentioned Tom Price Hospital. I want to reflect on some of the claims that have been made by both the Leader of the Liberal Party and the shire around Tom Price Hospital. I can assure the chamber and the community that regional health infrastructure remains a high priority for this government. I will remind members opposite of the commitments already delivered under this government, and if not complete, that are already underway.

We have delivered the redeveloped Newman Health Campus, which was a \$61 million development, and the Albany radiation oncology service, which is incredible for that community in Albany. There is a particular demographic of community members in Albany, many of whom seek to access radiation oncology services at home and close at home. We have delivered upgrades to Dongara Health Centre and the incredible theatres at Collie Hospital, which are now taking work from Bunbury Regional Hospital because those theatres are operating so well. That is a fantastic outcome for that regional community.

There have been upgrades to the emergency departments at Plantagenet Cranbrook Health Service, Boddington Health Service, Dalwallinu Health Service and Wongan Hills Medical Centre. We have appointed Multiplex to complete the Bunbury Regional Hospital redevelopment. We have already put 30 beds into the Bunbury Hospital redevelopment with the COVID surge. It already had 30 extra beds. We awarded the tender for the Geraldton Health Campus redevelopment and we are building a new women's and babies' hospital and redeveloping the Peel Health Campus. Those are just the completed and underway projects. We remain steadfastly committed to delivering those projects.

I want to discourage the opposition from continuing to peddle dishonest claims about those hospitals, in particular about Tom Price Hospital. There have been claims that it is not in the budget. We know that the Leader of the Liberal Party cannot read a budget paper. The funding for Tom Price is in the budget and remains in the budget! Some of the claims being peddled are, frankly, dishonest. It is ageing infrastructure. I acknowledge that, but the fundamental point of the campaign that is currently being run by the shire is actually about the service delivery at Tom Price. Not once has the shire, the member or any member of the opposition written to me to complain about the service delivery at Tom Price. Not once! That is exactly what the campaign is about.

I can tell you, it is distressing staff. It is distressing the fantastic clinical staff who work there. Not once have you made any representation to me. There is a claim that somehow at Tom Price all you get is a bandaid! That is the claim being made by the opposition, and it is wrong. I will go through the services that are actually available at Tom Price Hospital. I will go through those services.

Ms M. Beard: It is the building! They want the building!

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is not the claim!

There is a 24/7 emergency department. It is not just a bandaid; it is an emergency department! There are PathWest facilities. There are inpatient beds. There are radiological services.

Ms M. Beard: It is the building they want.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Ms A. SANDERSON: There are paediatric services. There are physiotherapy services, speech pathology, occupational therapy, child health, gynaecology, audiology, dietetics, school and community health, specialist telehealth services and general surgery. The claim that you can only get a bandaid is dishonest and it is politically motivated. That is it!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms A. SANDERSON: It is dishonest and politically motivated.

We have always acknowledged that the infrastructure is ageing. That is why we are committed to redeveloping it. That is why we are committed to that. I am backing in the service, and I am backing in the staff who do an incredible service to that community.

The SPEAKER: Members! That concludes question time.

**BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION AMENDMENT
(SEX OR GENDER CHANGES) BILL 2024**

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [2.57 pm]: I rise today to make a contribution on the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024 and I —

The SPEAKER: Member for Belmont, can I just ask you to pause for a moment while people who are needing to go elsewhere leave. It is a bit noisy at the moment. Thank you, members.

Ms C.M. ROWE: I rise today to make a contribution to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024. I would like to start by acknowledging the work of the Attorney General. This is another incredibly progressive piece of legislation. I wish to extend my gratitude to him for bringing this significant piece of legislation to the house.

This bill may not impact a large cohort of our community, but it certainly will impact some members of our LGBTQIA+ community in a very profound way. Currently, WA is the only jurisdiction in which a board determines someone's application to change their sex. Also, in WA, a person is required to undergo medical or surgical reassignment in order to change their sex on their birth certificate. The reforms before us today will abolish the Gender Reassignment Board. I know that is welcomed by the community. It will also remove the requirement to undergo a medical or surgical procedure in order to change a person's registered gender.

I was not going to speak on this bill today because so many other people on our side were going to make really elegant contributions, but I thought the pretty hateful contribution of the Leader of the Liberal Party was again incredibly disappointing, but not surprising whatsoever. After all, the Liberal Party's history book is littered with countless examples of persecuting marginalised groups, especially our LGBTQIA+ community.

The fact that the Liberal Party has just endorsed Thomas Brough as a candidate for the seat of Albany signals that the same old Liberal Party is really peddling the same old hate. For those members who missed it, Thomas Brough, who is a local councillor—heaven forbid!—claimed during a council meeting in March this year that the community should be aware that paedophiles, or what he coined in his words as “minor-attracted persons”, were part of what the plus stands for in LGBTQIA+. The fact that he has been preselected just about says it all about the Liberal Party, which is stuck in prehistoric times in its approach to anything remotely progressive. It is still trying to have a say on women's bodies, who people sleep with and what others do about their gender. It is really quite appalling.

I take this opportunity to clearly state my support for the LGBTQIA+ community. I trust and hope that the support of our Labor government for this community is patently clear from not just these reforms, but also other reforms that we have delivered in the preceding seven years and over time. Over many years, whenever Labor got into state or federal government, we have always championed reforms that seek to protect this community and enshrined them in legislation.

I will touch on other reasons I think these reforms are important. A national study on mental health and wellbeing was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2022, and it found that nearly 75 per cent of lesbian, gay, bisexual or otherwise non-heterosexual Australians have experienced a mental disorder at some point in their lives. Nearly 48 per cent of this group had seriously thought about taking their own lives at some point. The rate of self-harm for this cohort was six times higher than for heterosexual Australians. That is significant. Non-binary Australians experience mental health issues at more than double the rate of men and women. I quote —

Equality Australia legal director Ghassan Kassisieh said the “sobering” figures were a “wake up call” for the state of mental health among Australia's queer community.

He says —

“It shows that debates about our lives and about our rights are not academic, and they have an impact on people ...

“When our equality is up for discussion, when our laws discriminate against us, when people are still afraid of being who they are or falling in love, these are things that impact on the day-to-day experience of LGBT+ people.”

I also want to highlight comments by Nicky Bath, who is the chief executive of LGBTIQ+ Health Australia. She said that the report by the ABS, which I am quoting from, confirmed “adverse mental health outcomes” related to discrimination and abuse.

I will quickly touch on how important it is, especially for our non-binary Australians. More than four in five non-binary Australians, or over 85 per cent, have experienced a mental health disorder at some point in their lives, and that has to be compared with approximately two in five, or 42 per cent, of men and 43 per cent of women. This is staggering: 79.6 per cent had seriously considered suicide and almost three in four had self-harmed. That is more than just a little bit alarming. That is how difficult their lives already are. Any measure that government can employ to make things a little bit easier for people in that community should be absolutely wildly celebrated instead of this community being vilified by the opposition. It is just rank.

These reforms are important because I think everyone deserves the respect of having autonomy over their legal identity. More importantly, it speaks to why I am very proud to be a Labor Party member standing in this place; we believe in supporting people from all walks of life, and I will always be proud of that. I will never be able to support the Liberal Party for its stance on such legislation.

I commend the bill to the house.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [3.04 pm] — in reply: Well, well, well—the Liberal Party did not disappoint in its contribution! If anything, it is perfectly predictable. It uses any guise and any excuse to resist any social change in the legislative statute book. It was really a pathetic performance by the member for Vasse.

I will come to her speech later, but to show that saying it was a “pathetic performance” is not a throwaway line, I will say that the member for Vasse said concerns were raised about the legislative process because it lacked significant public consultation and a broader discussion of public engagement in the legislative process. She said a more inclusive approach should have been taken. I notice that a member of the Liberal Party is present in the chamber. I did this back in 2018, but for the edification of the Liberal Party, I will once again table the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia’s project 108, titled *Review of Western Australian legislation in relation to the recognition of a person’s sex, change of sex or intersex status*. That report, without all its appendixes, comprises over 80 pages. Then its appendixes compare the legislative regimes in different jurisdictions. The Liberal Party is ignorant of the existence of this report. Could we please table it again?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Paper tabled.

[See paper [2816](#).]

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I will ask the member for Cottesloe to pass it on to the absent member for Vasse before consideration in detail commences.

I have to say that it was a truly humbling and pathetic performance by the Leader of the Liberal Party. I juxtapose this with the speech of the member for Central Wheatbelt, Hon Mia Davies, who gave a very thoughtful and insightful speech about the legislation. She recounted the personal experiences of “A”, one of the constituents, I think, of the member’s electorate, and addressed an example covered in project 108 of the young child who was musical and all this. She wanted to live as a girl, the parents accepted and embraced it, and the child came to happiness.

Perhaps I could tell a little story of a constituent, a single mum who comes to see me with her lovely daughter. I will not mention her name, but she is five years old and in preschool. She attends one of the local schools in my electorate and is a gorgeous little girl. She is very intelligent but was born biologically a boy. Her dresses, her visage, her presentation and the way she looks at the world are those of a beautiful five-year-old girl. She is very, very intelligent and knows what is going on.

I thought that the member for Central Wheatbelt’s speech was very insightful and sensitive. I have said it before: she will be a loss to this institution as she has announced her intention not to return to this place at the end of this Parliament.

I want to address a few of the things that the member for Vasse said. She is always critical of legislation we bring forward. Why did she not bring another piece of legislation forward? Why was coercive control not brought forward? Why was a budget bill not brought forward? I have brought 60, nudging up to 70, bills forward. I do not go and genuflect in front of the opposition and say, “Please, sir. May I bring another bill forward?” I have gone hell-bent for leather to try to bring as much reform to this Parliament as I have been able to with my wonderful team.

I have disabused this chamber of the notion that there was no, or insufficient, consultation. In that report that I have re-tabled and that the member for Cottesloe will erstwhile pass on to the member for Vasse for her edification, there are pages and pages of names of the people who, and organisations that, made submissions on this very point. I agree with the member for Central Wheatbelt; we are on the same page.

The member for Cottesloe will not have to take the report of which the member for Vasse is totally ignorant very far. The member can just pass it on to the next seat. I was just making the point, member for Vasse, that, although you said that there should be public consultation, report 108 comprised 80 pages, and pages and pages of submissions, on this very point—a point that you were ignorant of because it appeared that you were reading someone else’s prepared speech to attack this bill. When you pick up someone else’s homework and start reading from it, you will seriously embarrass yourself, like you have in this chamber this afternoon.

The member is ignorant of the Law Reform Commission’s extensive inquiries and report on this matter. The member is looking at me wide-eyed because it has all come as news to her that there was this big report and big public consultation. There was not a whisper of it and not a breath of recognition of that report in her revolting speech.

The member then talked about safe spaces. We have to remember that all around Australia, with New South Wales lagging a bit, there is capacity to change gender recognition. Nowhere around Australia has this resulted in a string of offences of trans people entering ladies toilets, female toilets, or other female spaces and committing offences. I did an AI search for convictions for offences by transgender people in women’s safe spaces. Zero! There was one in Canada in which a sex offender dressed as a woman to fool somebody else. They were not transgender. I found one in the world! It is just not an issue in Australia. This is the drumbeat of the extreme right.

Remarkably—I remember that I never thought the member would go to this place—the member for Vasse said to think of Scotland! Scotland, in its devolved Parliament, moved to have gender recognition legislation. Member for Vasse, think of Scotland and what happened. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that Westminster would veto that law as they are allowed to do under the powers of devolution. I remind the member for Vasse—I read this in *The Times* of London this week—following local government elections in the United Kingdom, the Conservative Party is about to replicate you and become the third force in politics. It was slaughtered by its extreme right-wing policies. It is bound to become the third party as you, the Liberal Party, sit in this chamber as the smallest

party in this chamber. For the first time in the history of Western Australia, the Liberal Party does not even occupy the position of Leader of the Opposition, let alone the Premiership. It has become a pimple on the horse's backside. I am surprised that the member for Vasse raised what happened in the United Kingdom.

The member is also totally ignorant of the commonwealth's Sex Discrimination Act and how that overrides provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act in relation to single-sex services like single-sex girls' schools. Under the Sex Discrimination Act, you are allowed to discriminate on sexual characteristics. One of the things, but only one of the things, that people may take into account is gender on birth certificates. I want to intersperse my comment to the member for Vasse with a comment to the member for Central Wheatbelt, who asked about the register and the extractions from that register. It was report 108 on this subject that actually reported that there be no gender field on the extracted birth certificate.

Ms M.J. Davies: It caused some media coverage at the time.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes. It recommended that there be none, and then people could go and apply for a gender identification certificate. The government did not accept that recommendation. The government decided to keep a sex gender field present on the certificate.

As for the entering of women's safe places, I have never ever heard of someone trying to enter a toilet producing an extract of a birth certificate. It is just nonsense created by extreme right-wingers to mislead the public that, somehow, the issuing of an extraction from the birth register that has in the sex gender field the identified gender will give people a right to override institutions and organisations that comply with the Sex Discrimination Act of the commonwealth.

The member for Vasse also said the government was negligent or dilatory to have received the report in 2018 and not brought it forward. I asked for the report in 2018 on gender identification for a very good reason: it interlaced with the Equal Opportunities Act. When I got that report back and looked at the Equal Opportunities Act, I saw it immediately needed a review, not just of sexual identification in the Equal Opportunity Act but a rewrite of that act. That was a very large component of the Law Reform Commission's work. Following that, there was a big report and very complex drafting instructions and drafting of equal opportunity legislation that has been held up in its presentation to this Parliament because of constitutional considerations and what the federal government has announced as its intentions. But the government will proceed in any event within a short period of time with the amendments to the Equal Opportunities Act once it sorts that out.

The member was also very critical of the fact that a person who has been convicted of a crime, and it might be a sex crime, will be able to apply for a birth certificate under their new transitional gender identification. Well, why not? Gender identification is not part of the penalties of the Criminal Code, so why not? A person who changes their gender identification and has a record of criminality as defined in the bill will be required to advise the commissioner within seven days. Where is the problem? There is none. It is another attempt to try to scare the public. The opposition raises the question of bathroom wars. Let me tell members about the bathroom wars. On numerous occasions I have attended sporting events where the only incursion into toilets by people of a different gender is women, in desperation, entering a male toilet.

Ms J.L. Hanns: Absolutely, 100 per cent—guilty as charged!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I have members in the chamber saying "guilty".

Ms M.J. Davies: Not at the new stadium because, as minister, we were very clear about the number of women's toilets that were going in the new stadium and the fact that I used to have to be one of those who lined up for the blokes' toilets at the Subi oval.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We are all being candid here this afternoon. I can remember being at the football waiting for my turn at the urinal and the very attractive dental nurse from the dentist practice I go to came in and went past me on her way to the cubicle. We greeted each other and in she went. I have never had recounted to me stories of women complaining about men entering women's toilets at the football or at the arena or anywhere. I have never heard of men busting into women's toilets.

The only time that women's toilets become unsafe—I have to be careful here because some of it is before the Supreme Court at the moment—is when heterosexual men enter women's toilets for the purposes of accessing women. Women who have been born biologically male but have identified as and transitioned to women do not enter women's toilets to assault other women. That is a nonsense. That is covered, member for Vasse, in the Law Reform Commission's report. The commission looked around Australia for incidents of this and could not find any. Do you know what I mean? Women who have transitioned do not enter women's toilets to assault women. Heterosexual men have been known to do just that to rape women in those toilets. I have to be careful here because it happened in Scarborough and the matter, I think, is still partially unresolved and before the courts. There were incidents in Scarborough of women being sexually assaulted in a women's toilet by heterosexual men. That is the danger for women. I hope that I am not damning the member for Central Wheatbelt amongst her colleagues by praising her, but we are both out of here at the end of the year, so I think I can speak frankly. I agree with her wholeheartedly that nothing in this bill will increase the vulnerability of, or danger to, women. There is nothing in here that will do that.

As for the Liberal Party, which opposes this bill, in all the years of the federal Liberal government under Hon John Howard, under Turnbull and under Morrison, I never heard the Liberal Party, and particularly the member for Vasse, rail against the commonwealth's rule that if someone wants to change their gender on their passport, they can just apply for a new passport and elect their new gender. I have never heard the Liberal Party rail against that. It is just a non-issue.

People in other states can change their gender identification and come to work here. They can move here with their families. It is a non-issue. I thought this bill was just almost a non-event. We are just bringing ourselves broadly into line with the rest of the commonwealth. I did not count on the member for Vasse reading the homework of Hon Nick Goiran. If members want me to speak candidly, I do not think she has anything to worry about from Lord Mayor Zempilas. He might knock her off for five minutes. Over the course of the journey the Liberal Party I predict will not go with a libertarian like Basil Zempilas. They will want to lock you down to the extreme right wing, and they have already lined up in the preselection process —

Dr A.D. Buti: We have a great member for Churchlands now anyway.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is right. There is all this presumption that he is going to get in. Even if he got in, is the point I am trying to make, Goiran has stacked the Liberal Party preselection process, so the public can expect from the Liberal Party more of this tripe that has been read out here this afternoon.

Dr A.D. Buti: Keep going; keep going.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I will just go for a little while, member.

The question the member for Vasse asked rhetorically highlights the member's ignorance of the law. She was totally ignorant of the Sex Discrimination Act of the commonwealth and its implications. She asked this rhetorically: why is WA going further than other jurisdictions and allowing 12-year-olds to 17-year-olds to apply to the Family Court without parental consent? Let us go through this. Other jurisdictions allow children under 18 years to apply to change their sex or gender without the consent of their parents. She is wrong there—once again. South Australia allows children under 18 years to make their own application. Does the member want to stand up and apologise or withdraw? She is sitting there with her mouth agape. South Australia allows children under 18 years of age to make their own application with the approval of the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Queensland allows children under 16 years of age to make their own application with the approval of the Children's Court. Tasmania allows children under the age of 16 years to make their own applications. The ACT has recently passed legislation to allow children aged 14 years and over to make their application without parental consent. Does the member get any idea of the ignorance of her speech? I know she did not write it. She must be humiliated hearing this because what she said was 100 per cent wrong and misleading of the public of Western Australia.

Does the member want to apologise? The Liberal Party does not apologise. That is what I said. I went to Nedlands state school. I know the rule book of the Liberal Party. Never admit error. Never apologise for anything. That is why they never gave Andrew Mallard a second appeal, by the way. They will never admit a mistake or apologise.

Then she asked what are the potential administrative and financial burdens for the Family Court as a result? I can tell the member what they are because the Family Court has advised that it considers that, in practice, applications pursuant to the amendment bill are likely to arise in the context of application to the court for authorisation to commence stage 1 or stage 2 treatment for gender dysphoria. At the moment, for gender dysphoria treatment there has to be some permissions from the Family Court. I will give the member the numbers: 2018, one application; 2019, two applications; 2020, five applications; 2021, 23 applications; 2022, 12 applications; 2023, 16 applications; and 2024, as of 30 April, four applications.

It was not disgraceful, but it was perhaps one of the member's most unfortunate contributions in this chamber when she stood and parroted what the extreme right of the Liberal Party put in front of her. Once again, I compliment the member for Central Wheatbelt on her contribution, and I look forward to the debate in consideration in detail.

There is one other thing I will touch upon before I sit down: clinical treatment. This could involve anything; treatment does not have to be surgical intervention. It does not have to be chemical intervention. It has to be treatment; talking to the person and counselling them is treatment. I found out during my consultation with stakeholders that people who have gender dysphoria, or people who are thinking about transitioning at any stage, have usually been in contact with a doctor. That was the case in the family that the member for Vasse referred to; it certainly was the case with the family In Butler that I referred to. They seek answers: "What's going on with my life? What's going on with my body?" They seek and get consultation, and we want to keep the bar low. Any treatment consultation will do. In Queensland even that is not needed; they just need an affirming affidavit. But I thought, as the Attorney General, that we do not want to bring the system into disrepute and have people on St Georges Terrace who have had a few drinks having a bit of a lark: "I'll go home as a girl tonight, and go in there and make an application." That would bring it into disrepute. There has to be some document evidencing their sincerity in engaging in the process. If they have spoken to and consulted with a medical practitioner or psychologist, and can provide evidence of that to the registrar, that should be sufficient.

Finally, before I resume my seat and we go into consideration in detail, I ask: how many people in this chamber even know where their extract of birth certificate is? How many people could put their hands on it in a hurry? The member for Vasse is probably applying for that big job up there and they have asked to see it, but most people, when they are opening a bank account or anything else, are asked for photo ID and they produce their passport and their driver's licence. Their birth certificate does not identify them to anyone, let alone, "I've had three beers; I've got to go to the toilet. Where's my birth certificate?"

That is just a joke. Let us get into consideration in detail. Let us get this done. Let us bring Western Australia into the twenty-first century.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mrs L.A. Munday) casting her vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (50)

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

Noes (3)

Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam	Ms M. Beard (<i>Teller</i>)
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Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I ask the Attorney General to bear with me a little because of the timing of when we received the legislation and the time we have had to go through the bill, so if I ask something in the wrong section, I am happy to take the Attorney General's advice. Under clause 1, "Short title", there were a couple of things that we touched on in the —

Mr J.R. Quigley: Excuse me, member. I am getting a bit old. I could not quite hear you.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Sorry, it might be my voice. There are a couple of things I want to clarify. If we can get them out of the way under the short title, then we can zoom through some of the other changes, although I am not entirely sure we will get there before four o'clock, which was an earlier discussion.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Sure. Thank you, member.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: As I understand it, the nomenclature—male, female, intersex or indeterminate—that will be introduced for the birth certificates is intended to be in the regulations. Can the Attorney General tell me when we are likely to see that, what is the timing, why there has been a conversation about those four in particular, and whether any other particular nominations were requested by people?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: After the passage of the legislation, there will be a six-month period for implementation. Yes, thought was given to descriptors. As the member knows, we have male, female and non-binary. In another jurisdictions, the field was open. People can nominate their own descriptor, as long as it was not offensive. That was Queensland. We considered that as well. We did not go with intersex because stakeholders in that space were objecting to that term. They were concerned that that was a sexual denomination rather than a gender. I have explained to the trans community, and they are wholly acceptive, that we put in a statutory three-year review so that when this legislation is up and going, if further descriptors are required, the next Parliament can give that consideration. We are very comfortable with these three descriptors as not causing concern in the community or amongst the stakeholders.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The descriptors that will be on the birth certificates will be male, female or non-binary, reviewed after three months —

Mr J.R. Quigley: Three years.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Three years—sorry, my apologies. Is that different from what is on the actual register?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No. There is a register, and at the birth of a child, the attending midwife or doctor will have to fill in a form. They will fill in that form, and that will be entered on the register. That will be a permanent record on the register. The register is not available for public inspection by everyone. People can go along and ask for their details. We call that the extract of birth certificate. It is printed big on the form. It will be in respect of that form that a person who has transitioned or is transitioning can request, if they have a doctor's or psych's letter to support them, that on the extract they be identified by the gender that they identify as. In three years' time, if we have to open this up further, that will be for the next Parliament to consider, but we thought this was a big step forward, and we are doing it a little bit conservatively so that we can step it out.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Just so that I am absolutely clear, a child is born and is entered on the register, which is not a publicly available document. Their biological sex, whether that is male, female or intersex or indeterminate —

Mr J.R. Quigley: Indeterminate.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Male, female or indeterminate is listed, but the extract—the birth certificate—at the time will be issued, and that is what someone can then apply to be changed?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is correct. When a little baby is born, the attending midwife or obstetrician might not be able to determine the sex and might put “indeterminate” on the form. Subsequently, because of growth and development, it might be that they can actually tell. That is not changing gender; that would be a correction of the record. The doctor would say, “It's now three months on. Whoops! I can tell it's a baby boy, and the record has to be corrected.” That record will be permanent.

Ms L. METTAM: This question came up in the briefing and was raised by the shadow minister, Hon Tjorn Sibma. For clarification, will the birth certificate contain sex and gender? Will it have the sex of the child that is born, whether they are male, female or intersex, and then if there is a change, will the birth certificate reflect the changed gender?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Could the member repeat the question once more because there were two questions?

Ms L. METTAM: There are two parts to it. I wanted clarification that the sex of the child at birth will be part of the birth certificate and that it will be maintained. The second part is: will the birth certificate reflect a change in gender?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The register will not change. The only circumstances under which the register will change is by correction of an error.

Ms L. Mettam: I am asking about a birth certificate.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes. We have got that there as locked in forever in the register. Then we go to the birth certificate. The birth certificate will evidence the gender. At the moment it says sex, and has M or F. The form will be in the form of regulations yet to be put out, because we have not got the bill through. It will either have gender or sex/gender. It will show gender, which is different from sex. It took me a while. I was born in the first half of the last century, but I walked the mile; I got there. Sex is not the same as a person's gender identification. Their nominated gender will be on the extract of the birth certificate.

Ms L. Mettam: Will their sex be there?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is what I said. It will have sex/gender.

Ms L. Mettam: What is meant by that? Is it sex or gender? Is that what is meant by sex “slash” gender? Does it capture both?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes. That is what I mean. It gives a person the opportunity of identifying their gender. The Law Reform Commission report recommended not having anything on the certificate.

Ms L. Mettam: At one stage your government committed to that, didn't it?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Sorry?

Ms L. Mettam: At one stage the government committed to that.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No, we said that we broadly support the project 108 report; however, we did not commit to having nothing on the birth certificate.

Ms L. Mettam: In the Attorney General's second reading response, you said that I should read the Law Reform Commission report.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Could you stand, please, Leader of the Liberal Party?

Ms L. METTAM: The Attorney General pointed to the Law Reform Commission report as reflecting what is in the bill, but he is now saying that it is not. I want clarification that birth certificates will contain and confirm what the sex of the child is at birth.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: When the Law Reform Commission report came out, it said to not put anything about sex or gender on the birth certificate. We ruled that out immediately. We said that we would not be going down that

path, and we are not going down that path. When a person shows the extract of their birth certificate for whatever reason, the person looking at that is entitled to know that it is evidence of their gender. The further part of the member's question is whether the original gender be shown.

Ms L. Mettam: Sex.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Original gender or sex. I know it is difficult. Will their original gender or sex be shown? This was raised during consultation on the bill—again with stakeholders—after we introduced it. It was at stakeholders' request, yes. That will be the government's amendment this afternoon or the next time the bill comes on; that is, if a person requests that their gender history be on their extract of birth certificate, it will all be there.

Ms L. METTAM: Okay. For further clarification, if someone is biologically male but identifies as a woman, will the birth certificate list their sex at birth as male and then their gender as female? Will the birth certificate illustrate their biological sex?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No; it will do so only if they request that information to be on the extract of their birth certificate. We are putting their identified gender on the extract of their birth certificate. It is the same as on their passports. A transgender person can have female on their passport. It does not have on the passport "female, but once was born a biological male". As I said in my response to the second reading debate, those who voted against the bill this afternoon never railed against the federal Liberal Party and John Howard, Malcolm Turnbull or Scott Morrison. They did not rail against any of those governments for allowing a change of gender identification on passports. What seems to have happened here is that it has descended into an ideological argument by the member's party. The opposition is not railing against passports. Members opposite do not come into this Parliament saying people are showing up with passports for photo identification and have not put on their passport that when they were a baby they were born with male genitalia. They just present their passport.

A classic example—I have so much admiration for her—is Danielle Laidley. I had a few beers with her down at Scarborough. What was her nickname in her sporting days? It was the "Junkyard Dog" because she was so tough on the halfback line. Now she is Danielle Laidley and widely respected by everyone. I was having a drink with her and she said, "You might remember this bloke, a bloke called Laurie Keene." This happened in the member for Vasse's electorate. Laurie used to play for Subiaco and the Eagles. He was their first ruckman. On Australia Day, Laurie had a function down in the member for Vasse's electorate, which I would not have wanted to go to, because to go there you had to have played for Subiaco or for the Eagles. I could not think of a worse function. Anyway, it happened at Caves House Hotel on Australia Day. The after-luncheon speaker was her, herself, Danielle Laidley. She spoke to a room of testosterone-charged heterosexual men who all embraced her for her honesty, her character and the person she is. We have all come a long way. As the member for Vasse knows, she writes for *The West Australian* on a weekly basis. She is a wonderful person. We do not need to say, "I want to see your birth certificate, Danielle, to find out what you were born as." It is insulting.

Ms L. METTAM: I seek further clarification, Attorney General. This is a birth certificate. I guess the reason for having the sex at birth on the birth certificate is because of the significance of the document from that point of view. It will denote the sex/gender and then what is recognised as one gender or one sex. Will there be a historical record of the change?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I take responsibility for not explaining it, perhaps. It will only have the historical record of the gender changes at the request of the applicant.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

ENERGY — GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Motion

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [4.01 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Labor government's seven years of energy portfolio mismanagement, resulting in a declining reliability of the system, a failure to ensure coal and gas supply meets our state's current and future electricity and energy needs, and a failure to make sufficient progress on renewable energy-based industries.

I have sat in this place for a little over six years and otherwise observed from outside for the past seven years the decline in the provision of public services to the public of Western Australia. In saying that, I have no criticism of the public service, but I have considerable criticism of the government's mismanagement of the services that are provided to the people of Western Australia. This is not a personal reflection, minister, but we have a government that seems to have a strong connection with the media and spin and being able to put forward a good story. Unfortunately, that is not a substitute for good governance for the people of Western Australia. This government has presided over a backward slide in a range of areas across various government functions. This government has created a mess over a number of years and then expects kudos when it finally faces up to its failures and tries to compensate with poorly directed overspending. We see this no more so than in the case of health and, I might say,

housing, which is an absolute train wreck. When we start to get to the next election period, we hear of massive dollops of money being put in, but unfortunately the basic service has been degraded. I do not have time to go into that here, but I am sure that we will have plenty of time in the future in our budget reply speeches to go through some of that in detail.

Energy is an area of major concern. This government gets obsessed with things. In the transport area, it has been obsessed with Metronet to the detriment of other areas of government. In this place, we have a preoccupation with the politics around climate change. This government sees it as a wedge. It thinks that somehow or other it can claim the political ground on this issue, so it constantly bangs that drum —

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Listen to what I have to say, please, member.

The government is obsessed with the politics around climate change, and it is constantly trying to use —

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Member for Cottesloe, are you taking interjections?

Dr D.J. HONEY: No, thanks. I have got quite a bit to get through.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Sorry, member for Belmont.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The government is constantly trying to use it as a political wedge issue, but then it supports the various policies that we see coming through and, in some cases, perhaps a good too many cases, there is a lack of action, which is creating all sorts of problems. We do not have to go back very far to see Labor's record in the area of energy and no more so than the disastrous Gallop Labor reforms in which the original supplier of our energy network, Western Power, was split up into four separate entities with four boards, four CEOs and four chief financial officers. The increase in costs was massive, and we inherited that mess. Premier Gallop forecast 10 rises of 10 per cent increases in electricity charges. That is what he was forecasting and what we inherited from that government. I really find it nauseating when I hear members on the other side talk about the massive power rises that the Liberal government implemented. Why? It is because the Labor Party had utterly destroyed the energy network. Fortunately, Premier Colin Barnett was able to aggregate that back into two agencies for the south west interconnected system: the retail agency of Synergy, and the generation and reticulation agency of Western Power. We inherited that debacle from the Gallop government era. Now this government is generating another crisis. I have sat in this place and listened to the former Minister for Energy tell us again and again that the cheapest way for the future was to go for this complete renewable energy transition that would deliver lower costs. Yet what we have seen here and in every other jurisdiction in Australia is that when this is rushed and not done properly, the greater the penetration, the higher the cost to the people of Western Australia and Australia generally. It is dishonest to sell this tale and say that we are going to go there and that it will be a nirvana in which everything comes at a lower cost, when in fact the system is less reliable and the pricing is higher because it is not being managed correctly. As I have said, the government is obsessed with trying to use this as a political wedge issue. It does not listen to what we say on this matter. Members do not listen to what they say on this matter. They just regurgitate various mantra but have no understanding of what they are actually talking about. They are catastrophising any single-point weather event as being caused by climate change, rather than looking at individual trends, and using that to justify unjustifiable actions on the part of the government, particularly in relation to the compunction around and precipitous rate of transition ahead of what is technically achievable.

It is interesting when we look through this. I, and I am sure my colleagues also, will talk about the conscious underspending of this government on the rural grid to the detriment of rural and semirural communities on the edge of the metropolitan area. I will talk members through that shortly. Good management of our electricity network comes down to two fundamentals: reliability of supply and price.

The electricity challenge facing our state can be split into two main components. The first and foremost problem is the reliability of our system, which needs to be tackled with urgency. I am not sure that the minister is aware of how much our electricity system has been run down under this government. Despite the fact that I have alerted the former minister to this on a number of occasions, we have seen no improvement in the age of our electricity system. I will go through that in a little detail. That aspect involves the reliability of our infrastructure.

The second problem is the planning and implementation of increased renewable energy into the SWIS, and the unnecessary risks taken by this government in what is a political wedge issue, as it sees it, rather than doing this in a considered way—no more so than the rush to artificially close our coal-fired power stations before we have reliable infrastructure to replace them. Again, I will go through that in more detail.

We are a long way from the position that we should be in of having a reliable alternative, but Labor is nevertheless pressing on with a decision that is more about getting a grab in the newspapers than supplying reliable and affordable energy for the people in Western Australia. The broader community is concerned about the risks of a changing climate and the contribution of fossil fuel-derived emissions to that change. There is no doubt our climate is changing, but I might say that our climate has never been static. That is true in the short term as well as in the longer term in

the state of Western Australia. For example, as little as 400 years ago, rainfall in Perth was one-third of what it has been on average since European settlement—one-third. Some excellent work has been done by the University of Western Australia that shows decade-long droughts, vastly more severe than anything we have seen in this state since European settlement. That is changing and the community is concerned about that. However, the trouble is that climate change politics has seen governments constantly bid up their ambitions to the point of misleading people into believing the claims that we can get by without any fossil fuels on some very truncated time frame and that we can decarbonise the planet in that short time frame.

There are good reasons to pursue a decarbonisation strategy. There are logical concerns that increasing atmospheric carbon levels or carbon dioxide levels will artificially affect our climate. Also, Australia currently relies on substantial oil and fuel imports to underpin transport and industrial needs, and reducing our reliance on imported oils and fuels will reduce our sovereign risk in the event of unexpected supply disruptions, such as we saw during COVID. Also, if there is armed conflict, we will not be dependent on an ocean supply for a major energy source for our state. However, there has been massive oversimplification of how readily we can transition away from fossil fuels. Transitioning our electricity supply away from fossil fuels is a daunting challenge. The electricity network is a daunting challenge in itself. Just to contextualise it for members in this place, our electricity network supply represents around only 12 per cent of Western Australia's energy requirements. The other 88 per cent is industrial energy supply, yet we are struggling in the transition, even in electricity networks. I can say that is true right around Australia. It is quite misleading. I often hear percentages quoted in Australia about how much we have moved away from fossil fuels to renewables. In fact, across Australia, only around eight per cent of our total energy supply is from renewables. It might surprise members on the other side to know that half of the renewable energy in Australia is biomass-derived energy, not from wind turbines or solar cells—that is the other half, basically. Half of it is from biomass, mostly from the gas burning in Queensland. We are an enormous distance from where members claim we are. When people quote percentages, they quote percentages of our electricity network, which is a relatively much more straightforward but not trivial area for transition from fossil fuels. As I said, bidding up or saying we are going to do more in a shorter time causes problems and ignores the reality. However, reality is dawning on a whole range of people, including the Premier, for the challenge that we face. We might say that the Premier had a road to Damascus moment late last year when he admitted the truth. The truth is that Western Australia is actually increasing its carbon emissions. We are the only place in Australia that is. We are increasing those emissions, and they cannot be cut in a precipitous manner without having a dramatic negative impact on our economy. That truth was acknowledged. Why? Our state will continue to increase its carbon emissions for some time. The Premier's explanation was reasonable. He pointed out that the state cannot continue to prosper through our mining and energy sectors and to contribute the essential ingredients for the proposed energy transition without emissions continuing to rise, really, for the foreseeable future. Good on the Premier for coming to that realisation. The trouble is that we have public policy that is based on the opposite; that is, we can substantially cut those emissions in a very short period and there is compunction around that, particularly at the federal level. His admission needs to be reflected in the public policy position. It is very difficult to see how Australia can achieve the federal Labor government's emissions target when our emissions are increasing, as I have said, I think, for good and logical reasons that will benefit of the overall country and the world.

In 2019, the state Labor government, through energy minister Johnston, gave support to the federal coalition government's target of a 28 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030. Subsequently, we have had a change of federal government to the Labor government. The new Labor government came in, so we saw a bidding up. In an effort to say it is even more virtuous on this front, it bid up to a 43 per cent reduction by 2030. I do not think now a single credible person in this industry believes that Australia can achieve anything like a 43 per cent total emissions reduction by 2030. In fact, I would say it is impossible. It is impossible financially to imagine that it is possible by 2030. I do not have time to go through that, but I have previously. Unfortunately, we have a codified reduction because the federal government has introduced a law that not only sets that target, but then says if that target is not achieved, it is going to apply a tax for industries and so on that are affected. They are going to be taxed. That law will do more to destroy industry in Australia than any other single thing in the history of the nation. Every major heavy emitter in Australia is going to be shut down by that law.

This is the pyrrhic nature of what the federal government is doing, and the state Labor government has said nothing about this—made no criticism of it. The pyrrhic nature is there will not be one single tonne less material manufactured in the world as a result. I will give the example of the Kwinana alumina refinery that is going to be shut down. When that refinery shuts down, every tonne of that alumina will likely be made in China. It will make that alumina using brown coal, which will have more than double the atmospheric carbon emissions of the Kwinana refinery. The Kwinana refinery, like Alcoa's three refineries in Western Australia, is amongst the most efficient refineries in the world and it runs off natural gas. We are going to lose the equivalent of around 1 500 jobs from the state of Western Australia. It is a multibillion-dollar industry. Substantial export revenue will be lost in the state of Western Australia, but the relevant equivalent carbon emissions globally will be doubled. For those members who are concerned about that, it will substantially increase the risk of elevating temperatures due to atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. That is absolutely stupid. The Boyne Rio Tinto smelter in Queensland is a 560 000 tonne per annum smelter, which would probably be a \$5 billion facility to replace. Following the introduction of the Albanese target,

the book value of that smelter is zero dollars. Again, when that smelter shuts down, which it will if the government continues the application of its 2030 emissions reduction target, we will not see one tonne less aluminium made in the world because of it. We will simply transfer that production to China.

Ms C.M. Rowe: So we should do nothing?

Dr D.J. HONEY: That production in China will have doubled the global carbon emissions, member. Her federal government's policy will result in an increase in global carbon emissions, simply destroying an industry that creates thousands of jobs in Australia.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is the truth, member. This is the absolutely pyrrhic nature of that law. Having a target is a fine thing, but it has to be achievable. That is a problem with the oversimplification and over-bidding of people trying to outdo each other with targets. They exceed not only common sense but also what is achievable. We will not achieve the 43 per cent emissions reduction target. That is now widely stated by people right across industry.

That does not mean we should not do anything, but it means that we have to have a consequential view.

It is really interesting. I had a person come to visit and talk to me. There are some doctors who have a bit of a campaign going on in which they talk to members of Parliament. A lovely person came to see me—a very well-meaning person—and we had a discussion about this. It was interesting because I was able to participate in an online seminar. I will not name the company that ran it, because I have not told it I will use its name, but it is one of the major iron ore producers. It is doing some outstanding work looking at how we can decarbonise steel manufacture. It is doing that to help its customers.

The presenter stated that if we transitioned steel manufacture from metallurgical coal in blast furnaces through to natural gas, we would reduce global carbon emissions by four per cent. That is massive. It is probably the single largest thing we could do. The same doctor was saying we should shut down all the natural gas lines, or at least wells, in Western Australia and that we should not have any more. We had quite a useful discussion. I said, "Well, if you do that, you will simply make sure that they keep using metallurgical coal if we don't have adequate supply." In fact, increasing natural gas production in Western Australia will be a critical enabler to reduce global carbon emissions. That is the subtlety of this debate. People reaching for simplistic solutions are not going to achieve the goal they want.

WA's total carbon emissions at the national inventory in 2021–22 was around 19.1 per cent of the national total, despite our population only being 11 per cent. We are high emitters per head of population. It is just a reflection of the energy intensive industries we have in the state of Western Australia. I have pointed out why before. We are actually a crucial global ingredient. We are one of the great exporting areas of the world. Western Australia is quite remarkable. It is unusually blessed with a variety of minerals. Those minerals are critical to the materials needed to go through that energy transition. It is a reflection of that. It is also a reflection of the fact that the world needs natural gas. As I have pointed out, natural gas is a key enabler to reduce global carbon emissions. I cannot understand why we have this legislated hard target with a tax that is going to destroy the industry in Western Australia. It is quite clear that we are not going to meet that emission target.

The reality of the challenge facing our state in reducing carbon emissions without crippling our state economy must be reflected in the government's current climate change bill. That is an interesting bill. I think we can largely call it a "kick the can down the road" bill in many ways. The rubber hits the road, if you like, outside the key election period. It would be useful for the public of Western Australia if we could see a detailed plan of how the government thinks we can meet our emissions target. Given the state's pivotal role in the electricity networks, what is the detailed plan?

I have made this comment a couple of times in this chamber and had the former Minister for Energy mock me in his usual way by saying, "Yeah, we've got a detailed plan." Yet I looked for that detailed plan and sat down with the relevant government agency and did not see it. I see aspirations. I will not go into a discussion about modelling, because I just do not have time to do that. The state government's agency has got a good model, but it is a model that is built for optimising the combination of supply in the network. It is not a model that tells us how that is achieved. There is such an enormous level of detail, yet we are not seeing it from the government. Why is it important? It is important because it needs to be scrutinised. We need other people to have the opportunity to see it. All the wisdom does not sit with the government. We need the opposition and, more particularly, the people who are industry experts to have an opportunity to review that plan. But we still have not seen a detailed plan.

I get really frustrated when I keep getting told, "There is a detailed plan!" It is not a detailed plan. In fact, it boils down to a general statement of intent as opposed to any detailed plan. The challenge of reducing reliance on fossil fuels has seen what I think is a chaotic outcome, with the rush to close the coal-fired power stations in Collie. I am sure someone on the other side will probably say, "Oh yes, but your policy at the last election was X!" Well, as I have explained in this place a number of times, it was never our policy. The forced closure of the Collie coal power stations was never a policy that I personally supported.

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is true!

I am just being open with members. I explained that. There has actually been an article in *The West Australian* that went through and detailed that explanation quite well for those who choose to read it. Government members will have their fun with that, and that is fine, but the truth is that the precipitous closure of the Collie coal-fired power stations is adding substantially to the risk of unreliable power in our network. It has caused chaos within the whole system because we have coalmines that are facing the impending loss of their major customer and we have this enormous difficulty with the reliable supply of coal. It is interesting.

Ms J.L. Hanns: Are you saying the coalminers of Collie aren't doing their job?

Dr D.J. HONEY: No. How did I say that?

Ms J.L. Hanns: You just said that you don't have any surety of the coal. Are you saying that the coalminers are not doing their job?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am fascinated by your logic train there! How do those two things translate? What has happened is the government has created uncertainty in those companies. It is not just uncertainty; it is a cliff. They will fall off a cliff. They will effectively lose the majority of their customers because of government policy. That has caused chaos in those mines.

The member may know that I have actually spent some time in Collie talking with the unions. I like manufacturing unions because they actually do useful things. I have had a good relationship with them throughout my working career and since. This is about the government causing chaos in those businesses. Do not try to verbal me, member, and make something up in your mind.

The government announced closure dates for the coal-fired plants in 2022. We were told that the government had a detailed and costed plan. Here we are again; it had a detailed and costed plan. It included the closure of Muja C unit 6 in 2024, leading up to the 2025 election. What do we see? The government's detailed and costed plan is not so detailed and costed as a mode of thought, because it cannot do it. It cannot provide reliable, low-cost electricity if it closes it by that date. Now what do we see? The government has moved that closure to after the 2025 election. It has faced the reality that it cannot do it, even though it had a detailed and costed plan. It promised the people of Western Australia, but it has now changed the date to a politically expedient one after the 2025 election. It is trying to hide the truth from the public of Western Australia.

The closure announcement also included the closure of Muja D in 2029 in the run up to the 2028 election. It will be no surprise whatsoever to see the government start to crawl back on that again for the obvious reason that it is not trivial to simply turn those power stations off. As part of my role as production manager for the Kwinana refinery in Alcoa, part of that responsibility was for a 160 megawatt power station. I understand power stations and the issues with them. Yes, those coal-fired power stations are not ideal to provide, if you like, switchable energy, ramping them up and down. Nevertheless, the inability to compensate with other renewable sources and gas turbines means that we have to keep those going.

There is an obvious pattern here. The government makes announcements for a good headline, but when push comes to shove, it is not detailed. It is not costed. Its plan was wrong. The government had to admit it. The government has had to delay that closure. As I said, political expediency is taking that closure out past the election. As I said, we expect to see other dates being pushed out. That is not a proper way to manage anything. Managing things for political expediency and ignoring the realities is not good government. The former minister, Minister Johnston, said originally that the government would come in with this hard line and then, all of a sudden, he started to say that there might be further delays depending on what happens, thereby setting up the next minister to walk back even further from that.

There was more evidence that the government was misleading the public of Western Australia on a detailed plan when we saw the Australian Energy Market Operator's *SWIS demand assessment 2023 to 2042*. That assessment report is self-described as —

... only the first step in the journey towards transformation of the grid.

There is a lot of work to be done yet. Yes; that is certainly very, very true. As I said, why will the government not give us a detailed plan? I have looked at everything I can. I have gone and had a briefing with the Office of Energy and there is no detailed plan. There are general statements of intent and there are parts of statements about doing this and that with batteries. There is no detailed plan that shows the capacity of the government to maintain reliable and affordable energy in the network, in particular when the coal-fired power stations are taken out precipitously. When I was having this discussion with my colleagues before the last state election, I said that eventually those power stations will be taken out because of cost, but doing it in a precipitous manner is foolhardy.

Contrary to this, the Queensland Labor government, WA Labor's colleagues in Queensland, has a really detailed plan. It is an extremely detailed plan that means that the community, industry experts and the opposition have a chance to look at all the detail, challenge it and ask whether it is achievable. I encourage the minister to look at the Queensland plan and then contrast that with what this government is providing for the people of Western Australia.

As I said, it worries me that this is more about a good headline and not about a meaningful attempt to explain to the people of Western Australia what the government has to do. The Climate Change Bill 2023 will come before the chamber and we will have a chance to debate that. I am not going to debate the time lines now. It certainly kicks any meaningful decisions or announcements past the next election when that bill comes through.

The Labor government needs to acknowledge the reality of the emission reduction targets, particularly those set at the federal level. Obviously, we have not seen what has been set at the state level yet other than the generic 2050 target of zero, which will be a fascinating challenge in the absence of some other major base load, but in any case, it is going to be very difficult. It is going to be impossible to achieve a 43 per cent reduction in Western Australia's energy emissions by 2030. That is impossible unless we have a major shutdown of industry in this state, and there would be a concurrent economic collapse if that happened. The government should be taking heed of what is being said by people in the industry. Even keen advocates of renewable energy are now saying that we need a more tempered approach to this issue because people's optimism has exceeded what is technically achievable.

I am not opposed to renewable energy, as I have made very clear privately and in this place, but we do not have the technology that is affordable for the rate of transition that people are proposing. Only a few weeks ago, we saw media reports of companies involved in the renewable energy rollout with a vested interest in the growing sector telling the government to accept the reality that the time lines are overly ambitious and will not be met. There is a good article in the *Weekend Australian* of 23 March 2024, titled "Renewable targets lost in transition". To quote the comment from Ausgrid in the article —

... substantial network investment will face cost pressures, social-licence issues and workforce and supply-chain challenges" ... "These issues are likely to result in longer timelines, higher costs and more complexity and disruption than anticipated."

The people who are rolling out the renewable energy infrastructure are saying it cannot be done on the politically driven schedules. The task of creating a massive renewable energy system is greater and more complex and costly than the government has been saying. As I said, the former Minister for Energy said in this place that this would be more reliable and cheaper, and what is patently clear is that that statement is completely untrue. That reality needs to be faced and the Labor government needs to be honest with the people of Western Australia in that discussion.

If we look at the state of South Australia, it is far worse off having done down this path. South Australia has the highest energy costs in Australia by some distance and its energy network survives only because it is underpinned by coal-fired power from Victoria and New South Wales. It will be utterly reliant on the national grid if it goes down that path. If we look at what happened in the eastern states and the national grid—I think it has been mentioned in this chamber today—we see that energy prices rose by between 21.2 and 29.8 per cent last year. That came on top of enormous increases in previous years. In this state, we have seen significant rises in the price of energy. I find it fascinating; the government loves to talk about its one-off sugar hits when it has given a rebate on power, but all the underlying utility charges are going up. These rebates are being completely eaten away by the underlying increase in fees and charges. We get a headline and a sugar hit from handing out money to everyone, but the government is not holding the underlying fees and charges. In fact, they are increasing and have increased substantially. But it is better than the other states. We face the prospect, as we go further and further down this path, that we will see a similar increase in fees and charges unless the government does this in the proper way. I will come back to it. It is no good that the government is just asserting it and saying it will do that. Show us the detail that can give us that guarantee, because that is not what we have from the government at this stage.

One of the obvious major issues with renewable energy is the intermittency. It is much more intermittent than people think, and it is much more common that we have no meaningful sun and no wind for extended periods of time right across the southern part of Western Australia and up into the midwest. That is not uncommon. What have we heard the government make? It has made numerous announcements about big batteries. Big batteries will never provide meaningful long-term energy reliability in the SWIS network—never. The reason is that they are vastly too expensive. If the member for Collie–Preston is shaking her head on it, she knows nothing about it because they are massively expensive and they only ever —

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: If the member is saying that batteries will provide long-term support for the network over extended power outages over days, the member is totally wrong. They will not do it. They provide backup for a few hours in the network and otherwise they cover switching in the network.

Mr R.R. Whitby: They provide critical support at the time it is needed and that is where the peak demand is.

Dr D.J. HONEY: They do, and make no mistake, minister, that batteries have a role in our network, but the contention that batteries will provide the necessary support for our network over extended periods when we have effectively no sun and no wind—there are numerous periods of that over the year in Western Australia—is simply untrue. Anyone who is in the industry knows and admits that. They do not provide —

Mr R.R. Whitby interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: As I said, minister, batteries have a role. Let me go through the cost of what the government is doing. Let me go through the cost of what the minister is doing. Let us look at the large batteries—the Kwinana battery.

Mr R.R. Whitby interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: As I say, minister, I am talking about the long-term outages we have when there is almost no sun or wind. In those periods, batteries have no use. They provide temporary support for switching and provide for short-term outages. As I said, that is an important role for batteries, but they will not underpin reliability in our network or replace the coal-fired power stations in Collie in the short-term. The cost of the Kwinana battery to power 160 000 homes for two hours was \$150 million. With about 800 000 homes in Perth, five of those batteries would be needed to cover that period of two hours, and it would cost \$750 million. If we look at a 24-hour outage, the cost would be something like \$9 billion. That is why, member, the cost of the batteries is so high. There is no-one in the world —

Ms J.L. Hanns interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Dr D.J. HONEY: No-one in the world is proposing that batteries cover long-term reduction in renewable energy. They have a role, but it is a limited role, and it is not the key role in providing that critical firming for networks. If batteries were to cover two days, it would be \$18 billion. The cost becomes ridiculous. It is an investment that the state cannot afford at that level. Looking at that, I say we need to remember that the devil is in the detail. Going out to the people of Western Australia and saying, “We are fine, we can switch off the coal-fired power stations because we have put these batteries in,” is fanciful. I am not saying they do not have a role, but they will not cover the long-term outages that we have seen.

There is also a massive pending cost in building additional transmission infrastructure and the associated problems we have seen in the eastern states. If we look at those reasonable estimates around the cost of batteries and infrastructure, we are talking about something like a \$30 billion investment, at least. That has its own problems for the state economy, but even that will not provide the firm power we need. It does not matter who builds this infrastructure. This is one of the problems as we transition to renewable energy, especially when we say we are going to 100 per cent renewable. If we are going to 70 or 80 per cent renewables, the key is having sufficient gas turbine backup in our electricity network. In that case, we would have to have 100 per cent redundancy in gas turbine backup for the peak demand on the south west interconnected system. Nevertheless, if we do that, we can possibly get there, but the problem with renewable energy in terms of cost is the massive level of redundancy needed to provide renewable power. For example, on the generation side, because we do not generate at full capacity all the time, we have to build three, four or even more times the actual generation capacity. Let us say there is a peak demand of five gigawatts on the network, probably about 15 to 20 gigawatts of generation capacity would be required, and for short-term storage, let us say another five gigawatts of battery storage for that. Most of that infrastructure, most of the time, is not being used, because the peak demand is five gigawatts. Once the batteries are charged, there is nowhere else for the power to go.

People talk about potentially using it for hydrogen, but that is a long way off. We end up with this massive redundancy in infrastructure, and all of that has to be paid for by the consumer. Someone could say, on an individual megawatt of power from a wind turbine versus an individual megawatt of power from a gas turbine, that the wind turbine produces it more cheaply. However, the point is that when there are coal and gas turbines, only a slight level of redundancy is needed because many hundreds of per cent redundancy are not needed in that generation equipment. Although it is more expensive, the actual capital cost is substantially lower.

Make no mistake, Macquarie will not build these wind farms that, most of the time, will do nothing. They are not going to build those for nothing. The user will pay for it and that is why there are rising costs; it is the massive level of redundancy. Again, there has been a lot of misleading discussion about the cost of an individual megawatt from this facility versus that facility. It does not talk about the cost of the whole system. That is why we need to see the detail. I understand the Office of Energy has done modelling on this. It has worked out what it thinks is an appropriate mix of wind, solar, batteries and other forms. However, we do not see any of that, or have access to any of that information.

It is not just me saying that; many people are very concerned about this now. I had the opportunity to meet Ryan Stokes a while ago. He is a really impressive individual, I might say. He is someone who understands industry very well. He published an article in the *Financial Review* on 5 January 2023, not so long ago, in which he stated that we are sleepwalking into an energy crisis. He talked specifically about government policy and the approach that governments are taking with that. He talked about how moving steadily to renewable energy makes sense, but he believes it is crucial that gas is fully harnessed as a transition fuel and it is nonsensical to retire coal-fired power stations before a fully reliable replacement system is up and running. That is the key, and the point I made before. We have this politically driven timetable for the closure of the Collie coal-fired power stations before we have any certainty whatsoever about what will replace it or what will provide the reliable electricity supply we need for the state of Western Australia.

In the time remaining, I will move on to some issues about the adequacy of the electricity supply. I raised a question in the chamber today and the minister theatrically responded to it. It is really quite remarkable that the state cannot generate enough electricity to meet demand. I fully understand the concept of demand-side management. It is quite clear we see that being used as an excessive tool. I lived in this world in my previous life. My former employer, Alcoa, had clever engineers who could write up clever spreadsheets, and they would work out how Alcoa could make more money selling or at least reducing its own electricity demand. By either reducing its draw on the ties to the south west interconnected system, or in fact putting electricity into the network, it could make more money than making alumina. The only problem with that is it reduces the output of the state to do that. Alcoa's bottom line looks better, but Western Australia is actually worse off. We are cutting production to do it. I know that with absolute certainty.

The Minister for Water kindly let me see the Binningup desalination plant, and I talked to the operators of that plant. If that plant is wound up and down, and it is done excessively, the life of that plant and the asset is harmed. The government might think it is convenient that, because it is a government agency, it can be directed. It is not a good thing to be winding the desalination plant in Binningup up and down. It is not a good thing for us to cut production output for the state of Western Australia because there is an inadequate supply network. I understand, minister, there are ridiculous extremes in everything. Does the government want an infinitely reliable network? No. Clearly not, because the government is reducing it back. What I believe is clear is that we see a struggling network. The minister said, in his answer to the question, that these are unusual periods. Well, I do not think they are unusual periods. As I have said, there is a realistic expectation that our climate will become drier and hotter. We are on a drying, heating trend. People can speculate all they like about that; we are not going to change that. Western Australia has an infinitesimal impact on that by itself—as does Australia, can I say. I understand the argument of us doing our bit and all of that, but it will not make any difference. There are other major emitters around the globe that are driving that trend. We need an electricity network than can provide the reliable power in that circumstance. It is not good enough to say, “Well, that was unusual, that was a one-off.” We need a network that does not require that level of intervention and people cutting their production.

As I said, the government last year announced a delay in the supposedly detailed energy plan for the closure of Muja 6. I am intrigued about what we are going to see after the election. Will the government proceed with the plan to close it down or will it risk leaving us with power shortages? I do not think it will. I give credit to the government: it made a plan and it was not right, and it had the good sense to say, “Hold on; we'll hold back on that.” That is a good thing, but I suspect there is going to be much more.

The Australian Energy Market Operator in its latest report forecasts a large shortfall in our electricity supplies as early as 2026 and has assessed that the state will be in need of another gigawatt of energy supply by then. That is a very large increase in the state's requirements. It is also forecasting a four-gigawatt shortage by 2032–33. In respect of installing new infrastructure, that is tomorrow. There is a significant lead time for putting that infrastructure in place, and it is now clear that there are significant headwinds on the installation of renewable infrastructure. There is opposition to it from one end of the state to the other. I had an opportunity to visit the Gascoyne region last week and it was interesting to talk to local communities there. There are enormous concerns. I have spoken to people in the wheatbelt. I grew up not far from Flat Rocks and I have spoken to people there, and they have enormous concerns. I know from the member for Vasse that there are enormous concerns amongst communities on the coast—surfers, fishers, environmentalists—at the prospect of wind farms off the coast. The government has this idea that we will have all these renewables coming in. At the commercial level, we have seen that some businesses that were going to install infrastructure are holding back. I know there are some projects going on, but it is not occurring at anywhere near the pace that it needs to. That is a real issue facing the Minister for Energy. The minister, for all his talents, has only just come into this role, but we want to see the detail on that.

I would like to now move on to gas. A major part of the transition of the energy supply is the utilisation of gas turbines to produce energy. In the same way as we see predicted shortfalls in electricity generally, we are seeing major forecasts around the supply of gas into our network. The government is making an increasing number of statements about reliance on gas. Obviously, natural gas and gas turbines are going to play a key role. If we were to simply adopt a formula of renewables and natural gas for backup, we could probably get to 70 or 80 per cent and have a reliable electricity supply, but if the target is to go for 100 per cent, that is to assume we have enough domestic gas to provide that backup when it is needed. There are two challenges with the supply of gas. The first is the total amount of gas we need and the second is the rate at which we need the gas. We cannot just switch on five gigawatts of gas turbines, mostly located around the metropolitan area, and have enough gas coming out of the pipeline. The pipeline actually has a finite flow of gas. Yes, there is some limited gas storage in the metropolitan area, but, again, it is a major challenge. If we are going to rely on gas turbines to provide that firming in the near future, we are going to have to look at gas supply. On gas supply, AEMO's 2022 *Western Australia gas statement of opportunities* states —

From 2030 onwards, the gas market is forecast to move into a larger deficit, with shortfalls over 200 TJ/day between 2030 to 2032 (over 16% of demand each year). This is driven by planned coal retirements increasing the need for gas generation and a decline in production from existing gas fields.

To be specific, it is forecasting a shortage of 213 terajoules a day in 2030, increasing to 296 terajoules a day past that point. That is a serious and significant problem. Just to contextualise that gap, the current usage of gas in the south west interconnected system averages around 127 terajoules a day, so we are talking about really substantial increases in the gas supply requirement. Again, where are the detailed plans? There is a finite limit to the number of additional pumping stations and loops we can put in. Where is the plan to ensure that we have adequate gas supplies?

Maybe it was convenient for the government that Alcoa's Kwinana refinery shut down; perhaps that is why the government was not as enthusiastic as it could have been about trying to keep that refinery running past the forecasted Christmas closure. Nevertheless, that in itself will not solve this problem. I desperately hope that this government will continue to work with Alcoa and the federal government to try to keep that important refinery going. The AEMO report states —

Since the 2021 WA GSOO, the gas generation profile has changed markedly, due to Synergy's announcement of the scheduled closure of all its remaining coal-fired generators within the outlook period.

The decision has put substantial stress on the network, and we have a looming gas shortage. There will be more gas found, and the 15 per cent domestic gas reservation policy is in place, but it could well be that that will not be enough to guarantee the required gas supply for our state. Apart from one of them, onshore gas producers are prohibited from exporting gas, but what we are hearing from those producers is that they do not think it is economical. I think it is a noble aspiration on the part of the government in respect of onshore gas, and I am sure that the Minister for Mines and Petroleum and the Minister for Energy are talking to those producers, but there needs to be an understanding of whether it is actually viable to develop those onshore gas supplies if we have no offshore exports. I have not been a critic of the government's aspirations in that regard, but I equally understand the pragmatic position. In relation to the approval that has been given for the offshore export of onshore gas, it is my understanding that that approval will result in about 100 per cent of the gas in that deposit being taken offshore, so it is unlikely to help us in a meaningful way with our gas supply shortages.

We saw the absolute debacle of the mismanagement of the coal supply. The government's announcement of the closure of the Collie coal-fired power stations has put a question mark over both our major coal producers. Reportedly, we have an estimated two billion tonnes of coal reserves in the Collie region, but we had the ridiculous situation of literally getting coal in from Newcastle. There are ongoing concerns there. Now there is a rush of public money to underpin that network, with the government setting aside \$220 million. That is somewhat dumbfounding. For the period over which that money is allocated and the amount of coal that is mined by Griffin Coal, we are talking about a subsidy of around \$50 a tonne.

Ms J.L. Hanns: Are you saying that shouldn't happen?

Dr D.J. HONEY: Member, I think the government has created a problem for those coal producers and we are again seeing the taxpayers of this state being hit in the pocket because of the McGowan and Cook Labor governments' mismanagement of this space. It is a debacle and there is no transparency. We ask where this money is going, what the details are and what the money is being spent on, and we are told that it is commercial-in-confidence. What absolute nonsense. There is nothing competitive about this. That coal mine is there, it is fixed and it is not competing with anyone else for the supply of coal. It has contracts for the supply of coal into the power stations. There is no intrinsic reason for commercial-in-confidence, but the government will not give us the details because it does not want to be embarrassed about that deal. If we look at the raw data, we are talking about a \$50 a tonne subsidy. I am happy for the minister to disabuse me of that. That \$220 million could have gone into other useful things like housing, so that people are not sleeping in their cars, health services and Meekatharra Hospital and other areas. But, no, it is going into there. I will not have a chance to go through hydrogen in any detail. The Minister for Energy was good enough to allow us to have a look at the renewable hydrogen plant in Denham. It was very impressive, minister. Thank you for allowing us to do that. I was really impressed. It is a very impressive facility. It is a facility that can tell us how hard or easy it will be to do. It is very clear that integrating hydrogen into the network is not trivial. For an intermediate-sized plant, or a trial plant like that, it is very clear that the net energy balance is interesting. As I say, minister, I am not critical of it. Thank you for that. That was interesting. I will talk about that tomorrow in a two-minute statement.

I want to talk about the age of the degrading equipment. We have seen the number of distribution poles under five years old go from 160 000 to 70 000 and the number of distribution crossarms under five years old go from 105 000 to 70 000 under the minister's government. The number of overhead distribution conductors has stayed about the same, but the number of distribution transformers under five years old has halved. I do not have time to go through all of it. The minister should have a look at the report on the state of the government's equipment. We have seen an ongoing and massive degradation in the life of that equipment, which is risking reliability.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.01 pm]: I also rise to support this motion —

That this house condemns the Labor government's seven years of energy portfolio mismanagement, resulting in a declining reliability of the system, a failure to ensure coal and gas supply meets our state's current and future electricity and energy needs and a failure to make sufficient progress on renewable energy-based industries.

I appreciate the contribution of the member for Cottesloe. I could have listened for another hour! The member has copious knowledge of the system. I remember many a time here when I have brought up pole-top fires or the failing infrastructure of Western Power. The previous minister used to say, “You don’t understand!” But we understand what is going on in the regions and metropolitan area. I look forward to our new Minister for Energy coming up with better quality answers than were delivered by the previous energy minister, who took the approach of belittling anything that we brought up or any scenario that was happening in our electorate, like a farmer out at Lake Grace having to stand next to a pole-top fire with his fire unit all day waiting for Western Power to turn up. The minister told me that I did not understand. I look forward to the Minister for Energy’s explanations of some of the failures that our constituents are facing.

Today I want to talk about power outages across WA, pole-top fires and ageing infrastructure. I thought those figures from the member for Cottesloe on the failure to replace poles, crossarms and transformers were very interesting. That in itself is an indictment of this government’s failure to replace vital infrastructure. These failures are exacerbated in regional areas. As I called out today when the minister made his theatrical performance to the journalists in the chamber, he should come down to Bremer Bay and talk to the owner of the pub who faces up to a crowd in the middle of summer when the power goes out. He should talk to the person who was going to build a carwash facility at Bremer Bay but cannot because there is no continuity in the power supply. The minister needs to get out to those sorts of communities. He should talk to the business owner in Boxwood Hill who is trying to sell farm supplies and chemicals and the like and has been told it will take 18 months or two years to get the connection not only designed, but also hooked up so his business can operate out of the shed that he has already built. He has to go back to a farmer’s shearing shed and try to operate his business out of that. The minister should talk to those people who are at the coalface trying to run businesses. We know that the state commenced its transition away from coal-fired power without being prepared to handle the alternative energy options. Infrastructure WA has stated —

Ensuring regulation keeps pace with energy transformation and government policy is a continuing challenge.

That is the challenge for this new minister and this government. I can assure the minister that when he goes out and talks to local governments about wind farms and the like, which I will talk about shortly, he will see that there is barely any regulation whatsoever. All we get is the local council trying to work out how it goes about regulation, consultation and talking to its ratepayers. Then the state-controlled joint development assessment panel comes in over the top of the local community and basically says that this is going to happen. It is not too worried about what the locals think. It says that this will happen because it matches up with the energy transition. They are the senses that our constituents are coming up with. They are not happy.

I just want to go back to a few statistics. In March 2023, Western Power had supply to around 43 000 customers interrupted across the network during pole-top fire activity—35 000 in the metro area and 8 000 in the south western wheatbelt. Yet again, during the long weekend in March 2024, Western Power said it was responding to 70 pole-top fires that had cut power to about 44 000 properties. We also saw the unfortunate storm event in January that led to the power outages in the goldfields, wheatbelt and Perth hills. Speaking to the media that weekend, the Minister for Energy said there was clearly an issue with the infrastructure. The minister said he would ask Synergy to review the exact cause of the failure. Even though the state government acknowledged in 2022 the need to improve the network and backup power in Kalgoorlie, it had done nothing. That was the response from the minister. I also remember his initial response when he turned up and said that Kalgoorlie could be a renewable energy hub. The people of Kalgoorlie, the wheatbelt and the hills were not interested in that response at that time. They could not get power.

We know of the expenses of the Kalgoorlie butcher and Livingston Medical. The Kalgoorlie butcher lost tens of thousands of dollars of meat and Livingston Medical had vaccines in the fridge. The \$240 outage rebate was offered, but it was not good enough. The government ignored the warnings, especially about the backup supply. Obviously, it could not help the storm, but the lack of backup supply and what went on after that are not acceptable. No-one will forget the Wickepin–Narrogin fire in February 2022, which was recognised as having started, once again, by poles being placed too far apart in the network. Wires clashed and a fire started and we lost 18 000 hectares of farmland and thousands of livestock. The fallout from that for our constituents—our farmers who had to destroy sheep, pigs or whatever it may have been—will stay there for years. We know that legal action is taking place and hopefully there will be decent compensation, but we cannot compensate for what those landowners went through. As far as I am concerned, that is something that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Returning to Bremer Bay, a wind turbine is on the top of the hill, but whole businesses, like the abalone farm and hatchery, are at risk if their power is off. Western Power has provided a backup generator but no assurances to businesses or the community about improving supply and minimising outages. That is what I was referring to. Not only is the community losing time when current businesses are non-operational, but also businesses do not want to set up now because they cannot get reliable power throughout summer.

It would be good if the minister drifted down to Bremer Bay and Jerramungup and some of those towns. The Minister for Education was there recently to talk to people at some of the schools in that area. It would be good if the Minister for Energy went to Bremer Bay and caught up with some businesspeople. That would be much appreciated.

I have an article here about the Western Australian government and its plans to go green. It is a story by Daniel Mercer on 9 May 2023 entitled “West Australian government reveals massive scale of going green—but who’s going to pay is yet to be worked out”. He writes —

Western Australia’s biggest electricity system will need to roughly triple in size over the next 20 years, as the state seeks to wean itself off fossil fuels and go green.

...

The state’s energy minister, Bill Johnston, revealed an extra 4,000 kilometres of new high-voltage transmission lines would need to be built ...

Within the same time frame, Mr Johnston said peak demand for electricity from the state’s main grid—the South West Interconnected System (SWIS)—would treble to about 13,000 megawatts.

There are real concerns about the cost of 4 000 kilometres of high-voltage transmission lines and the fact that they need to be built to connect renewable energy zones, particularly in windy and sunny areas to the north of the current SWIS footprint. Victoria is looking to throw in an extra 28 000 kilometres of high-voltage transmission lines and the people of both regional and metropolitan Victoria do not like it—nor do the people of regional Western Australia who do not want to lose high-quality farmland to massive high-voltage transmission lines. Former minister Bill Johnston acknowledged the big industrial users such as mineral processors and manufacturers would ideally help pay for the work, but he was not sure how it was going to happen. Mercer’s article continues —

Speaking after the announcement, shadow energy spokesman Steve Thomas said today’s report was embarrassing for the government.

...

“It’s not costed, it’s not funded, and it can’t deliver the transition that government is talking about, and this document actually reinforces that.”

This is the concern, minister. We have seen the green plans and we have seen what this government is looking to do; however, whether it is achievable is another scenario.

I want to talk about wind farms as well. In her article from 29 February 2024, Jane Norman wrote —

According to Energy Minister Chris Bowen, Australia needs to be building 40 wind turbines every month until 2030 ...

According to the Clean Energy Council, only three wind farms with a total of 115 turbines were commissioned and built in Australia last year.

This is the challenge, minister. This is the challenge of unregulated wind farms. There is a range of reasons for the sluggish pace of development. One of the main reasons is challenges with connecting to the transmission network and challenges with community pushback against both renewable and transmission projects. The minister may be interested in this analysis by law firm Herbert Smith Freehills. The federal approval time frames for wind projects is 3 488 days or 9.5 years. It is 705 days or 2.5 years for solar projects. It takes 530 days or 1.5 years for battery projects. Norman continues —

The report also points the finger at the Commonwealth where bureaucrats are generally taking up to three years to assess a project under federal environmental laws, “causing significant delays”.

One pleasing thing I have seen is that our state Minister for Environment has pushed back against our federal Minister for Environment and Water on her environmental laws and the mess that Hon Tanya Plibersek is making and is looking to make with her nature positive laws. I was pleased to see our minister stand and be counted when she came over here and he had a meeting with her to express his concerns. I think she has a hard row to hoe with what she was looking to bring in as one suite. It is not going to work. She is out of touch with what is going on in the regions of Western Australia, and the rest of Australia for that matter.

I am running out of time, but I would like to quickly talk about my electorate and wind farms, because we have real issues. I think the biggest one is that the minister needs to bring local governments on board. He needs to have much better consultation with our local governments, because every time we go to a Western Australian Local Government Association zone meeting—I know the members for Central Wheatbelt and Moore certainly attend a lot of zone meetings—one of the first things that gets brought up is wind farms, lack of regulation and the concerns that our local governments have about how they deal with it. I tried to bring this up with the previous minister. He brought out his usual line that it was not a problem and that I did not understand—whatever. I am looking forward to this minister taking it on board and talking to our local governments and telling them that he is not going to ride roughshod over them with their joint development assessment panels and the like. I am looking forward to him telling them that he will talk about regulations that do not seem to exist at the moment and actually create some regulations for wind farms.

It is not fair on local governments and their ratepayers, and it is not fair on those communities. Leigh Ballard, who is Narrogin’s shire president and is very well respected in that community, said that the Narrogin shire tried to take

the front foot prior to development and drafted a policy to require that firms communicate with local stakeholders, minimise noise and environmental impacts and ensure that turbines blend with natural landscapes in order to receive council approval. The Narrogin shire president said that the policy was created as council believed the state government's framework was not comprehensive enough. He said that the state has guidelines only and that there is no serious policy. I could not agree with him more. This is the problem that local governments and local communities are having. I have said in this place before that I am ambivalent about renewables and wind farms, but I am not ambivalent about the grief that seems to be caused in a lot of our local communities. We have projected wind farms cropping up between Williams and Narrogin, North Williams, and west between Darkan and Collie. I believe there is another big wind farm planned near Ongerup, and, of course, one at Flat Rocks. The member for Cottesloe mentioned the completion of stage 1 of the wind farm at Flat Rocks. What has happened? The energy is not for the local community. It is for BHP, which purchased it as an offset for a mining project hundreds of kilometres away. This issue has resulted in neighbours not talking to each other and disputes. This will be generational. These are the things the minister needs to think about. Some farms have them; others do not. People are threatening that they have been built too close to their boundary. They might spend \$600 000 to \$800 000 to build a house near that boundary to stop a wind turbine going up in the area close to the property. Things like that are going on. The Water Corporation will spend a couple of hundred million dollars with Flat Rocks stage 2 to offset the Alkimos desalination plant. No doubt that will also create grief in the community.

They are the issues from my perspective. It is the local members—whether it is the member for Moore or the member for Central Wheatbelt—who have to get involved in these disputes. I do not want to be involved in them. I do not want to have to talk on radio about how the government has no regulation and how local governments have to make it up as they go. It is not good enough. I urge the minister to take on board what I am saying and to take on board the division that is being created. We have seen it with Flat Rocks stage 1, and no doubt we will see it with Flat Rocks stage 2. The Minister for Water will no doubt hear about it. We do not want to see that division in our communities. We just want reliable power in places such as Bremer Bay, Jerramungup, Narrogin, Katanning and other places in my electorate. I urge the Minister for Energy to take on board what I am saying—to look at the regulations for wind farms and to do something about it.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [5.23 pm]: I rise to support the motion on the energy portfolio and add some brief comments to the debate. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for allowing me to stand now so I can take my germs and go somewhere else, outside this chamber!

I want to talk about a couple of things today. The Minister for Energy may be aware through his parliamentary secretary that the Wheatbelt Futures Forum was held last week, at which Hon Darren West spoke. The issue of energy and some of the matters that the member for Roe, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, raised were part of the discussion on the day. The Minister for Energy would understand that. I have raised questions in this place previously around standalone power systems. I heard the minister talk about this today during question time. I heard mentioned 50 new standalone solutions. I think the majority of those, as the minister mentioned—I will be interested in the locations—are probably in the midwest in the electorates of the member for Roe and the member for Moore. There is a definite need in my communities as well. I would like some clarity on that from the minister, because he knows that I have asked several times about how those projects are being rolled out and what the priority is. The minister can tell me whether I have this wrong, but somebody has explained to me that individual farm businesses or customers on spur lines are being dealt with first so that we can get to a community perspective whereby there are not as many spurs coming into a more discrete location, which could potentially at some point island whole communities.

However, that has not occurred my electorate in the wheatbelt yet. Therefore, we have a parallel conversation with communities such as Beacon, and towns in the North Eastern Wheatbelt Region of Councils, which is in the north east of my electorate, such as Mukinbudin and Quairading that have continual power outages. They want to be able to utilise renewable energy solutions. Some of them are saying that at this point they will take anything, but they want to be part of the renewable energy transition. They want to do it in a way that is responsible, but they just want some reliable power. I know the minister is aware of Quairading because we have talked about it in here before. However, I have been unable to elicit answers from the minister or the department, and the same outcome occurred at the Wheatbelt Futures Forum that was attended by a Western Power representative and at which the parliamentary secretary spoke. When questions were asked around how these were being rolled out, when they would be rolled out and when we would see some of these things addressed, there was a very nice presentation by the person from Western Power. The fellow was an engineer and he did a very competent job. I am not critical of the person Western Power sent; however, he was unable to answer the broader policy questions, of course, because he was not a member of Parliament or a member of government. Businesses, individuals and residents in the community want to know when they will have a reliable power source.

I have had an update—I am sure the minister has it in front of him—on the works being completed in Cunderdin. The last time I raised this, there had been a number of upgrades to power poles, lines and transformers, which is wonderful, except that the power keeps going out in a number of those communities. The issue has not gone away. As far as I am concerned, that is Western Power doing its job. It should invest in the infrastructure that is delivering

the power. It should be making our system more resilient and looking at alternative delivery solutions for those communities that are constantly at the end of long stringy lines in very unreliable areas, so that where there is a distributed power network as we transition across to the renewable outcome, there is some certainty for those customers.

In question time today, I felt as though the wheatbelt was a bit of a black hole. I hope the minister can assure me that some of those 50 standalone power systems will be coming to local government areas and customers in my electorate. I do not want to take any away from the member for Roe or the member for Moore—or anywhere else. I read in the paper today about the projected budget surplus that is likely to be announced by the Treasurer tomorrow. This kind of spend on essential infrastructure so that we can transition and make use of renewable energy and have a stable delivery system is where the government's priority should be.

The sentiment from the Wheatbelt Futures Forum last week was that no priority is being given to the wheatbelt. Hon Darren West—whom sometimes I actually feel sorry for, but do not tell him, because I think he gets rolled out just to be the whipping boy for this government in my part of the world—turned up and did his job. I am certainly not making a pitch for his preselection but nobody else came. I was told by the organisers that they had approached a number of ministers for this forum. I know forums like this are held in other regions with Over the Horizon in the goldfields and in the Pilbara, and they are all very well attended by government ministers. They relish the opportunity to speak to a room full of people in a discrete area, particularly before the budget, to capture a whole group of people so they can go back to their communities and tell everyone what the minister has come to town to spruik. As a result of not having one single minister attend, the only conclusion we could draw was that there was nothing to spruik for the wheatbelt in the upcoming budget. That made me sad because the issues we were talking about were mostly around essential infrastructure—land assembly, energy, power and telecommunications. These are things that enable our businesses to operate in a sustainable and profitable way and keep our communities safe. Not one government minister turned up to the Wheatbelt Futures Forum. Some reasons were provided, such as it was a very busy week and it is the budget next week. The Minister for Regional Development was in Northam on the Sunday for a motorsports event. It was a great event, including “Flying 50 Round the Houses” and Mt Ommaney. Fabulous. I was there. I live in Northam, so I popped down to say well done to the organisers. The minister was there. I understand that the Premier was up in Geraldton on the weekend making some announcements. So it seemed there was an opportunity for them to travel, but not where there was a forum—an organised event—that would provide a platform.

I congratulate the Wheatbelt Development Commission, which provided a spokesperson—not the CEO, but a spokesperson—to deliver an overview of the government's priorities, I would say. It was less than satisfactory in the representation from the government. It left most people feeling like they had not had the opportunity to ask questions to better understand where they sit in the priority for this government. In fact, they think they sit very close to the bottom. The challenge we have, particularly in the minister's portfolio area, is as part of the SWIS, there may not be very many customers, but we have a lot of infrastructure. The minister would be very aware of that. It probably causes him no end of headaches, and Western Power as well. I do not think it is too much to ask, so I will ask again: when will communities like Quairading, Beacon, Mukinbudin, Wyalkatchem and others be able to investigate the opportunities that have been afforded other communities to remove themselves from the broader grid? They have a renewable energy source that is backed up with a battery, which can operate potentially in a discrete area. It means there would be some consistency, which would also provide them with consistency for their telecommunications.

I did not let Telstra off the hook. Do not worry; Telstra got the same treatment on Friday at the wheatbelt forum. Telstra continues to turn up and say the same things and have a tin ear when it comes to the service it is providing to our community. I have no problems saying that in here or outside this chamber. They are simply not listening and do not listen to constituents in my part of the world in particular. There are other solutions and other people are moving into that space. I have some hope that they might have to tidy themselves up. However, Western Power does not have any competition, unless people do what Hon Darren West has said to a number of my constituents—I know this because they have said it to me—which is go out and buy a generator. I do not think that is the solution, certainly not for the seniors at the Wyalkatchem senior citizens home. They probably would not even know how to do that, let alone have the physical capability, and nor should they have to foot the bill. I would rather have a system that they could rely on.

From my perspective, I am truly hopeful there is still more to come in the budget tomorrow about how we are going to improve reliability and the resilience of that network. Will we see, as the member for Roe spoke about, the integration of renewables into the system in a way that does not alienate people? That is the second part of the conversation.

When we raise this issue, I know some people in this chamber think this is the Nats and others being opposed to renewable energy. I have more renewable energy in my electorate than probably almost any other member, and have done for some time—maybe not the member for Moore. It has some pretty big wind farms and some significant solar farms, and applications are underway for more. That is not an issue, but the issue is how it is being done. Local governments have concerns about managing renewables and some of the risks around land management. There are also the interactions that some individual businesses are having with access arrangements, compensation, the

impacts on neighbours and all those things. It is all happening at the same time, as a whole raft of other things are happening in my area in particular. There is a bit of fatigue when it comes to matters like this. If there is not a role for government in trying to coordinate, support and educate, I am not quite sure what it is doing. I feel like there is a role to provide some support through local government to other decision-makers when decisions are being made about shifting—it is a big shift—away from our current system of delivering coal-fired energy or gas from a very singular point to a distributed network. Members may sit in their offices and talk about this all the time—the department and Western Power do—but that is not what the majority of Western Australians are sitting around thinking about. They turn on the lights and hope for the best! They quite rightly think that in a state like Western Australia, with the budget surplus and resources we have, the light should come on, barring significant weather events, of course. I think there is a bit missing. There is an education bit missing about that transition—namely, how it is going to look and how it will end up. Most people are pretty reasonable when they are included in that conversation and discussion and are given the opportunity to provide feedback, so that they understand where we are going with it, and that what they are likely to end up with is better than what they have now.

Having been member for Central Wheatbelt for nearly 17 years, I can tell members there is one thing I know about my communities. If we talk about taking something away without giving them a vision of what they are going to get to replace it, they will batten down the hatches and become very resistant to change. That is human nature but in the wheatbelt, because we are quite used to things being taken away from us and not coming back, it is incumbent on governments, I think, of either persuasion to understand that when we are doing big shift changes like this, government members have to be out there on the front foot having those conversations. There was a great opportunity at the Wheatbelt Futures Forum, which is a forum of a business network. Kitty Prodonovich was there from the Regional Chamber of Commerce. I know she has a great relationship with the government. She talks to a lot of businesses. If the concern from government ministers was that it was going to simply be a pile-on, that was not true. The event was very professionally run and Kitty was emceeing and managing the panels. She did a wonderful job. It would have been a great opportunity for the Minister for Energy, the Minister for Regional Development or any other minister who was invited to come along and give some of that vision and provide some of that understanding so they could understand some of the concerns in relation to this change, because it is real. I will not discount the local government representatives and the leaders in my communities who raise this when I go to zone meetings or when I am in those communities because there is concern around what is happening. It is not because they are opposed to renewable energy, but because they do not quite see where we are going to end up. There is a gap. If members do not turn up and have those conversations, that gap just gets bigger and, all of a sudden, it will become something insurmountable and the community will shut down and shut out the government. I do not want that. I want my community to thrive. I do not think it is an unreasonable request for us to have a better understanding. That is why, as the local member, I stand every time there is an energy debate, whether it is a conversation around infrastructure or the generation of energy. There are all sorts of things we can bring into these debates. I am relatively agnostic about what we use to create the electrons down the line, I just want the lights to have the electrons in them.

The request I have for the Minister for Energy is, once again, when can we see or have some understanding of the priority for the rollout of these standalone power units, not only for individual businesses, but on a community basis? If communities are not on that list and will never be on that list or be considered, just tell us now so we can go about doing something different! A lot of community leaders in local government volunteer a lot of time trying to deal with this on behalf of their communities. I would rather they focus on something else, or that they be given an opportunity to say, “Okay. Here are the things we need to address so government can escalate or reprioritise.” That is what I have to say. I do not think it is an unreasonable request. That is what I wanted to contribute to the debate this evening. I thank the member for raising it as a very important issue. There is a whole raft of things that we could have covered today, but that was what I wanted to talk about on behalf of my electorate.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [5.41 pm]: I would like to contribute to this excellent motion raised by the member for Cottesloe that this house condemns the Cook Labor government’s abysmal handling of the state’s energy network, subjecting families and businesses to extended power outages during the scorching summer heat and inflicting financial losses amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I start off with a little bit about the town of Mullewa in my electorate, which has one of those unenviable records in having some of the most unreliable power supplies in Western Australia. It got so bad in the end that the government relented and Western Power parked a number of diesel generators there on a permanent basis to kick-in when the power supplies fail, which happens very often, from the main line going into town. Temperatures in Mullewa this year reached near 50 degrees. On some of those occasions, we saw the generators fail when the line fails, leaving that community in a dire situation. I know it has led to depopulation. I know businesses and residents left because of unreliable power there. This is so in many other communities. One of the local cafe owners, Helen Ansell, said that the power outages occur so often and blackouts were so common that many residents and business owners have now installed their own backup generators in addition to the Western Power backup generators. That shows that this system is plainly not working in that area.

I know that Western Power publishes, via local government, reliability factors, but even within that, I think there are some towns that are disguised because their average performance is much worse than the case in the rest of the

shire. For instance, since the development of the microgrid in the Shire of Northampton that the former government kicked off and that this government finally scaled back without the renewable energy supply to it, which would have pretty well islanded Kalbarri, there has been an improvement in supply. But I think that masks the situation for other communities such as Port Gregory, which has an abysmal record as a town site within that shire. Individual communities are sometimes not even recognised for the difficulties that they face.

In January, 4 300 properties were left without power over a weekend, including 15 000 in the wheatbelt and 18 000 in the hills. Some were progressively brought back online, but other communities were without power for weeks. That was very debilitating for those towns. I know that the town site of Kalannie had limited or no water supply because communications had failed. Basically, for the best part of two to three weeks, that town was in an abysmal situation, such is the failure of this government to adequately prepare.

We often hear talk about climate action. The minister today said, “Last year was such a hot summer. Next summer, it won’t be.” That would seem to be quite contrary to the message around the changing climate. We know that Kalgoorlie was left with no power supply despite the fact that there is a Synergy generator in the area and that one of them is supposed to have black start capability to start even when there is no power coming in. That should have kicked the other one in. That process failed. The local fibre generators in the area were finally patched in, I believe, by running the power down to Kambalda and back up again. Some sort of bespoke solution was arranged and power to Kalgoorlie was restored, but not before individual businesses had had losses of up to \$100 000 of stock, which was never covered despite there being discussion in this place about some assistance for them.

For that reason, I have a petition circulating expressing concern at those outages and the fact that, at some point, people could not get a 000 call. I understand that the Kalgoorlie fire and rescue service could not even get inside its shed, such was the devastating situation caused by the failure of the government to properly prepare for the inevitable fact that there might be an outage on that line.

Another community with a similar problem in having a large-ish community, city or town at the end of a long line is Geraldton. We know that the line from Three Springs to Geraldton is inadequate for industrial development. The Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry explains that business opportunities in the midwest are being lost simply because of insufficient capacity to provide power to them. Then, of course, the government will say, “There is no demand. We don’t have to meet it.” It does not have the demand because industry is not coming in because it does not have that surplus power. I note that \$133 million out of a \$700 million investment may go towards that, but that is a drop in the ocean, as described by the chamber of commerce up there, in the cost to develop the second stage of the Mid West Energy Project. It is needed to carry through from Three Springs up to Geraldton to replace the cricket wicket-type situation at the moment. The backup up there is barely adequate. If the community were to lose power from those wire transmission lines, that generator would kick-in eventually and perhaps provide enough to supply the town. That happened after cyclone Seroja and is why Geraldton got power back before many other communities through the midwest battered by that cyclone.

I think the damage done to the network prompted the move towards standalone power units, which I believe were spoken about today in question time. The experience of the standalone power units is somewhat mixed. Not everybody is reporting such a happy experience. A couple of months ago, I got looped into a WhatsApp group discussing the situation in the area around Perenjori and Carnamah where a large number of farms are being moved from the grid to off-grid standalone power units. Some of the major complaints that appeared in that WhatsApp group were that the number of batteries or the capacity of the batteries being offered was not adequate. That led to generators constantly running pretty well every night. Some of the planning also seemed to be not the best. In one case, I think the generator was located 60 metres or so from a bedroom window, which meant the people could not sleep because it was waking them up every night. Then there was the slow response time of Western Power to get back to people. When there was a complaint about a breakdown, there did not seem to be very swift action. There was also some concern that some of the electrical appliances were being damaged because of the constant switching from battery or renewable battery; when the battery gets low, it switches over to the generator and that was leading to some appliance damage. They were told that there would not be a downgrade, but they felt there was a downgrade. For instance, one family was looking to switch from electric hot water to gas because the system was not coping. Some of them might have already had solar panels but they could not use those as part of the system. They were not allowed to connect those in there.

I have a letter here that one particular family received from Western Power back in September last year. I think it just goes to show that there was a slow response to their concerns. It states —

I am pleased to be able to finally share with you ...

It continues —

Thank you for your patience ...

This is the family with the generator 60 metres from the house. They were offered an additional 35 kilowatt hours of battery storage capacity in the hope that that would solve the problem. That seemed to have made some difference. But 35 kilowatt hours is not a lot for a large house with ancillary uses. For instance, I know one built out in Chittering

was larger than that just for a house and farm sheds, and probably that does not run out of power every day and does not need a generator to kick in. That was—I cannot remember—40 or 50 kilowatt hours and that seemed to be enough. Seventeen kilowatt hours does not seem to be very much all at all. Some of those sizing issues and assessments and planning seemed to be problematic. There was also an offer to the family of \$150 000 if they would just go away. A payout to provide their own solution into the future was offered in the letter from Western Power. The minister is quite welcome to see that if he wishes.

I will run through some of the problems we see in country areas. I think 10 shires are listed on the website for having the worst performing power in 2022–23. Seven of them are in the electorate of Moore, so I certainly get plenty of calls throughout most summers from people who have issues. I note that Quairading has the very worst performance of any and the next worst is, I think, Lake Grace. Despite the fact that there are not too many local governments in the member for Roe's area represented on the website—I think the Shire of Ravensthorpe and the Shire of Lake Grace were the only two—the figures are very poor. They show why members, of this party at least, are commenting on that issue, because it is a longstanding issue for many communities.

Just getting back to the situation with Oakajee again, the extension of the 330 kilovolts transmission line to Geraldton is required to activate the industrial complex at Oakajee and really kickstart development around Geraldton and the midwest. It is, I think, a damning indictment that Oakajee has sat undeveloped for a number of years in the way that it has under this government. Despite promises of delivery and despite it being the centre of industrial development, we are seeing very little delivered to benefit the communities of the midwest, who are looking for that next stage of development. In Western Australia, we do not have the large regional centres that we see in other states, like Bendigo or Newcastle or Townsville, with 100 000 or 200 000 residents. If we are ever going to get to that number of people, we need jobs and industrial development in the area. To achieve that we need the support of government through it taking a lead in the provision of infrastructure, instead of always hanging back and being behind the curve, so to speak, which seems to be the way that the midwest is being treated. Certainly, that is the feeling I get from talking to businesses in the area. They feel that they are not being taken seriously by this government.

I am happy to report that the Nationals WA has recently endorsed a candidate in the area who deeply understands the issues of the midwest and will provide the level of understanding and advocacy that has been so sadly lacking in the Geraldton area, especially over the last number of years. Kirrilee Warr is her name and I hope and believe that in 2025 she will be taking her place here and we will see a turnaround in the consideration of those issues of Geraldton and surrounds. As members know, thanks to this government and its policy of stripping away regional representation, it will be even more important that people in the midwest have that level of support and advocacy that Kirrilee will provide, because it is sadly lacking at the moment, just as this government's record on energy is sadly lacking.

The member for Cottesloe has outlined the macro sense of it all, the government's inability to understand and the devastatingly, I think, fine line that the government is on towards having a system collapse around its ears. I note what goes on in this place, with members shouting at him and baying like a pack of dogs as he is speaking, instead of listening to the considerations and concerns he puts forward. There is a complete lack of respect to the vast experience that he has in industry and in project development and the like. When I look around this room, I think it is far, far more than others here possess. Members would do well to listen to what he says and to accept that there is a coming energy crisis in Western Australia.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Energy) [5.57 pm]: I note the contribution from members opposite. Once again, I think the best contribution on the other side was made by the member for Central Wheatbelt. The member for Central Wheatbelt is moderate, reasonable and informed, and I always value her contribution. It was quite a stark contrast from the contribution of other members opposite. I just want to respond to some of the issues that the member for Central Wheatbelt spoke about. Unfortunately, I know she has had to leave the chamber, but she raised some issues about standalone power systems in her part of the world in the wheatbelt. I want to respond because she made a considered and reasonable contribution and I think that deserves a response from me.

Yes, the announcement in the budget related to Horizon's standalone power systems. Obviously, in the Esperance region and parts of the Gascoyne and midwest, Horizon is the operator. The wheatbelt is covered by the south west interconnected system where Western Power is the operator and Western Power certainly has a program to roll out standalone power systems as well. In fact, it is already funded to roll out many, many standalone power systems. The member also commented about the use of batteries to bolster the security of supply around some of the wheatbelt communities. That is certainly something that Western Power and Horizon in its regions of responsibility are looking at all the time. I was requested to itemise which communities would be chosen and when they would get what power solution. That is not my job as minister; I rely on the operational expertise of Western Power and Horizon. Obviously, they are very well considered. They look at where the next standalone power systems should be offered and where the next network solutions should be positioned in order to get the best result for the community and ensure that people who are at most risk of outages are served.

The member for Moore raised the issue of the reliability of standalone power systems. Overwhelmingly, they have been very successful and well received. On average, they operate under power from the sun over 90 per cent

of the time. There have been occasions—I have been briefed on this issue—when the capacity offered to a particular property has not met the demand for electricity at that particular property. There is often an issue. An audit is performed, a meeting is held and the provider is consulted to assess that property's energy needs. It is often underestimated in that process. I will not point the blame, but the property owner could be underestimating their demand.

Mr R.S. Love: You've got the meter readings.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to let me respond. I am not attacking or questioning what he was saying; I am offering an explanation that I think is reasonable. There is an assessment, an audit process. They look at their situation and they look at their energy needs, because it is not a case of one size fits all, and when larger capacity is required, it is installed. I might add that this comes at no cost to the customer. Whatever the cost of the capacity required, it is provisioned. One example that comes up a fair bit is the fact that welding occurs. I understand that welding is very energy intensive. If that is not factored into the equation and a bit of welding and other work occurs on the farm, the capacity may be underestimated, so they go back and increase the capacity.

Generally, I was quite disappointed by the contributions made by most members opposite. Energy transition is a substantial challenge for Western Australia, as it is for the whole world. It will be expensive. It will require a lot of renewable energy, storage and transmission and it will rely on communities, government and the private sector to work together.

We heard from the member for Cottesloe, who kicked off this motion. It is almost like the Cultural Revolution and they are rewriting history. Someone said something and then all of that is forgotten; it is a complete 180-degree change. I will refer to a couple of things. I have before me *The Liberals—New energy jobs plan*. This was the Liberals' policy on energy three years ago. It was not that long ago when it released its commitment to the state of Western Australia. It includes a commitment to end state-owned coal-fired power stations down in Collie seven months from now. We heard from the former shadow Minister for Energy, the member for Cottesloe. He said that he did not really mean it. At the time of the 2021 election, he made a commitment that the Liberals would pull the cord on coal-fired power in Collie. That is now seven short months away. Today he argued that we have to take our time and we cannot rush getting out of coal in Collie. That is a complete backflip!

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I am not going to take interjections.

Dr D.J. Honey: If you were being fair, you'd acknowledge I've said that for a considerable period of time.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: But this is the member for Cottesloe's document.

During the 2021 election, the Liberals made a commitment to get out of Collie coal-fired power by 2025—in seven months' time. Does anyone on any planet think we are ready to exit coal in seven months' time? I can tell members what the result would be: it would be energy Armageddon for Western Australia. This plan was the Liberals' commitment. They are questioning our approach to energy but its policies are all over the shop; they are disastrous. They threaten energy Armageddon. They would create rolling blackouts across the state. Forget about peak demand in summer; we would not be able to provide power to everyone in the mildest of conditions. It would mean crippling Western Australian industry. We would have to shut down industries. We would not be able to supply power. It would mean tens of thousands of people would be out of work.

The other thing the member for Cottesloe said today is that it would be impossible for Australia to reach its 43 per cent reduction emissions by 2030. This document has the same member saying that it was possible for not just the state government's emissions but the economy's emissions for Western Australia to be reduced to net zero by 2030. It is possible to get to net zero by 2030 but it is impossible to get to 43 per cent by 2030!

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: That is absolutely correct.

I have before me comments made by the member for Cottesloe; I will quote him in a minute. This is the nonsense we get from the opposition. It says that it supports renewable energy. It says that it is meaningful and we need more renewable energy but we cannot have solar or wind and batteries are not really that good, and they are worried about all the transmission. They cannot have it both ways. This is a challenge. This is real. We need a massive increase in electrification. This is a period of change for the planet. This is a great challenge for the world. Western Australia is the best place anywhere on Earth because of our abundant renewable energy resources, abundant space and wonderful job skills. We can be at the forefront of this change. We need people to be part of this, not to question it and come up with the nonsense we heard today.

As I said, before the last election, the member for Cottesloe, the former shadow Minister for Energy, said on 11 February 2021, with this policy that I have just been talking about —

I'm extremely excited to be part of this announcement. This policy is really the next phase of industrial development in the state of Western Australia. We believe that Western Australia and the government should be targeting zero net emissions by 2030.

The member for Cottesloe, at a media conference on 12 February 2021, said —

The truth is our policy is a well thought out policy and a policy that can provide stable, safe and cheap energy for the people of Western Australia.

He included lots of comments about renewable energy and battery storage but he also talked about hydrogen playing a very early role. We are not ready to get out of coal but we are also not ready to get into hydrogen. The technology is not there yet; we have a long way to go. It is a good investment to make and it is a smart investment to make but it will not solve all our problems in the short term.

What did Zak Kirkup, the then Leader of the Opposition, say about the policy? He said, “Dr Honey is the expert in this area.” He said he would let other members of the Liberal Party comment on the policy further. Hon Dr Steve Thomas, the current shadow Minister for Energy, said on ABC Radio on 15 March 2021 —

“That energy policy was the stupidest policy I have ever seen the Liberal Party release.”

His comments were not exactly moderate. In an ABC online news article on 15 March 2021, he said again —

“That energy policy, in my view, is the reason why our costings were such a debacle, because you could not afford to have that policy costed.”

Hon Tjorn Sibma, in the same ABC online news article, called the energy policy an “absolute disaster” and said the remaining lower house Liberal MP, David Honey, had made a contribution to that policy. The article states—

“The day before it was released, I urged the party headquarters not to proceed with it,” he said.

“This was a desperate gamble, absolutely catastrophic and ill-conceived and poorly delivered.”

This was the opposition’s approach to energy policy three short years ago. I could go on and on. Let us go outside the state Liberal Party to its federal colleagues, such as the former federal Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction, Angus Taylor. He criticised the plan and said that the government should not be focused on helping businesses to upgrade their energy-efficiency technology as that was not how it was done, nor by closing coal-fired power stations prematurely.

The Shire of Collie president, Sarah Stanley, who is close to the heart of the Collie community, was quoted as saying that —

... while the transition to renewable energy was “absolutely inevitable” she questioned the proposal’s timeframe.

“The technology just doesn’t exist today,” Ms Stanley said.

The Australian Energy Council CEO, Sarah McNamara, said the WA Liberal’s plan appeared to be very ambitious in terms of its pace. It is sort of like when Sir Humphrey on *Yes, Prime Minister*, questioned a policy. He said, “A very courageous policy there, sir. Very ambitious.” Claire Wilkinson, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association WA director, said —

“What we’d encourage is that the Opposition and the Government, on these really important announcements, they come and talk to the industry and have some consultation,” ... Members opposite probably do not care what Greg Busson from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union says, but he was actually right on the money. He said —

“This insane plan to close these power stations by 2025 would see over 1500 workers losing their jobs ... straight away,” ...

“It would mean the death of the community of Collie.

...

“This plan will compromise power supply to every home and business in Western Australia.

He was absolutely on the money with that. Mike Nahan, a former Minister for Energy in the Barnett government, said it was “worse than Colin’s canal”. That was a big call, if members remember what Colin’s canal was all about. That was the Liberal Party’s energy policy in 2021.

The member for Cottesloe made some comments about the state of the network infrastructure. He referred to a *State of the infrastructure* report. He said that the kit was falling apart, it was no good and that we had let the side down while in government. What he did not do was to look to the number of failures when his party was in government. In 2016–17, there were 327 unassisted failures of poles. Unassisted failures are when a pole simply falls down because it is old, is worn out, has white ants through it or is not being maintained properly. That happens in the system. There is close to 900 000 poles in the Western Power network and they are being progressively looked at and maintained and replaced. Back in 2022–23, under this government, we had 44 unassisted pole failures. The number of unassisted failures of overhead distribution conductors during the time of the Barnett government in 2013–14 was 341. In 2022–23, there were 187. We know that trees and cars can smash into powerlines and bring them down, but this is when poles collapse because they are not being maintained. It is always a challenge because

it is a big network. Most of the customers are in Perth, but most of the infrastructure is in the regions, so we spend a lot of money—disproportionately more—getting electrons to folk in the regions. We understand that is a community obligation, but Western Power and the power utilities all share that with the government and we are committed to that.

The view of the opposition on this is to attack and criticise a government that is investing in and taking this energy transition seriously, like no other government before it. We are investing billions of dollars. I will go through some of the things we are doing, because I know the opposition is interested in that. Really, let us be serious about the way forward. Let us be reasonable: this is always challenging in Western Australia because of the geography. However, to suggest that we are not in control of energy policy, and to then look at how appallingly hopeless the opposition was and is on energy policy—I will come to its latest version of that and where it is headed at the next election—God help us! We are committed to and believe in an energy transition. We believe we need to seriously futureproof our economy. We are investing in renewable hydrogen, but we need to make sure that that stacks up. It is too early to go to hydrogen as a power source because it is not economic. We need to be in the game, investing in and bringing on projects that can be viable. We know we can play a huge part in the future of hydrogen. Gas is very much an important transitional fuel. No-one says anything about this government stepping away from gas because we need that vital firming energy for our system and for economies overseas. As part of our state's transition, we are committed to retiring, as I said, all state-owned coal-fired power stations by 2030—an extra half decade beyond the opposition's ambitions—but we will do it responsibly. The opposition was committed to spending, I think, if one can believe it, \$100 million to help Collie. We already have that figure up to about \$640 million. We believe in a just transition.

We know this is a big task. That is why we are investing in renewable energy generation, transmission and storage to ensure that Western Australians have access to clean, reliable and affordable energy. As I said, we get division, incoherent policy and backflips from the opposition bench. The two parties tend to be divided, but the opposition has no discernible or serious approach to the issue. Meanwhile, this Western Australian Cook Labor government has made a decision to get into big batteries. There were some comments from the member for Cottesloe, doubting the effectiveness of big batteries and saying we cannot rely on them. That is right. We are not going to stand just with batteries and renewables, because we need to continue to have that firming energy and explore other forms of storage, but I cannot underestimate the value of these big batteries. We have, and will have, two of the biggest grid-scale batteries in the world in the next short while. In October this year, we will have a Neoen battery, which will be expanded with stage 2, providing up to 650 megawatt capacity with 2 240 megawatt hours. A private investor in Collie is hooking up to the network down there. I tried to find a bigger network grid-scale battery by doing a bit of Mr Google research. It is probably not the safest form, but it is a reasonable assessment. The only bigger one that I could find was in California.

We are doing amazing things in this state. Synergy's own big battery is taking shape, with 500 megawatt capacity and 2 000 megawatt hours. Is that right? It might be more than that. It is a four-hour battery. We will do the maths, but this is enormous capacity. South Australia made a big song and dance about getting the first big battery installed—the Tesla battery—which was 150 megawatts. Members will remember the story about that. I was going to say that we have one under construction with 650 megawatts and another at 500 megawatts. These batteries will do amazing work. Our issues with the network are between 6.30 and 9.00 pm every evening. That is when demand peaks. In summer, when everyone has their air-conditioners on, that period between 6.30 and 9.00 pm, about three or four hours, is when we get the historic highs of demand from people at home. That is when we need to keep the lights on and the energy there. That is the critical moment. A big battery that gives two to four hours of storage will soak up all the daytime solar and the rooftop solar, and absorb the wind that gets produced in the system, and then dispatch all those electrons when they are needed most. I cannot emphasise enough how critical they are for delivering security for our system. Someone might ask, "What's a four-hour battery? What's the good of that? It's over in four hours." No, it soaks up energy during the day, dispatches it for three or four hours when it is needed, and then, the next day, it charges up again and dispatches again the following night. It is absolutely critical to sustainability and getting the most out of our renewable energy.

KBESS1, our first big battery in Kwinana, was built by Synergy and is up and running at 100 megawatts with a 200 megawatt-hour capacity. KBESS2, the second one, is almost completed, also down in Kwinana. That will provide 200 megawatts—four hours, with an 800 megawatt-hour capacity. The Collie battery, again by Synergy, will provide around 500 megawatts, with a 2 000 megawatt-hour capacity. It is set to be one of the biggest in the world and certainly the biggest in Australia when it is finished. There is also the Neoen battery, which I talked about earlier, also in Collie.

Wind farms are critical. We have virtually the best wind resources on the planet in Western Australia. Companies are coming to us from all over the world saying, "Your wind is amazing. You get the best return rates of energy because of the consistency and power of the wind here." From the south coast right up to Geraldton, it is an incredible resource. That is going to be incredibly important because we have a big state and there will be parts of the state that will be windy when others are not. There are also inland opportunities, in the goldfields and the north of our state, where the wind blows at night in the desert. We have options to keep renewable energy flowing.

We are increasing our investment in power reliability across the grid, as I talked about, with standalone power systems and more community batteries; they are important. I will not go over standalone power systems again. I also mentioned demand-side management today. Demand-side management is part of the system. It used to be that SECWA did everything for us in terms of energy—do members remember SECWA? It was one entity; it was government-owned and it ran everything. That is now part of a market; the government does not run everything. The government does not run every generator or all storage. In some parts of the state, we do not run all of the transmission, either. It is important to realise that we have an independent federal authority, the Australian Energy Market Operator, that runs the market. When AEMO looks ahead at the demand needs of Western Australia, it is its responsibility to assess that. We will play our role, but the market operator operates the market and looks ahead at what the demand is going to be on the south west interconnected system in Western Australia in two years' time. If it sees a shortcoming ahead, it can go to the market and try to get extra capacity built to serve it. There is a very keen market and all sorts of processes in place; if we ever fall short, we can go to the market.

There is also demand-side management, through which companies agree, for a payment, to dial down their energy use, which avoids us having to overbuild the system for generation. The member for Cottesloe talked about Alcoa and other companies deliberately downsizing production and making more money out of that. I am not sure that I have ever heard about that, or how realistic that is.

Dr D.J. Honey: That's exactly what they did.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I am not sure that that is a model for economic success, but most companies we deal with want not only energy but also to be part of the community, and they understand their role in managing demand. Of course, demand-side management happens all over the world. In fact, I was asked about this issue during question time today and criticised because we asked Water Corporation to turn down its power usage—how dare we do that? I wonder which government introduced demand-side management in the system? I wonder whether it was Hon Peter Collier, as energy minister, who set that provision in motion. The member for Cottesloe is criticising me for using an application that one of his own former energy ministers implemented so that we can successfully manage peak demand when we need to; it does not happen all the time.

I do not know what next summer is going to be like, but I know the last summer was a hell of a summer and there was enormous energy demand. Demand-side management was critical to keeping the lights on. At the end of the day, the people of Western Australia want their lights on; they do not care how it happens. They are not interested in the detail, they just want power, and that is what we are able to deliver.

What is the future? We know that in the future there will be investment in renewable energy. Renewable energy is the most affordable and cheapest new form of energy today in Australia. Between diesel generation, gas turbines, coal and solar and wind, solar and wind will be cheaper every time. But we also need storage, and we are getting lots of players in that area. We have talked about the big batteries. Transmission is a challenge. Fortunately, in Western Australia we have wide open spaces and larger land holdings, so it may be easier than it is in constrained areas of the eastern states, where the land holdings tend to be smaller.

We need the opposition to help the community on this journey. The member for Central Wheatbelt talked about bringing the community along, and I think she is dead right. There is a real challenge for any government in Australia to talk to local communities and get their support and understanding, because this is a challenge that will bring great benefits for our whole economy and communities as well. Rather than getting in there and playing the cheap political games by talking about “Labor's wind farms” or “Labor's transmission towers”, we need to understand that this is for all of us. We have to work together with our communities, and —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Member for Roe, there are responsibilities on me and the government. We need to learn and we need to improve. There are lessons being learnt in the eastern states right now about community engagement and social licence; we also need to learn those lessons, and I am very keen to do so. We need to sit down with people and get them understand. There are small minorities of people who will never, ever support renewable energy; I think they exist on both the extreme left and extreme right, but most people are reasonable and in the centre. That is where this government always sits—the sensible centre—and I think most people in Western Australia are also like that. We want to engage with them and we want to explain what the requirement is and work together, because there is a lot of work to do with social licence and where we place infrastructure related to transmission and solar and wind farms.

I have to talk about nuclear. Even though it is absolutely ridiculous, it has been put up as a serious policy by the federal Liberal Party. I do not want to misquote her, but the Leader of the Liberal Party in Western Australia has indicated that it is something the Liberal Party will consider, although she said not yet. But she has certainly left the door open. When she says, “Not yet”, it means pushing out the use of coal-fired power in Collie way beyond 2030. There is a challenge here; it cannot be too soon, but it cannot be left too late, because those mines will produce only so much coal. This has to be done in a measured and moderate way by 2030. It is simply not sustainable to push it out for years. It is also not a good thing environmentally. We need to make a careful transition plan for the

workers in Collie; they are foremost for me and the member for Collie, and they need certainty. The Leader of the Liberal Party is now saying, “If we’re going nuclear, we might have to wait longer.” What does that mean? It means leaving coal later and later, so that is one big problem with that policy.

However, the critical issue with nuclear is that it does not stack up economically or practically. I am going to leave ideology aside here. I think the only ones engaging in ideology on this issue are conservatives, who want to push nuclear because it is an “up yours” to the green community, who are always after emission-free energy. The conservatives’ message is, “If you want emission-free, cop nuclear and see how you like that.” Leave the ideology alone. There is no economic case for nuclear power in Australia. It is the last place on Earth it makes sense. We have an abundance of renewable energy. We have the world’s most affordable renewable energy. We have the wide open spaces to replace that renewable energy infrastructure. We have the wide open spaces to find the transmission routes.

Nuclear energy is extremely expensive. We have no regulatory regime or administration to handle a brand new industry. That will take years to establish. We know that nuclear is notoriously long in terms of getting a project set up. Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates achieved it in 15 years. Think about that—Abu Dhabi is not exactly a place where people make lots of public comments and object to things through an EPA and go out and protest with placards if they do not like something. When the king wants something, it happens. It took 15 years in the UAE. With the time frames we have in Australia, where we have a robust democratic process and the need to consult and get approvals and public comments, it will not take 15 years; it will take 25 years or more. Who knows? We do not have time to wait for nuclear, even if it was affordable or possible.

Nuclear energy is extremely expensive. We talk about power prices now. We could multiply that by a factor of four or five; I do not know—take your pick! They are trying to get major nuclear facilities up in the United States. They are falling over over there, and they have a history of nuclear power and a regulatory system and businesses already running them. It makes no economic sense, it would make energy unaffordable and it would take too long. We would need to consider the practicalities of it. Where would we put it? Collie has been nominated. The people of Collie might have something to say about that. The people of Western Australia might have something to say about that. All the social licence issues are enormous. It is something we do not need to turn to. We have the luxury of being able to say that renewable is the way for us and nuclear does not make sense.

Here we have an opposition that is attacking the state government’s approach. We are investing billions of dollars in batteries, new renewable generation and transmission. We have a huge amount of work in planning and consulting with industry. I sit down with some of Australia’s biggest private energy companies. I have private conversations with them and they say the same thing about nuclear. They would not have a bar of it; it does not make sense. We have an opposition that went to the 2017 election with its commitment to privatise Western Power. That was its energy policy that year. We know what happens with a privatised network and a privatised retailer and transmission owner, as they have in the eastern states. We have seen what has happened to household energy prices over there; they are way higher than in Western Australia. That brings me to another item I can refer to about power costs for householders.

During the 2021 election, the answer was ripping the power cord out of Collie in seven months’ time, plunging the state into darkness and bringing economic disaster to the state. That was the opposition’s second policy, and now it is going with the nuclear option. It does not make sense for all the reasons I have explained. May I suggest that rather than bringing this debate to Parliament, the opposition should work on its energy policy. That might be time better spent, rather than trying to score a point or go through the motions and say, “What are we going to talk about this week? What are we going to say about the government?” It does not fly. It does not make sense. This is a government that is leading the way in renewable energy in many respects. It is seeing the way forward. We have a great challenge in Western Australia—huge challenges—in terms of our emissions, but we are facing up to them.

I will leave my contribution there because I think some of my colleagues would like to add their comments.

The thing about energy is that when it is all boiled down, it comes down to what the mums and dads pay for it. They want it to be reliable, but they also want it at a reasonable price. I go back to the Barnett government. It increased the price of power by 90 per cent. Year after year, it went up. When Labor was last in office, just before the Barnett government took office in 2008, the average household consumption of 4 728 kilowatt hours a year cost \$658. By the time the Liberal government was finished, that cost had almost doubled to \$1 249.84. Since then, we have been responsible in keeping energy prices down. The fact is that when the \$400 household energy payment is included, the average price in 2023–24 is about the same as the energy cost seven years ago in 2016–17. The reality is that people are paying about the same for their energy today as they were paying seven years ago, yet during the Liberal government’s eight years in office, it increased household energy charges by 90 per cent. In fact, in the last year, the price of energy per household was cheaper than it was in the last year of the Liberal government. Again, in 2020–21, it was cheaper than it was in the last year of the Liberal government. Today, it is about the same. That is a story about how we have worked hard to keep energy prices affordable for Western Australians.

I reject the opposition’s motion absolutely. It was a good exercise, though, because I think members opposite need to be reminded that this is an important area of public policy that they need to get right. Rather than debating this issue and bringing up nonsense in Parliament, apart from the member for Central Wheatbelt, they would do well to sit down and work out a decent energy policy.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.37 pm]: I rise to make a short but incredibly passionate contribution. I place on the record that I condemn the opposition’s motion to condemn the Labor government. I will not read the whole motion for the purposes of *Hansard*, but I can absolutely say that the opposition has put a fictional motion to Parliament today.

I start by addressing the comments that the member for Moore made in his contribution when he said that members on this side were behaving like a pack of dogs during the contribution of the member for Cottesloe. I probably should apologise because I get a little bit passionate about this, but perhaps it is because I will fight like a “chi-chuana” for my community, so I will take that every day!

Firstly, I would like to say that it is really important that we understand that two transitions are occurring around the energy system. The energy system that provides the energy needs for our communities and industry in Western Australia is undergoing a revolution, and I will speak very quickly about some of the reasons why that is occurring. The other really important part, definitely from my perspective, is the transition of the community of Collie. It has provided power to millions of Western Australians over the last 140 years. The minister spoke about the Liberal Party’s energy plan during the 2021 election. In stark contrast, we are delivering a sensible, managed transition to a low-carbon future. We are investing in renewables, transmission lines and storage, and, importantly, in the people of Collie and the wider community of my electorate of Collie–Preston.

I was interested to look at this today because as I was driving to Parliament this morning, the back of the bus in front of me had a big decal that said, “40 per cent of Western Australian households have rooftop solar”. It then directed people to a climate website provided by the Western Australian government. I really had to think about that in relation to the challenge we have in the energy sector. I asked the question: where did the significant government subsidies come from that triggered the massive uptake of rooftop solar? It commenced in 2001 under the Howard federal government’s mandatory renewable energy target system. The system in which we had this massive uptake of rooftop solar was created quite some time ago by a government that already understood we were moving towards renewable energies in the future. I remind the opposition it was a Liberal government.

I think it is really important to appreciate the nature of coal-fired power stations and the coal-fired power stations that are currently operational at Muja. Unit 6, which is due to close in 2025, was built in 1981. In 1984, unit 7 was built and, in 1985, unit 8 was built. Both those units are due for closure in 2029. I think everyone would accept a couple of things. Firstly, the units are really at the end of their useful life. Secondly, replacing those power stations would be incredibly expensive, no matter what they were replaced with to replicate a new coal-fired power station on that space. That is notwithstanding the fact that, as a country, we are locked into meeting the Paris Agreement around carbon emissions. It is important to understand that the running of those power stations has been made incredibly difficult by having to balance and manage the system given the amount of rooftop solar in Western Australia. It creates a duck curve, which the former Minister for Energy spoke about at great length. It means peak demand is in those hours the Minister for Energy addressed today, between six and nine o’clock. That is why batteries play such an important role in this transition. I am very pleased to say that two of the biggest batteries in Australia, if not the world, are in my electorate. I know the Minister for Energy googled it today trying to find some answers around that. They certainly play a key role in making sure our energy system is sustainable for the future.

What is our government doing around transition, firstly for the people of Western Australia, and also my community? We are using the solar and wind that we have copious amounts of in Western Australia as natural resources. Tapping into them means our electricity prices will remain the lowest. In fact, we know that because experts have said that solar and wind create the cheapest forms of renewable energy in the world. The other part of that is obviously the significant role of the just transition process for the Collie workforce and community. I want to very quickly contrast that incredible plan to deliver a sensible, managed transition to make sure we deliver for the people of Collie–Preston with the fact that the Liberals very clearly still demonstrate today that they have no understanding of the energy system. I can go back as far as the recommissioning of Muja AB and the \$308 million it took to refurbish that part of the station, only to be mothballed a short time later, with a worker being injured in the meantime.

The second one was the energy platform the Liberals took to the 2021 election. The minister went through some quotes today from the member for Cottesloe. I want to reference what Hon Dr Steve Thomas said on ABC radio on 15 March 2021. He said that energy policy was “the stupidest policy” he had ever seen the Liberal Party release. Strap in, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, because the federal Liberal party has something for you! It is the nuclear solution. Hon Peter Dutton has come out and said that Collie is the location in Western Australia in which a nuclear reactor would be placed. We are going to pull out the plug on coal and plug in nuclear and off we will go with no interruption to the system! The minister made some key points around the fact that nuclear is the most expensive form of energy. That was published in a recent report by the CSIRO, which the federal opposition leader said was actually incorrect. If we were to plug in even a small modular reactor in Western Australia, I suspect we could possibly blow up the whole of the south west interconnected system. Distribution infrastructure would be needed to distribute the massive amounts of power, because nuclear power stations are either on or off. If that energy needed to be distributed when there was an interruption anywhere, I suspect the whole of the SWIS would blow up. I am no technical expert, but

that is what I think would probably happen. The other thing is that nuclear power stations need a lot of water. I am not sure whether Peter Dutton has ever been to Collie, but the last time I looked, Collie was not near the ocean, which is generally where nuclear power reactors are located. There are a whole lot of furrphies in the Liberal policy on this.

I will quickly speak about Hon Chris Bowen, MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, who is the Minister for Energy's colleague in the federal government. Hon Chris Bowen has been to Collie and met with transitioning workers. He visited Muja power station, and I was lucky to be able to head along with him on that visit. He wrote an opinion piece on 24 February this year, and I just want to pull out a couple of quotes around nuclear that he put on the record. He states in the opinion piece —

Let's be clear upfront. Nuclear is not being pushed as a genuine alternative to renewables. It's being used as a distraction and a delaying tactic.

That is appalling—my words, not his. He also stated —

Take just solar, for example. Last year, the world installed 440GW of renewable capacity. This is more than the world's entire existing nuclear capacity built up through decades of investment. By early 2025, renewable energy will surpass coal as the planet's largest source of energy, while coal, gas and nuclear will all shrink their market share.

He referenced the alleged boom in small modular reactors, saying that it is a mirage. He also stated —

China and Russia are the only two countries to have installed them. The US has now abandoned its “flagship” commercial-scale pilot SMR ... wearing 70 per cent cost blowouts without having started construction on a single reactor.

All these things point to the fact that nuclear is not the answer. Hon Chris Bowen's opinion of nuclear power was followed up in an excellent article published in *The Guardian* on 10 March, in which he said —

... the average build time for a nuclear plant in the US ... was 19 years.

The article states —

The federal energy minister, Chris Bowen, has dismissed Coalition MP Ted O'Brien's claim that Australia could develop a nuclear power industry within a decade, stating: “Tell him he's dreaming.”

That is a great Australian phrase! The article also states —

Sky News reported on Sunday that a 2020 paper from the NSW chief scientist found a nuclear power industry would require tens of thousands of trained staff and at least two decades to become operational.

Responding to the report, O'Brien—the opposition's energy spokesman—claimed the Coalition had received different advice.

“The best experts around the world with whom we've been engaging are saying Australia could have nuclear up and running within a 10-year period,” ...

O'Brien did not reveal which experts the Coalition had talked to.

He actually discredited the New South Wales Chief Scientist's advice around nuclear energy for Australia. Liberal governments have an appalling track record on energy policy.

What I want to highlight in all this is the Collie Just Transition workforce piece. I want to make people understand and appreciate that my passion is to make sure that my community has a just transition and has jobs for the future, so that the generations of people who have lived and worked in Collie can continue to live and work in Collie. Dare I say it, but that is my laser-like focus; I borrow that phrase from the Minister for Housing. I have a personal reason for feeling that way. My husband, obviously, is employed in the coal-fired power generation system, as are all my neighbours, friends and acquaintances and so on in Collie. A really, really personal part of this story is that my brother was working in mining in Western Australia. The mine was privately owned in Ravensthorpe and he flew down one day to go to his fly-in fly-out shift. He arrived and they were all marched into the crib room and told that the mine was shutting effective immediately. They were told to clear out their lockers and get back on the plane they had just come down on. He flew home to tell his wife and two young kids that he was now unemployed—a stroke of the pen and he was unemployed.

I can tell members that is absolutely not what I want for my community, and I know that is absolutely not what the Cook Labor government wants for my community. It is with that focus in mind that I will work and fight like a “chi-chuana” for my community. I again place on the record my disappointment in the motion moved today by the opposition.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.50 pm]: I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate. I do so because, personally, I do not think there is a more pressing policy matter that confronts any government than energy transition. I say this not as a member of Parliament with a passing interest in this but as

someone who for my entire adult life has had an abiding interest in this. Before I ran for Parliament, I worked for over a decade in the energy sector. I worked for both private equity, publicly listed and government trading enterprises, in gas, in electricity, and I have been involved in a range of energy projects over my working life. I think that the member for Cottesloe and I are the only two current members of Parliament to have had a corporate career. I come to this debate with a certain degree of insight and certainly no small measure of passion about this, because this issue is quite literally the issue for which I ran for Parliament.

I left an incredible career in the energy sector to do this job and to be part of a government that I genuinely believe is doing everything right in this space and that genuinely has a vision for not only energy transformation, but also economic diversification, which is essential to this state's future. I left my career in the corporate world, in the energy sector, to be part of this government because I think this government more than any other government in Australia is doing more in this space. It is doing the most in this space. In fact, the member for Cottesloe is aware of just how world leading this government's work is. I find it galling. He sat on the Economics and Industry Standing Committee with the Deputy Speaker and me. We travelled to other jurisdictions. We heard evidence from experts around the world and here in Western Australia and from our good friends in other jurisdictions. All of them complimented Western Australia on its thought leadership and were amazed that we had such an ability and line of sight, through our public ownership of the electricity assets, to both perceive the problem, receive technical advice and expertise and then go about developing sensible and measured solutions in lockstep with industry.

The member was part of that entire process and every time he gets on his feet in this place, he embarrasses himself. He knows, because we took evidence on this, that we are undergoing the most profound shift in energy systems right now, more so than we have ever had at any other point in history. He knows that. He sat through the hearings on that. He knows that between 2010 and 2017, installed solar rooftop capacity went from 50 megawatts to 700 megawatts. He knows that. He knows that in 2019, when our committee reported, a quarter of households had solar PV on their rooftops. It is now a third and it is projected in short shrift to get to half. He knows that large-scale generation is being installed at record rates, and he knows that is because that is what the energy market says is the most efficient way of installing generation capacity and producing energy. The member for Cottesloe knows that. It is not something we have cooked up; it is what the market is saying is the best thing to do. I find it really quite strange that the Liberal Party is sitting there having a crack at market-driven outcomes. There is a certain irony to that. The member for Cottesloe knows this, but he comes repeatedly into this place with harebrained ideas and baseless criticisms that are frankly an insult to all the public servants currently working within the Western Australian government to prosecute and develop energy policy. It is insulting to all those industry participants who engage in such good faith in lockstep, helping us develop the market rules that are required for transition and the technical standards that are required for the connection of these new assets. It is an insult to them. I think it will harm his post-politics career. I really do.

This government has done power bank trials, the first of which was in Ellenbrook. We have rolled out standalone power systems. We are the leading jurisdiction in the country for standalone power systems—there are 180 of those—to look at how we can deliver more reliable power at the fringe of the grid. We have rolled out advanced metering infrastructure so that we can facilitate sensible tariff trials to have orchestration across the network to shore up grid stability and security. We announced an energy transformation taskforce. We implemented an energy transformation strategy. We have delivered a whole-of-system plan. We have produced a distributed energy resources road map—all of that in lockstep with industry, thoroughly engaged through industry, with the first projects of their kind in this country. We are the one and only government to take such thought leadership and steps forward. These things were all aspects of the microgrids inquiry that the member for Cottesloe was part of, and now he has the audacity to come into this place and criticise the government. He did not raise a noise of objection the whole time he was on that inquiry. It is absolutely pathetic.

Our whole-of-system plan that we have released is a 20-year outlook for the south west interconnected system to look at all sorts of alternative scenarios—what generation might be required, what transmission and distribution infrastructure augmentation might be required, having a look at changes in demand in technology and the economy and the way that could shape what we do and the way we use electricity. The Liberal Party never did anything like that when in government. Nothing. It released a four-page flimsy state energy initiative pamphlet. It was the laughing stock. I was at Fraser's when it was released. The sector could not believe it. We have been able to do all that because we own Western Power and Horizon Power and can sandbox all sorts of innovative things, and because we own Synergy, we have a clear line of sight through the various changes that we make.

As the minister outlined, we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars—billions of dollars. We are doing this in lockstep with industry. We are working on issues in domestic gas. I know, because the Premier has me working on those issues personally. I have personally consulted right the way along the gas value chain with industry. It is working collaboratively with us. We are working in lockstep with industry also in hydrogen, and the member for Cottesloe criticises that work. He insults the sector and insults the participants. What he fails to understand is that these challenges are complex. They are significant. The way forward is not to throw stones and criticise. The challenges also cannot be tackled alone. There must be bipartisan support on such a complex and challenging set of issues in front of us. Industry, government and society must work together. We need collaborative consultative

processes. We need measured, informed and constructive debate. We need to listen to the experts. We do not need political hyperbole, harebrained thought bubbles or half-baked ideas. We need the thought leadership that is so evidently lacking from the opposition.

I encourage members to review previous debates in which I have quoted the announcements that came from the Liberal opposition when it was last running for election. I very vaguely recall an article in which even the member for Cottesloe was not aware of the energy policy announcements that his leader was going to announce. Like I said—half-baked, ill-thought out thought bubbles. We deserve better than that. Our Premier, at the energy transition summit last year, delivered one of the most inspirational speeches I think I have heard in a very long time on just what this state needs for energy transition. We need to get behind that vision for the future.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

**BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION AMENDMENT
(SEX OR GENDER CHANGES) BILL 2024**

Standing Orders Suspension — Notice of Motion

By leave, **Ms C.M. Rowe** gave notice that at the next sitting of the house she would move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024 to proceed forthwith to the third reading following consideration in detail.

House adjourned at 7.01 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH — INDIA VISIT

1057. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many departmental staff travelled with the Minister to India in February 2024:
 - (a) If any, how many staff travelled separately from the Minister?
- (2) Please provide a total breakdown of the airfare costs for each individual departmental staff member on their flight to India either with or separately from the Minister.:
 - (a) Please provide a total breakdown of the airfare costs for the Minister themselves on their flight to India?
- (3) How many departmental staff travelled with the Minister to Australia returning from India in February 2024:
 - (a) Did any departmental staff travel separately from the Minister to Australia returning from India in February 2024:
 - (i) If yes, how many?
- (4) Please provide a total breakdown of the airfare costs for each individual departmental staff member on their return flight to Australia from India either with or separately from the Minister?
- (5) During the Minister's time in India did she conduct any meetings with officials and/or staff at the National Health authority of India:
 - (a) If yes, how many meetings did the Minister attend in total:
 - (i) Please provide any agendas, itineraries and/or minutes and briefing notes relating to each individual meeting attended by the Minister;
 - (b) On what dates did the Minister meet with any such officials/staff;
 - (c) How many if any departmental staff attended these meetings in total;
 - (d) How many departmental staff were present at each individual meeting that the Minister conducted or was present at;
 - (e) What was the duration of each individual meeting between the Minister, departmental staff with officials and staff from the National Health authority;
 - (f) Please provide a total breakdown of costs and expenditure by the Minister whilst in India, including any accommodation, meals and travel costs incurred by the Minister; and
 - (g) Please provide a total itemised breakdown of costs and expenditure by each individual departmental staff member whilst in India, including any accommodation, meals and travel costs incurred?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (1)–(4) This information is published in the quarterly *Report on Overseas Air Travel*, tabled in Parliament regularly.
- (5) No.
 - (a) Not applicable.
 - (b) Not applicable.
 - (c) Not applicable.
 - (d) Not applicable.
 - (e) Not applicable.
 - (f)–(g) This information is published in the quarterly *Report on Overseas Air Travel*, tabled in Parliament regularly.

HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CAMPUSES — CLADDING

1058. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Health:

- (1) For each of the following hospital sites listed please detail if any of the exterior panels also known as cladding at any of the buildings on the sites have been removed for the testing for flammability since February 2023; Fiona Stanley Hospital site, Perth Children's Hospital site, Joondalup Health Campus, QEII site.:
 - (a) If yes:
 - (i) How many panels were removed for testing since February 2023 at each individual hospital site; and
 - (ii) When were such panels removed for testing at each individual site; and

- (b) Please provide a breakdown by hospital site, of how many of the exterior panels were identified as flammable?
- (2) For each of the hospital sites mentioned in (1), has a tender process been undertaken and administered by the department to replace exterior panels identified as flammable:
- (a) If yes, at which of the sites has the department issued contracts for tender to replace cladding identified as flammable:
- (i) If no, which sites haven't had contracts either issued for tender or the department yet to identify a suitable vendor for the contract to be tendered to?
- (3) Have any buildings on the sites mentioned in (1) had exterior panels replaced following the tendering of contracts by the department:
- (a) If yes; please detail at which sites mentioned in (1) and at which of the buildings on such sites:
- (i) If no; which sites mentioned in (1) have had contracts tendered and issued where the replacement of flammable exterior cladding is yet to be undertaken;
- (ii) For each site mentioned in (1) what dates were the contracts awarded whereby flammable exterior panels are yet to be replaced; and
- (iii) When does the department expect exterior panels, found to be flammable, to be replaced?
- (4) Please detail all current and estimated costs associated with the replacement of exterior panels identified as flammable at all sites mentioned in (1)?
- (5) Please provide a breakdown of costs both current and expected as mentioned in (4) by each individual hospital site mentioned in (1)?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (1) (a)–(b) 28 panels were removed at Perth Children's Hospital in November 2023. All 28 panels were identified as flammable.
- (2) Yes. Contracts have been issues for remediation work at Fiona Stanley Hospital Childcare Centre. Contracts for remaining sites at Fiona Stanley Hospital, Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, Joondalup Health Campus and Perth Children's Hospital are yet to be awarded.
- (3) Panels have been replaced at Fiona Stanley Hospital Childcare Centre.
- (a) Fiona Stanley Hospital – Childcare Centre.
- (i)–(iii) Tenders for remediation works at remaining sites at Fiona Stanley Hospital, Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, Joondalup Health Campus and Perth Children's Hospital are yet to be awarded. Project timelines will be finalised following tender award.

(4)–(5)

Hospital Site	Estimated Cost / Project Budget (\$'000)	Current Cost
Fiona Stanley Hospital	17,458 (Excluding Building B where business case is still in development)	Current cost for completed works is pending final invoices
QEII	16,100 (Excluding Building PP where Statement of Intent is still in development)	TBC
Perth Children's Hospital	Pending results of burns testing	TBC
Joondalup Health Campus	2,500 (To be delivered as part of JHC Redevelopment project)	TBC

ELECTIVE SURGERY — CANCELLATIONS

1059. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Health:

I refer to all public hospitals, including public hospitals with private operators, and I ask:

- (a) With a breakdown by classification of hospital and patient initiated, how many elective surgeries were cancelled in each of the following months:
- (i) April 2023;

- (ii) May 2023;
- (iii) June 2023;
- (iv) July 2023; and
- (v) August 2023?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) (i)–(v) Elective surgeries are cancelled for a range of both patient and hospital-initiated reasons. Patient safety is the priority and surgeries are often rescheduled within a matter of days. The data includes WA public hospitals only, and not data from Contracted Health Entities.

Patient-Initiated Reasons

Month-Year	CAHS	EMHS	NMHS	SMHS	WACHS	Total
Apr-23	74	182	116	79	217	668
May-23	75	217	151	103	274	820
Jun-23	81	198	122	120	222	743
Jul-23	63	152	133	108	194	650
Aug-23	74	174	127	133	200	708

Hospital-Initiated Reasons

Month-Year	CAHS	EMHS	NMHS	SMHS	WACHS	Total
Apr-23	126	377	278	148	431	1,360
May-23	160	485	355	211	463	1,674
Jun-23	150	487	331	224	460	1,652
Jul-23	127	654	305	205	426	1,717
Aug-23	171	625	314	188	499	1,797

ELECTIVE SURGERY — CANCELLATIONS

1060. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Health:

I refer to all public hospitals, including public hospitals with private operators, and I ask:

- (a) With a breakdown by classification of hospital and patient initiated, how many elective surgeries were cancelled in each of the following months:
- (i) September 2023;
 - (ii) October 2023;
 - (iii) November 2023;
 - (iv) December 2023;
 - (v) January 2024; and
 - (vi) February 2024; and
- (b) For each month listed in (a), what was the total number of cancelled elective surgeries by area health service?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a)–(b) Elective surgeries are cancelled for a range of both patient and hospital-initiated reasons. Patient safety is the priority and surgeries are often rescheduled within a matter of days. The data includes WA public hospitals only, and not data from Contracted Health Entities.

Patient-Initiated Reasons

Month-Year	CAHS	EMHS	NMHS	SMHS	WACHS	Total
Sep-23	63	155	107	88	215	628
Oct-23	66	151	109	106	257	689
Nov-23	62	162	156	120	225	725
Dec-23	37	83	82	82	121	405
Jan-24	36	157	97	100	165	555
Feb-24	42	120	118	130	254	664

Hospital-Initiated Reasons

Month-Year	CAHS	EMHS	NMHS	SMHS	WACHS	Total
Sep-23	145	532	358	169	464	1668
Oct-23	137	564	273	173	497	1644
Nov-23	120	584	317	208	420	1649
Dec-23	70	364	225	121	330	1110
Jan-24	111	586	296	174	325	1492
Feb-24	117	539	301	170	505	1632

Total Cancellations by Health Service Provider

Month-Year	CAHS	EMHS	NMHS	SMHS	WACHS	Total
Sep-23	208	687	465	257	679	2296
Oct-23	203	715	382	279	754	2333
Nov-23	182	746	473	328	645	2374
Dec-23	107	447	307	203	451	1515
Jan-24	147	743	393	274	490	2047
Feb-24	159	659	419	300	759	2296

