



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2022

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 10 August 2022

Legislative Assembly

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER — HEATING

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.01 pm]: Members, I have a statement on the heating in the chamber. You will note that it is still chilly in the chamber today. The Parliamentary Services Department has advised that the air-conditioning system was back online as of an hour ago, but it will take some time for the air to warm up.

Mr R.H. Cook: I think that's what you said yesterday, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I know—I get poor advice, I think! In the meantime, members and staff should feel free to wear coats or other garments to keep themselves warm.

Mr R.H. Cook: Are blankets provided?

The SPEAKER: Blankets—you name it.

Also, for the time being, the doors of the chamber will be closed so as not to let in the cool air from outside. I thank members and staff for their understanding.

PAPER TABLED

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

BILLS

Returned

1. Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022.
2. Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022.
3. Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2022.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

RETIREMENT VILLAGES ACT — REFORM

Statement by Minister for Commerce

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Commerce) [12.03 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the decision regulatory impact statement, or DRIS, that was released on 2 August and sets out recommendations for reform of the Retirement Villages Act 1992 that have been accepted by the McGowan government.

An estimated 25 500 residents live within over 300 retirement villages throughout Western Australia. Retirement villages provide an important service to the community, with supported affordable accommodation for seniors consistent with their needs. The DRIS, which includes 35 recommendations for reform, was accompanied by a report by Western Australian Treasury Corporation, *Analysis of potential financial impacts on retirement village operators of proposed Western Australian retirement villages legislation reform*. Publication of the reports will facilitate further stakeholder consultation during the course of implementing the recommendations.

The most significant reform for residents is likely to be the introduction of a mandatory time limit of 12 months for the payment of exit entitlements when a resident leaves a village, and the requirement that payments be made to former residents to assist with the costs of aged care until such time as the exit entitlement is paid. Although it is acknowledged that many retirement villages provide the exit payment in a timely fashion, it is recognised that delays from a handful of providers have resulted in some residents waiting three to four years to receive their exit entitlements. Importantly, a further transition period of 12 months will be provided to the industry to enable it to adjust to this change.

Operators have long requested a better system to allow for village redevelopment. The recommendations will address this by creating a single, clear process that will be supervised by the State Administrative Tribunal and that will consider significant changes to the use of village land that will secure the interests of residents, while permitting appropriate village development. Other recommendations will address improved information disclosure to prospective residents by providing for earlier and more effective disclosure of key information. This will help reduce complexity and promote consumer understanding and choice. Other recommendations include important clarifications of the conduct obligations of both operators and residents in a village, the requirement to provide budget and other financial information, and the obligations of operators and residents for capital maintenance and improvements in a village.

The DRIS is the result of extensive consultation undertaken by the Consumer Protection division of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety between 2019 and 2021. Implementation of the recommendations will complete the retirement village reform process, in accordance with the McGowan government's election commitment. I thank the previous Ministers for Commerce for their work in this important area of work.

MARRUGEKU DANCE COMPANY — *VENICE BIENNALE*

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [12.06 pm]: I would like to share with the house that the work of Western Australian dance company Marrugeku will be featured at the Australian pavilion at the 2022 *Venice Biennale*. The *Venice Biennale* is the largest and most important international contemporary cultural exhibition in the world. It is also one of the most anticipated international art events of the year, drawing more than half a million art enthusiasts internationally.

Marrugeku is a Broome-based dance company that bridges Indigenous and non-Indigenous dance. It has pioneered a renaissance of Aboriginal history and culture on an international stage. The company's dance performances aim at preserving the past to create a new contemporary culture by mixing ritual dance with urban dance. The Australian presence at *Venice Biennale* is coordinated by the Australia Council for the Arts. It is a significant achievement for a Western Australian company to be invited to present at the *Biennale*. It signals to the world the caliber of talent from this state and celebrates the world's oldest continuous culture.

Jurrungu Ngan-ga, or *Straight Talk*, is a powerful, confronting and proactive new dance work. It explores concepts of incarceration, and with its trademark dedication to first people's stories, Marrugeku bridges cultures, communities and identities, delivering courageous truth-telling in this piece. Marrugeku is one of five Western Australian national performing arts partnership organisations that the state government is proud to support in partnership with the federal government. We should be very proud of the work of Marrugeku and the fact that it will be featured at the Australian pavilion at the 2022 *Venice Biennale*.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2022 — WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ATHLETES

Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [12.08 pm]: I would like to offer my congratulations to the Western Australian athletes who have again excelled on the world stage at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. A record 51 Western Australian athletes competed at the games, with 90 per cent of those supported by the Western Australian Institute of Sport.

Our Western Australian athletes claimed a remarkable 43 medals across 11 sports in Birmingham, comprising 19 gold, 15 silver and nine bronze, as Australia again finished on top of the medal table.

Some of the highlights include track cyclist Matt Richardson claiming dual gold in the sprint and team event, and Peter Bol taking silver in the 800-metre running event. In her third Commonwealth Games, Maddison Keeney won three medals, including two gold in diving; and, in the swimming relays, Zac Incerti claimed a three gold medal haul. The Western Australian legacy in pole vaulting also continues to shine bright, with Nina Kennedy and Kurtis Marschall both bringing gold medals home to our state. Courtney Bruce and Sunday Aryang, who were part of the West Coast Fever Super Netball series, have also added Commonwealth Games gold to their names. Aran Zalewski led the Kookaburras to a seventh consecutive gold medal in hockey, alongside Tom Wickham and Jake Harvie. Western Australia also had five of the 18-member Hockeyroos silver medal winning team—namely, Aleisha Power, Karri Somerville, Penny Squibb, Shanea Tonkin and Georgia Wilson.

Eight medals were won by our para athletes, including two gold to Madison de Rozario, who is the first Australian para athlete to win four gold at the Commonwealth Games. Basketball was another highlight, with the debut of the 3x3. Western Australia had six representatives across the men's and women's and wheelchair men's and women's competitions. I am proud that they all won medals, including Jake Kavanagh, who claimed gold in the men's wheelchair 3x3.

The McGowan government provided the Western Australian athletes with a \$3 000 Commonwealth Games grant each to help support their preparation. Five staff members from the Western Australian Institute of Sport supported the athletes in Birmingham, including the pole vault head coach, Paul Burgess, biomechanist Aaron Balloch, and the Gen 32 para athletics coach Danny Kevan. The athletes were also supported by physiotherapists Chris Perry, who supported the Hockeyroos to the silver medal, and Tania Althorpe, who was part of the athletics staff. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is also proud to have had its very own Jacqui Jashari represent Western Australia and netball as an umpire coach at the 2022 Commonwealth Games. It is wonderful that Jacqui has been recognised and is contributing to the sport of netball and officiating on the world stage.

I congratulate the Australian Birmingham Commonwealth Games team, and particularly, of course, the record number of athletes who were part of the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL — CHAIR — APPOINTMENT*Statement by Minister for Road Safety*

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Road Safety) [12.11 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house of the appointment of Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas as the new chair of the Road Safety Council. Ms Hodson-Thomas previously served in this house as the member for Carine before retiring in 2008. During her time as a member in this place, she served as opposition spokesperson for transport and road safety, and in life after Parliament served as the chief executive officer for the Caravan Industry Association Western Australia.

The Road Safety Council plays an important role in providing advice and guidance to the state government on road safety and comprises experts from across state and local government and the not-for-profit sector. Western Australia faces many challenges in the road safety field, with our state taking up one-third of the continent and a road network that covers many regional and remote locations. Serving as the chair of the Road Safety Council comes with significant responsibility to protect all road users across our state. Ms Hodson-Thomas has the experience and commitment to work with and provide leadership and guidance to the council so that we can continue to see a reduction in the number of Western Australians killed or seriously injured on our roads each year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Mr Iain Cameron, who prior to Ms Hodson-Thomas' appointment, served as the chair of the council for five years. Throughout my time as Minister for Road Safety, I have had the opportunity to work with Iain and have witnessed firsthand his passion and expertise for road safety. Under Iain's guidance, the council has assisted with the development of the state's current road safety strategy and its predecessor, Towards Zero. I wish Iain all the best for the future and thank him for his service and contribution to road safety improvements in Western Australia.

Finally, on behalf of the state government, I again congratulate Ms Hodson-Thomas on her appointment and I look forward to working with her and the council to continue to improve road safety outcomes for all Western Australians.

NAIDOC WEEK*Statement by Minister for Aboriginal Affairs*

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [12.13 pm]: National NAIDOC Week was held across Australia between 3 and 10 July this year to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This year's NAIDOC Week theme of "Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!" encourages all of us to champion institutional, structural, collaborative and cooperative change as well as celebrate those who have driven and led change in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over many generations.

NAIDOC Week was marked by a broad range of celebrations throughout the state and gave each of us the opportunity to learn about First Nation culture and history and to participate in the celebration of the oldest continuous living culture on earth. The week was officially launched in an opening ceremony at Wellington Square on Sunday, 3 July. There was a diverse range of celebrations for NAIDOC, from school assemblies, flag raising ceremonies, storytelling, morning teas, singing and dancing, and creating artworks to the sharing of culture. Communities in all parts of Western Australia came together to join in NAIDOC events. Most recently, I had the great pleasure of attending the NAIDOC Ball on Saturday, 30 July. It was a wonderful occasion with many in attendance and awesome performances provided by Aboriginal dance groups and musicians. The evening also provided me an opportunity to congratulate and celebrate the 13 NAIDOC 2022 award winners, which included artists, businesses, sportspeople and health practitioners, to name just a few. I take this opportunity to again acknowledge and congratulate this year's NAIDOC award winners.

Notably, this year's NAIDOC Week coincided with a renewed sense of optimism and hope across Australia as the Indigenous Voice to Parliament has emerged as an important issue in the national discourse, as has the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This is obviously a very significant process and I look forward to dialogue progressing over the coming months.

In closing, I congratulate the 2022 NAIDOC Perth committee for its hard work in creating an entertaining and inclusive event, and I look forward to the whole community continuing to give effect to the theme of "Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!" every week of the year.

2022 WOMEN'S REPORT CARD*Statement by Minister for Women's Interests*

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [12.15 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the release of the *2022 Women's report card*. Developed in partnership between the Department of Communities and the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, the report card is the most comprehensive research tool to track the progress of Western Australian women. Women and girls in WA deserve to live and work safely in a community where diversity is embraced and access to rights, resources, opportunities and protections is not determined by gender. As is sadly the case to varying degrees across the globe, women in WA face inequalities, discrimination and disadvantage across various aspects of life. A critical step in addressing this inequality is to provide reliable

information, which is the primary objective of the *Women's report card* series. The indicators in the *Women's report card* align with the priorities in *Stronger together: WA's plan for gender equality* and provide a framework for measuring progress towards gender equality.

As highlighted in the report card, women make up 52 per cent of the WA adult population, so it is vital that we continue our efforts to achieve better outcomes for the next generation. Promisingly, we can see that women's workforce participation has increased, and women are completing higher education at much higher rates than men. For the first time, women comprise almost 50 per cent of all vocational education training enrolments. The number of teenagers giving birth in WA has fallen 26.6 per cent since 2016. Sadly, however, data also shows that women in WA continue to experience family, domestic and sexual violence at a drastically higher rate than men. Women also shoulder the majority of caring and domestic responsibilities, even when they work full time. Women remain under-represented in leadership roles and senior positions across almost all sectors, despite having relevant qualifications, experience and ambition. It is essential that these issues are monitored over time to inform our policies and practices. Although the report card shows that progress is being made across many indicators of women's outcomes, it recognises that barriers continue to exist.

I once again thank the BCEC for its collaboration on this report card and for hosting the launch event. I am very proud of the work the government is progressing and I commend all those people in our community who are working together to make gender equality a reality so that WA can be a place where every person can reach their potential.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ORGANISATION (ACCO) STRATEGY 2022 TO 2032

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [12.18 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the launch of the Department of Communities' *Aboriginal community controlled organisation (ACCO) strategy 2022 to 2032*. Last week, I was pleased to join the Minister for Housing; Homelessness for the Department of Communities' launch of the ACCO strategy in Fremantle. Aboriginal people across the state have consistently told us that to truly improve outcomes, Aboriginal communities must lead the way and that that is best achieved through community-based and family-led solutions. The new strategy aims to increase opportunities for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal children, families and communities. The strategy aligns with several priority reform areas and socio-economic targets identified within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and aims to empower Aboriginal children, families and communities to determine their own futures through ACCO-led service delivery.

ACCOs play an important role in delivering culturally secure services to Aboriginal people across WA. These services range from housing, child protection, disability support and youth justice to family and domestic violence. The state government has also allocated \$3.4 million to assist Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to progress towards targets in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap for the next four years, and I want to acknowledge the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for his leadership in this area. Grants from the fund will go towards delivering high-quality sustainable services for Aboriginal people and communities in the sectors of early childhood education and care, housing, health and disability.

The Department of Communities is committed to reform, particularly in the way that it commissions and delivers services to Aboriginal children, families, and communities. The 10-year strategy was developed by representatives from 11 ACCOs across the state, alongside the Departments of Communities and Finance. I thank all those who contributed. This strategy is the first step. To conclude, I quote ACCO strategy project working group co-chair Joslyn Eades-Tass, who said —

It is our responsibility to ensure a genuine collaborative approach at all levels with a commitment that we are all working together to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal children, families and communities in Western Australia.

This strategy is a foundation for enduring reform to ensure that Aboriginal people are at the core of our business and can determine the services that best fit their needs.

ANIMAL WELFARE AND TRESPASS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Restoration to Notice Paper — Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [12.21 pm]: I move —

That the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 be restored to the point it reached prior to its removal from the notice paper on Tuesday, 9 August 2022.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.21 pm]: I would like to make some comments on this bill, the length of time it has been sitting on the notice paper, and the fact that no progress has been made towards moving it through this place. As we know, we are seeking to restore the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 because it has sat here on the notice paper since August last year, without any further discussion.

Ms C.M. Rowe: There's only been a pandemic!

Mr R.S. LOVE: Sorry, there is some noise up the back and I am losing my train of thought.

This bill encompasses three pieces of legislation, including the Criminal Code, and it seeks to conflate two issues: trespass on land and animal welfare inspectors. This is of importance because at the moment there is a severe biosecurity risk in Western Australia and across the whole of Australia, which is why I am taking the time to make some comments about this bill and to highlight that it is a real slap in the face for regional WA that these matters have not been addressed in a more timely manner by this Parliament and this government.

I go back to 2017 when the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2017 was introduced by the Minister for Agriculture and Food. The bill was referred in 2018 to the Standing Committee on Legislation, and a report of that committee came back to say that some of the powers involved in the legislation were far too broad. The minister committed to making some key changes on the advice of the committee, and to remove some contentious clauses. In 2019 the Minister for Agriculture and Food—the same minister as we have now—declared that she believed that the current trespass laws were a sufficient deterrent. On 27 February 2019, the Premier contradicted that assertion and said that the laws needed to be reviewed. We know there was an ongoing situation at that time with vegan activists et cetera. There had been a trespass on land, and one would have thought that the whole matter should have taken on degree of urgency by that point, when the Premier himself had stated that it was an important matter that needed to be addressed. That is going back a number of years now.

In July 2019 the federal government introduced laws into federal Parliament that sought to curb some of those activities, and laws were also introduced in the federal Parliament in September of the same year to stop the carriage of certain information on the internet that was being used by activists to gain addresses of farms and other places where animals are processed.

These matters have been taken seriously in other jurisdictions. In August 2019 the New South Wales government implemented the toughest trespass laws in Australia at that time. Criminal activists who trespass on agricultural properties in New South Wales now face fines of up to \$220 000 for individuals, and \$440 000 for groups, with on-the-spot fines of \$1 000. In April 2019, Queensland introduced heavier fines for unauthorised entry of places where animals are kept, recognising that that is a breach of biosecurity. These are situations that have been dealt with in other jurisdictions and have been highlighted as important by this side of politics.

I turn now to a February 2019 press release by Hon Colin de Grussa, the shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food —

The Nationals WA agriculture spokesperson has questioned Minister Alannah MacTiernan’s latest foray into the industry where she bizarrely suggested the only way to stop animal activists from trespassing was stricter animal welfare controls.

Again, the minister is just not listening to the industry. She has different views that she wants to impose on the industry and she is not acting in the best interests of the industry in making sure that biosecurity is top of the agenda. The media release continues —

In the media last week, Ms MacTiernan was quoted as saying: “we do need further reform of our animal welfare system, which is based on only taking action where there is ‘suspicion of cruelty’—effectively encouraging animal activists to seek out such evidence.”

In other words, she was actually explaining away and excusing trespass by activists, and we know the type of activists they are. We have seen restaurants being invaded by people covered in blood. It is an invasive situation. There were actual incidents on farms at that time. The media release continues —

Mr de Grussa said rather than making excuses for animal activists who trespass onto the properties of law-abiding WA farmers, Ms MacTiernan should be condemning these radicals for their criminal behaviour.

“These activists don’t care about animals. They only care about their own misguided political agenda,” he said.

It is a misguided political agenda, and it should not be reinforced by the state. We have always held that this matter should be addressed separately. Animal welfare is separate from the matter of trespass on land. Another concern now, given the biosecurity situation, is the unannounced inspection of properties by inspectors with limited on-the-ground experience in agriculture. That could, in itself, lead to biosecurity threats for those properties. If they have inspected a number of properties —

Ms C.M. Rowe: Where’s your evidence for that? It’s a baseless allegation.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Member for Belmont!

Mr R.S. LOVE: Just let me finish.

If they have inspected a number of properties, they could be spreading disease risk. The disease risk at the moment is foot-and-mouth disease, which is a very real risk, but there are other diseases out there, such as lumpy skin disease, which does not sound like a very pleasant condition for animals, but it is also debilitating and leads to a situation in which they become unsaleable, and that would severely threaten livestock industries in Western Australia, especially in the north, where it would be a matter of some impact.

In spite of all the concerns, we know it took until June 2020 before the bill came to the house. I am looking at the second reading speech made in this house, which was read in by the Attorney General representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food. He stated —

The unlawful behaviour of these people is not acceptable to the WA community. There is a clear need to protect our agricultural sector, and in particular, regional farming families from the adverse economic, biosecurity and personal effects of this type of trespass.

Given that that was known in June 2020, I find it quite ridiculous that we still have not seen such legislation brought before the house in a timely manner since then. That was before the last election. The last time this matter was debated—I stand to be corrected, but this is what I found—was on 17 September 2020 in the parliamentary debate on the second reading of, at that stage, the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. On that day, extensive amendments were put on the notice paper by the member for Roe. Mr Rundle, the member for Roe, had a list of amendments about stopping animal trespass, not about biosecurity risks for Western Australia farms. To clarify, the Attorney General read the second reading speech and it was his bill. In reply to the speeches in the second reading debate, the Attorney General said, “We will not accept any amendments to this legislation.” He turned his back on listening to the member for Roe, and, instead of accepting those amendments that were on the notice paper, he pushed to take it to a vote in consideration in detail. Then, of course, the government voted against the amendments. The government was opposed to protecting Western Australian livestock owners in that case.

After that point, the bill did not progress. It could have progressed and there could have been at least some measure of protection, but, again, I reiterate that we believe that the bill should always have been two separate bills. There should have been a bill for animal trespass, which was one issue, and a bill around the general inspectors, which is another issue. Those issues needed to be addressed in both the concept and the current environment in terms of ensuring that there was protection for the biosecurity of farms. This issue was raised at the time and this was quite clear in the debate, right the way through, and in the second reading speech of the Attorney General. He knew that biosecurity was an issue and there was a real risk for Western Australian farmers in the current circumstances. We now have a disease risk of incalculable cost to the community should it come to pass that this disease comes into Western Australia. Farmers themselves are well enough aware of that.

I am looking here at a petition that was tabled way back in 2019 when the vegan activism was going on. The Legislative Council has a sponsoring member, and that member was Hon Colin Holt, but it was read in by Hon Colin de Grussa as the other member was absent. It read —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, are concerned about the significant economic impact of rural crime on primary producers and regional communities. Stock and equipment theft, rural trespass and illegal hunting are crimes of major concern to rural and isolated communities. As many rural families live and work on the same property, such crimes can generate tremendous fear and a sense of insecurity. There is also frustration that, even if successfully prosecuted, perpetrators of rural crimes only pay minimal fines.

We support a review of legislation that will increase protection of landholders against trespassing, hunting or fishing on private land without permission, theft, damage or destruction to livestock or property, including reviewing the adequacy of maximum penalties for trespassing or illegal hunting on private land, and the potential creation of an aggravated trespass offence where there is an enhanced biosecurity risk, intent to engage in stock theft, or the presence of hunting equipment.

We therefore ask the Legislative Council to review the above matters.

The rural community obviously understands and is concerned about the situation. The member for Roe, whom I spoke about earlier, has been a tremendous champion of regional Western Australia and the industry, which is prevalent throughout his electorate, from Esperance across to Wagin and up through Narrogin. It is a tremendous agricultural area, with a very large livestock industry and several abattoirs, especially down around the Katanning area. There is a real threat to the economy that he represents, which is understandable, even more so than my own electorate, which has substantial livestock industries. It is absolutely paramount to the future of his area. Understandably, he has been questioning and prosecuting these matters for some time.

Even back in August 2019, while we were waiting for legislation to come in, the member for Roe asked the Attorney General about the recently introduced legislation by the federal Liberal–National government and the recently implemented legislation by the New South Wales Liberal–National government, which was aimed at deterring criminal animal activists. He asked —

- (1) Given that other state and federal jurisdictions have managed to introduce legislation in a timely manner, why has this government failed to introduce any legislation to deter criminal activists?
- (2) Does the Attorney General concede that these Liberal–National governments care more about protecting the agricultural community than this Labor government?

I will not bother reading out the answer that the Attorney General gave. If anyone is interested, they can read *Hansard* of 7 August 2019 and see for themselves. It was a non-answer, but the last sentence is interesting and shows just how much care and concern there is from this government for these industries that are vital to our area. He finishes off by saying —

It will be effected by legislation that the member will be called upon to vote yes or no for, and he will line up behind me like a tame little duck come the day.

Mr Rundle then tried to ask a supplementary question. He said, “I have a supplementary question.” The Attorney General’s response: “Quack, quack!” He might have thought that was funny. I do not think the farmers of Western Australia thought that was funny, and even the Speaker called him to order for the first time. Mr Rundle went on to ask —

I remember the Attorney General’s outrage earlier this year. When will the Attorney General introduce this legislation; where is it?

To which the Attorney General replied, “When it is ready.”

In 2020, the legislation was finally ready. It was debated in September and then it just sat there. This current government reintroduced this bill, and I will quote from the second reading speech for the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. It states —

There is a need to protect our agricultural sector and, in particular, regional farming families from the adverse economic, biosecurity and personal effects of this type of trespass.

Again, in 2021, when the bill was introduced, the government used the same words but where is the heart, where is the concern, and where is the emphasis that we would expect to see on these matters if the government actually cared about biosecurity and ensuring that not only the Western Australian industry, but also the Australian livestock industry are kept safe. Once the continent has an outbreak, it will affect markets and everybody. It will have a real impact on industries right across our nation, which is why this is something of such a grave concern.

I must put on record my appreciation of the gravity that has been attached to the actions of our federal leader, Hon David Littleproud, in pushing for enhanced biosecurity measures throughout the country. The current government has belatedly taken on some measures, which should have been put in place when he first called for them weeks before. It is only by good luck, in my view, with all the travel and commerce and meat products et cetera going backwards and forwards, that we have so far not had a disease outbreak that could potentially lead to a wipe-out of our industries.

I saw a newspaper article that stated a person had tried to import a hamburger into Australia. I think it said that the fine was around about \$2 000 and described it as a “whopper” of a fine. A \$2 000 fine is nothing compared with the damage that would be done to Western Australia and Australia’s agricultural sector and indeed its broader economic base if there were an outbreak. I am not sure that is a sufficient penalty for such a careless and almost indifferent act, to bring in meat that could be contaminated in that way. It is complete selfishness. To me, that is not an appropriate fine; it is not an appropriate response.

We want to make it very clear to people that our biosecurity is important. We would like to make it very clear to the government that we consider biosecurity very important, and we would like to make it very clear that we do not agree with conflating these two issues. Indeed, increasing the potential risk to biosecurity by having inspectors showing up on people’s properties without there being a guarantee that they will not be bringing on board any diseases or any increased disease risk is entirely inappropriate at this time. We are so very disappointed when we see things like foot-and-mouth disease on our doorstep. We have the other disease I mentioned—lumpy skin disease—which is also a great threat to agriculture right throughout this nation. In the bee industry we have varroa mite, which can also cause tremendous loss to not just the honey industry, but also other industries that rely upon those pollinators in order to get their fruit to market.

We know that any competent agriculture minister would have been pushing to have this bill put through over a number of years—from 2019, when that petition highlighting the biosecurity risks was first brought in, right through to now. Even though the New South Wales, Queensland and federal governments have acted, our government has sat on its hands in this regard. Any competent agriculture minister would have been pushing the cabinet and the Attorney General to make sure that this was a priority for Western Australia and this Parliament. They would have been seeking to have this matter debated both in the Parliament and in the wider community. A competent minister would not have sought to downplay the risk to our industry by saying that foot-and-mouth disease would result in cheaper meat and milk. That comment exhibits the complete dissociation of the minister’s world view from the people involved in the industry. The two things are completely separate. I would like to know whether the agriculture minister has been on the phone making some sort of advance to the Attorney General to ensure that this bill is debated in a timely manner.

I still put on the record our great concern about bringing those two completely separate aspects into one bill, about the continuing risk to this state’s biosecurity because of the minister’s actions and inactions, and about the minister’s lack of concern for the industry. There is a complete lack of care. This bill has been sitting here for a year. It has not been touched. The government has not moved on this. It has done nothing.

Ms C.M. Rowe: How insulting for those workers!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Mr R.S. LOVE: The government has done nothing to prosecute this matter in all this time. In fact, since 2019 we have not seen a bill successfully move through the Parliament and we have not seen the government start to take on board the concerns of industry and the concerns of the opposition about the structure of the bill. We are happy to debate the two matters, but conflating the two makes both bills weaker. Not only has the government failed to listen to reasoned argument about the need to split the bill; it has done nothing to advance the bill in all this time.

We will not be opposing the motion today, but we do continue to oppose the conflation of those two issues and we continue to question the commitment to the protection of our agriculture industry by this government, this Attorney General and this Minister for Agriculture and Food.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [12.44 pm] — in reply: I am happy to close this debate on the restoration motion. I do not want to get into a debate on the issues around foot-and-mouth disease. Very clearly, foot-and-mouth disease is a biosecurity concern for Australia; there is no denying that. In fact, I point out that in the last state budget an additional \$15 million was committed to enhancing early warning and detection systems for responding to threats such as foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease. Biosecurity continues to be an important matter for governments across Australia, including the federal government. The state government is very committed to working with the federal government on these matters. We recognise that protecting our biosecurity is critical for the agriculture industry and other related industries, and we are budgeting for that. I highlight the \$15 million.

I also remind the member about the opposition's record in government on the agriculture portfolio, as the Premier referred to yesterday in question time. When it comes to funding departments, like the agriculture department and others, that are there to work with and enhance the interests of primary producers, the record of those opposite is very poor; in fact, it is appalling. It was this government that restored, through subsequent budgets after coming to power, the funding of the department of agriculture and food, after the slicing and cutting by those opposite. The member raises a whole range of matters about this government and its commitment to primary industries. I remind the member that this government has restored budget allocations to the department of agriculture and food and this government has made budget investments into a whole raft of measures focused on protecting the biodiversity of the state of Western Australia and, indeed, the nation, and we will continue to do so. I think the member's words are very hollow when he claims that this government has done nothing and that this government does not care. It is absolute rubbish, quite frankly. The record stands very starkly in contrast to the record of those opposite.

It is very interesting that the member raises these matters, knowing that in the previous government—he was there—when there were members of the National Party in the Barnett cabinet, they failed to represent the agricultural interests of the farmers of the state. They failed. In fact, as the member is well aware, there was a cavalcade of ministers for agriculture in the member's term of government. In eight and a half years there were six, from memory. Some of them were of the member's party and some of them were of the Liberal Party. The record of those opposite in supporting the agriculture sector is very poor, yet the member continues to attack the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Alannah MacTiernan. He will no doubt do it again this afternoon in private members' business, and he will be reminded again of the record of those opposite when in government on the funding of this very important portfolio area.

I am very pleased that I represent the agriculture minister in this place, because I am aware of the hard work that she continues to do. The fact that we are restoring this legislation means that we do not at all resile from the fact that the protection of biosecurity is an important matter, and that matter will be progressed. The motion seeks to restore to the notice paper the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, which the member has indicated he is opposed to.

Question put and passed.

MINING AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)** on behalf of Mr W.J. Johnston (Minister for Mines and Petroleum), and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Leader of the House.

Second Reading

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [12.50 pm]: On behalf of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Mining Amendment Bill 2022 amends the Mining Act 1978 to improve regulation and regulatory practice by streamlining administrative processes and safeguarding the security of mineral titles and licences. This bill supports the government's vision for Western Australia to continue to be recognised as a world leader in responsible resource development, underpinned by robust and adaptable legislative frameworks. The bill provides for three key reforms to the Mining Act, which I will now summarise.

The first reform provides for the adoption of the Geocentric Datum of Australia 2020, or GDA2020. GDA2020 is Australia's new geometric datum that is progressively replacing the old GDA94. The transition to GDA2020 is necessary to maintain the accuracy of location information. This will ensure latitude and longitude coordinates are accurately aligned with global navigation satellite systems that support in-vehicle navigation, automated mining operations, and surveying. Maintaining the accuracy of location information is critical to the security of the state's mineral titles system and to support modern resources sector activity. To enable the transition to GDA2020, amendments to the Mining Act will enable the exploration licence grid to remain constant as it is now, at GDA94, while its location on the surface of the land will be described using GDA2020. This will remove practical and administrative issues resulting from the overlay of different grids. The amendments are forward looking and flexible, recognising that the continued movement of the earth's surface will require updates to the datum to be applied in the future. The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety will be able to adopt future changes to the datum through regulation, rather than legislative amendment, seamlessly securing the state's mineral titles system.

The second area of reform allows lease applications to be made without first marking out the land when applicants cannot access land through circumstances outside of their control. The Mining Act provides that a holder of a prospecting licence, exploration licence or retention licence may apply for a mining lease or general purpose lease over the land that is the subject of the existing licence. The licence holder must mark out the area of a proposed mining lease or general purpose lease prior to lodging an application and before the underlying licence expires. However, the ability for a licence holder to apply for a mining lease or general purpose lease over all, or part of, their existing licence is at risk when circumstances outside of the licence holder's control prevent access to the land. This was identified during the lockdowns and travel restrictions put in place as part of the state of emergency declared during COVID-19.

The bill proposes to amend the Mining Act to allow an applicant to first submit an application for the lease before marking out the land. This will preserve the licence holder's ability to apply for a lease over the existing licence area and maintain the security of the state's mineral titles system. Application of the new provisions are limited to exceptional circumstances as set out in the bill. These include a natural disaster, civil disturbance, industrial dispute or state of emergency. When an applicant's ability to access the land is prevented by any of the circumstances set out in the bill, the applicant may submit an application for the lease without first marking out the land. An application must be supported by a statement and evidence specifying why it is not possible to access the land for marking out purposes. The applicant's evidence must be sufficient to satisfy the mining registrar of the exceptional circumstances, otherwise the applicant must mark out the land. Once circumstances no longer prevent access to the land, the applicant will be required to mark out the land as soon as practicable, or within a time specified by the mining registrar. The new provisions will apply only under exceptional circumstances. The marking out of the land must still be completed before the lease is granted.

The third area of reform will enable fees to be prescribed for lodging an objection against a mining tenement application. Unlike other application types under the Mining Act, there is currently no legislative provision that allows for a fee to be imposed for lodgement of objections. These amendments will align objection applications with other applications and actions under the Mining Act by enabling a prescribed fee to be applied. The amendments will not only align objection applications with other applications under the Mining Act, but also establish consistency with comparable jurisdictions when there is a fee for lodging objections, such as with the State Administrative Tribunal. The amendments do not propose any fee amount, only for a fee to be set. Any setting of a fee will require an amendment to the Mining Regulations 1981 and be subject to consultation with stakeholders.

Finally, this bill contains a minor amendment to designated tenement contact provisions. This amendment will increase the scope to give information, documents and notifications electronically, supporting the government's digital transformation and streamlining of services.

In conclusion, the key outcome of this bill is that it will maintain security of the state's mineral titles system by allowing seamless responses to changes in circumstances affecting the resources sector. This will provide greater certainty to the resources sector, allowing it to continue to grow to the benefit of the state and Australia.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.S. Love**.

BUSH FIRES AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading

Resumed from 9 August.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.58 pm]: I rise to make a very brief contribution to the debate in support of the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends sections of the Bush Fires Act 1954 to instate what is recognised as the nationally agreed Australian Fire Danger Rating System—AFDRS—and the corresponding fire behaviour index and thresholds. The feedback that I have had at a local level and from some key stakeholders is that this bill is welcome. We hope that it will be in place in good time and that

the communications around these changes will be properly resourced so that it can be properly communicated to the public. From the shadow's consultation and briefings and the information that we have received as an opposition, I understand that how this bill has been communicated was probably one of the only issues raised by stakeholders, including the Western Australian Local Government Association.

I have had feedback on what the bill does, which is to simplify and update the former McArthur rating system for fire risk categories. It means that going forward we will have in place a system that better informs the community and the state about the risks associated with fire. It is particularly important in this state because the old McArthur model picked up only two different types of fuel types to calculate the fire danger index here in Western Australia: forest and grass. We know that with the varied landscape of Western Australia, it is important that we also consider other fuel loads that feed into the fire danger index. The new model recognises eight different fuel levels.

A good example of how the former system worked and how such issues were missed is the Margaret River fire of 2011. Under the fire danger index, the fuel load was recognised simply as grass as opposed to coastal heath, which has varying challenges; the fire index rating for that fire was just 2 when the challenge was significantly greater. The new system recognises, for example, spinifex in the north of the state, which poses a real risk to property and is a unique challenge. They are important measures. I understand that the challenge will be to ensure that this legislation is adopted and implemented in good time going forward, given that Western Australia is the only state that requires a legislative instrument for making such changes to the fire ratings.

I want to touch on a concern that has been raised at a local level in the City of Busselton. The City of Busselton oversees 16 brigades and 550 volunteers. The area is in a high fire risk zone and the efforts in relation to bushfire mitigation are quite significant. Until last financial year, the cost of the role of the bushfire risk mitigation officer was split 50–50 split between local government and the state government. I appreciate a lot of planning work goes into bushfire mitigation. The mitigation activity fund funds activity, and grants can be applied for under that fund, but there is not state funding for the significant planning activity. Recently, the City of Busselton and the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River worked together with the allocation of a bushfire mitigation officer and have invested in this role to see a reduction in the fuel load across the region. Local governments already invest significantly in roadside burns. They invest in the bushfire risk mitigation officer role, the community and emergency services as well. There is some concern that going forward, local governments will have to take on fully investing in the bushfire mitigation officer role without state government funding support.

That challenge has been raised not only at a local level by the City of Busselton. It has also been recognised by the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River as it tries to tackle the important task of reducing fuel loads. They have shared this responsibility together, but I certainly urge the government and the minister in particular to reconsider cutting funding for that important role of bushfire mitigation officer, appreciating that more costs will be borne by ratepayers given the importance of the role going forward as well. We know that the important consideration here is that the city has more volunteer brigades and volunteers than many other local governments. It also has a significant fuel load that it is challenged with trying to contain, and it has more assets at risk and more hazards that require management than is the case in other local government areas, such as the management of Meelup Regional Park.

We saw recently and earlier this year just what the risk is at Meelup Regional Park. In January this year, there was a significant fire; the Eagle Bay bushfire threatened the Eagle Bay town site, Meelup and Cape Naturaliste. That underlines the significance of the City of Busselton's investment and the challenges that it faces in the fire mitigation efforts. That fire illustrated and highlighted the great role of our volunteers and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. I think that fire and how that fire was contained illustrated a few things. The fire broke out in early January this year. I understand that over 220 hectares was burnt in that town site area. Residents of the Eagle Bay area and surrounds were awakened in the early hours of the morning by a DFES alert. We saw an incredible effort by volunteers and City of Busselton and DFES officers all working together to contain what was a very significant blaze. I think it was a really good example of how far we have come as a community in these efforts. Quite clearly, our volunteer teams work, and we have seen how well they work on the ground with the DFES officers. That fire was ultimately contained.

There was so much support from neighbouring businesses, such as Eagle Bay Brewing, Wise Wine and Meelup Farmhouse. An extraordinary effort was undertaken to contain that fire, which was really out of control and was a significant threat. It took an enormous effort, but the outcome in that case was very positive. The great role of the prescribed burning that had been undertaken the season before, as I understand it, was also highlighted—as well as some of the work that had been undertaken in terms of bushfire mitigation and prescribed burns in the Dunsborough area. Effectively, in the words of many fire officers on the ground, this had averted something that could have been much more significant. I think it illustrated a few things such as the great effort of our volunteers, the outstanding effort of our DFES officers, how they worked well together locally in the Capes region and also the importance of ensuring that there is a continued and concerted effort to reduce fuel loads in high fire-risk zones such as in the Capes region. This is exactly why I urge the government to reconsider the cuts to bushfire mitigation funding. I also underline the support for prescribed burning going forward, and the important role that it has in mitigating more serious impacts when fire inevitably strikes a region.

Just in terms of my thanks in relation to that fire, I should also mention FAWNA Inc and Emergency Animal Support Evacuation WA, which also played an important role in supporting the welfare of animals in response to a significant threat to their landscape. I will leave my comments there, and as a member of the opposition I will illustrate that we will also be supportive of this bill going forward.

MS E.J. KELSBIE (Warren–Blackwood) [1.13 pm]: I rise today to contribute to the second reading debate on the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022. The bill forms part of the government's response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. The royal commission was established in February 2020 in response to the extreme bushfire season of 2019–20 which resulted in loss of life, property, wildlife and environmental destruction. The commission examined coordination, preparedness for, response to and recovery from disasters as well as improving resilience; adapting to changing climatic conditions and mitigating the impact of natural disasters. The inquiry considered the legal framework for commonwealth involvement in responding to national emergencies. The commission's final report outlined a series of recommendations, and the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022 will ensure WA is able to instate the nationally agreed and consistent Australian Fire Danger Rating System and corresponding fire behaviour index thresholds recommended by the report.

In my electorate of Warren–Blackwood, we unfortunately know the impacts of bushfire all too well. I have never had to pack up my house before, or think about where I am going to take my animals—my cat and my dog—but recently that is exactly what I had to do. I have never been so pleased to hear helicopters and planes flying over Denmark—something I thought I would never say. The community came together—volunteers, staff and local police—to make sure that the town was safe and actually saved. Looking at the photographs now, it brings a bit of a tear to my eye and goosebumps. We came really close. Whilst the fire kicked off in Denmark, it kicked off in Bridgetown as well. Meeting the locals and the volunteer fireys was really emotional. I have actually joined a bush fire brigade as a volunteer ancillary. I have joined the Ocean Beach Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade. I have roped my partner in as well. I would encourage everybody to play their part in our local bush fire brigades. They are always needing more volunteers.

Recent bushfires in Margaret River, Manjimup, Denmark and Bridgetown, as well as others across the great southern and south west, tore through our forests, farms and bushland, putting homes, buildings and lives at risk. We had multiple incidents across Warren–Blackwood and other parts of the state occurring at once. Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Darren Klemm highlighted that the state had never seen this many emergency warnings at one time. Our emergency services responders were working long days and nights to keep our communities safe. This included volunteers from volunteer bushfire services in the Shires of Denmark, Plantagenet, Bridgetown–Greenbushes, Nannup, Manjimup, Donnybrook–Balingup, Augusta–Margaret River and Boyup Brook. That is pretty much the whole of my electorate. State emergency service volunteers from Bridgetown SES, Denmark SES, Gnowangerup SES, Manjimup SES, Mt Barker SES and Walpole SES also played a part. Local government councillors and staff, police, St John Ambulance, community resource centres and animal welfare organisations all pulled together—as they do across the state when fire hits.

We were lucky enough in Denmark to have a really proactive Country Women's Association, which made sure everybody was fed and watered. In small towns, locals wear many different hats. The state was on fire, and everybody pitched in to do what they could. I am really proud to share that Edwin Bland, from the Bridgetown Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, is a finalist for this year's Murray Lang Bush Fire Service Award. This award is the highest individual honour one can receive as a bushfire service volunteer. It is presented to a volunteer who has gone above and beyond what is expected of them and made an exceptional contribution in the last 12 months. I give massive congratulations to Edwin on being selected as a WA Fire and Emergency Services Awards finalist. I wish him the best of luck, and the winners will be announced at the WA FES Awards gala dinner in September.

Just last month I joined Minister Dawson and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA Commissioner, Darren Klemm, in Greenbushes to present Talison Lithium with a certificate of distinction. Talison runs its own bush fire brigade to support volunteer emergency services groups in the region. Its staff were among the volunteer firefighters who helped bring February's Bridgetown blaze under control. It was amazing to meet the volunteers and hear their stories, and receive some tips on how to make my cottage even further prepared for fires. Talison offered accommodation to emergency response personnel so that they could stay close to the fireground. It provided use of its water cart so fire crews could reload supplies in the field. The Bridgetown blaze was just one of three big bushfires supported by Talison during the recent high threat period.

I am really proud to be part of the McGowan Labor government in continuing to improve the state's ability to respond. We committed \$11 million in this year's budget to secure WA's first large air tanker to be based in WA during bushfire season. From December to March each year, there has never been a large air tanker exclusively for WA, with our state previously relying on available aircraft through the national aerial firefighting centre. I know firsthand that people who were on the ground when these fires were blazing were so thankful that the LAT was available to us and that it came swiftly.

Our government has also committed \$15.9 million to upgrade the Emergency WA website to ensure that critical information is more easily accessible in emergency situations, and \$3.1 million for the bushfire framework review. On the ground, we have made a number of local investments, including in a new Isuzu 4.4 broadacre tanker for

the Forest Hill Bush Fire Brigade. I had the absolute pleasure to be on site to hand over that vehicle. To see the pride of the volunteers when they got that new equipment and drove it out of the car park was outstanding. This is a world-class firefighting vehicle that forms part of the McGowan Labor government's \$140 million investment in frontline appliances. It is a primary firefighting appliance for regional firefighting brigades, with the latest safety features to protect our crews. It has a number of new and improved safety features, greater off-road handling and more efficient firefighting capabilities. The state government is not only supplying brigades with new appliances, but also has worked hard to redesign the operational fleet, with input from volunteers who use them. This will ensure that each appliance better meets brigade operational needs and is suited to local conditions and terrain. It is important to our government that the appliances suit the needs of Western Australian firefighters. Additionally, much of the manufacturing can be done in this state.

Earlier this month, we announced the recipients of the mitigation activity fund grants program, or MAF. The program supports local governments through endorsed bushfire risk management plans to treat bushfire risks in their communities. Across Warren–Blackwood, we are supporting the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River through a \$499 000 contribution to undertake 33 treatments, the Shire of Bridgetown–Greenbushes with \$160 850 for 19 treatments, and the Shire of Manjimup with \$289 320 to complete 36 treatments. In the 2021–22 round 2 allocation announced in November last year, we committed \$202 450 to enable the Shire of Nannup to undertake 14 treatments. This is a great program. All local governments are eligible to apply for a grant once they have a bushfire risk mitigation plan endorsed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' Office of Bushfire Risk Management. The activities undertaken by local governments through the MAF include building firebreaks, reducing fuel loads and carrying out hazard reduction burns, making our communities safer from, and more resilient to, bushfire. The latest MAF funding announcements are on top of the water tank funding that was provided last year. The Warren–Blackwood bush fire brigades in Porongurup, Kendenup, Smith Brook, Alexander, Kudardup and Wallcliffe all received funding to install water tanks. Every little bit helps.

The McGowan Labor government understands that this is something we need to attack from all angles—better prevention, fit-for-purpose equipment and whole-of-state solutions like the light air tanker. The Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022 is another part of the response by looking at the systems and processes our state uses and improve them. We all understand that climate change is having a major impact on our state, our country and our planet. Climate change is influencing the frequency and severity of dangerous bushfire conditions through changes to temperature, environmental moisture, weather patterns and fuel conditions. Significant changes have been observed in recent decades to more dangerous bushfire weather conditions. It makes sense for WA to move towards a more modern system that will bring us in line with the rest of Australia. The new model utilises modern scientific models to more accurately predict the way in which a fire is likely to behave, and will be easier to understand for government agencies, businesses, industry and, most importantly, the community.

The new model draws upon over 60 years of scientific advances in the field. By endorsing the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022 and coming on board with the Australian Fire Danger Rating System, we will ensure that, for the first time, all state and territory governments will use a single, unified Australian fire danger rating system. This is incredibly important for several reasons. Perhaps most importantly, it will ensure consistent, straightforward messaging across Australia on the next level of fire risk and action required. Simple, easy to understand and consistent messages help keep people safe. Fires do not recognise where one state ends and a territory border begins. Our messaging will now be consistent with the rest of Australia.

To close, I would like to reiterate four important points that Minister Whitby raised when speaking on the bill. He talked about how public safety will be improved by adopting the Australian Fire Danger Rating System and corresponding fire behaviour index thresholds. Firstly, it will improve the scientific accuracy behind danger predictions. This will provide benefits such as more accurate fire danger information, increased confidence in predictions, improved management outcomes and reduced economic losses. Secondly, it will improve the way in which fire danger is communicated. This will provide benefits such as having a more informed public, which will result in fewer lives lost, less property damage and reduced community recovery costs. Thirdly, it will provide government and industry with better decision-making tools. This will provide benefits such as better proactive fire management, better firefighting outcomes, improved community safety and reduced over-warning costs. Finally, it will be a truly national system. This will provide benefits such as reduced development costs, better resource sharing, less chance of public confusion and improved national outcomes. I encourage all members of the chamber to support the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022 and to seriously consider joining one of their local bush fire brigades and to support them in any way that they can.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.27 pm]: I rise to make a contribution on the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022, and I am very pleased to do so. I like to make a contribution whenever there is an opportunity to address the issue of bushfire, because this issue is incredibly pertinent to my electorate. As I am sure members appreciate, the Wooroloo bushfires basically burnt from one end of my electorate to the other on 1 February. My community is on the front line of the impacts of climate change. We live the impacts of climate change every day, so I think it is always important to make a contribution. Every time I do, I try to take a different angle. I will try to do that again today and hopefully have something a little fresh and interesting to say.

The bill forms parts of the Western Australian government's response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. Two recommendations focused on expediting the development and implementation of a new Australian fire danger rating system, and another recommendation focused very much on the delivery of education to make sure that the public understands what the fire danger rating system will mean for them. That was very important for us in Swan Hills during the Wooroloo fires. This bill will instate a nationally agreed fire danger rating system and some corresponding fire behaviour index thresholds, reflecting the fact that climate change is undoubtedly impacting both the frequency and severity of bushfire conditions both here and in other regions of the world. It is undoubtedly influencing temperature, environmental moisture, weather patterns and fuel conditions. There have been significant changes in recent decades and things are much more dangerous than they were, but the system we have at the moment is based on science that is over 60 years old, so it really is in need of a refresh. The new rating system will use modern scientific models to provide greater accuracy in predicting how fires are likely to behave and will make it easier for everyone to understand what it means for them. This system is a key component in addressing the lessons we have learnt in recent years. In particular, we know that consistent and straightforward messaging is key for the safety of our communities, and that was brought home to me very poignantly during the Wooroloo fire.

The process of recovery from the Wooroloo fire is a long and enduring one, and I think it will continue for many years to come. One key thing that has continued through our recovery process is our community recovery dinners. They are held monthly and everyone comes together. They are fabulous events. They are sponsored by some incredible local organisations. At each dinner, there is a different theme, if you like. There are guest presentations on how we can help our native flora and fauna to recover and how to prepare property in a mitigation sense. Commissioner Klemm and I have attended several now and provided an update from the state government's perspective on our recovery initiatives.

Just before the winter recess, I attended a community recovery dinner with Assistant Commissioner Craig Waters and Deputy Commissioner Melissa Pexton, and Superintendent Peter Sutton from the metropolitan south east region. We were invited to the dinner to provide an overview of the recently released *AFAC independent operational review: A review of the management of the Wooroloo fire of February 2021*. The independent review was initiated so that we could learn lessons from the Wooroloo fire. It was quite a unique fire in its severity and the speed with which it tore through my electorate. There were some really significant lessons to be learnt about how prepared the community was, the immediate response and, as the event endured, how agencies and community organisations continued to work together. Indeed, some lessons were learnt about recovery, too. It is very important that we take the time to learn those lessons.

As I say, I would like to acknowledge the significant work done by the independent review team that was appointed. It was a panel of three: Mr David Nugent from Parks Victoria, Assistant Commissioner Steve Yorke from the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and Susan Davies, who was the local community representative. I know Sue through her incredible involvement in the Bullsbrook Residents and Ratepayers Association and the Bullsbrook Community Garden. She is truly community minded. She has an extensive professional background, as she was a nurse, so she has dealt with some crises in her time. She had a very measured, thoughtful and thorough approach. Having spoken to her about her experiences through this process, I know that she did a wonderful job, so I really want to acknowledge her. It would be intimidating, as a constituent, to engage in such a formal process that involves so much emotion and complexity and is so important to so many people. I just wanted to acknowledge the work of the independent review team.

The report is a very interesting read. It is long, but it underscores the important role of first responders and the many organisations that both contribute to the immediate incident and assist with the aftermath. Many organisations in my community are still working to provide support, and I just want to thank them.

The report also underscores the severity of the impacts of this event on my community. There is quite a lot of trauma in Swan Hills. It is funny how it is coming out more now—now that we have had a bit of time and space away from the immediate event. I have been advised that there has been a bit of an uptick in the number of community members seeking access to mental health supports, so there is quite a bit of trauma. When we were invited to this dinner—the event preceding it commemorated the one-year anniversary of the fire—we decided not to present this information because it may have been quite emotionally difficult for some people who nonetheless wanted to come together. We thought that we would give plenty of notice that we were going to talk about the independent report so that those who wanted to hear about the fire could come, but those who wanted to stay away because they were still traumatised by the event and it was still too fresh for them would have the opportunity to sit that particular dinner out. There were also some people who were not able to make it, so for that reason I thought I would take the opportunity today to discuss the report, the feedback I had from my community about the report and some of the perspectives that were offered into the conduct of the report. For those who do not have the time to read what is quite a lengthy tome, this will give them a little bit of a *Brodie's Notes*, if you like, on the report.

I want to thank all the constituents and organisations that provided submissions to the process. The lived experience is really important to share, so I want to thank all those constituents who provided submissions. I know that a lot of people have subsequently chosen to publish their submissions, and I think it is great that they were willing to do that and have done so. Thank you to everybody who provided feedback.

The report begins with an overview of the incident and runs through its commencement on 1 February and how it ran through the hills. It started in Wooroloo. It is called the Wooroloo fire, but relatively little damage was done in Wooroloo. The vast majority of the 86 homes that were lost were in Gidgegannup. The fire proceeded through Brigadoon and then jumped Great Northern Highway into Upper Swan and threatened the community of Ellenbrook. That was very scary. It was scary for everybody. The fire got to the boundary of my neighbour's place. I had to evacuate. In a suburb of 40 000 people, the fire threat was very real for all those people. It was a huge suburban area to think about evacuating and making sure that everyone was fire responsive. It was an incredibly stressful time. The report goes through the progress, I suppose, of the bushfire. It then refers to pre-incident actions, what has been done about community preparedness and how operationally ready the various agencies that responded are. It also discusses the response itself and the management of the fire.

I debriefed with every single one of my fire brigades in the aftermath and all of them said that it was a challenging fire to respond to. No sooner had they made a plan than they found that the fire front had moved on so much further. It really did progress incredibly quickly.

[Quorum formed.]

Ms J.J. SHAW: As I was saying, the first section of the report runs through incident response. Our firemen and women and the various other first responders who turned out did an absolutely amazing job. It was quite emotional for me. As soon as we were allowed back onto the fireground, the former captain of the West Gidgegannup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, Beau Algeri, who is a great guy, took me on a tour through the fireground. The place was still smouldering; it was absolutely crazy. I was talking to him about what had happened and how close the fire came to my house. He said to me, "That was my brigade. We were there on Campersic Road; we held the fire at bay there." It was quite emotional to know that it was my local brigade and friends of mine who had stood there and defended my home. As I said, incident response was absolutely fabulous. The first recommendation in the report is interesting. It is —

That DFES lead the development of a dedicated purpose-built, appropriately equipped Multi-Agency Incident Control Centre to be built in or around the Perth Hills to deal with fires and other emergency incidents in that area.

I think it is a very valid recommendation, and the government has noted that recommendation, but it is not so simple. People should be aware of the terrain of the Perth hills, the geography of the place. It is 100 kilometres from Bullsbrook up my way, down to Serpentine–Jarrahdale. The whole area is an incredibly long, thin populated strip. There are lots of inland communities that spur off the north–south axis into Bedfordale, Roleystone, Kalamunda, Darlington, Mundaring, Gidgegannup and Bullsbrook. If there is just one centre, where do we put it in the hills? Are we sure that it is going to be the best possible facility? It is probably worth thinking about what we can do with existing facilities to make sure that their capability to respond to incidents is deployable right the way across the scarp. The state government made the single largest investment for a standalone volunteer bush fire brigade facility at the West Gidgegannup brigade. It was \$1.3 million for a state-of-the-art facility that has fabulous incident control capability and radio rooms. I do not know whether one facility is the right idea. We probably have to look at how we leverage the assets we currently have at those various spots along the scarp to make sure we have a fabulous incident response capability in the hills.

I appreciate that I am a little short on time today. There is just one other point I would like to talk to on recommendations 7 and 8, which are about reviewing vehicle control points and the use of restricted access permits. Those recommendations were accepted by government. It includes the establishment of a road-clearing capability. One of the things that came up the most during the Wooroloo bushfire from my constituents was that people were very frustrated about not being able to go back into their properties once they had left. There seemed to be a bit of inconsistency about vehicle control points. A lot of people who had stayed were then not able to leave to get fuel and water. They did not have access to power or food and, if they left to acquire those things, they were not permitted to go back. I want to say a couple of things about that. People really need to understand what it takes to prepare to stay. You cannot just say you are going to stay for a day or two. If someone is prepared to stay and defend, these incidents may endure for many days and people need to understand what that means in preparation of their properties. That has really been brought home for us as a community. I think it is very appropriate that a review be undertaken. Page 20 of the report talks about the experiences of residents who remained. I would very much encourage people to review that and consider their own fire preparation plans and ability to leave in light of the findings and recommendations of this report.

Finally, I want to speak to one other aspect for which there were no findings or recommendations made but there is a fairly extensive amount of discussion given in the report. It is on the animal welfare aspects of this incident. Thankfully, there was no loss of human life or serious injury, and the vast majority of domestic pets, horses and farm animals were evacuated to safe areas. Of those animals that remained, many survived with minor injuries. Unfortunately, a number of animals had to be euthanized and, obviously, there was a devastating impact on native flora and fauna. This was the first incident during which the *Animal welfare in emergencies: State support plan* was enacted. It provides for the care of animals at evacuation centres and facilitated the establishment of a response

team located at a dedicated emergency hospital that was set up. It also allowed for the deployment of vets and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development personnel into the incident area to check on animal welfare—to make sure that animals that had remained had been fed and, unfortunately, to deal with any animals that might be in difficulty as soon as possible. There were dozens of local volunteer veterinarians, veterinary nurses and wildlife carers who managed to get fast and safe access to the fire zone to attend to animal welfare. Over 150 veterinary days were spent assisting affected animals and over 750 veterinary assessments of animals were completed prior to landowners being given clearance to return.

When people are fearful about returning because they are worried about what is going to happen to their animals when they reach an evacuation centre, this plan meant that there were mechanisms available for evacuees and their animals to be taken care of. For those who evacuated and were worried about the animals that were left behind, this plan ensured that those animals received urgent veterinary care and were fed and watered. That all encourages people to make better quality decisions in response to fire incidents. No doubt there are lessons to be learnt but the mere existence of this plan made a real difference.

I want to congratulate Australian Veterinary Association WA president, Dr Garnett Hall, who coordinated, led and represented the veterinarians who were involved. He and I released an owl together that had been injured in the fires. Again, it was very emotional. It cannot have been easy for those personnel. They had to make hard decisions about animals. I want to thank them for their contributions. I want to congratulate the state government on implementing the animal welfare in emergencies response plan. It is vital. On that note, I draw my remarks to a close.

Visitors — Warwick Senior High School

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Members, before I put the question, I would like to acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery the student leaders from Warwick Senior High School, which is dear to my own heart but is now ably represented by the member for Kingsley.

Debate Resumed

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [1.48 pm]: I rise today in support of the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022. This bill forms part of the Western Australian government's response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. Recommendation 13.1 is about expediting the development and implementation of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System. Recommendation 13.2 is about the government delivering education about fire danger and the rating system, understanding the danger involved with the fires and the appropriate actions to be taken depending on the rating system. The frequency of bushfires and the magnitude and intensity of bushfires is getting worse, and the current legislation is based on evidence from 60 years back. Things have changed. We have had the opportunity to review various bushfires, see what could have been done and learn from science to implement new systems. For instance, the current system takes into consideration only temperature and rainfall and comes to a conclusion on the rating when, in reality, there are many more considerations such as wind, wind speed, moisture in the area and various other aspects that could allow us to more accurately determine the risk and the rating, and particularly the actions to be taken.

This bill will do four things. It will improve the accuracy of the determination of the fire danger; improve the communication standards so that there is consistency to keep people well informed to take actions; have a better decision-making tool to help people, businesses, agencies and government to take appropriate action; and be a truly national system. I take this opportunity to thank the volunteers across the state. The member for Kalamunda mentioned that there are 19 000 volunteers in this particular sector across 566 fire brigades. Being a general practitioner for more than half my life I have always been proud of saving lives, but these volunteers save lives and livelihoods. I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them for their contribution.

I heard from the Minister for Police about the investment the government is making in its latest recruitment to fight bushfires. He mentioned that the latest trucks are worth \$250 000, which is nothing when it comes to saving somebody's life or livelihood. The government is making that investment. More importantly, this government is acknowledging science, climate change and the changes that need to be made to prevent bushfires happening in the future. I recently visited Willetton Senior High School and interacted with six different classrooms in that high school. Without doubt, the biggest topic that the young students brought up with me was climate change and renewable energy. We need to do more than that. I support this bill and thank you for the opportunity, Madam Acting Speaker.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Environment) [1.52 pm] — in reply: I will respond and conclude the contribution of members to this debate on the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022. I begin by thanking all members from all parties who had something to say on this important legislation over the last couple of days. There is a lot of commentary about the standard and quality of debate and the tenor of proceedings in this chamber, but I think we can all agree that the debate has been conducted in a very worthwhile way. The contributions of all members have been significant, worthwhile and well thought out. Everyone who stood and made their contribution did so with something meaningful to say, with the intent, as we all have, to make Western Australia safer. It was great to see bipartisan support. A number of opposition members also spoke. Opposition members, at times, raised

certain issues that were of interest and concern to them, but every opposition member also indicated that they intended to support this legislation. I welcome the support, commentary and quality of debate from around the chamber on this very important issue.

We need to know simply what this bill is about. Most importantly, this bill is about saving lives from the risk of bushfires that are ever present in our community. As some members indicated, bushfires are becoming more extreme as time goes on. The contribution of climate change has been remarked upon in terms of having a longer bushfire season, more intensity in the fires, an increase in the fuel load and drier conditions generally, which increases the likelihood of more intense fires. When we have intense fires and extreme weather conditions with heat and wind, we know that that can end up in a catastrophic situation. We know that it can result in loss of life and loss of property. We have been all too familiar with those losses and tragedies in Australia and Western Australia in recent years.

The bill is very simple. It is three pages long. It consists of seven clauses, and as the member for Riverton pointed out, it is a response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, the response at the national level to disasters that have occurred in Australia in recent years, specifically the fires on the east coast in 2020 that were, in their breadth and intensity, incredibly devastating. They were a wake-up call to us all. The Western Australian government, like all states and territories, has responded positively to a royal commission finding that a consistent Australian fire danger rating system be implemented, one that is nationally consistent, universal, modern and based on a firm scientific knowledge; is easy and clear to understand; and, importantly, describes not the likelihood of fire occurring on a particular day, but the way a fire is likely to behave if there is a fire on that certain day. There will be a reduction in the number of warnings from six to four. It is in very simple language and the levels are moderate, high, extreme and catastrophic. Along with those is a series of graphics with certain messaging that is consistent. They escalate according to the level of warning. It is meant to be a very clear message to all members of the community and, most importantly, to members of the public and the agricultural community, business community and local government. A lot of consultation and work has been conducted at the national level and also here in Western Australia. I am happy to get into some of the detail of that consultation a little later.

It is important that this messaging is easy to understand, based on modern scientific knowledge and consistent across all state and territory boundaries. These days there are many interstate travellers who may come from another state or territory, or Western Australians travelling around the rest of Australia who would be confronted by different warnings, systems and categories. It could lend itself and no doubt does lend itself to some lesser understanding of the apparent danger, and possibly confusion. It is important to get this right. Our current rating system is based on science that is 60 years old. It is high time and necessary that we make these changes.

I refer to climate change. That is another reason why it is particularly important that these changes go ahead and that the new nationally consistent fire danger rating system is implemented. We know that climate change is leading to more intense fires. We know that the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, Darren Klemm, has in the past couple of years mentioned that his experience on the ground, leading the defence of Western Australian towns and property, has instructed him that the intensity has increased to a dramatic degree. I can draw from my experience in a former life as a journalist for many years. Covering bushfires every summer is a regular part of a journalist's job in Western Australia. I can remember going back 20 or even 30 years ago, when the loss of a house or a property was a very rare event. We seemed to have bushfires often, but the times when multiple houses and properties were lost were very rare. However, increasingly as the years went on, climate change obviously had an impact, as did the building of more urban interface with the edge of Perth and the increasing population in regional areas.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 3364.]

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF NORTH WEST CENTRAL

Issue of Writ for By-Election — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Members, I have a brief statement to make ahead of question time. I wish to advise that yesterday, I issued a writ directing the Western Australian Electoral Commissioner to proceed with an election in the North West Central electoral district. The writ listed the following dates for the purpose of the election. The last day for the nomination of candidates is Friday, 26 August 2022. Polling day will be Saturday, 17 September 2022. The last day for the return of the writ is Monday, 7 November 2022.

VISITORS — WARWICK SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, DIANELLA SECONDARY COLLEGE AND MORLEY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: I would also like to welcome my very many guests in the gallery today. Firstly, on behalf of the member for Kingsley, I welcome students from Warwick Senior High School. I would also like to acknowledge, on behalf of the members for Morley and Mount Lawley, students from Dianella Secondary College and Morley Senior High School. I think we will be joined by even more visitors shortly.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — CARNARVON

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

I refer to the letter written to the Premier and members of his cabinet from the president of the Shire of Carnarvon, Eddie Smith, that outlines the challenges facing his community. It includes the comment —

It breaks my heart when I am told of an 86 year-old woman who is woken at night by a group of children standing over her bed, who then go on to steal items and trash her property. The elderly ... are living in fear!

Has the government considered the proposal for the intensive family and community intervention support program, which was developed by the Shire of Carnarvon in consultation with key community stakeholders, including Yinggarda Aboriginal Corporation, and is designed to tackle these difficult issues; and, if not, why not?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

The Western Australian government recognises that some significant antisocial issues have been occurring in various parts of the state. That is why we are employing an additional 1 100 police officers across Western Australia. That is a 15 to 20 per cent increase in the police force, which is exactly what the former Commissioner of Police, now Governor, requested when he sought additional resourcing. In addition, there has been a significant increase in the complement at Carnarvon Police Station of full-time police officers, plus an additional youth police officer to Carnarvon. That has been a significant boost to the station that will provide additional resources to deal with these issues.

Thirdly, Operation Regional Shield has been deployed to Carnarvon to support police with additional overtime, in particular for dealing with youth offending in Carnarvon. Fourthly, the Western Australian government has put in place, in conjunction with police, what is called Operation Test Curve, to reduce juvenile offending antisocial behaviour. This is about engaging street-present juveniles, targeting offenders, and crime reduction strategies.

Fifthly, the Target 120 program is being rolled out across parts of regional WA, including Carnarvon. That is an \$11.1 million increase. That is a peer-reviewed program that we brought in when we came to office. It is designed to intervene early in families where children are having severe difficulties and give parents and families the appropriate strategies to enable them to provide more structure and support for their children so that they do not engage in antisocial and criminal behaviour. Sixthly, the community youth officers for the program are being recruited currently, so that is already occurring. That program has worked effectively across the state. It is evidence-based. It has actually reduced offending in families where these difficulties are in place.

I have been to Carnarvon a few times in the last year or so. The PCYC is one thing that we have brought into the town centre. The gym, which is relatively new, has been converted to the PCYC. That is being appropriately resourced to provide a huge number of additional activities to engage young people in Carnarvon.

I realise these issues are difficult. They are difficult for all involved. They are very unpleasant for all involved. There are six or seven different initiatives that the government has put in place to deal with these issues in Carnarvon.

CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — CARNARVON

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

I have a supplementary question. Thank you, Premier. Can I just bring you back to the question? Has the government considered the Shire of Carnarvon's proposal for the intensive family and community intervention support program, which was developed by the Shire of Carnarvon and designed to tackle these difficult issues; and, if not, why not?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

As I said to the Leader of the Opposition, and I will repeat it, not only are a whole range of additional law enforcement initiatives being put in place in Carnarvon, the Target 120 program is also being rolled out in Carnarvon. You might not know what that is —

Ms M.J. Davies: I am very aware of what it is, but that is not the question.

Mr M. McGOWAN: You do not know what it is, because you did not do it when you were in government.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: This government has rolled it out. It is based upon international and interstate experience of dealing with these issues.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are rolling it out in Carnarvon to deal with these issues. It is not as though these issues are new. They have been there for a very, very long period of time. The difference between now and the last government is that we are putting in place things that actually work. We are putting in place additional resources. We are putting in place additional police. We have moved the PCYC into the heart of town. We have provided a better PCYC. We have backed up the funding of the PCYC, which was dying when you were in office. We have put the Target 120 program into Carnarvon to support families in these difficult situations.

STATE ECONOMY — MIGRATION

460. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts in delivering one of the strongest economies in the world. Can the Premier outline to the house how the government is working to attract more skilled workers to Western Australia and meet the needs of industry?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question.

Western Australia has one of the strongest, if not the strongest, economies in the world. We have had strong management of the pandemic and avoided the long lockdowns that were experienced in other states and countries around the world. That is one of the things that has contributed to the extraordinary economic performance of Western Australia over the course of the last few years.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data released last month showed a record level of interstate migration into Western Australia between 2020 and 2021. We saw net interstate migration of 11 423 people. In comparison, New South Wales lost over 50 000 residents and Victoria lost over 30 000 residents. The two states that have had significant interstate migration into them were Western Australia and Queensland. In the final months of 2021, we had our largest ever quarterly interstate migration inflow into Western Australia. That is a sign of Western Australia's success over the course of the last few years—in fact, over the course of this government being in office.

On top of that, we recently analysed the cost of living differences between Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. That showed that the cost of living in Western Australia is significantly lower, particularly the cost of housing. If people are on an average or below average income, or even an above average income, the cost of buying a house in Western Australia is less than half the cost in New South Wales. There are huge advantages in moving to Western Australia, plus very high, by national standards, average yearly earnings.

Last month, we launched a new skilled migrant employment register to attract workers to key industries. It allows employers to connect with skilled migrants, easily see the pipeline of potential new workers, and support skilled migrants settling in Western Australia. It also allows migrants to indicate where they prefer to work in Western Australia, and what their skills and desires are. We have also added six more building and construction occupations to the Western Australian skilled migration occupation list. This includes building and engineering technicians, surveyors, roof tilers, project builders and building inspectors. We are advocating strongly to allow for more of these people to come to Western Australia during our time of need.

On top of that, we are investing more in TAFE. I recall that under the last government, TAFE fees were increased by up to 500 per cent in a whole range of courses, and that priced it out of reach of many ordinary families across Western Australia. We have dropped fees significantly for over 130 or so TAFE courses, some by more than 70 per cent. That has seen, between May 2020 and May 2022, building and construction apprenticeship commencements increasing by more than 150 per cent, while electrical apprenticeship commencements have nearly doubled. We are doing everything we can to ensure that Western Australians can take advantage of the extraordinary economic performance of our state.

Visitors — Osborne Park RSL

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge in my gallery some guests of the member for Balcatta from Osborne Park RSL.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE — INVESTIGATION

461. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Attorney General:

I refer to my question of 17 March regarding the Public Trustee, and the confronting findings in the Auditor General's performance audit of the Public Trustee that was tabled today.

- (1) What actions did the Attorney General personally take to investigate the performance of the Public Trustee after I raised these concerns five months ago?
- (2) Will the Attorney General commit to directing the Public Trustee to implement in full all the recommendations of the Auditor General's report, as a matter of urgency, to regain public trust?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) The Auditor General handed down a performance audit today, and we are very relieved and pleased that, in that performance audit, she has not identified any malfeasance or impropriety in the handling of any particular estate. The Auditor General identified the fee structure within the Public Trustee as requiring review, and has recommended that the Treasury conduct that review, and it will be conducted.

There is some history to this. One of the recommendations is to put back in place a board of governance. The board of governance was originally instituted in 1997 by the Court government in preparation for selling and privatising the Public Trustee office—to take it out of government control and take it beyond the purview of the Auditor General. In 2002, to stop the privatisation by a conservative government of this important state office, the Gallop government dispensed with the board of governors because it did not want this preparatory work for the sale of the Public Trustee to occur. The Court government wanted to privatise everything: Western Power, hospital services, the lot. The taking away of the board of governors was a step for keeping the Public Trustee within state hands, and that is a policy question, not for the Auditor General.

The Auditor General said that the fee structure in the Public Trustee—that is, fees for service rather than for time spent on producing a service—is wrong, but the fee structure was put in place by the Treasury in 2012, during the Barnett government years. The government and the Public Trustee are quite happy that this performance audit has been undertaken, and pleased that there has been no report of defalcation or misconduct within the office. The government accepts the finding that there should be a review of the way in which the fees are charged by the Under Treasurer. We accept that, and that will happen.

I also note—the government wants to stress this—that the Auditor General notes —

I would like to recognise that we found Public Trustee staff work hard to fulfill their duties, often in trying circumstances. Caseloads are high, particularly in the trusts area, and the work can be mentally and emotionally demanding.

It was the Treasurer—our esteemed Premier—who, in the last budget, budgeted for more staff to go into the office of the Public Trustee.

We thank the Auditor General for looking at these fee structures and other matters. The government will not necessarily accept all its recommendations—for example, the recommendation that the government start publicly funding the Public Trustee. The whole review of the Public Trustee by the previous government was to have a self-funded Public Trustee, and we cannot do that without charging fees. If people do not like the fees, they can complain, or those who can afford it can go to another trustee. But these fees were not set by the government; the fee structure was recommended under the previous government by the Under Treasurer. We thank the Auditor General for her report and for drawing these matters to the attention of the government.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE — INVESTIGATION

462. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Attorney General:

I have a supplementary question. Does the Attorney General acknowledge the seriousness of this matter; and, as the Auditor General's report found today, what has the Attorney General actually done in the last five months, as a responsible minister, to alleviate these concerns?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

I am not an auditor and I am not a soothsayer. I do not have a crystal ball. It was the Auditor General's task to conduct a performance audit. I cannot, in front of a performance audit result, say, "This is what we'll do".

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: What is that, over there? Can the member give me her helpful comment again?

Ms M.J. Davies: Five months ago it was raised in this place with you. What have you done since then?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I told the opposition at the time what we would do: we would write to the Public Accounts Committee of this Parliament and ask it to have a look at it. The Public Accounts Committee has written back and said, "Hang on, Attorney; there is actually a performance audit being undertaken by the Auditor General." It is not for the Attorney General to then barge in on the Auditor General and say, "Out of the way, Auditor General. We don't want you looking at this because I'm about to do something within the office." That is not the appropriate course of conduct for an Attorney General. We know that the Auditor General is in there, she has done a performance audit, and now she has recommended that the fee structure and the way that the Public Trustee operates on its fees as a self-funding agency needs review by the Under Treasurer, and we are happy with that.

Visitors — Blue Sky Community Group

The SPEAKER: Members, I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the member for Bassendean, the staff and management committee of the Blue Sky Community Group. Welcome to the gallery this afternoon.

HOSPITALS — BED CAPACITY**463. Mr D.R. MICHAEL to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's substantial investment in our health system, including the rollout of 530 additional beds across the state. Can the minister update the house on the delivery of these additional beds, and outline to the house how this significant infrastructure investment will help improve the delivery of health care in Western Australia and build further capacity in the health system?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for his question. I was very pleased to open 30 of these additional beds in the electorate of Balcatta at Osborne Park Hospital. This is a significant expansion of beds in our system. To put this into perspective, these beds were funded in the budget towards the end of last year. In less than 12 months, this government has delivered 420 beds into the health system. To provide some context, Perth Children's Hospital has around 200 beds, so we have put the equivalent number of beds of two Perth Children's Hospitals into our system in less than 12 months. That is actually an incredible achievement by the people involved in this project, and I have to thank the Department of Health, the Department of Finance and our delivery partners for delivering these beds.

One of the reasons we were able to put them on so rapidly was the new modular construction. This is a new way of building in Western Australia. It creates lots of local jobs and enables us to put good quality construction on the ground quickly. I know that the Minister for Housing is very excited about this construction method for our social housing builds and buildings. This is a significant number of beds across Western Australia. They are going into Bunbury Hospital, Osborne Park Hospital, Bentley Hospital and Rockingham General Hospital. A range of beds are going into the metropolitan area as well as regional areas. We will provide really important capacity, because we know that we are challenged by high demand and longer periods of hospital stays in our community.

I heard the member for Cottesloe call these "demountables". Let us just be clear that the company that delivered this is a great Western Australian company, Multiplex. What an insult to the people who worked on this incredible construction and all the people who helped build these modulars locally in Muchea in Western Australia, and we have all of those jobs on the ground because they know that we need to add capacity —

Mr W.J. Johnston: You wanted it done in Malaysia!

Ms A. SANDERSON: If it was up to those opposite, it would be built in Malaysia. They offshored as much as they possibly could.

This has not only provided important work for local trades; it is fast-tracked capacity expansion in our health system across Western Australia. I congratulate everyone who has been involved and thank Multiplex for its work.

MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — PERFORMANCE**464. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:**

I refer to today's reinstatement of the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and the ongoing calls from those in the agriculture sector for the Minister for Agriculture and Food to retire following her shocking comments regarding foot-and-mouth disease.

- (1) Does the lapsing of this bill in such a heightened biosecurity environment show that the minister has again let her wrong priorities divert her from dealing with the matters that are important to Western Australian farmers?
- (2) Has the Premier had dealings with any of the farm lobby groups to help repair the relationship in light of the minister's recent comments on foot-and-mouth disease?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) We held an event last night here at Parliament with CBH. I do not know whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was there, but we held an event with CBH and it was very happy. In fact, the minister was well received, and I was able to talk about our great record in agriculture and the fact that we have put \$131.5 million back into the Department of Agriculture and Food because the last Liberal–National government ripped it out. We were able to put all that additional resourcing into research within agriculture because the last government ripped it out. The consequence of that investment is that we have some of the greatest harvests in history, both now and predicted into the future. When I met CBH and the farmers last night, they were incredibly happy with the performance of the government, the minister and all the actions we have been taking. So that was quite a good event.

I was able to advise them that members of my family have been out there assisting the agricultural community with the harvest, making sure the harvest gets to market, gets on the ships and is exported away from Western Australia, earning valuable income. I have been doing my bit, and my son has been doing his bit to assist Western Australian farmers, as well.

If we were to apply the same approach as the Nationals—every single time someone says something that might be regarded as being inappropriate, wrong or slightly off, they have to resign—none of those opposite would have a job. They are so loose, so injudicious and so lacking in knowledge about everything that none of them would have a job. As for the member for Roe’s question a moment ago, the minister answered it and then the member asked the same question again. Honestly, if some rule was applied to require members to actually listen to the answer, it would be an important change to the standing orders as it would ensure some improvement in the performance of the opposition.

The minister for agriculture and I have been working cooperatively with the agriculture sector across our state.

MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — PERFORMANCE

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

I have a supplementary question. How much longer is the Premier going to allow the tired Minister for Agriculture and Food to hold onto her role when farm lobby groups have expressed —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! This is for the Premier to answer, not another 50 members to answer. We will wait and then we will start the supplementary again.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Speaker.

How much longer can the Premier’s agriculture minister hang on when she has already announced that she is not staying after 2025 and the farm lobby groups have expressed a lack of confidence in her?

Ms C.M. Rowe: Low!

The SPEAKER: Member for Belmont, that was quite uncalled for. Premier.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

It is a very low quality opposition. It is the lowest quality I have seen in my 25 years in the Parliament. People without imagination, without ability, without energy, without work ethic and without much brainpower—that is the reality of the opposition today.

SOCIAL HOUSING

466. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s significant investment in delivering more social housing across Western Australia. Can the minister update the house on the number of homes that were added to the state’s social housing stock in the last final financial year, and can the minister outline to the house how many social housing homes are planned to be delivered in the next couple of years?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for his question. As I have said many times in this house, our government has made a record investment injection into social housing in Western Australia of \$875 million, with \$2.4 billion over four years. We have faced an incredibly challenging market. As I have put on the record multiple times, in this COVID world, with large numbers of people either making Western Australia home or returning home, we have a booming economy, large demand for housing and a heated construction market. That is why, as I have said in this chamber, we are using every lever we can to deliver additional social housing—that includes timber frame homes, as we are knocking them out from concrete pours in four months. Speaking to those in the construction sector indicates that this is an incredible turnaround time.

We are also doing the modular program. The Minister for Health is right: I love modular! Modular is particularly great for the regions. Contrary to the member for Cottesloe’s attacks on modular, it is very much a growing industry in Western Australia, and we have a dedicated modular program for regional Western Australia. We are spot purchasing at a rapid rate. We are converting old row housing that is surplus to needs into social housing. I am really pleased to say that in the last financial year, we added 600 homes to the system, despite the significant construction market challenges that we faced. We are still doing it right now, with another 860 homes under contract and under construction. So we are getting on with the job. On top of that, we are trying to grow the community housing sector by providing direct grants—that includes 173 additional homes being created through those direct grants. On homelessness, in the last financial year, we added 102 extra crisis beds to the system.

Despite all the challenges we face and despite our heated construction market, the message is very clear: as the homelessness sector knows and as the housing sector knows, this government is open and doing everything it can to drive and boost social housing supply in Western Australia.

MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES — PERFORMANCE

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

I was mesmerised by the answer from the Minister for Homelessness! My question is to the Premier. I refer to suggestions from the WA Prison Officers' Union secretary, Andy Smith, that corrective services have been on the backburner and for the Minister for Corrective Services to be relieved of his roles in multiple portfolios while public servants rally for better pay.

- (1) Has the minister lost control of his portfolio responsibilities?
- (2) Does the minister retain the Premier's unequivocal support to retain the corrective services portfolio?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Ask me a question!

The SPEAKER: Minister, you are not to interject. I call the Premier to answer.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes.

The reality is in every state in Australia, at every point in time going back to 1788, the prisons portfolio has had issues—in fact, 26 January 1788. I can put a date on it!

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am going with 26 January. It always has been one of those portfolios because it deals with range of people who have been convicted of, on many occasions, very serious crimes and behavioural issues are part and parcel of that portfolio. The minister is doing a terrific job to manage a very difficult portfolio. I hear some of the member's complaints, including that he has too many portfolios. Today I looked at the portfolio load of some of the opposition members. Some of them have eight portfolios. He has four. The opposition leader has eight. If four is too many, why has the opposition leader got eight? What is the member's complaint? With its very low work ethic and very low amount of effort it puts into anything as an opposition, the member can have double the number of portfolios and that is okay, yet the minister can have half the number of portfolios and that is not. Does the member not think that is logically inconsistent?

In any event, there have been some issues in Banksia Hill Detention Centre. Essentially, 16 or 18 detainees have been moved because they were destroying their cells and behaving in ways that were disrupting the entire estate. The remaining 80 detainees—two were removed and have come back now, so 82—have had a much more congenial atmosphere created inside Banksia Hill to allow them to go on the pathway to rehabilitation far more easily, with the most disruptive detainees taken out of the estate. The reason was behavioural issues. That is staring everyone in the face.

To try to say that the behaviour of an individual was therefore the fault of the minister I just think is wrong. It is just wrong. I know that is the way that people try to portray these things, but it is just not correct. Individuals are there for a whole range of reasons and they have had very difficult lives outside detention, but their behaviour is unacceptable, and it is causing huge grief to the other people who are detained and especially to the people who work there. The very decent people who work there, often with very altruistic motives to try to put young people back on to a correct pathway in life to give them opportunities and hope for the future, have to deal with this incredible situation. That is why some difficult decisions have had to be made. No-one has an alternative solution to that. Although people complain about it, no-one has an alternative solution that is effective and safe to the one that this government has put in place.

MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES — PERFORMANCE

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

I have a supplementary question. Noting that there are 39 ambitious members sitting latent on his back bench, why will the Premier not give someone else the opportunity to manage this major portfolio?

The SPEAKER: Just a little bit of advice, there should be no preamble to the question, so you do not say "noting this", "will you not that". You just ask the question, rather than give the preamble. The member for Vasse can laugh if she likes, but she is probably the first person who will get a supplementary question ruled out of order.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

It is true that we have a significant number of members on the government's back bench—around 39 times as many as the opposition or something like that. In fact, I do not know whether there can be 39 times zero. I think my maths might be a bit out there, but I am only the Treasurer!

It is the case that we have a very talented group of people in Parliament. That is not something the Leader of the Liberal Party can say. It is not a problem he has. A very talented group of people were elected at the last election, the election before and elections before that, all of whom are making an important contribution to Western Australia. It is not a problem the member faces. I realise it is not one of his issues that he has to deal with, but it is obviously one of the crosses I have to bear.

TARGET 120 PLUS

469. Ms D.G. D'ANNA to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to steer young people away from the criminal justice system and keep the community safe, demonstrated by the success of the groundbreaking Target 120 program. Can the minister update the house on the support that will be provided to young people who are in or who have been detained in Banksia Hill Detention Centre to ensure that they also have the opportunity to break the cycle of offending and at the same time make our community safer?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am very pleased to talk about this latest announcement that we announced together in Broome, and I would like to particularly acknowledge the member for Kimberley. She has an incredibly difficult job with not only the geographic reach of her seat, but also the complexity of the number of issues that she faces. She does it with determination and skill and capacity on many fronts, so thank you.

I know that the member understands that tackling youth offending is quite a complex issue that requires work. It requires looking at the evidence of what are effective outcomes when dealing with difficult behaviour. That is why when we took our policy of Target 120 to the 2017 election, we had done the work. I acknowledge my colleagues, the now Minister for Police, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and others who worked on that policy. We took to the 2017 election the policy that we would do the Target 120 program. We would work with 120 families approximately a year as an early intervention youth justice approach. When we got to government, we set about doing more work on that policy to look at what it would look like with the resources of government. We funded that policy and we have set about implementing that policy.

I was very pleased in the last budget to report that as a result of the successful implementation of that policy and good outcomes in Target 120, we have been able to expand it. Target 120 will be in 20 sites around the state. We are now looking at expanding not only the locations, but also the target audience or the target clientele. Target 120 Plus in Broome will work with young people, again, probably between the ages of 10 and 14. Whereas Target 120 works with young people who have had numerous interactions with the justice system but have not been in detention, Target 120 Plus will start to work with young people who have been in detention, but it is the same model. It will work with young people and their family to help them navigate existing services and foster good cooperation between government agencies and community services to understand what is going on in that young person's life that has led them to offend. It might be about needing to resolve mental health issues of their own or within their family, resolve drug and alcohol issues or provide financial counselling. Whatever the issues are, we will start to look at how we can address in a positive way the issues that have led to offending.

We know from Target 120 that the results are very, very good. I have reported previously in this Parliament that about half those young people who are involved in Target 120 have not offended while being involved in the program. It really is quite remarkable. We have also had them engaged in positive or organised leisure activities—for instance, sport. They have been more engaged with school, and that is really what we want. We want to understand what has led to the offending and engage not only in a positive way, but also with their family. The multiplier effect of Target 120 has been significant because we are dealing with not only those young people, but also their family, and many of them have numerous siblings who have been able to have issues addressed through the program.

Target 120 Plus will work with 10 young people at any time who have now been in Banksia to see how the model works and to see whether we can start to work constructively with those young people and their families to get a change in behaviour.

I ask the chamber to think about what the opposition has proposed in relation to youth justice issues that they have raised in this place. I ask the chamber to think about what the opposition, when it was in government, did to constructively deal with the underlying causes of youth justice issues. Think of one thing. Think of something. If opposition members can say anything to me, either in the chamber or afterwards, I would be really interested to hear it. I cannot think of one thing that the previous government did constructively. In fact, across my portfolio, I struggle. I have asked my staff to look to do numerous searches on innovations that the previous government made in child protection—cannot find anything. I am happy to hear what the opposition has done, but certainly in youth justice I hear no constructive suggestions and I can think of nothing that it did while it was in government. This government, on the other hand, is looking at evidence-based solutions to work constructively to turn young lives around.

MEDI-HOTELS

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

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's 2017 medi-hotel commitment, which it claimed would take pressure off our health system by freeing up expensive hospital beds so that more patients could be treated and waitlists shortened. How many additional patients have been treated and bed days saved as a result of the single four-bed medi-hotel the government has actually managed to deliver?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

The medi-hotel commitment was an important commitment that we took to the 2017 election. We have delivered medi-hotel beds at Royal Perth Hospital that are now regularly in use. I have visited them and they look fantastic. They are good for people who are preoperative or postoperative, and they were used during the COVID lockdown for a number of homeless people who were living on the street to provide somewhere for them to isolate. Anyone who drives up and down the freeway will see an enormous complex being built by Aegis Health in partnership with the Labor government to deliver a medi-hotel and a range of health services that will complement what already exists at that health campus. That will be in operation hopefully within 12 or so months. We are finalising the contract now. That will provide really important relief, particularly for Fiona Stanley Hospital. We are in contract negotiations with that provider now. Also included as part of that complex will be an urgent care clinic, radiology and private consulting rooms, which will hopefully include mental health and psychiatric services. It will be a really good partnership, with public and private services on the site.

We are also significantly expanding the bed capacity at Joondalup Health Campus. We are expanding the number of hospital beds at Joondalup Health Campus and putting on 102 mental health beds—102 mental health beds will be in operation in the northern suburbs by next year! That is an incredible investment in our system. Those mental health beds will take pressure off the beds within the main hospital and will provide a much more appropriate place for those patients to be treated and recover from their episodes.

We are absolutely proud of our investment in our health system. The medi-hotel investment is one part of a number of investments that will help to ease the pressure on hospital beds. There will be more mental health beds and better access to community services. There has been significant investment in mental health community services as well.

MEDI-HOTELS

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

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister confirm when we can expect the two remaining medi-hotels to be delivered?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I do not have the exact date in front of me for the medi-hotel near Fiona Stanley Hospital, but it will be up and running next year. As I said, we have expanded the number of hospital beds at Joondalup Health Campus and expanded the footprint of the hospital. In discussions with the local community and the local provider, we found that that was what they wanted.

Ms L. Mettam: They didn't want a medi-hotel?

Ms A. SANDERSON: We had discussions with the provider on the ground and that is what they wanted. We have actually made an even bigger investment in Joondalup Health Campus than a medi-hotel by expanding the bed base and providing 102 mental health beds. That is more than the previous government built in the entirety of its term, and just in the northern suburbs!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Vasse!

Ms A. SANDERSON: We are significantly expanding the footprint and delivery of health services in the northern suburbs. We are very proud to stand on our record up there.

PRISONS — REFORM

472. Mr M. HUGHES to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I have a question for the Minister for Corrective Services, unlike the member for Cottesloe.

I refer to this government's reforms to corrective services to ensure Western Australia's custodial estate is safe, secure and efficient. Can the minister update the house on the work underway to ensure that our adult prison estate is safe for all staff and prisoners while ensuring that funding is invested responsibly and appropriately?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I thank the member for the question. He is brave enough to ask me a question, which is in contrast to other members of the chamber.

The corrective services portfolio is not an easy one. I have deep respect for the people who work in the sector. The question was about the adult prison estate. When I came to the role, a \$360 million budget cut had been implemented by the former government but had never been actioned; it had been rolled forward. One of the tasks I had was to deal with that \$360 million budget black hole. I have found \$120 million of savings and I have sought approval for, and have been given, \$240 million to fill in two-thirds of the hole. I thank the Treasurer for investing \$240 million in the prison estate to fix our recurrent funding activities.

One thing that we need to do is to reform. We have had the prison service evaluation, the Public Sector Commissioner has done a review, and when the Auditor General told me that she was going to look at overtime management, I was pleased to have that. I thank the Auditor General for her complimentary opening statement in the audit report, in which she set out her view that the work I was doing was very important and on the right track. I thank her for that.

One thing we are doing is dealing with workers' compensation. There were more than 120 cases that were more than eight years old. Any former union official would know how disgraceful that is. Over 100 of those have now been settled. We have a major emphasis on health and safety for the workforce, but I know that this is a challenging time because the amount of overtime that is available for the workforce has now reduced. That is a challenge for the workforce and for the union. That is why I am not surprised that Andy Smith, the secretary of the union, makes commentary regularly in the media, because this is a difficult time for him. What I was a bit surprised to find out was that he is not the secretary of the union! I draw members' attention—I will table the paper in a moment—to the decision of the Registered Organisations Commission dated 1 June. It states in part —

In response to the queries from Commission staff, the Branch has confirmed that no further scheduled election for Federal Offices has been conducted since election **E2016/196** was declared. That is, some offices have not been the subject of election for six years.

It goes on to state —

If that approach (to have persons remain in office without further election) was accepted, it would be contrary to the provisions in the ... Act about the length of a single term.

The decision also states —

The failure to hold the election for Federal Offices within the required period, indicates an apparent lack of understanding of relevant election related rules and of the obligation to lodge prescribed information in accordance with the ... Act ...

It also states —

I also draw attention to the matter of *Registered Organisations Commission v Australian Hotels Association*, in which the Federal Court imposed substantial penalties on a registered organisation which had contravened section 189(2) of the ... Act on multiple occasions. The Commission will engage further with the WAPOU Branch and the CPSU in relation to the recurrent late lodgement of prescribed information that in relation to the Branch, which leaves the organisation open to civil penalties.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I seek your guidance on the relevance of the minister's answer, which is delving into union matters that have nothing to do with the question advanced by the member for Kalamunda.

The SPEAKER: At this point in time I am not going to accept that as a point of order. I am listening very carefully to the minister's answer. I do see that he is drawing an analogy. I am hoping that that analogy will come to a conclusion soon.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am sure it will, Madam Speaker. I am surprised at many things. Every time I meet a prison officer, I am amazed at the hard work they have to put in. They work in a terrible environment. You get 6 500 of the worst people in Western Australia and put them in 18 individual locations—I would not want to work there! It is a terrible job. The fact that they do it so well is a credit to them personally. I have talked to many of them and they have such deep engagement with the prisoners in the hope that they can help them get to a better place in their life. That is why so many prisoners do not return to prison—because of the strong influence. In fact, prisoner officers have said to me that they would walk down the street and run into former prisoners who congratulated them on the work they had done. They need to be properly rewarded. What we do not need is a union secretary who is not elected going to the media and criticising his comrades. Every criticism he has made so far of the prison service is of union members. Every complaint he has made is about one of his own union members. I am surprised that he does that when he is not elected to do the job. I would suggest that he urgently rectify this and allow the union to conduct its affairs in accordance with law and stop frustrating the opportunity for the members to have a say. I also draw the chamber's attention to the fact that there is no assistant secretary of the union.

Point of Order

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The point of order goes to relevance and how this relates to the safety of prison officers and the prison estate, which the question clearly related to.

The SPEAKER: I do think the minister is answering the question. His answer is bordering on a little long from my point of view at this time, and I am keen to give the opposition one last question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Indeed. Of course, if there had not been a point order, I would have already finished my answer.

I am surprised at the behaviour of the union secretary and I look forward to him complying with the laws of Australia. I table the document that I read from.

[See paper [1324](#).]

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition with the last question.

POLICE — RECRUITMENT

473. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the government's pledge to recruit 950 new police officers above attrition.

- (1) Has the total number of police increased in net terms in 2022—yes or no?
- (2) Can the minister guarantee that he will meet this much-hyped 950 figure by 2024, as he originally promised?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question.

- (1)–(2) The answer is yes. It has increased but, beyond that, what was committed to was growing the police force by 950 above attrition. That is fully resourced and funded. We will have a crack at it and do everything we can. Right now I can tell members that tomorrow night I will be attending a graduation of 59 officers. It is another one. I go to the academy monthly and often no-one from the opposition is there. Occasionally, the phantom shadow police minister attends, but mostly he does not. Often, the Leader of the Opposition is not represented, but I am there.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am always there. However, the one time I was not there, I had COVID, so the Attorney General attended in my stead. He did a sterling job of delivering a speech on my behalf—not as good as the one that I present, but I was told it was not bad! I can guarantee the member one thing: the police are greater in numbers, better resourced, better equipped in my view and as well led as at any time in the history of this state. We are right behind them, unlike members opposite. Almost every time members ask a question in this place about this portfolio, they take the opportunity to denigrate the performance of the police.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Nationals WA and the Liberal Party —

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I know that their representatives are in Carnarvon right now. What they said yesterday about the police was disgraceful. When they come into this place and say that the police are not performing well, they hear it.

Ms M.J. Davies: Find a quote where I said that. Find it and read it back. Go on!

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yesterday, members opposite implied that the police were failing in Carnarvon.

Ms M.J. Davies: That's your interpretation. That's your political take.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Members cannot say that crime is out of control in Carnarvon and then expect the inference not to be made that the police are not doing their job. Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that the police are not doing their job in Carnarvon? If she is saying that, I will go straight from here after question time and ring the Commissioner of Police and say that the National Party is saying that the police are not doing their job in Carnarvon. Do not worry about that because that is what I will say.

POLICE — RECRUITMENT

474. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, can I ask you not to start until people are quiet.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Minister, I did not get an answer to that question. It was very simple. Has the total number of police increased in net terms in 2022—yes or no?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please. Based on your earlier answer, minister, I am expecting this to be a very short answer.

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I said yes. I said yes before in the last answer. It was the first thing I said—yes, it has. As I said, it was the first thing I said when I stood up. Yes, the number has increased. Yes, there are more police than ever before in Western Australia's history. Yes, they are better equipped. Yes, they are as well led as, if not better led than, at any time in history. I am very proud of the Western Australia Police Force. We are recruiting more all the time. I am going to graduation tomorrow night, when I think 59 officers will be graduating.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

BUSH FIRES AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [2.56 pm] — in reply: Before the break for question time, I was recalling how fires have increased in intensity and I drew on my own experience as a former reporter. In my early days, it was very rare to see properties lost, but in my later days in that role, occasionally a series of properties were lost and then the number of houses that were lost increased. I entered the role of Minister for Emergency Services just after 87 homes were lost in the Wooroloo–Gidgegannup fire. We are seeing a dramatic increase in the intensity of bushfires right across the country, including in Western Australia. It is important that we support these changes, which represent a universal and consistent approach to warnings so that the public is well informed and served. Ideally, the end result is to preserve as many lives and as much property as possible.

As I said earlier, the systems are based on more scientific analysis than previously. Indeed, there is a more modern scientific approach to the assessment and analysis of conditions in which a bushfire occurs. The new fire danger rating framework builds on information gathered during a social research study, with key changes including a simpler system with only four levels; a gradual increase in wording and distinctly different words for each level; a simplification of the current system, building education or familiarity; and distinct actions at each level. It allows the four levels to be targeted to the most important actions. It is important to change. As I noted earlier, the new simplified standard ratings are moderate, high, extreme and catastrophic.

Although I represent the Minister for Emergency Services, who sits in the other place, I was a former Minister for Emergency Services, so the issue of bushfires is dear to my heart. As minister, I gained an appreciation of the amazing contribution of the members of our emergency services community, including career firefighters and volunteers from all disciplines, whether it is volunteer bush fire fighters, volunteer firefighters, State Emergency Service responders or marine rescue volunteers. They all play an extraordinary role in our community. Anything that can assist in the emergency response—in this case, to bushfires—will be welcome.

In the last few days, members in the chamber have heard a range of contributions. We had many speakers and I want to thank again all members for their contributions. All members carefully considered their contributions and gave incredible insight. Some detailed issues were raised, including from the Deputy Speaker who served as an incident controller at some level and a captain of a volunteer bush fire fighter crew. Many other members present had experience in either the volunteer services or engagement with them as local members of Parliament or local community members.

The member for Kalamunda kicked off the debate. The member for Kalamunda obviously represents a community in the Perth hills, which is an incredibly vulnerable area where fire is a major concern. We heard from the member for Moore, who asked quite detailed questions and raised a range of issues. I intend to get to them a little later in my contribution this afternoon. They were important issues and were of interest to the member for Moore and others in his community. The member for Armadale made a contribution. Again, his electorate is a peri-urban community in a hilly area with a lot of vegetation. The member for Burns Beach had involvement in firefighting, both in the community and also in his service as a police officer. The member for Murray–Wellington made an important contribution recalling the impact of fire in her community. The member for Roe also made a contribution representing a regional area in Western Australia that is prone to bushfire and has had some very sad and tragic experiences in recent years. The member for Darling Range, with his naval experience, was able to draw the benefit of a clear and concise message—the benefit of clarity—when responding to emergency situations. He pointed out that that was his experience in the service and why this new fire danger rating system is important because it has that same essence of clarity and concise messaging. The member for Cottesloe, we recall, was effusive and full of praise for the government's efforts in this area, particularly our efforts around fire mitigation. It was good to hear that members opposite were fulsome, especially the Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Cottesloe. He was very appreciative of the government's hard work in this area. I want to thank the member for acknowledging that.

The member for Collie–Preston gave a very moving and personal account of the impact of fire in Yarloop. In a matter of eight minutes, almost an entire community was razed from the map of Western Australia. So many buildings and so many homes were lost in that very short time—eight minutes. She spoke about how the community

hospital was lost, a place where she was born. Her father and grandfather had also been born there. She mentioned her grandmother, who was 98 years old at the time. She had spent virtually all her life in Yarloop. The family had to keep that information from her until she was ready to receive it, and then took her to Yarloop. Members can imagine the impact on someone who has spent all their life in a small community like that, who would know every building in town. How devastating it would have been for her to see the shocking impact of fire. It was a very moving contribution.

We are very aware that bushfires can have tragic outcomes in Western Australia. Beyond the immediate impact of the tragic loss of life, it scars a community for many decades and it changes communities forever. I still remember looking in the Channel Seven archives at the raw footage from the first camera crew into Dwellingup in 1961. They are the most incredible pictures that show people shell shocked, moving around town, trying to get through to their homes. The local general store and petrol station had been wiped out, along with the school and people's homes. It was an incredible fire situation. I think in modern times in Western Australia, it was the first major bushfire disaster, back in the 1960s. From that time, over the decades, we did not really get anything like that again until more recent years. I go back to my earlier comments about the intensity of fires increasing in Western Australia. The Dwellingup fire stood out because there had been fires over the decades, but it was a devastating fire that sits in the consciousness of the state for good reason. We have had major fires with loss of life and major loss of property since then.

The member for Landsdale made a contribution and is one of our members representing a peri-urban area—the interface on the edge of Perth with a more natural vegetative state. I refer to the geography, not the member when I mention that! The risk of fire is also very real on the edge of Perth in many communities, including my own community of Baldivis. A number of fires have threatened to have an impact on very dense suburban areas.

The member for Forrestfield, the Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, has experience as a firefighter at quite a senior level. He told the story of the tragic loss of a brave woman volunteer firefighter in a fire a few years ago now. I remember hearing about that volunteer at Kings Park where all firefighters who have lost their lives fighting fires in Western Australia over many decades are recognised and acknowledged. I remember recalling her name being one of those for whom the bell chimes once every year when we remember fallen firefighters. It is for both career and volunteer firefighters. From memory, over the history of firefighting in this state, the loss of life is higher amongst volunteers than it is with career firefighters. That just goes to the contribution that volunteer firefighters make and how much we rely on volunteer emergency responders in Western Australia.

The member for Vasse also made a contribution and raised issues around mitigation. That is a major area of concentration for the McGowan government. We have invested many millions of dollars in increasing our efforts around mitigation because we know how important it is. The member for Warren–Blackwood again is in a part of the world that is prone to the dangers of fire and has recently suffered losses. I remember being at the Margaret River oval in my time as minister when we were responding to a significant fire down there. It looked like it was going to be very bad, but there was an enormous response from volunteers and career firefighters. There was also the involvement of large air tankers—LATs—and there was a fortuitous change in weather conditions, as I recall, that averted what could have been a major catastrophe in her electorate. The member for Swan Hills also represents a mixed semirural and urban community at risk of bushfire. The member for Riverton concluded with his praise for volunteers. There were wonderful and very valuable contributions from right across the chamber.

Some issues were raised and I will move through them. Again, I point out that I act for the Minister for Emergency Services; I am no longer the Minister for Emergency Services. I know there will be the opportunity to raise issues with the minister in the other place, but I will get to the specifics of what the member for Moore, in particular, raised—there were a number of issues—as well as the member for Roe. It is my best intent to address those issues.

As we know, one of the issues raised by the member for Moore was how this will affect consideration of downstream fire plans in the way that schools and Western Power operate. The advice I have is that the rating system impact on established bushfire plans and local government and state bushfire planning will be minimal. The change to the Australian Fire Danger Rating System brought on by the Bush Fires Amendment Bill will not have any material impact on the types of conditions that invoke restrictions on activities that have a bushfire risk associated with them. In fact, restrictions, when required, will be able to be applied geographically in a more targeted manner. The rating levels and the number of levels are changing to ensure that there is a nationally consistent approach. The process of issuing total fire ban notices, which I believe the member was referring to, will not change. This was confirmed at a recent briefing for the shadow Minister for Emergency Services that was held by the office of the Minister for Emergency Services at which these questions were asked to both the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and the executive director of the Rural Fire Division of DFES. This also includes the temporary harvest and vehicle movement bans, which I think the member for Roe raised. The total fire bans are issued by the FES commissioner on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services, who has delegated his power to the FES commissioner for these declarations. Local governments are responsible for the issuing of temporary harvest and vehicle movement bans.

A question, again from the member for Moore, was: What metrics have changed? What effect will that have on fire bans and bushfire plans? The current fire danger rating system applies only to two fire behaviour models—

that is, the McArthur Forest Fire Danger Index and the McArthur Grassland Fire Danger Index. The new Australian Fire Danger Rating System will incorporate eight different fire behaviour models, seven of which are applicable in Western Australia, and fire danger calculations that will be based on a fire behaviour index rather than a fire danger index. That goes to the science we spoke about before in terms of what sort of fire we will get, rather than the likelihood of a fire. The aptly named fire behaviour index, or FBI, is a numerical index that provides a scale of potential fire behaviour based on weather conditions applied through the applicable fire behaviour model. Because the FBI has a higher level of precision, it can be used by government agencies, industry, primary producers and others that work with vegetation fires to support decision-making on issues such as prescribed burning, bushfire suppression strategies and when total fire bans may be required.

The member for Moore asked about funding and resourcing for these changes. I am advised that \$1.95 million has been received in commonwealth funding contributions to implement the Australian Fire Danger Rating System in WA. Following a recent survey provided to all local governments by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, requests from local governments have been received to replace 145 static fire danger signs and 40 digital or electronic signs. Most electronic signs will require some retrofitting and minor alterations.

Another question from the member for Moore was: what will the other legislative changes be? These changes will result in minimal impacts across other legislation. An example of this is that restrictions on the lighting of campfires in national parks and state forest will need to be applied in accordance with the new rating system.

The member also raised the issue of timing: why now and why so quickly? I think the member answered the question to some degree when he pointed out that there was a national effort to have this new system across the nation by 1 September, in time for the bushfire season. It is a time frame that has been agreed nationally to implement the Australian Fire Danger Rating System by all states and territories. September was chosen as a lower risk period between the northern and southern bushfire seasons.

Western Australia is the only state that requires legislative amendment. Our Bush Fires Act 1954 stipulates a reference to the old rating system; therefore, these amendments are necessary. We are the only state that has an act whereby that is required. Why have we introduced it now? Western Australia was actually waiting on some national decisions and there were delays in that for the framework and protocols. We had to wait for some national decision-making to occur to ensure that this amendment to the act would be accurate.

I think the member for Moore asked whether this bill was an example of uniform legislation. It is not. There is no commonwealth legislation or legal obligation that binds Western Australia to adopt this system. As I explained before, we are doing this because of that reference to the rating system in the Bush Fires Act.

Mr R.S. Love: So there are no mirrored provisions in other legislation in the other states?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: There is no requirement to change legislation in any other state. We have an almost 70-year-old act. The member can read in the bill about why those changes are necessary in terms of referencing the historic act.

The member asked about the emergency services bill. That is a more general issue and it may be outside the scope of this, but I am happy to let the member know that the new minister is working on the consolidated emergency services bill that is being drafted to replace the current Fire and Emergency Services Act. It is anticipated that the new bill will address some of the issues identified around the management of bushfires such as providing a legislative framework for the optional transfer of bush fire brigades from local governments to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. There will also be new provisions in relation to training standards. An exposure draft bill is expected to be released for public consultation in early 2023, so early next year the member will be able to look at that. The Western Australian Local Government Association has already been consulted, along with volunteer associations.

The member asked about consultation. DFES has conducted extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders. There has been considerable engagement with volunteer bush fire fighters by working with each of the volunteer associations and local governments. Each volunteer association was invited to attend an initial information workshop on 19 September. Members have been engaged—I believe it would have been last year, obviously—through regular updates through bushfire advisory committees. Volunteers throughout the state were provided the opportunity to receive training and participate in operational testing prior to the last northern and southern fire seasons. In November 2021, chief and deputy bushfire control officers were engaged throughout the state to participate in regional forums to discuss changes, particularly in relation to the application of burn permits, harvest vehicle movement bans and the communication of fire danger ratings.

Over the past 12 months, presentations have been provided at a number of volunteer forums such as the Bushfire Ready facilitators forum, the chief bushfire control officers forum and a number of regional forums, including the Pilbara and Kimberley fire management forums. DFES is also working with Western Power and other utility providers on exemptions to power restoration activities that are triggered by the FDRS. It is expected that the Australian Fire Danger Rating System will result in minimal impact to their activities.

Members opposite in particular raised a number of other items and issues that the bill does not address or interact with. I will not be addressing them in my third reading speech. I make the point quite strongly that the minister's office has representatives here, as well as representatives from DFES, the *Hansard* is available, and I have been

told that the Minister for Emergency Services has provided briefings to the opposition on a range of DFES matters and incidents. I encourage members to continue to address those items correctly to the minister. The minister has indicated that if any other briefings are required, he is very happy to make sure that that can happen.

One issue that was raised, and I will speak about this only because of my experience as the minister, was about members' access to facilities. I know of a number of times when Hon Martin Aldridge attended major events, whether it was firefighter school graduations or the sod turning of new brigade facilities being established. I remember specifically the Gingin fire station sod turning. I do not believe there is an issue, but members opposite are welcome to raise any issues or concerns that they have with the minister.

The other point I would make is that all members of Parliament, regardless of whether they are in government or opposition, are required to go through a process, and it usually involves them contacting the minister and the minister contacting the commissioner's office for arrangements to be made to visit any facility. Obviously, we are guided by operational issues and concerns on any particular day, but as a simple matter of courtesy, it is important that for any visit by members to fire stations there is an awareness that someone is coming.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: As I said, I am not going to go into it more deeply than that. That is a matter for him to address. I know that from my experience, even as a minister, I could not simply rock up unannounced at a fire station. There was a process and a protocol to go through. The commissioner was aware of my visit, both as a minister and a local member, to my own volunteer brigade.

I will leave it there. I hope that this has been quite a significant, detailed response to the issues that have been raised. There is the opportunity to raise issues outside the scope of the legislation with the minister's office later, and I am sure opposition members in the other place will be able to ask questions directly of the minister. Can I just finish by thanking everyone for their contributions on this debate. I also acknowledge the members of the minister's office and representatives of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services who have been here for the last two days to advise if required. They have taken very keen interest in debate. It has been a very useful debate. It has been very supportive of the bill.

This bill before the chamber, as I pointed out earlier, is very simple and straightforward. It amends our act so that the new fire danger rating system can apply in Western Australia. At the end of the day it is about saving lives. I think every member who stood up to speak in this chamber has that as their desire and their intent. We are facing climate change and we are facing increased risk of fire devastation in this country. We are doing a lot of work to mitigate against that, but at the end of the day communities need to be properly warned in a way that they can clearly understand in order to respond appropriately. Seeing this legislation move through this chamber and eventually pass both houses is incredibly important to the future safety of many Western Australians right across the state.

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

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Environment) [3.23 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.24 pm]: I will make a very brief contribution as we have not gone into consideration in detail. There are not really a lot of different matters to point out since we discussed the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2022 in the second reading debate, except to thank the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services for outlining a fairly good response to most of the questions I put. I will leave it to my colleague in the other place, the shadow minister, Hon Martin Aldridge, to discuss the bill further with the minister when it gets there. I do not think it is a good use of the house's time for us who are neither the shadow minister nor the actual minister to be delving further into the details of this bill. I think we have examined the issues in good enough detail for members in the other house to review what the minister has given in answer and to further interrogate the bill.

I will conclude by thanking all the people who have made a contribution, thanking the minister for his response and the advisers who have been in attendance and who no doubt furnished in some way or other the answers that the minister has given today. As has been outlined, this side of the house supports the matter and we support the changes. I think it is very important that they are dealt with as expeditiously as possible. With that, I conclude my remarks and commend the bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

CASINO LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BURSWOOD CASINO) BILL 2022*Second Reading*

Resumed from 22 June.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [3.26 pm]: I rise today to indicate, firstly, that the opposition will support the Casino Legislation Amendment (Burswood Casino) Bill 2022 because it is required. Having said that, I have many questions for the minister responsible, and I will just lay out some of those things as I go along. Obviously, we will also have the opportunity of consideration in detail, probably tomorrow, by the look of it at this stage.

This bill seeks to implement the priority legislative amendments arising from the final report of the Perth Casino Royal Commission tabled in Parliament on 24 March 2022. I have not brought that in with me, but it was pretty weighty. Of course, I have also got the interim report, issued on the 30 June 2021, on the regulatory framework as well, which I thought was also a pretty important document. The report from the royal commission made 59 formal recommendations and found the Crown and Burswood entities were not presently suitable to hold a gaming licence. The report outlined a remediation process required to make those entities suitable.

The royal commission concluded that the current regulatory framework is nearly 40 years old and requires replacement, and this bill will obviously establish the role of an independent monitor to monitor the remediation of Burswood Casino's management and operations. I think the independent monitor is the crux of the bill, but some priority actions are provision for the Minister for Racing and Gaming to appoint an independent chair of the Gaming and Wagering Commission; to enhance the power of the Minister for Racing and Gaming to direct the commission on mitigating risks associated with the management and operation of the Burswood Casino; and to enhance the power of the commission to direct the Burswood Casino licence. It is going to be a two-year remediation period to enable the above actions to be taken, along with the government's action. There are clauses to establish an independent monitor to be appointed by the Minister for Racing and Gaming, who will monitor the casino licensee for mediation. Having an independent monitor is certainly a good scenario, providing the minister appoints the right person. I will be curious to hear from the minister as we go along how that is progressing and the qualities of the independent monitor.

I want to go back to a little bit over the history of the Burswood Casino. In 1984, we had the Casino Control Act providing that a casino would be established in the metropolitan area of Perth. At the time David Parker was the minister. The Burswood site was chosen for a number of reasons. Some of those reasons were that the land was owned by the government; it was a prime, under-utilised river site in need of development; and the casino inquiry committee report recommended the site. The government entered into the negotiations with prospective developers. The intent of the bill was to provide machinery for the administration of the act by the casino control committee comprising four members appointed by the Governor. During debate, Bill Hassell argued that the minister had too much control and power and that the committee only had an advisory and administrative role. Interestingly, at the time, the member said —

The Bill is fraught with danger to the interests of Western Australia. One of the biggest dangers is that of undue influence and corruption, because the Government has not been prepared to separate itself, through the proper instrument—that is, an independent commission or board—from the granting of a licence or from dealings in a casino. It is open to the possibility of all kinds of backroom dealings, influence, and corruption. Do not think that is not a possibility. It is more than a possibility; it is a probability.

That those words have not come to fruition is probably not the right phrase, but certainly those risks at the time identified by Hon Bill Hassell have certainly, as we have seen down the road, created the necessity for the casino royal commission. We have also seen it in both Victoria and New South Wales. After much debate on the bill, it was passed. In November 1984, Brian Burke said that the 1983 report of the Government Casino Advisory Committee estimated revenue of between \$6 million and \$7 million for the government from casino tax. In 1985, an amendment to the Casino Control Act was made to make the employees of the committee public servants. Previously, they were members of the TAB, and therefore not public servants. Under the Public Service Act, there is more control over the members, regarding confidentiality and corruption.

In another bit of history, developer Dallas Dempster spoke to *The West Australian* in 2015 about how the casino was built. He said that it was during a time when WA was awash with money. The casino opened on 30 December 1985, at the time the largest in Australia and the third largest in the world. Dempster had long identified the Burswood site as a prime prospect of some sort. It was targeted at the Asian market, and the complex had to be world-class with a strict dress code. I suspect that the dress code has since deteriorated, minister. I look forward to the new minister making some changes in that direction.

Dr A.D. Buti: A sartorial address, member. You talked about the history of the establishment. If I can recall correctly, my father was a labourer on the building of the casino.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is that right?

Dr A.D. Buti: A bit of history there!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am glad to see that as he built it, it seems to be standing up pretty well. As I said, I look forward to the minister's contribution as far as reinstating the standard of dress, because when I was there, some few Saturday nights ago, it was quite concerning in some ways.

Dr A.D. Buti: I hope there were no farmers coming in their shorts and singlets?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: No! I was well dressed on the occasion, thanks, minister. It was interesting, just noting the strict dress code.

The Burke government decided to suddenly call for a re-tender on the \$320 million project. We are struggling to find out why, but, as we know, there was some wheeling and dealing back in those days. When the casino opened, it posted a gross profit of \$1 million a day for its first two months. It is certainly interesting to see some of those figures. I recall at the time, although I probably was not paying a lot of attention to it, some of the controversies about the financing to the site and some other issues. Of course later we saw the ownership arrangements over time.

The opposition has no issue with the strengthening of the regulatory framework, considering the previous one has been in place for a long time with little scrutiny. We found that when those who purport to uphold the integrity of the framework start to work outside it, they get away with more and more until the lines of influence and corruption become merged. Until light is shed on these influences, those who are within the flawed and accepted system may not have the ability to perceive the wrong that they are perpetuating. That does not go just for the casino; many other places have people who are well entrenched in their organisation who cannot see the wood for the trees. That is where this bill will help with that perception.

At first glance, this bill, although supported by members on this side, follows closely the ideals of this government and it will give the minister extraordinary power. I hope the minister will act with a strong sense of responsibility.

Dr A.D. Buti: Are you supportive of that?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: No. I look forward to the minister's strong sense of responsibility. The bill will give him the powers to appoint the chairperson and the independent monitor, who, independently will also have limitless power. That will need to be clarified during either the minister's response or through consideration in detail. Certainly, although someone needs to take responsibility for the allocation of a casino licence—presumably that will be the minister—some checks and balances would be prudent to protect both the minister and the government of the time. Under this bill, and presumably the bills to follow, the minister will have the power to extend the remediation period, whether it has expired or not, and as many times as the minister considers necessary, to establish the office of the independent monitor and appoint an individual to the office of the independent monitor with no particular prerequisites outlined. What concerns me is whether that person has any links to government or unions, and what their history is, or the like.

Dr A.D. Buti: What about links to farming associations? Would that be a problem?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is another subject that I will be covering in an hour or two's time, so I look forward to the minister being in here to listen to that one. I am certainly concerned about the appointment and who that person will be. It will have to be someone of the highest integrity, with no background union affiliation.

Dr A.D. Buti: Why would it be a problem to have a union affiliation?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I think we need independence and integrity away from this government.

Dr A.D. Buti: If it was a former judge who was once upon a time a union official, is that a problem?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Possibly not.

Dr A.D. Buti: What if they are a former judge and were once a member of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association; would that be a problem?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I think I will continue with my contribution.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, minister!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: There are a lot of hypotheticals coming in here from the minister.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, minister.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am open to seeing the background of who is appointed as the independent monitor. As I said, the opposition just wants to outline its concerns. We have seen the track record and we want someone of the highest integrity. The minister will also have the power to determine the remuneration of the independent monitor on the recommendation of the Public Sector Commissioner. The minister may decide whether to publish the final report from the independent monitor on the department's website, which questions the transparency of the remediation process. That is something, minister, that I think is important, considering we have had a royal commission and what has happened over the last couple of years. That is an opportunity for the minister to improve the transparency of this government and the transparency of the processes, so I look forward to that.

The minister will have the power to appoint the independent monitor. Following this appointment, the independent monitor will have extraordinary powers. Members should bear in mind that at this point the legislation, as I have pointed out, gives no clue about the background or qualifications of the independent monitor. Anything, any power or duty, the independent monitor wants to delegate to a member of their staff—or any staff member from what I can make of it—is allowed. The independent monitor will approve the proposed remediation plan submitted by the licensee if it is up to scratch. Once approved, the remediation plan will be given to the Minister for Racing and Gaming and the Gaming and Wagering Commission. The commission will not be bound by the opinion of the independent monitor’s final report. But the independent monitor will have the power to give anyone a direction requiring them to comply with the notice within a specified time, despite any claim of confidence or privilege.

The independent monitor will be able to enter a place that is a part of the Burswood Casino at any time and inspect the place, make any investigation that is relevant to the independent monitor’s functions, and require a person at the place to produce a record or other thing in the possession or under the control of the person that is likely to be relevant to the independent monitor’s function. My question is: will this put employees who are following orders from the top at risk? There is a fine further down in the bill of \$50 000 if a person hinders or obstructs the independent monitor or another person assisting in the exercise. Potentially, the independent monitor or their employee could wander in and say to someone working at one of the tables in the Burswood Casino: “Provide me with this information.” There will be a conflict there if other information is coming down to them from their employer. Will they be fined \$50 000 because they have obstructed the independent monitor?

The independent monitor will be able to examine any record or thing. As I said, it can also be done by anyone on the independent monitor’s staff. That is a concern to me because the prospective judge might be the independent monitor, but one of their staff may not have the same qualifications or integrity or the like. From my interpretation, they could appoint that staff member to go into the casino and ask for whatever they like at any time. Not only that, either the independent monitor or their member of staff will also be able to attend a meeting of the governing body of the Burswood Casino licensee or any other relevant person. They could just wander into the board meeting of the licensee. Not only can the independent monitor wander in, the employee or staff member of the independent monitor can wander in. Therefore, I look forward to the minister’s explanation on that one. It opens up a can of worms when a staff member could potentially attend a board meeting of the licensee.

The other question from me, minister, before I gradually close down, is: considering the power of the office of the independent monitor will there be any method of appeal or a complaints process that the licensee can issue in regard to the actions of the independent monitor? Will they be able to go back through the minister or the Gaming and Wagering Commission and so forth? That is a question that I would be curious to have a response to.

From my interpretation, the current members of the Gaming and Wagering Commission are of high quality. Lanie Chopping is the ex officio chair at the moment, and there are some very good quality members on the current Gaming and Wagering Commission, so I certainly look forward to them doing an excellent job.

That brings me to a bugbear of mine. As the minister knows, the current government arrangement of these mega-departments has been very difficult, as was proven in the royal commission, for members such as the previous director general when they are trying to handle a department with five or six different ministers or five or six different elements to that department, it is just too much to ask for them to have the training and the skills to handle that. Therefore, that is a real weakness of this government. These mega-departments that have appeared as part of the machinery-of-government changes are a really good example of what has gone wrong. It is just too much of a challenge to expect these directors general —

Dr A.D. Buti: Member, do you know a lot of the issues that were raised in the royal commission actually occurred prior to this government being in power? It actually occurred under your watch? A lot of the issues raised by the royal commission occurred under your watch, before this government.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I hear what you are saying, minister. What I am talking about goes right back through from, as I said, 1985 when the Burswood Casino was first established. But what I am referring to are some of the challenges of the mega-departments of this current government. This was just one method that we saw coming through the ranks and a challenge that our directors general and a variation of departments are up against.

Dr A.D. Buti: In regard to the bill, it happened prior to the amalgamations.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: There are always issues that flow through from one government to another; I acknowledge that. I want to point out that the qualities of the current director general are very good in her role as ex officio chair until other appointments are made. I recognise that and I also recognise the quality of the current members of the Gaming and Wagering Commission. Their skills are more than suitable, on most occasions, for their role.

I have a couple of other final questions about the briefings with Blackstone that I want to ask the minister to answer in his second reading response. How many briefings have there been? What has the response been like? What is the timetable for Blackstone taking up the licence, and what are the mechanics of that? What consultation has the minister and his department had with Blackstone? Obviously, Blackstone is a massive outfit, so I am curious about the response, the consultation and the timetable that it will be working to when taking over the licence.

One other thing I want to point out is something the minister said in his second reading speech. Obviously, the penalties have been well and truly strengthened. The independent monitor will potentially have the ability to impose a maximum penalty of up to \$250 000 for hindering or obstructing the monitor, and a \$50 000 penalty for providing false or misleading evidence, which I referred to earlier on. There is also the ability for the independent monitor's costs to be recouped from the Burswood Casino licensee, which I understand is an approach similar to that taken in New South Wales and Victoria. However, in his second reading speech, the minister pointed out —

... clause 5, which amends section 21B of the Casino Control Act 1984, will increase the maximum penalty available under the act tenfold, from \$100 000 to \$100 million.

That is actually, I think, 10 000-fold; tenfold would take it from \$100 000 to \$1 million.

Dr A.D. Buti: You can see in the bill what it is.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Just something there to perhaps correct the record in the second reading speech.

In winding up, from our perspective, the opposition obviously discussed this bill in the party room and we think it is important that, in light of the royal commission, we support it. However, I certainly have a few questions, as I pointed out. It is a very unusual scenario for this type of independent monitor, but that is a recommendation of the Gaming and Wagering Commission. It probably also extends to staff members and how they can have the same powers when they may not have the same qualities, qualifications or integrity. That is a concern for me, but I look forward to the minister's response. I think the people of Western Australia will look forward to the next phase. Certainly, there will be other pieces of legislation over time; the minister has already referred to that. I am interested in the timetable for that as well and how it will roll out over the coming months. I will leave my contribution there. Thank you.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [3.52 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Casino Legislation Amendment (Burswood Casino) Bill 2022. I say at the outset that I think the member for Roe is a genuinely decent bloke.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Point of order!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I think he is a good bloke, but I have to say that on this occasion, I do not think he understands the bill that he just spoke to. The minister was not trying to lead the member astray with his interjections on the points the member was trying to make on the machinery-of-government changes. The minister was trying to make the point that the machinery-of-government changes have no bearing whatsoever on the findings that were made by the Perth Casino Royal Commission, or the recommendations it made, which are being considered in the debate on this bill today. I will briefly explain why that is the case.

Mr P.J. Rundle: I'll share this article afterwards.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Wait until I am finished, and we will see whether we can educate the member for Roe! The issue is not about mega-departments or whatever language the member wants to use. One of the issues that is dealt with in this bill is a recommendation of the royal commission that the director general of the department should not also be ex officio chair of the Gaming and Wagering Commission. It does not matter what the composition of the department is; whatever alphabet soup comes after "department", the point is that the director general of the department that has regulatory functions in relation to the casino and to gaming and wagering activities in Western Australia is also the ex officio chair of the Gaming and Wagering Commission. It does not matter what the department was called 10 years ago or what other responsibilities fell under the director general's purview 10 years ago, five years ago or five days ago. The issue is that the director general of the department that has regulatory and budgeting responsibilities in relation to the Gaming and Wagering Commission is also ex officio chair of the Gaming and Wagering Commission.

To understand why that is an issue, one actually has to understand the fee structure and budgetary relationship between the department and the Gaming and Wagering Commission. The Gaming and Wagering Commission, as it presently stands, does not have its own staff or its own infrastructure. Instead, the department provides staff and resources to carry out the functions of the Gaming and Wagering Commission, and it then charges a service fee to the commission in recognition of taking on those responsibilities on behalf of the Gaming and Wagering Commission. The royal commission found that that puts the director general of the department into an unavoidable conflict of interest, because as the director general of the department, they have to carry out their responsibility to make sure that the department is charging for the services it provides and getting best value for money for the services that it provides and is recouping from the Gaming and Wagering Commission. But as ex officio chair of the Gaming and Wagering Commission, the same person has a responsibility to ensure that they are not being overcharged or taken advantage of by the department. If the member for Roe had read the report of the royal commission, he would know that it makes the point that that is clearly a conflict of interest. It is nothing to do with the composition of various government agencies; it is to do with the fact that there is a conflict of interest in the role of an individual being both director general of the department and ex officio chair of the Gaming and Wagering Commission.

The royal commission found that that is the case not only for the director general; there is also the department's chief finance officer acting as the Gaming and Wagering Commission's chief finance officer, so the same officer

draws up the budgeted service fee that the department charges the Gaming and Wagering Commission, and is also responsible for providing advice to the Gaming and Wagering Commission about the financial implications of the fee that they have budgeted for the department. That person cannot therefore possibly give independent advice, because they are the person who budgeted for the fee in the first place.

That was one of the points made by the royal commission, and that is why the bill makes provision for the appointment of an independent chair. That is what the minister was trying to get at. I obviously do not expect the opposition to take advice from me, but when I practised as a lawyer—I am sure the minister will agree with this—I was taught to not make every point you can just because you can make them, because that weakens the value of the points that are worth making. Making in this debate the same point that the member makes in other debates about so-called mega-departments and what he sees as the policy failures of those machinery-of-government changes creates the impression that he does not actually understand the purpose of this bill, its provisions and what was recommended by the royal commission. They are chalk and cheese; they simply have nothing to do with one another. I have outlined the reasons that there is now an identified conflict of interest in the role of the director general and their role as the ex officio chair, and I want to make it clear that there is no suggestion that there has been any impropriety by any individual. The point is that the current regulatory regime puts that person in that position of conflict of interest. They cannot escape from it because of the dual responsibilities that they hold.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

MINISTERS — PERFORMANCE

Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [4.00 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the Premier to sack his incompetent ministers after a winter recess that has exposed a raft of delivery failures in key portfolios at a time of record windfalls.

We have started this conversation in the chamber over the last two days about a number of ministers who have been under pressure and the cracks in the McGowan Labor government's cabinet that have started to emerge over the winter recess. Members, we have a Premier with parliamentary strength, I think it is fair to say, with numbers that we have never seen before. The same Premier is also the Treasurer and has a massive budget surplus at his fingertips. Over the last five years, I can safely say that we have seen this government and its MPs become more arrogant, more dismissive and more caught up in spin than substance than I think I have ever seen. The last two days have been particularly disappointing because there has been an attitude of almost derisiveness in discussions on the serious matters that we as the opposition have raised—serious issues like crime in the north west of the state and other matters that impact the people and communities that we all seek to represent.

This government has been in power for five and a half years. The Minister for Health was moved on after completely failing to get a handle on bed block, ambulance ramping at record highs—that has continued under the next Minister for Health—and resourcing issues, whereby we saw cuts to operational funding in our health service that were not matched with the reforms that were needed to be undertaken as recommended by the sustainable health review. That has delivered some of the most challenging circumstances that have been then added to by COVID. The Minister for Water, who was probably the only minister that an industry found more challenging than the current Minister for Agriculture and Food—I am referring to the Minister for Water in his former capacity as the Minister for Fisheries—managed to alienate an entire sector over his handling of the rock lobster industry. Aside from those two and a couple of shuffles after the last election, there has really been little change in the portfolio line-up. A minister really has to do something pretty terrible to lose their portfolio, it would appear. The scale of what is pretty terrible is hard to determine. We will go through what has emerged in some of these portfolios during this period and ask: What does a minister actually need to do? What does a minister need to do to get the “Don't come in on Monday” letter from the Premier?

Over the winter recess, we seemed to see a bit of a tipping point. No matter what the Premier believes, he cannot continue to provide that cover and defend ministers without some of that shine that has been with him for the last five years coming off. It will have an impact because, as the Premier, he will not be able to go out and prosecute the positive stories that we know the Premier likes to associate himself with, whether in his portfolios or everyone else's—a point of contention I am aware of amongst his own cabinet ministers—but also he will be defending and providing that cover for ministers who probably really need to move on. He will have backbenchers starting to say, “I reckon I could do a bit better.” If he continues to blindly back those loyal lieutenants who have been a part of that central McGowan power structure within the Labor Party, I think that it will start to grate on those who can see these fumbles and gaffes from senior members of the Labor government. It really must grate when those blunders and mistakes earn the defence of the Premier and it poses the question, as I said before: what does a minister actually have to do to be moved on from a portfolio?

Further to this, we have also become aware over the winter recess that there will be a number of ministers stepping down at the next election. That includes Minister Ellery and Minister MacTiernan; however, we understand that they will continue to hold plum jobs in the cabinet, although it was questionable when we asked the Premier

yesterday whether Minister MacTiernan would have that job for the remainder of this period. There was definitely not an emphatic, “Yes, Minister MacTiernan will be a member of my cabinet until 2025.” That was left a little open. I wonder whether that minister has come to the end of the line with her cabinet portfolios.

I do not pretend for one moment to understand the machinations inside the Labor Party, the way unions work and how ministers are selected. I know it happens, and there is a dark art and science that I am sure most do not want to share with the general public. But I do know that the unions and certain factions get a responsibility to make sure that their representatives are in the cabinet. I suspect that is part of the answer as to why we do not see certain ministers being shifted off; I think another part is definitely loyalty from the Premier’s perspective, so he cannot shift some of the people he wants to and he will not shift some of the people he needs to. The problem is that it is the people of Western Australia who will ultimately suffer, because we have ministers who are not doing their job effectively. We have a destructive government and a destructive Premier.

The Premier’s unwillingness to see the failings of his ministers means that he will have to keep defending them instead of getting out on the front foot and talking about policy and government achievements and actually working on some of the challenges that we in this chamber are constantly talking about—there are many—and his unwillingness to move these ministers on means that there is an inability to control the narrative, as there has been for the last three years, particularly with the cover of COVID. That is a fair observation. In COVID, as in any emergency situation, people naturally look to those in power, and the Premier was at the head of that. But now that we have shifted from the most immediate emergency of COVID, that cover is diminishing, and people are starting to look more closely at what exactly is being delivered by this government. Does it match the rhetoric? Does it match the promises that have been made? Where are the cracks that are starting to emerge?

For the record, I think it is important that we talk about what we think are the basics of a good and functioning government. What are the basics in the important business of governing? From my perspective, a strong and sustainable health system is one of the fundamentals for a state government to get right. Other basics include a housing sector that provides a safety net for those who are in most need or in crisis; affordable entry-level housing for those who are aspirational and want to grow their own personal wealth and security over their lifetime; and a private sector that offers a diversity of options that means we do not have some of the issues that we are facing at the moment. I think that the basics also include an education system that means we have a teacher in front of every classroom and resources to deal with the complex issues that we know our schools and our families face on a daily basis, and a safe and secure community that has not only a well-resourced police service, but also all those other functions that prevent people from ending up entering the corrective services system, into our detention centres and jails and prisons, diverts them away from those pathways and provides the support that is needed. From my perspective, I think the expectation of the public for a good and successful government is that they get the basics of health, education, housing and safety elements right.

Of course, it is more complex than this. People in other sectors will say, “What about this?”, and I am not dismissing that, but there are fundamentals that state governments have to get right. I will go through some issues that portfolio holders and cabinet ministers have had responsibility for, but on any assessment of what has happened over the last five years, by any measure, there are significant failures that need to be addressed. My colleagues will go into this in far more depth, but, from my perspective, this is about providing an overview of why we think there is a real challenge ahead for this government and why there is a need for the Premier to discontinue the defence of the indefensible and allow some of the others sitting on the back bench who are competent to come forward and refresh the cabinet.

Minister Sanderson took over the health portfolio and now has the dubious honour of overseeing the highest levels of ambulance ramping ever in the state’s history. That is correct, is it not, member for Vasse? I think it was around 7 000 hours last month—or just a touch under. That is nearly 10 times what it was when we were in government, and we had the shadow health minister at the time saying, “This is an unmitigated crisis; the health system is broken”, yet now we have 10 times the amount of ramping.

The ambulance ramping started under the previous Minister for Health, and that was very early in the piece. It was raised again and again by the then opposition, by the AMA, by health workers and by the nurses union, and this was well before COVID arrived in Western Australia. Those challenges in the health system were identifiable. Anyone who understands the health system knows that when you start to get ramping, there are issues that need to be dealt with down the line. The red flags, or the canary in the coalmine—whatever you want to call it—were ignored by the government very early in the piece, as was the sustainable health review. That is another one that has been shelved, with very little attention given to it. I go back to earlier comments I made both here and outside this chamber: if you are going to go through a review process, it comes with a price tag. To my understanding, this government cut the operational funds for our health system without doing the reforms that would improve efficiencies and safety in our hospitals and health services. That is not reform; it is simply coming in and cutting funding, and that is why, among other reasons, we have ended up with such an enormous challenge in the hospital system.

Under this government, we have seen rallies on a number of occasions. One sticks in my memory. The Perth Children’s Hospital nurses, the AMA and the nurses union—I am happy to be corrected, but I do not think that is something

that had happened before—all came together to say, “We’ve had enough. We have absolutely reached our tipping point, and we need change.” There can be no doubt that there is a crisis in the health system, and the problems are compounded in the regional areas of Western Australia.

I asked the minister today, going specifically to an issue that I know is impacting a community in regional WA right now, to guarantee that the maternity services at Carnarvon hospital will be returned in full. Not only do we have these enormous issues, compounding problems and resourcing issues in the metro, but, from February this year, 71 mothers have been forced to travel from the Gascoyne, Carnarvon and surrounding areas to deliver their babies in either Geraldton or Perth—71 families! Most often that means mothers having to leave their family. They can travel with one family member, but if they already have kids they have to find somewhere for them to stay. They have to pay for accommodation and travel. Some of that is reimbursed, but not all of it. More of a problem, I think, is that they are forced, at a very challenging time, when they are about to give birth, to be away from their family and their support network. Then, immediately after having given birth and having spent the first couple of days in hospital, they have to travel a significant distance to get back home. I cannot imagine what that is like; I am not even going to pretend to be able to, but I do not imagine it is something we would say is best practice when dealing with a newborn baby and a family who need to be together. I think that is unacceptable. That is just one isolated issue that I raise very briefly in my contribution, but I am sure that each member sitting on this side of the chamber could raise at least 10 examples from their own electorates. We need to have these issues treated with some urgency to do everything we can to make sure we have a functioning health service.

In relation to housing, we have a Minister for Housing who has no houses, having sold 1 300 houses upon coming into government. Yesterday, when asked directly whether the 1 300 houses had been replaced, the minister danced around the question. There was no clear answer on that. There was absolutely no: “Yes, we have returned those 1 300 houses to housing stock in Western Australia”. It was far from comforting to listen to the Minister for Housing’s answer yesterday. That is what this government does. When it does not want to answer the question or does not think the answer will be palatable to the community, we see the avoidance of responsibility.

I will give an example from regional Western Australia. There is a plethora of other issues, including those surrounding homelessness in our metropolitan areas but also in our regions; the lack of a social housing pipeline; and the failure to manage the challenges we are facing—particularly in regional WA. I want to point out a real issue on which the minister could drive some change tomorrow if there was actually a desire to do so. My colleagues, both Liberal and National, have travelled through the North West Central electorate, as we have candidates in the upcoming by-election, something the Labor Party has chosen not to do. In a recent visit to both Kalbarri and Exmouth, I would have to say the number one issues on the agenda for every key stakeholder and member of the community are workforce shortages and housing shortages. They are the two issues that are consistent among every group we talk to. In both Kalbarri and Exmouth, but for different reasons, there is a real challenge in finding accommodation for those who provide support services in the tourism industry and also small business.

Workers’ accommodation is the perfect solution for this. It allows the community to rebalance and private sector investment to be made, but the reality is that, without government intervention, there is not going to be a workers’ accommodation project. I know the member for Moore has more to say in relation to the Kalbarri experience. All I can say is that land has been identified repeatedly in both areas by both local governments, and there has been a tender process for at least one of them, but without the government stepping in to provide support for services and take a stake in housing projects, I cannot see—though I am happy to be proven wrong—the private sector stepping in to do this off its own bat. This needs government intervention, and it needs to happen now. It should have happened much sooner in Kalbarri, as should the emergency housing that that community, along with Northampton, was promised after cyclone Seroja. Workers accommodation is a real and lasting legacy that this government can make.

I often hear the things that this government believes we fell short on when we were in government. In the Pilbara, when we came to government, there was a shocking situation in which there had been no planning and no servicing of blocks. We had record high rents and record high housing prices. We had people in caravans, piled on top of each other, and sleeping in driveways simply so that they could continue to take advantage of the great opportunity of working in the mining sector. The government had utterly failed to manage the growth of those communities. When we came to government, we had to deal with the backlog that was left behind by the Carpenter and Gallop governments and invest in a whole raft of different remediations, which included workers’ accommodation that is still used today. This government could do that tomorrow. It could simply say that it will not go through the tender process but have a stake in building the accommodation facility itself instead of relying on the private sector to come to the market. The cost of developing the land up there, putting in the services and then finding the right product prices out most of the private sector in getting a return on its investment. That is why many local governments in regional Western Australia often end up being the developer of last resort in their communities. That can be changed by the government taking a different approach. I put that on the record in the context of the electorate of North West Central.

Also, from an electorate point of view, it is interesting that the Premier had a conversation last night, which he talked about today, at the event that was held in Parliament House with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. CBH was up here celebrating its enormous success of last year’s massive grain crop of 24 million tonnes. There was a celebration on that front to say what a great achievement that was for the state of Western Australia and what an

exciting time it was to be involved in the agriculture industry. The Premier spent much of his time addressing the audience talking about himself and his family. I think he missed the point that people in the industry and the sector were trying to make; that is, they were there to talk about the next 25 to 30 years for the industry and the fact that it requires government support to invest in infrastructure to enable us to take advantage of that and to be a real player in not only domestic food security, but also international food security. Although there was appreciation for the Premier's attendance at that function last night, which was co-hosted by CBH and the Minister for Agriculture and Food, the Premier needs to scratch a little bit deeper when he has these types of conversations and listen to what industry is saying. The one thing that came out of the conversation after that event was that housing is going to be one of the biggest inhibitors for that industry to be able to deliver the infrastructure and the people that it wants living in the region to support the growth that it knows is coming in this amazing industry. That is the conversation we should be having—how we plan for the future of the mining industry and the agriculture sector. Both those ministers do not have the capacity to have the conversation with industry; firstly, because Minister MacTiernan has got everyone in that sector offside to the point that they do not want to engage; and, secondly, because I am not sure that this minister, because he has failed to engage in the workers' accommodation discussion in other areas where there is acute need, has the capacity to look at this in a strategic way for the agricultural sector.

Before I sit down, I will also touch on the Attorney General. We have had a bit of a discussion recently about the Attorney General's performance over the last five years. As we all know, he was a lawyer before entering Parliament, as he is still, and is now the chief law officer of this state. He has earned himself many column inches and talkback minutes. Although no-one would deny that the Attorney General brings a reform approach to his portfolio and has been prolific with the legislation that has been brought before this house, I know that everybody agrees and accepts that the bar is necessarily higher for the person who holds the role of Attorney General. That person is the chief law officer of the state. The bar is set high for the integrity, accountability and performance of the person who is in that role. It is very important.

Quite frankly, on some occasions the Attorney General's judgement has been atrocious. We saw him jump in a private helicopter with Mr John Poynton, a former Crown director, during or just post an inquiry into Crown casino. Friend or not, a minister's judgement in an incident like that needs to be, "It would be nice to do it but I'm not going to because it's not going to look great." Perception, whether it is real or not, is everything in the role that ministers hold. The bar is higher. That incident would never pass the pub test. In this case, I do not think the Attorney General has ever conceded that it was the wrong thing to do. He kept his job. In the middle of the COVID pandemic, as we have heard previously, when the Premier, the Minister for Health, the Chief Health Officer, the Vaccine Commander and the WA Commissioner of Police told everyone that they needed to wear their masks and stay safe, we saw the Attorney General attend a big public function without a mask. He was fined. It was not a small incident; he was actually fined. Members of the public who were required to do the same thing and did not want to do that were also fined. Again, the bar is set very high for the Attorney General. He is one person in the government who needs to set an example, along with the Premier. He is a senior member of cabinet. He had a really poor sense of judgement on that occasion.

Honestly—I think this is a fair question—what do ministers have to do to get dismissed from this cabinet? When a Federal Court judge described the Attorney General's performance in evidence in a Federal Court as having flipped and flopped and then flipped again, it was far from a resounding endorsement of capacity. It is definitely a reflection on what was a fairly sorry state of affairs. The Attorney General was forced to return to the court to again provide evidence. He directly contradicted himself and was found to be not reliable by a Federal Court judge. *The West Australian's* Peter Law pondered exactly the question that I have just posed to this house, which is: what do you have to do to get the "Don't come Monday" from the Premier? On 4 August, he wrote —

Labor insiders say this strong backing is a legacy of a failed coup to replace McGowan with former Federal minister Stephen Smith as party leader in 2016.

That entire opinion piece was very interesting. I might just read a little more. He went on to say —

At the same time as the Premier was telling reporters to "move on" from MacTiernan's "clumsy" playing down of the foot and mouth disease threat, sources said the pair had a heated clash at Labor's annual caucus retreat in Karratha.

In that whole article there were references to Labor insiders and Labor sources. He then described what happened, as he was told by Labor sources. We all have them in our parties, but I have to say that over the last four years, the Labor Party has been very disciplined in its discussions outside of caucus and outside of its party room. That is one of the things that has kept the government together. When we start to see those lines written more and more in the media, good luck to the journalists and well done to them for having people who are willing to share that information. It is an interesting part of the role we play. We absolutely know that fault lines are running through the Labor government and cabinet.

In relation to the fight that the Premier and Minister MacTiernan were having, that was about whether the Labor Party should run a candidate in the North West Central by-election that we are currently in the middle of.

Mr R.S. Love: What was the result?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The Premier, because the Premier always wins, as we are told, won that argument. Minister MacTiernan, the Minister for Regional Development, who had a candidate waiting in the wings, was told that that would not be happening and was overridden. We can imagine that that did not go down well. It has not gone down that well in the electorate. They do not understand and, in fact, see it as the Labor Party and this government turning their back on those communities.

We have all heard over a number of months and years of the challenges that they are facing and also the opportunities and aspirations that those communities have to do better. I think that gets lost in the argument that when a local member brings those things to Parliament and asks those questions, they are asking them on behalf of their community. Quite frankly, the way the government has responded to some of those questions, whether it was the former member for North West Central, myself or others who have been asking those questions, the respect that we would expect when we are doing that on behalf of our community was simply not there. It is very disappointing. It has flowed right through to Labor making the decision that it would not enter the fight and has no interest in representing that electorate. I think that is very poor form.

Obviously there are some challenges in managing a party with the large number of members this government has. That was always going to be the case. An unfortunate part of that is we have some serious challenges facing our state, but we also have the capacity to respond quickly. We have more financial capacity than any state in the nation. We have the ability to respond, if legislative reform is required. We saw that happen with the rubber stamping of a Labor pet project that needed to be rammed through Parliament—electoral reform being a case in point. Changes can be delivered very quickly if there is a political desire to do so. What we will see, I think, is more and more disruption and destruction within Labor ranks.

The last point I will talk to briefly as I know some of my colleagues will pick up on it. It relates to Minister Johnston and Minister MacTiernan. Much has been spoken about Minister MacTiernan, so I will leave that to someone else. I want to put on record my thoughts about Minister Johnston's responsibility in the handing down of the FIFO report from the inquiry chaired by the member for Vasse but also supported by a number of his own government members. When the member for Vasse delivered the committee's report to the chamber, the minister was, I assume, called away on urgent parliamentary business. It was a very poor look not to be in the chamber to receive what was a groundbreaking report that has serious implications for the sector he has responsibility for in terms of regulatory responsibility.

The member for Vasse and I were at a forum a couple of weeks ago that was hosted by the Chamber of Minerals and Energy. It was an outward showing, at least, that there was a willingness to have this open discussion—uncomfortably, I imagine—around what needs to be done from an industry perspective. It was disappointing that no-one from government was represented in that room. Certainly, when I have heard Minister Johnston speaking on this matter all of the onus in his eyes is on industry. I have no issue that industry has responsibility for keeping its house in order and it needs to provide safe workplaces. I do not want anyone to misunderstand me when I say what I am about to say. One of the points made at this forum by Kate Jenkins, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, was that the regulatory and policing role of government is equally as important as industry's role, otherwise we would expect everyone in Western Australia to do the right thing. When people get in their cars they would put on their seat belts; they would not break into houses; and we would not need the police. I have not heard Minister Johnston take responsibility for the role that the regulator has in this. The commissioner's words were telling: it is incredibly important to have an effective regulator. That comes under the immediate responsibility of Minister Johnston. That is a failure of the minister and one that needs to be addressed. It is the elephant in the room. The minister cannot make strong comments about industry and not then back them up by acknowledging the government has a role to play, which is directly the minister's responsibility. That needs to be addressed.

We could touch on a number of issues with other ministers, but no doubt when the government comes back with its answer, there will be grab bag of criticisms dredged up about the previous Liberal–National government, because that is how this government operates in this place. Members should remember that this government has been here for five years. This government is in charge. This government has unprecedented numbers in this place and a budget surplus that allows it to shift things at a very quick pace. Expectations have been high in the community, and the bar should be a very high for someone to make it into cabinet, with the amount of power that this government has. Quite frankly, a couple of ministers need to go immediately.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.33 pm]: I join the Leader of the Opposition in debate on this motion. It is fascinating when members sit on this side. We are busy most of the time because of the small number of members and the body of work that has to be done as an opposition. It was interesting today to hear the Premier try to make some pathetic comparison between the number of shadow portfolios we hold and the number of ministries held by certain ministers. Clearly, it is an arithmetic reality for us. We all know that a minister has a significant formal workload above and beyond that of a shadow minister. It is interesting, looking at the Premier's body language and hearing his response. He is the Premier of this state and he has record high popularity. He is ascendant in Parliament, which is historic for a Labor government. He has absolute control of both houses of Parliament. He could institute constitutional amendments in the Parliament of his own volition with

his own numbers. Yet what do we see the Premier do? To say that his language is unparliamentary is a considerable understatement. We just hear slurs and insults from the Premier to this side. Because he is unable to defend his ministers, he responds by making puerile childish insults to members on this side. That is not the way a Premier behaves. It is not the way we would expect a Premier with that level of public and parliamentary support to behave, but that is all he resorts to. Before I came into this chamber, a couple of former members of Parliament spoke to me. Hon Cheryl Edwardes and Hon Richard Court gave me some coaching and guidance on how I could go about this role. One of the things they said was to stay in the chamber, observe body language, behaviour and the interactions of people. When I observed the Premier's body language, which I did yesterday during question time and the matter of public interest, and again today in question time, it was clear that the Premier is deeply embarrassed by the poor performance of a number of his ministers. I can see it on his face.

Ms S.F. McGurk: Time and time again you show your emotional intelligence.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I can tell the minister that time and again I see a Premier who looks frustrated and angry at your poor performance and that of other members in this place who cannot even answer questions.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: We have the Minister for Community Services today with a Dorothy Dixier. What was the substantive part of her answer? It was what the previous government did. The government has been in power for five years and I can tell the minister that I have visited those communities in the north during the time I have been here. What has happened every time I have been there, minister? The crime rate is worse; the dysfunction is worse. There are more children on the streets and more children not going to school. The minister is not doing her job. The minister loves to talk about her programs. She loves to talk about the Target 120 program and the Target 120 Plus program. What I have seen on the ground in those communities is heartbreaking. It gives me no pleasure to say that. Minister, I desperately and genuinely hope that those programs work, but what I see after five years of this government are communities with substantially greater dysfunction than when I first came into this place.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Member, can I suggest that, like me, you get out and visit those communities.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Dr D.J. HONEY: If the member went to Carnarvon today —

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Dr D.J. HONEY: If the member went to Carnarvon today, she would see dozens and dozens of school-age children on the street and not at school, and no-one is doing anything about it. Today there would be dozens of them, as there was the last two times I was there in recent history. It is heartbreaking. It breaks my heart to see those children not having a future. We saw the Minister for Housing today. He got up to give an answer because he had to redo his answer to the question I asked yesterday with a Dorothy Dixier from a member on his own side, because he could not answer it properly yesterday. His prepared answer today proved that even by the end of this year, the government will not have replaced the number of houses that have been sold. The Minister for Police, in some conflated effort today, tried to say that our criticism of him is a criticism of the police. As I pointed out by interjection and will say now as part of my contribution, members on this side hold the police in high regard. I worked closely with the police for six and a half years of my career. I have deep respect for the police and the work they have to do and for the job they do. I do not have deep respect for the job the Minister for Police is doing because he is clearly failing those communities.

Most of all today we saw the Minister for Corrective Services carrying out some union fight in Parliament. He gave us some detailed legal opinion on whether a secretary of a particular union is legitimately in their position. I am a student and I like to study. One of the things I looked at was the WA Labor website and its page on affiliated unions. The last entry on that page is the Western Australian Prison Officers' Union of Workers and its secretary is Andy Smith, the very person that the minister went to some lengths to launch quite a vitriolic attack against using our Parliament's time. But the Labor Party's website says that it is an affiliated union. If it is so bad, why is it affiliated with the Labor Party? Clearly, the minister has raised an issue there, but that official website also says that he is the secretary of that union. As I say, I am not quite sure what was going on there, but, clearly, not all is happy under the Labor tent with the unions.

In a past life in opposition, the current Premier said that ministers should not be overloaded. Back in 2013, it was reported —

The Opposition Leader Mark McGowan has called on the Deputy Premier Kim Hames to resign from one of his ministerial portfolios.

Because he held both the health and tourism portfolios, he should resign. Back in 2013, the Premier thought it was important that ministers were not overloaded with various portfolios. I will not go through the whole article because there is too much ground to cover, but ambulance ramping levels were the basis for saying that. Ambulance ramping was under 1 000 hours, but Mark McGowan thought that that minister should resign from one of his portfolios. The current Minister for Health is overseeing almost 8 000 hours of ambulance ramping and, yet, that minister is still in their job. What a farce!

Ms L. Mettam: It is almost 7 000 hours.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I apologise and stand corrected. It is almost 7 000 hours; it is almost a moot point, member. I will not go on because I know that the member for Vasse will cover this, but I thought it was fascinating that the then opposition leader would call for the Minister for Health at the time to give up a portfolio when his own minister at the moment is overseeing ramping that is seven times greater than it was back then. Nevertheless, he has clearly gone through some epiphany over the ensuing years.

It is fair to say that *The West Australian* has given this government a pretty good run. During the pandemic period, it provided strong support to and championed the Premier and the government. I think that twice there were cartoons of the Premier dressed in a superman costume saving the people of Western Australia in some metaphoric form. I do not think that members on the other side could say that *The West Australian* has been weaponised against them in any form or that it has been overly harsh, but the good journalists and the editor of *The West Australian* now see this government as becoming dysfunctional and failing the Premier in what he is trying to achieve in this state. The editorial —

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Dr D.J. HONEY: She is like a cocky.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Member for Belmont! Please, we do not need it. Can I honestly say that I allow a little bit of back and forth in these debates, but, Leader of the Liberal Party, you are technically breaching standing orders because you are not directing your comments through the chair.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Well —

The ACTING SPEAKER: No, I do not need the commentary about it. I allow some interjections in those circumstances, but, to the member for Belmont, it is repetitive and we do not need it.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The editorial in *The West* of 27 July 2022 states —

Almost 18 months into his second term as Premier and Mark McGowan still has the Midas touch.

They clearly think that the Premier is doing a good job —

He is undoubtedly the most popular leader in the country and WA Labor is still able to rely on his star power to deflect any negative headlines.

And that's a good thing, because those headlines are starting to come thick and fast as it becomes increasingly clear he's surrounded by subpar talent in his ministry.

The article goes on to talk about the issue of organised crime —

The union rightly warned that a decision like this “gives the impression that the prison —

This is about corrective services —

is actually run by criminal elements”.

It talks a little more about that later and then lists the other ministers who are failing the Premier.

Another article by Peter Law in *The West Australian* of Friday, 29 July nominally goes through to talk about Hon Alannah MacTiernan retiring at the next election. It also points out that a number of ministers in this government should be retired for the job that they are not doing in government. As I said, I do not think members on the other side could accuse *The West* of being unfairly harsh on them, but those journalists have seen what we see on this side—that is, ministers not doing their jobs.

I will not go on about health anymore because my colleague will talk about that. However, we will come across a number of portfolios and other speakers will talk about transport and Metronet. The Minister for Transport oversees 50 per cent of the government's capital spend and she is utterly failing to deliver. The Forrestfield–Airport Link is still held up. We hear all sorts of stories about why. It could be due to ventilation issues or that the government is incapable of attracting drivers. Nevertheless, it is a massive spend that has sucked up all the money that other ministers could be using to solve their problems.

I want to come to the Minister for Energy. From time to time, I make positive comments about members on the other side of the house. Some of my colleagues say that no, I should never do that or say something positive, but I have said in this place a number of times that Minister Johnston in his various guises is a hardworking minister. I suspect that he is probably the hardest working minister who has dedicated his life through the union and through Parliament in public service. I do not have a personal grudge against the minister and I respect the amount of work that that minister does, but it is very clear that the minister has too much work to do. As I pointed out today in question time in my supplementary question, there are 39 Labor members in this chamber, some of whom are not in the ministry but are in this chamber at the moment and are extremely capable. We have a minister who has been quite obviously overworked. Why can the Premier not take some of that workload and give it to some of the other people in this chamber who would currently have the time to take on that particular role? The energy portfolio of the Minister for Energy has obviously been a passion of his over a long time, like industrial relations, and an area that he has put a lot of focus on. But what do we see in terms of performance in the energy system? We see an energy system in decline. If we look at any measure of the electricity system that we have in this state, we will see it in decline. I will go through just a bit of this because, honestly, it is overwhelming to go through the whole lot and I do not have time to do that.

The Economic Regulation Authority has reported on the number of customers affected by extended interruptions, which is a power outage of 12 hours or more. Those figures rose from 45 000 in 2016–17 to 98 000 in 2019–20, which is not just some idle blip of statistics, and 70 000 last year. That is still 55 per cent higher than when our government was in power. In terms of rural and regional customers, the ERA talked about the standard average electricity outage duration being 290 minutes or nearly five hours. The result last year was about 1 700 minutes of interruptions, or over 28 hours. That is nearly six times higher than the expected minimum standard. The expected minimum standard for rural customers is substantially higher than what we accept in the metropolitan area. Again, regional customers are being treated as second-class citizens.

Yes, sometimes outages are caused by events. Cyclone Seroja had a significant impact. However, in the year before cyclone Seroja, there was nearly 1 400 minutes of interruptions. We have seen a massive increase above the accepted standard. We might even say that that increase is growing. As I have indicated from those statistics, the number of outages has increased quite dramatically.

For a minister who is passionate about this area, it is clear that he has not had time to put in the oversight to make sure that Western Power is doing its work. I have been through this in detail before, and I will not go through it in detail now, but if we look at the age of the network that the minister oversees through Western Power, we see that in almost every single category there has been a reduction in the amount of equipment that is less than five years old. In fact, the whole network is getting older. When we look at things like high-voltage insulators, switchgears, transformers and the like, we see that in every category the equipment is getting older. Therefore, it is no wonder that there are more power blackouts. It is not just because of acts of nature or other events. A quite remarkable storm came through a week or so ago when I was up at Diggers and Dealers. When storms like that come through, we accept that there will be a certain amount of damage.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: In almost every category, there has been a substantial reduction in reliability. If we take a broadbrush approach, the Minister for Energy has to make sure about two things: that there is good reliability of supply and that costs for customers are not too onerous. As I have said, we have seen a significant deterioration in reliability of supply. We have also seen continuing substantial increases in costs for customers.

We have had what I would call little election bribes. Before the state election, the government had put up electricity charges, but it then said, just before the election was held, that every household would be given \$600 for its power charges. That did not do much for people who are homeless and sleeping rough. It did not do much for the many people who cannot afford to buy their own home. However, it was effective and it partly went towards the election result that we saw. That trick had worked once, and, miraculously, just before the federal election, a \$400 bribe came out. That time it was not quite as much.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Dr D.J. HONEY: That was timed suspiciously, and I think deliberately, just before the federal election, again to entice voters. This has been underlined by a dramatic and substantial increase in connection fees. There was almost a doubling of connection fees in the first term of this government. It does not matter how much electricity people use; no-one can escape connection fees. We have also had increases in the cost of electricity that are significantly above the average run of inflation.

It is fascinating. I watched the press conference today—online, I should say, not in person—of the Premier and the Minister for Energy on different topics. The Minister for Energy said during that press conference that the government is going to fork out \$10 million to upgrade the electricity network and make it more reliable. This is in the context

of what the state government has allocated to Western Power to spend on maintenance. In the five years that this government has been in power, Western Power has underspent both its maintenance and capital budgets by about \$368 million. Western Power has also not paid any dividends for a couple of years, so it has hundreds of millions of dollars of retained dividends. How does \$10 million compare with that over \$300 million underspend? When I have raised this point in the chamber, the minister has said that Western Power does not have to spend that money; that is its indicative budget. This organisation is not maintaining the life of its assets. It is running them all down. We are seeing more blackouts. Surely the minister needs to intercede. As I have said, I suspect that this hardworking minister is distracted because he has too many portfolios. The conclusion is straightforward. The minister needs to shed some of those responsibilities, or one of those responsibilities at least, and focus on the work that he is doing.

We had the dreadful issue just before last Christmas of massive power blackouts across the state. As a consequence of that incident, the minister instituted an inquiry or review. That review took some time to come back. The review made some recommendations. In May, within a couple of days, there were two major power blackouts in Kalgoorlie. The minister told this chamber that nothing could have been done about that, because it is a long way from Kalgoorlie to Muja power station, which is effectively where the power comes from most of the time, and we have to expect that as the lines get longer, we will have blackouts. There is a 60-megawatt Synergy power station in Kalgoorlie that is supposed to provide backup power. We then heard all sorts of excuses from the minister about how it takes Western Power a long time to start up and switch over to that power station; it cannot get it up quickly. I thank the minister for allowing me to visit the Synergy power station. I found out subsequently from that visit, and also through budget estimates, that Synergy can have power going into the network in Kalgoorlie in 15 minutes—not all of it, but some power—and that in half an hour it can provide full power to that network. Furthermore, all the switching is automatic. It is not as though someone has to go out with a long wooden pole and try to move enormous dangerous switches. This is just people pressing buttons in a control room. The problem is that Synergy does not have any workers based in Kalgoorlie and has to rely on Western Power workers to help if there is a problem such as the plant will not start. Synergy told me that it can take up to 36 hours to get a technician from Perth to that station. In the terrible storm that came through Perth last week, when power was lost to the airport and so on, Kalgoorlie did not lose power. It had power the whole time. That is because the minister had given Synergy a direction that it should start up that reserve power station immediately the power from Perth goes out. I assume that Synergy had done that pre-emptively. Therefore, Kalgoorlie did not endure those power outages. For all those months and all that time, the Kalgoorlie community was at risk, and in May it was realised that it was because of that inaction by Western Power.

I now want to move to corrective services, which again is fertile ground. This is a portfolio that either the Minister for Corrective Services should give up, or the Premier should take away from him. We know that industrial relations is the minister's passion. He has told us that. We know that power and energy is also the minister's passion. I accept that that is an area in which the minister has expertise. However, it is quite clear that corrective services is a forgotten child in this minister's purview. I accept that corrective services is not a trivial area and that it is a challenging portfolio. Clearly, groups of people are at the lowest ebb of their life and facing all sorts of disadvantages. We have to not only protect the community from those people, but also provide a service that hopefully rehabilitates those prisoners so they can go on to lead useful lives. That has been the goal of the prison service for a considerable time, not just under this government. We have seen the minister moving prisoners from Banksia Hill—a prison designed for juveniles—and putting them into a purpose-built unit, and I accept that. It is a purpose-adaptive unit at Casuarina Prison, which is a maximum-security prison that houses the worst criminals—murderers, rapists and the many bikies who are in prison. That is the only option to house juvenile prisoners.

I hear again and again from members on the other side that it is all our fault because we did not do enough about this. Of course, the reality is that the government has been in power for five years. We should have another major tertiary hospital. Today at the minister's press conference, he was trying to blame Hon Christian Porter, a former minister in this area, for closing another facility. If the minister were so concerned about it, why has this government not done something about it? It has had plenty of time. The original facility was converted to a centre to rehabilitate young men aged 18 to 28 so that they could go out and enjoy a better life. Of course, this government changed the purpose of that facility to a rehabilitation centre for prisoners who are drug addicts, and it changed the location to Wandoo. The purpose of that centre is good, but it took away a facility for young men and that has meant those young men are being kept in prison while getting that service rather than being kept in a transition centre. In any case, that lies at the feet of this minister. If this minister knew it was a problem, why did he not do something about it?

We have seen further dysfunction. I will not go through the horrendous stories of self-harm of children, but that is an absolute crisis. This is not normal; this is a failure of the government to provide adequate services for children. That is what it is. We have seen prisoners in Banksia Hill, at the behest of guards, apparently, making wood carvings for an external organisation. The prison is indulging in its own personal interests and is getting the prisoners to do it. That is absolutely disgraceful. Again we see the minister waving his hands and saying that it has nothing to do with him and that we should report it to the Corruption and Crime Commission. I respect that Minister Johnston works hard, but the simple reality is, and the evidence is all too plain, that the minister is failing in his portfolios. If he does not resign, he needs to have a portfolio removed from him because he is not doing a proper service to the people of Western Australia.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [5.03 pm]: I also come out in support of the Leader of the Opposition's motion —

That this house calls on the Premier to sack his incompetent ministers after a winter recess that has exposed a raft of delivery failures in key portfolios.

Today I would like to focus on the Minister for Agriculture and Food. We certainly have been asking questions in here about her recent performance and about the lack of confidence the sector has in the minister. If possible, I will also spend a few minutes towards the end of my speech on the Minister for Education and Training. That is another minister who is also in the departure lounge.

It is well known that when the Premier was the Leader of the Opposition, his focus on the Barnett government was that any minister who either had announced or was intending to announce their retirement needed to move on and make sure that they handed their position over to someone else. We have heard over the last couple of days about the number of keen backbenchers. It is time for some of these ministers to go. It was quite bizarre yesterday when I asked the Premier about whether he would be calling for the resignation of the Minister for Agriculture and Food and he said that the minister had said it was clumsy wording and that she had apologised. I am sorry, but that does not cut it. The ag minister has lost the confidence of the sector that she represents. That is the key to the whole argument. It is about representing the sector that the minister is responsible for. The minister needs to have the confidence of the sector. I will be able to give members plenty of examples today whereby the sector has lost confidence in the minister. Today, when the member for Moore asked a question about the Minister for Agriculture and Food, the Premier talked about the Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd function last night and about grain. This matter is about livestock producers, foot-and-mouth disease and the lack of confidence the sector has in the minister handling the livestock sector.

Probably one of the most disappointing elements that we have seen is the failure of the minister to engage with representative organisations such as the Western Australian Farmers Federation and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. I will refer to a few articles that have come through over the last few weeks since this happened during the winter break when this minister made a very unfortunate statement that a breakout of foot-and-mouth disease could potentially provide cheaper meat and milk. I can assure members that the response from my constituents—I know other members have also had the same response—has been all about the lack of confidence in the minister and disbelief in what this minister has done. I would like to quote from an article called “Its Time” that Trevor Whittington, the CEO of the WA Farmers Federation, wrote. I think some of the paragraphs are spot-on. He writes —

Like governments, Ministers have a use by date. Some Ministers last the full term before going down in an election, others are shuffled out when they fail in their portfolios, some have to be blown out by the opposition, while the Honorable live up to their title and simply fall on their sword when their time is up.

He goes on —

Eighteen months into the second term of the McGowan government, it's becoming obvious that there is one Minister that has missed the opportunity to go out on top.

As we know, the minister certainly has a track record of holding different portfolios. A little bit like the member for Cottesloe, members need to recognise what some ministers have achieved. Certainly, there was no doubt, when I looked back on it, that the farming and ag sector was very interested to see how this minister would perform. It is unfortunate that we have probably come to what I think should be the end in this unfortunate fashion. As Trevor Whittington pointed out —

In hindsight, it is clear that the State Labor Party made a mistake when they allowed her to come back into State Parliament in 2017 after MacTiernan suffered relevance deprivation in Canberra.

They made a second mistake in putting her back into cabinet, then a third, by giving her the agricultural portfolio, a fourth in rolling a younger MP Adele Farina to allow her to move seats and run again at the last election and the Premier has now made a fifth in backing her to stagger on as a lame duck Minister who has clearly lost the confidence of the industry.

I think that sums it up pretty well. As I said to members, within the representative organisations, the president of the Western Australian Farmers Federation, John Hassell, is calling for the minister to resign. The president of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, Tony Seabrook, is in a state of disbelief, I guess I would say. He has also said that he is angry. The only thing that he is concerned about is that he does not know whether there is anyone in the state Labor Party who is capable of taking on the ag portfolio. They are the sector's concerns. There is no doubt. That has been spoken about by many of my constituents. We only have to listen to the *Country Hour* on a daily basis to hear some of the calls coming in.

One thing that I found really disappointing at the start of this foot-and-mouth disease scenario and after enduring the minister's statements is that when people emailed or contacted the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development with their concerns about FMD, the email that they received in response stated, “Thank you for your email regarding foot-and-mouth disease. The matter you raise falls outside the priority of the Western Australian government and is a matter for the federal government.” That sums it up. That is the standard of responsibility that

the minister was overseeing. A horrified farmer from Borden sent me that email straightaway and said, “I just cannot believe the response.” From there onwards, we see in the minister’s statements no interest in listening to the knowledge and experience that has developed over time and a misguided perspective of what agriculture in WA is.

I want to talk about some other elements that have happened over time with the minister. I refer to some of the statements made by our shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Colin de Grussa, about Minister MacTiernan. He said —

“The Minister’s disregard for the real fears held by producers across the state shows she is not fit to maintain her position and if she won’t stand down, the Premier should sack her.”

“The Minister’s FMD gaffe was just the latest in a long line of activities that put her at odds with the sector she is responsible for.”

He also said —

“She has stood with protestors against the live export industry, stacked the animal welfare review panel with animal activists, used a machinery of government diminish the purpose and capacity of the Department of Agriculture, and failed to deliver much-needed updates to WA’s biosecurity laws,” ...

Finally, he said —

“This Minister has had half a decade to come to grips with the importance of her portfolio but has failed to do so.

“This isn’t good enough and she has got to go.”

I think that sums up the thoughts of a lot of people in our agricultural sector. There are so many articles that I could refer to here. There are so many articles that have been written by *The West Live*. One article states —

Alannah MacTiernan will quit politics at the next State election, heaping further pressure on Mark McGowan to strip his under fire Cabinet minister of the Agriculture portfolio ...

The Premier was again forced to defend Ms MacTiernan’s downplaying of the threat of foot-and-mouth disease, saying she had apologised for her “clumsy language” and claimed “people need to move on”.

It is fine for the Premier to say that, but this minister has lost the confidence of the agricultural sector. That is what I am referring to. It is all well and good for the Premier to say, “Look, just move on, you need to stop talking about it, she has apologised”, but that is not on. When the minister came into government with the agricultural portfolio, probably the whole industry and the larger sector were intrigued and thought that having someone with her conviction on their side would be a positive change, but it was not long before we came to realise that this was not what this minister wanted to achieve. She wanted to change the landscape to suit her values, and she has a mission. She wants agriculture in WA to look like the picture in her head—full of carbon offsets in our lonely, sandy country; hydrogen stations everywhere; and electric tractors. Firstly, I ask: where are we going to charge our tractors and headers when we are 50 kilometres from a power station? It might happen, but there are a lot of hurdles to overcome before it can happen. We are not Europe; we have vast areas of farming. I cannot help thinking that the minister is all about the big picture and fails to see the detail. Unfortunately, this picture is so far out of the realms of possibility, let alone probability, that the only thing agriculture is getting from this minister is chaos and a complete disregard for most of the people involved in agriculture. When people stop listening to someone, they have no place as a leader, and it is time to forfeit their role. This minister has been given every opportunity to leave the sector. Unfortunately, as I have pointed out, the minister’s values are not in alignment with the values of our agricultural sector and especially our livestock sector in its response to foot-and-mouth disease.

I have a couple of other examples that I would like to give. When the minister advocated and urged farmers to give up 20 per cent of their cropping land to plant trees, she said that insects could do what growers had paid chemical companies to do for years. Unfortunately, the minister has not quite got the experience to understand. We plant thousands of trees. I have planted over 50 000 trees on my farm. I understand. We planted them in waterways; we planted them in fence lines; we planted them wherever there is a salt problem. We understand where you need to plant them, but we also understand that when you need to grow crops, you need to have weed and chemical control and you need to use fungicides. We were at a function last night talking about the 24 million tonne crop that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd has been working through. It received 21.3 million tonnes. I can assure members that many, if not most or just about all, of those broadacre farmers who delivered those crops had to use chemicals and fungicides. They needed to do that weed control. These are the issues.

Unfortunately, we have seen a continuing list of items whereby this minister has worked in contravention with her portfolio. Live export was another one. We have seen the pictures of the minister on the Fremantle Traffic Bridge. We have seen the scenario, and it is very difficult. Once a minister has stood on that bridge with those animal activists opposing live export, it is very hard for her to come into the Legislative Council chamber as Minister for Agriculture and Food and say that she is representing her farmers and her industry, of which live export is an

important element. These are the challenges. It even drifted across to federal Parliament. The minister's gaffe on FMD went all the way to federal Parliament, where David Littleproud asked the Prime Minister whether he supported the WA minister in saying that FMD will not be catastrophic.

The minister has two opposing portfolios—hydrogen and agriculture—and that is another issue. Those two industries are now pitted against each other for the same swathes of rural land, and, quite frankly, it is an odd pairing. Josh Zimmerman from *The West Australian* identified that it is a contravening portfolio, if you like. I think this is the opportunity for the Premier to move the minister on.

I once brought up the minister's policy manual, *Call of the Reed Warbler*. The Premier was not quite sure about it. That was three years ago. Elements of that book, such as getting rid of glyphosate and all of those things, do not add up when we produce a 24 million-tonne grain crop in Western Australia. As far as I am concerned, the minister needs to go. This is a demonstration of the issues that we and the agricultural sector are up against. I wanted to put that out there today. When the Premier just says, "Oh, it's clumsy wording, don't worry about it. Let's move on", that is not good enough. The agricultural sector has lost confidence in the minister, and that is where the real issue lies. Our sector has not got any confidence in this minister.

In closing, I would like to quickly run through some issues. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about many ministers whom we are starting to become concerned about. The other one in the departure lounge is the Minister for Education and Training. One element that concerns me is the looming teacher shortages. There are truancy issues in the north of the state. Halls Creek was highlighted recently. We have had teachers and principals leaving in droves from fatigue. Anecdotally, I hear that the system is broken and it has led them to the point that they are leaving their vocation. We have 25 per cent of graduates leaving or contemplating leaving within five years of graduating. That is a real concern.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This issue of fatigue in the regions really concerns me. As we know, the regions were hit hard by this minister early on in her tenure. There were the decisions on School of the Air, Moora Residential College and the boarding away from home allowance. The Isolated Children's Parents' Association calls time after time, year after year, for this minister to look at the boarding away from home allowance, which she slashed from royalties for regions and cut down to a massive extent. Time after time, year after year, the association calls for that at its conference. The minister says, "We'll have another look at it. I've blown them off for another few months, another year or two", and that is what it comes to. These are the sorts of things that have led to a lack of confidence in this minister.

I turn to housing in the regions for principals and teachers. I cannot begin to say how substandard it is. If the minister actually thinks that she is going to attract people into the regions with some of that housing out there, she really needs to take a good, hard look at it.

They are some of the issues. I know that we have people with teaching backgrounds in the chamber who might like to step into the fold. I know the member for Wanneroo over there has connections in the State School Teachers' Union. No doubt the member for Southern River fancies himself as the next education minister. We also have the member for Collie–Preston who has been a deputy principal. I am concerned that, once again, another minister has announced her retirement. The Premier is obviously going to have to do a reshuffle because many of these ministers have been —

Ms S. Winton interjected.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: We have heard repetitive and unwelcome interjections from the member and I ask you to call her to desist.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Acting Speaker —

Ms S. Winton interjected.

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

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms C.M. Collins): Member for Wanneroo, he is not taking interjections.

Ms S.E. Winton: But he mentioned my name!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Roe, you were inviting interjections, so please keep to your point.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I will just come back to the subject. There have been very disappointing performances from some of our senior ministers. The Premier needs to take a good, hard look at a cabinet reshuffle. Now is the opportunity. We will certainly support him in that reshuffle.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [5.24 pm]: This afternoon, I have been listening very closely to this debate, and there is a bit of a pattern here, but I am happy to make a contribution and, of course, defend a number of ministers whom the opposition has attacked. I will also compare the current government with

the previous government, which we know was dismal. Before the previous government's demise at the 2017 election, in the Nationals WA's very own cherished portfolio of agriculture there had seen an embarrassing cavalcade of seven ministers for agriculture. The government had overseen dramatic cuts to important institutions like the Department of Agriculture and Food and the various important research entities that help to ensure that our agricultural, horticultural and other primary producing industries are robust and can adapt to the changing nature of climate, market forces or whatever it might be. I am sure members opposite will remember that in the cavalcade of ministers who held the position of minister for agriculture in the previous cabinet, the position sort of waxed between a National Party member and a Liberal Party member. The opposition's history of holding that portfolio is quite embarrassing. The very interests that opposition members seek to argue for and keep raising here were not progressed when the Nationals were in power and were around the cabinet table. We know from history that there were times when members of the National Party would basically not participate in some of the cabinet deliberations. That was part of its strange, strange commitment to what was, I think, called an alliance.

When the National Party was in power, tens and tens of millions of dollars were ripped out of the agriculture portfolio and the Department of Agriculture and Food. That money was subsequently returned under the McGowan Labor government. The National Party, which purports to be the only party that understands and represents the regions, saw regional employees, including those in the agriculture department, lose their positions. When the National Party was in government, full-time equivalents were lost in the regions, the very places that the National Party argues it represents. What was happening around the cabinet table when that sort of stuff was put forward, particularly in the Expenditure Review Committee process? What was the National Party doing? What were National Party ministers doing, particularly those who might have held a position during that interim period of eight and a half years, to prevent those cuts to the budget? For a substantial period of time the state was booming—apart from the fact the former government blew the budget, of course. The previous government was quite happy to go on a spending spree and put us into spiralling debt, but at the same time it cut one of the portfolios that the opposition is now criticising under the stewardship of the honourable member in the other place. It is a great example of absolute hypocrisy.

I want to refer members opposite to what this government has invested into the agriculture and food portfolio since being elected in 2017, despite the budget position we faced when we first came to government in 2017 as a result of spiralling debt and record deficits under the former government. Despite being left with those economic circumstances by those opposite—the National Party and the Liberal Party—and the fiscally responsible effort by the McGowan government in its first term to restore the budget and put it back on a trajectory of delivering surpluses but also having a clear focus on making sure that spending in priority areas was maintained, be it in health or education, we made sure that we restored budgets to important government services in regional Western Australia, including the agriculture department. I want to go through some of them. A total of \$131.5 million was returned to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development in the 2019–20 budget because the National Party, aided and abetted by the then dominant numbers in the Liberal Party, had cut it to the bone. That is the truth, the fact and the reality.

Let us not forget—I love mentioning this—the tier 3 rail line. We saw the demise of the railway system in country Western Australia. Under whose stewardship did that occur? It was under the stewardship of the Liberal Party and the National Party—those parties that purport to represent regional Western Australia, with the National Party saying it is the only party that represents the interests of regional Western Australia.

Dare I mention the *AvonLink*? The Leader of the Opposition represents the central wheatbelt and my home town of Northam. Good old Northam; I love it. The Nationals wanted to close down that train service. We restored it.

The wave of hypocrisy that comes from those opposite in debates such as this does not stand up at all in the information they provide or in their arguments and criticism of the current Minister for Agriculture and Food. We provided \$131.5 million for DPIRD and \$48 million for grains research. The Premier mentioned during question time this afternoon that representatives of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd were here last night. We had some great conversations. Thankfully—I am so grateful—in the last couple of years, apart from some pockets, our grain-growing areas of Western Australia have been doing very, very well. I honestly think that every Western Australian is very happy when that occurs. Having been born, having lived and having taught in regional WA, when the farmers do well in grain-growing areas, the broader community does well, and there is a buoyancy. It is great. It is important. I used to teach in Three Springs. I can vividly remember some tough years of drought and low rainfall and the impact that had on not only the harvest, but also the vibrancy and buoyancy of communities.

There is no doubt that this side of the house, the Labor Party, is absolutely committed to making sure that our agricultural regions and our primary industries flourish and are given every opportunity to not only deliver high-quality products to the world and, of course, to other markets in Western Australia and the nation, but also be at the leading edge in research and development.

Visitors —Youth Pride Network

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms C.M. Collins): Leader of the House, I will interrupt you. I want to give a warm welcome to members of the Youth Pride Network, who are in the gallery.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Hello, Youth Pride Network. It is marvellous to see you. Welcome to the Parliament of Western Australia. I am now lambasting the Liberal Party and the National Party for their appalling stewardship of the agriculture portfolio during their eight and a half years of government. In doing so, I am highlighting this government's achievements in the regions, particularly in the areas of investment, research and infrastructure. I want to highlight a couple more, including the \$48 million grains research partnership with the Grains Research and Development Corporation and \$25 million to kickstart the Western Australian agricultural research collaboration to futureproof the state's primary industries. Our research stations have been reinvigorated under this government. I point to a number of them, including one in Katanning in the member for Roe's electorate. We have invested \$8 million to establish a world-class sheep research and net zero demonstration facility in Katanning.

Mr P.J. Rundle: I went to it, even though I didn't get invited.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They probably did not know who you were. "Who's that fellow over there with the hat?", they asked. That funding of \$8 million is very important. I do not know what the invitation arrangements were but I am sure the member was warmly welcomed.

A total of \$1.8 million was allocated for the Merredin Dryland Research Institute in the Leader of the Opposition's electorate of Central Wheatbelt. We revitalised the Frank Wise Research Institute in Kununurra.

We had a conversation earlier today about the reinstatement of a bill, particularly around biosecurity. In the last budget, this government allocated \$15.1 million to boost our biosecurity capabilities and emergency preparedness. Members should be under no illusion that biosecurity is a critical issue for both state and national governments. Indeed, as we know, in many respects Australia is in the particularly fortunate position of being an island nation. There are parameters that we can ensure are kept strong in order to ensure our biodiversity protections are in place.

We have seen the reversal of the proposed sale of InterGrain, making sure that the capability in Western Australia is maintained. We also won back the national oat breeding program from South Australia. There has been a revamping of the northern beef program with the provision of an extra \$8.3 million. These amounts are adding up. The McGowan Labor government has invested tens of millions of dollars because it absolutely values the agricultural and primary industry sector of Western Australia.

To address and respond to the pressures of climate change and the changing nature of soils, we re-established the Soil and Land Conservation Council after it had sat in hiatus for 16 years. For eight and a half of those years, who was in power? We restored that. It is important that we have a council that is focused on the issues of soil and land conservation. We provided \$15 million for the agriculture climate resilience fund, again to help and support farmers to respond and adapt to climate change. As we all know, climate change remains one of those key issues the planet faces, including Western Australia. We have to get better. We have to mitigate and respond. We are putting money into that response to the climate change challenge.

Carbon farming on the pastoral estate has been allowed for the first time. It not only provides income for pastoralists, but also supports rangelands regeneration. We have boosted funding to natural resource management projects by \$8.5 million per annum, which is double the amount of \$4 million that was provided by the previous government.

Mr R.S. Love: That's certainly not true.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not know what the previous government was arguing about those things.

Does the member want to talk about the wine industry? It is an important industry. There is \$3 million towards the wine industry export growth partnership and \$6 million for a project to build international demand for Western Australia's high-quality wines. The Western Australian wine industry has a great reputation. It is a great product to promote and sell overseas. It is tremendous that we are investing to make sure that that is done effectively.

There is \$30 million to manage the impact of wild dogs and other feral animals. There are a few ferals across the way there, but I will not talk about them individually! There is \$30 million to manage wild dogs, including repairs to and maintenance of the state barrier fence, the Esperance extension and cell fences in Kalgoorlie and Carnarvon.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: But the Nationals WA did not do anything in government. That is the point. I like this; they say, "Oh, it's not there." The point is that the Nationals did nothing in government but they bring on motions attacking a minister who has worked particularly hard. She travels extensively through the regions. She meets with everyone. She consults people and talks to them. She gets yelled at and abused by people like the member opposite, but she still fronts up! Why is it that Nationals WA members did not front up to cabinet in the last government? It was because they were gutless and they were useless! They knew they were weak, feeble lettuces! That is what they were. The Nationals could not stand up for regional Western Australia in the cabinet room and they let all these things happen when the budgets were handed down in the last government by, I think, four different Treasurers, by the way. It might have been more. At one stage, due to the indiscretions of one of them, the Premier of the day, Colin Barnett, had to suddenly step in to deliver the budget when he was not essentially the Treasurer at the time.

That is what happened. Where were the Nationals? The Nationals come into the chamber and bark and hiss. They come out of their cages like hyenas and attack, but they have no basis at all for their attacks because they did nothing during the eight and a half years they were in power. In fact, the Nationals could not even carry an argument. Members on this side of the chamber understand that Nationals WA members walked out of some cabinet meetings, abrogating their responsibility to even debate in the cabinet room the important issues that affected their constituencies and had a direct impact on the whole constituency of Western Australia.

Nationals WA members should not come in here and start to hiss and bark and yell and growl when they know they have an appalling history in the job. They attack and they abuse people. They love abusing Alannah MacTiernan and asking other people to do that. I tell you what: I will defend her because I have known her for a long time. People can never question her commitment to getting outcomes and wanting to get things done. She has a history of doing that. Does she make mistakes? Yes, she does. She apologised for her comments on the foot-and-mouth issue. As the Premier said, yes, her comments were clumsy, but she has done amazing things in her current portfolio and in portfolios she has held in previous governments, including what she has done for where I live, in Mandurah, by bringing the railway line there. I think she deserves a bit of respect in that case because she is bloody hardworking and I respect her commitment. I know that as Minister for Regional Development, she goes to all the regions she represents. She is there all the time consulting, engaging with and talking to people. She cops things when it is a fair cop, but she is out there trying to find solutions, and I have outlined a number of them. Be it restoring the integrity of departments such as the now Department of Agriculture and Food, or restoring research budgets so that we are actually leading edge with our research, knowledge and experience on how climate change has changed the nature of how we grow and produce things, she is spearheading work on import stuff and I admire her for it. She makes mistakes, but she has a go! If Nationals WA members had had a go when they were on this side of the chamber, representing their constituents and holding positions in cabinet, we would not have had to restore \$131.5 million to the ag department. The Nationals let that happen and they should be condemned for it, yet they condemn the Minister for Agriculture and Food.

The minister has done other stuff on the hydrogen industry. It is a very important industry in the basket of how we will deal with energy into the future. She is spearheading a hydrogen strategy for Western Australia. It is a field I do not profess to know anything about, but I understand the importance of making sure that we are at the leading edge on research and effort in that field. She is spearheading it. The government has been able to demonstrate that belief in and commitment to hydrogen through its budget provisions. We have a budget allocation of \$160 million to support a renewable hydrogen industry in Western Australia. That should be commended, not condemned, because it is a direct example of having the policy position we need and backing it up with action and investment. That is an example in the hydrogen area but there are a number of others. There is a \$10 million commitment to the hydrogen fuel transport program. Again, whether it is public transport or whatever, we are looking at the effective use of hydrogen as a power source for those entities. The \$70 million investment towards the Pilbara hydrogen hub is another very important investment in the Pilbara. There is \$47.5 million to activate Oakajee. How long did the previous government talk about Oakajee?

Mr R.S. Love: She was the minister who sat on it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What did the member do for eight and a half years? The previous government talked about it for eight and a half years; it did not do anything. The government has put in money and it is targeted. The Oakajee Strategic Industrial Area in the midwest has a hydrogen hub.

There are issues around regional development. I could go on to talk about the \$14 million to the digital farm grants program that will allow more than 2 000 farm businesses to be brought onto enterprise-grade broadband, the \$8.1 million boost to the eConnected digital data service to support agricultural business competitiveness or the \$4.6 million to upgrade the Albany and Geraldton Bureau of Meteorology sites to Doppler standard. These are really important investments in regional Western Australia that will deliver positive outcomes for the people who live, work and have important primary production businesses there.

For the massive challenge and important step forward needed of the just transition in Collie, there is a \$100 million investment to stimulate new industries. The government recognises that the transition requires investment, and that is what it is doing through this Minister for Regional Development. There is \$45.8 million for the regional economic development grants. They are very important in my area of the Peel region. Lots of businesses are recipients of RED grants. They are focused on stimulating and providing continuing support to grassroots business development and innovation to create local regional jobs—absolutely. It is a very important program. The communities that the Nationals WA purport to represent have been benefiting directly from those grants. A number of businesses in all the regions have been recipients of RED grants. It is a program that the government will continue to roll out because it recognises that by investing in and supporting innovative existing and emerging businesses, this will not only increase opportunities within the regions—maximise opportunities there—but also create regional jobs for regional people. That is part of the picture of where the government wants to take regional Western Australia.

Can I go further? There is \$40.4 million for the Kimberley youth and community justice response, including \$15 million for an on-country residential facility. Again, the government recognises that there are tough issues in

many communities. The member for Kimberley, who is here tonight, has been absolutely remarkable in bringing to Parliament and highlighting to various ministers important issues that need to be addressed, and the government has responded.

The Minister for Community Services is also a pivotal part of that drive, because the government recognises that it has to do stuff and it has to back it up with investment. That is what it has done. The last budget contained numerous commitments to investment that focus on making sure that people in regional Western Australia have better access to services and opportunities so that they can flourish. I meet and talk to people in regional Western Australia and they are great people. It distresses me sometimes the way that the Nationals WA and the Liberal Party seek to drive this wedge between people who live in the metropolitan area and those in the regions. There is no difference. We are all Western Australians, for goodness sake. We all want to see people flourish and businesses grow—no matter where they are—so they can employ local people. We want to promote our regions in terms of business investment and tourism potential. We want to make sure that if a person chooses to live in Western Australia, whether regional Western Australia, rural parts or very remote parts, they know they will be supported. It is not easy. We know that. There are issues around the tyranny of distance. We know there are issues around the capacity to house people and have people live and work in places like that, but the government is focused on addressing those issues and finding solutions, and is backing it up by investment in its budgets.

I will mention the member for Bunbury, because he is in the chamber. We invested \$78 million in stage 3 of the Bunbury waterfront transformation. I have been there a couple of times, and I am very jealous. We have a similar program in Mandurah with our foreshore development. The Bunbury waterfront is much longer than Mandurah's waterfront in lineal length. Those investments in regional centres that enhance the liveability, attractiveness and ambience of those places mean that people who might seek to open a business there, whether it is in hospitality and tourism or ancillary support services, are provided with an added incentive because those places have been enhanced. People are proud of where they live. They recognise that there is a real future there, and that is drawn out by population increases in the south west in particular. Even though the member for Bunbury and I will continue to argue—until this place legislates against it—Mandurah is of course the second-largest city in Western Australia. That is fact. He and I will disagree. Former members for Bunbury and I have disagreed. John Castrilli and I had many arguments about this, as did Tony Dean, his predecessor, and I. Those were the two members prior to the current member for Bunbury. Members can look at the former Gallop government's initial investment in Geraldton. I remember this because Labor came to power in 2001. The investment in Geraldton turned the face of Geraldton back to the water; it had turned its back on the water because the railway line used to go along the foreshore. That investment under a Labor government changed all of that. That was the start of the rejuvenation of and the aspirations for Geraldton. We have continued to do that. We have the expansive hospital expansion also happening there. Investment is happening in a number of areas in Geraldton. I mentioned the Oakajee project.

This government has focused tens of millions of dollars on important regional centres. I mentioned the waterfront project in Bunbury, which is important. We invested \$187.5 million into the Spoilbank Marina project. Those members who have been to Broome recently will know about the new jetty and the new work being done at Town Beach, which were all supported and encouraged by good collaboration with the local government. The member for Kimberley is well across this because she championed the investment in infrastructure there, like the Chinatown reinvestment program. It is outstanding. What does this investment do? It lifts the whole perception of and opportunity for the place. That is happening in various regional areas in Western Australia.

I know other members want to speak so I will finish on legislative reform. Being the Leader of the House, I chair the Legislation Committee. I have to tell members that there are bills that might not necessarily be seen by people as important, but the minister in the other place Hon Alannah MacTiernan really championed them, including in the area of veterinary practice, modernising our Veterinary Practice Act, for example. I can remember a vet in Mandurah years ago lobbying me strongly about the importance of reform in that area. He was part of the consultation process. He can no longer practise because of health reasons, but he came here to watch that piece of legislation pass this place and the other place, because it was important to a whole number of issues around veterinary practice. There has been modernisation of the Agricultural Produce Commission Act, and we commissioned reviews of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act. We have amended the Industrial Hemp Act and modernised the Soil and Land Conservation Act. We have reinstated the effectiveness and skills base of the Soil and Land Conservation Council. All this was done through the efforts of Minister MacTiernan. She also delivered the Forrest Highway, the Mandurah rail line, which I mentioned, and the Champion Lakes development in the electorate of the member for Armadale, which might even straddle the electorate of the member for Thornlie as well, although I may be wrong. I will defend Hon Alannah MacTiernan and I will keep defending her.

In its second term, the McGowan Labor government is committed to doing the very best for Western Australia. I can assure members that as I look around the cabinet table, I know the people there are invested strongly in not only their portfolios, but also the deeper and broader interests of Western Australia. When I compare the robustness, commitment, dedication, hard work and focus on making sure, as we did in the last two and a half years, that Western Australians were kept safe and our economy continued to grow even when COVID was ravaging our nation and other nations around the world, we made sure we positioned Western Australia as best as possible under

those circumstances. We do not know what further circumstances we will face. We can only guess. There are obviously political instabilities that could impact the nation and our trading status. We could have another pandemic, and we could face a range of other challenges, but I can tell members that the people of Western Australia are confident that the government they have in Western Australia is focused on their best interests. We are focused on making sure we continue to position Western Australia in a strong financial economic position. Over the last six months we have been rewarded for that, whether in economic ratings, record low unemployment levels, the highest job participation rates in the nation and being recognised worldwide as one of the safest places to do business and to visit. Of course, we are recognised as one of the few places that was able to respond with timely action, focused attention and hard work to position ourselves in the situation that COVID dealt up. We are the envy of most states and territories in Australia. If we look at the budget circumstances of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania, they pale into insignificance in the robustness of the economy and the position we are in, with great support and effort by Western Australians. We have positioned ourselves in a remarkably robust way. That is because we have committed ministers whom members opposite have shamefully condemned today. Opposition members should really hold up a mirror to themselves, because the reflection they will see in that mirror would certainly not match the calibre of the effort of the ministers they have had a go at today.

I assure Western Australians that no matter where they live, whether in the Kimberley, central wheatbelt, south west, great southern, Gascoyne, goldfields or Peel, where I live, that we are committed to making sure that we continue to do the best job we possibly can. The opposition will find that the broad proportion of people understand that. We will keep doing as best we can and we have the evidence to demonstrate that it is working.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms C.M. Collins): Member for Moore.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [6.00 pm]: Thank you, Acting Speaker. It seemed to be a bit of a race between me and the member for Morley, but I am glad that I won!

It is ironic that the Leader of the House finished his contribution to the debate by talking about the legislative program of the Minister for Agriculture and Food because the discussion point today was the failure of this house to be able to proceed with the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, which is legislation that has been kicking around since 2019. It has not progressed. It is very strange that the Leader of the House defended the minister on the basis of a legislative program that has been very tardy indeed.

Further, the Leader of the House commented on the Minister for Agriculture and Food's role as the Minister for Regional Development and her commitment to ensuring that communities are a nice place to live. I remember when she became minister, she referred to programs such as petunia planting as a waste of money. Maybe that explains why since she has been Minister for Regional Development there has been close to \$2 billion in cost shift in the budget and an estimated \$815 million has come out of the budget from royalties for regions over the forward estimates. Nearly \$3 billion has been ripped out of the budget to pay for things like the orange school bus service, vocational education regional subsidies and country water subsidies that in some years have been worth up to \$370 million. I also point out that \$36 million was used to pay for education assistants and \$224 million for remote services. Those things would normally be paid for by government, but this government chose to pay for those things out of the royalties for regions program.

Also, in his defence of the hapless Minister for Agriculture and Food, the Leader of the House pointed out that Nationals WA members have no commitment to agriculture and that funding for agriculture had fallen. On the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development website there is still a webpage titled "Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture". It states —

Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture is a \$350million initiative made possible by the State Government's Royalties for Regions program.

That was actually made possible by the Nationals. Our election commitment in 2013 was to start the Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture initiative. We wanted to ensure that money going into agriculture would be directed to programs that would have great outcomes for the farming community. We invested in programs such as the agricultural sciences and research development fund, the Asian Market Success fund and Strengthening WA's Agricultural Biosecurity Defences, which is a program that we introduced in 2013 and it is back. Still on that webpage are links to "Boosting Business Skills of Agrifood Business", "Boosting Grains Research and Development Support", "WA Agricultural Branding", "Food Industry Innovation", "Helping Grain Growers to Better Manage Risk", "Building an Empowered WA Agrifood Sector" and "Infrastructure Audit and Investment Fund". That fund was the first real attempt in a long time to see what critical supply chain issues exist in Western Australia. We foresaw problems that have manifested in recent years and we were prepared to invest money in dealing with those issues. Of course, one program that this government cut when it came to power was a program to fund some necessary investments to overcome the infrastructure challenges that we saw in getting products to port and getting inputs out to farms and regional areas. We also funded the Muresk Institute agriculture degree and diploma program, and the Northern Beef Futures project. There was the sheep industry business innovation project and Katanning in the member for Roe's electorate received the major funding for that. There was also the WA Open for Business project and the Water for Food program, which expanded over the years and became a very important program for unlocking

some of the vast potential of untapped and unknown water assets, especially in the north of the state. In areas that were thought to have limits to the amount of water that was available, drilling showed that there were more water sources that were not yet tapped and other areas could be used for irrigation. I think all that sort of work is pretty well on the backburner under this government.

I want to put it out there that the nonsense that is peddled that the Nationals actually were not funding serious agricultural programs when the previous government was in place is completely wrong. It was funded in more of a program sense, rather than just pouring money generally into the department and having no surety of the outcome. We wanted to see specific outcomes from the department, so we funded specific programs that could be delivered. I think that that is an excellent way to fund things. It is a pity that when this government came in, it chose to cut back so many of those programs, as it did with many other programs that were funded by royalties for regions—under this very regional development minister. This included funding for Moora Residential College and a vast number of programs that were beneficial to the state. Funding for transport, education and health programs was slashed when this government came in and that money was redirected to the city. Government members wonder why we talk about a city–country divide. That is why.

The minister is so tin-eared that she said in the middle of a dire situation for Western Australian livestock producers that all it will mean is that there will be cheaper meat and milk. I think they were the words she used. The point is not that she is not hard working or that she does not have a track record in other areas; the problem is that the Minister for Agriculture and Food is clearly in the departure lounge. She is not going to be here after the next election. She has had her opportunity and there are other people with enthusiasm and knowledge who could be doing a better job than her. We know that she has never fully understood the people who are involved in agriculture. That is the problem. She does not understand the industry. She does not understand the people and she seeks to impose her view of the world on the industry. That is why it does not work. That is the problem. She does not think as a champion of agriculture; she thinks as a person who is championing Alannah MacTiernan's view of what agriculture should look like. That is insulting to the people and generations of families who have spent their lives learning about the land. Many of them are degree educated in agribusiness or related agricultural areas. Those people have years of experience and have much broader experience than just on their farm. To be told like schoolchildren that this is the view of the world that will be imposed on them is a disgrace. That is the problem with that minister. It has always been the problem with that minister in the role of Minister for Agriculture and Food and that is one of the reasons she should go.

The Premier must surely know that her view of the world is the only view of the world. I understand that his interaction with her in Karratha, as reported, has led to a bit of a rift in the Labor Party over the whole business of not running a Labor candidate in North West Central. I understand why the Premier does not want to run a candidate in the North West Central by-election. The first thing the government did when it came to office was to slash all regional representation out of that area. The people of North West Central are seriously expecting that that seat will be dissolved after the next redistribution because of what the government did. It took away regional boundaries and we will see those seats slide into Perth. The electorate of North West Central could well disappear, and the people who live up there know that. I am sure that they must be feeling a bit of voter regret about voting in four Labor members to the upper house. What did those Labor members do, along with the three Labor members in the Agricultural Region? They put up their hands to dissolve their representation and to have a whole-of-state electorate.

I wonder what level of concern there will be in the upper house for the people of Carnarvon in the forty-second Parliament? I doubt that anybody will even know where it is. That is one reason why I think the Labor Party was embarrassed. We also know that the Minister for Police has been busily telling people that there is no problem with crime there. He is hardly going to go up to Carnarvon to stand with a candidate and say, "Look at the job we're doing." What candidate would want that? The member for Central Wheatbelt outlined how 71 mothers had to go to a centre in Geraldton or Perth to have their child. The Minister for Health is presiding over this situation. Carnarvon is past the twenty-sixth parallel, yet the women who live there have to go to Perth to have their child. Government members are telling us that they think they are doing a good job and that their government is actually performing well. I have to say that that is not the perception of the people out there. It certainly would not be the perception of people in the North West Central electorate. I can understand why the Premier does not want to risk the reputational loss of getting a hiding in the by-election. He would not get a five per cent swing against him; it would be a far more debilitating outcome. As happened in the tale of the little boy who cried out, "the Emperor has no clothes", once that sort of thing starts to happen, some of that belief and awe will start to rub off and people will start to question what is going on with this government and with this Premier. He knows that, and it is why he is not prepared to run a candidate in the North West Central by-election. I invite him to run a candidate. I would love for him to put up a candidate and I would love that candidate to get a few hundred votes, because that is about all they would get. The Premier knows that and that is exactly why no action is happening in that regard.

I did not get up here to talk about the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food because I spoke about her failings at some length at the very start of the day's proceedings when I spoke on the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill not being progressed through the Parliament. What I want to talk about is another situation. I am glad that the member for Vasse is here because, as we know, the member for Vasse has been a great champion for women in the mining sector as the chair of a very important inquiry into the shocking situation

of sexual discrimination, sexual assault and other matters that have been going on in the fly-in fly-out industry. This all came to light originally due to reporting by Caitlyn Rintoul and some articles in *The West Australian*. As a result of some of those articles, questions started to be asked about what is going on in the industry. At that stage, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum had oversight as the minister in charge of the regulator to ensure the safety of those people in camps. I am going to read some extracts of articles written by Caitlyn Rintoul in *The West Australian* of 24 August 2021. One article is headed “Mine site sexual assaults: Department of Mines tried to keep media responses ‘bland’”. The article states —

Secret emails reveal how Energy Minister Bill Johnston’s office and senior media advisers at the Mines Department tried to play down horrific rape allegations by fly-in, fly-out workers that have since resulted in a landmark parliamentary inquiry.

That is the very inquiry that I referred to that was chaired by the member for Vasse. It continues —

Under Freedom of Information laws, The West has obtained a flurry of emails between the offices of the Department of Mines and the minister over 48 hours in early June as they discussed how to hose down the story and offer “bland” replies despite “very detailed” media inquiries.

At the time, The West was seeking responses in relation to exclusive reports into allegations over sexual assaults at BHP and Fortescue mine sites.

...

On June 10, Mr Johnston’s media adviser ... asks the department’s principal communications officer Mark Richardson if the newspaper had been in touch requesting the number of alleged sexual assault and harassment incidents at WA mines.

She also tells Mr Richardson the minister “will probably reply along the lines” of three short sentences.

Mr Richardson reveals that The West had been in touch and said, “I imagine we will provide a generic response ... I’ll loop you in”. Later in the day, he informed the department’s director of Mines Safety Andrew Chaplyn that the “Min’s Office wants to approve anything we send”.

The department had to run everything through the minister’s office —

At 4.22pm, Mr Richardson drafted a four-sentence reply to The West’s questions that he told Ms Kakulas was “bland but ‘factual’”. Despite this, at 5.40pm Mr Richardson emailed The West and said “FYI—we’re not actually working on your response with the minister’s office per se”.

This is shocking. The minister’s office is actually trying to ensure that this situation, which is so outrageous, is not being addressed properly. Another part of the article about Mr Chaplyn states —

An email he sent later that day at 2.01pm refers to how the minister’s office told the department to “scrap yesterday’s media response”. An email at 2.10pm also reveals how not everyone was happy with avoiding questions. “I am not sure that avoiding answering the last question is an ideal approach but as I advised the MO (Minister’s Office) last night I am happy to be guided by them as the media experts,” the department’s deputy director-general of the Safety Regulation Group ... wrote to Mr Richardson.

We know that the department had information. The article further states —

Official Department of Mines figures revealed alleged mine rapes across the industry have more than trebled so far this year.

The department knew of this terrible situation and instead of concentrating on fixing it, it ensured that the spin was right and that the right messages were going out from not only the minister, but also the department. The minister’s office had direct oversight of what the department was putting to the press. If that was not bad enough, when this report was tabled in this house, after all the discussion that had gone into it, and many brave people came forward to outline their situation—can I have an extension? That time went very quickly.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: Members of this house made contributions and some committee members came forward to relate their experiences. One would have thought that a minister who was in touch with the industry and with the situation would have made the effort to be here. He is here now so perhaps he can explain why he was not here then. I know that we do not often refer to people not being here, but that was such a momentous report that had such huge public interest, to actually not be here showed a lack of interest. That is deplorable.

The minister has since commented that it is up to the industry to solve this problem. Yes, I agree. It may be up to the industry. I have actually commented in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and it has also been reported in *The West Australian*, on how people go to the Diggers and Dealers Mining Forum to hear others talk about all the problems that they have had with ensuring a better culture in their workforce and making sure that everybody knows that it is not okay to treat women poorly, and those same people then go out at night and spend their money and time at the bars crowding around skimpy waitresses. I do not think that that is a good look for senior managers and investors who

attend an event such as that. That is 1980s behaviour and we should be moving on from that sort of thing. Since then we have seen further reports from the deputy editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* about conduct towards her at one of those events. I think that shows that, yes, it is the industry's issue, in a sense, but also that it is incredibly important to have a strong regulator, whether it be WorkSafe or the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety. Whoever that regulator is, it is incredibly important that the regulator does its job properly, because safety and a culture of safety is so important. I think the member for Vasse spoke about this at an event and the Leader of the Opposition mentioned this in her speech today about when the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins, was there. They outlined how incredibly important it is for the regulator to be an agent of change in the industry to make sure that this happens. But what we have here is a minister who did not show up for the tabling of the report, he put it all back on the industry in his comments since, and he did not make a commitment to make sure that his department understands that this is a very important issue. He has, in fact, failed to grasp just how incredibly important this situation is and how it needs to be addressed. I think that is a great failing.

We might talk about other issues to do with the minister. I know there have been situations in his other portfolios. The member for Cottesloe said that perhaps the minister has too many portfolios. Perhaps that is the case. He is busily working away here at the moment. Perhaps he needs less responsibility. I think it is indicative of the situation in cabinet. What we are saying is that the cabinet of this government is getting tired and it is getting to the point at which it needs renewal and refreshment. It has ministers who have been there for a good length of time either in this government or in previous governments. They have had long ministerial careers, but they are coming to an end. It is time that some of the younger, more energetic, fresher members of this Parliament were given the opportunity to come forward. Every organisation needs to have renewal and a succession plan. I think that this government needs to put in place its renewal and succession plan for its tired and worn-out ministers who clearly are not up to the job anymore.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [6.22 pm]: I want to address some of the issues raised by the opposition. Many of them require a response, but I will start with the comments the member for Moore just made. Some of the things that he has raised are pretty staggering; in particular, talking about the responsibility that anyone in the mining industry has to call out bad behaviour. I am not sure whether I misunderstood that the member had been at the Diggers and Dealers Mining Forum and had presented there.

Mr R.S. Love: No, I made a comment to the *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Thank you. He made a comment to the *Kalgoorlie Miner* that he thought it was important for the leaders in the industry to call out bad behaviour. I think it was a very poor choice of words to say that it was a "bad look" for people in the industry to be talking about safety while the conference was in session but then after hours to be socialising at or going to bars that have skimpies and the like. Of course, a terrible incident happened with a journalist that has been well reported in *The West Australian*. The member is saying it is a bad look. That is a pretty poor use of words, member. It is actually not a bad look; it is actually very, very bad performance and very, very bad behaviour.

Ms M.J. Davies: Read the article.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Those are the words that he used, member. That is what I heard. I heard him say that it was a bad look. In fact, it is more than a bad look; it actually reflects very, very poor attitudes and very, very poor behaviour by anyone participating in those sorts of after-hours activities, including the sexual harassment of a journalist. In fact, it goes a bit deeper than that because the National Party—in this case it was a National Party member who was talking about poor behaviour—is in partnership, as a party that he represents, with the Liberal Party. That party comprises members of "The Clan", who we know have very, very poor attitudes to women. That has been demonstrated a number of times in the report that has been discussed at length in this chamber. Women in the Liberal Party were described as sandwich makers. Just yesterday in the chamber we were reminded of the numerous examples of the sexist attitudes by members of "The Clan", the members of which are the people who are running the Liberal Party at the moment. Yes, leaders in the mining industry need to call out bad behaviour in the workplace during working hours and also after hours, in this instance at the Diggers and Dealers conference, but we all have to look in our own backyard. Members of the National Party who are in partnership with members of the Liberal Party also need to look at their own behaviour in terms of sexist and out-of-date attitudes.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Goiran would have been frogmarched out of any other workplace.

Ms S.F. McGURK: That is right.

I want to refer to a couple of very practical improvements that this government is working on now. As the Minister for Women's Interests, I am working in close partnership with the Minister for Industrial Relations on some of the recommendations from the *Respect@Work* report and also on some of the initiatives such as the mental awareness, respect and safety program. We have provided \$8.4 million to implement that program. It will ensure that the regulator, through WorkSafe and the department, will understand how it can work with the industry—in this case the mining industry—to better change the behaviours and attitudes that lead to poor behaviour such as sexual harassment or worse, by which I mean sexual assault and some of the criminal behaviours that we have seen revealed partly through the parliamentary committee and partly through reporting in *The West Australian* and other places. The

government has provided \$8.4 million through the MARS program, which will start to look at behavioural change in the industry and also at how the regulator can work with the industry to make some of those improvements. As a government, we have committed to implement all the *Respect@Work* recommendations that apply to Western Australia. I met with Kate Jenkins recently in my office to talk through those issues. I have known Ms Jenkins, the commissioner, for a number of years, and I worked with her in the lead-up to the *Respect@Work* report. I met with her, as did the Premier, to discuss some of those issues as she was writing that report. We are working on their implementation and will report on those publicly. I also had an opportunity to meet Ms Jenkins at a Rio Tinto site not long ago. I will continue to work with my cabinet colleagues, whether it is in mining, industrial relations or other portfolios that interact with many of the issues that have arisen in the *Respect@Work* report. We know that once the thread has been pulled and we start to uncover bad behaviour in industries when it comes to sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexism, often many women come forward and talk about their experiences. We have seen the mining industry in particular come under the spotlight, as it should, because the industry makes a lot of money out of our state, it is a big employer and it is a corporate leader in our state and nationally. It should be held to a very high standard, but it is sadly not the only industry in which there is sexual harassment and sexual assault, and certainly not the only industry in which sexism is present. There is a lot of work to do, and, as government, we have been committed to doing that.

One of the themes I picked up on today in question time is that it gets a little frustrating hearing these very shallow calls from the opposition saying that as a government, we are tired and we need refreshment, when we look across the chamber and see who is calling for that—the member for Cottesloe, the member for Moore and others.

Dr D.J. Honey: What are you saying?

Ms S.F. McGURK: I am saying, actually, member —

Dr D.J. Honey: It's very explicit!

Ms S.F. McGURK: I will be explicit, member for Cottesloe. When it comes to the preselection for your seat, when there were many opportunities for renewal for the Liberal Party —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party!

Ms S.F. McGURK: The Liberal Party did not go for renewal.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party!

Dr D.J. Honey: Come on—what are you saying?

Ms S.F. McGURK: If you would stop interrupting, I will answer your question. When the Liberal Party had an opportunity for renewal, to have more women —

Dr D.J. Honey: What's the problem? Come on. Get on with it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party!

Ms S.F. McGURK: If you would stop interrupting, member, I will answer the question!

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just wait, minister.

Leader of the Liberal Party, you have had your say. It is now the government's turn to respond to some of the comments you made previously. You may not like what you are hearing, but the government has the right to say it, and the minister has the right to respond.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Just let the record show that one of the difficulties I am having in answering the question is that the member for Cottesloe continues to interrupt, continues to speak over me and continues to assume what I am going to say. What I am going to say is that the member for Cottesloe's party had an opportunity for renewal when it came to having more women amongst its ranks and some diversity in its ranks, but no. It chose someone who is very typical of Liberal Party members, particularly in the federal Liberal Party representation, as well as in the state.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party!

Ms S.F. McGURK: It is true that by shrinking the number of Liberal Party members in the lower house to two, it has finally achieved gender diversity, but it is a hell of a way to do it. You absolutely need to look at these issues as a party, and if you do not know that, you have not been paying attention in the last six months.

Dr D.J. Honey: You're about stereotypes.

Ms C.M. Rowe: It's about equality, actually.

Ms S.F. McGURK: It is actually about gender equality, member. That is the point I am making. To hear from the other side that we need to look at renewal and refreshment is just so frustrating when I look at the achievements that we have made and we have put in place as a government over the last five and a half years. Members opposite are calling for resignations from our side, when the only resignations that we have seen have been on their side. There have been two resignations, one due to child sex abuse allegations and charges that have been made—that is one of the resignations—and the other from the member for North West Central, who went to the last election 18 months ago and asked to be elected for the next four years. What did he say when he decided to go now? He said, “I have teenage children and I want to spend more time with my family.” As the Minister for Education and Training; Leader of the Government in the other place said, I think the member for North West Central knew the ages of his children and how many there were when he went to the election last March. It is ridiculous to say that he has now decided that he cannot handle the job and needs to spend more time with his family. It is ridiculous. When the going gets tough, he decided to quit, just like he has done before. On this side, when we have work to do, we stick at it.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Ms M.J. Davies: It’s reflections on people’s families. It’s disgraceful.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Ms S.F. McGURK: Just so we are clear, the Leader of the Opposition is saying that I am making a poor reflection on the member’s family. I never made any reflection at all on the member’s family. I was talking about the reason that he resigned from Parliament. He ran for election 18 months ago and committed to stand for another four years; 18 months later, when the going gets tough, he pulls out.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Leader of the Opposition!

Ms S.F. McGURK: On this side of the chamber, when we have work to do, we get on with it. We do the hard work of being in government and committing to good policies.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

Ms S.F. McGURK: We did not interject when the member was speaking. We did not interject at all.

We have work to do as a government, we have work to do as government ministers, and we are getting on with it. There is an incredible list of achievements that we are very proud of. But if we again just focus on the opposition, what have members opposite done? What proposals are they putting up to address the issues that they talk about? For instance, members opposite have raised youth justice a number of times. What actual policy proposals and initiatives are they putting up and saying will make a material difference to the issues? They are difficult issues; there is no doubt at all about that. These are difficult issues that have been generations in the making and were there for the eight and a half years when members opposite were in office. In fact, when we think about initiatives, innovations and improvements, if people can think of any improvements in any of those areas—in my portfolio areas, for instance—I would be pleased to hear about any improvements that were put in place while they were in office, because I cannot think of any. I cannot think of any improvements to policy or any policy initiatives for the eight and a half years that members opposite were in government or since they have been in opposition. I really would like to hear some detail around that, because I cannot think of any and cannot see any.

In fact, the only thing I see from the opposition is when I read *The West* in the morning and get an idea about what their questions will be about in here. All of a sudden, the theme is that we are going to call on ministers to resign—an issue that has been taken up in *The West Australian*. That is their theme. That is their parliamentary tactic once they come in here. The member for Moore talked about the Minister for Industrial Relations’ response to the allegations of sexual assault and the words that were used in response to a media query. It happens every single day in the minister’s office. It has happened for the last five and a half years; it happened in spades for the eight and a half years that members opposite were in office. It happens in every single government that there is discussion about how a minister will respond to a media query. Quite apart from these questions, all opposition members do is read *The West* and then get up, and that is what they are armed with. They have nothing else—absolutely nothing else.

I refer to my portfolio. The Leader of the Opposition said that the Department of Communities is clearly dysfunctional, and the opposition has repeatedly called the Department of Communities a mega-department. How is it clearly dysfunctional, member? There are hundreds and hundreds of child protection workers around this state doing incredibly challenging and difficult engagement with families, actually having some really good wins at times—not always, because it is really, really hard work, and, by their nature, those families coming before the department are in crisis. Their situations are often many years in the making. But when those workers fail, when they have difficulties, she calls them dysfunctional. I notice the Leader of the Opposition is not looking up; her eyes are staying

glued to her computer, because she does not want to deal with those issues, when she blames child protection workers in our state and their department for being dysfunctional. She cannot have it both ways. She cannot say that the Department of Communities is dysfunctional, yet applaud the work of child protection workers. She cannot have it both ways. I acknowledge that there is difficult work there, and sometimes we do not get it right, but that is the nature of child protection work. It is high-risk work.

When we were at the Achiever Awards and I saw the reduction in the number of Aboriginal children in care for the first time in 25 years—a small but significant and definite trend—I was very proud of that. I am proud of the policies that we have put in place as a government. I am proud of working with the Department of Communities and the child protection workforce, which, as I said, are doing difficult work. There are pressures at the moment. There is no doubt about that. There are staffing pressures because of COVID impacting the state, including through the border closures. We are not the only industry to have those pressures. The Department of Communities and the social services workforce are not the only workforce or industry to suffer those staffing pressures. We acknowledge that, but we are working hard to overcome them. We are putting in more staff.

We have put in more than 224 new full-time equivalent positions for case-carrying child protection staff since coming to office. In the opposition's last term, over four years, it put in 13 new FTEs. We have been in for five and a half years and we have brought in 224 case-carrying child protection staff. I am really proud of that. I am proud of the government for putting more money into early intervention so that Aboriginal community-controlled organisations can work with vulnerable families and start to address the issues that have brought them before the child protection system. That is where we are starting to see inroads into better engagement with those services and more contracts to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and, as a result, fewer children in the child protection system. But if children are unsafe and we need to bring them into care, that is what we will do.

I ask opposition members to just once back those staff and thank them for their work and acknowledge that it is difficult work, instead of always going for the crisis, being ambulance chasers, being hysterical and being lazy. All opposition members do is read *The West* and come here, and that is their strategy. It is really quite tragic.

I could talk about a number of other things, such as the additional money that we have put into my portfolios, particularly child protection, and the feeder issues that bring families before the child protection system, particularly around family and domestic violence. There is a huge focus on and a huge increase in investment, with \$150 million of new spending. There is massive law reform and cooperation happening across portfolios, which the opposition could only have dreamt of. What was happening in cabinet when it was in government was incredibly divisive. There was absolutely no cooperation across portfolios at all. In fact, the then Minister for Transport, Dean Nalder, eventually resigned from cabinet because he said that he was continually getting undermined by the Premier's department.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [6.42 pm]: I want to answer a few things. Normally, when opposition members come in here, they do not make specific allegations, but today they made a couple and a number of those relate to me. Therefore, it is only appropriate that I get the opportunity to answer those specific allegations because it is an unusual event. Normally, they do not make specific allegations.

Firstly, I want to address the question raised by the member for Moore about some emails between public servants regarding a media response from a year ago. It is almost a year to the day since that news article appeared in the paper and this is the first occasion on which anybody has ever raised it with me. Therefore, this is the first occasion on which I have been able to respond to that allegation. I make the point that I have never refused an interview on the question of sexual harassment in the mining industry, and I have been quoted in the media dozens of times because I have done press conference after press conference. I have made myself available to media interviews. Even at the time, a year and bit ago, when Caitlyn Rintoul started this excellent work that led to her getting a Walkley Award, the day after the first article was written, I did a press conference in Cockburn at the so-called South Fremantle power station, where Caitlyn Rintoul asked me questions. To make it clear, I have never not made myself available for interview.

Today the opposition referred to an email from a public servant to another public servant that was cc-ed to an officer in my office. It was nothing to do with me. I did not know anything of that email until after it was published in *The West Australian*. The idea that somehow it had anything to do with me is a false position. It never had anything to do with me. The member says, "Oh, you were trying to manage the media performance of the department." Of course. We all do that, but I was not managing the media performance of the regulator. The regulator at that time in health and safety was Andrew Chaplyn, who is the chief inspector of mines. I never once suggested to him how he should respond to the media. I did not want the department to give itself false bravado in the media, as if it were on top of the issue, because clearly the reason this young journalist, who did a splendid job in exposing something no-one knew anything about, raised this issue was that she had information that was not available to the department. I certainly did not want the department to come out and say that it was doing a good job, because clearly that was not the case. If it had been doing a good job, we would have known about the issues that Caitlyn Rintoul was reporting on.

Of course, I told the department not to crow in the media about its performance because that would have been disgraceful. Of course, I told the department to report only the statistics and other information that it had available.

Whatever the stats were was no business of mine, but I wanted it to stick only to the facts. I did not want it to defend its performance in the media. Again I say that I never once told any regulator how it should respond to a media inquiry—never. Regulators are independent of government. Ministers do not control the activities of regulators. Regulators make those decisions. If the opposition wants, I am happy to table in Parliament my communications agreement with the Parliament, which makes it clear that I do not have the right to tell a regulator what to do. I have nothing to hide in these matters because I have exercised my responsibilities to a high standard. What is my responsibility? My responsibility is to work with the regulators to make sure that they have the resourcing they need, and the mines safety inspectorate is the best resourced safety regulator in Australia. I need to make sure that it has the legislation it needs to enforce the rights that we want.

Guess what? I delivered the work health and safety legislation against the vote of the Liberal Party. I acknowledge that the Nationals WA supported the legislation and we would not have industrial manslaughter as an offence in Western Australia if it was not for the work of the National Party in support of the government. I always acknowledged the National Party was a key part of introducing the offence of industrial manslaughter when it supported the government in that matter. It is something that the trade union movement is proud of, because we have worked for so long to get it in.

I am trying to do my bit. I am not the regulator. I understand the purpose of some of the recommendations of the inquiry and we will respond to them, but some of them ask the Minister for Mines and Petroleum to take action when it is about legislation covered by the Minister for Industrial Relations. I am not going to split hairs on a badly worded recommendation, because I understand what it is trying to achieve. But members should not come in here crying about things that they have shown no interest in at any time in their career.

I am not going to personalise it, but do not forget that the Liberal Party elected Troy Buswell as its leader after he had sniffed that woman's chair and after he had undone clothing on a Labor staffer in the Speaker's personal chambers. That was after the Liberal Party knew that. Liberal Party members come in here to lecture me about sexual harassment. The Liberal Party elected a serial sex pest as the Leader of the Liberal Party and then it defended him for years. When we tried to hold him to account after he got drunk and crashed his car eight times in Subiaco, Liberal Party members said, "Oh, you are impacting his mental health." Do not lecture me. One of the things I am proud of is my time at the Shop Assistants Union. Young women used to come to me and tell me about problems they were having with being harassed by pests in the workplace. I have never experienced it; I do not know what it is like to be a victim of sexual harassment, but I have worked with women who have been victims and I will always work on the side of victims.

I could be politicising this to no end. Until tonight, I have never publicly pointed out the hypocrisy of the Liberal Party. When I was the Minister for Commerce, I personally introduced legislation in this chamber to give women escaping domestic violence additional rights. Except for the current member for Cottesloe, who was not in the Parliament, the rest of you voted against the legislation. You all voted against it. Do not come in here and try to personalise this stuff. As the Bible says, let him who is without sin cast the first stone. I am not suggesting that the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety has got stuff entirely right in its handling of sexual harassment matters. It needs to be held to account for anything it has done wrong. I will not be lectured to by a group of people who supported a serial sex pest to become the leader of their party. The Leader of the Opposition was leading both the National Party and the Liberal Party at that time. They celebrated their belief that he was some great person who should lead them. He was their Treasurer and their chief attack dog in the Parliament. They did not find out about his sexual harassment behaviour after he did that. That happened before they gave him those jobs.

I am sorry but I do not remember the name of the journalist, the deputy editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. We talked on the sideline in the media area at the Diggers and Dealers Mining Forum. She seemed to be an impressive young person. I am deeply saddened that she was treated that way by people who attended Diggers and Dealers. It shows that Diggers and Dealers needs to step up. It is the principal mining conference in Western Australia. If it is going to continue to hold itself up in Kalgoorlie, it will have to pick itself up. Many people are lobbying to move Diggers and Dealers to Perth because of the accommodation issues. I support it staying in Kalgoorlie because Kalgoorlie is the golden heart of Western Australia's mining industry. It would be disappointing to have it leave the goldfields. It will stay in Kalgoorlie only if these issues are resolved, not some time in the future. We can never have this situation occur at Diggers and Dealers again. If there is sexual harassment and predatory behaviour by delegates at the conference, it will not last in Kalgoorlie; it will end up in Perth. If the people of Kalgoorlie want to keep Diggers and Dealers—I believe that is the best place for it, despite the accommodation challenges—they need to improve, and they need to do it immediately. I raised the question of sexual harassment and culture in my presentation at the dinner. I have spoken at the dinner five times. It was only the second time I got spontaneous applause. The first time was when I reported that eight mineworkers had been rescued from an underground fire half an hour before the dinner started and the second time was this year when I said it was time for culture change in the industry.

Somehow I am being blamed for saying that the industry needs to improve. I suggest that members read the Rio Tinto report. The Rio Tinto report does not make a single recommendation about law reform. It says that Rio Tinto will drive out sexual harassment and predatory behaviour if Rio Tinto changes. That is the whole point. The law has been clear in Western Australia since the 1980s. The Equal Opportunity Act was enacted in 1984. I have talked about

this previously. The 1991 Clough Joint Venture v McIntosh decision made it clear. At that time there was a \$142 000 reward. In 1991, \$142 000 was a lot of money. It would have bought someone more than a house. It was a huge decision at the time. The idea that employers do not know that they are responsible for sexual harassment is a ridiculous argument. The fact that companies have been making secret payments to women who brought forward complaints shows that they knew it was their job. The fact that they did it and did not report it to the Equal Opportunity Commission, the mines safety inspectorate, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, the Fair Work Ombudsman, their shareholders or anybody else showed that they knew that they were doing the wrong thing, yet they never did it publicly. When I would ask the regulator to tell me the stats, the stats were quite low. Clearly, those stats were wrong.

I wish to make another comment. The problems in the FIFO industry are appalling and we need to fix them. One way we are going to fix them is by increasing the number of women in the sector. Quotas will work. I suggest that the opposition get on board with quotas. Let us look at the Labor Party. When I joined the Labor Party back in 1983, it was a completely different organisation from the one it is now, and that is because we changed our culture. The introduction of quotas was an important component of the change of culture in the Labor Party. It is unrecognisable now. Next year it will be 40 years since I joined the Labor Party. I can tell members that it is a different beast now from what it was 40 years ago. We have our own sins to atone for, but at least we have changed our culture, and the mining industry needs to accept that. The next industry that needs to accept that is the agriculture industry. Let us have a look at what is happening in agriculture. There are plenty of reports of farmers around Australia demanding sexual services from backpackers in return for getting them an extended visa. That is appalling. I have been desperate for the federal government to take action, and now we have a federal government that might do so.

In the hospitality industry, four men are currently in court charged with raping their staff members. The idea that this is a problem only for the FIFO industry is not correct. Of course there is a huge problem in FIFO, and it is particularly severe because women have to live on site, but that is a question for FIFO.

I was once asked why the mental health code of practice in FIFO workplaces deals with sexual harassment. It is because there was a parliamentary report that told us we needed to introduce that code. It was not given to me as the minister; it was given to the former government. When we came to government, there had been no response to that inquiry. When I came to office, one of my first actions was to demand that the code of practice be developed, and it dealt with the issues that the Jacobs inquiry had recommended we look at. Now we have a new report from this new committee and we are responding to that. It is hardly a surprise that we respond to data when people provide data to us. That is why the WorkSafe Western Australia Commissioner is looking at farm deaths in the agriculture industry. Three-quarters of workplace deaths in Western Australia are in the agriculture industry, which is a fraction of a per cent of the total workforce. We operate on data. I get back to the fact that the government did not have the data available to it before Caitlyn Rintoul's great work; it was all being hidden by companies through their confidential agreements. I am happy to be held accountable for the work that I do; I have no trouble with that at all.

I could go on for a long time on that, but I have only a couple of minutes before the Parliament rises. I want to address corrective services. By the way, the power station in Kalgoorlie is turned on by a guy with a laptop and he can sit anywhere in the world, so what does it matter? It is such a stupid comment. It is so ridiculous. They have technicians up there who repair it. The member for Cottesloe knows that. He visited the facility and he does not understand anything that he learnt. This is the problem. Every time we give the member a briefing, he knows nothing.

Anyway, let us get onto the prisons. Prisons are difficult to manage. I am very proud of the work done by the prison officers. I know that I am in a dispute with the WA Prison Officers' Union; I get that and I have sought legal advice. I am not able to explain exactly why we are in dispute, but the point I would make is that the criticism from the union started about three or four weeks ago. I cannot tell members what I did three or four weeks ago because I have sought legal advice from the State Solicitor and I was told I am not allowed to talk about it. When it becomes public, people will understand what is driving the Prison Officers' Union. I am proud of the work done by the prison officers, and I want to assure them that I am on their side to provide a safe environment. The number one cause of workers' compensation claims by prison officers is being injured by a prisoner. That has to be dealt with by the department. The department has not been properly concentrating on that in the past, but it is now. We will continue to work with prison officers to improve the situation in the prisons. They are in a dangerous environment, and we have to improve it. But glib one-liners are never going to change anything.

I am proud of the work that I am doing on behalf of the people of this state to provide a safe environment for the workers in the prisons, for the prisoners and for the community, keeping the prisoners inside the prisons, but I also want to do it efficiently. We have to do it efficiently. We cannot have a situation in which money is no object. Money is an object. We have to be accountable for the expenditure in the prison service. This is a very difficult environment, and I am proud the Premier trusts me with such great responsibility.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
