



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2022

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 16 November 2022

Legislative Assembly

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

PAPERS TABLED

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

LAND TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

PERTH FESTIVAL 2023

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [12.02 pm]: It was my pleasure to represent the Premier at the recent launch of the Perth Festival 2023 program at our Perth Concert Hall. The state government is a proud supporter of the festival through Lotterywest, Tourism WA and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, and is particularly proud to do so in this, its seventieth year since its foundation by the University of Western Australia in 1953. The state provides more than \$7.7 million to the festival through Lotterywest, which helps attract visitors, create jobs and boost the economy. The direct economic impact of the 2022 festival to Western Australia was \$20 million, with a multiplied flow-on impact to the wider economy of more than \$55 million. It is a curated festival and has a strong reputation for its international program, the presentation of new works and distinctive Western Australian content. It has been an absolute pleasure to see the vision of artistic director Iain Grandage being realised over the last few years, and I congratulate him and the whole Perth Festival team.

The festival attracts more than 500 000 people and engages more than 600 volunteers every year. It includes the Literature and Ideas program and Lotterywest festival films. The Perth Festival celebrates our city, our stories and our inspiring artists. It is exciting to see this year's theme of Djinda revealed—encouraging us to look to the stars and galaxies that have fuelled the imagination of people for thousands of years. As Iain Grandage says, Perth Festival 2023 is celebrating its seventieth anniversary by looking upwards and outwards and singing to the stars. Perth Festival has a strong tradition of commissioning major new works, showcasing First Nations culture, local artists and innovators, while bringing creatives from around the world to Western Australia.

In 2023—this is exciting, Madam Speaker—we will have an Australian-exclusive performance by Icelandic superstar Björk, presenting the very special event *Björk's Cornucopia*. We will also have the Australian premiere of *Blueback*, the film adaptation of the iconic Tim Winton novel, as part of Lotterywest Films. There will be international, national and local artists providing outstanding performances, music of every genre, visual arts exhibitions, conversations with authors and free community events.

I am pleased to see the festival's ongoing commitment to community participation, creative learning and touring to regional Western Australia. The festival also brings new arts experiences to regional WA through its Touring WA initiative. The Perth Festival is a great asset to the state and is a good example of cultural tourism diversifying and strengthening our economy while celebrating who we are as Western Australians. I wish the Perth Festival—plenty of time now!—a fantastic season, and I encourage all members and their families, friends, neighbours and other attachments to engage with it with enthusiasm. The program offers something for everyone.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Culture and the Arts, no pressure, but the only new work I am currently looking forward to is your performance on 1 December!

TAB — SALE

Statement by Minister for Racing and Gaming

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [12.05 pm]: I rise to inform the house that after an extensive and rigorous process, the McGowan government has decided to terminate the market process for the sale of the Western Australian TAB. The government always made it clear that the sale of the TAB would proceed only if it was in the long-term interests of the racing industry and the taxpayers of Western Australia. After prudent and exhaustive efforts, it has become clear that agreement cannot be reached to meet those terms.

The process to sell the TAB was first commenced under the previous Liberal–National government in 2015. The process was halted in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. In October 2021, at the request of Racing and Wagering Western Australia, former Minister for Racing and Gaming Reece Whitby announced that the government would

commence a new sale process. Expressions of interest were initially sought from the market, followed by an intensive request for binding offers, with three selected respondents. Within the past month, the government progressed negotiations with NTD, otherwise known as Betr, as the preferred respondent, but it ultimately failed to confirm the necessary financial commitments to support its offer. The other bids received were from Tabcorp and Entain Group; however, they did not provide the necessary financial return to proceed with the sale.

Since the restart of the TAB sale process in mid-2021, the state government has spent approximately \$3.5 million to fund staff, legal, commercial and other consultancy expenses. Unfortunately, by the end of the market process, we did not have the certainty required to ensure that the long-term interests of both the state and the racing industry could be met by the offers presented by respondents. On this basis, the McGowan government has made the responsible and prudent decision to retain ownership of the WA TAB. The state government will retain ownership of the WA TAB and it will continue to be operated by Racing and Wagering Western Australia in the state's interests and for the benefit of the local racing industry. I would like to thank Racing and Wagering Western Australia and the racing industry reference group for their collaborative and constructive approach to working through the sale process.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ADMINISTRATION) REGULATIONS 1996 — ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Local Government) [12.08 pm]: I rise to inform the house that new regulations to allow local government council meetings to continue to be held electronically have been gazetted. Temporary arrangements were in place that enabled councils to hold meetings electronically, as part of the McGowan government's world-leading COVID-19 response. Following the end of the state of emergency, these new provisions will enable local governments across our state to continue to hold meetings electronically. This is another initiative being delivered as part of the McGowan government's package of local government reforms, which are the most significant reforms for local government in more than 25 years.

The new provisions, which are already in effect, will enable councils to hold up to half of all council meetings via electronic means, and provide that councillors—with approval from the mayor, shire president or a majority of council—can attend meetings via electronic means. There will be a cap on the number of meetings a councillor can attend via electronic means; however, this will not apply to councillors living with a disability. These measures will be particularly beneficial to regional local governments because councillors often have to travel some distance to participate in the council decision-making process. Although the measures will provide flexibility to the sector, I encourage local governments to generally hold their meetings in person and host meetings electronically only when necessary.

These regulations will be reviewed after 12 months. A public consultation process will take place, and members of the public will be able to provide feedback on how council meetings have operated under these changes. New provisions relating to the live streaming and recording of council meetings are also being progressed as part of the state government's local government reforms.

SENIORS WEEK

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [12.10 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house that Seniors Week 2022 was held last week, with the hugely successful Have a Go Day on Wednesday, 9 November. Seniors Week is an opportunity for us all to show our appreciation for the valued contribution of Western Australia's seniors. It is a highlight of my year, as Minister for Seniors and Ageing. This year, the McGowan government proudly supported over 50 community organisations and local governments to hold events through the Seniors Week community grants program. There was so much happening across the state, with events supported in metropolitan and regional areas, including Karratha, Mukinbudin, the Shire of Irwin, Mandurah, Mt Barker, Collie and the City of Vincent to name a few. I was fortunate to attend several events for Seniors Week, and I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to connect and get involved and to hear from seniors directly about what is important to them.

Seniors Week demonstrates two important things: age is not a barrier to participating in the community and to living a fulfilling life, and there are many organisations working to create opportunities for seniors to be active and to feel valued and connected. One such organisation is the Seniors Recreation Council of WA, which held the thirtieth annual Seniors Recreation Council Have a Go Day at the beautiful Burswood Park last Wednesday. I thank the Premier for his attendance and address to the huge crowd at Have a Go Day and for his time in exploring all the exhibitions and displays. Have a Go Day was a fabulous event, with thousands of seniors in attendance. I would like to congratulate Phil Paddon and Dawn Yates from the Seniors Recreation Council for their outstanding work in organising this event. There were opportunities to try new activities, get important information about services and support, connect with friends and meet new people. People could even get a new, highly desirable WA Seniors Card.

Finally, just this morning I had the pleasure of presenting the WA Seniors Awards in partnership with the Council on the Ageing WA. The awards celebrate the amazing individuals, businesses and local governments that are making

a difference for seniors across WA. The award recipients generously share their time, energy and skills to make our state a positive place to live and to age. I would like to thank the many organisations and individuals who contributed to making Seniors Week 2022 a great success.

SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [12.13 pm]: With a growing population and increasing demand for sources of protein, aquaculture is the world's fastest growing food production sector, with shellfish aquaculture the fastest growing sector in Western Australia. Rock oysters and akoya are being grown from Carnarvon to Albany, with significant investment in regional infrastructure and jobs.

WA's aquaculture research capacity has been strengthened with \$500 000 of upgrades completed at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development research facilities at Hillarys. The improvements will further support aquaculture industry development across regional WA, with the creation of a small-scale hatchery to increase research opportunities to support the growing marine shellfish sector. Seawater supply to the site has been improved, and a new algae food supply system and expanded laboratory and nursery space have been provided. These are vital for shellfish seed production. Facilities have also been improved to allow shellfish breeding stock to be brought in from the wild and kept separately and securely to minimise the risk of disease.

The upgrades to the Hillarys facilities mean our shellfish aquaculture research can be expanded to include species such as scallops, driving industry diversification and market competitiveness of the state's aquaculture industry. A new research project will commence in 2023 with funding support from One Sea Pty Ltd and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to trial the production of southern saucer scallop spat in the hatchery. This research will be vital to support wild stocks and for potential commercial production. The upgrades have already had a significant impact on water quality, with recent successful spawning runs of shellfish from the hatchery. The shellfish team is very encouraged by this recent progress and is enthusiastic about the important role of supporting the industry's expansion.

The McGowan government understands that, for WA, the aquaculture industry represents a fantastic opportunity to diversify the economy and create jobs, especially in the regions.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Standing Orders Suspension — Withdrawal of Notice

Notice of motion, given Tuesday, 15 November, withdrawn by **Ms C.M. Rowe** on behalf of the Leader of the House.

Statement by Acting Speaker

THE ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife) [12.15 pm]: In light of the member for Belmont withdrawing the Leader of the House's motion on his behalf, I advise that there will not be a dinner break between 6.00 and 7.00 pm and that private members' business will proceed as normal between 4.00 and 7.00 pm.

LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT (PROTECTED ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCTS) BILL 2022

Second Reading

Resumed from 26 October.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [12.16 pm]: I will be the lead speaker for the opposition in the Legislative Assembly on the Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022.

Mr D.J. Kelly: We look forward to it!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, minister, in actual fact we do support the bill. That is the first thing I wanted to say. As the shadow Minister for Racing and Gaming, I have done as much research as I can through briefings and the like in the short time that we have been provided by the government. From the outset, I acknowledge that the opposition will support the bill, but we have some serious reservations about some elements of the bill. I will bring those to the fore during consideration in detail, and I will outline a few questions for the minister during my contribution.

My sympathies are with the Raco family, whom this legislation is based on. I had the opportunity to meet Enza Raco when the bill was read in. My sympathies go to her and the balance of the Raco family. I can certainly understand why this bill has been brought forward. Something that we all have in common is that when we go out with our family, we want to have a safe time and come home in one piece. I certainly agree with the purpose of the bill and I look forward to it somehow achieving that result. If and when the bill passes and has been in place for a year or two, I also look forward to the minister briefing us on some statistics and updating us on how it is going and what effect it has had.

This bill will bring to Western Australia the concept of protected entertainment precincts that are uniquely managed by the police and the Liquor Commission. As I pointed out, the bill has been brought in to remember Giuseppe Raco,

who was the victim of a one-punch attack. Its intent is to reduce unacceptable levels of harm in areas with a high concentration of licensed premises and ensure that unlawful and violent behaviour is minimised. As is the case with all legislation, we will not know whether this legislation is working as intended until it has been enacted.

As I have said, the briefing that we were given has raised some concerns. We were told in the briefing that, yes, this will be in regulations, and, yes, the WA Police Force will self-regulate in this area. I understand that some of the guidelines have been set out, and others are still being created by the police. It does not fill me with a great deal of confidence when we get a statement that the guidelines are being made up as we go along. These are the challenges that we have as an opposition. No doubt the government and the drafters of the legislation have been working on this for several weeks or months. We were given the briefing only last week, so we have had limited time to scrutinise the legislation. The opposition and I fully understand and support the thrust of the legislation, but we have reservations about some elements. This legislation will also not be retrospective, which could be seen by some as a missed opportunity.

The one-punch laws have raised concerns. I note that the Premier was quoted in the media recently as saying, in relation to these concerns, “Cry me a river.” That is not the right attitude as far as I am concerned. The opposition is also concerned about the resourcing of the WA Police Force to deal with this issue. The Minister for Police tells us all the time that we will be getting 950 new police officers and everything is going great. However, the WA Police Union is telling us that the number of resignations has doubled and people are leaving the Police Force in droves. I have concerns about whether the police will have the resources that they need to enforce this legislation. Cybersecurity and technology is another issue. The Commissioner of Police has talked about how body-worn cameras and data will enable the WA Police Force to monitor people in entertainment precincts such as the Wellington Street area and Northbridge. I will be more than happy to hear from the Minister for Racing and Gaming on how those elements will help in enforcing this legislation.

I now want to give a bit of the history of the Giuseppe Raco case. Early on the morning of 5 July 2020, Jaylen Denny Dimer, aged 26, attacked Giuseppe Raco, a 40-year-old nightclub manager, while he was ordering a kebab on his break. Mr Dimer had been drinking all day and hit Mr Raco from behind. The incident shocked Western Australia and saw Mr Dimer originally sentenced to seven and a half years’ jail. I do not agree with the Premier too often, but I will say that I agree with the Premier comments last week about the reduction in Mr Dimer’s sentence and when he will come out of prison. That obviously concerns the Premier, and it also concerns me. An attack such as the one on Mr Raco is inexcusable, and it is distressing to see that Mr Dimer’s sentence has been reduced. I can only imagine how Mr Raco’s family is feeling.

As a consequence of what happened to Mr Raco, his family created a petition called “Coward’s Collar”. The petition calls for specific legislation to deal with one-punch attacks. The petition states, in part —

We believe that the current sentencing laws and guidelines are ineffective to operate as a deterrent to one-punch attacks. They do not reflect community standards and fail to recognise both the harm caused to the families of victims and further the outrage with which the community views these offences.

We are proposing that any individual found guilty of a one-punch attack that has caused either permanent disability or death, is sentenced using a new law called ‘Coward’s Collar’.

Coward’s Collar would include a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment, with the addition of a 5-year prohibition from all licensed premises and entertainment precincts.

This additional 5-year post-sentence order would act as a powerful deterrent in addition to continuing to protect the community from cowardly behaviour.

We are asking for your support for the introduction of Coward’s Collar.

This legislation to create protected entertainment precincts is a big part of what has been asked for in this petition. Another element is sentencing for these crimes. The question is: will this legislation deliver the “coward’s collar”? No, it will not. However, it certainly will deal with part of the Raco family’s request. I am sure that other legislation will come on stream to deal with sentencing for one-punch attacks.

I point out to the minister that the opposition also met with Mr Raco’s family and discussed what we would do. We would ensure that any legislation that was brought in to deal with this issue was not just virtue signalling or populist but would deliver on its intent. The Raco family simply wants to deter one-punch attacks. The intent of this legislation to create protected entertainment precincts and to deter certain people from coming into those precincts will cover part of the Raco family’s wish. It is difficult to say whether legislation such as this would have helped on that fateful day.

It will be very challenging to enforce this legislation and intercept people from committing a one-punch attack. A person who has committed that crime and been sentenced under the mandatory sentencing arrangement will not be allowed to go into a protected entertainment precinct for five years. There is no doubt that this legislation will be effective in keeping offenders out of these precincts after an attack has occurred, but it will be very challenging

to try to intercept attacks by people who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This bill has been dedicated to the memory of Mr Raco, and his family has come out in strong support of the bill, as we saw with their presence in the gallery on the day that the minister read the bill into the house.

I also want to compliment Danny Green and people like him for the work that they have been doing in the last few years on stopping one-punch attacks. Danny Green should be congratulated for coming out strongly with his campaign and advertisements. I also give my sympathies to Danny Hodgson and his family. That was another very unfortunate situation. The perpetrator of that offence should not have been out on bail at the time. We need to try to stop these attacks from happening whenever possible.

The government has identified five precincts that will be captured by the bill—namely, Hillarys, Scarborough, Fremantle, Perth and Mandurah. In our briefing, we were provided with slides and maps of the indicative precincts, but we as the opposition asked for a list of stakeholders that had been consulted. My understanding is that we are yet to receive that, minister. We are looking forward to receiving that at some stage. We have also sought the statistics of the offences in the proposed precincts. Once again, we have not yet received that information from the minister's office, so I look forward to receiving that in the very near future.

In relation to the precincts, section 175 will be amended to allow the minister to make a recommendation to the Governor to make regulations to prescribe an area of the state to be a protected entertainment precinct. This poses a question for the minister: will he be able to recommend special time-limited precincts for specific events? The events I am thinking about are the leavers events in places such as Dunsborough and Rottnest. Those events have a short time frame. There are probably not a lot of licensed premises in those precincts, but there is a lot of alcohol in one place at one time and a lot of people. Therefore, is that something that the minister will look at in times ahead? Obviously, the legislation will not be ready for leavers week in 2022, but it may be something for the minister to consider for future events.

One other question I have about the precincts is: why has the Burswood Casino been omitted from the list of proposed precincts? As the minister well knows, that is a precinct with multiple licensed areas in which a lot of people are in one place at one time. When we asked the question during the briefing, the answer was that there are existing security protocols at Crown casino, and the legislation applies where there is a concentration of liquor licences, not venues. As an opposition, we are still unclear as to why the Burswood Casino has been excluded and whether the current processes will perhaps be meshed or rearranged at some stage to allow a place like the Burswood Casino to be included.

Dr A.D. Buti: They can be excluded from Crown by the Crown security.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Certainly, to me, there is still a large concentration of people in one place, as the minister well knows. This is something that could be looked at as a flow-on effect from this legislation.

To me, these precincts will be pretty rigid. What would happen if I were inside the precinct and on the street corner just outside the precinct someone got one-punch attacked. Would there be any flexibility with the edge of the precinct?

Dr A.D. Buti: They will still be charged.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I know they will still be charged—I know that. But what I am saying is: will there be an opportunity to increase the size of a precinct? Theoretically, if that person was charged, they would still be able to stand on the far side of the street after they finish their sentence. They will not be able to go into the precinct for five years, but they will be able to go and stand on the other side of the street. Therefore, will there be any flexibility with that? It is going to be a bit of a challenge for police. This issue has also been brought up by some of the local governments. What will happen when undesirable types who have been moved out of a particular precinct just move into the local government precinct next to it? Those are some of the concerns that have been expressed to us.

The Queensland legislation started with 16 precincts, called the safe night precincts, or SNPs. They were part of a broader safe night out strategy. Has the minister looked into the safe night strategy of Queensland?

Dr A.D. Buti: Yes.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a quote from Minister Buti. It states —

“What we do know is that Queensland has the legislation and, from our investigations, communications with them, they are saying that it's successful,” he said.

“In regards to actual data, that is still being processed.”

My understanding is that those precincts have been going for quite some time, so I am wondering whether the minister has received some data in the meantime. Another question that I have flowing on from that is about when the minister says that he has consulted with the Queensland government. The article continues —

In May, the Queensland government said its efforts to tackle alcohol-fuelled violence, including the 10-day bans, stopping alcohol service at 3am, and introducing mandatory ID scanners, had delivered a 49 per cent drop in the number of serious assaults across the state between 3am and 6am on Friday and Saturday nights.

I am curious about how much consultation the minister has actually had with the Queensland government. The other question I have is about mandatory ID scanners. Has the minister considered that as part of his legislation? Has the minister considered giving police the ability to use those scanners? Liquor licensees, using a secure website, will have the ability to gather the information of undesirable types and will have their name, address, phone number and so forth. How will they use that? Once they identify an undesirable type, will it be their job to move them on from their premises or will that be part of the police's job? Those are the sorts of questions coming forth to us; therefore, I thought I would point out some of those things.

The other issue I found quite interesting was an article by a former Commissioner of Police titled "Karl O'Callaghan: Protected Entertainment Precincts the latest lazy laws targeting crime".

Dr A.D. Buti: You know he supported something similar many years ago?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am just going by this article from *The West Australian* of 5 October 2022. It states —

While it is commendable to see the Police Commissioner reassuring us about how well trained his officers are, his claim is unconvincing. Are we expected to believe that of the thousands of people in a PEP at night that a newly graduated officer will know who is banned and who is not? That, of course, is in addition to knowing who is on the Sex Offenders Register, who has received a move-on notice and (maybe in the future) who is on the Banned Drinkers Register.

I am just quoting former police commissioner Karl O'Callaghan, minister.

Dr A.D. Buti: Do you agree with him?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I agree with him in that it will be a difficult challenge for the police.

Dr A.D. Buti: Do you think it is lazy legislation?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The problem for us is, as per usual with this government, we have had about five days to try to absorb it. We have had no information coming back from the —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: — questions that we have asked.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This is the scenario that we are dealing with. We get no time to absorb what is going on. We get no information back when we ask for it at the briefing, and then the minister tells us that he read it in weeks ago.

Dr A.D. Buti: We did.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I know when the minister read it in.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Minister for Finance, if you carry on, I will start calling you to order.

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

Dr A.D. Buti: Minister for Racing and Gaming.

The ACTING SPEAKER: You are always able to be referred to as the Minister for Finance, and I do not need correcting on that.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: These are just some of the quotations I am giving as background in my contribution. I would have thought that the former Commissioner of Police is a fairly well respected and well regarded person. I do not really appreciate the attack from the minister about the credibility of the former police commissioner. Anyway, I will move on.

Dr A.D. Buti: Don't verbal. I did not. I said that he supported something similar. That's not attacking his credibility.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am just going on the article in *The West Australian* of 5 October 2022.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Finance, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In relation to mandatory exclusion and the guidelines, if a person commits an offence such as murder, manslaughter, unlawful assault causing death, grievous bodily harm, wounding, sexual penetration without consent, aggravated sexual penetration without consent or drink-spiking offences, they will be excluded from the precinct for five years after release from prison. I certainly see that as a reasonable scenario, especially for an offence

that is committed within the precinct. I do not see any reason at all why they should reappear in the precinct down the track. There are some exemptions, which I will talk about in a moment. We will have short-term and long-term exclusion orders for the five different precincts. Of course, a member of the police force must not make the order unless the member is satisfied on reasonable grounds that making the order is necessary because the person has behaved in an unlawful, antisocial, violent, disorderly, offensive or threatening way. Before making the order, the member of the police force must obtain the approval of a member of the police force who is, or is acting as, an inspector or an officer of a rank more senior than inspector, unless the member making the order is, or is acting as, such an officer. That will give some sort of chain of command for those officers when it is referred to an inspector or someone higher up the chain. Long-term exclusion orders will be able to be enacted only if the Commissioner of Police writes to the director of Liquor Licensing. The Commissioner of Police will also be able to revoke or vary a short-term exclusion order. I think there will probably be some challenges in the back and forth with these exclusion orders, but involving the director of Liquor Licensing will give another piece in the chain.

I have one question about the perpetrators who will be slapped with exclusion orders. Will some of the defences that could be claimed to an exclusion from a protected entertainment precinct be explained to them? The defences for entering a protected entertainment precinct include attending their residence or another person's residence to provide care, attending work or education, receiving health or welfare services or legal advice, complying with a court or written law, attending a religious ceremony, undertaking union activities, undertaking any permitted travel or, if the individual is Aboriginal, fulfilling a cultural practice or obligation. Some of these will be approved only if deemed necessary in the circumstances. Obviously, this will be different for each person, but each case will potentially set a precedent.

I cannot believe that there will be a defence because the person needs to go into the precinct for union activities. I find that quite bizarre, to be honest. That is one of the weakest points of this legislation. For some reason, the person will be able go into the precinct that they have been excluded from to take part in some sort of union activity. I think that reduces the credibility of this part of the legislation. I can understand that a person may need to attend religious ceremonies, care for someone, attend education or receive health care or legal advice, but undertaking union activities does not cut the mustard as far as I am concerned. It reduces the credibility of this legislation. However, I will move on.

Obviously, juveniles will be captured by this legislation. A juvenile is defined in the act as anyone under the age of 18 years. Will the policer err on the side of providing juveniles with short-term exclusion orders? How will those on the cusp of turning 18 be handled within this system? During the briefing, police advised that they would develop their own guidelines, as I said earlier. On 29 September, the Commissioner of Police, Col Blanch, was quoted as saying that he conceded that enforcement would definitely be a challenge for the force, which would use live streams from officers' body-worn cameras, closed-circuit television networks and venue identification scanners to identify those who flout the ban. As I said earlier, enforceability is going to be a challenge. We know that body-worn cameras, CCTV networks and, potentially, venue ID scanners will help to identify these people. With the resourcing challenges that the police force has at the moment, the worry is how officers will be able to keep a close eye on everyone in the five precincts. I look forward to that being explained to me.

I want to bring up a couple of other points before I wrap up my contribution. Certainly, we need a bit more detail on the secure website for licensed premises. How will it operate? To whom will the information of patrons be restricted? How will someone be removed, or will they have to call the police? How will that part of it work? Proposed section 152NB refers to adverse effects on the atmosphere, ambience, character or pleasantness of the areas. There will certainly be a subjective element to police measuring what someone is doing to the atmosphere or ambience. How will that be balanced? I imagine that an offence will be triggered after multiple occurrences of disorderliness, but that is another matter that could be a challenge for the police.

Generally, there are always three, four or five people in these particular precincts that contribute to 80 or 90 per cent of the problems, but certainly from my perspective there are some challenges there. As I said before, the minister and the drafters of the legislation have no doubt been working on this for quite some time, but it certainly is a challenge, particularly for some of those areas that have question marks about the ramifications of this legislation. Another example is what will happen if an offence occurs within a private residence within a precinct. Could the person who committed that offence be banned under this legislation? Another question mark is the lack of oversight by a third party. The WA Police Force will self-regulate. As I said, why was Burswood not included? What will happen to the data of offenders and licence holders? Who could potentially access that data? They are some of the questions I have.

The final thing I want to talk about is the stakeholder engagement, or the lack of stakeholder engagement, I should say. From what we have been able to deduce in the short time available is that there has not been a lot of stakeholder engagement with local governments. The Australian Hotels Association has been briefed on the bill and supports the precincts, but the City of Perth was not consulted prior to the bill being read in. However, I note that Basil Zempilas, the Mayor of the City of Perth, is in favour of it. He certainly was not consulted. He said that an increased police presence in the city and Northbridge had already made a difference.

He is in favour of it, but were all the local governments that will have these precincts in their area consulted? An article in *The West Australian* states —

City of Vincent Mayor Emma Cole said the local government welcomed the move and was keen for talks with the Government about expanding the exclusion zone to an adjoining area of William Street in Perth.

“It is difficult to predict if there would be flow on impacts to Vincent town centres, such as Leederville or Beaufort Street, but if that did happen, of course we would raise this with WA Police and the State Government,” she said.

Was she consulted? Were those local governments consulted? They are the sorts of questions that I have. As I said, my biggest reservation is the defence to go into an exclusion zone because someone is engaging in some sort of union activity. That is not a good thing.

Dr A.D. Buti: That is your biggest concern in the whole legislation, is it?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It is not my biggest concern, but it is one of them. As I said, I do not think it helps with the bill’s credibility.

I will wrap up my contribution there. As I said, the opposition supports the bill, but we have serious questions about its enforceability, the resources that will be provided to it and the point I mentioned about union activity. I look forward to being able to iron out some of those elements during the consideration in detail stage. I am sure that the minister, along with his advisers, will give me some good explanations. As an opposition, we support the bill and we look forward to getting some clarity on some other issues.

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [12.54 pm]: I rise to also make a short contribution to the Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022. I am very pleased that Hillarys Boat Harbour and the surrounding area was included in the initial five protected entertainment precincts. Although Hillarys Boat Harbour does not have the high volume of licensed premises that some of the other PEP areas have, there are a number of very clear reasons why it needed to be included in the legislation. Hillarys Boat Harbour has been a much-loved and visited destination for over 30 years. It is visited by not only local people, but also interstate and international tourists. In fact, in a busy year we get between four to five million visitors, and upwards of 24 000 visitors on a busy day. The Committee for Perth recently reported that Hillarys Boat Harbour is the second-most visited destination in the Perth region, second only to Kings Park. I regularly visit Hillarys Boat Harbour on my weekends, and in the summer months in particular the boardwalk is buzzing with free activities for people to enjoy. We often take our friends with young kids there because there are a number of free amusements, including bouncy castles, a mini-train and car rides for everyone. It is very much a family-oriented area.

The member for Roe asked for some statistics for the individual precincts and today I can share some of those for Hillarys. In recent years, the statistics have pointed out a rise in recorded random acts of violence and general rowdiness in a number of entertainment precincts across Perth, and Hillarys has not been immune from that. I will take a moment to outline some of the incidents that occurred in the past year, starting with the most recent. Just last month, in October, there was a reported act of violence at the harbour when a police officer was hospitalised with a shattered jaw. He was completely blindsided while on the job. One minute he was doing what he should be doing, which was protecting the people at Hillarys Boat Harbour, and the next minute he was punched out cold. This is notable because not only was a police officer attacked, but also it occurred at 8.50 pm, which is quite a bit earlier than a number of the other incidents I will mention. A 52-year-old has been arrested for that incident.

I will go back a little bit to December 2021. I vividly remember waking up to the bold lettering on the front page of *The West Australian* that read “Hell in Hillarys”. I think that front page was a tad sensationalist, but the content of the article made some clear points that there had been three incidents in just over a month at our beloved boat harbour. I will mention some of those incidents, working backwards. On 18 December 2021, a young man was critically injured in a parking lot at around 11.40 pm. He was punched to the ground and received serious head injuries and had to go into emergency surgery to hold onto life. On 19 November 2021, three men were injured when a fight started between two groups at 4.00 am near a nightclub. This also resulted in a young man being hospitalised after he received injuries to the head. On 7 November 2021, another man was punched in the back of the head in a car park at 4.30 am, leaving him in a coma and in the ICU in hospital.

All these incidents, and certainly the headline of *The West* that day, suggest that Hillarys has a problem and is not a safe place to be. That could not be further from the truth. Hillarys is one of the safest suburbs in the Perth metropolitan area. Data shows that the crime rate per 100 residents in Hillarys is approximately one-third of the average number of crimes committed per 100 residents across all other suburbs. It is worth looking at the Hillarys crime statistics in greater detail because assault is the most common crime reported that is not family related. This information was recorded in 77 reports across 12 months. We need to be honest about the fact that a share of these assaults are fuelled by alcohol and bad behaviour within the entertainment precinct of the boat harbour. One Hillarys resident wrote to me and expressed her concerns about our community’s reputation. She said, according to my notes —

“Hillarys will be viewed as an unsafe place to visit and will lose its status as a family friendly place.”

She also noted —

“Every person who is bashed is someone’s husband, dad, son, uncle or friend.”

“Swift action needs to be taken to avoid the future risk of a death occurring at our harbour.”

That brings me back to this bill, which will expand the Liquor Control Act 1988. Firstly, the bill will establish protected entertainment precincts—five, initially. Secondly, it will enable police to exclude from those precincts people who engage in violent or tuggish behaviour. The bill is not intended to address underlying social conditions or the reasons behind violence or antisocial behaviour; that is a discussion for a different day. The intention of this bill is to reduce unacceptable levels of harm in areas that have a concentration of licensed areas by excluding repeat offenders from all those areas, so that Western Australians can enjoy a safe night out.

As I said, Hillarys does not have the same number of licensed premises as some of the other PEP areas, but it does have one major bar and one major nightclub, and, historically, a lot of the cases have stemmed from or around those venues. The Hillarys PEP area will extend north to include Whitfords Nodes Park, which is utilised for concerts in the summer months; thousands of revellers congregate there to listen to tunes by the beach. Once Pinnaroo Point is developed just north of this area, I will push for it to be included in the protected area. I have been told that there is scope for that sort of flexibility.

It is important to note that a lot of mechanisms are already in place under the Liquor Control Act 1988. Police currently use barring notices and prohibition orders to deal with people who are involved in antisocial behaviour; however, these are limited to licensed premises and do not deal with violence that occurs in public spaces. Of course, we already have move-on notices that can order people to stay a reasonable distance away from a place or part of it for up to 24 hours, but that area is defined by the police who give that order. A clear point of difference is that under this bill, police will be able to issue, depending on the seriousness of the offence, short or long-term exclusion orders for protected entertainment precincts. Rather than being just a 24-hour move-on notice from that particular place, a person could be excluded from an area for perhaps six months for a less serious offence or up to five years for incredibly serious offences, such as the ones that have been listed. Whether for six months or five years, those people will be excluded from all those entertainment precincts. This will give police—I do not like to use the term “extra power”—another tool to stop people committing offences in another area. As the law currently stands, people can be kicked out of a nightclub in Northbridge for antisocial or even violent behaviour, and can then get in a cab and go to Hillarys Boat Harbour and cause issues there. Had this legislation been in place earlier, the four horrific cases that I have mentioned would have fallen under this bill and the perpetrators would have been banned from not only Hillarys but also other protected precincts. We know that this legislation will not be retrospective, and there are obvious reasons for that; we would have to decide how far to go back and that could become quite messy.

I want to make particular note of the officer in charge of Hillarys Police Station, Mark Stoneman, who was on the Hillarys working group for this legislation. He told me that this is the best legislation he has seen in a really long time. He reiterated the point that up to four or five million people visit Hillarys Boat Harbour every year, yet only 30 or 40 people, if that, cause serious disruption. He noted that while this bill may act as a deterrent, more importantly, it will exclude serious repeat offenders from these areas. I think it is really important to note that exclusionary orders will be used only in circumstances that target high-level recidivist offenders. Mr Col Blanch, the Commissioner of Police, reiterated that exclusion orders will be used sparingly on those who habitually reoffend. It will not be simply for one officer to decide that a person will be excluded from one of these precincts; the constable will have to get approval for that from an inspector. As mentioned before, police can charge people for disorderly behaviour or give them a barring notice or prohibition order; all these mechanisms are in place and will be the first port of call before an exclusionary order is given. Offenders will obviously also have the right to appeal an application to the Minister for Police if they wish to do so.

These amendments will also provide an ability to start sharing information. Mobile and desktop solutions are currently being developed for WA police. Police will eventually have an opportunity to share this information with some licensed premises, so that they are aware of who is excluded. It is fortunate that the two major licensed premises at the boat harbour already use Scantek, which will make it easier to note any excluded people who go to those venues.

This legislation will really complement other strategies that this government has been working on, and certainly those that I have been working on with various ministers and Hillarys police officers to deter antisocial behaviour at the boat harbour. Mobile hoon CCTV cameras were recently deployed across the electorate, including one just outside the boat harbour. Thanks to Minister Saffioti, 21 new CCTV cameras have been installed around the boat harbour car parks, where a number of the incidents that I mentioned occurred. Not only will they be linked directly to Hillarys Police Station, but also one will potentially be linked back to the State Operations Command Centre. We have mentioned Operation Heat Shield. The Minister for Police noted that we already have more police in our entertainment precincts than ever before. Under the Hillarys action plan, extra police officers are now patrolling the boat harbour every Friday and Saturday night. More people are being charged, and the number of offenders has dropped away. This legislation is another tool to deal with the really high-risk and repeat offenders.

It is important not to forget that the majority of people who go to these precincts are simply there to have a good time and want to know that they can do so safely and without being affected by acts of violence. Hopefully, this bill will be in force by Christmas, just in time for summer. It is a really important step in the right direction, so that Hillarys Boat Harbour remains a family-friendly venue where everyone feels safe and secure, including staff. I commend this bill to the house.

MR S.N. AUBREY (Scarborough) [1.08 pm]: I rise in support of the Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022. These protected entertainment precincts are known as “PEP” for short, in honour of Giuseppe “Pep” Raco, who was tragically killed following an unprovoked attack by a stranger in Northbridge. I would like to take a moment to congratulate Pep’s wife, Enza, for her tireless advocacy to improve safety in our entertainment precincts, so that other wives, parents and families do not have to suffer the same tragic loss. The protected entertainment precincts will include Scarborough, Hillarys, Mandurah, Northbridge, the Perth CBD and Fremantle. Protected entertainment precincts will enable people who act in antisocial, offensive or threatening ways that impact on others in a precinct or who have been convicted of serious offences in a precinct to be excluded from those precincts. This will put the onus back on those who do the wrong thing, rather than on the licensed premises or the rest of the community. It will punish and deter those few in our society who act in the wrong way.

I would like to recognise and expand on what my colleague the member for Hillarys mentioned about Hillarys being labelled and sensationalised as a dangerous place to be. Over the last few years, Scarborough has been labelled as “Scareborough”. Many people in my community have told me that they do not see Scarborough this way, but the behaviour of a few individuals out there makes Scarborough appear to be worse than it actually is. The presence of the police and their efforts to keep our community safe become only too clear when we are on the foreshore. Their actions are having a huge impact on the safety of our community. In addition to the protected entertainment precincts initiative, the government is undertaking other initiatives to enhance the safety of our community. For example, the initiative to close Northbridge to vehicles is being replicated in Scarborough. The City of Stirling, the Western Australia Police Force and other relevant state government departments have collaborated and organised to close the foreshore during peak hours, being Sunday nights and Thursday nights when the markets are on. These are the more dangerous periods during which vehicles interact with pedestrians who are leaving the nightclubs and venues along the foreshore.

Further to that, we have connected Scarborough foreshore CCTV to the State Operations Command Centre so that WA police can monitor from its headquarters community safety in Scarborough in real time. An office is situated at the front of the foreshore, which I recently visited during a drive around with Scarborough police. I got a unique perspective on the everyday life of local police and their efforts to keep our community safe. I have heard the Minister for Police mention Apple CarPlay technology a few times in this house. I did not really know what he was talking about, but having seen it in police cars in person, I can say that it is fantastic. WA police is the only police jurisdiction in the world that has access to their jobs on the go and digitally in their cars so that they are more effective in responding to jobs on the go. It was a fantastic opportunity to spend seven hours with some of our local police, going around the foreshore and community to look at the kind of things that they have to deal with on a daily basis. I spent a bit of time walking around with them on the foreshore. It was funny because people kept coming up to me and asking why I was being escorted around the foreshore, to which I said that I was just walking with the police.

The incidents that occur there are few and far between these days because of not only the police presence, but also the CCTV and automatic licence plate recognition, which keep a good eye on what is going on in area. An operator sits in an office in the front of the surf club and monitors the cameras at all times. They keep an eye on what is happening on the foreshore. A police sergeant sits in the office with them and directs resources to where they are needed. All of this is in response to the rapid increase in patronage to Scarborough. Scarborough was and still is a fantastic place to live, work and play. I remember going to the Lookout in Scarborough—it was a newly changed bar—prior to COVID and sitting amongst locals and very rarely seeing any violence or issues in any of the bars and nightclubs. The Lookout is referred to as a nightclub, although it does close at 1.00 am. When COVID hit and people could not leave the state, they started going into Scarborough on party buses and other mechanisms and it became a nightclub destination, especially the Lookout. I was on a date at the Lookout when someone behaved in a homophobic and antisocial way towards me and I have never been back. The people who were coming in were not people from the local community. The odd person who was out was doing the wrong thing. The community itself is not dangerous; rather, it is individuals who behave in antisocial, harmful and disruptive ways, and they need to be brought under control and stopped. Scarborough is a fantastic place to be. It is growing from its activation in arts and culture and sports and recreation, which I am trying to drive as best as I can as the local member. The Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022 is fantastic in that it will stop people from damaging our residents, our community and its reputation in an antisocial or harmful way.

In his second reading speech, the minister said —

Under the Liquor Control Act 1988, there are some mechanisms—namely, barring notices and prohibition orders—that restrict or prohibit individuals from attending licensed premises. However, those mechanisms are primarily limited to licensed premises and cannot deal with antisocial, offensive and disorderly behaviour and violence occurring in other public areas in our entertainment precincts.

I have had a few conversations with my local police about this and the issues they have experienced and what they are limited in doing with three-month prohibition orders. The three-month prohibition orders are intended to prevent individuals from accessing licensed premises, including liquor stores, bars, nightclubs and any other licensed venues across the state. But unless a venue has Scantek or an individual is antisocial or disruptive and they come to the attention of the police, the police are unaware that the individual has entered a licensed premises or a liquor store, and a licensed premise would not know that the individual is prohibited from being there.

What are we to do about that? Should we place Scantek across every bar and nightclub across the state? Are we supposed to introduce the scanning system used in the Kimberley so that every liquor store has a licence scanner? This would put a huge financial burden on businesses across the state and the rest of society and it would punish them for the actions of a few. This bill will counteract that issue by providing the police with the tools they need to come down on people who do the wrong thing and ensure that the onus is put back on individuals, not the rest of society, with short-term exclusion orders, which will be able to be issued by a member of the WA police, subject to the approval of a senior officer, an inspector or higher, for a period of six months.

The bill also provides for extended exclusion orders, which will be able to be issued by the director of Liquor Licensing on application by the Commissioner of Police for up to five years for adults and two years for juveniles. Individuals subject to short or extended exclusion orders will be prevented from entering all our entertainment precincts for six months; and, if they breach the short-term or extended exclusion orders, the penalty will be two years' imprisonment or a fine of \$12 000. In addition to the exclusion orders, a person convicted of specified serious offences in a protected entertainment precinct, such as Scarborough, will be subject to a mandatory exclusion period of five years for an adult and two years for a juvenile. Specified serious offences include murder, manslaughter, unlawful assault causing death, grievous bodily harm, intent to cause grievous bodily harm, wounding, sexual penetration without consent, aggravated sexual penetration without consent and drink-spiking offences. These offences will be specified in the act, not the regulations, which means that they can be amended only by Parliament.

I note that because the laws are not retrospective, they will not apply to the well-known Pizza King case. That case is before the courts so I will not comment on its expected outcome, but following the introduction of PEP, if someone is accused of perpetrating sexual penetration and convicted, that individual will be banned from our entertainment precincts for five years following their release from prison.

This provision will also apply to an extended exclusion order under proposed section 152NZ if an individual is imprisoned at any time during the period of the exclusion order. The penalty for breaching the mandatory exclusion is up to five years' imprisonment or up to two years' imprisonment and a \$12 000 fine for summary offences.

Western Australia and Scarborough are home to some fantastic entertainment precincts. Scarborough is also a beach precinct and an arts and culture precinct and it is a growing sport and community recreation precinct, with the Aussies and Groundswell Festival being held there next year. We have markets every Thursday in the summer and every Saturday in the winter. We have untold events on the foreshore at all times and to see it labelled as dangerous seriously offends me as a local of the community because I know that is not the case. It drives me and many people in my community nuts when Scarborough is in the news as a dangerous place to be and live when that is completely not the case. It seriously upsets me to constantly see these individuals come in and ruin our reputation as a safe, prosperous, active beachside community that has a vibrant lifestyle and is a great place to live, work and play. The work we are doing with this protected entertainment precincts legislation, all the other local community safety initiatives, the hard work of the local WA police, and our investment in the prevention of family and domestic violence and in housing, is all to try to correct that balance.

Families should be able to go out and enjoy dinner at a restaurant without being threatened. Women should be able to go to a nightclub and not be assaulted. This bill is about protecting people who just want to go out, have a good time and do the right thing from those who do the wrong thing. This bill sends a clear message to people who come into our entertainment precincts like Scarborough and behave in an unlawful, violent, disorderly or antisocial way and impact on the safety and wellbeing of others that they are not welcome in Scarborough or any of our other entertainment precincts. With that, I commend this bill to the house.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [1.20 pm] — in reply: I thank the three speakers who contributed to the debate on the Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022—the member for Roe, who is the opposition lead on the bill, and the members for Hillarys and Scarborough. I will come to the member for Roe's contribution a bit later.

I give regard to the members for Hillarys and Scarborough, who represent areas that come within the purview of the proposed legislation—the precincts around Scarborough and Hillarys. Those members live and work in those areas. They advocate for those areas, and we could not find two better or stronger local advocates for Hillarys and Scarborough than the current members in those positions. As both members said, they and the people they have spoken to in their communities support this legislation. I have visited Scarborough and Hillarys with the local members. This legislation is most welcomed by the business operators and the people who frequent those areas. As the member for Scarborough said, Scarborough is a great area and there are a lot of good things to do there, as

there are in Hillarys, and it should not be ruined by a certain element. The whole idea of this proposed legislation is to ensure that we can have vibrant entertainment precincts that people can visit and enjoy without being threatened by thuggish behaviour. That is the objective of this bill. Of course, nothing is guaranteed, but this bill has been drafted after a lot of work by many people in the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor, various agencies and my ministerial office. A lot of work has been put into this legislation. I thank the members for Hillarys and Scarborough for their advocacy, for wanting to ensure that they have a vibrant entertainment precinct in their area and for their support for this legislation. I know they will go out and educate their local communities on it, so I thank them very much.

I now turn to the member for Roe. The member for Roe started off by saying that he supported the legislation, and then spent nearly 95 per cent of his contribution criticising it. I was a bit confused about what he was or was not supporting. The member referred to the issue of police resources. The police have been involved in discussions in the development of this legislation. I can assure the member that they have been extensively consulted. As members know, the Commissioner of Police is in support of the proposed legislation and has said that he is now drafting guidelines. He is confident that the police have the resources and will be able to administer the bill once it passes into law. I do not see that as such an issue, as the member seems to want to emphasise.

The member said that he had met the Raco family. They are very, very supportive of the proposed legislation. It goes beyond what they were requesting—way beyond what they expected—and they are very supportive of, and have been very complimentary about, the process.

The member mentioned consultation with stakeholders. As members know, I mentioned in various media statements and in the second reading speech that local government authorities and other relevant stakeholders will be consulted before the final maps for the precincts are gazetted in the regulations. They will be consulted, and I can assure the member—he even mentioned it himself—that all the local government mayors have expressed support. A former minister in this house, Albert Jacob, the Mayor of the City of Joondalup, which takes in Hillarys, is incredibly supportive of this legislation. I can assure the member that the local government authorities are supportive of the legislation.

With any proposed legislation, there are always going to be consequences. If we do X, Y might happen. That does not mean we should not do X; otherwise, we would have legislative paralysis and we would never do anything.

The member referred to the Queensland legislation. I never said that I consulted with the Queensland government; I said that we looked at its legislation. From my understanding, the department has been in consultation with its Queensland counterpart on its legislation.

I probably should not be surprised that the member brought up the issue of union activity. We know the member's anti-union stance on nearly everything. I ask the member a question: I assume that if farmers were really upset about something, the member would not oppose a convoy of farmers driving up to Parliament House, as they have done in Canberra, to express their concerns, would he?

Mr P.J. Rundle: Probably not.

Dr A.D. BUTI: No; that would be okay. We could have a convoy of farmers in trucks going to Parliament House, blocking up highways and traffic, and that would be okay in the member's books, but anything to do with a union is evil in the member's eyes. I go back to when we were introducing legislation in response to the Perth Casino Royal Commission and the recommendation to appoint an independent monitor. I asked the member a question. Even if the potential appointee were a former High Court judge, if he had once been a union official, in the member's eyes, that would bar him from being appointed.

Mr P.J. Rundle: No, I said I would reserve my rights until I saw who was appointed.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But why reserve your rights? Would a High Court judge not have the experience and qualifications to be an independent monitor? The member said he should be barred because he had been a union official. I will get on to that issue a bit later.

I refer to the issue of timing. The member said that he has not had enough time. This bill has not been declared urgent. This bill was read into Parliament in the last session. We have had two weeks to consider it—maybe even slightly more. That is the normal procedure. The member then received a briefing in the normal period. This legislation has been no different from any other piece of legislation that has gone through the normal process, so I do not really understand why the member would criticise and say that he has not had enough time. The bill has not been declared urgent. It was read into Parliament a couple of weeks ago.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member!

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member had the briefing within the normal period that the opposition receives briefings, so he has had sufficient time.

I turn to police resourcing. As I said, the Western Australia Police Force has indicated that it does not need any further resourcing. It will be another tool that the police can use in their patrolling and protection of the precincts, which I think the member did at least concede. As the member mentioned, the Lord Mayor of Perth, Basil Zempilas, has noticed that there has been an increased police presence in the City of Perth and Northbridge.

As I mentioned to the member, consultation on the precincts is ongoing. I have made that clear on a number of occasions. We will be consulting further with all the relevant local government authorities and industry stakeholders and organisations such as the Aboriginal Legal Service and the Law Society of Western Australia. We will continue to consult on the definition of the boundaries. As I have said, the maps that the member has seen are only indicative, and we will determine what the boundaries should be after further consultation. However, as was also stated in the second reading speech, those boundaries will be able to be changed. That is why the boundaries will be put in the regulations to make them easier to change.

This bill is not intended to apply to time-limited precincts, such as those for school leavers. The bill will amend the Liquor Control Act, so there has to be a connection to the concentration of licensed premises. It would be very difficult to justify it in that case.

The member mentioned the issue with Burswood not being included in the bill. The initial five precincts that we have selected have the highest rates of alcohol-related behaviour and offending. We will continue to monitor the offending rates in other areas. We will be able to add or remove precincts. That is why it is being put into the regulations. The Burswood precinct is rather unique. With the exception of the Camfield and Optus Stadium, all licensed premises are within the Crown Resorts complex. The casino licensee has the ability to issue an individual with a notice revoking a licence to enter or remain on premises, which rescinds the consent of the person to enter Crown Perth property. If a notice is issued to a person and they breach it, they are considered to be trespassing and an offence takes place under section 70A of the Criminal Code. Although those premises are already catered for in legislation, that does not prevent us from addressing the matter, but at this stage it does not appear that we need to because legislative instruments are already in place.

I turn to the issue of union defences. The member read out the list of defences in the bill. If a person has been issued with a mandatory exclusion order, they will have to show that the defence is necessary to enter a precinct. They are very narrow and targeted. A member of a trade union is obviously connected with lawful occupation. The member can at least concede that, right? For a person to be a member of a union, it has to be related to their lawful occupation, trade or profession. The member would agree that it may be necessary to enter a precinct for employment purposes. Does the member see that as a problem?

Mr P.J. Rundle: No.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member may not join a union and he may hate unions, but it is considered to be a legitimate form of membership connected to a person's employment. It may be necessary for a person to engage in a union activity that is involved in a precinct, but they will still need to show that it is necessary. A person will not have open-slasher access to a precinct just because they are a member of a union. I must say that I do not understand the member for Roe's hatred. It is also arguable that that right is protected under the Australian Constitution. As the member would know, the Australian Constitution guarantees an implied freedom of political expression and peaceful assembly. Arguably, that would include lawful trade union activity. Does the member want us to breach the Australian Constitution?

Mr P.J. Rundle: So you're happy with some thug who has been excluded from that area to just turn up into the precinct for a union meeting?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I said it will not be open-slasher access. The trade union activity will have to be connected to their lawful employment and it will have to be necessary for them to be in that area for the union activity. They will not be able to just go and do what they want in that precinct. I am not citing a High Court case here, but, as the member would know from the Katanning constitutional law library, there is an implied constitutional guarantee of freedom of political expression and peaceful assembly. Arguably, a lawful union activity would be caught by that guarantee.

In any case, member, it is unlikely that union activity will happen in some of these precincts, but a person may actually work in the entertainment industry in one of these precincts. An employer is unlikely to employ a thug who is engaged in activity like this, but if they are employed, they have rights attached to that employment. Anyway, we will leave that and continue our discussion about the member's hatred of unions another time. The defence of union activity is also found and allowed for in the anti-consorting legislation. It is pretty hard to see why we would not allow it in this bill that is before the house.

The member raised a legitimate concern about privacy. This bill will allow for similar arrangements to those for barring notices. Details of short-term exclusion orders will be published on a secure website. As we know, we live an age of possible cybersecurity threats. The same goes for our laptops, but it does not mean that we do not use the technology that is available. Important guarantees will be made and, as the member would know, under the act,

important obligations will have to be complied with and no unauthorised disclosure of information or photographs contained on the secure webpage will be allowed. If a person accesses that information, it will be an offence. That provision already protects people who are subject to barring notices, and will apply to short-term exclusion orders.

With regard to extended exclusion orders, the director may publish limited personal particulars on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries website. This is consistent with the current arrangements for prohibition orders. It is really no different from what we have now for barring notices and prohibition orders. Limited personal particulars will be collected, including the person's name, suburb and photograph. The webpage will contain only the level of detail required so that an individual can be properly identified as someone who is subject to an exclusion order. Although the bill will allow for the disclosure of data to persons or organisations involved in the creation or provision of IT scanning technology, the minister will be required to make regulations to prescribe who those people and organisations are. That process will involve a probity assessment by the director of Liquor Licensing and satisfaction of relevant data security and privacy considerations, including compliance with the Privacy Act and the Australian Privacy Principles.

The member was concerned about how people's privacy will be protected if licensees are provided with the name, address and date of birth of those people who are subject to a short-term exclusion order, and this also applies to barring notices. Access to the secure website will be limited to the licensees of licensed premises and the information should be further disclosed only to those staff who assist licensees in complying with their obligations under the act. There is always a chance that a privacy breach will occur, but that is the same for everything today, member. We believe that the bill will cover off the necessary protections and that technology is available to ensure that websites and information are secure.

The member asked whether the Commissioner of Police's guidelines will be made available to the public. Proposed section 152NI will require the Commissioner of Police to issue guidelines for officers on the relevant considerations, circumstances and requirements for exclusion orders, but the guidelines will not be subsidiary legislation for the purposes of the Interpretation Act. The guidelines will still be within the police manual and available for use only by members of the Western Australia Police Force. They will not be available for general public access or subject to application under freedom of information legislation, because they will be in an operational document.

I hope that addresses some of the member's concerns. I note that the member said that he is supportive of the legislation. With regard to Karl O'Callaghan, I never criticised his character. When the member brought it up, I said that he had previously supported similar legislation. I think I will leave it at that. I thank the member for his contribution, and the members for Scarborough and Hillarys for their contributions.

I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Firstly, I welcome the advisers and thank the minister for giving us some explanations and clearing up a couple of things for me. Obviously, I will have other questions along the way. I have a few questions on the short title of the Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022 and then I will go to other specific areas in the legislation. My first question is: what is the time line for the review of this amendment legislation and how will the effectiveness of the bill be captured?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The statutory review will be after three years.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Does the minister think there will be —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, would you like to wait for me to give you the call? I know there are lots of competing people in here.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. Does the minister think there will be a capacity not to reduce that particular time line, but to give some feedback on how the legislation is going and what the results are, whether crime has been reduced or the situation has improved, in those five precincts prior to that three-year review?

Dr A.D. BUTI: As I said, it will be possible to alter the precincts at any time because they will come under the regulations; that will remain possible. It will be up to the minister to determine whether information should be provided to the public or to Parliament on how the operation of the law is panning out, but we will need to give it some time before making a determination.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I know there will be a three-year report. How will the actual effectiveness of the legislation be captured in that report?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I assume the member means the three-year report by the state Ombudsman. Is that what he is talking about?

Mr P.J. Rundle: Yes; that is right.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Ombudsman will provide a report that will emphasise how successful the legislation is and whether any particular groups have been disproportionately affected by it. That is difficult to know, is it not? We do not have a control group and a non-control group like we would have in a scientific laboratory, with legislation taking place there and not taking place there. I think the police and other stakeholders will have a good idea of whether the legislation is successful. Part of that will be determining how vibrant and safe the precinct is. This legislation on its own will not be a panacea for issues in these areas, but it will be a very strong instrument to help police control these areas.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I might have missed it, but does the minister have a time line to finalise the regulations?

Dr A.D. BUTI: We want the legislation to be operational for summer, so the intention is that the regulations will be gazetted by Christmas.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The minister has said that his ministerial office or the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries was consulting with other jurisdictions. Could he provide a little bit more detail about who has been consulted and whether the likes of the Queensland and New South Wales governments or their police forces have been consulted on the legislation and asked how effective their results have been?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I can assure the member that the department has had considerable consultation with the liquor commission of Queensland and the deputy director general of the relevant department, and has reviewed academic reports on the operation of the Queensland legislation.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Roe, before you comment, I have been reminded by the Clerk that the short title does not permit members to range far and wide. You might want to restrict your questions to those related to the short title.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am on my last question. Thanks, Madam Acting Speaker, I will take that on board. Could the minister provide a list of all non-government stakeholders that he consulted, and table that at some stage along the line?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will not give any guarantee that I will table a list of the people who have been consulted. I mentioned in my second reading response some of the groups that have been consulted and that there will be further consultation on the regulations.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Long title replaced —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Why was the Liquor Control Act 1988 identified as the most appropriate legislation for these amendments? Could a separate, standalone piece of legislation have been created to properly acknowledge Giuseppe Raco, and might that have been more appropriate?

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is an interesting question. We are dealing with licensed premises, which come under the Liquor Control Act. We already have barring notices and prohibition notices that come under the Liquor Control Act. It therefore seems that this is the most appropriate place for these amendments. We have honoured Giuseppe Raco in creating this bill. The member mentioned that he was colloquially known as “Pep”, which will be acknowledged in the naming of the protected entertainment precincts. This is the most appropriate place for these amendments to lie.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 3 amended —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: My question relates to the public authority. I am wondering whether the definition of “public authority” aligns with other legislation.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Generally, yes, it aligns with most legislation. There might be some differences in some pieces of legislation, but overall, yes.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Proposed section 3(1)(c) refers to —

a body, whether incorporated or not, or the holder of an office, post or position, that is established or continued for a public purpose under a written law;

Could the minister give me a bit more clarity about what other bodies that will cover?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is like a statutory authority.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is the minister saying a statutory authority similar to the Water Corporation? I am trying to get to which public authorities will be affected by this legislation.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It could be bodies like the Gaming and Wagering Commission or the Liquor Commission; they are statutory authorities that might be relevant.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7 put and passed.

Clause 8: Section 25 amended —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am curious about reviewable decisions. What educational materials will be given to people subject to a reviewable decision, and will they be given materials in hard copy?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is the member talking about the person who has been issued with the order?

Mr P.J. Rundle: That's right.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The order will set out that they have a reviewable decision, and what needs to be done. That will be contained in the actual order itself.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I find that quite interesting. Could the minister outline to me what package, if you like, an offender might receive when they have an exclusion order? Will it be in hard copy? Will it refer to legal representation et cetera?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is quite a lengthy process. They will receive a copy of the application, they will be entitled to ask questions, there will be a response, and then, in the actual order, they will receive details of what needs to be done if they are going to seek a review. It will be a detailed response. The website will contain information on this bill and the different exclusion orders. It will be no different from a restraining order or any other order. Education is provided on websites that look after those as well.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In some of the materials and articles that I have read on this legislation, Dennis Eggington and Peter Collins of the Aboriginal Legal Service have expressed very strong concerns about members of the Aboriginal community who might be part of this situation. They are very worried about educational materials and assistance, and how Aboriginal people will move to the next phase after an exclusion order has been issued. They have expressed a lot of concerns. The minister says, "Oh, they can just go to the website." I do not think that will really cut it for members of the community who may not have those skills or access to the internet.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I did not say, "Just go to the website"; I said that that is part of it. In the issuing of the order, it will be laid out in detail what they are entitled to and what the review process is. That will be included in the issuing of the order that they receive. It will be no different from being issued with a restraining order or a move-on notice. This is not revolutionary legislation. With regard to the Aboriginal Legal Service, I am sure Peter Collins, whom I have great respect for, will ensure that there is an education process for the people the service represents, but their rights and reviewable options will be set out in detail in the issuing of the order.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The temporary exclusion orders present a unique situation; a police officer will have to contact an inspector to grant approval for an exclusion order. Will there be a holding process while this happens? Can the minister explain to me how it will work with time frames and the mechanics of it? Will the person who is being apprehended have to stand out on the street with the police for an hour while the order is dealt with, or will there be a shorter or longer process?

Dr A.D. BUTI: They will be dealing with a substantial offence, so they will be in custody. There will be a period during which the process will take place. It will not be issued immediately; there will be a process. As the member rightly pointed out, it will have to go to a police officer of the rank of inspector or above. There will be a period during which that process will take place. People will know their rights because, as I have stated repeatedly, the order that will be issued will set out their rights and their review options.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Does the minister foresee that the perpetrator will be dealt with at a police station? Could the exclusion order process be done within an hour or two, or are we looking at a longer period?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I assume the member is talking about the short-term exclusion order.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It will depend. As I said, if it is an offence for which they are placed in custody and sent back to the police station, that will take a longer time, but there is a possibility that they could be verbally issued with the order on the spot, after it has been explained and they are given details of the process going forward.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5431.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**YOUTH DETENTION — INQUIRY****697. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

The WA Inspector of Custodial Services, Eamon Ryan, has said that a summit is “a positive step”, but that “a broader conversation” is crucial and should involve all players: representatives from various departments, such as the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Mental Health Commission, the Department of Communities and the Department of Justice; community representative organisations; and, most importantly, First Nations representatives, advocates and families.

- (1) Why is the Premier ignoring experts who are calling for a broader conversation and inquiry about youth justice in Western Australia?
- (2) Will the Premier reconsider his refusal to instigate an independent inquiry to assist all stakeholders to share their solutions in an open and transparent forum?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I will be hosting a meeting of a number of interested parties who have publicly expressed views about these matters. It will be this week or next week, I expect. One of the representatives is Indigenous, and I have invited another person from an organisation with an interest in the matter, and they are Indigenous, as well. Hopefully, they will both be able to attend. I will seek practical and sensible ideas from this group about what can be done in addition to what is currently in place. It is a very difficult issue, as the last government found when it was in office and moved 70 young people into Hakea Prison. That was when the current Leader of the Opposition was a minister.

We currently have 10 or 11 detainees in unit 18 at Casuarina Prison. In order for a detainee to get to Banksia Hill, they will have been in the justice system for a long time and committed multiple offences. Because of the way the Young Offenders Act is structured, the courts will inevitably try to divert them if their offence is not extremely serious. They will be given some sort of community order or be released without penalty. They might get a work order. They might get some sort of supervision and welfare checks on them. Those sorts of things will occur. Inevitably, that happens multiple times, but if people keep offending, particularly with aggravated burglaries, robberies, stealing cars or serious assaults, or worse—significantly worse, on occasion—they will eventually end up in some form of custody.

The custody we have is Banksia Hill. It has been around for 20 or so years. It is undergoing \$25 million worth of improvements. We currently have 85 young people there and 10 or 11 at unit 18. The 10 or 11 at unit 18 are there because of their behaviour at Banksia Hill. When they destroy their cells, we do not have anywhere to keep them at Banksia Hill. We have to move them somewhere else, and the only place we have had to move them to is unit 18 at Casuarina, where they are not in view of the adult prisoners and they cannot see the adult prisoners.

It is not an easy situation, but we are doing our best to deal with it. I think there is a lot of misinformation out there. There was a column in *The West Australian* this morning, quoting Dr Adam Tomison and explaining all the recreational programs, the music and education programs, the welfare and the psychologists that are on offer at Banksia Hill to provide support to the detainees there. It is all there.

As I said yesterday, the number of youth in detention has halved over the last 10 years. Ten years ago, when members opposite were in government, there were twice as many young people in detention as there are now. That decrease has happened because we have put in place a range of diversionary programs, such as the Target 120 program to intervene in families that are troubled, to try to deal with the situation. Eventually, though, if people commit crimes and their crimes are serious enough, they are going to end up in custody, and that happens for a number of reasons.

Firstly, there needs to be a consequence for people who repeatedly commit crimes, particularly serious crimes. If people do not have consequences, how do they learn, particularly young people? With children, there has to be a consequence for bad behaviour. Secondly, we need to protect the public, the victims. Once someone is in custody and undergoing rehabilitation, we are actually protecting the public. Victims matter. Thirdly, if people keep breaking into someone’s home or shop, they are eventually going to get hurt. If they are 13-year-olds, 14-year-olds or 15-year-olds, or whatever age they are, eventually something bad is going to happen to them. At least if they are in custody, that cannot happen.

This is all very unfortunate. Any child being in custody is a sad thing, but in many cases it is unavoidable because of their behaviour.

YOUTH DETENTION — INQUIRY**698. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. On what date will the Premier’s secret and exclusive meeting take place?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I do not know the answer to that question, and it is a silly question. Sometime this week or next week I will convene people in a meeting to see whether there are any other ideas out there. One of the ideas that was put out this morning was to use the Bullsbrook facility, which was put in place by the last federal government. The problem with using the Bullsbrook facility is that it is not escape-proof and it does not have all the measures in place to prevent suicide. There are lots of ideas out there, but when we drill down into them we find there are issues. I do not want to put young people in an environment in which it is easier for them to self-harm.

Distinguished Visitors — Hon Peter Dowding, SC; City of Fremantle; Relationships Australia; Brian Smith; and Scarborough Primary School

The SPEAKER: I am delighted to welcome to the Speaker's gallery this afternoon Hon Peter Dowding, SC, former Premier of Western Australia. Welcome, Peter.

I am also very pleased to welcome the Mayor of Fremantle, Hannah Fitzhardinge; the chief executive officer of the City of Fremantle, Glen Dougall; Mr Chris Lewis from Relationships Australia; Mr Brian Smith; and, most importantly, students from Scarborough Primary School. The member for Scarborough has asked me to acknowledge the principal and the students from Scarborough Primary School. It is always great to have young people in the Speaker's gallery. Thank you for coming to Parliament House.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY — INVESTMENT

699. Mr T.J. HEALY to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to diversifying the Western Australian economy through its investment in our defence industry. Can the Premier update the house on how the government is working to grow our defence industry workforce and create new employment opportunities, particularly for skilled workers?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Southern River for the question.

We are investing significantly in diversification initiatives such as local manufacturing. With BHP and Rio Tinto, I recently announced that we will be manufacturing iron ore railcars in Western Australia again, which is terrific. We are manufacturing railcars for our Metronet lines here in Western Australia for the first time in 30 years, something the Liberal Party had closed down.

We are building new film studios just south of Whiteman Park, which will be a significant achievement and diversification initiative for Western Australia. We have the future health research and innovation fund for medical research, which provides ongoing funding for medical researchers in Western Australia.

We are also putting in a huge effort for defence industry. The other day, I was out with the Minister for Defence Industry and the Minister for Education and Training at the Rockingham TAFE campus, where we have put in place significant training opportunities for Western Australians in the defence industry. We launched four new state-of-the-art machines known as computer numerical control—CNC—machines. People can train with specialist equipment that can manufacture parts for machinery that is used in the defence industry, in particular. People will find that equipment in workshops on the Kwinana strip and in Cockburn and the like, so they can train on them at Rockingham TAFE so they can go into a job in the defence industry that uses those machines.

South Metropolitan TAFE is leading the country in this area. It was awarded Academic Institution of the Year at this year's Australian Defence Industry Awards. We have made TAFE more available to Western Australians by slashing fees by up to 72 per cent. Remember that the last government put the fees up by over 500 per cent for many courses for Western Australians. Therefore, we slashed the fees for TAFE so that Western Australians can get their birthright, which is the opportunity for training and getting a job in the state.

The *Western Australian defence industry workforce development plan 2022–27* was launched last week as well so that we can be in the mix and present to the commonwealth that Western Australia is a great place for defence work.

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — ENERGY PERFORMANCE

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

I refer the minister to the recommendations of the *Independent review of Christmas 2021 power outages* report, concerning the unnecessarily delays in repairing faults and restoring power supply on days of high fire danger.

- (1) Who was the independent expert appointed by the minister, as mentioned by the minister in Parliament?
- (2) Has this person completed the work; and, if so, was a report prepared; and, if there was a report prepared, will the minister table it?
- (3) What changes are proposed to ensure a quicker restoration of power for communities experiencing a blackout?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I am just trying to find the name of the independent organisation that was appointed. I am sorry; I do not have that name in front of me. I do not know why.

- (1)–(3) It was a professional organisation that works in the bushfire management area. It has completed its work. Western Power engaged with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Western Australian Local Government Association to go through the processes that are used for restoring power during high bushfire danger areas. We have to understand that this is a really critical issue because the challenge is that if there is an outage on a line through an area of bush and we re-energise the line but the disruption of the line is continual—it is not just transitory—we can actually start a fire. Therefore, it is absolutely incumbent—I know that everybody in this chamber agrees—that Western Power not start bushfires. Can members imagine what would occur if we had a bushfire created by electrical infrastructure on a day of high bushfire danger? One of the challenges that has been highlighted by this process is that sometimes DFES asks Western Power to apply the high bushfire danger processes because DFES is dealing with existing bushfires. DFES actually asks Western Power to delay the re-energising of lines not because of the specific bushfire risk in that location, but because the resources and the volunteers have already been allocated to active bushfires. Therefore, there are no simple solutions for the management of electrical infrastructure.

We do not take the approach that is used in other parts of the world that have high bushfire risk—for example, in California where the entire network in the high bushfire area was switched off for three weeks this summer. The approach used in other parts of the world is to have no electricity supply at times of high bushfire risk. We do not do that in Western Australia. I am pleased that Western Power, DFES and WALGA have been working through these issues. There is still some more work to be completed. They are changing their practices and that was one of the commitments that has been made.

Another advance that has come out of the report by Michelle Shepherd is that Western Power was told to upgrade its communications. It has written to all regional councils in the south west interconnected system and asked for a single point of contact. That way, when there is an outage in any location in the south west interconnected system, Western Power can communicate directly with the person chosen by the council so that the information about the circumstances of that particular outage can be better understood. One of the problems that we had, which was highlighted in Michelle Shepherd's report, was that often the challenge was not in Western Power's control; for example, the overwhelming majority of the outages at Christmas time were actually about external impacts on the network, not the network infrastructure itself. This is going to be a significant advance so that people can understand what is needed.

Also, this year Western Power has been implementing 37 engineering projects to make sure that the resilience of the network is improved. Again, one of the challenges that was highlighted in Michelle Shepherd's report is the question of planning criteria. Some people think that when they talk about planning criteria, it means that on 15 December they will talk about what they are going to do on 25 December—that is not the case. Planning criteria is about in this year saying what you are going to do in 2025. Therefore, what Michelle Shepherd asked Western Power to do, which it has done, is review its planning criteria. The good news here is that because of this government's investment into advanced metering infrastructure, Western Power now has a much granular understanding of how the distribution network operates. Previously, there was only the monitoring of the transmission and high-voltage system and not of the low-voltage system, but because of this government's investment, we now have a much clearer understanding of what is happening on individual feeders. We are able to have a much better, more granular, planning process, and that has been a good outcome. These are all methodologies that Western Power is using, following on from the Shepherd inquiry, that will improve the service now.

I often get asked by journalists: can I guarantee that there will not be outages? There can be no guarantee. You cannot have a 100 per cent reliable electricity system. There is no possibility of that ever occurring. We have a system that is 99.91 per cent reliable, and that is extraordinary. Of course, that is the average, and there will be different experiences on individual feeders. Again, we are trying to provide better reporting to people so they can have an understanding of the performance at that lower level. In the past, the problem was that because Western Power was being rewarded on the basis of averages, it encouraged Western Power to work in larger communities rather than smaller communities. But by working on these details, feeder by feeder, it means that the individual experiences that people have will improve over time because we will be able to respond to individual outages rather than on the averages.

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — ENERGY PERFORMANCE

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

I have a supplementary question. Given the report outcomes, will the minister guarantee that we will not see excessive power —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, Minister for Transport!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Given the report outcomes, will the minister guarantee that we will not see excessive power outages this summer due to unnecessary repair delays during hot weather?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

That is an interesting question—“unnecessary”. What is unnecessary? There will always be more delays in hot weather than in cold weather.

Dr D.J. Honey: The Shepherd report said there were unnecessary delays before.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, member!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Do not verbal Michelle Shepherd. She never said the word “unnecessary” and that there were unnecessary delays. That word is never used in the Michelle Shepherd report. The fact that the member continues to use these things, in this chamber, that he knows not to be true is a big reflection on him as an individual person and as a contributor to this Parliament. The member for Cottesloe and his colleagues need to have a think about that. I keep making the point to the member for Vasse: when she becomes leader, make Hon Dr Steve Thomas — Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: — the shadow Minister for Energy because he will do a better job than the member for Cottesloe.

ST JOHN OF GOD MIDLAND PUBLIC HOSPITAL — AMBULATORY EMERGENCY CARE UNIT

702. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s record investment in our health system. Can the minister update the house on how the new emergency care unit at St John of God Midland Public Hospital will help avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and reduce wait times, and can the minister outline to the house how this new unit builds on the other measures being taken by this government to improve access to emergency care in our hospitals?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for his question.

I was delighted to go to Midland Public Hospital last week to open its new emergency care unit, the ambulatory emergency care unit. It had been due to open a couple of years ago but COVID took over and the hospital needed that space for the COVID clinic, so the opening is later than we would have liked. The great thing about this unit is that it was driven by the staff, the emergency consultants and the nursing and allied health staff. It was developed directly to respond to that community. It is a local solution that has been supported by the government. We provided \$3.4 million worth of funding to help establish the unit and to fit it out and staff it. Essentially, it is for those patients who present at the emergency department who need access to a specialist but do not necessarily need to be in hospital overnight. They need to come in for tests and a whole range of things. Normally, they would be admitted while they waited to see a specialist or to have those tests done, and therefore they would take up a hospital bed that could be used for people who needed absolute emergency care. The patients can go through the emergency department lists and be pulled off the list to be seen in this unit. The patients get access to a rapid wraparound specialist service from an emergency physician. They have their pain and symptoms managed and get the scans and tests they need. If a patient is able to go home and see a specialist the next day, an urgent appointment with a specialist will be made for the next day. It is essentially access to urgent outpatient care with a specialist whilst managing symptoms and pain, and avoiding hospital admissions. That is exactly what people want. They do not want to be in hospital if they do not have to be. This avoids hospital admissions and long wait times to see a specialist. Sometimes specialists will not get to see their patients until the afternoon the next day and the patients could have been waiting at home. Under this initiative, patients are sometimes required to come back the next day.

This initiative is supported by doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, the geriatric emergency department team and the Red Hot Foot podiatry team, because feet emergencies are often the most significant issues that our older people face. This is a contemporary model of care that is being used in a range of settings around our state and also around the country. It is meeting the changing needs of the community, which is an older, ageing population who need access to urgent specialist care but do not necessarily need to be in a hospital bed. This initiative will help ease bed pressure at Midland Public Hospital and is supported by range of other activities like freeing up beds for people who are medically fit for discharge, the mandatory discharge policy, the transition fund for the provision of beds for aged-care providers, respite services, and the whole multisystem approach for tackling the challenges of emergency access care. I want to give a special shout-out to the physicians on the ground who drove this project. It was their idea and we backed them. They understand the community they support and treat, and they have already diverted significant numbers from the emergency department.

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — *FOUR CORNERS* REPORT —
“FOLDING UP” RESTRAINT METHODOLOGY

703. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to a statement from the Department of Justice to ABC *Four Corners* advising that the use of folding up as a restraint process was authorised for officers to use only as a last resort in the most extreme circumstances for as little time as possible when there was a safety risk to staff and other detainees.

- (1) Has the minister now requested a briefing from his department on this form of restraint?
- (2) Is there a formal policy in place for officers to use, and will the minister table it in Parliament?
- (3) Is a record maintained of the use of this type of restraint?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(3) I confirm that the Commissioner for Corrective Services, I am told, issued an order in January 2021, when I was not the Minister for Corrective Services, regarding the narrowing of the use of this particular methodology; that is to say that prior to January 2021, the capacity for trained staff to use this procedure was wider than it is currently, or was until now. Of course, we have now asked the department to cease using this methodology.

All critical incidents are reported. Therefore, there is a report of every interaction between detainees and officers. For example, the situation that occurred in February this year that was highlighted by the *Four Corners* report on Monday night was widely recorded in the system, including by video. I make the point that that video was not leaked to the ABC; it was given to the lawyers of the youth detainee who was involved in the incident. By the way, the incident was also investigated by the police and I am advised that no staff involved in that incident were subject to any adverse findings following that police investigation. I will not be tabling the procedures because it is not the practice to table the confidential procedures of the department because, of course, they are about the operating procedures in each individual facility and there are obviously reasons that the department does not want unedited versions of the procedures becoming public.

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — *FOUR CORNERS* REPORT —
“FOLDING UP” RESTRAINT METHODOLOGY

704. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I have a supplementary question. I thank the minister. The minister mentioned that a record is maintained of the use of this type of restraint. Will the minister undertake to provide Parliament with this information for the last 12 months at Banksia Hill?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

Yes. I have answered every single question thoroughly. The shadow Minister for Corrective Services is in the upper house and he regularly asks questions in the upper house. Every single time he has asked a question, I have answered every single detail that he has requested. Indeed, Hon Dr Brad Pettitt, member for South Metropolitan Region, has also asked an extensive number of questions and all those have been provided with answers. I have no reason not to provide any information, and every time anybody asks me a question, I answer it thoroughly. I am therefore happy to do so. I also point out that I have encouraged the department to allow all independent organisations like the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services and, indeed, the United Nations, to be able to visit both unit 18 and Banksia Hill Detention Centre. I have facilitated members of Parliament from non-Labor parties to visit both unit 18 and Banksia Hill. That is a contrast, because in 2013 when the Leader of the Opposition sat around the cabinet table as a minister in the former government and decided to move 70 detainees to an adult prison, Hon Fran Logan was refused a visit to Hakea Prison.

GIANTS OF MANDURAH EXHIBITION

705. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s commitment to diversifying the WA economy through its investment in tourism and world-class events and attractions. Can the minister outline to the house what this government’s success in securing the *Giants of Mandurah* exhibition by world-renowned artist Thomas Dambo means for tourism, particularly for the Peel region, and can the minister advise the house how major events like this support the local economy and local jobs?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question.

It was a genuine pleasure to be with the member for Murray–Wellington, along with the Premier; the Minister for Culture and the Arts, the member for Mandurah; and the member for Dawesville at the official launch of *Giants of*

Mandurah from Tuesday through to Saturday last week. It was also a pleasure to have the Mayors of Mandurah and Subiaco at that event because, as people would be aware, the *Giants of Mandurah* exhibition extends from the City of Subiaco down to Mandurah.

The secret is out. The rest of the world now understands what Western Australians have known for many years—that is, how extraordinary WA is as a tourism destination. Members may have noticed that *Lonely Planet* named Western Australia one of the top 30 places in the world to visit in 2023 and one of the top five global journeys in 2023. This comes on top of *Forbes* naming Perth as one of the top 10 places to visit in 2023. These are incredible opportunities for our tourism industry, an industry that, in 2019, employed more than 100 000 people and provided \$13.5 billion worth of activity to our state's economy. It is an important part as we continue to grow rewarding jobs and diversity in our economy. Our ability to turn expectations on their head and attract people from across the world is because of attractions like the *Giants of Mandurah*.

The *Giants of Mandurah* is an Australia-first spectacular exhibition of larger than life hidden sculptures by world-renowned artist Thomas Dambo. The giants will reside in their hiding spots across the Peel region and Subiaco for at least the next year and are expected to attract a high number of visitors to the region, providing a significant boost for local accommodation, cafes, and the hospitality and tourism industries. The *Giants of Mandurah* is supported by the McGowan government through Tourism WA's regional events program; the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; and Lotterywest, as well as the City of Subiaco and the Alcoa Foundation. It is through these creative events that the McGowan government is encouraging people to visit, explore and stay in regional WA to experience all the fantastic accommodation, dining and tourism opportunities on offer. What this represents is local jobs—quality local jobs for people to enjoy in the communities in which they live. Bringing these parts of regional Western Australia alive is an incredibly important part of our economic strategy.

I have previously mentioned the list of world-class tourism and sporting events happening here in Perth, but the list of events happening in regional WA is equally impressive. That includes the total solar eclipse, which will occur in the state's north; the Margaret River Pro in the south west; or any number of events like the 2023 UCI Mountain Bike Marathon Masters World Championships, which is happening in your electorate, member for Murray–Wellington, or Dambo's giants in the Peel. There is something for everyone in regional WA, and this is about not only continuing to stimulate visitors to get out of the metropolitan area and into regional Western Australia, but also attracting people from interstate and international tourists, who are now relying upon publications like *Lonely Planet* to guide them in a post-COVID world on how they go out and explore the world once again. They will be directed to Western Australia, our incredible tourism product, which features an amazing and safe environment, great culinary and wine experiences and incredible landscapes that inspire everyone in the world.

I strongly encourage all members to take their families to Mandurah and Subiaco to see the many attractions on offer. Once they have finished finding and climbing on the giants, they can go and poke the local member, which is equally rewarding!

Mr J.N. Carey: Who wants to poke him?

Mr R.H. COOK: He is rather spongy around the middle!

Mr M. McGowan: The pygmies of Mandurah!

Mr R.H. COOK: The pygmies of Mandurah!

This is a great tourism initiative and we very much look forward to the Western Australian public enjoying it.

ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

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

In 2010, the Training Together–Working Together task force, chaired by Dr Sue Gordon and Mr Keith Spence, recommended the establishment of Aboriginal workforce development centres, which saw centres established in Broome, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Perth, training thousands of Aboriginal adults and youth and giving them meaningful employment. In 2017, the government closed all these centres as a cost-saving measure.

- (1) Given the Premier's statement this afternoon that education and training is a birthright, does he now admit that closing these centres was a mistake?
- (2) Will the Premier commit to re-establishing these centres?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the Leader of the Liberal Party for the question.

- (1)–(2) I am unaware of what the member is referring to, but I can tell him this: there are more Aboriginal people in training and employment than ever before. We have the three per cent policy for government contracts for Aboriginal-owned businesses that employ Aboriginal people. We have Aboriginal traineeships across government. We have the program for rangers across our conservation estate. I might note that we are expanding our conservation estate by 20 per cent and, as I have commented, it is the biggest expansion

in conservation and national parks in the history of Western Australia. Literally hundreds of Aboriginal trainees are being employed to manage these areas across Western Australia. I meet them when I go out there. It is a wonderful achievement. Across industry, we work with particularly the mining industry for Aboriginal trainees and apprenticeships extensively. When I go to the north west—for instance, Hedland, Karratha and Newman—I meet many people engaged in employment. I remember back in the early 2000s when the Gallop government was elected, no Aboriginal people were working in the mining industry. I remember the then Premier, Geoff Gallop, and the then education and training minister, Alan Carpenter, having round tables with the industry and saying, “Aboriginal people live here; you need to employ them.” Clearly, there has been a significant improvement there.

When we came to government, we set up the jobs and skills centres. It may well be that the role that the member is talking about was incorporated into the jobs and skills centres. We have 13 or 14 of them across Western Australia—one-stop shops for everyone to go in and get access to services. If the member had given me some notice, I might have been able to give him a more direct answer, but it may well be that the jobs and skills centres, which are incredibly effective, both in the city and regions, in connecting young people with employers and training with personalised service, are now undertaking that role.

ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

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

I have a supplementary question. Training centres led by Aboriginal people were an overwhelming success, so why does the Premier not look at that in detail and consider re-establishing them as effective training centres for Aboriginal people?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Again, I am unaware of what the Leader of the Liberal Party is referring to, but I just remind him that we have more Aboriginal people in training, more Aboriginal people in apprenticeships and traineeships, more Aboriginal people enrolled in TAFE and more Aboriginal people employed. We have put a huge effort across government into these initiatives. We have the jobs and skills centres. We actually dropped the fees for everyone, including Aboriginal people, in our TAFE colleges because they were out of reach under the former government. The jobs and skills centres are there to assist everyone. I am unaware of what the member is referring to. I will have a look at it because I have a feeling that, as usual, he is misrepresenting.

SOCIAL HOUSING — REGIONS

708. **Ms L. DALTON to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s record investment in social housing.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on this investment and outline how it is delivering more social housing, particularly in our regions?
- (2) Can the minister outline how this investment is also supporting our community housing sector?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

- (1)–(2) I am very pleased to report that our government is continuing to roll out our record investment of \$2.4 billion in housing and homelessness programs over the next four years. That includes, as I have said before in this chamber, 3 300 social homes and critical maintenance and refurbishment.

We have already invested and made announcements regarding community housing, but I am very pleased to say that we have made another announcement for another round of funding for community housing in Western Australia. We are providing nearly \$40 million to community housing organisations as part of the social housing economic recovery package new builds program, and this will deliver around another 150 new social houses. This is concentrated in the regions. We are looking at an investment of community housing in Bunbury, Busselton, Donnybrook, Witchcliffe, Perenjori, Shark Bay and Dalyellup. That is all new community housing as part of 150 new social homes. This builds on the first round so that, in total, we are investing over \$78 million to deliver 320 community houses. Why is the community housing sector important? It is because we want it to grow so that it can leverage funding from federal government and from super funds. We can make our dollar go further.

One would think that our rollout of and investment in social housing in regional Western Australia would be welcomed, but I have to say it is disappointing to see that a local government has expressed concerns about the rollout of social housing. I refer to an article titled “Cherry Gripe: Shire leader riled up as new seniors complex filled with social housing”. The article quotes the former Liberal opposition leader, now Shire of Manjimup president, as saying —

... while he welcomed increased social housing in Manjimup, it was never the Shire’s intention for Cherry Glades.

Cherry Glades is a DevelopmentWA estate that is actually being developed for seniors, and our proposal is to put six social houses into this lot as part of our modular program to provide housing for some of our most vulnerable Western Australians. This is the point that I make, but people always say this: “We welcome social housing, but not here. Not there. Not here, not there, not there.” This is a classic response by the Liberal Party. It is! Old habits die hard for Liberals, because they say they support social housing, but just where they want it, and that means not anywhere near them.

I am deeply proud that we are a state Labor government that is committed to integrating social housing across all our communities. We understand that that is the model that works, and we will continue to do that and support the community housing sector.

GOLD CORPORATION — RISK MANAGEMENT

709. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to revelations over recent months surrounding governance failures at Gold Corporation and its compliance obligations under part 7 of the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act.

- (1) Does Gold Corporation currently conduct due diligence on all corporate customers?
- (2) If yes, what does this entail; and, if not, why not, and for how long has this lack of due diligence been occurring?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(2) Yes, it is true that when we came to government, there had been a complete failure of management at Gold Corporation. When the Premier took over the portfolio, he started a reform program. Unfortunately, COVID struck, and his reform program was paused. He therefore asked me to take on that reform program in the second term of the government. It is true that that reform program is bearing success. We are identifying a range of historic failures by Gold Corporation, and that includes the fact that until 2021, it had not registered under the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act arrangements required by the federal government. Interestingly, it appears that that means that the failures of the former Liberal government may be forgiven, because it is possible that a failure to register under the AMLCTF regime means that there was no failure to comply with the regime. I am not a lawyer, and I am not giving that as advice, but that appears to be the situation. It is possible that the AMLCTF obligations only became settled on Gold Corporation because of the reform program introduced by the Premier. There was a failure by the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA to do anything about bringing Gold Corporation into compliance with the AMLCTF arrangements, but, in the end—although I do not say this as a lawyer; it may well be that in the end it is not the case—it appears that Gold Corporation being unregistered may forgive the former government’s management of the business, but not ours.

As members know, Gold Corporation self-reported its failure to comply with the registration and registered in February 2021 during the caretaker period, and, for the entire time that I have been the minister, it has been properly registered under those arrangements. Gold Corporation is currently working with regulatory authorities to complete all “know your customer” checks and we are investing in that. There is a dedicated team to bring all the “know your customer” arrangements into compliance as quickly as we are able to.

GOLD CORPORATION — RISK MANAGEMENT

710. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I have a supplementary question. Is the minister satisfied that Gold Corporation is currently conducting due diligence on all high-risk clients, including customers from areas such as the United Arab Emirates?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

What I say to the member is: the good news is that we have a dynamic and effective chief executive officer in Jason Waters. The change to the business since Jason Waters came into the business has been remarkable. For example, the obligations that had never been complied with at any time under the former government for registration in the United States, in respect of customer protection issues over there, have been found by Jason Waters in his role as the CEO of Gold Corporation. I go back and answer the question again exactly as I did in the first part: we are working through all the “know your customer” obligations, and the business, as has been announced previously by the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, is working with relevant authorities on the arrangements that AUSTRAC has requested.

HEAVY VEHICLE TRAINING PROGRAM

711. Mr D.R. MICHAEL to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s significant investment in training and skills, particularly in industries facing skill shortages.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the heavy vehicle driver training program and outline how it is supporting the industry in its need for more skilled workers?

- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how the program is also supporting more women to enter what has been a male-dominated industry?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for that question and, of course, for his strong advocacy for the transport industry.

- (1)–(2) Members will be aware that we are implementing a range of initiatives to encourage more people to become truck drivers in this state. One of the key initiatives that we have created is a new short six-week program that encourages people to enter the industry. The skill set program is all about encouraging people who want to change careers or get a career for the first time in the truck driving industry.

Two days ago, I was out there at the airport site with the Minister for Education and Training, and we talked to members who are delivering and also participating in the heavy vehicle driving operations skill set. So far, 230 people have gone through that program and have gained jobs in that industry. We talked to a number of women who are participating in that program. Just to give members a snapshot of the success of the program, currently three per cent of truck drivers are women. Of the 230 people who have graduated from that program and gone on to get jobs, 30 per cent are women. That is an incredible achievement.

On that day, two days ago, we met about eight women who all explained their personal circumstances. There was a single mum of seven who was entering into a long-term career for the first time. There was a woman who had left the banking industry and wanted to come into maybe a more dynamic industry—no insult to bankers—and was very keen to get a job in the industry. There was another single mum who wants to get a job in civil construction. This is a pathway for a person to not only become a truck driver, but work in warehouses or online delivery.

There are a number of different careers for people who, as I said, want to change careers, but especially for many women who have never had the chance to go in and get a long-term secure job. This was, to be honest, one of the most gratifying days to actually meet people who are taking advantage of the opportunities that are given and who are so passionate about the industry.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I could see you driving a cement mixer.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Ha-ha! Possibly my career choice at the end of this parliamentary year, I can tell you! Of course, it allows all of us to change careers. Maybe the Leader of the Liberal Party, after no longer being the Leader of the Liberal Party, can also take this six-week course and become a truck driver, too. It is a great program. It is delivering real opportunities. We have 1 000 places to fill. It is about creating new opportunities. When we meet people who are undertaking the course, we realise that these types of programs that we are delivering actually make a difference in people's lives.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Liberal Party with the last question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

SYNERGY — PREMIER COAL SUPPLY CONTRACT

712. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to Western Australia's current coal supply issues with Premier Coal, with which the government has an enforceable coal supply contract.

- (1) What action has the minister taken to ensure that Synergy enforces the contract?
- (2) What have been the outcomes of the minister's actions in terms of ensuring Synergy secures adequate coal supplies for this summer as per the long-term contract?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

Before I answer that question, I will let the member know that the name of the consulting firm helping Western Power on the bushfire issue is Eco Logical Australia.

- (1)–(2) It is absolutely true that Synergy has an enforceable contract with Premier Coal, and it could sue for liquidated damages against Premier Coal for its failure to supply the contracted volumes of coal. The problem with that is that it might lead to Premier Coal going into liquidation. That is actually not in the interests of Western Australians.

We all know of the troubles with Griffin Coal. Imagine if Premier Coal had the same financial challenges as those with Griffin Coal. It would not only make the community of Collie a disaster zone, but also turn off the lights in Western Australia. That is the member's plan. No wonder he sits where he does. This is the problem. He just does not get this issue. Premier Coal is a foreign-owned private company, as

is Griffin. The government of Western Australia cannot—it is not that we do not want to—seize the assets of a foreign-owned company. It is legally not possible. Let me make it clear: it is not a company because of Western Australian law; it is a company because of commonwealth law. We cannot overturn the Constitution of Australia because we do not like the outcomes that the free market in Western Australia for coal delivery is providing to us. The free market is exactly that. We do not operate any coal mines in Western Australia. We have a contract with them.

What has occurred is that Synergy has discussed the issues around that and asked Premier Coal to provide 100 000 tonnes of more coal than it would otherwise get between now and Christmas. How is Premier Coal, through its owner Yancoal, providing that additional coal? Yancoal owns Premier Coal and Yancoal is the majority owner of a company called Yancoal Australia. Yancoal Australia actually operates the Premier mine, but it is owned by Yancoal, not Yancoal Australia. Premier Coal, through its common ownership, has asked Yancoal Australia to provide two shipments of 50 000 tonnes of coal from New South Wales. That is where it is going to make up part of the short deliveries that Premier Coal is responsible for.

This is not an ideal outcome, but I just make the point: the government of Western Australia is not bringing any coal into Western Australia and neither is Synergy; it is being brought into Western Australia by Yancoal Australia that has common shareholding in and operates Premier Coal. That is a sensible outcome, because if we took action to enforce the contract that we have with Premier Coal and sought liquidated damages, that would take cash out of the business, it would make the government of Western Australia's business Synergy better off because we would have the money that we took out of Premier Coal, but the Premier business would go into financial challenge.

I note that there is a story by Dan Mercer about this issue. What I said to Dan Mercer I will say here: there is no magic wand. If we could walk down there and say, “Abracadabra”, and the coal supply is returned, we would do it, but I live in the real world; I do not live in fantasy world. That is why I am working with the leadership of Synergy and Energy Policy WA and the other resources of government to get a good outcome for the people of this state. I am not playing silly politics that make no sense.

SYNERGY — PREMIER COAL SUPPLY CONTRACT

713. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:**

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister assure the community that we will not have power shortages over the coming summer period due to coal shortages?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! Minister, you have been asked lots of versions of this question in recent times. Perhaps you could just give a short and clear answer.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

There are two separate questions in that. I know that the member does not understand that, but I just make the point. There is the question of the coal-fired power stations in Collie that are owned by Synergy. We are currently confident that there will be sufficient coal supply for Synergy to make it through summer.

There is a separate question that is the responsibility of Australian Energy Market Operator, which is not part of Western Australia's government and is not controlled by the government of the Western Australia. The AEMO operates the electricity system in terms of power stations. The Australian Energy Market Operator—I have answered this question previously—has gone to market for a supplementary reserve capacity for this summer because it thinks it is about 174 megawatts short, and it is currently working through what it can. I make it clear: that is not for the supply of electricity over summer because it has sufficient power stations for that; it is for the reserve margin—that is, if something goes wrong, what happens? Remember that electricity is instantaneous. If we are using every single power station in Western Australia and one of them breaks down, there would be blackouts. That is just the way the system works, so we have to have a reserve margin—a number of power stations sitting idle ready to take up to the slack.

That is the challenge for this summer. That is what the Australian Energy Market Operator, not the government of Western Australia—I know that Paul Murray does not understand this either—is doing. We are working on it. I am engaging with the Australian Energy Market Operator on a constant basis. I met with the CEO when I was in Melbourne for the national energy ministers' meeting. I talked to Kate Ryan—the strategy and whatever her proper title is—here in Western Australia.

Ms J.J. Shaw: All-round legend.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: All-round legend. I met with her to work through these issues. It is not simple; it is complex. That is why I understand why the member does not understand it.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT (PROTECTED ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCTS) BILL 2022*Consideration in Detail*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Clause 8: Section 25 amended —

Debate was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Clause put and passed.**Clauses 9 and 10 put and passed.****Clause 11: Section 115AC amended —**

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We have spoken about “public authorities” and clarified the term. We are now talking about a “prescribed person” in proposed section 115AC(1AA)(b), which will be inserted by clause 11(2). Can the minister clarify who a prescribed person will be?

Dr A.D. BUTI: A prescribed person would be someone who operates the scanning equipment or the disclosure of information.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This could be the licensee of a licensed premises, but how far down the chain does it go for employees who may have access to the details on the secure website et cetera?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Employees will have that information when they scan the ID on the machine, but they will be obligated under the provisions of the act regarding disclosure of information.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am trying to get to how far down the chain someone can go without committing an offence. Proposed section 115AC(4), under clause 11(6), refers to —

A responsible person in relation to licensed premises does not commit an offence under subsection (3) if —

- (a) the responsible person discloses the information or photograph in the performance of duties relating to the person’s work on the licensed premises; or
- (b) the responsible person discloses the information or photograph to another responsible person ...

It goes on further down. How far down the chain can it go? Are employees still not committing an offence if they start handing out photos to other people on the premises?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is what is considered to be an approved delegation. The delegation goes as far as is necessary to ensure that the identity of the prescribed person who is excluded is known to the licensee’s people. Obviously, the person to whom the information is being disclosed has to be involved in the employment of that premises and they have a role to play in ensuring that those people who are excluded are excluded from the premises. They cannot then disclose information outside the particular duty they have under the operation of the act. The delegation is allowed to the extent that it is necessary for that licensed premises to ensure that its staff can properly exclude someone who should be excluded.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thanks for explaining that, minister. Can the minister fill me in on the use of the ID scanners? Are there many premises that already have them? Will they be put in place as a flow-on effect of this legislation?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Many of the premises that will come under the purview of this legislation in the five precincts already have scanning equipment. That information is relayed back to the department. It is not something that is new. As I said, licensees have scanning identification machines already and that information is fed back to the department.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am trying to get my head around the procedure. They have the scanner. Let us say there are five people who are not allowed into the precinct in Northbridge, for argument’s sake. The premises will have the ability to access a secure website that will enable the identification of those five people on their scanner. What is the action when they identify one of those people coming into the precinct or the premises?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Proposed section 115AC is drafted in the same way as legislation on publication and disclosure of information in regard to barring notices and prohibition orders. It is no different. The exclusion orders will follow the same procedure for disclosure and publication. When that identification is put into the scanning machine, it will come up that a person is excluded. The licensee or their staff will then tell that person they are excluded, as we have now with prohibition and barring notices.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a final question on that. Is the minister saying that it is the licensee’s responsibility to remove them, or do they call the police to remove that person from the precinct?

Dr A.D. BUTI: They will not let them in. If they are subject to one of the exclusion orders, they will have breached that exclusion order by being in the precinct. If they are told they are not allowed to come in, the police should be notified that it has happened, because it is a breach of the exclusion order.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 12 to 15 put and passed.**Clause 16: Part 5AA inserted —**

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am looking at proposed sections 152ND to 152NI and I have a couple of questions along the way. What is the process when a short-term exclusion order is in place and a review is sought?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is that for a short-term exclusion order?

Mr P.J. Rundle: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: A short-term exclusion order can initially be reviewed by the Commissioner of Police, then it is reviewed by the Liquor Commission. There has to be more than one month between them, but in more than one month it can be reviewed by the Liquor Commission. That is the process. It is reviewed by the Liquor Commission but it can initially be reviewed by the Commissioner of Police. If the exclusion order is for six months, after one month it can be reviewed by the Liquor Commission.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a further question: will the police guidelines for the issuing of the short-term exclusion orders be tabled?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I think I mentioned in my response to the second reading debate that this will become part of the police manual and will not be tabled. Guidelines are produced as an internal instructional manual for officers. They sit with the Western Australia Police Force corporate knowledge database, and in line with other police manual and policy references, will not be considered to be for public consumption.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is the minister comfortable that police are creating their guidelines as we speak? We have no access to them during the formation of this legislation, and will have no access to them after the completion of the legislation because it is to be in the police manual. Is the minister comfortable with putting this in place? We have a scenario in which the Commissioner of Police is creating it as he goes along, and we will have no handle on it when it is created.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Actually, no. There is a very strict delineation between operational and policy matters. There is even a High Court case on this delineation. Operational matters are the purview of the police. I, as a minister, or the government, cannot interfere in operational issues to do with the police. This is an operational issue. The Ombudsman will do a review of the legislation after three years and that is to be tabled in Parliament. I am happy with this, and I have full confidence in the police commissioner's ability to come up with appropriate guidelines. The police are always subject to the Corruption and Crime Commission. Someone can always make a complaint, which will cause an internal review and then a CCC review.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the minister table a list of the number of offences by category specified in this bill that occurred in each of the five proposed PEPs?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I do not have it here at the moment, and I make no guarantee that I will provide it or table it in Parliament. The legislation is before us, and we are confident that these are the five precincts we should be dealing with at this stage. That is the situation.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Flowing on with another question, could a short-term order of up to six months be issued if a person in a PEP could cause violence or public disorder? Does this mean that the police could issue an order if no offence has occurred, but they suspect that it might occur?

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is correct.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Does it mean that a person subject to a mandatory order will not have the exclusion apply on the basis of living in the area and the like? Can a person's order not be varied?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member is talking about mandatory exclusions. The defences still apply.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I would like to move on to proposed section 152NZK, which refers to defences for moving through the precinct or part of it. As the member knows, I spoke earlier in my second reading contribution about the situation in which, in general terms, I think most of those defences are reasonable, such as for education and for lawful occupation, and if one is a sole carer and the like. Even though the minister says that I hate unions, I do not, but this legislation will create a particular scenario through proposed section 152NZK(3)(1), which states —

the accused was a member of an organisation of employees registered under the *Industrial Relations Act* ... and was undertaking activities for the purposes of the business of the organisation and it was necessary in the circumstances for the accused to be in the protected entertainment precinct in order to undertake the activities;

In other words, an individual may undertake union activities. Obviously, the minister and I will beg to differ on this one, but, as I said earlier, I think this proposed paragraph weakens the legislation. It is not a genuine necessity for someone who has committed crimes or been barred from the precinct to be able to enter the precinct for union activity. Given this, I move —

Page 51, lines 23 to 32 — To delete the lines.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (6)

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

Noes (42)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr M. McGowan	Ms J.J. Shaw
Mr G. Baker	Ms K.E. Giddens	Mr D.R. Michael	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Ms L.L. Baker	Ms M.J. Hammat	Mr S.A. Millman	Dr K. Stratton
Ms H.M. Beazley	Ms J.L. Hanns	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr T.J. Healy	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr S.J. Price	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr H.T. Jones	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Ms C.M. Collins	Ms E.J. Kelsbie	Mr J.R. Quigley	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms A.E. Kent	Ms M.M. Quirk	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms L. Dalton	Dr J. Krishnan	Ms R. Saffioti	
Ms D.G. D'Anna	Mr P. Lilburne	Ms A. Sanderson	

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I will move on from that loss of the amendment.

I would like to ask about proposed section 152NZO, “Protected entertainment precincts must be advertised and notified”. What is the step-by-step process to add a new protected entertainment precinct?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister will consult with the local government authority and any other relevant stakeholders. It will then be advertised on the department’s website and in any other prescribed manner. The director of Liquor Licensing will maintain and publish a description of each prescribed protected entertainment precinct on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries website, and they will be put into regulation and gazetted.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Will that be tabled in Parliament?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The final regulations will be.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Were any regional precincts considered? What is the current threshold for the concentration of licensed premises?

Dr A.D. BUTI: At this stage, the five precincts have been determined. Some could argue that Mandurah is regional.

Mr D.A. Templeman: There is no argument!

Dr A.D. BUTI: There you go—one regional precinct!

There is nothing preventing a regional precinct from being included. That will be considered in due course. If a case is made and it seems appropriate, that will be considered. There is no prohibitive stance or philosophical opposition to it. At this stage, we want to go with these five precincts, and we will see about any others in due course.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I now move to proposed section 152NZV, “Monitoring by Parliamentary Commissioner”. Will more resources be allocated to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations now that he will be responsible for this oversight and scrutiny once the bill is in operation?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The parliamentary commissioner has agreed to it being included in the bill, and resourcing is a matter for that office to determine.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 17: Section 175 amended —**

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I think the minister might have alluded to this earlier, in his second reading speech. Why were the five proposed precincts chosen first?

Dr A.D. BUTI: They were considered to be the precincts that had the highest rates of alcohol-related behaviour and offending. We will continue to monitor rates of offending in other areas. If need be, we will add additional precincts.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How is the concentration of premises, as the building block for these precincts, defined? Is there some sort of formula for working out how many premises need to be within a given area?

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is no mathematical formula; it is just a general consensus. I think people would not argue about the five that we have selected: Perth CBD, Fremantle, Carine—although Carine does not have a massive amount, it has a couple that are quite prominent in a very small area—Scarborough and Mandurah. There is no formula, but it was generally agreed that the five precincts selected have a high concentration relative to their geographical area.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The minister spoke earlier about consultation with local governments, and my sense is that there has not been much of it. Regardless, the geographical boundaries for the precincts have been chosen. During

the second reading debate, I quoted the Mayor of the City of Vincent and her concerns about the precinct flowing over into another area within her local government area. If a local government wanted to alter the precinct—to expand it or reduce it—how would that be done?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It would have to change the regulations. This bill introduces an obligation for government to consult the relevant local government authorities in drawing up the precincts. If the relevant local government authorities want to change the configuration of those areas, they will have to engage in discussions with the government to change the regulations.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is the minister confident that if, in the next term of government, a mayor or councillor approaches him or the minister at the time and presents a case to change the boundaries of a precinct, he will be comfortable putting it into regulation? I have seen the maps provided in the briefing, but local government authorities may want to expand or decrease the area if they are concerned about people coming into their area and those types of things.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The local government authority will have to present a case that there is a concentration of licensed premises and a high rate of offences. The minister of the day will have to determine that adding to or subtracting from a precinct will be in the public interest.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a final question on this clause. I am concerned that we could see flow-on effects. The Mayor of the City of Vincent spoke about certain characters in Northbridge who will suddenly be worried about being banned from the precinct and will move into a precinct next door that could potentially have enough licensed premises to be covered by the regulations. Will it be the case that if a local government authority feels this is occurring, it can go to the minister? What time frame can the minister suggest for a precinct to be added to the regulations?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have a couple of things to say. I do not think, but it remains to be seen, that a big crowd of people who go to Northbridge will suddenly say that they will not go to Northbridge because of this legislation. There may be an individual who is excluded, so they will not be able to go there, but that does not mean hundreds of people will move from Northbridge to another area because of this legislation, because most people behave.

The member asked how quickly a precinct could be added to the regulations. That will depend on how quickly the consultation, the minister's decision-making and the drafting take place. When someone is barred from a precinct, there will be nothing to prevent the issue of a prohibition order that will bar them from a premises that is outside that area. It just means that that person will not be banned from a precinct; they will be banned from a particular licensed premises.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 18 put and passed.

Clause 19: Section 178 amended —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Does the bill apply to a specified serious offence that occurs in a protected entertainment precinct but within a private residence? For argument's sake, let us say there is a domestic violence assault in an apartment or accommodation room that is above a licensed venue.

Dr A.D. Buti: I am sorry; could the member repeat the question? I was distracted.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Let us say that we are talking about Northbridge again. There is a licensed venue with a room or accommodation above it and there is a domestic violence assault on the premises. Would this serious offence potentially put this person out of the precinct? Even though it happened in a private residence, what would be the result if it was a mandatory offence?

Dr A.D. BUTI: If it occurs in a private residence, it will not be caught up in this act. It has to be in a public place.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Okay. The offence is one of those that has been listed—murder, rape and so forth—that has a mandatory exclusion period of five years. Is the minister saying that if it does not happen in a licensed premises or on the street, this legislation will not apply?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It has to occur in a public place.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20 to 24 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [3.36 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [3.36 pm]: I will briefly summarise the Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022 on behalf of the opposition. As I said at the start of my contribution, we support this bill. The

minister has noted that we have reservations about some elements, but the key takeaway is that we support it. I would like to go into those precincts with my wife, my family or my friends and feel a lot safer, and I think this legislation will go quite a way towards that.

As I said earlier, our sympathies go to the Raco family and we acknowledge what happened to Giuseppe Raco in the Northbridge area. I have also pointed out the good work that Raco family members have done to bring their petition to the attention of not only the Premier, the minister and other members of government, but also the opposition; they met with our leader, Mia Davies, and Vince Catania some time ago. We certainly support the thrust of the legislation.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I might go down to Mandurah—one of the five precincts—and get the member for Mandurah to take me out and show me the nightlife there.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: But I think the legislation will make a big difference.

I have pointed out that I am concerned about the lack of consultation. This is about not only the short time frame between briefings and debating the legislation, but also the lack of supplied information and consultation with local governments. A symptom of this government seems to be that it is almost a cut first and consult later type of government. We saw what happened with the forestry industry, which was very disappointing, and we saw the proposal for the crayfishing industry. We now have a new Minister for Fisheries. A pattern has developed over time. I remind the government and the minister that consultation is all-important, and consultation prior to introducing the legislation is even more important. Consulting while putting in place the regulations does not cut it for me. The government needs to consult all stakeholders. The Australian Hotels Association has been briefed and supports the precincts, but the City of Perth was not consulted prior to the bill being read in. I note that the members for Hillarys and Scarborough appeared to have had more consultation in their electorates. That is just a comment I would like to make.

I am very hopeful that the police can work their way through this legislation and employ more resources to enforce it. A real concern of the opposition is the enforceability of the legislation. Certainly, with improved technology, body-worn cameras and CCTV, I think the police will have a better opportunity to put the necessary steps in place. Generally, it is a handful of people in these precincts who cause 90 per cent of the issues. Having lost my amendment, I look forward to the minister inviting me to the first union meeting in one of these precincts.

As I said, the opposition will and does support the bill. We have some reservations about it and I am sure questions will be asked in the other place. We have a right to question the government but we also want to see safe precincts and safe places to go to at night-time. As I said, we support the bill.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [3.42 pm] — in reply: I thank the member for Roe for his contribution to and support for the Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022. The union defence is not a union defence; it is a defence of industrial activity related to employment. Like the other defences, it still has to be shown that it is necessary for the person to be in that area. It will not be open slather, just as it is not for most of the defences. Obviously, if a person lives in the area, they do not have to show that it is necessary to be there, because that is where their home is, and so it is essential.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the drafting of this bill and in bringing it before the house. I can assure members that this bill has been drafted almost out of existence. The number of drafts involved has been very complicated. I would like to thank the advisers, Jennifer Shelton, Donna Kennedy and Senior Sergeant Wayne Henry, and the department overall—the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. I thank my staff, Adelaide Kidson and Rachel Sackville-Minchin. The other agencies that have been involved include the police. The Premier has also taken a particular interest in this bill. Of course, I thank the Raco family, particularly Enza Raco and “Pep” Raco’s father. What happened was terrible. This will not bring back Pep, but it is an important piece of legislation. I also thank the members for Scarborough and Hillarys for their contributions to the debate.

I strongly commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

PREMIER’S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from 18 October on the following question —

That the Premier’s Statement be noted.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [3.44 pm]: It is very unusual, of course, for a minister to make a contribution to the Premier’s Statement, but these are unusual times and, being an unusual person, I am happy to make a contribution during these unusual times and use my 15 minutes to take us through to 4.00 pm for private members’ business. I am sure it will enlighten and ignite great debate and great interest.

This is my first real opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate the new member for North West Central on her election to this place—congratulations. I rang her a few days after her election and congratulated her. I hope she has not been too turned off by her experience over the past month or so. Parliament is an interesting place. It is always a bit daunting for new members who come into this place, particularly when they are elected at a by-election. The member joins an illustrious group of people who have been elected to this place at a by-election. The member for Armadale, the Minister for Racing and Gaming, is one such member who was elected to this place at a by-election. The Minister for Police, the members for Willagee and Cottesloe and the former Treasurer who is the former member for Victoria Park were all elected to this place at a by-election. The member for North West Central is in an illustrious group. She will note that all those members became ministers. There is an opportunity. It was a good hip and shoulder from the member for Roe. I have not seen that one since the former member for Vasse gave someone a hip and shoulder here, but we will not go into that. That is not to be spoken.

This is an opportunity for me to put on the record a couple of important aspects for my constituency and the Pinjarra region that I represent. The regional population around Mandurah continues to grow rapidly, stretching to the Shires of Murray, Boddington, Serpentine–Jarrahdale and Waroona. It is a remarkably diverse region and a very important region for Western Australia because of its ongoing population growth and the strong effort by the McGowan government to ensure that we diversify the economy in the Pinjarra region. There are numerous examples of that, one of which is Peel Business Park that has now been dually named. I stand corrected. The new dual naming is an Indigenous name—Nambeelup Kaadadjan—for that particular region around Nambeelup. That park is a major investment by the McGowan government and is focused on offering a diverse business park. Obviously, that area of land is available for development. We were very proud when the McGowan government decided to make the Bushfire Centre of Excellence the centrepiece of the park. The Bushfire Centre of Excellence is built-operational and will continue to play an important role in how the state tackles bushfire mitigation and bushfire responses in the future. Of course, aspirations for that centre include training for visiting firefighters and trainers into the future. I am very, very pleased with that.

As members know, when the Premier delivered the statement at the beginning of the year, we were coming out of COVID. In terms of business activity in my region, like other parts of Western Australia we are very pleased that employment growth has been very strong. We still have residual unemployment, but we have strong employment growth. Indeed, similar to other places, there are areas of business in which the attraction and retention of staff has been a challenge. Hospitality is one example of that. However, we are also focused on ensuring that we train Western Australians for the future, and that is why I am very proud that our expansion of the TAFE site in Mandurah is almost complete. The major expansion of our TAFE facility is a \$15 million investment by the McGowan government, which will result in enhanced course offerings. As we know, history shows that investment in TAFE courses and apprenticeships has been a focus of the McGowan government. We have always believed that training and making access to training cheaper and more accessible is key to ensuring that we have a skilled workforce for the future. What we have seen in the Peel, as it is called, as part of the South Metropolitan TAFE in the education precinct in Mandurah is a massive uptake of courses. That is because we have made them far less expensive than they were under the previous Liberal–National government. We all remember what happened under the previous government when the former member for Scarborough was the Minister for Education and Training and she increased the fees for scores of courses. TAFE participation dropped dramatically. Why? Because it became too expensive. Many young people could not afford to access the courses they wanted and needed to ensure that they could commence on the pathway to a viable and effective future career.

I am so proud that the McGowan government, on coming to power in 2017, focused on freezing TAFE fees and then, of course, cutting TAFE fees, some to negligible amounts, in order for people to participate. What did we see? We saw a massive increase in participation. A massive and growing number of people can access courses that they wish to pursue. I am immensely proud of that because so many young people are seeking to train and others are seeking to retrain. I remember going to the TAFE centre when construction of our new additional facilities commenced and meeting young single mums whose children were leaving primary school and going to high school who could now afford to access the TAFE course to which they aspired to start a new career. They retrained, and that is because we recognised the importance of training and offering those training opportunities in an inexpensive way. I know that many people living in my region enrolled in and have completed their courses following that huge injection into TAFE. They accessed that training and are now working, and that is tremendous. Indeed, some have even started their own businesses because of their training and the opportunity given to them by this government, which was so important.

I am very proud of what happened in terms of costs of living after agitation by my constituents and the member for Dawesville's constituents about the cost of public transport, particularly for those who live in the extremities of the public transport network. Deputy Speaker, you can take a trip to the regional city of Mandurah on the Metronet line. Prior to our capping of fares, the transport costs for those living in the outer areas who were travelling five days a week could have been more than \$100 because they lived in zones 8 and 9. Of course, a number of people need to use public transport to go to work and access education opportunities and further training, but when those travelling costs were added to their household budget, it was a lot of money. I was pleased that a number of constituents

contacted me and the member for Dawesville highlighting this. The option of driving to Perth or places in the metropolitan area was out of reach because of parking costs and the cost of using their personal cars. But they also had to find public transport costs each week from their household budget. I approached the Minister for Transport, as did other members who live on the extremities of the public transport network and those who will be connected with connections to the Thornlie and Byford lines and those living further north. I was very appreciative when she announced that those people will not pay more than the cost of two zones. That is a major and significant policy decision by a government that recognises the importance of not only investing in public transport, but also delivering in terms of affordability. After the Minister for Transport introduced that measure—it was delivered by the Treasurer in the last budget—it effectively meant that people travelling from Dawesville and parts of Mandurah would now pay \$2 000 or more less a year, and that is now being enjoyed by them, which they deserve. Many of those people are already on a low income or are not necessarily in a high-paying job, so that makes a massive difference to their household budget.

Another thing that I am looking forward to is, of course, the Peel Health Campus expansion, which is a very important \$152 million commitment by this government. There are a lot of stories about and a long history of Peel Health Campus, but it is this government that will fix it. This government is investing more than \$152 million so that this hospital can deliver high quality health care for the people of that region. It will be a public hospital, and that is why I am pleased by the announcement about the wages outcome. When that hospital becomes a public hospital in August next year, it will deliver additional benefits to the staff.

When she was an election candidate, the member for Dawesville fought very hard for the Dawesville bridge commitment and it will be delivered. The scoping work for duplication of the bridge will be delivered. The \$130 million project will address congestion issues and will be so welcomed.

I will be interrupted shortly for private members' business. These are just two projects within the Pinjarra region that are so important to the people who live there, the people who visit our beautiful part of the world, and, indeed, for the people whom we will welcome as residents in the future. We want to make sure that we have available the best health services, the best opportunities for employment and training and the best services that government can deliver, and we are committed to that.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Public Trustee's Administration of Trusts and Deceased Estates — Motion

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [4.00 pm]: I certainly look forward to this opportunity. I move —

That this house requests the Public Accounts Committee to inquire into and report by 31 May 2023 on the Public Trustee's administration of trusts and deceased estates, including —

- (1) inviting submissions from the public regarding experiences with the Public Trustee;
- (2) reviewing the implications of a self-funded model of delivery on estates and trusts under the responsibility of the Public Trustee;
- (3) reviewing the fees and charges of the Public Trustee together with the communication protocols used for informing clients of the statements of their estates and trusts;
- (4) reviewing the level of fee subsidisation across estates and trusts; and
- (5) reviewing supplier policies and procedures.

In August this year, the WA Auditor General called for an urgent review of the state's Public Trustee—I have the report here with me—questioning the way it charges for its services and describing it as being only partly effective at carrying out key functions. I am certainly glad I have the Attorney General here today to respond to not only this report from the Auditor General, but also some of the concerns that I have heard from many constituents who have contacted me in recent months.

Following a *Four Corners* exposé of the Queensland and Western Australian Public Trustees, the concerns of many families and individuals across the country were made public when they recounted their experiences with the different Public Trustee jurisdictions. At face value, the service provided by the Public Trustee is an essential function of the state and serves to work around a complicated structure of legal and financial laws for the best outcome of wills, trusts and estates. The issues that have been highlighted deserve more scrutiny. The Auditor General found that clients unknowingly subsidised other clients. She found that fees and charges were sometimes excessive and not made clear.

Since I asked my initial question in Parliament about the WA Public Trustee, I have been approached by a number of concerned people who have had dealings with the Public Trustee in various situations, and their personal stories have been startling. I think it is fair that we ask the government to review the actions of the Public Trustee. I want it on record that the people who work in the office of the Public Trustee are only following policy. I am not making a personal attack on any individuals, but the policies and procedures need to be reviewed.

I turn to the *Office of the Auditor General: Annual report 2021–2022*. The first statement of fact is that the Public Trustee is 100 per cent self-funded—so there is the first problem. The Public Trustee employs 170 FTE and the 2021–22 annual report indicates that the cost of employee benefits amounts to \$18.29 million. From the \$1.5 billion held in other people’s funds, interest income came to \$1.7 million. That means the Public Trustee must make \$16.5 million to fund its workforce alone from its only source of income, which is people’s estates and trusts. I doubt that the 1 977 wills that were drawn up during this time would amount to the cost of running the Public Trustee office. It is no wonder the Auditor General found there were clients who were unknowingly subsidising other clients. The annual report states that the size of the trusts varies from thousands to millions of dollars.

I want to highlight the Auditor General’s report titled *Public Trustee’s administration of trusts and deceased estates*. I could see the concern that she had that day when I attended the briefing, and I heard some of the questions that were asked. In this paper, the Auditor General asked: what did we do? The Auditor General assessed whether the Public Trustee effectively administers the deceased estates and trusts that it manages, whether deceased estates and trusts are administered effectively to protect vulnerable people and whether effective controls are in place to prevent fraud. In the first section of this report, the Auditor General finds that administration is partly effective; that gets a green tick. Fees are charged in line with the schedule. Then there are some crosses. Some trusts are charged a lot for little work, trust fees are poorly communicated, deceased estates take too long to administer and not all fraud controls are in place. In the first section, she found that trust fees did not always reflect actual work effort and are not effectively communicated to clients. Fees are charged in line with the schedule. There was a green tick there; it is lawful. There is a cross for “fees can exceed actual work effort”. That is appropriate. That is highlighting that sometimes fees well and truly exceed work effort. There is a cross for the review of fees relying on complaints. That identifies that people will get a review only if they actually complain, which is not good enough. Also, clients are not given a clear explanation of potential or actual fees. Those are some of the highlights of the report.

Another one was that the KPI to close estates within 12 months has not been met. Another was that nearly 700 clients rely on cash cards for core purchases such as food and clothing et cetera. The Auditor General found no processes to guide staff on cash cards, cards were stored in staff drawers, and there was no tracking process for them. The Auditor General said that it was essential that a process be implemented. The Auditor General also found that there are weak financial controls, increasing the risk of fraud; property inspectors are not independent; there was no reference table for common works; no verification that works are complete; inadequate vetting of suppliers to clients; and poor management of supplier master files. To me, that expresses some serious concerns from the Auditor General. The cost of running 12 different departments under four directorates is expensive, and some of the information that passes through the office is also of a complex legal nature, meaning legal opinion is required, and that is also expensive.

I note from its annual reports that one of the Public Trustee’s values is —

We are open, honest, impartial and ethical in our communication and decisions. We take responsibility for our behaviours, which are governed by the legal system, agreed standards, and codes.

Attorney General, what has troubled me about the cases that have been highlighted to me from articulate, well-meaning but frustrated family members is that their dealings with the Public Trustee have been anything but open, honest and impartial. There are examples of unethical and arguably irresponsible cases in which the Public Trustee has not fulfilled its obligations to the estate that it is responsible for. One observer used the word “criminal” to describe the actions they witnessed when dealing with the Public Trustee.

A consistent comment from those who have contacted me is that they are unable to get information such as rental statements, bank statements or fees charged—anything to do with the expenditure of moneys in the estate. That list is greatly concerning. I will outline these concerns in the following cases that have been highlighted to me.

Since my first question in March this year asking the Attorney General about concerns related to the *Four Corners* story on the Public Trustee, people have seen that I am interested in the operations of the Public Trustee and they have been contacting my office with their experiences. I will go through some of these experiences.

A recent caller told me about his experience with the Public Trustee and his late mother’s estate. It was a simple will consisting of \$20 000 in a bank account, a funeral fund of \$8 000 and a family home. Both siblings were mentioned in the will as sharing the family home. The brother was to pay out his sister for her share of the family home—simple, one would have thought. Two years later, after countless emails, phone calls and misinformation on the settlement of the property with various amounts being requested after settlement, which were unsubstantiated by the Public Trustee, still no financial statement has been sent to the beneficiary of the will from the Public Trustee, despite numerous requests.

A recent correspondent said they were now filled with immense dread for the future management of John’s finances and assets as they were not confident that the Public Trustee had their best interests at heart. They found the trustee to have a lackadaisical approach and it seemed to them like the business was secretively gaining its income from unsuspecting clients. That correspondent said that the trustee had not released to him a statement of its current charges, nor information about the rent being received, the fees or the real estate agency’s monthly charges.

Another correspondent's family member owns a house that has been managed under the Public Trustee for months due to their mental health diagnosis. The correspondent writes about how the house has been ignored by the Public Trustee with food being left out and the freezer full of meat that is going rotten—complete neglect on behalf of the Public Trustee. They say that the trustee is totally incompetent and that its neglect is criminal. They have exchanged many emails with the Public Trustee. It does not give a damn and it tells them that despite the damage being caused due to the trustee's neglect, the correspondent's sister will be paying for the cleaning and rectification. That is the attitude of the Public Trustee.

A quote in a recent article reads —

“I'm 85 now and I just found that the most stressful period of my life was when my wife passed away ...
“The second most stressful part of my life has been dealing with the Public Trustee.”

This client received a \$19 000 bill from the Public Trustee to manage his wife's estate, which consisted of applying for probate, changing a bank account and transferring seven shareholdings from his wife's name to his. From the account statement he worked out that the Public Trustee had charged \$370 an hour. When he raised his concerns, the Public Trustee reduced the amount charged by over \$8 000. This is what I referred to with the Auditor General's report; the only way that fees can be changed is if a person complains. That is not the way to run a business.

A stockbroker told the ABC that even with the reduced fee, it appeared to be a high hourly rate for an off-market transfer. I used to work with a company called Computershare and I managed off-market share transfers at different times. I can assure the Attorney General that for an off-market transfer, a person has to get the transferor and the transferee to sign the document, walk to the stamp duty office to pay the \$5 stamp duty, as per the estate, and transfer it across. The share registry will do most of the work. There is no way that people should be charged \$370 an hour for processing off-market transfers. A parting comment from that client was —

“If you see the Public Trustee anywhere near your assets, run as fast as you can,” ...

I recently received correspondence from a concerned family member whose brother's assets are under the Public Trustee. He has mental health issues and is borderline illiterate. When his sister sought clarification and information on the Public Trustee's fees and services, the Public Trustee directed their client, her brother, to its website when it knew he would be unable to read it, let alone understand it. I have read through the fees and charges in the *Government Gazette* and, honestly, when one trawls through that list it is almost impossible to understand. I do not see how referring someone who is almost illiterate to the website is appropriate.

A carer raised a concern about the takeover of their client's pension card by the Public Trustee. They said that the card is now in the hands of the Public Trustee and when their client needs his pension card, most importantly for identification purposes, he will not have it.

Community service organisations have also contacted me about their work with the Public Trustee on behalf of their clients. One officer said that the Public Trustee is a disgrace and outlined how he works in the mental health area and had seen the devastation that the Public Trustee has caused in the community.

Finally, I will remind the Attorney General about the *Four Corners* exposé that outlined the situation Siham Benz found herself in with the Public Trustee when she was caring for her mother. The ABC had to go to the Supreme Court of Western Australia to lift a ban on identifying Siham's mother, who featured in the program. Ms Benz was caring for mother, who had early onset Alzheimer's disease, her two young children and her husband who had suffered a brain injury. She had quit work to look after everyone. When the Public Trustee was appointed to look after her mother's financial affairs, Ms Benz said she was relieved as it took some of the pressure off her at the time. The Public Trustee began to ask questions about household spending. Following the death of her mother, the Public Trustee sent the police to Ms Benz's home to arrest her on 10 charges of theft. It alleged that \$140 000 was stolen from her mother's estate. Two and a half years later, the matter made it to the District Court. The jury returned a not guilty verdict within 10 minutes of adjourning. The discovery that the \$12 000 of legal fees for the Public Trustee came from the mother's estate to essentially convict her daughter, shocked and appalled Ms Benz. Her final comments in the article were —

“They're a law unto themselves, they're a power unto themselves,” ...

“There needs to be some oversight into how their decisions are being made.”

I have received many calls about complex dealings with the Public Trustee. The constant message is that it has been dishonest, incompetent and inept. How does the Attorney General reconcile these comments with the work of the Public Trustee and still provide no answers for these distressed families members?

When the *Public Trustee's administration of trusts and deceased estates* audit report was tabled, the Attorney General was fairly pleased that the report found no evidence of malfeasance, fraud or corruption. In the hierarchy of serious misconduct, those three terms would be at the top of the tree, yet the Attorney General was satisfied that the Public Trustee needed to improve its services with the expedient finalisation of estates and transparent communication with clients over fees. Extraordinarily, the Attorney General also announced in a media statement the largest staffing increase in the history of the agency. The Attorney General has made it blatantly clear that the agency

will remain self-funded. The annual scale-of-fees increase of up to 2.4 per cent will not cover the cost of the extra FTEs, so we can only assume that the funding will come from the estates and trusts through fees and charges, which as we know is not entirely equitable. Employing more people under the Public Trustee is going to create even more havoc for this fee scenario in which it appears people with larger estates are subsidising those with smaller estates.

I think the Attorney General has a responsibility to the public of Western Australia to task this review to a public inquiry. Sending it to the Department of Treasury to provide government with options to improve equity and value for money is nowhere near good enough. The members of the public who are closely connected to the Public Trustee have a right to know what is happening to their estates and the estates of their family members. When I asked my question without notice on 17 March this year, the Attorney General said he thought the appropriate body to look into the issues of the Public Trustee would be the Public Accounts Committee, saying that he had already had a discussion with the chairperson of the committee about its workload capacity and it would be considered at the next meeting of that committee. We searched the committee's inquiries and found that at the moment that committee is not running an inquiry. I ask the Attorney General to follow up on that promise. I know he has shuffled some of the Auditor General's concerns across to a Treasury inquiry, but the public of Western Australia deserves a proper follow-up on the promise that it would be reviewed by the Public Accounts Committee. More than anything, these people who have been mistreated and are unhappy about the way their estates are being dealt with deserve a decent hearing. They deserve the ability to go to the Public Accounts Committee, talk about what has happened to them, get a fair hearing and feel like they have been listened to. I ask that the Attorney General refer to the Public Accounts Committee an inquiry into the Public Trustee, not just a Treasury inquiry about certain elements of the Auditor General's report. A proper inquiry of the Public Trustee should be held by the Public Accounts Committee. I look forward to the Attorney General's response.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [4.22 pm]: I would like to make a few preliminary remarks about trusts generally and the Public Trustee in particular. Trusts, of course, are set up so that the ownership of funds and the ownership of property is legally held by one person, be it in a bank account or real property, for the benefit of someone—the beneficiaries under the trust. For those people, the trustee has a fiduciary relationship. They are not easy vehicles all the time for either the beneficiaries or the trustees. I can give members a couple of examples outside the Public Trustee. One we have dealt with in this chamber is charitable trusts through which so much money for the Indigenous land rights settlements go and there are continuing complaints by beneficiaries about the administration of those trusts. There is a notorious litigation involving Australia's richest woman and trusts with her children that were set up by her late father. They are the subject of ongoing litigation in the Supreme Court involving millions of dollars. I am raising these points because when we look overall at the vehicle of trusts, we see that they are fraught for beneficiaries who are always demanding more. I will give members an example, now turning to the Public Trustee. In advance of the debate this afternoon, I was not given the names of the particular beneficiaries raised by the member for Roe. Even if I were given prior notice of their names, I would not be in a position to come into this chamber as the Attorney General and discuss the internal business of those trusts without the authorisation of all the beneficiaries of that trust. It might not just be the beneficiary named by the member. There might be siblings who are also beneficiaries of the trust who would not want the whole trust laid bare in this chamber for various reasons. I will not attempt this afternoon to answer the particular complaint that was raised by the member, but there is a pathway for those beneficiaries that I will come to in a moment.

It is true that *Four Corners* ran an episode on 14 March 2022 that focused on Queensland's Public Trustee. I am very pleased that, in that report, no malfeasance by the Public Trustee of Western Australia was exposed. Following the broadcast of that program on a Monday evening, the member for Roe asked a question without notice in this chamber. I quote in part —

Will the Attorney General follow the lead of the Queensland government and launch an investigation into the WA Public Trustee?

We did not have before us, as a result of that program, such malfeasance as to require an independent investigation. I answered the member's question in this chamber on 17 March. That was three days after the broadcast of the program. I stated —

I think the appropriate body to look at this is the Public Accounts Committee because it is cross-party.

It is non-political and each member of that committee would have a chance to address the chamber on the return of the report. I stated further —

I have already had a discussion with the chairperson of that committee about its workload capacity to look at it, and I believe that will be considered at the next meeting of that committee.

I did immediately write to the Public Accounts Committee, which is a committee of this chamber, and on 31 March, which was a quick turnaround—I did not dilly or dally—I received a response from the committee saying —

The Public Accounts Committee ... considered your correspondence at its recent meeting. The Committee has resolved to defer further consideration of this matter until after the Auditor General has tabled her report on the performance audit of the Public Trustee.

The committee did not resolve to do it. On 10 August, which was about five months later, the Office of the Auditor General tabled its *Public Trustee's administration of trusts and deceased estates* report. The report found —

The Public Trustee understands its high-level fraud risks and has a coordinated approach to manage them. However, no evidence was identified of fraud or corruption, but the way the accounting system worked meant it was identified as a risk for fraud. Having identified that risk, it was then addressed by the Public Trustee and the Auditor General. The Department of Treasury accepted the recommendation. The report recommended —

The Department of Treasury should:

5. review the appropriateness and transparency of the Public Trustee's fees and self-funding model. In particular:
 - a. if the cost of work for clients without, or with limited, financial means to pay should continue to be paid for through the fees charged to clients with financial means or through an appropriation from Parliament

It was since about 2008 that the Public Trustee became fully self-funding. The second point that the report recommended was —

- b. whether current governance arrangements should be aligned with practices at other State entities that hold private monies in trust, including establishing a governing board.

The Auditor General's report also revealed that the Office of the Auditor General would be conducting a further audit of a forensic nature. This is very important. It would not be a report into the structure of the office or whether it was meeting its key performance indicators; it would be a forensic audit of accounts. The Auditor General stated in her report —

My Office has commenced a more in-depth forensic audit, using data analytics, to review procurement services, and in particular to see whether there are any anomalies in contract management systems and transactions on behalf of clients.

This is important. It continues —

This work is not indicative of specific concerns, rather a targeted examination of some control weaknesses identified in this audit and a previous audit in 2013. Findings from this work will be reported separately to Parliament when complete.

A detailed analytical audit is underway, in which the particular trust account that the member has named can be looked at in depth and audited.

On 28 September, which is after the Auditor General has said that she would be conducting an extensive analytical audit, the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee wrote to me as the Attorney General and said —

The Committee has had the opportunity to further consider your correspondence, together with the Auditor General's report *Public Trustee's Administration of Trusts and Deceased Estates*. The Committee notes the Auditor General has made a number of recommendations to the Public Trustee, due to be implemented between 31 December 2022 and September 2023. The Auditor General has also recommended the Department of Treasury should review the appropriateness and transparency of the Public Trustee's fees and self-funding model, which does not have a date specified for completion. Finally, during a briefing on the report for members of Parliament, the Auditor General advised that a forensic audit on the activities of the Public Trustee was currently underway. It also does not have scheduled date for completion.

That refers to the forensic audit that the Auditor General had announced a fortnight before she met with the committee.

The letter continues —

In consideration of the ongoing work of the Public Trustee, Department of Treasury and the Office of the Auditor General, the Committee consider now would not be an appropriate time for it to undertake an inquiry into the operations of the Public Trustee. The Committee will monitor the outcomes of the ongoing work by these agencies, and consider whether an inquiry should be conducted in the future.

The first part of the motion before the chamber this afternoon is that this house requests the Public Accounts Committee to invite submissions from the public. In response, the Public Accounts Committee does not wish to take public submissions or make inquiries while the inquiries by the Department of Treasury and the Auditor General are on foot. The Public Accounts Committee wants to see the product that will be produced by those inquiries.

The second part of the motion is that this house requests the Public Accounts Committee to review the implications of a self-funded model of delivery on estates and trusts under the responsibility of the Public Trustee. In response, the Department of Treasury has already agreed to review the appropriateness and transparency of the Public Trustee's fee-for-service and self-funding model, with the aim of providing government with options to improve equity and value for money for the Public Trustee's clients. That work is already underway through the Department of Treasury.

The third part of the motion is that this house requests the committee to review the fees and charges of the Public Trustee together with the communication protocols used for informing clients of the statements of their estates and trusts. In response, the Public Trustee has already agreed to the Auditor General's recommendation to review fees and improve communication of fees and has committed to implement this by 30 September 2023. This will build on the work already implemented. In 2020, the Public Trustee commissioned external consultants Marsden Jacobs Associates to independently review the Public Trustee's fees and charges for trusts, deceased estates, personal financial administration fees, and fees charged for the writing of wills. The 27 July 2020 report from Marsden Jacobs found that the Public Trustee's current work effort fee basis is fair, reasonable and appropriate in most circumstances. I say "in most circumstances". The Public Trustee has since been working with Marsden Jacobs to simplify the current fee structure so that clients can more easily understand the fees. Indeed, Hon Nick Goiran, MLC, asked for the Marsden Jacobs review to be tabled in the upper house. It was tabled on 19 October 2022 and is tabled paper 1737. If the member were to read that tabled paper, it would answer some of the questions raised this afternoon.

The fourth part of the motion is that this house requests the committee to review the level of fee subsidisation across estates and trusts. In response, the Department of Treasury has already agreed to review the appropriateness and transparency of the Public Trustee's fee-for-service and self-funding model, with the aim of providing government with options to improve equity and value for money for the Public Trustee's clients. The government is awaiting the return of that Treasury report.

The final point of the member's motion is that this house requests the committee to review supplier policies and procedures. In response, this will be addressed in the Auditor General's forensic review, which is currently underway. With the greatest respect to the Public Accounts Committee, the Auditor General's ongoing work will be an —

... in-depth forensic audit, using data analytics, to review procurement services, and in particular to see whether there are any anomalies in contract management systems and transactions on behalf of clients.

It is easy to understand why the Public Accounts Committee, which we all recognise is a cross-party committee, wants to wait for the Auditor General's forensic audit to be completed before it looks at those matters. That is because the product of those two inquiries will greatly inform the Public Accounts Committee and enable it to answer those questions. The government is not opposed to these issues being looked at by the parliamentary committee. In fact, I wrote to the committee back in March requesting that that be done. If the Public Accounts Committee wants to make its decision after the Department of Treasury and Auditor General reviews have been concluded, that is also a reasonable position for the Public Accounts Committee to take. This motion will not be supported by the government, in view of those ongoing inquiries and the Public Accounts Committee's own resolution to look at this further once it has received the product of the Treasury's investigation and the Auditor General's own forensic report.

Before I sit down, I will suggest that the people who are writing to the member with a particular complaint about the management of the accounts of the Public Trustee might choose to give that information to the Auditor General to form part of her forensic audit of the whole office. May it please the chamber.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms C.M. Rowe**.

EDUCATION

Motion

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [4.40 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the McGowan Labor government to take responsibility for the mess of Western Australia's education system and take immediate action to address systemic issues impacting students and staff.

As shadow Minister for Education and Training, education is very close to my heart. Being married to a teacher, as I have pointed out to the member for Southern River a few times, over the years I have heard many elements of what goes on in the education system. Some of it is good and some not so good, but it has given me the opportunity to develop a wideranging knowledge.

The Department of Education has a staff numbering just over 43 000 people, according to *Business News* in September 2022, and the total revenue of the Department of Education is \$5.61 billion. They are big numbers, and no-one would argue that managing enormous staff numbers and a significant budget is an easy task.

I want to go back in history to 2006, when the now Premier was Minister for Education and Training. A search through the *Hansard* of that time shows that governments have had to deal with the very same issues for decades. The question is: when does this become a reflection of Einstein's theory that insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result? One commentator suggested that discussions about education in Western Australia are like groundhog day. I think we have all heard the issues that have been discussed over the past decades. Teacher shortages are not a recent occurrence, but, since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, they seem to have come to the fore. They cannot be attributed entirely to COVID, but I know school leaders and school

staff were under a substantial amount of pressure during that period. We have spoken about the COVID challenges that principals had, when schools had to become a pseudo-health department, checking out students, parents and staff in the school system.

When the Premier was education minister, he spoke of the long-term blueprint for the education and training workforce in 2008. He even commissioned a report by Lance Twomey on education workforce initiatives. The report covered 15 major themes, including remuneration; leadership and mentoring; flexible learning; housing; workload; and career progression. The question to be asked is: what has changed in this narrative? The answer is: not much. The Premier and the minister are still banging on about how they are managing the crisis unfolding in schools, but the reality is that our teachers and principals have had enough. I think that is the difference now. The loyalty of teachers and principals over the last 20, 30 or 40 years has been fantastic; they have hung in there, but now they feel they are not being supported. That seems to be the theme coming through time after time. In almost all the reports that have been produced or are coming up, including the report of the State School Teachers' Union of WA, one of the main themes is lack of support.

The recent Productivity Commission report has reviewed the National School Reform Agreement. The reason people are talking about this report is that it reflects, in real terms, the issues our schools are facing on a daily basis. The report recommends that teacher workloads be reduced, that more attention be paid to student wellbeing and that more scrutiny of how schools spend money be implemented. Despite the agreement, spanning four of its five years, very little improvement has been made in literacy and numeracy. In some cases, we are actually going backwards, as one of the recent reports notes, especially on boys' literacy and numeracy. One of the most concerning statistics to come out of the report—which is no news to teachers, of course—is that teachers are spending as little as 40 per cent of their time in the classroom, with the other 60 per cent being spent on administrative duties. Teachers surveyed for the report said the number one reason they are leaving the profession is workload. The report notes that higher hours of workload for teachers reduces the quality of teaching. No-one would dispute that the quality of our teachers is the highest priority. It is vital that our teachers are happy, sufficiently supported in their roles and well remunerated, and that they enjoy their vocation.

The positive impacts on students of valued teachers is immeasurable and lasts a lifetime. We had many examples of that in our debate on the Teacher Registration Board legislation, and several members opposite spoke of the effect their teachers had had on their careers. Unfortunately, this is not happening in some of our classrooms. Worn-out teachers cannot possibly give their best to their students. They have to spend their lunchtime doing relief because there are no relief teachers to call. They have to double their classroom numbers because a teacher cannot be replaced, and they have to make up lessons at the last minute for students who cannot make it to school. The lack of surety in their roles has really taken a toll.

A caller to talkback radio who is a teacher said that they had been told to list the cleaning products in their classroom, research the safety data sheets and make sure they were all in place as per the occupational health and safety requirements and be available for inspections. This is arguably not a great use of a teacher's time.

A recent report from Monash University titled *Australian teachers' perceptions of their work in 2022* reported that over 70 per cent of teachers felt that the public does not respect their work and nearly 70 per cent of teachers felt that the Australian public does not appreciate their work. Significantly, though, 46 per cent of teachers were satisfied with their role as a teacher and over 80 per cent of teachers had a sense of belonging to the profession, which arose from relationships with other teachers, school staff and students. Conversely, the factors that threatened a sense of belonging were negative public perceptions towards the teaching profession, workload, negative media, a lack of support, unrealistic expectations and time pressures. When we examine these figures—conflicting accounts of public perception versus the sense of belonging—we need to be cognisant of what is happening and provide a structure that allows our teachers to teach and fulfil their critical roles in the classroom.

I know that the members for Southern River and Hillarys know what that is all about, having both been in the classroom, and how important it is that teachers are supported to teach in a constructive way and to have fulfilment in their role. Teachers and principals have spoken to me about the system. A comment made within a Monash University report related to school-wide or systemic failures from one teacher who just wanted to be heard. The report states that only 27.6 per cent of teachers surveyed plan to remain in teaching until retirement, while nearly 20 per cent plan to leave in five years. Principals are in the difficult position of having to deal with directives from the department, exhausted teachers, irate parents and discipline problems with students. They are copping it from all angles, and I wonder whether they are sufficiently equipped to deal with the various complex problems they are facing.

According to a recent global survey from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Australian students were ranked amongst the worst of the worst for classroom discipline. According to the 2018 study, Australian students ranked seventieth out of 77 participating nations. That is a quite damning statistic, and it is something I think our minister and our Department of Education need to have a good look at. Principals are not only the CEO, but also the chief financial officer, office manager, human resources manager, pastoral care leader and chief negotiator/mediator—to name a few. I think it is a lonely place at the top. I am sure that principals are finding their tasks and the decisions they have to make increasingly difficult. I am concerned that the onus of many issues in

schools is being unfairly lumped on our principals. We find that we are in a situation in which principals are being asked to come up with ideas to reduce the workload for teachers and let the department know what those ideas might be. That seems to be the wrong way around to me when we have many ex-principals sitting around in Royal Street. I would have thought it would be coming from the other direction.

A number of teachers and principals have contacted me with their own experiences. It is extremely concerning that they feel that they are on their own. Either teachers are not getting support from the principal or the school, let alone head office, or if they are principals, they are put in a position in which doing nothing is safer than doing something. Education assistants are touted as the answer to the workload of teachers. However, 58 education assistant positions were advertised last week. Many of those were for special needs. It was all very well having a position for a role, but it is another thing when that role cannot be filled. Regional and remote schools have various issues to deal with that no metropolitan school has to deal with. Finding a suitable house for the principal or a new teacher is impossible at the moment in some towns, and government housing and private rentals are at a premium; they cannot be found anywhere.

We saw a list put out earlier this week of 43 schools at which the pay scenario will be improved. The government is attempting to attract regional and remote teachers to those schools. One of the key parts of the puzzle that has not been filled in is that housing is at a premium. We hear stories of Meekatharra hotel rooms. How is the minister going to attract a teacher who will have to sit in a hotel room all year? How will the parliamentary secretary attract a teacher who will have to sleep in a caravan park all year or attract a teacher who will have to sleep on the floor of another teacher's house?

I hear a lot of blame coming from the Premier and the Minister for Education and Training that it is always someone else's fault. They have blamed COVID. The education minister seems to wheel out time after time that we are a lot better off than those in the eastern states. Compared with the eastern states, and New South Wales in particular, we are doing a lot better. Well, that is not hard when Victoria has Australia's worst Premier, Daniel Andrews, who locked up the people of Victoria for 256 days. No wonder they have problems at some schools in Victoria and that some teachers are pulling the pin. It is not right that our education minister keeps comparing us with other states. We live in WA. It is a little like international education. We had a scenario earlier in the year in which the Premier locked everyone out until 5 February. Then the Premier decided off his own bat to extend it for another three or four weeks. He smashed the international education sector, which led to Western Australia having 5.5 per cent of the international student market. We have dropped to the lowest state in the nation, even below South Australia. Some of these decisions have long-term implications.

As we know, 25 per cent of graduates are leaving the profession after five years. Even incredibly well qualified principals are opting to resign, because the system has finally beaten them. Teachers are looking for respite in easier jobs. In an environment in which jobs are everywhere, there needs to be a reason for these valuable people to stay in their positions. I am sure that the member for Southern River will agree that once they are gone, they will not return. It takes a lot of investment in money and human resources to replace these teachers.

It is appropriate that I now quote the State School Teachers' Union of WA President, Pat Byrne, in her address to the state council meeting held earlier this month. Some of these quotes are very appropriate. She said —

We have reports of student teachers in their second and third years of initial teacher education (ITE) filling in in schools—especially regional schools.

The next one states —

... we've been seeing signs for years—in the number of people applying for principal positions—sometimes only three or four for a metro school; the numbers of teachers willing to go to the regions; the lack of department support structures we used to take for granted.

...

What we do know is that politics will ensure that the minister will be able to truthfully say there is a teacher in front of every class in February next year—schools and colleges. We of course know that that will be achieved by some classes being cut; teachers teaching out of area; teachers losing internal relief, and a great reliance on remote and online learning programs.

This is the final quote —

At this very moment we have a Western Australian Labor government with the largest majority in WA's history ... coupled with its strongest ever economic balance sheet actually shrinking the percentage of funding public schools get and leaving them short of the minimum school resource standard.

That is Pat Byrne, the President of the State School Teachers' Union of WA, who is generally supportive of the state Labor government, telling it as it is. This government with its \$6 billion surplus and strong economy is actually shrinking the percentage of funding that public schools get. As a result of the significant issues within the education system of WA, the SSTWA felt the need to commission an independent review of public education in WA. This review will be tasked with delivering workable solutions. It is quite bemusing that the union has reached the point

at which it has used members' fees to commission a review for which the Department of Education should have been accountable. As we know, former Premier Carmen Lawrence is heading that review. Once again, I note that the lack of support is one of the main elements. That is something this government needs to focus on.

Moving on, 792 principals are holding substantive positions in 2022. That number has been pretty constant over the past four years. Principals will hold onto their position until something better comes up. They will shift from different schools while keeping their substantive position. It is not unusual for schools in my electorate to have had as many as six principals in the past couple of years. Certainly, one school that comes to mind in my electorate is Kukerin Primary School. Probably over the five years that I have been a member of Parliament, the number of principals it has had is in double figures. We have this merry-go-round whereby a principal holding a substantive position might go on leave or be transferred to another school to fill in an acting role but will keep the substantive position and then be moved to another school and another school. Five or six years down the road, they are still holding the substantive position but have moved to three or four different schools in the meantime. There is no continuity for the small regional communities or for a principal with a substantive role who wants to stay in the community, move their family there and be part of the community. That is a real weakness in the system, and it needs to be addressed. We get all this information from the minister that it is because of the Public Sector Management Act and all those things.

Mr T.J. Healy: That is correct.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is right, but there are ways to work through these things.

Mr T.J. Healy: Contrary to the act?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Not in contravention, but there needs to be a good, hard look at it. We cannot have teachers and principals holding roles for five, six or seven years down the road. When we talk about messing up schools, this is part of it and these are the issues that need to be addressed. I am just pointing them out today. As I said, the minister loves to compare WA with the eastern states. She says, "Look at us; we're better than the eastern states." As I said, Victoria is not good. It has the worst Premier in Australia. I say that without any equivocation.

Regardless of that and getting back to WA, some of the concerns I have at a local level include concerns about VacSwim. That is a real concern for regional schools and parents. We know that the VacSwim team is trying its best to open classes. The lack of swimming teachers can be a reason for classes to remain closed. However, parents are facing the prospect of having to take their children hundreds of kilometres to a swimming pool each day to access swimming classes. Another issue is that class registrations are filled as soon they open, so parents and, more importantly, children are missing out on critical swimming skills. We have kids in the wheatbelt who are missing out. The member for Central Wheatbelt and I raise these issues about VacSwim every year around this time. The other day, a class filled up in the local town and the officer said, "That's all right. You can go to Hyden", which I think was 200 kilometres from where the person was living. Some of these issues need to be focused on because that happens every year.

My favourite subject is Esperance Senior High School. This is important. It has nearly a thousand students. The buildings were built in 1966 and the two main wings are the main part of the school. We have grandparents who say that not only did their sons or daughters go there, but also their grandsons and granddaughters. The conditions are not good enough. Once again, we have put this on the Minister for Education and Training's radar. The Premier was actually embarrassed into going there to have a look.

Mr T.J. Healy: What?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: He was embarrassed into going there by the local radio station to look at Esperance Senior High School, which he did, to his credit. After being asked about it by the local radio station, the Premier took the time to look at Esperance Senior High School, despite saying he was unaware of it and despite the fact that I have brought it up many a time in this chamber and also delivered a petition on it to this chamber. To top it off, we had a community group made up of the shire, local community members, the chamber of commerce and members of Parliament, and we wrote to the minister about a potential master plan for the school because it is well and truly in need of it, and the education minister wrote back and said, "You're more than welcome to do a master plan, and, by the way, you can fund it yourself." I have never heard of a community being asked to do a master plan for Department of Education infrastructure and to fund it themselves.

Hon Colin de Grussa asked a question yesterday in the Legislative Council in reference to a previous question asked about schools identified in the minister's previous response. Hon Colin de Grussa asked the minister to provide a list of the specific preliminary planning, feasibility studies and master plans. For the preliminary planning and feasibility studies undertaken by schools, the member asked the minister whether the government provided additional funds to assist the schools to carry out this work; and, if so, whether the minister could please specify that funding. He also asked the minister whether the schools received funding from sources other than the government to carry out this work. The response was that the Department of Education does not have any records of a financial contribution from the state government directly related to the studies, reports and plans for the five schools that were listed. The minister answered that she did not know whether there was a financial contribution from the state government,

which I find rather interesting, to say the least. The thing that I find most interesting is that a community is being asked to fund a master plan for education department assets without being given any assurance that there will be funding for that school. Let us spend \$50 000 or \$70 000 on a master plan for Esperance Senior High School but the government will not assure us that it will be funded down the track. According to the State School Teachers' Union of WA, on a student-funded model, 27 schools are underfunded. Esperance Senior High School, which I have been talking about, is underfunded to the tune of \$1.86 million; Castletown Primary School by \$1.16 million; Esperance Primary School by \$1 million; and Gnowangerup District High School is underfunded to the tune of \$310 000. Where is the equity in funding for those schools?

I want to go back to housing, which I spoke about earlier. I heard about a house in the member for Central Wheatbelt's electorate. A house in a country town owned by the shire can be rented to the principal at the subsidised rate of \$720 per fortnight. Why would any principal apply for a position in that town and lose nearly \$20 000 of their hard-earned salary each year when there are principal positions closer to the metropolitan area? Why would someone apply when they have to go down that path?

We have a real issue with housing; we have brought it up many a time in this chamber. Part of the issue with housing is security; there may be housing available but the security is insufficient. The grandmother of a 24-year-old graduate teacher in one of the communities in the north of the state rang me up to tell me that, last weekend, a rock was thrown into the back of her granddaughter's Prado while it was parked in the garage. The offenders then smashed on the front door and said, "Give us your effing keys or we will break in." That is the sort of stuff that is happening. How does the government expect graduate teachers and young female teachers—or male teachers for that matter—to go into those communities with those sorts of conditions? It is not good enough. We need not only houses, but also security, or something must be done to deal with the people making those threats. We recently heard about an incident when nurses in Halls Creek were stoned and they had to call the police. We need some security. I suspect these people will need to live in gated communities to actually have some safety.

According to *The West Australian*, there were 126 principal vacancies, 700 vacant teacher positions in the public sector and another 700 vacancies in the private sector last month. The minister's recent announcement of a maximum of \$17 000 in incentives does not cover the costs of the rent in the example I just gave; however, I am heartened by the fact that the minister and the Department of Education have finally recognised that regional schools are difficult to staff and they are putting some incentives in place. I fear that, to some extent, the intention of the new incentives that were advertised earlier this week will be misdirected. When we look at the details, we see that it appears that they target teachers in schools that are already staffed with incentivised teachers and principals, so all this funding will do is keep them there. The term "golden handcuffs" is touted by some, creating a situation in which staff members stay beyond their capacity in difficult remote schools purely to receive the extra salary. I have had difficult scenarios described to me concerning the country teacher program and it appears that it may need a thorough analysis. Once again, the wheatbelt misses out; it has been crying out for help for years. We must do this differently if we are going to improve student performance. This is not about administration; this is about teachers in classrooms doing what they do best.

The National School Reform Agreement states that student performance is not getting any better and nothing will change without changing strategies. It is really disturbing to hear people calling for the basics to come back. What on earth have we been teaching if not the basics? I know that there are times when there seem to be so many other peripheral activities happening at schools that the basics are not always taught. A Grattan Institute survey found that out of 2 243 teachers and principals, half plan their lessons on their own and only 15 per cent have access to high-quality curriculum materials for all their classes.

As we know, Halls Creek is a very difficult case that has been very badly handled by the minister. She admitted that when she apologised in the other chamber. It took the minister months to admit that she was wrong. That is a sad indictment because the employee who raised concerns about the issues at the school that prompted the apology was subject to a police raid, then taken to court by the education department, had the case thrown out by the judge within 10 minutes and they are still being investigated. Can you imagine? The employee's house that they share with their family was raided by the police because they gave out truancy numbers. They have faced all that has happened since then and they still have not been reinstated by the Department of Education. That does not reflect well on the way this has been handled. It is rightly so that the minister apologised.

I will move on in the short time that I have left to talk about the role of regional directors. In my mind, they have a critical role in our system. The challenge is that they cover such massive areas and such a large number of schools. In the wheatbelt and the midwest regions, the regional directors have to cover about 70 schools. I cannot even imagine the challenges that they face in trying to cover every school, the recruitment of every principal and any other issues that arise that they need to put out fires for. I always beg to differ with the director general on this, but I believe that the regional directors need more direct support and a smaller area to cover. Some of our regional officers used to go out to somewhere like Narrogin, which had a very good regional office, to mentor the principals. There were people who were able to visit young principals in their region two or three times a term. That was a good system. Our regional directors generally do a good job—I do not deny that—but it is very challenging to cover that area and the number of schools.

I want to move on to the environment that our graduates are being put into in those schools. I spoke earlier in my contribution about the lack of support that sometimes happens. As I said, 25 per cent of graduates leave within five years. In some cases, they are expected to mentor pre-service teachers. They are not only out there as graduates trying to learn their craft, but also being asked to mentor pre-service teachers. I spoke about this with the member for Southern River when we debated the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022. We discussed the limited registration. I think there were 600-odd limited registration places in the last financial year. There are a lot of teachers out there who are yet to complete their qualifications.

I recently received a letter from a concerned parent of a student at a school in my electorate. She made several points about education in her regional school. There has been a decline in the number of teachers and principals who are willing to travel to rural areas and there has been a lack of quality applicants to fill staffing positions over the past 10 years. There is a lack of housing to offer teachers and principals. In her words, there are many “substandard, unprepared” principals and teachers, which is creating poor learning environments. This has led parents to opt to move to larger regional centres or put their children on buses for long trips to larger government or Catholic schools. This is creating split families and poor mental health outcomes. Over the past few weeks, the correspondent has spent hours counselling distraught mothers who feel cornered into moving or putting their young children on long bus routes to larger centres because all the other children their age are being moved.

Mr T.J. Healy: Member, when they found out that you could be their local member, I’m surprised thousands didn’t come!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am just relaying to the member for Southern River some of the issues. I do not think the member understands the trauma that some families go through when they realise that the standard of their school has dropped because the principal and teachers are not getting support and the curriculum is not being covered properly. Mothers and their kids have to move to Perth, Bunbury, Albany, Geraldton or a larger regional centre, splitting the family and sometimes never coming back together. These things are upsetting people in our smaller regional towns. As the member for Southern River well knows, I was part of the school bus review and I learnt that many students are having to travel up to 85 or 90 minutes a day just to get to school. It comes to a point at which they cannot take it anymore and they end up moving to the metropolitan area or a larger regional centre.

The mother to whom I referred also offered some solutions. According to my notes, her solutions were —

1. Offering teachers working 50km or more out of major centres a higher salary;
2. Teachers who take a position in a rural and remote school for three years get a guaranteed higher wage for the rest of their working life;
3. After five years, they get a guaranteed placement in a location of their choosing (not specific schools)—remember when this was a policy a few decades ago?
4. Teachers who take a rural placement get permanency after 24 months.

Those are some of the ideas that came from a mother who has children in a regional school. She also outlined some concerns that we have heard from teachers. According to my notes, they are —

- Going rural demotes your ability to ‘climb the ladder’
- Once you go rural, the education department tries to keep you there;
- It is really hard to get back to metro if you go rural

Those are some of the thoughts and feelings of people out there. With the permission of that correspondent, I shared her letter with the director general when I met with her the other day to provide a sense of how some of our rural constituents are feeling. As I said, member for Southern River, the other day we finally received recognition that the 43 schools that have been outlined need better incentives, which is a breakthrough from my perspective. I applaud the Minister for Education and Training, the director general and whoever was involved in that for recognising that we need to incentivise people. The funny thing is that sometimes when people move to the regions, they actually enjoy being there and they stay with their families for years on end. The same thing happens with the police force. Quite often it is difficult to get police force members back to the metro area because they love it in the regions.

Once again, we need this recognition because some teachers at small schools have five year groups in one class. I will say that one positive is that some of our smaller schools have been kept open despite not having many students. The other day, the member for Central Wheatbelt visited Babakin Primary School, which is a fairly small school. There are small schools in my electorate, such as Woodanilling Primary School and Jerdacuttup Primary School. The impact of these schools on their communities is significant; indeed, they are the centre of their communities. In a place such as Woodanilling, the school plays an important role because it is where everyone gathers and celebrates their local community. There are some amazing teachers in our small regional towns and I applaud them. As I said, it is great that the Minister for Education and Training now has an understanding about some of the incentives that are needed.

In conclusion, the figures do not lie; 700 teachers and more than 100 principals need to be found before school starts next year. I know of many teachers and a few principals who will be signing off at the end of the year because the system has got the better of them. They are good-quality people who still have so much to offer, but, unfortunately, with the way things are going, they have decided that enough is enough. It has taken the minister too long to appreciate the looming crisis that has now reached our schools. Targeted approaches to staffing should have been in place years ago—before the COVID pandemic—because we knew back then that there were staffing and housing issues. I would like the minister to tell me, the schools, parents and everyone who is affected by understaffed and under-functioning schools what her plan is for the next five years because I have not seen anything that suggests that a plan is in place. As the shadow Minister for Education and Training, I receive information from many key stakeholders and I can unequivocally say that the lack of consultation with groups that are begging to be heard is overwhelming. I look forward to the minister listening, looking at the solutions that already exist and telling us what her plan is for the next five years.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [5.26 pm]: I rise to contribute to this debate. I will touch on some of the challenges that we are seeing right across the education system, but specifically in my electorate of Vasse. No doubt the challenges that the teaching cohorts at local schools are experiencing in Vasse are replicated in other areas. I want to touch on the lack of investment in local school infrastructure in particular, some of the increased pressures that teachers and other staff at schools are experiencing and the need for additional resources. I commend the shadow Minister for Education and Training for highlighting some of the real issues that our teachers are facing across the education system, particularly in our regions. It has been a challenging few years for our teachers and what is very clear is that they need more support and more needs to be done to ensure that there is a teacher in front of every classroom. The answer cannot be cutting classes or corners.

The comments made by Pat Byrne from the State School Teachers' Union of WA about funding and the shrinking of the resource standard under the McGowan Labor government at a time when this government is enjoying significant state windfalls were certainly damning. As my colleague pointed out, the Minister for Education and Training has neglected to address critical issues in her portfolio, such as cultural issues, which are pushing hardworking teachers out of the profession and leaving the state desperately short of teachers. I have heard about the teacher challenges faced by our schools across the electorate; indeed, one school is having trouble attaining a principal. The recent incentive program to lure teachers to remote schools will not assist those in the south west that are experiencing significant difficulties. That is the feedback that I have received from local schools within my electorate.

I want to focus on infrastructure. The parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Education and Training will be familiar with this issue of infrastructure for local schools, particularly Cowaramup and Dunsborough Primary Schools.

Mr T.J. Healy: Like fixing the roof!

Ms L. METTAM: It is much more than just fixing a roof. That was the short-sighted approach taken by the Minister for Education and Training. This 99-year-old school remains in dire need of repairs to several unsafe structures and ultimately requires additional major upgrades to accommodate the rapidly growing school population. The best this government has been able to do is commit \$60 000 to address the sagging ceilings. The school board and I have been calling for investment to meet demand that was highlighted in an audit report in 2016. The audit report highlighted the fact that the administration building needs to be upgraded and extended. It recommended two buildings actually be demolished, not just patched up, and it also pointed to the lack of permanent early childhood education facilities. As I said, I raised a grievance in this place to the parliamentary secretary. In his response, he criticised me for not seeking and securing funding under the previous government. Of course, it is worth pointing out that following the 2016 audit, we made a commitment of \$6 million again and again to Cowaramup Primary School in both the following elections. Since 2017, the government has not made any significant investment in infrastructure at the school—just minor improvements and alterations.

Mr T.J. Healy: Except for the maintenance blitz and all of the unsafe issues.

Ms L. METTAM: The member may call it a blitz, but from the school community's perspective, it was very far from a blitz. We are talking about a school that is significantly run-down. The fact that the minister's response was to address only the sagging ceilings and not the more significant issues—certainly, the sagging ceilings did need to be addressed—illustrates the complete lack of connectedness with this school community. It was such an insult to the school community to put out a statement like that. We know that the Cowaramup population has doubled since 2011. Half the classroom facilities at this school are still transportable; they were meant to be only a temporary measure. Joel Hall, the Cowaramup Primary School board chair, was quoted recently in the *Augusta-Margaret River Mail*. He said —

“It’s an issue that has become politicised, when we’d really like to see an actual commitment to the audit the government conducted in 2016 that identified a serious need for more classrooms,” ...

...

“We’ve had funding for things like science equipment, for which we don’t have a science room and instead have to wheel the science equipment from room to room.

“This school is in an area of extremely high growth and investing in the school is for the benefit of the whole community, not just the kids.”

...

“It’s not sufficient to address just one or two things, more needs to be done to prepare the school for the growth this community is experiencing.”

Quite obviously, the sagging ceilings needed to be addressed, but when we are talking about a complete lack of capacity in classrooms, an audit report that says that the school is not fit for purpose and the absence of a proper early childhood learning area, promoting the \$60 000 commitment was, quite frankly, a real insult to the community that supports this school so much.

Dunsborough Primary School is another example. We made an investment of \$900 000 to Dunsborough Primary School. The school community in Dunsborough was seeking that investment to provide the school with an undercover area and to expand the canteen. That was again a commitment by the Liberal–National party; the school community had identified it as a need and had outlined the associated cost. Dunsborough Primary School is the only school in the district that does not have an enclosed weatherproof undercover area, which meant that birds were roosting in the ceiling, causing a health hazard for children. Instead of committing a small amount of funding to bring it up to standard, the Department of Education committed to paying thousands of dollars for the ceiling to be cleaned rather than actually fixing the problem, as it feared it might create a precedent for other seaside schools. It was a complete waste of time and money, and yet another bandaid and short-term measure. At the end of last year, when it became clear that the department would not fix the building, the school P&C paid to have the ceiling lined in an attempt to improve the health and safety and amenity of this area.

The City of Busselton has also undertaken an assessment of the canteen area and concluded that it is no longer fit for purpose and is inadequate for the existing school capacity. The assembly area that is adjacent to the canteen is unable to comfortably seat the 770 students who attend the school, which is why we need this upgrade. All that we have seen from the government in response to these very fair requests was a \$25 000 commitment, leaving the P&C to appeal to members of the school community to dig deep into their pockets and to ask parents to pay a levy to help fix the area. It is a disgrace that this government, which has the capacity to support a school community such as this by ensuring that its canteen is fit for purpose and the children of the school can be seated in an undercover area, apparently does not have the funds to do so. It cries poor when it comes to providing the funding to adequately ensure the health and wellbeing of students and staff at this school. Again, as reflected in the government’s response to Cowaramup and Dunsborough Primary Schools, this government gloats about its \$6 billion surplus, which is apparently the envy of every other state, but it cries poor when it comes to the needs of students and schools across the state.

I touch on the three-year-old pre-kindergarten program and KindiLink. We have been told and it is understood that birth to five years is the most critical stage in which a child’s brain develops more rapidly than at any other time in their life. For some children and their families, the kindergarten years are particularly daunting. Inroads have been made to prepare them in the years preceding. A range of pre-kindergarten programs are opening up that have great merit in connecting and getting some students and parents familiar with the school environment. Currently in my electorate, pre-kindergarten programs are offered by private schools—St Mary McKillop College and Georgiana Molloy Anglican School. One public school in my electorate has been granted approval for a three-year-old program for one year. I commend the principal and the school for offering this program to families of the school community and beyond. Initially, the school will be running two sessions a week with 20 students per class. However, the program did not receive separate funding and will be covered by the school’s existing one-line budget. Under section 74A of the School Education Act 1999, the minister must approve provision of programs at public schools for children in the early education period. Although the content and implementation of such a program is to be decided by the principal, it is subject to the direction and control of the director general. As I mentioned, approval has been granted for next year. The Department of Education has an alternative KindiLink program that is currently available to a select 38 public schools. However, the question remains: why has the government not included in that list West Busselton Primary School, which also has a need? I understand that the school was interested in offering the KindiLink program and that the school met the objectives of this valuable program and had the demand for it in its catchment area and beyond. For those who are not aware, KindiLink is a play-and-learn initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are not old enough to enrol in school. When there is room in the class, non-Aboriginal children and the children of families that fall outside the school’s catchment area are also very welcome to participate. Out of the 38 schools that offer the KindiLink program, only three are found in the south west. I understand that the program is run in Collie, Bunbury and Albany. It is not clear what the selection criteria is or how the application process works, but I urge the minister, as I have done in correspondence to her, to provide funding support for this pre-kindergarten program and the necessary KindiLink program. Many students in the West Busselton Primary School community are facing significant challenges and, in some respects, the school leadership is really seeking to address the vulnerabilities amongst that community through the pre-kindergarten and the KindiLink programs.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms L. METTAM: I will touch on another important area that is critically underfunded and in need of more support. Tragically, my electorate has experienced a number of student suicides over the past few years. Following the death of one student who attended a school in my electorate, one of the ex-staff members organised a petition calling for an inquiry into mental health guidelines in WA schools. This was signed by 823 Western Australian citizens. In early August, the minister issued a statement in the other house advising that guidelines had been developed in 2018 in recognition of the growing emergence of suicide ideation and suicide, and that the department had led a cross-sectoral development of guidelines for suicidal behaviour and non-suicidal self-injury, which were endorsed by the public, independent and Catholic education systems. These guidelines are recommended but not mandatory. They are designed to be used in conjunction with existing school-based policies. The minister stated —

Schools have a role to play in not only promoting mental health and wellbeing, but also identifying, supporting and referring vulnerable students.

We understand that our teachers and staff are under extreme pressure. I constantly hear of the need for additional resources and support for staff who are under increasingly significant and challenging pressure to support students. A local school nurse has often reflected on how significantly her job has changed over the last decade. Once she treated physical injuries, but she is now on the frontline of dealing with school students who have significant mental health issues. Quite clearly, it is a significant issue.

A recent report by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, highlighted that almost two-thirds of young women or girls said that they never feel safe and rated life satisfaction as very poor. Almost 70 per cent of girls from year 9 to 12 reported that they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row, compared with 47 per cent of teenage boys. Our wonderful high school staff, who do an amazing job of supporting our students, tell us that they are challenged by an increasing demand for mental health and suicide prevention support. They are struggling to meet demand with current resources. One of the support staff advised me that they do a suicide risk assessment at least once a week. They said that teachers are doing well at talking about mental health, but they need backup. They need more funding for external programs that make an incredible difference to young people and can be life changing, but so many of the schools cannot afford them. I was also advised that when students are really unwell, they have to be referred to an emergency department. Apparently, there are no regional support facilities for young people, and going to Perth is not okay. The patients in the mental health units in Perth hospitals are high end in terms of their condition, and this often creates more trauma for the young people who end up there. We know that quite often our schools are on the frontline in the response to youth mental health concerns.

I will conclude by saying that more needs to be done to address this issue and support our teachers in this area and, through that, our students, to ensure that their health is prioritised in a range of ways so that they feel resilient when they leave school. At a more simplistic level, but just as important, is the vital infrastructure that is needed across the community. We have been calling for this for years and years. Quite clearly, the government has the capacity to respond.

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [5.49 pm]: Obviously, I am going to take a regional perspective in my speech today. I would like to acknowledge the teachers, staff and educators out in the regions who operate under extremely difficult circumstances. I have enormous respect for them. They are teachers, mentors, mothers—they are everything—often to a lot of children who do not have a home life. It cannot be underestimated what the member said about additional help that a lot of teachers need in these really tough schools. Some of these kids are coming to school and they may be an eight-year-old but they have only been to school for three days in that time. They are being put into classes where they do not know anything because they have not even done pre-primary yet. The teachers have to deal with these kids.

I certainly understand the need for education and the ability for it to be delivered to everyone, but I want to highlight that the needs of cohorts throughout the state are very different, particularly in regional areas that are remote. Often, the infrastructure is not in place and there is no housing for teachers. I congratulate the initiative to provide incentives for teachers. I think it has been well received by teachers because there is no incentive otherwise for them to go out to the regions. I completed my primary schooling through Schools of the Air, which is a different way of learning again. When the decision to close the Schools of the Air was on the radar, it would have had an enormously detrimental effect on a lot of families, businesses and children in terms of their education. That is an example of being open to having different forms of learning and different ways of teaching. Coupled with that is the issue of housing. A lot of these kids come from overcrowded housing and dysfunctional families in the regions.

As an example, a couple of the ministers made reference to a comment I made in my inaugural speech about the kids looking forward to going to juvie, as they call it, because of the food, the beds and the Xbox. My comment was taken out of context. I said in my speech —

These are basics that most of us take for granted. Education is the key to creating change, yet some children do not have an environment in which they are able to take advantage of opportunities; their school attendance may be low or sporadic —

Or not at all —

and they may have the added disadvantage of poor housing and a need for family support, with high levels of drug and alcohol abuse within some groups.

The takeaway from that and my intention for that comment was that, in fact, if juvie is better than their home life, we have a serious problem. We know what these kids endure when they do go to juvie; they see that as being better. At the end of the day, this is what our teachers are faced with every day. I had a conversation with a child in the street who was about 10 years old. I asked him, “Why aren’t you at school?” His response to me was, “Oh, I’m ’suspended.” I asked, “Why are you ’suspended?” and he said, “There was trouble.” I asked what trouble and he said, “I chucked a chair, a table—a whole lot of stuff.” Schools go into lockdown regularly throughout the year, which is not good for the teachers—it is dangerous—it is not good for the kids who are being sent into lockdown and it is definitely not good for the other children in the class. It is something a lot of normal classrooms would not experience.

The teachers do a remarkable job, going above and beyond. I know one teacher who had a fish tank and the children broke in overnight and destroyed it. She had brought that in for the benefit of the children and that is the kind of disappointment they are up against. Health and wellbeing of teachers needs to be at the forefront because they are making an enormous impact on some of these children who are dysfunctional. It is difficult for them to have their classes split with dysfunctional children and children who want to learn and be in a more normalised environment. Clearly, they are not equipped to deal with some of the extreme issues that these children have. The teachers probably need more resources and specialists, including psychologists, and there are some foetal alcohol spectrum disorder children who fall through the gaps. They are not classified as having a disability under the current funding model, I understand. For kids with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, funding is limited for those who require medication and it can take a long time for them to get paediatric appointments and diagnoses. Autism is another condition that they struggle with. These kinds of wraparound services for our teachers would be useful because they are faced with trying to manage all that.

Coming back to my example of the children who are suspended at age 10, clearly they are suspended and then roam the streets for the next 10 days. I think there are gaps there for educational opportunities for these children. Having said that, some of them are so dysfunctional that I know a couple of the teachers who would normally pick them up and take them to school are now afraid to do that because they have had their cars ginged and their windows broken. Teachers face that as well. I think a mental health check is essential for lots of them. It is admirable what they do. I think an alternative method, if there is some way of capturing those kids when they are disrupting a classroom to go into a different learning environment, whatever it might be, would be hugely beneficial to those children because many of them are definitely not being encouraged to go to school by their families.

The comment around kids wanting to go to juvie really is alarming. It confirms and highlights just how bad their home environments are. Teachers are being given the role of looking after these children when they come out of places where they had no role models, no education or understanding of what normal behaviour is. The disengaged children are in urgent need of intervention, which is through specialist care programs that would alleviate some of the pressures on teachers. I am sure the teachers here would have more understanding than I do, not being a teacher. The safety of educators is paramount because, as we said before, their houses are ginged and their cars are ginged. They go into lockdown from time to time. It is something that they are going to have to endure.

Another couple of schools in the more inland communities have fed back that the turnover of teaching staff is such that the kids will get attached to their teachers, but the teachers change every three or four months, so building relationships with their teachers is really difficult. It is difficult to cement those relationships in which they want to go to school because of a person and then the person will leave. That means it becomes even harder for the child to have a constant in their lives when they do not have any constants.

My brief comment on this motion is that Western Australians across our state rely on the provision of and access to education. It is important and critical and it is going to be the catalyst for change if we can get these education streams right. However, at times we need to look outside the model because kids are slipping through the gaps and teachers are being tasked with looking after that extreme group of children who are sometimes in a classroom environment. That is where additional support is needed. It is important that the government continues to support strong education programs and resourcing to support working collaboratively across agencies as well. At times the teachers feel like they are left sailing solo. If these teachers could have additional assistance to help at-risk children and children who are disrupting normal classes for other kids in these towns and communities, that would be the way the go. We need to find pathways forward to secure a strong future.

Eight-year-olds are being put into classes for eight-year-olds when really they should be going into a grade 1 class. These kids are dysfunctional within the classroom. From what the kids have told me, it is because they do not feel like they know anything when they go into a class if they have not done any schooling for the last three years. It is not helping them. They feel a bit ostracised by the whole situation. My take on it is that I think teachers do an amazing job. They are very resilient and they find ways to get the best out of the kids. I urge the government to look closely at providing more support for teachers in difficult regional locations.

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [5.59 pm]: I rise today to oppose the motion moved by the member for Roe. Education is close to my heart, for very obvious reasons. I strongly feel that anything can be taken away from us, but not the knowledge that we have. That stays with us permanently. It is the biggest asset that any person can possess.

I want to reply to the comments made by the opposition one by one. I will start with the member for Roe. He was all over the place. He said that the honourable Premier of Victoria is the worst Premier ever. The Victorian election is not far away. In 11 or 12 days, we will know the result of that election. If Hon Daniel Andrews is re-elected as Premier, I please request the member for Roe to make a commitment that he will apologise for making that comment and for insulting the people of Victoria for having chosen the right person to lead that state.

The member for Roe also spoke about the revolving chair of principals. I cannot understand why he would take one example and generalise it to apply across the state. The member for Roe is without doubt one of my best friends in the opposition. I extend an invitation to the member for Roe to visit Riverton. I will seek permission from the schools in Riverton for the member to come with me and talk to the principals about how long they have been at their school, how well they have been performing, and how excellently their schools are producing the most outstanding students in the world. This state's best schools are Willetton Senior High School and Rossmoyne Senior High School. I extend an invitation to the member for Roe to make time to come to Riverton and see how well our schools and our teachers are functioning, and the quality of the students they are producing, and how proud we are of those schools.

Please stay away from criticising teachers. Teachers have gone through a lot. They have had to adapt at quick speed to the COVID pandemic. They have had to adapt to online teaching. They have had to adapt to the uncertainty of schools opening and closing. They have managed all that. We need to be proud of teachers for having done that. The number of days that schools in Western Australia were shut down is among the lowest in the world. That is simply because of this government's effective management of COVID. However, the member for Roe is still continuing to complain about the closure of borders. It is pathetic.

Mr P.J. Rundle: It closed off the international education sector.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: I will answer the member for Roe's question about the international education sector. I was part of a delegation to India led by the Deputy Premier. One stream of that 130-person delegation was focused exclusively on international education. I assisted the Minister for International Education in those meetings during our visit to India. I can tell members that the interest and enthusiasm, and the security that parents feel about sending their children to Western Australia, is next to none. That is simply because Western Australia is seen as one of the best states in the world.

I come now to teaching graduates. I was in this chamber a few weeks back when we made an amendment to the Teacher Registration Act. The member for Roe was here at the time. Did he support or not support that bill? I am sometimes not sure on which side he is leaning.

Mr P.J. Rundle: I supported it.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: Today, the member for Roe supported the previous bill on protected entertainment precincts, but, just prior to that, he made the statement that there is insufficient information and data to enable him to make a decision.

Mr P.J. Rundle: My job is to look at all the weak points.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: I am not stopping the member for Roe from doing his job. All I am saying is that he either says yes, he supports the bill, or, no, he does not support it. I kindly request that he please does not have even the slightest doubt that we are providing the best education system ever possible for the kids of Western Australia. The Department of Education is not something that we should play politics with. Another reason that this is not the time to play politics is that students are taking their final exams for their Western Australian Certificate of Education. Kids are seeking to achieve a high Australian tertiary admission rank so that they can secure their future by gaining admission to the right institution and the right courses to skill themselves up. Is this the time to say that our education system is broken and dysfunctional? Please do not discourage the next generation by making such statements. Please accept that Western Australia is providing the best education system in the world. It is definitely not acceptable to make the statements that standards are dropping and the curriculum is not being covered. That is an insult to the hardworking teachers who are getting up every day to provide the best education to the kids in their classroom. Teachers go through a lot. I would request the member for Roe to look at the *Hansard* and at his statements that the standards are dropping and the curriculum is not being covered. Please do not ever make those statements in this place again, because that is the biggest insult that could be thrown at our hardworking teachers.

What are we trying to do here? There is a workforce shortage in Western Australia. There is a workforce shortage in Australia. There is a workforce shortage globally. We are trying to find the balance, find solutions and move forward. When this state has 700 vacancies for teachers and 100 vacancies for principals, the member for Roe is creating the big scare that if people choose to join the Western Australian education system, they might be under pressure. Is that the fear that he is trying to create? I would instead have welcomed the member making some suggestions about how we might get over that problem.

I once again invite the member for Roe to please visit Riverton and see the best performing schools in my electorate.

Ms M.J. Davies: What about coming to my electorate?

Dr J. KRISHNAN: I will definitely come to the member's electorate. If she gives me an invitation, I will be happy to come there. It will be a great visit for me. I am looking forward to that.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: Let us do that! The member will come to my electorate and I will come to his electorate, and we will visit the schools together.

I turn now to the comments of the member for Vasse. She said that the lack of support for teachers is creating fear in people who are contemplating a teaching career. I have been a medical educator. A lot of the people in this chamber have had a previous career as a teacher. They are proud of that. When there is a need for more people to be invited to join the teaching profession and create the best next generation of students, it is not right to create fear for people.

The member for Vasse talked about schools in the south west of this state. To pick certain schools and generalise that across the entire state is definitely not acceptable. The member for Vasse repeatedly spoke about the ceiling and roof in a particular school. The member for Southern River interjected to say that the government is working on having that roof fixed. The member went on and on about that. I am not saying that a class should be conducted if the roof is hanging down, but, at the same time, I also cannot guarantee that no roof anywhere will ever be damaged. When problems arise, we have to fix them. I want to tell the member for Vasse that what I have taught students, as a medical educator, is that they should fix the leaking roof rather than continue to mop the floor. I have taught them that rather than continue to treat the symptoms, they should stop the leak in the roof—the disease. They should use their power to educate the next generation.

I encourage the member for Vasse to come on board and support and speak positively about the education system, instead of making comments like the canteen and the assembly area at certain schools are unfit for use and scaring parents into cancelling the admission of their children into those schools. To even mention those schools is not really the right thing to do. Unlike the opposition, I appreciate some good inputs from the opposition. The member for Vasse raised the issue of suicide prevention in schoolchildren. I was touched by that. It was an eye-opener for me to dig into the data and the detail of what is happening. I would like to consult with my colleagues and my friends to get more input into how we can make things better. I am happy to join hands with the member for Vasse in advocating for something like that to make things better for the kids.

Finally, I want to speak about the member for North West Central. I know she is new; she is doing her best, but I was very disappointed —

Ms M.J. Davies: Don't be condescending. There is a pattern of that happening in this house.

Mr D.R. Michael: You know that's not right, Mia.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: I am making the right comments in the right part. I am also new to politics. I am still a baby. I am still learning. I accept that.

Ms M.J. Davies: Don't follow the lead of your colleagues.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: What I am trying to say is that the member for North West Central was made shadow Minister for Tourism but she was speaking about crime. That confused me. As shadow Minister for Tourism, shouldn't she be working to promote tourism, not speaking against tourism?

The member for North West Central mentioned eight-year-old kids having been to school for only three days. I put the question back to the member: how many eight-year-old kids in Western Australia have only been to school for three days? There are nine instances. I do not intend to ignore even a single child. In the beginning of my contribution, I made it very clear that education is close to my heart. I strongly believe that it is the one asset that nobody can take away from me, and every child deserves to have the best. Picking one example, generalising it and demotivating the entire teaching population—teachers who are working hard to deliver the best—is not what was expected of the opposition.

The member for North West Central spoke about dysfunctional families. I do not deny they exist, but they need support to be functional. They need support to provide their kids with the best. Global events are significantly impacting the economic situation of every citizen. In these circumstances, preparing the next generation with ongoing support and encouragement is what we should be doing, collectively, rather than picking examples, one here and one there, and playing politics with them.

Before I close, I will make a quick few comments. I have already mentioned that I am very fortunate to represent an electorate with the best schools in the state. People move to my electorate to provide their kids with the best education. In fact, they are prepared to pay more for the properties they buy to gain admission to those schools. Making generalised statements about standards and curricula is no good for the morale of teachers, who are working hard to produce the next generation. Please respect our education department and our teachers. They are working really hard and doing an excellent job.

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [6.13 pm]: I absolutely disagree with this motion. I disagree that our education system is somehow in a complete mess and that there are systemic issues. There absolutely are challenges, no doubt, and I will discuss how we are addressing some of them, but I think it is important to draw a contrast by briefly looking at the track record of the Liberal–National coalition under Colin Barnett. I say that not to deflect from the issues that exist now, in 2022, but to point out what a real mess looks like.

Who can forget, back in 2013, the then Liberal–National government sacking 500 education assistants? Who can forget Hon Peter Collier and then Premier Colin Barnett admitting that they were thinking of closing some of Perth’s major high schools? Who can forget education staff rallying against short-sighted and damaging cuts and Premier Barnett calling it a political stunt in the lead-up to the federal election? The union said it was a ridiculous accusation, and the former Premier then spun around and said that Western Australian principals should lighten up. That is what real mess and real systemic issues look like. Of course, there are challenges. As the member for Roe mentioned, we have many, many years of built-up issues in education.

Last week, I met with members of the State School Teachers’ Union of WA from my electorate, and I listened to their very real concerns and observations—some qualitative and some anecdotal—about their experience in the teaching profession. The representatives I spoke to had a number of concerns, including concern about the morale amongst teachers, which they said was largely due to many teachers leaving the profession, either retiring early or just choosing to leave. They spoke of their concerns about class sizes and pointed to classes having to collapse because of the number of teachers away due to COVID or other illnesses over winter. They also spoke about the compliance issues and the increase in paperwork going through the roof. As a former teacher, I cannot stand hearing people say that teaching is a nine-to-three job. The administrative part of the job takes up a huge amount of time, and that is on top of lesson planning and report writing. These union representatives raised very valid and legitimate concerns.

As we know, we are in the midst of a global pandemic. COVID is still here with us. In fact, cases are increasing on a daily basis. There is no doubt that living in a global pandemic these past few years has presented huge challenges for many industries, particularly schools. There has been a lot of undue stress on teachers, admin staff and students, whether through having to adapt to online learning during our short lockdown or, more recently, in the past year, having numerous teachers away due to COVID isolation and teachers having to share classes and take on more students.

I was still teaching at the very start of the pandemic. I certainly found it challenging to transition to online learning, but I was in a school that was very much prepared for that and had all the resources at hand. I understand how difficult it must have been for schools that did not have quite the same resources.

The member for Roe seems to really dislike the Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews. He made a comment about the sheer amount of time that Victoria was in lockdown. I think it is worth reminding him that it was not just Victoria but countries all over the world. Schools were shut. Teachers were working from home. Students did not get to see their classmates and teachers for months and months on end. Here in WA, due to good COVID management, our schools had at most a month’s worth of lockdowns. Nonetheless, in the past year, after opening our borders, we have felt the impacts of Omicron, as have other countries around the world, and we are starting to experience teacher shortages. We hear the term “COVID hangover”, which continues to affect the motivation and engagement of students and staff and cause them anxiety. It has been challenging, and some teachers are choosing to leave the profession.

I want to talk about some of the ways that the state and federal governments are attempting to deal with teacher recruitment and retention and tackle the fact that this is an ongoing pandemic and that we might face future crises that we need to be prepared for. Given that I just mentioned I had a meeting last week with the State School Teachers’ Union of WA, I wanted to touch on what will happen this December. Teachers will receive their agreed pay rise, backdated to 6 December 2021. Some of the conditions that were decided in that agreement include an additional school development day dedicated to curriculum support; bringing in a modern and flexible personal leave entitlement system; additional flexibility for time off based on additional hours worked; leave for principals; and a reduction of red tape for performance management and staff transfer agreements.

We have also heard this evening about the announcement just three days ago by the Minister for Education and Training to boost the number of teachers in rural and remote areas. We have seen a \$12.4 million boost to address some of the shortages in the key schools that struggle to retain teachers. We now have a federal Labor government, and after a decade of inaction by the previous government, federal Labor has wasted no time addressing some of the skills shortages in not only the teaching profession, but also all industries. Earlier this month, we heard from the federal Minister for Education, Jason Clare, who released the *Draft national teacher workforce action plan*. This is a \$328 million plan to attract, train, retrain and retain teachers. Yes, this was a federal government initiative, but the federal government worked very closely with the states and territories, union representatives, principal representatives and university representatives to develop the plan. The Anthony Albanese government has promised 4 036 new higher education places, which will boost the education system. I will not read all the many other federal government commitments because we are here today to talk about Western Australia.

I want to touch on my own electorate of Hillarys in particular and the fact that in the last year we have received record spending on school infrastructure. The electorate of Hillarys was previously a Liberal held seat for over 30 years. On the topic of ceilings, which has come up a few times tonight, the ceiling at Hillarys Primary School was sagging and in fact caved in two years ago. The school received a \$20.8 million commitment to rebuild the school. The high school, which caters for my electorate but is just outside of it in Duncraig, has received over \$32 million to redevelop the school to provide more classrooms and better infrastructure such as a library and staffroom. Another local primary school, Springfield Primary School, is also getting a full rebuild worth over \$15 million. This government is addressing some of these schools, which are ageing and in need of redevelopment. Some members this evening were a little dismissive about receiving only equipment for science labs, for example, but this government is putting education first. It is looking at the importance of STEM subjects and pouring money into schools across the state for STEM and for maintenance.

Other state government commitments include a \$42.2 million investment to employ an additional 100 FTE school psychologists in public schools. That came up in my meeting with union representatives. I also regularly meet with teachers in my electorate and my friends from when I was teaching, and they discuss the impact of COVID and the need to address students' mental health in our schools. I think we are a government that is starting to look at that. I will leave the rest of the time for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Training to go into much greater depth on these excellent commitments that the McGowan government has put forth.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.25 pm]: I am very happy to rise to address this private members' business motion. I would like to thank the member for Roe for the motion, but I will disagree generally with the intent. I assume the member is not seeking to amend the motion. The member acknowledged a number of things and said some very nice things about the Minister for Education and Training and the Premier. Overall, however, I am disappointed that he continues to attack our schools. He included some nice caveats about the good work the schools, principals, directors and staff are doing, but there was also a subtle undercurrent attacking the schools. I will not do that in my contribution today and the members for Riverton and Hillarys have not done that in their contributions either. Again, I think it is important to not talk down our schools.

The member for Roe started off with an Einstein comment about repeating the same issues. With respect, this is about the third version of a similar speech he has given. He has repeated the speech and I have given the same response several times on a number of issues. Those matters remain on record. I will go on to provide further detail. The member acknowledged that the Minister for Education and Training and the Premier had visited schools in his electorate in 2021 and 2022, but then the member attacked them for doing that. The member subtly said that we do these things only in election years. Obviously, we were not in an election cycle when the Premier visited post-election in 2021 and post the federal election in 2022.

I also have to correct the comment he made about the attraction and retention initiative. It was not 43 schools; it was 48 schools. It is important to acknowledge that regional communities and families need support and that they should be given that support because teaching in a regional community is fantastic. I have told members many times that my sister taught in Kununurra for many years. Teaching is very important and teachers and families who make those decisions should be supported.

Extending into some of the member for Vasse's contribution during a grievance, I am happy that the member is working very closely with Hon Jackie Jarvis, the member's other local member of Parliament, in the absence of the time when the former member for Vasse was the Treasurer and held the purse strings. I confirm that Cowaramup Primary School was very deservedly awarded a \$40 000 science grant and recently received \$15 000 for plaster glass ceilings and \$75 000 as part of the maintenance blitz. Overall, since we came to government it has received \$725 000 in maintenance, in addition to the \$60 000 for the roof. It is very important for that work to be done over the summer. I acknowledge that under the former government, \$2.2 million was spent on infrastructure at Vasse Primary School, \$2.1 million of which was allocated by the federal Labor government. That was a key time when a by-election was held after the previous member for Vasse Troy Buswell resigned and the current member for Vasse was made government Whip, which is a very important and powerful role.

I would like to acknowledge the amazing role that all our educators have played over the last couple of years. We have been dealing with COVID and other pressures for a number of years, but for the first six months of this year, and even now, we are seeing a number of staff absences. We have to stand up and applaud every single educator in every public and private and regional and metropolitan school. Whether they are an educator, an administrator, a cleaner or an education assistant, every single person has played a role, including the families, in carrying our schools. Every single school stepped up to the challenge, and that is something we should all be very proud of. As I said, shadow Minister for Education and Training, we should celebrate schools and not attack them. Some amazing people have made our schools great places to learn.

I would like to mention a couple of points that were raised about teacher supply. Twelve months ago, the National-Liberal opposition—sorry, that is pronounced “the Hon Nick Goiran National-Liberal opposition”—was attacking vaccination policies and saying we were not going to have enough teachers for the start of the 2022 school year. Members opposite said a number of things that did not turn out to be true. At the start of this year, we

had teachers in front of every class. That was not an easy thing to do in the circumstances. Twelve months ago, there was heavy criticism and people said that the government would not meet a number of those deadlines, but I can confirm that teachers were in front of each class. The member for Central Wheatbelt, the Leader of the Opposition, called it an education crisis. Nick Goiran, the real leader of the Liberal Party, said there was an extreme risk there would not be a teacher at the front of every class. The member for Roe condemned —

... the government's lack of planning and management of the state education system resulting in staff shortages and unsafe conditions for staff and students.

The member for Roe said that we had our heads in the sand. That is not true. Again, we continue to face the challenges we are presented with. All of our staff, all of Western Australia, did the right thing and got themselves vaccinated, resulting in a fantastic scenario in which we were able to minimise the impact of COVID. It was not an easy process. Again, we commend people for that.

Last year and this year as well, the member for Roe wrote opinion pieces in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and issued media statements undermining our vaccination drive and the work that school communities across the state were doing. I think Nick Goiran has been harvesting quite a lot of email and electronic data on vaccination. There were a lot of Facebook promotions. The member was obviously under instructions to do certain things. Those communications had quite a significant effect when we were trying to have a consistent message about where we were going. I think the member for Roe acknowledged in a contribution at the start of this year that the government has done the right thing, but at the end of last year he said —

All I want is a teacher in front of every classroom; that is what every student and every family wants.

It turns out that there was a teacher in front of every class on 31 January, and 447 000 students went to school and had a great start to the year. We had one of the highest attendance rates when COVID entered the community not only across the nation, but also around the world. We needed 2 500 teachers through that churn. With pools and initiatives, we got 3 000. The Department of Education is continuously monitoring the teacher workforce supply for next year. We are in another interesting promotional period, with a number of opportunities in the market. The department is working directly and collaboratively with all our universities here and in the eastern states to maintain teacher workforce supply to meet that anticipated demand. We have significantly boosted the casual teacher supply by enabling final-year pre-service teachers to work under limited registration in public schools. I think that is something the member for Roe criticised earlier; is that correct? I think he said that limited registration was a bad pathway.

I spoke about the attraction and retention initiative. Importantly, teachers in rural and remote schools will receive incentive payments of \$20 000 per annum at schools identified as a remote teaching service and over \$13 000 at the country teaching program schools. And there is the \$12.4 million investment in the one-off attraction and retention initiative. These initiatives are important.

The Minister for Education and Training will continue to meet with her colleagues and other skills ministers in other jurisdictions. Australian education ministers are working on the *Teacher workforce action plan*. I believe more detail on that will come out in December.

At this point, we do not have a full picture of the exact requirements for each of the 860-plus schools for day one next year. We only know that information exactly just before school starts, but that does not mean we are not preparing or communicating with our colleagues. The required number of teachers will continue to change. We know that about 1 000 teachers are coming out of universities and we have 1 500 teachers in various pools who will be available to teach. Schools with vacancies are recruiting. They are talking about the roles and leadership positions, and working out the FTEs and student numbers now.

I will refer to some comments made on Government Regional Officers' Housing. The government greatly acknowledges the efforts of people committed to teaching working in regional and remote locations. We will always ensure that regional communities have access to critical state government workers, such as teachers and police officers. That is essential. The Department of Education arranges the best possible housing for teachers and school staff in regional and remote locations where accommodation is sometimes scarce.

I can confirm that at 31 October this year, the department had approximately 2 150 houses that were being used to house employees who work in schools in rural, regional and remote towns and communities. The government has frozen rent increases in the last two years, so GROH rent has not increased as rents normally do in the Perth metropolitan area. We have approved and committed \$200 million to expand this state's GROH stock across regional Western Australia over four years. The Department of Communities delivers the GROH program, providing housing to government workers in certain regional areas to ensure that critical services such as education and law enforcement can be delivered.

I can also confirm that at 31 October, 34 new construction projects are progressing across Western Australia, and there is planning for another 19 properties. It is quite a unique and difficult thing to do in a heated market with significant supply chain and other shortages affecting Australia and the world. We are investing \$200 million in

the GROH program across the state. We are investing in spot purchases and new builds, refurbishing properties, bringing stock back online and undertaking maintenance to ensure that GROH properties are of a high standard. Ensuring that GROH stock is looked after is key to ensuring properties stay in the system longer.

We are also investing \$12.8 million to conduct detailed building assessments on more than 10 000 ageing GROH properties. We are exploring all options to fast-track the delivery of GROH properties where they are needed, including modular and prefabricated builds, and leasing opportunities and partnerships. I have to commend Minister John Carey for leading a cross-agency approach to identify under-utilised GROH properties, making sure that we provide the best opportunities for utilising existing stock so that each department's allocation is correct for its staff members. There are changes to policy settings to allow different departments, different silos, to transfer those assets. The minister has also asked the Department of Communities to assess all vacant properties, including long-term vacant GROH properties, that are no longer needed by the agency. This means we can make better use of under-utilised government-owned housing and ensure there is maximum efficiency in the system. Of course, we will continue to work with the Department of Communities to source suitable accommodation.

I would like to mention Esperance Senior High School because the member for Roe raised issues about it. Again, I commend all the staff, the families and the community around Esperance Senior High School. The member has asked a number of questions about the school, and they have always been responded to. We have a number of amazing schools across Western Australia—over 800—that are a variety of ages. Almost 50 per cent of schools are older than 50 years, including the school I taught at, Esperance and a number of others. We will continue to face those challenges because the schools are utilised and they are loved. We are investing heavily in upgrading ageing schools to ensure they are fit for purpose and can deliver a modern curriculum. The 2022–23 budget includes funding to upgrade STEM and science labs in secondary schools, including \$1.5 million for Esperance Senior High School, which, quite frankly, a lot of us are sick of the member for Roe attacking. That is a great investment in the school. The community deserves modern, appropriate facilities. Esperance Senior High School opened in 1966 and has a combination of older and more recently constructed buildings. When the minister and the Premier visited the school, the member for Roe attacked and said it was an inappropriate stunt. Did Premier Barnett ever visit Esperance Senior High?

Mr P.J. Rundle: I'd have to check up on that.

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member might need to check up on that!

We have brought into question the member for Roe's reading and comprehension abilities. In response to one of the questions the member asked about schools, according to the uncorrected *Hansard*, the Minister for Education and Training answered —

The Department of Education does not have any records of a financial contribution from the state government that is directly related to these studies, reports or plans.

That does not mean “I don't know” or “We don't know”; rather, that is the advice from the Department of Education that it did not fund the business cases. I want to clarify that in *Hansard* for the number of communities that are interested in that issue.

We have spent \$13 million delivering upgrades and maintenance to buildings across the Esperance Senior High School site and almost \$2 million in upgrades through the maintenance blitz program. These are good investments that need to be acknowledged. Great work has been done at that school and we need to stop attacking the school and its students about their facilities.

We are also investing in a number of regional schools, and we will not stop. As the member for Roe knows, Labor is the party of regional representation and regional education. We are investing \$4.4 million to build a new STEM lab at Broome Senior High School, \$8.5 million at Albany Senior High School, \$10 million at Halls Creek District High School, \$3 million for new classrooms at South Sunbury Education Support Centre and \$31 million for a new facility and classroom block and refurbishments at Karratha Senior High School. I could go on. We are building and upgrading STEM labs at 46 regional secondary and district high schools, five of which are in the member for Roe's electorate.

The government is committed to regional education and will continue to invest in schools no matter where they are located. Esperance Senior High School can initiate a business case process to identify major upgrades if it chooses. It is not uncommon for public schools to initiate their own business case process or develop a feasibility study when requesting major upgrades such as this. The department is in contact with the school regarding this process.

The member for Roe is always very keen to raise issues that affect his electorate, but we are dealing with the whole state. As the shadow Minister for Education and Training, it is important that the member for Roe acknowledge all the schools across the state, not just those in his electorate. The Roe electoral boundaries are very important, and it is important that the member for Roe agitates as the local member, but in taking on the very important bestowed mantle of shadow minister, it is very important that he does not lose sight of the larger picture of what is happening in education. It is not only in the member for Roe's electorate that education happens.

There was discussion about some school tours. I think the member said he would visit some Riverton schools and bits and pieces. I like the cabinet secretary's comments, "It's always good when we can help National Party members get out of the city and visit their communities." I commend the recommendation made by the member for Riverton.

Back to the motion at hand and the chaos, confusion and stress in schools that the member spoke about. We have to commend the incredible work done by our educators. Each year of COVID—we are into our third year of COVID depending on how one calculates the years—has presented different challenges. This year when COVID was particularly rampant within our community, school communities stood up. Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic has meant, as the member for Riverton said, very few days of lockdown and online learning. My daughters did not lose school days like students around the world and in Victorian and New South Wales. They have had a very different experience. In the last year especially, COVID has impacted almost every element of our lives, and schools have often been one of the major places where that changed significantly.

When people talk about the ripple effects that come from COVID, such as anxiety and lost and changed opportunities, Western Australian schools remained open, and for that the state government should be congratulated. We were criticised about closing the borders and vaccinations and principals were criticised by the Liberal–National–Goiran alliance opposition for doing their jobs and communicating what they needed to communicate. Elsewhere in Australia, students were sent home from school and undertook remote learning. It was a very different scenario. Here, we kept schools open, which the health advice supported. We navigated very high caseloads, the impact on staff numbers and student attendance. It was very challenging for a number of schools to have whole-of-staff meetings, school assemblies and school balls. We managed and we did it very, very well.

There is value in face-to-face learning, and I extend this to those doing vocational education and training, certificates and apprenticeships. While the rest of the world was in lockdown, a number of Western Australians completed certificates, qualifications, the Western Australian Certificate of Education and other things. If we look at the hospitality environment, the face-to-face practical learning that took place here in Western Australia places an entire generation of young people streets ahead for their entire lives. On behalf of the McGowan government and Minister Ellery, I acknowledge all those who were part of that.

The member for Roe may also be interested to know that in 2020, we had the highest Western Australian Certificate of Education achievement rate since the requirement changed in 2016, with 81.7 per cent of full-time public school students, or 11 829, achieving a WACE. In 2021, we had the second-highest WACE achievement rate of the last five years, with 81.1 per cent of full-time public school students achieving their WACE. Achieving the WACE sets students up to pursue a number of post-school pathways. The achievement of a WACE is no small or simple thing given the number of grade, attendance and online literacy and numeracy assessment requirements—again, well done. It speaks to the quality of our teachers, educators, schools and families.

We have prioritised creating culturally responsive schools that celebrate and share Aboriginal cultures and languages. The member for Roe would also be aware that we are rolling out a number of different commitments that were made at the last election, including student mental health and wellbeing initiatives. That includes an additional 100 FTE school psychologists, which is a fantastic achievement, as we discussed in estimates. The initiative will provide more assistance for the number of students who are presenting with mental health issues. In 2022, we welcomed 87 new psychologists to the workforce, with 41 of those in regional areas. In addition, \$38.5 million has been allocated to expand the alternative learning settings to every education region in the state. The majority of ALSs are up and running. We have spent \$1.23 million to expand the Respectful Relationships program to prevent family and domestic violence and \$21.8 million to enable public schools to purchase chaplaincy services if they choose to do so. If we were not funding these things, the member for Roe would be criticising the government for not doing so. The silence that comes from the opposition on certain education matters and issues speaks volumes; the opposition agrees that they are good initiatives, promised and delivered by this government.

I turn to vocational education and training in schools. We provided funding for a range of new initiatives to significantly expand and enhance career education. There are career practitioners in the member for Roe's schools; indeed, Esperance Senior High School and Katanning Senior High School have been allocated extra FTE for career practitioners. Member for Central Wheatbelt, Northam Senior High School and, member for Vasse, Busselton Senior High School and Cape Naturaliste College—these are good investments in people who will assist young people to find and source their careers.

We are boosting early engagement in VET with new toolkits for years 8 and 9 students in public and non-government schools to provide a real insight into the world of work and additional career information has been made available to parents and guardians. We are supporting industry placements for teachers' professional development and strengthening industry partnerships with schools and TAFEs. We have introduced a new support scheme for financial assistance and mentoring for school-based apprenticeships and trainees in need in the regions and metropolitan areas. We have allocated funding to expand VET delivered to secondary students with 9 000 additional places by 2024 to provide more students with the opportunity to study VET courses. I could not discuss this motion without saying that I have not seen this level of investment in infrastructure in education in my time, and it will continue and be delivered.

There is a \$87.6 million package to upgrade and build new science, technology, engineering and mathematics classrooms in schools and the primary school science program, which is delivering science equipment grants to 280 public schools. Already, 135 schools—again in the electorates of members opposite—have had classrooms transformed into science labs. There was criticism from the member for Vasse that they had to wheel the facilities, but they are available to our young people. This builds on our promise made in 2017 to deliver those science labs in your schools, my schools and all our schools. The clean energy technology fund provides schools with the opportunity to apply for funding to install and deliver clean energy solutions at their schools. Already, 180 schools will receive solar panels through the program, and we are investing heavily in schools to ensure they can deliver a twenty-first century education for their students.

There are more commitments. I think I am going to run out of time. I will not seek that we extend beyond 7.00 pm, but there are some fantastic initiatives that the members of the opposition and Hon Nick Goiran need to understand.

In the state budget this year, we increased funding for students with disabilities and additional learning needs. There is \$39 million over four years to expand the educational adjustment allocation. That makes a huge difference in the dollars that are available to principals when they spread the playdough and make key funding and human resource and resource allocations for students who need it. There is \$2.5 million over five years to develop literacy skills of all students and additional support for teachers so that they can give their students the help that they need. The WA curriculum has been updated to include phonics. There is \$18.2 million for specialist learning programs. Eight new schools have been announced with specialist learning programs for students with autism spectrum disorder.

We discussed, member for Roe, the problems and issues that arise. We discussed the Public Sector Management Act. I know that he has been briefed several times, and it is not appropriate to discuss in the chamber the challenges. I think earlier in his speech the member spoke about reforming the Public Sector Management Act so that we can more easily intervene in schools. I would not recommend going down that path. The Department of Education must act independently of government. I appreciate that the member will continue to give his personal views about hiring and firing. I do not know whether he has a hit list or a target list. I think he should support his principals in his schools. It is not his role or my role to advocate for who should be a principal, a teacher or a staff member.

Again, I thank all the teachers and school leaders, P&C board members, volunteers, school cleaners and every single person who makes our school communities; the crosswalk guards are wonderful people but often forgotten.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Margaret Adams was at the member's school. John Howard was at my school. His name was John Howard, but I still loved him. He was a lovely fellow.

To package up a number of the things because we have had a number of issues with understanding some of the challenges that are available, I present to the opposition the ABCs of a number of different things to make it a bit easier for members.

“A” is for the air purifiers that were provided to schools. That made a difference earlier this year. A number of unsung highlights and hits from the Department of Education were never given the proper credit, but they are good wins in our community. Air purifiers in schools were well utilised and well distributed; every school was appreciative. We were having a conversation earlier this year about ventilators and air purifiers. They have been delivered and funded. Well done and thank you to all those in procurement who made it possible. The alternative learning settings is another A. “B” is for Better Beginnings in the Kimberley and the Pilbara, which are important regional communities. “C” is for COVID management, creative school programs, chaplains, career practitioners and consent education, which is very, very important thing for our young people to incorporate going forward. “D” is for district high schools, district high school STEM labs in the electorates of members opposite and in my electorate, and direct to market, which allows P&Cs and schools to allocate what they would like. “E” is for education assistants. Education assistants were cut from schools under the Barnett government but returned under the government under Minister Ellery. “E” is for Esperance Senior High School STEM classrooms and e-cigarettes.

We are finally giving some clear guidelines on e-cigarettes. I note the issue of e-cigarettes is not always raised by the members opposite. I know that the Labor Party does not take money from tobacco companies. I think these guys still do, so I notice there have not been too many funds in that regard.

Ms M.J. Davies: Do not mislead Parliament.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am happy to clarify. I am saying that the alliance partners —

Several members interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: “E” is for e-cigarettes and the tobacco companies that continue to fund the Liberal Party. If they stopped, I would support that. “F” is for flying squad and free period products in schools. “G” is for Government Regional Officers' Housing and expanding GROH stock. “H” is for the health advice that was ignored by the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA. “H” is also for the hotlines set up by the minister to talk to students

and principals. That was criticised by the shadow Minister for Education and Training. “I” is for international students for schools and TAFE and the infrastructure program. “J” is for the jobs and skills centres that the member for Cottesloe criticised in question time today when we were talking about Aboriginal career advisers working in these centres. “K” is for Karratha skills summit, which was a wonderful opportunity to discuss all the important parts. “L” is for living—cost of living. “M” is for masks, maintenance blitz and Moora Residential College—one of the dodgy things these guys did before we changed government. The member for Vasse spoke about funding Vasse’s Cowaramup Primary School in the dying days of the Barnett government.

“M” is for Metronet, which is going to help a lot of students get around. “M” is for Minister Ellery and mobile phone ban. “N” is for new energy technology fund. A big improvement to schools was the resignation of the former member for North West Central. That has certainly improved a number of schools. “O” is for outdoor education advisory group and outer metropolitan schools. “P” is for primary school science labs, the Premier’s Reading Challenge and school psychologists. For some members of the opposition, that is a silent P; it is pronounced “sychologist”. “R” is for the Respectful Relationships program expansion. “S” is for STEM laboratories and student councils. “T” is for Target 120, the TAFE fee freeze and the 10-point plan. “V” is for violence in schools. “U” is for undoing the Liberal tax on schools. “V” is for ventilators and vaccinations. “W” is for wellbeing. “X” is for Exmouth District High School—that is an E, not an X.

I would like to close on a couple of matters and acknowledge that the Liberal–National alliance opposition has moved a motion today to say that there is chaos within our schools. It has asked us to take responsibility for the mess of Western Australia’s education system. Our education system is in the strongest state it has been for a long time. I taught for many years when the Barnett government was in—under Minister for Education Liz Constable, Ministers for Training and Workforce Development Terry Redman and Peter Collier, and Minister for Education Peter Collier—when schools were savaged and regional schools were not looked after.

Ms M.J. Davies: Rubbish! There was investment in schools across Western Australia.

Mr T.J. HEALY: When there were opportunities to look after regional schools, you did not stand up. In your time in government, you did not. I taught within a school that had funding promises made and withdrawn. I taught within schools. We spoke about the education caucus that sits in this chamber. A number of members have long-term experience—far more than me. The member for Collie–Preston —

Ms J.L. Hanns: Colin Barnett was going to fund the school upgrades and withdrew the commitment.

Mr T.J. HEALY: A litany of urban and regional schools were promised infrastructure upgrades, supports, additional educational assistants and things that never came to be.

One thing I have not had the chance to properly explain is the TAFE fee freeze. In my contribution so far, I have not mentioned the 500 per cent increase in TAFE fees that hurt our young people. It meant that young people did not go to TAFE and did not complete certificate qualifications. We talk about a skills crisis and opportunities missed when the former government did this. The former government spent too much money on aspects that were not there.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr T.J. HEALY: It promised to build new infrastructure upgrades when it had no money to do it. The former government raised TAFE fees and hurt young people.

I congratulate Minister Ellery and Mark McGowan.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
