



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2022

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 19 May 2022

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) took the chair at 10.00 am, read prayers and acknowledged country.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNIFORM LEGISLATION AND STATUTES REVIEW

Membership Change — Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) [10.02 am]: Members, I have received some correspondence —

Dear President

I wish to advise you of my resignation from the Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review Committee, effective immediately.

Yoursself faithfully

Hon Matthew Swinbourn

Member for the East Metropolitan Region.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I know it is “happy Thursday” but it is a little early.

HARDWOOD HARVESTING BAN

Petition

HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural) [10.02 am]: I present a petition containing 361 signatures couched in the following terms —

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

Western Australia’s native forest harvesting is sustainable and regenerative. A small amount of the re-growth hardwood forest is harvested each year and it is re-grown for future harvesting. The ban came without any consultation with the forestry industry who are now facing a very uncertain future. Banning hardwood harvesting in WA will cause widespread job losses and put the future of forestry towns in regional WA in jeopardy.

There is already a shortage of hardwood in WA that will only worsen if the ban goes forward. As the Eastern States do not have supply, WA will be forced to import hardwoods from countries that do not have the same ethical and sustainable practices that are in place here. This will result in a worse environmental impact.

We therefore ask the Legislative Council to oppose the ban on native logging due to the significant negative effects it will have on the environment and community that far outweigh any positive impact it may have.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 1289.]

PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION DAY

Statement by Minister for Education and Training

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Minister for Education and Training) [10.04 am]: Tomorrow we will celebrate Parents and Citizens Day. Parents and citizens associations bring school communities together to provide a forum for parents and valuable practical assistance to public schools. This is the fourth annual P&C Day celebration initiated by the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations and supported by the McGowan government. P&C Day is a great way to acknowledge and thank the many volunteers who give their time to support their school, staff and students. They do a fantastic job at bringing school communities together, often going above and beyond what is required or expected; that is because they are committed. The partnership between parents and schools has traditionally been a cornerstone of a strong public education system. Research shows that children do better when schools and parents work together. They are more engaged in school work, attend more regularly and have improved social skills. No doubt the COVID pandemic has brought many challenges to all of us, but these have been highlighted more so in our schools. My sincere thanks to the many volunteers who represent the P&C associations in our public schools and who have supported school leaders and staff through a difficult two years and certainly a very difficult term 1 this year. I hope members will take the time tomorrow to pass on their thanks to those P&Cs in their electorates.

PAPER TABLED

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

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Thirty-seventh Report — Delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia: Critical condition — Tabling

HON PIERRE YANG (North Metropolitan) [10.05 am]: I am directed to present for tabling the thirty-seventh report of the Standing Committee on Public Administration titled *Delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia: Critical condition*.

[See paper [1290](#).]

Hon PIERRE YANG: The report I have just tabled advises the house of the committee's findings and recommendations following its self-initiated inquiry into the delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia. Unlike many other jurisdictions in Australia, the majority of ambulance services in Western Australia are contracted to private organisations. St John Ambulance is the main provider of emergency ambulance services in metropolitan and regional WA. Non-emergency inter-hospital transport services are shared between St John Ambulance WA, Wilson Medic One and National Patient Transport. The WA Country Health Service provides ambulance services in Derby, Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing through the Kimberley Ambulance Service.

The inquiry revealed emergency ambulance services in metropolitan Perth are under significant strain. In 2020–21, St John Ambulance WA was unable to achieve its contractual target response times for emergency calls. The committee has made a number of recommendations that aim to address this. The WA government should review the implementation of these recommendations within the next five years and consider alternative emergency ambulance service providers or a state-run service if service delivery does not improve.

In relation to the delivery of ambulance services in regional areas, the committee recommends that the Department of Health investigate extending the current service delivery model under which the majority of work is performed by volunteers with a hybrid model whereby more career paramedics are deployed to work alongside volunteers.

The committee has also made a number of recommendations in relation to the service delivery of non-emergency inter-hospital patient transfer including: establishing a centralised centre to improve coordination of inter-hospital transfers; expanding the operational hours of inter-hospital transfers to allow all service providers to perform this work 24 hours a day; and removing St John Ambulance WA's right of first refusal to perform inter-hospital patient transfer in regional areas.

The committee heard evidence that workplace culture is a significant issue at St John Ambulance WA. The committee found that frontline staff have a lack of trust in senior management at St John Ambulance WA. The committee has recommended the Department of Health require St John Ambulance WA to comprehensively re-evaluate its organisational and workplace structure and processes.

The committee found Western Australia's largest remote Aboriginal community, Bidyadanga regional community, does not have guaranteed access to emergency ambulance transport through St John Ambulance WA. The committee has recommended the Department of Health develop a strategy to ensure a reliable ambulance service is available in Bidyadanga regional community; the Department of Health and WACHS identify remote Aboriginal communities that do not have access to an ambulance service and investigate the adequacy of existing emergency ambulance services; and the Department of Health develop strategies to enhance access to ambulance services to any communities identified.

Ambulance services are critical to the wellbeing of the people of Western Australia. The efficient and adequate operation of these services is an essential part of health service delivery in Western Australia. The committee would like to extend its appreciation to those who contributed to the inquiry. The committee is particularly grateful for the contributions of the many frontline workers who shared their knowledge and experience with the committee.

I commend the report to the house.

CITY OF WANNEROO FENCING LOCAL LAW 2021 — DISALLOWANCE

Notice of Motion

Notice of motion given by **Hon Lorna Harper**.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNIFORM LEGISLATION AND STATUTES REVIEW

Appointment of Member — Motion

On motion without notice by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That Hon Dr Sally Talbot be appointed as a member of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK*Motion*

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.11 am] — without notice:
I move —

That this house —

- (a) notes that this week is National Volunteer Week; and
- (b) acknowledges and thanks volunteers for the contribution they make in our communities.

Obviously, it is National Volunteer Week. Moments ago we heard from the Leader of the House; Minister for Education and Training that tomorrow is P&C Day. Of course, our parents and citizens associations are also made up of many wonderful volunteers who do a great deal for our schools and kids.

I want to take the opportunity today to not just acknowledge National Volunteer Week, but also talk about some of the trends, I guess, and some of the things that are emerging in volunteer land and reflect on the contribution that volunteers make to our communities right across Western Australia. Earlier this week, Volunteering Australia put out a media release that refers to this year's theme for volunteering—Better Together. On its website, Volunteering Australia notes —

... volunteering brings people together; it builds communities and creates a better society for everyone.

Its media statement released on 18 May states —

“This year's National Volunteer Week theme is ‘better together’. Our communities have taken a big hit in recent times and yet volunteers are always there when we need them. Volunteers across the country have stepped up to help their communities through bushfires, floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic in a most practical demonstration of Australian community spirit. Volunteers contribute significantly across crisis prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery in many key roles.

“The aftermath and the impact of disasters are felt long after an event has taken place. Volunteers provide support to those affected by crises, including in mental health and suicide prevention services, which typically experience a surge in demand during and after disasters,” ...

Mental health and suicide prevention services are especially critical during major emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Lifeline engages 10,000 volunteers across Australia. In 2018, these volunteers answered 739,481 calls and initiated 5,840 emergency interventions for Australians in need of crisis support.

I wanted to start my contribution today by outlining some of the statistics around volunteering. It was not that easy to find up-to-date statistics. Some of those statistics have not been updated for many years. Earlier this year, Volunteering Australia put out a fact sheet entitled “Key volunteering statistics: February 2022”. It started out by obviously defining what volunteering means. Its definition of volunteering is “time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain”. That is how Volunteering Australia defines volunteering. That is what it has assessed the level of volunteering and other statistics against.

We all know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the lives of all of us right across Australia and it has had a profound impact on volunteering. There is no doubt that people have reduced their contribution as volunteers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also true that many of those people who have stopped volunteering did not come back to it after restrictions were lifted and so on. We have a little way to go to try to encourage volunteers to come back. Research conducted by the Australian National University found that Australians engaging in formal voluntary work fell from around 36 per cent in late 2019 to 24.2 per cent in April 2021. Only slightly more than half of those who stopped volunteering went back to volunteering in the 12 months leading up to April 2021. That is quite a significant drop in the number of people volunteering. Obviously, the fact sheet has been updated to reflect some of those figures.

I wanted to talk a little about the raw numbers because they are quite impressive when we consider the contribution that volunteers make. We all know volunteer groups in our communities and the job they do. It is quite an interesting exercise to look at the raw numbers. Around five million people volunteered through an organisation or group in 2020. It was nearly 5.9 million in 2019. That means 900 000 people stopped volunteering as a result of the COVID pandemic, a significant number of people by any measure. Western Australia's formal volunteering rate was 25.6 per cent in 2020 and 27 per cent in 2019. That is a little bit of a drop, though not as significant as other states. Obviously, the measures that were put in place in Western Australia to manage the pandemic kind of limited the effect that had on the community and obviously that enabled people to keep volunteering.

The number of women volunteering has dropped a little but now men and women volunteer at the same rates. Traditionally, more women have volunteered. Informal volunteering rates tend to be higher than formal volunteering rates. In Western Australia, around 30 per cent of people were volunteering in an informal capacity in 2020, down

from 35.6 per cent in 2019. Again, a big effect of that was as a result of the pandemic, but nonetheless a significant number of people still volunteer in our communities. What value do they contribute? Again, it is difficult to measure. There are many different ways of measuring the economic value of volunteering. I am not an economic rationalist, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who certainly is. Nonetheless, the accuracy of the value is largely irrelevant; the contribution is significant. It is estimated that in 2012–13, there was a \$17.3 billion contribution to the national economy, which is significant. Nearly 3.9 million people have done 520.5 million hours of volunteering. These people made a huge contribution to Australian society, which is very much worth outlining, and we need to thank them for that contribution.

Furthermore, some of the trends in volunteering are quite interesting. I will refer to another report shortly. Obviously, the COVID pandemic has had an impact on the number of hours contributed to the community, with a decrease of around 20 per cent from 2014 to 2019. In 2020, the number of hours contributed fell by a further 18 per cent. That obviously has a big impact on our communities.

The Department of Social Services reviewed volunteer management activity and found that the population is ageing and the workforce is contracting, which will come as no surprise to people. Also, people are more discerning about how they use their time, which is a key factor that affects volunteering and our ability to find the time to satisfactorily fulfil the time demands that volunteering requires. There is growing demand for services that have traditionally relied heavily on volunteers to supplement government funding. Examples are community and aged care, and disability support services. Government programs also encourage volunteering to help people experiencing disadvantage, for example, to meet mutual obligation requirements or to help build skills and relationships with people living with a disability. Information technology is providing new opportunities for people to find volunteering opportunities that suit their interests and circumstances, and to volunteer in different ways. Like with much in our society, things are changing and the impact of technology changes the way we interact with our community, and as a result, it will have an impact on volunteering trends.

I want to talk a little about another trend in volunteering. I have a 2017 report that is very relevant because it relates to Western Australia in particular. It was produced by Murdoch University and Curtin University in collaboration and titled *Out of sight: Volunteering in remote locations in Western Australia in the shadow of managerialism*. This report refers to the effect that increasing professionalism has on volunteering. It is a bit of a trend, I guess. I will go through some of the key findings of this report, which are very much worth talking about. The report states —

Volunteer management has become significantly more professionalised since the 1990s ... This has been due to several factors both from within and outside the sector ... Within the sector, volunteer managers have sought to adopt more formalised processes, which mirror the human resources management approaches used with paid staff ... The adoption of more formalised processes has been seen as a way to raise the status of volunteer management as a career choice ...

Further on, the report states —

A further influence from outside the sector is increasing legislation to protect both clients and volunteers of volunteer-involving organisations ... Volunteer-involving organisations often find that they need to comply with a complex variety of laws ... including (but not limited to) police checks, working with children checks, duty of care, food and beverage service training and standards, and public liability insurance ... Legislative requirements also vary across each state jurisdiction, increasing this complexity.

It is important to look at that, because as legislators we are responsible for making legislation that has an impact on our volunteers. They are not necessarily considered when we make that legislation, so we need to take the opportunity to reflect on the work they do and assess the contribution they make against the potential disadvantages, if you like, of the legislation we are passing. Further on, this report notes —

We note that the increase in the professionalisation of volunteering and volunteer management (and the language used in volunteer management guidelines) is taking place alongside a growing trend towards more individualised and reflexive forms of volunteering ... Volunteer participation is declining in Australia ... and volunteers are changing the ways in which they volunteer ... Volunteer-involving organisations are caught between pressure from government and other funding agencies to become accountable and meet standards and the need to adapt their programs to attract and retain reflexive volunteers. The data reveal the key problems arising from this tension are concerned with the potential adverse impacts of attempts at over-regulation and standardisation of volunteer organisations, and the disincentives these can produce for volunteers to offer their services in regions where their work matters most.

Further on, the report refers to some of the perceived problems that result from that. This report considers the issue in a regional context. Of course, the volunteering rate in regional areas, particularly in regional Western Australia, is significantly higher than in the metropolitan area. There are fewer people in the regions but still a great demand for the work they do, so a necessary result of that is that a higher proportion of people are volunteers.

I will move on from that to a ministerial statement from the Minister for Volunteering earlier this week. I echo my support of the minister when he encouraged members and our constituents to take the opportunity to provide

feedback on the new national strategy for volunteering. This is the first national strategy on this issue we have seen in 10 years, and from the information I just read there has been significant change in the volunteering landscape. That new national strategy is critically important. As representatives of our communities, we are in touch with many volunteer organisations. I encourage members of this place and our constituents, as the minister said, to make a submission to that national strategy and make sure that our voices are heard.

I want to start winding up my remarks by recognising the role that volunteers play in all our lives and communities, whether that be in times of crisis such as natural disasters or pandemics. Of course, in the aftermath of those disasters, volunteers continue to provide that support, which does not end when the disaster ends but continues for a very long time afterwards. That work would not happen without volunteers. Volunteers contribute in many other ways too. Every weekend I see plenty of volunteers at kids' sport. They are running the water, cutting up the oranges or whatever it may be. I see it every weekend at Basketball WA with my daughter; the stadium is full of parent volunteers helping those kids out while they are playing basketball; or down at the hockey oval with my other kids, where parents are running around left, right and centre providing food, and medical assistance when there is no ambulance assistance around.

Volunteering takes many different forms. One of the most obvious forms of volunteering that we see at the moment is those many volunteers who are proudly wearing their political colours and standing at the polling booths doing their bit for democracy. It does not matter which side of politics they are on; they are volunteers doing something they believe in and are participating in Australia's democracy. They should be thanked and acknowledged for that work. Not long ago, Hon Pierre Yang handed down a report into the state's ambulance service, which again is a great example of the work volunteers do across Western Australia. The national total of ambulance volunteers is something like 7 000, with over 4 000 in Western Australia alone. Western Australia relies heavily on volunteers in the delivery of its ambulance service and the work they do is absolutely incredible. I take the opportunity to thank all those incredible people for doing what is no doubt a difficult and challenging job. We have other emergency services such as marine rescue, bushfire brigades, the State Emergency Service and many more. I am sure the minister will talk about those as well. Both the Minister for Volunteering and the shadow Minister for Volunteering are in this house. I am sure they share our collective gratitude and I look forward to their contributions later on.

I offer my thanks, and I am sure that of all members, to volunteers across our state and nation, no matter what field of volunteering they are in, whether it is sport, aged care, helping the homeless, providing food to those who really need it or dealing with people with significant mental issues or drug dependence. We thank you. We acknowledge the work you do and are very grateful for your participation and assistance in Western Australia.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Volunteering) [10.30 am]: I thank Hon Colin de Grussa for bringing this motion before the house today. I indicate that the government is very happy to support this motion. It is a very good motion, and given it is National Volunteer Week, it is a great, great issue to have before the house today. As I have said to many volunteers this week and over the past few months as Minister for Volunteering, we would truly be lost without the great work that they do right around Western Australia on a daily basis, at all hours of the day—sometimes seven days a week. We would truly be lost without that. So thank you for what you do.

As we know, this week is National Volunteer Week and it is an opportunity for us to acknowledge and celebrate the volunteering that happens in our communities. It provides a heartfelt opportunity to say thank you and to recognise the vital work of volunteers across our state. As we heard from Hon Colin de Grussa, we as a state have a strong volunteering culture. Hon Colin de Grussa gave the example of the ambulance service, but right throughout, whatever industry it is, whatever sector it is, our volunteers are very, very strong and have a great culture. The theme for this year's National Volunteer Week is "Better Together", and that refers to the strength volunteering has in bringing people together, building communities and creating a better society for us all generally. We also hope through this theme to reinvigorate volunteers who may have either had to step back from their roles or adapt how they volunteered, particularly during COVID-19 over the last two-and-a-bit years. COVID-19 has been very challenging for the community generally, but certainly for the volunteering sector. Thankfully, though, while we have had a drop in volunteering over the past little while, it has not been to the same degree as seen in other states and territories around Australia. Volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations have played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic doing all sorts of things. In some cases, it has been getting shopping or essential goods for neighbours or doing safety and wellbeing checks. All those things have been very, very important. Our response to COVID-19 has meant, I have to say, that our volunteers generally felt safe and secure enough to step back into their volunteering roles. It is important to continue to say thank you to volunteers for their generosity, their commitment and the dedication that they demonstrate all the time, because their commitment really does make a real difference, particularly during these difficult times.

The state government acknowledges our long-serving volunteers through the Volunteer Service Awards. These awards recognise Western Australians who have dedicated over 25 years of their time to benefit our communities and allow the acknowledgement of the extraordinary contributions generally of volunteers in Western Australia. This year there were 173 recipients of a WA Volunteer Service Award in one of two categories—25 to 49 years

or more dedicated to a single organisation, and 50 years or more dedicated to a single organisation. So 173 people have been volunteering for over 25 years. That is an amazing achievement. The awards happen on a yearly basis, so there are thousands of volunteers across our state who have given similar amounts of time.

I am constantly amazed by the extraordinary stories of service that I hear when I am out in the community visiting volunteer organisations. Some of the recipients this year who have dedicated an incredible 50 years or more to an organisation really just amaze me. I see that in the fire services, in particular in regional Western Australia. I go to a town, to a celebration, and I hear that someone has been volunteering since they were 14 or 16 years old and now they are 80. It is just truly amazing. Although they might not be still on a truck, they are tending the gardens at the fire station or whatever. It is just truly amazing that they continue to give back to their community. One such person I came across was Rod Blyth from the Chidlow Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade in Hon Donna Faragher's electorate. Rod began as a volunteer firefighter when he was almost 18 years old. Over the past 52 years, he has fought innumerable fires on behalf of his community, including the devastating Yarloop fire in 2021. Rod has been a great mentor and teacher to many younger members as they joined the brigade and he says he enjoys just knowing that he is helping other people. The time and effort that volunteers like Rod put in and give to our community really is to be commended.

There are so many more like Rod right around the state. Quite frankly, many services that operate in our state would not happen if it were not for the support of volunteers, particularly in regional Western Australia. Volunteering activities have been the glue holding many communities together, and that has been the case for many, many decades through the worst of times and the best of times. Anyone who has grown up or, indeed, lived in a regional town will most likely have been involved in some volunteering activity or some activity to which volunteers are integral, whether it is Landcare, the State Emergency Service, Red Cross or St Vincent de Paul. These are all examples of the volunteers and organisations whom we depend heavily on for outreach and support, particularly those who find themselves in need.

I turn to other things that government is doing. Through the Department of Communities, we partner with volunteer-involving organisations and we have provided more than \$1.5 million to develop volunteer opportunities in Western Australia and to encourage and assist people to become involved in volunteering. We fund the Volunteering Development Services program to support Western Australians to develop the capability of volunteers and organisations to respond to community needs. Another \$700 000 is provided annually, with 13 services engaged currently to provide volunteering support across metro and regional areas. We also have our Thank a Volunteer Day grant program that provides funding to volunteering organisations to host events on International Volunteer Day, which is on 5 December. Last year, grants were provided to about 29 organisations across WA. They ranged from the Wellstead Community Resource Centre in the great southern to the Mowanjum Aboriginal Corporation in the Kimberley. Right across the state, from top to bottom, east to west, there are people and organisations involved in doing great work. The grants program for this year will open very soon—next month, in June—and that intends to provide even more support to local community volunteer-involved organisations to help recognise the enormous efforts of our volunteers.

As I said, we do well in Western Australia with the numbers of people who are volunteering, but I have made it a particular focus of mine to encourage more young people to volunteer. I was able to announce recently a grant of \$440 000 to the peak body, Volunteering WA, to deliver volunteering as a pathway to job-readiness projects over three years. That is to encourage young people to get involved in volunteering and gear them towards jobs and job opportunities. The initiative is focused on people aged between 16 and 24 and aims to give them real-world experience through volunteering opportunities, because through building confidence, skills and networking, their path to employability will hopefully be made easier. A new volunteer website, www.yvolunteer.org.au, has been launched that includes an online CV builder. It has resources and some engaging stories and informative learning models for young people to access.

There are some great things happening across the state, and it is really important that we all get involved in National Volunteer Week. We need to keep showing our appreciation for volunteers. One way we can do that is by participating in the “Wave for Volunteers” social media campaign. It is as easy as drawing a smiley face on your hands. You just need two dots for eyes—there is a smiley face on your hand. Take a photo of yourself with your hand and upload it onto your socials using the hashtags #waveforvolunteers and #NVW2022.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: You do not have to speak to the hand! Just take a photo of your hand, post it on your socials and tag it so that people know that you are supportive of volunteers and you are thankful for the great deal of work that they do.

People can also follow Volunteering WA to keep up with its new initiatives with volunteering and also find that opportunity with local volunteering organisations via the SEEK Volunteer site. We need to make sure that our next generation is involved in volunteering. At so many organisations we visit, there are people who are retired, but it is equally important to get people in early. We see from people like Rod Blyth, who started volunteering as a teenager and has been doing it for over 52 years, that people who get in early keep going, so we need to get more young people involved. As I said, that will be a focus of mine.

I have had the opportunity this week to meet a number of volunteers. Last night as part of “Wear Orange Wednesday”, I made a contribution about some of our State Emergency Service volunteers. I was able to meet volunteers from the Bassendean, Cockburn and Serpentine–Jarrahdale SES units and provide some new vehicles to them. I am very thankful to them for their work. Yesterday I also had the opportunity to visit the Friends of Bold Park Bushland, the Friends of Kings Park and the Kings Park volunteer guides, who do tremendous work. Hon Donna Faragher would know, having been a minister, how dedicated these individuals are. Having been the Minister for Environment for four years in the first term of the McGowan government, I had plenty of opportunities to engage with those volunteers. I have to say, not that one has favourites as a minister, that they are truly some of my favourites.

Hon Donna Faragher: Don’t forget the Perth Zoo docents.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I love the docents, too. As a father of a seven-year-old, I continue to engage with the docents at the Zoo. The volunteers from the Friends of Kings Park and the volunteer guides have had a challenging time through the COVID-19 pandemic because many of these volunteers are older and many of the services, such as the tours in Kings Park, were put on hold. However, they are all back on track and it was great to see many of them yesterday. I also had the opportunity to present some volunteer service award certificates to five recipients who volunteer with the Friends of Kings Park: Mr Darren Harrop who has volunteered 25 years of service, Mr Ian Foster for 27 years of service, Ms Joanne Dumaresq for 27 years of service, Mr Martin Revell for 27 years of service and Dr Tony Scalzo for 27 years of service. Those volunteers have given just so much of their invaluable time to our community. It really was a pleasure to have morning tea with them yesterday and to recognise their dedication and achievement over the last 25 or 27 years. The Friends of Kings Park has over 1 300 members, 200 of which are active volunteers. They really are to be treasured. They do great work. If members have not had the opportunity, they should book themselves a tour with the Kings Park guides to see the magnificent jewels that we have right across the road at Kings Park. We have an extraordinary biodiversity right on our doorstep.

I will finish by acknowledging the motion before us. I thank Hon Colin de Grussa for bringing it before the house. It is a very good motion. We all know, because we are all engaged with our communities, about the dedication and remarkable work that volunteers and volunteer organisations do around the state. This week is a great week to say thank you to them all. On behalf of the state government I say thanks very much.

Members: Hear, hear!

HON WILSON TUCKER (Mining and Pastoral) [10.43 am]: I also rise to support this excellent motion. I thank Hon Colin de Grussa for raising it today. I would also like to place on record my acknowledgement of volunteers around Western Australia and the excellent work that they do in donating their time and effort to help others in this state. As pointed out by the other speakers, a very high percentage of people in WA donate their time and effort and they should be commended for that. It speaks to the very strong community values that we enjoy in the west, especially in a lot of the regional towns and communities where that percentage of volunteerism is certainly strong. I would also like to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to carers, whom I put in the same bracket as volunteers. They dedicate their time and effort to help family members and loved ones and they are sometimes in a position where they do not necessarily need to do that. I have been fortunate enough to meet representatives from Carers WA. A report that came out in 2015 mentioned that the effort of carers in society equates to a \$60 billion contribution to the Australian economy, so carers should be commended as well.

The timing of this motion and National Volunteer Week coincides quite nicely with the excellent report just tabled by the very powerful and illustrious Standing Committee on Public Administration—I can see a few nods of agreement—chaired by the illustrious Hon Pierre Yang. I encourage all members to read this excellent report. I certainly do not want to steal our illustrious chair’s thunder too much by going into the details of this report, but given that it is National Volunteer Week, I would like to take this opportunity to speak about one key finding.

The report mentions the heavy burden that we place on volunteers. The ambulance service in regional areas relies heavily on volunteers to function. During the pandemic we have seen an increase in the burden placed on those volunteers. We should be doing what we can to support them as much as we can. I want to talk about a few points that the committee found. In WA, the number of volunteers per capita is decreasing. As highlighted, this is happening in not just WA, but Australia-wide. Obviously the pandemic is having a significant impact as well. Over the last six months, the average number of jobs per volunteer has increased and also the average number of emergency jobs per volunteer has increased. Western Australia has an ageing population and this is certainly happening out in the regions as well. We can conclude that that will mean more complex medical cases and a higher case load, which will put more of a burden onto the volunteer ambulance officers and the sub-centres that operate in the regions. The average number of inter-hospital patient transfers performed by volunteers has also increased over the last six months. It is a balancing act with the sub-centres and the volunteer crews. The inter-hospital patient transfers are a significant revenue stream for the sub-centres that allows them to operate under some autonomy, but there is a trade-off. When that volunteer crew is formed, they are potentially taken off the road and are not able to respond to an emergency situation. This was witnessed recently with the tragic death of a woman in Geraldton who waited for over two hours for an ambulance to be dispatched.

The committee also found that there is a heavy reliance on a small number of active volunteers. In 2021, the most active 10 per cent of volunteers were involved in 56.3 per cent of the cases. The same 10 per cent of volunteers

were involved in 49.2 per cent of all country cases. This speaks to a heavy reliance on a small cohort of very active volunteers. To put it in more clinical terms and from a redundancy perspective, that is obviously a concern because if those people are sick or unavailable, that can place a lot of strain on the availability of some of these services in the regions.

Volunteer attrition has increased over the last four years. The amount of money that St John Ambulance spends to attract volunteers has generally been increasing. In 2021, the amount spent was 2.7 times greater than the amount spent in 2012. St John is spending more money to attract the same number of volunteers. If that trend continues, it will be of concern. There has also been a steady increase in the average time to form and assign an ambulance crew in regional WA. The regions and their reliance on volunteers operates under a “best endeavours” model. The volunteers are not being paid for volunteering their time, so if they receive a call and have other commitments, they have an option to not respond. Typically, if it is an emergency, those people are very dedicated and will do their best to help, but there are limited resources and a limited number of people available in the regions and the time it takes to form and dispatch a crew has been increasing over the last few years. This speaks to the heavy burden and reliance we have on volunteers in the regions. They need to be recognised and supported as much as possible. I welcome the recent announcement from the government that as part of this budget it will invest more in career paramedics in the regions, and I also appreciate the intervention in the management of St John Ambulance, especially during the incident management we are seeing and the recent tragic death.

In summary, I support this motion and thank the honourable member for raising it. I encourage all members to read the excellent report that was tabled today.

HON DONNA FARAGHER (East Metropolitan) [10.50 am]: I also rise to support the motion and indicate that I am really pleased that we are debating this today, because it is important that we, as members of Parliament and the community as a whole, take every opportunity to acknowledge, thank and celebrate the important contributions that volunteers make across not only our state, but also our country. Our community is a diverse one. As such, so are the activities that thousands upon thousands of volunteers make across Western Australia every year across all facets of our society. Indeed, if we were to take volunteers out of our community, we would be very much poorer for it. Just yesterday, as the minister indicated, it was Wear Orange Wednesday. We all put on our best orange outfits. I do not have many in the wardrobe, but I found one, because it is important to acknowledge the more than 2 000 SES volunteers who stand ready 24 hours a day to come out and support our communities in times of emergency.

There are also a number of other emergency service volunteers who work tirelessly throughout our community. Some have been mentioned today: our volunteer bush fire brigades, ambulance volunteers and others, and I certainly thank them sincerely as well. Volunteers support our community across all facets of our society. In the East Metropolitan Region, we are blessed to have many volunteer-based organisations that provide invaluable support and assistance to children and young people, our elderly, people with disability, and other vulnerable Western Australians. I also acknowledge the minister and his comments with respect to a number of government departments that rely heavily on volunteers. He is right about the environment portfolio, which I had the honour of being minister of for a period. That department relies very much on the support of volunteers right across the length and breadth of Western Australia.

We also have our wonderful parents and citizens association. The minister indicated today that tomorrow is P&C Day. That is obviously a great opportunity for us to say thanks to our P&Cs. I think Saturday will also be a wonderful way for us all to thank our P&Cs by buying copious amounts at the sausage sizzles and cake stalls. My daughter has already been asking me if we can go down and get a few cakes at our school on Saturday. That is a great way to show our support as well. I know that election day is very important for many schools.

I think it was Hon Colin de Grussa who mentioned our local footy clubs and other sporting and recreation clubs. The simple fact is that they are run generally by parent and other community volunteers. Without the coaches, the team managers, the first aid support staff and the goal umpires, the teams would not be able to work and thousands of kids would miss out. I suppose it is in that vein in talking about young people that I would quickly like to focus my attention on a couple of organisations that are based in and around my portfolio as the shadow Minister for Youth. I have had the privilege of being both the Minister for Youth as well as the shadow spokesperson, and throughout my time in this place I have had the privilege of meeting with many organisations that provide invaluable support to young people in this state. Some of those are quite longstanding and global youth movements, such as the girl guides. I am a proud old girl guide, if you can call an old girl guide that, and my daughter is a girl guide. There is Scouts WA, and I will mention it specifically in a moment. We also have other programs, like our Cadets WA program, which has more standard cadet programs, in terms of the armed forces, but also we have unique Cadets WA units, which are uniquely Western Australian. That is something that we can be very proud of. I know that the WA cadets program is supported by all members of this house.

Those youth organisations provide incredible support to thousands of young Western Australians every year, helping them to develop important life skills and social skills, helping them to understand the importance of team work, developing leadership qualities, helping them get out of their comfort zone and to try things new. They also give them opportunities to have fun and to make new friends. They are only able to offer those sorts of programs and youth programs through the involvement of adult and youth leader volunteers. Some of the challenges in

continuing to attract and retain volunteers has been talked about today. It is really important that we continue to acknowledge and value the role that volunteers play, and tell people and thank them. They do not necessarily do it for us to say thank you, thank you, thank you. They do it because they want to do it, but it is nice to be recognised.

In that vein, and in the context of Scouts WA, I caught up with the chief commissioner, Ayden Mackenzie and new CEO, Jess Karlsson, a few weeks ago and followed up with another catch up in the lead-up to National Volunteer Week with some adult and youth leaders from some units in the East Metropolitan Region. They were specifically Walliston; Bassendean, which is a newly formed unit; and Hampton Park. Jess kindly gave me a couple of figures with regard to Scouts WA. Obviously, there are many volunteer organisations, but for the purposes of today, this is just one example of the value and impact that scouts have in this state. It has 7 600 scout members. Many of those children would miss out if Scouts WA did not have adult and youth volunteers to support them. In 2021, Scouts WA had 4 532 youth leaders and volunteers. It had 1 363 adult leaders and volunteers. Through them, Scouts WA was able to provide 13 440 educational activities for children and young people. Because of Scouts WA, 1 245 young people were able to participate in overnight educational camps. I am about to provide a pretty big figure. In 2021, Scouts WA contributed 1 414 800 hours to volunteering in WA. That is a massive figure. This is one organisation that works obviously along the length and breadth of Western Australia, but Scouts WA, through its volunteers, contributed 1 414 800 hours to this state. I think we would all agree that that is a remarkable achievement.

I simply, today, in the time available, want to thank all volunteers, including Scouts WA volunteers, who give such massive support to young people in this state. I want to just add my thanks and enormous gratitude to all volunteers for their dedication, commitment, time and support that they so freely give to help others within our community and across all facets of society. I simply say, thank you.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [10.59 am]: I rise to proudly support the motion moved by Hon Colin de Grussa in non-government businesses this morning as not only the shadow Minister for Volunteering, but also shadow Minister for Emergency Services. As a number of speakers mentioned in their contributions and members would be very much aware, in a state like Western Australia the emergency services sector significantly relies on volunteers. In fact, outside Perth, across the breadth of our geographically-diverse state, the emergency services delivery function is overwhelmingly delivered by volunteers. I think members would be very aware of the economic value that is placed on volunteering in Western Australia. If the figure is said quickly—more than \$39 billion—I do not think people fully appreciate that it exceeds our annual state budget. Obviously, many services, functions and community groups simply could not function without the important contribution of volunteers. On that note, I thought I had anticipated every type of volunteer function or role or form in Western Australia, but then I hear a contribution from another member and it triggers me to think about all the other areas in our community in which volunteers play such an important role.

Speakers including the mover of the motion talked about formal volunteering but just as important is spontaneous volunteering, particularly during times of crisis but at other times as well. Hon Donna Faragher's contribution and the Minister for Education and Training's brief ministerial statement earlier today highlighted the amount of spontaneous volunteering that happens in our education system. Much of that volunteering was displaced because of COVID-19 and COVID-19-response policies so it is really important that we not only recognise, but also reinvigorate spontaneous volunteering in our education system. Whether it is the people willing to read to or with our children in their classrooms, school canteen volunteers, people working in our uniform shops or people supporting our chaplaincy services, some volunteers have spent a significant period displaced from those functions and it is important that we re-engage them in their important work.

It is also important that we understand the barriers to volunteering and appreciate what motivates people to volunteer. Too often I hear people say that our lives are getting busier, we are working longer hours, our priorities are changing and younger people are not engaging as an explanation for why we perhaps do not have the level of volunteering we once had. To be fair, I think the issues are much more complex than that. Hon Colin de Grussa touched on those issue quite well in moving this motion, but good work has also been done by Volunteering WA—I will mention it briefly later—and organisations like the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, which published a report in 2019 entitled *The social and economic sustainability of WA's rural volunteer workforce*. The report provides really good case studies that go to the issue of understanding the barriers for volunteering. It looks at not just the recruitment aspect, but also, importantly, the retention aspect of volunteering.

I might pause there and reflect on the good work that Volunteering WA does in its volunteer resource centres, engaging volunteers and linking them to organisations and providing skills, support and capability to organisations that manage volunteers, which is a really critical function. Obviously, today we have heard about a diverse range of volunteering opportunities so I imagine the organisations engaging or utilising volunteers are equally diverse. It is important that particularly organisations that perhaps do not have a long history of volunteering or volunteering plays only a small part in the organisation understand how volunteers should be engaged with and supported through their volunteering experience.

Members made contributions about the importance of volunteering in regional WA. We obviously see much higher volunteering rates in regional settings. As has been said in this place on numerous occasions, the services and types

of activities and events that we see in regional Western Australia simply would not exist without volunteers. It is a fact some services that may well be delivered by paid employees in large regional centres or cities are generally delivered by volunteers in small country towns.

I want to offer the government some helpful suggestions in the spirit of acknowledging and celebrating volunteerism. As I said last week on International Firefighters Day, I also recognise that more can and should be done to support volunteers in Western Australia. In March, ahead of the state budget, which members now know has delivered quite a significant budget surplus, I called on the state government to contemplate an increase to the Emergency Services Volunteer Fuel Card. Members may not know the history of the fuel card. It goes back to 2015, when the Liberal–National government initiated the Emergency Services Volunteer Fuel Card program to allow brigades, groups and units—referred to as BGUs—to access a \$2 000 fuel card in recognition of some of the out-of-pocket expenses that emergency services volunteers in particular experience carrying out their roles and functions. When the McGowan government came to power, that fuel card was cut in half. Coupled with the significant increase in the cost of transport in regional Western Australia, largely driven by fuel prices, the value of that card has diminished significantly over time. If we look at the data that has been accessed through budget estimates, it shows that the fuel card is well received by BGUs. Some 93 per cent of BGUs apply for the card and one in three fully expend the card, which shows there is demand for an increase in the card’s value. I reiterate my call for the government to increase and, indeed, to index the value of this card.

I would like to talk about another thing that I think the government could do easily. Governments, regardless of which party is in power, often like to hold themselves out as a model employer. Last year I attended a number of employer recognition events with the then Minister for Emergency Services, Mr Reece Whitby. I was struck by the number of employers speaking at these award ceremonies who talked about how they had formalised policies, whether that was in their corporate workplace or in the federal public service. For example, there was a fellow from Australian Border Force who was being recognised. I understand that across the federal public service there is a 20-day leave policy for emergency services volunteers. I think there is an opportunity for the state, the Minister for Emergency Services and his colleague the Minister for Industrial Relations to consider applying a similar policy to the state public service. I have heard from volunteers—I am not going to name them or the organisations they come from because there are limitations on volunteers speaking to members of Parliament—who stress as public servants the difficulty in accessing training on the weekends when they have to on a Friday afternoon travel vast distances to and perhaps on a Monday morning return from a place like Geraldton. They have to take annual leave or leave without pay from their public service roles in order to maintain their proficiency as an emergency services volunteer. When we consider the industrial arrangements for the public service, I think this is another way we could simply do something to support this cohort of volunteers in Western Australia.

I want to finish by thanking all volunteers in whatever form they come, regardless of how small or large their contribution, in this National Volunteer Week. We thank them deeply for their service.

HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural) [11.09 am]: I had to check that it was Thursday; it has been very civil, congratulatory and bipartisan this morning!

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: I haven’t spoken yet!

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Indeed! That is because of the excellent nature of the motion. We have had outstanding contributions from the minister and other members, and I would like to join them in thanking our volunteer community. Also, the Leader of the House made a ministerial statement about Parents and Citizens Day. Congratulations on bringing that to our attention. I would like to personally thank all the people who volunteer in our school network. I am sure that a number of members have been involved or will in the future be involved with their local P&Cs. We put some controversial legislation through this place and we have some fierce debate, but as a member and president of my P&C, I can tell members that if they ever take to their P&C an item of business to change the colour of the school uniform, they will find that that puts into perspective anything we might attempt in this place! To all those wonderful people who spend their time volunteering in our schools, thank you very much. As Hon Donna Faragher said, we will have an opportunity to support them on the weekend, so please do.

I thought it might be useful in my limited time to mention some individual volunteers I am aware of. We have heard from other honourable members about the business of volunteering, if you like, so I would like to spend some of my time talking about some individual examples of volunteering.

In the aged-care sector, I was on the board of the regional aged-care centre in Narrogin for some time before entering Parliament. It has been tough in aged care for some time, and for the staff and the people who volunteer in that sector. That organisation in Narrogin is an extraordinarily well run facility. People like Rob Maxwell, who spent 40 years volunteering his time and ended up chairing that facility, Michael Ranieri, Frank Goater and a number of others have volunteered there. That 50-bed facility, which also has an enormous number of independent living units, simply would not exist without the wonderful work of those people. Hon Darren West opened the Maxwell wing shortly after the 2017 election. It was funded by the previous government, but that is beside the point. That facility would not have been opened without the wonderful volunteering work of people like Rob, Michael, Frank and the

dozens of others who contributed thousands of hours to get that facility built in Narrogin. There are 70 staff at Karinya and Narrogin Cottage Homes and they do an outstanding job, so I would like to thank everyone who volunteers their time and effort in the aged-care sector.

Earlier this year, a number of our communities were hit during that horrible weekend of fires, and we have gone over the outstanding effort that our bush fire brigades and all those volunteers made on that weekend. But I would like to mention an individual I bumped into on the Sunday night of the Wickepin fire. Clinton Hemley, a local farmer, was in his St John Ambulance gear. He had been in the ambulance all day ready to go; it would have been for 12 hours. It was dark, so it was about six o'clock. He would have spent 12 hours in his St John's gear and I happened to bump into him as I was knocking off from my shift. I said, "So, you're done for the day?" He said, "Yes, I'm done; I'm ducking home to put on the orange firefighter's vest, because I'll be out on the fire front for the rest of the night." That is just one small example. That was done a hundred times over that weekend by individuals from Denmark to Bridgetown to Wickepin to Corrigin to Bruce Rock. I am absolutely certain that the volunteering spirit is alive and well in our suburbs, but it is more obvious in the bush because there are fewer of us, so it does stand out. Those regional communities simply would not function, because they are quite small, without the enormous efforts of our volunteers. To Clinton and all the other ambos-fireys who help out on a regular basis, thank you so much. They are the best example of us on an everyday basis. They are the fabric of our communities and they absolutely make our communities stronger.

There is another example I would like to mention. Ernest Leslie Crute White and the White family were neighbours of my family in the 1960s. On 6 November 1967, Ernie White, as he was known, was volunteering for the East Wickepin brigade to do a burn-off on the main road, which is what they used to do in those days. The wild oats would grow and the local fireys would get called out to do a burn-off and clear a bit of stuff on the side of the road so that people could see around corners and so on. On 6 November 1967, Ernie White was seated in a truck when, very unfortunately, another vehicle came through the smoke and collected the back of the truck and Ernie was killed. My uncle happened to be standing on the other side of the truck and he was seriously injured but survived. The White family had tragically lost a young son in a dam drowning incident 10 years prior to that and in the late 60s Ernie was killed. The Wickepin community is very keen to recognise, all these decades later, Ernie's service as a volunteer. He made a very steep sacrifice just doing what people do—volunteering. They are attempting to put some sort of memorial in the community centre in Wickepin as we speak, and I wish them all the best with that. That example is one that we should all recognise. I am proud of the Wickepin community for doing that more than 50 years later.

In closing, as other members wish to make a contribution, I would like to join other members in thanking those in our volunteer community for the work they do and will do in the future. They are an outstanding example to all of us.

HON KLARA ANDRIC (South Metropolitan) [11.16 am]: I, too, wish to thank Hon Colin de Grussa for moving his motion today. As members of this house know, yesterday was Wear Orange Wednesday, and we saw many members of both houses in the Western Australian Parliament and people in our communities across Australia wear orange to celebrate the immense contributions made by our state's emergency services volunteers. This week is National Volunteer Week, so it gives us an important opportunity to thank all the volunteers who give up their time to make our communities better. They do important work, some of which is lifesaving.

More than 2 000 State Emergency Service volunteers from every walk of life play a vital role in keeping our communities across WA safe during natural disasters and emergencies. These highly skilled men and women drop everything to help when people need them the most. Over the past year, they have committed to more than 23 700 hours in responding to emergencies, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all SES volunteers who generously give up their time to help our communities.

I also want to give a special thankyou to my very talented electorate officer, Jessee Desmond. Jessee has always wanted to join the fire brigade and, from a young age, she wanted to work as a first responder and emergency services officer. However, her career took her down a different path—and I am not going to pretend that I am not extremely grateful for this! She found that volunteering in the fire brigade would be a good way of fulfilling her dream. Since moving to the south metropolitan region, she has been eligible to join the Jandakot Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade and I am very pleased to say that, on Monday, Jessee Desmond officially became a member of the brigade, which means that she will be able to help out with small fires. Following the rest of her training, she will be able to assist with larger fires later this year. I know that Jessee will do an incredible job. She is an inspirational young woman from Mullewa and I know that her contribution to the Jandakot brigade will be immense.

Today, Minister Dawson called on the next generation of volunteers to step up and do important work for their communities. Just like Jess, around four out of five Western Australians over the age of 15 volunteer every year. It is vital that this commitment to volunteering continues with future generations. Volunteering is not only good for the community, but also helps people to develop new skills that cannot be developed any other way. This is beneficial for volunteers both professionally and personally.

Yesterday was also important to State Emergency Service volunteers because SES units in Cockburn, Serpentine, Jarrahdale and Bassendean each received new general rescue utilities as part of the McGowan government's \$140 million investment in frontline emergency service vehicles.

I take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers across Australia who work all year round to provide for our communities in various ways. As mentioned by Hon Colin de Grussa, volunteers work across sectors within our communities including in sport, kitchens and, as we have recently and are currently witnessing, politics. There are incredible organisations and people in the South Metropolitan Region who dedicate their lives to volunteering and I want to make special mention of Bob and Pearl Kellar of Harvest Lakes Residents Association, who are my former neighbours and tirelessly worked to support the ecosystem and the lakes and many of the wetlands around our community, including through animal, bird and wildlife rescue. Once I even handed them a turtle because I was not sure what to do with it. They are two community members whom I have known for a very long time, and I want to make special note of them and thank them today.

Something else that I want to note is that the new occupational safety and health legislation covers some volunteers. Our community has high expectations that workers and volunteers come home safe after a day's work protecting or supporting our community. National Volunteer Week is the annual celebration to acknowledge the generous contributions of our nation's volunteers. From Monday, 16 May, to Sunday, 22 May 2022, National Volunteer Week will celebrate the significant contribution of almost six million volunteers across Australia. It is wonderful to see the community spirit across our state with so many giving back to our community. Volunteering is a beautiful and unique feature of Western Australian and Australian culture and our identity. We take pride in selflessly helping others and today I want to thank them all for their contribution that they make to our state.

HON PIERRE YANG (North Metropolitan) [11.24 am]: Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words to support this excellent motion from Hon Colin de Grussa and for whom I have tremendous respect. I think it is really fitting to have a motion in the words of the one in front of us. We have had the Minister for Volunteering and also the shadow Ministers for Seniors and Ageing, and Volunteering, commending the volunteers yesterday during members' statements and I think it is a worthwhile exercise; we should always thank our volunteers who have put in long hours for our community for our benefit and everyone's benefit in this state and in Australia.

We celebrated Wear Orange Wednesday yesterday. Members may know that I am a member of the Gosnells unit of the SES. The shadow Minister for Volunteering had a joke with me yesterday, saying I was the resident SES volunteer of the house. I want to repay that by saying he has been a volunteer with his local bush fire brigade and he was a career firefighter who has made a big contribution to our state. I want to mention that he was injured, I think, a couple of years ago during a bushfire in which he was involved. We should thank all our volunteers, including the shadow minister on the other side. I understand Hon Darren West is also a volunteer at his local bush fire brigade. Thank you, sir, for your contribution. While he is busy representing his community, he is also making a contribution to making his community safer.

I think Hon Donna Faragher, who is on urgent parliamentary business, talked about Scouts Australia and Girl Guides Western Australia and other volunteers involved in the community who are also making a contribution. I want to give a personal account. My children are involved in the local Scouts unit. The adult leaders are volunteers and make a huge contribution to the wellbeing of our youngsters in our respective local communities. They put in long hours; they prepare the lessons and the activities. At the time of the youngsters coming to them, they ensure they look after them and then safely hand them over to the parents who probably had a bit of respite from having the children. I am sure members would agree with me that it is good sometimes to have the youngsters outside school hours and I think we have benefited greatly from sending our children to Scouts. It is National Volunteer Week. Like all members who have contributed to this motion. I want to add my appreciation to all volunteers in Australia.

HON STEPHEN PRATT (South Metropolitan) [11.27 am]: With a few minutes left, I want to make a quick contribution. We have covered a lot of the bases and it is clear the valuable work that volunteers do to make WA the community that it is. I wanted to reference some of the ones that I am aware of in my area, including in the health system. It has been touched on in relation to ambulances, but this extends to services like Silver Chain; in-hospital services like the Ladies Auxiliary at Fremantle Hospital, which raises much-needed money to go back into providing the great services there; our emergency services, which have been touched on; and patient transport volunteers who provide just another level of service that we rely on so heavily and often goes unheralded. This is the perfect opportunity to praise them for the work they do. I think two that have not been mentioned are the Lions clubs and Rotary clubs across the state who provide great contributions to the community. I acknowledge Melville Cares and Cooby Cares in my patch in Coolbellup; the Rottnest volunteer guides; and people involved in sporting clubs. I make special mention of Ivo and Alenka Radonich at the Spearwood Dalmatinac Club, who make sure that that community sporting association runs so smoothly. In closing, given that it was Wear Orange Wednesday yesterday, I acknowledge some of the SES groups in Cockburn and the Kwinana Rockingham SES who are always there in our hour of need. Thank you very much to Hon Colin de Grussa for bringing this motion to the house.

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [11.29 am]: As has been said by other speakers, I want to give a big thanks and a shout-out to all our volunteers right across our regional communities. You are the lifeblood of our community, whether you are in the footy club kitchen, at the ambulance station or on the local P&C. I acknowledge the Minister for Education and Training's statement this morning. It is P&C Day tomorrow. I give a special shout-out to volunteers on P&Cs and anywhere in our communities.

I remember making a speech in the house several years ago. I had calculated the value of volunteering in Western Australia. I think it was comparable to that of the mining industry. All our volunteers right across the state make a big contribution. They are all wonderful. They all do a great job. I would like to reiterate the points made earlier by Hon Wilson Tucker. During the ambulance inquiry, we came across some wonderful people who do amazing work in our communities. I want to give a special shout-out to our St John Ambulance volunteers. It is difficult in the country because people often know the people who they are tasked to help. There are many harrowing stories of people in the ambulance service and police who have had to assist members of their own family and very close friends. It is very, very difficult. I thank the member for moving the motion. I will leave him with the last minute.

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.30 am] — in reply: In the time available, I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the motion today. It is unusual on “thirsty Thursday” that we have a reasonably sensible debate, but refreshing every now and again to do so. Again, I wanted to take the opportunity to acknowledge those many volunteers across our state and our nation for the work they do. In particular, I wish to reflect on the contribution of the Leader of the House about P&Cs this morning. We all know of the work that the parents and citizens associations do across our school system. It has been a particularly challenging couple of years for all our kids, parents and schools. I wanted to make sure we thank them all for the work they do.

Members: Hear, hear!

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.

HON JAMES HAYWARD — MAGISTRATES COURT — APPLICATION

Matter of Privilege

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [11.31 am]: I rise under standing order 93 to raise a matter of privilege.

I refer to two media reports—one on 9 May 2022 on ABC online news and one on 10 May 2022 in *The West Australian*. I table copies of those.

[See paper [1291](#).]

Hon SUE ELLERY: Both articles are about a request by Hon James Hayward to the Magistrates Court to vary his bail provisions with respect to five charges against him for alleged abuse of an eight-year-old girl in 2021. The ABC online report includes the lines —

The court heard he —

“He” being Hon James Hayward —

could not fulfil his duties and would have to resign his membership of a WA parliamentary committee looking into the current legislation and regulation of cannabis and hemp if he could not attend a symposium on the Sunshine Coast with the four other members.

The West Australian report about the same matter includes the lines —

The court was told that as a member of a select committee into cannabis and hemp, Mr Hayward, ... was required to attend the Australian Medicinal Cannabis Symposium.

If he could not attend, the court was told, then he would be deemed unable to fulfil his responsibilities as a committee member and would have to resign.

It is not the case that inability to attend a particular committee trip deems any member unable to fulfil their duties. It is not the case that inability to attend a particular committee trip requires any member to resign. There are no standing orders, conventions or practices that enforce travel on any member of a committee. Indeed, from time to time, for all sorts of reasons, individual members of committees do not travel on a particular committee travel program, including me, back in the day when I was on a committee. When that occurs, there is no standing order, rule or convention that deems those members unable to fulfil their duties, nor is there any requirement to resign from a committee if a member is unable to travel on a particular trip.

For a member of the Legislative Council to misrepresent to a court the practices and rules of the Legislative Council is a serious matter. It has the potential to bring the Council into ridicule or disrepute. The question arises: how did the court hear the false claim about what would happen to Hon James Hayward if he was unable to attend a conference in Queensland as a committee member? What information did Hon James Hayward provide to the court? Did Hon James Hayward provide that false information to the court; and, if he did, does that constitute a contempt of the Council?

It is a serious matter, President. My view is that it is a matter of such substance that you, President, ought to determine whether it is such, and then if you do, refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges for inquiry and report to the Council. That is the request I am making.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Leader of the House. I will consider your request, take advice on the matter and report back at my earliest convenience.

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE*Consideration of Tabled Papers*

Resumed from 18 May on the following motion moved by Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Emergency Services) —

That pursuant to standing order 69(1), the Legislative Council take note of tabled papers 1270A–D (2022–23 budget papers) laid upon the table of the house on Thursday, 12 May 2022.

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [11.36 am]: I rise to speak on the state budget for 2022–23. I relish the opportunity to talk about the budget. At this time, the opposition is given an opportunity to raise the issues in our regions that we are concerned about on behalf of the people we represent in the community, which government ministers do every day in their ministerial responsibilities, particularly the Treasurer.

We listened to the budget speech presented by the Treasurer. As a general observation, a fair bit of hubris came across from his expressions and in his presentation, but I guess we should not expect any less from Hon Mark McGowan, particularly given the significant buckets of money that he is managing to squirrel away as a result of the massive increase in revenue that we have seen in the state. It is a Thursday after all, and I suppose it has been very nice up to now. One part that irks me—I am sure it irks many members of the public—is the constant berating and comparisons of the debt levels that were projected versus the debt levels that exist. It is such a naive argument, and it drives me a bit silly. We have heard constant berating of the \$40-odd-billion debt that was projected. It is not recognised that debt continued to rise under the Labor government. It has come down, which is good to see. When we do the sums—one does not have to be a mathematical genius—we know the reason debt is going down is the extraordinary revenue growth that is occurring as a result of the mining sector and the GST fix by the very confident and able federal government in conjunction with the state government.

I reflect on the eve, almost, of the election. I am sure the Treasurer is quietly hoping for a Morrison government to be returned. Even though he has to get out there and support Anthony Albanese and do the things that he has to do, he would be quietly hoping for a return of the Morrison government. This state has done extraordinarily well from the Morrison government, with the delivery of record amounts of infrastructure funding, roads, rail and the GST floor. I do not think people could say any federal government has been kinder to the state of Western Australia than the present one. I hope the people of Western Australia recognise that on Saturday and we see that very able federal coalition returned to the Treasury benches in the federal government. I thought that would liven members up, but I am yet to get a response—it is a Thursday! I also congratulate the shadow Treasurer. Hon Dr Steve Thomas gave an incredible budget reply. His speech was absolutely incisive and laser-like.

Hon Stephen Dawson: He should be in the lower house.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: I hope that after the media frenzy around the federal election is over that our strong media here, *The West Australian* and the ABC, pick up some of the key themes that Hon Dr Steve Thomas has presented. He made some very interesting comments in his speech. I was riveted and I am sure the people of Western Australia will want further explanation on the state of our finances. I thought that one of the key things that came out is why, with record surpluses and record revenue, and even though the expenditure in the general government sector continues to rise—we will talk later about the efficiency of service delivery in this state—we still fail to see a major drawdown in state debt. I thought the member's comment very interesting about myriad—two dozen, I believe—special purpose accounts that are there so the government can squirrel away money in hollow logs! I know that Hon Dr Steve Thomas loves to talk about Scrooge McDuck and his money, so I have brought in another analogy—hollow log syndrome. We know that people have hollow logs so they can tuck their dollars away for a rainy day—maybe on the eve of the state election in 2025. Who knows? Putting those moneys away is less than efficient.

The opposition will raise these questions during the Committee of the Whole stage of this budget because we know the actual rate of return on those hollow logs. I think budget paper No 3 reports that the cost of debt to the state around 2.5 per cent, so every bit of debt that the state hold costs 2.5 per cent. Budget paper No 3 also says, conversely, that interest earnings on the public bank is 1.2 per cent. We know what it is like with a mortgage that has a redraw facility. People can knock down the interest so they do not pay the full interest rate; and if they can squirrel away an extra \$20 000 or \$30 000, they will reduce their interest payments. That is not the case with these special purpose accounts. We are earning less than we are paying in debt. We do not have a redraw facility on our hollow logs. Those hollow logs contain all sorts of funds, including hypothecated funds. I was very familiar with those when I was in the Western Australian Planning Commission, with the metropolitan region improvement fund, and we have the road trauma trust account. We have a raft of those accounts where money from the consolidated account has been squirreled away for a rainy day. I would love to have a full Treasury presentation on the state of those accounts. It would be great if we had a bit more transparency in the budget papers going forward. It would be really great to see the cost of those hollow logs. The shadow Treasurer greatly raised my interest on this issue. I was in thrall of his tremendous insight into this issue because it provided an excellent understanding of what is going on. What is the net amount in those hollow logs? How much has been tucked away?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: More and more.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: More and more! It would be great to have a graph of that in budget paper No 3, the overview, so it is transparent. I call on the Auditor General to look at this. It would be fantastic for a thorough analysis to be done. I have rubbed shoulders with former Treasury colleagues for many years. I am sure they get their directions from the Treasurer about putting together those budget papers. No disrespect to them, because they do their job, but it would be great if they could come here armed with some very good data on the trend of those special purpose accounts. They could put in the real cost of not paying down that debt. We could get a bit of a rule of thumb and, hypothetically, if \$10 billion could potentially have been directed to debt reduction but has not been—this is just a question—we could put it out there to the experts. We know that the differential between 1.2 per cent and 2.5 per cent is 130 basis points. That would be a lot of money on \$10 billion, potentially \$130 million a year. That is a lot of money that the state could save. It is a question that needs to be answered going forward on the overview. I am not trying to take anything away from the very able shadow Treasurer, because it was a point that he made that piqued my interest in this issue. I thank Hon Dr Steve Thomas for his very insightful assessment of that, because he has me interested in the matter.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Alternatively, the government could simply answer the questions that we ask.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: They could, and that would be fantastic. I am very happy to take an interjection from my colleague. It is just a suggestion.

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: I can see, yet again, Hon Darren West's hand up there by his head. He is obviously worrying about how this will all come out in the wash going forward. If I get my millions right, it is \$130 million per annum—who knows, it might be more! I know the government has an opportunity like none other to reduce debt, because as I said we saw the Morrison government do that amazing deal for Western Australia. I hope the people of Western Australia reward the Morrison government on Saturday for the incredible outcome the federal government was able to deliver for the state of Western Australia. I know Hon Mark McGowan will be quietly hoping for a return of the Morrison government.

Anyhow, I will move to my next point. Another colleague, Hon Tjorn Sibma, gave an excellent overview. It is great being number 4 on the list for the opposition in the budget debate because I have had the benefit of the incredible words of Hon Tjorn Sibma as he spoke about the issues affecting Metronet. It is an amazing expense. This issue is of interest to me because of my portfolio responsibilities around planning. The opposition will prosecute the case around the closure of the Armadale line; the time it will take to deliver the project is a big concern for the state of Western Australia. I would say it is also a very big concern for Hon Mark McGowan. I am worried that Hon Rita Saffioti may have bitten off a bit more than she can chew with the time frame for the delivery of this project. As I said previously, the good voters in Southern River, Armadale and all those areas south of the river, come 2025, I am sure, will be asking questions when they cannot catch a train. I can almost guarantee that is what will happen. I will be happy to be proven wrong, because that will be good for the community of Western Australia but it will be incredibly difficult to deliver that project on time.

We see the enormous investment of approximately \$9.5 billion in Metronet. We have questions. The opposition's duty is to raise questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of this investment. Yes, in 2017, the McGowan government came into power on the back of a promise to build Metronet. I must point to the work done by the Barnett government on the plan to deliver a railway to the airport, but it is still yet to be delivered. Here we are, going into the sixth year since that promise and the government is still yet to deliver that. I am sure it is coming soon. We do not know how many delays there will be, but we will get there! There have to be questions about that. From a planning perspective, we need to question many things.

One question is about the efficiency of our planning system to deliver—to capitalise on the value of that massive capital investment for our housing and our community situation. I do not believe we are doing enough on strategic planning. We are not delivering enough. I hear time and again from local governments, particularly in inner and middle-ring suburbs, that there is simply not enough investment being made into other forms of public transport, such as trackless trams. There is a lack of investment into planning and uplift of our density in those key transport-orientated nodes. Instead, we see this haphazard approach of just allowing market-led proposals and state development assessments not giving any consideration to schemes: "Let's not forget about strategic planning. If we can make a buck, we can put something out there that exceeds the recommended rates that the community has agreed to." Why are we not investing in strategic planning decisions to make sure that the massive investment in Metronet delivers for the people of Western Australia?

We can talk about some of those. The City of Stirling is a great example. Stirling train station is not yet developed in the way that we would like. There is a huge opportunity there for high-density development right on that train station. The government should be focusing on and tackling that. The work it is doing, the investment in tracks and wires, should be coupled with an investment into strategic land-use planning to deliver those outcomes so we see a return on this investment.

It is very troubling to see the fall in patronage on our public transport system. To be fair, COVID has definitely had an impact—there is no doubt about that—but we saw it fall away before COVID. We saw the press releases

saying that there had been an increase, but the record of 150 million boardings was under the Barnett government. We have never, ever exceeded that boarding rate. This government claims to be the government of public transport. It is pouring money into a system that it cannot even deliver to the community. That bothers me greatly, and I think the people of Western Australia need to hold the government to account with the massive concern that we have about the return on that investment—that \$9.5 billion.

That question has to be raised; it has to be put on notice. I have not yet formed an opinion on it, but I think it is a question that must be raised in the public square. The question is about this tracks-and-wires technology that has proven to be a very efficient technology until now. We have a world-class public transport system. It stands out in the world for the kilometres of tracks and wires that we have here in Perth vis-a-vis some of the other capital cities around the world. People should know that even though we have a very dispersed city, we have a world-class public transport system. The question has to be asked: What about the future of the transport revolution? How much has this government got an eye to the future beyond that tracks-and-wires technology? There will be a transport revolution coming to the world sometime soon. There is a transport revolution coming, and that transport revolution will include public transport and autonomous vehicles. That transport revolution will include a whole range of options that do not exist now. That transport revolution will include types of transport that will not have an impact on global warming or carbon. It will not have an impact because that transport revolution will involve either hydrogen or electric battery systems. That is the transport revolution that is coming our way. That is the transport revolution that Western Australia is very well positioned for, putting aside the investment currently in Metronet. We are very well positioned because of the incredible master plan for the City of Perth that was set out under the Stephenson–Hepburn plan. That transport revolution was eroded by the state when the government passed the Beeliar wetlands bill. I see Hon Dr Brad Pettitt probably agreeing with everything I have spoken about until now, but he has probably suddenly disagreed with me on that one. Fair enough. That is the transport revolution through which we could find ways to make sure we still develop the network in the transport corridors that can then be used for this new transport revolution, and it will probably not involve tracks and wires.

That is the question that must be asked by those planners. I hope that the Minister for Transport is talking to the experts in the Department of Transport and that it has invested enough. I hope that the director general of Transport is getting his marching orders from the government to invest enough into the future transport revolution. I can tell members now—I have spoken about this publicly in the press—that we are not seeing it on the surface. For example, I refer just to the issue of electric vehicle generation and recharge. There is some funding now being welcomed for regional recharge stations. We see that repeated verbatim in all the regional snapshots; it is like a page had to be filled. Yes, thank you; we know the government has put something in the order of \$50 million into new recharge stations; good on it. We have finally got something happening there. But do members know what? If we go to the issue of retrofitting charge stations to old apartment blocks, we are not seeing the Department of Commerce apply the kind of proactive measures we see in New South Wales, for example, where strata bodies are being properly advised on how to do the technical aspects of it. We are not seeing a proactive approach to assist those big decisions that have to be made to ensure that people who own an electric vehicle can charge them if they live in an apartment that does not have charging stations. Although I digress a little, I think this is a very pertinent point, because it underscores the fact that this government is so focused on these tracks and wires that it is not looking enough at the alternatives. Would it not be great to see a small part of that \$9.5 billion being projected for the delivery of the transport revolution? I want to just congratulate my colleague Hon Tjorn Sibma for his laser-like focus on this issue. I am sure he will continue to prosecute the case, and I will support him in my role as the shadow planning minister.

Having covered those matters, I go to my portfolio specifically. We have seen a few changes in the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. It is not a significant amount, but we have seen some spending changes there and some new initiatives put forward that I think are worthy of some discussion. In the heritage space, it is good to see the Fremantle Prison getting additional patronage. It is very good to see people getting out and about and starting to do a bit more. Although it does not appear in this part of the budget—I assume it is in the tourism budget—I welcome the improvements or repairs to our submarine at the WA Maritime Museum. I think that is a good thing because it is good to keep our defence heritage, which is very important in the state given the enormous investment by the federal coalition government in our defence spend here in Western Australia. We are going to have a future in the defence industry. Of course, my local member, Hon Melissa Price, is doing a tremendous job in the defence industry portfolio that she holds in terms of delivery and making sure we have a massive increase in construction of those defence assets here in Western Australia. That is fantastic work by Hon Melissa Price. I am sure she will be re-elected with a massive majority again come Saturday. I am looking forward to reporting on that in the coming weeks.

But let us go back to the issue of planning. There are a few things that are worthy of discussion. Although it is sort of in the agricultural heritage space, I will talk about the spending on the Aboriginal Heritage Act. I have raised considerable concerns about the delivery of that act. We know work on those regulations is underway. A lot of money is certainly being spent on that process and I hope that it is being directed towards proper consultation with the people who will actually be impacted by this. What we did not see in this place was any real evidence that a serious discussion had been held about the impacts of that legislation on the average punter—the small contractor and the operator—who just want to do some work. We can see some funding in the budget for that. Whether the government

can deliver those regulations in a sensible way and make what I think is an appalling piece of legislation into something that is moderately workable, remains to be seen. With its abolition of the department of Aboriginal affairs, this government seems to have a propensity to outsource everything and to leave it to run on its own and let people somehow survive, but I can tell members that that will come back to bite it when the people of Western Australia finally realise the impact it has on them. I am talking about the small end of town. The big end of town certainly has some major concerns, as articulated and discussed at length in this place.

The second issue is with phase 2 of the planning reforms. The Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2022 that has been rushed into this place will extend the time frame for applications to the state development assessment unit. I might have an opportunity to talk about that bill later today, so I will not go on about it at length, but people in the industry constantly talk to me about the inability of this government to deliver on proper strategic land-use planning. People in the industry do not normally want to put their heads up and say this publicly, but they are saying that there has been a lack of effort by this government on strategic planning. Yes, those people are quite happy, publicly at least, with some of the other pathways that have been put out, because of course industry will probably not object if the government is just taking away a step here and there and just avoid the framework of planning that has served us and our community very well.

As part of the Western Australian planning reform, the Minister for Planning put out some massively detailed draft development assessment panel regulations for consideration. Yesterday, during question time, we were told that around 113 submissions had been received. That could be contextualised to mean that the government is listening, but how about the government doing its work properly and doing that reform well. An additional \$3 million can be found in the out years for spending in this area. Let us hope that those reforms can actually be delivered in the time frame because none of the phase 2 planning reforms have been delivered, apart from these ad hoc approaches put through under the cover of COVID. That is a grave concern. That is one of the main planning issues that I wanted to raise.

Land supply is also a significant matter that is worthy of further discussion. I put out a press release that aptly explains the situation and the land supply pathway at the moment, particularly for industrial land. The heading on that press release reads “The State Budget Fails to Address Constipated Industrial Land Supply”. It is constipated. The industrial land supply system is constipated by the fact that it is not —

A government member: Explain that word.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: It is a word that aptly describes the land supply situation.

For years we have not delivered enough industrial land for the land supply pipeline in Western Australia. We are now starting to see a shortage of industrial land. I am told by people in the industry that they can still buy a two-hectare block of land in Neerabup or wherever, but they are running out very quickly because demand is increasing and we are going to see a reduction in the supply pipeline. This government has provided a belated response in an effort to try to turn things around by letting DevelopmentWA retain an extra \$68-odd million of dividends, which is money that will come back to the state eventually. We have to manage ahead. These things come and go in waves. This takes time and we need to be quicker off the mark, which we have failed to see happen. We saw that with the Oakajee Strategic Industrial Area. So little has been done with that place in terms of delivering on some of the promises. Despite the grandiose announcements, I am yet to see the delivery of serviceable land at that site. It has also happened with lot 350 in my region of the goldfields. We have heard gratuitous comments from some members in this and the other place—I am talking of the local member and the minister—about the ability to actually deliver on lot 350. Comments were made that it was the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder that held the management order, but when we dug down, we found it was the state that was failing to deal with those approvals on time.

Then the state government jumped in like a white knight and said that it was going to take over. That was fair enough. That was its chance, but 12 months later what has been done? Due to an air of desperation, the government has finally allocated something like \$11 million of that extra \$50 million in earnings that has been retained to drive an outcome for industrial land in Kalgoorlie. It is a much-needed outcome. I have spoken to members of that industry who are making decisions about their investments. They have said to me, “We don’t know whether we should be investing here. We might go to South Australia because it’s easier. It’s really hard to get a decently sized piece of industrial land in Kalgoorlie where there is a huge opportunity for downstream processing.” This government has frittered away time while making these belated attempts. I welcome the additional funding from DevelopmentWA and I hope that we actually see the delivery of this land because it will deliver jobs to the region and achieve things.

Tied in with that issue, of course, is the realignment of rail around Kalgoorlie. It is a vital piece of work. Again, the federal government is leading the charge and has provided funding in the order of \$2 million for some planning work. The state government has just kicked the can down the road and put the issue at end of the forward estimates. What is it waiting for? It should get on with investing in strategic planning now so that we can look at the possibility of realigning the rail. That would ensure that the national rail network can come straight into that hub of industrial development to facilitate more efficient trade with the eastern states and maybe even create a massive intermodal facility at Kalgoorlie so that we can start to distribute goods into the north west. That brings me to another point.

I would love to see the Wiluna to Meekatharra road sealed and finalised, or even the shortcut from Northam through to Meekatharra and Wiluna. It would be great to see that project facilitated. Those are the sorts of enabling economic projects that will transform our state. We know that industrial land is such a critical part of our employment and our economic strategy and in diversifying our economy so that we are less reliant on those ongoing revenue streams that come straight out of the royalties stream. We have to go down that path and we have to take some of the pressure off some of the choke points in and around Perth. I am a strong supporter of that and I hope that I can get some attention on the industrial land supply issue because it is vital that we do more in that space. This is not necessarily about throwing more money at the issue. It is about spending the money more efficiently and ensuring that we get those outcomes going forward.

People may want to avail themselves of one of my press releases, but with this lack of land supply, the differential between applications lodged and conditional and final approvals being given is starting to choke up in a massive way. If members are interested, I am very happy to table it. I put it out in my press release. For the benefit of Hansard, I am referring to the regional summary of industrial land activity for the March quarter of 2022. We are seeing a very clear choking up of those applications vis-a-vis the final approvals that are coming out the back into the system. I encourage the Ministers for Lands and Planning, because those are related, to focus more on the strategic planning and electronic approvals processes around that. Another approximately \$2 million has been allocated to planning and land use for improvements to its systems, as seen on page 729 of the budget papers. There is additional funding for “Digital Capability Fund” and “State Planning System”, with \$1.08 million for the out year. It is not a lot, yet I am sure that investment will deliver a bang for your buck, because something I am very passionate about is making sure those systems work more efficiently than they currently do.

The other funding piece for the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage that I think is worthy of comment—I have spoken publicly about this—is the transfer of the market-led proposal process across to Planning. To me that raises a number of questions. I remain to be convinced that that is going to work. We know that that can cover anything from health service types of items through to land, development, and market-led proposals; it is not just all about the South Fremantle power station. It is not just about that very non-transparent deal going on with that process. It is not about those little pieces of A-class reserves that people get their eyes on around the western suburbs, and think, “We might put in a market-led proposal.” It is not just about that. In fact, the vast majority of those proposals have nothing to do with the land or planning space. I assume it is because the very capable Anthony Kannis was appointed as director general of the department. At the same time as his appointment was announced in a press release, by the wisdom of government it decided it was going to put the market-led proposal process into the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. That raises questions about the capability of Planning to deliver. This is not any reflection on the officers involved at all. This is about whether we have the wraparound supports for this role. All major procurements—it certainly was the case when I was working in government—were always administered by the Department of Finance, even for things, for example, like if someone in the department of planning was doing procurement around a new payroll system. It still had to be assessed by Department of Finance staff embedded into the department of planning because it comes under the scrutiny of the Department of Finance. They are the people with the expertise in those complex procurement negotiations, contract negotiations and contract management systems. They are the experts. When that does not work properly, we see spectacular failure right across the board.

We have a minister who, on a daily basis, is dealing with proponents in relation to land, specifically land and planning matters and has statutory approvals requirements around the planning system. Is it right to have that process tucked into the department effectively under the administration of that minister? Personally, I do not think it is the right way to go; it raises a whole range of issues. I am not certainly not criticising my former colleague Hon Rita Saffioti, whom I spent a few years with in Treasury when she was there as an officer before she moved on to work with former Premier Geoff Gallop. I am not criticising her; I am asking whether it is the right process. That needs to be questioned, because I do not believe it is right. We should have a separation from that planning space. That is a high integrity role that must be maintained at that level, independent of the process around sales and increased value to the state in terms of sums of outcome. That process should have been retained within the Department of Finance at arms’ length. That is my view and I will continue to prosecute that case. That extra line on page 729 of budget paper No 2 for the funding of the market-led proposal process is worthy of further questioning.

I want to touch on a couple of other things in this portfolio space. I obviously welcome, under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 730, the Land Administration Act amendments. I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes of those draft amendments. We need change in that space; that would be a worthy outcome. I am looking forward to scrutinising that and putting some laser focus on whether it will deliver on our crown land estate in particular, because of the challenges involved with red tape. Let us move that forward with speed and haste, but done properly, so it results in the right outcome for traditional owners, pastoralists, people wanting to develop amazing land estate, sustainable energy producers and miners. We have to find a faster pathway to deal with the incredibly complex crown land estate, which is a bit of heritage from our colonial system that has changed over years and years. We need to get to the point at which we have more certainty going forward, so that people who want to avail themselves of economic activity can do so.

On this point, I will summarise, because this page also outlines Aboriginal Lands Trust divestment. I welcome the fact that some investment has gone into that. There is no additional funding, apart from an additional \$350 million. I am prepared to say congratulations to the government for putting forward that extra \$350 million, because we got an answer from the Treasurer saying that it was new money and a new fund for remote housing for essential and municipal services in those remote communities. If it is done properly, coupled with land tenure changes, that would allow for a longer term sustainable outcome for some of those remote communities and particularly for our Aboriginal traditional owners. Some of the people who are resident in those communities maybe do not even have traditional owner rights, but that is their home, and they could get on with their lives more effectively as a bit of a step up to allow that to occur and bring those communities into something resembling the high standard of living that we have. I think that would be a great outcome. I am looking forward to scrutinising that in more detail going forward and watching its delivery in coupling those changes to the Land Administration Act and the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act, which I believe will come to this place sometime in the next, who knows, six or 12 months. There are some things in that space on page 730 that provide some promise, but I hope it does not get bogged down in a bureaucratic process that ends up not delivering.

My last comment on planning portfolio matters is about the Perth City Deal, which I also welcome. I welcome the funding that has gone in. We have seen the funding and the little video that the Minister for Housing put out on the master plan for the Perth Cultural Centre. It is great to see that piece of work ongoing. I cannot recall off the top of my head the exact amount of funding involved in that. That was also part of the Perth City Deal, ably supported by the coalition federal government. That is a fantastic outcome. I think the history of that bears a bit of reflection. The incredible strategic decision about the Perth Cultural Centre was made by my former boss, the former minister Hon John Day. That included the planning that was done around the Museum. The preservation and redesigning of that wonderful heritage building has provided an amazing piece of community infrastructure for the future. Importantly, a decision had been made by, I think, the Carpenter government to put the museum out at the East Perth power station. That would have been a travesty because it would have broken up that wonderful heritage cultural precinct we have in the Perth Cultural Centre with the concentration of those amazing assets—the State Library of Western Australia, the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip. They are amazing assets for our future. A master plan is going to be presented and I am very excited to see it grow. My former boss Hon John Day and I were very passionate in that office about ensuring that was brought back to the centre. I believe the original plan by Sir Charles Court or someone was made back in those times when the idea was to bring everything together. We are now seeing the revamping and revitalisation of that wonderful community asset. Well done to the government for working collaboratively with the federal government on that that project. I look forward to it happening in the future.

Those are my main points on my shadow portfolio matters. I will now focus a little on my region because it is a bit of a mixed bag for the regions. I want to reflect on a couple of things about regional funding in the time I have remaining. It is a very mixed bag. I will start with a bouquet of sorts to the government for finally recognising that in the Kimberley—I will start in the north and move my way down—there is a lawlessness crisis and a family crisis and something needs to happen. There is funding of \$40-odd million for the Kimberley youth and community justice response package and \$15 million for delivery of an on-country residential facility to provide an alternative to detention. I had been working on that with some of the stakeholders prior to entering Parliament. It has enormous community support. We now see this \$15 million in funding in the budget. I thank the Minister for Regional Development for the answer, which was probably more transparent than some of the answers I get to my questions, that she believes Myroodah Station is probably the preferred location for this facility. I think the government is at least putting its toe in the water to do something about this problem and to find solutions other than sending kids to Banksia Hill Detention Centre, or not sending them when maybe they should go to Banksia Hill. It is a diversion that will be more culturally appropriate, suitable and geographically appropriate in the sense that people will stay closer to their place of residence and be able to have greater community involvement.

I hope the \$15 million means that by the end of next year kids up there by will be involved in a diversion program and we will see an end to some of the horrendous behaviour that has been allowed to foster across our community without any control. It started with the community standing up to challenge on this issue. As I said, a few months back, I ran community forums across the Kimberley. I hope they had an impact. We had something in the order of 400 people at the forums over five days. People passionately raised issues and we heard some sad stories about the fear permeating the community because of the home invasions, about a loss of a sense of pride and about vehicles being smashing and ruined. This is non-discriminatory action by kids. These kids are attacking their own families—their grandparents. People are losing vehicles and do not have access to cars. There are very sad cases in places like Fitzroy Crossing. I know some of my colleagues are also making representations.

I congratulate the government to an extent for at least recognising there is a problem. I do not want to get ahead of myself so let us see how it goes. There is funding in the budget for Operation Regional Shield, but my assessment of that \$2-odd million is that it is a little bit of smoke and mirrors. It looks like some of that funding has been spent already. We saw an additional police effort but it took so long. Seriously, what was the Minister for Police doing for two months before it was announced in January? It should have started in November. This problem had built

up to a crescendo before we finally saw some action. I know the hardworking police out there are trying their best but when we see closed-circuit television footage of cars chasing police we know something is wrong. We have lost the plot as a community and as a society when that behaviour is allowed to occur. When the crims are chasing the police, something is wrong. Anyhow, we have some investment and night patrols have been boosted—excellent. The Shire of Halls Creek initiated work on night patrols and night youth support officers. That is fantastic and I think that model has been replicated in Derby. Attempts to solve the problem started with local governments and it is good to see the state is finally getting behind them. Although some of it is not new money, let us hope the \$2.5 million to Operation Regional Shield to tackle youth crime continues.

This is not just a problem in the Kimberley, by the way; this is a regional problem. I commented on the terrible toll it has put on our taxidivers in Port Hedland. There is currently a petition by the industry, which members are welcome to sign, requesting that more be done in this space. Let us see some action.

There is a fair bit of investment in the Target 120 program. There is the Kimberley Schools Project, keeping young people in the region engaged with the education system. Minister for Education and Training, welcome. I hope that we do not continue to see the kind of smoke and mirrors with the data that was going on before. Let us see some transparency and accountability on attendance in these communities. We hear that it is very hard to get a proper understanding of the actual picture. There are kids up to 10 years of age who have not actually spent a day at school. We have to change the system. There is no point throwing millions of dollars into a new science lab in Halls Creek if no-one is turning up. It is great for a ribbon-cutting ceremony, minister, but think about getting the kids at school and interested. That might involve some serious debate about the model that we apply and the cultural aspect of how communities across the board respond and the value they place on education. We need to make sure that going to school is no longer seen as an option and going to school is actually a requirement. Kids need to go school. I believe research shows that kids with 90 per cent school attendance in their early life go on to have success in later life. Schools can have a lot of different aspects to them and represent different ways for kids to learn. I am no expert, but this investment must be targeted. Let us see a less punitive approach taken to data transparency and a more engaging response on this matter as we go forward. I know things were said in this place last week but I stand by the comments I make because this needs to occur and we need more transparency in this space.

The housing crisis is another issue in the Kimberley. I am probably spending too much time on the Kimberley so I will be quick, but this issue applies across regional areas. There is \$99.4 million to spot purchase and build new Government Regional Officers' Housing. I wish the government had stepped up during the downturn when the industry was suffering—we knew it was going to change—and move forward with a bit of government construction, because it could have been done a whole lot cheaper and whole lot more effectively.

It is about looking ahead, and that is what we do not see from this government. The amount of \$99.4 million has been cut and pasted into every snapshot for my region and even down into the wheatbelt. Three pages have been produced and then cut and pasted. The fact is that \$99.4 million over four years for the whole state will not build a lot of houses. We know that enormous rents are being paid at the moment and spot purchases also have an impact on the general market. I think there needs to be some serious evaluation of how effective this will be for the housing crisis. It is *deja vu* with this government. We saw it happen under the previous Carpenter–Gallop regime when things got totally out of control in Karratha. It took the Barnett–Grylls partnership to drive hard and deliver land and property in that space. We saw the absolute transformation of Karratha, which continues to grow to this day. In fact, the work that the City of Karratha is doing to develop new high-rise opportunities has been made possible only by the incredible amount of work that was done through that massive investment during the Barnett–Grylls era. It was vital for the engine rooms of our economy. That needs to move forward with haste and diligence, because the state government is not taking a proper role in this. The state government is not really considering our engine rooms, whether they be Kalgoorlie, Karratha, Port Hedland or Broome. Those major centres are in my region. I know that many other regional centres have big needs, but this is what we are seeing—\$99.4 million to spot purchase and build new Government Regional Officers' Housing right across regional Western Australia. It has been cut and pasted over and again into every regional snapshot.

As a matter of transparency, I would love to see the separation of those region-specific matters. I say this to whoever is responsible for producing these snapshots: would it not be great to have region-specific initiatives in the first list and then list all the generic ones after that? We have to talk about them generally, but at least we would know what we are looking at. It takes a bit of work for members of the opposition to understand what is going into the regions; it is hard to fathom. We have to do quite a bit of digging, do we not, Hon Dr Steve Thomas? I know that he is a member who digs and digs, and will continue to highlight and expose the government for its skulduggery with the outcomes of this budget. We can see that happening, and I am thankful that we have a fantastic shadow Treasurer operating on our side of the fence, who will no doubt one day be the Treasurer of this great state.

The last point I will cover is regional roads. We have seen a massive investment in regional roads, particularly in my region. I am running out of time, but there are two major initiatives that I absolutely welcome. They are a fantastic outcome under the leadership of the Morrison government. The state has come on board. Hon Rita Saffioti has her massive kit of money from the commonwealth—\$500 million to seal Tanami Road. That is an amazing outcome

from a social justice point of view, as it will provide a sealed road for the communities of Balgo, Billiluna, Mulan and others in the area. Of course, there will also be huge opportunities from providing an alternative logistics supply chain to the Northern Territory. It will cut off 12 hours of driving time from Alice Springs to Fitzroy Crossing and it will be an alternative route from South Australia and the south-eastern states to the Pilbara. That will be fantastic. This is the type of nation-building project—that term has probably been given a bad name by some TV shows—that we need to see. It is fantastic to see the state get on board with the federal government with that project.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Federal money.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: There is \$400 million of federal money to seal that road. The project is long overdue and has been pushed with great vigour by the Shire of Halls Creek. The shire president, Malcolm Edwards, has done a fantastic job. He has been a sterling advocate for that piece of infrastructure.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: It always does. We can see the \$500 million in the budget, but we know that \$400 million of taxpayers' dollars has been provided by the federal government. It is a fantastic outcome.

The other big piece of infrastructure that is of a similar nation-building standard is Outback Way. I believe something in the order of \$600 million will be spent. That is a tremendous outcome. I believe it is called the longest shortcut. If we think of the diagonal lines on the British flag, these two projects will have similar diagonal lines—the massive shortcuts that will enable our economy to diversify.

On the delivery of logistics into the state, we saw a woeful response from the minister when we had a crisis in the amount of stock on the shelves in Western Australia. I have heard, and I am happy for her to correct the record, that it took her office at least a week—this has come from people in the industry—to respond to the crisis and to get industry people together and say that the basics in life on the shelves were running out.

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [12.36 pm]: It is very good to stand today and speak on the budget. I want to take a bit of a different angle from what other members have spoken about. I am not going to dwell on the \$5.7 billion surplus, the iron ore price or the fluctuations in state debt. I want to look at the budget through the lens of what I see as a series of major challenges—some may say crises—that we are facing in this state and how the budget responds to them. Members might not be surprised to hear that I will be looking at climate, some of the challenges around urban sprawl and transport, and housing and homelessness.

Before I do that, I want to acknowledge that there are many good things in this budget that are worth highlighting. I will start with one that I have been going on about for probably a year—getting more electric vehicles on our roads. I was really pleased to see that we will have a substantial rebate of \$3 500 for electric vehicles, which will put us on par with the rest of the country. Unfortunately, EVs will be pretty hard to get for the next 12 months, but there is some other good stuff in the budget, such as the subsidies for workplace charging stations. That is the kind of stuff that we need to see happening, and I wanted to acknowledge that. I also want to acknowledge some of the investment in upgrades on Rottne Island. I see that renewables will soon power 75 per cent of the island's needs.

As someone who was previously on the Heritage Council of Western Australia and is passionate about Fremantle, I know that the \$12.6 million for Fremantle Prison, a World Heritage site, is really important. It is the only bit of built World Heritage in our state, so that is a really important investment. I flag at this point that there is an even older prison in Fremantle—the Roundhouse. It is also state-owned, but it has not had any investment and it desperately needs it. I put that on the radar for the next budget. The investment in Victoria Quay in Fremantle is also a good start. I would argue that we have had a few false starts on that one, but I hope that we can see some of that investment hitting the ground through this budget process.

I also want to acknowledge the native forest just transition plan, which I think is really important. Extra money will go towards helping workers in that area transition when native forest logging ends in 2024.

There is some really good new investment in the mental health space, with an extra \$1.3 billion for health services, and alcohol and drug services. That is really important. I will come back to that a bit later, but that is really key.

Also, this budget refers to some really important structural changes in the housing space that have not received a lot of attention. I acknowledge them because we have been calling for these things for some time. The 50 per cent land concession on build-to-rent is important. Build-to-rent is such an important product to have in the mix. We have not had it much in this state yet, partly because of the tax structure. The one in Subiaco is the only one I am aware of, but we see it more widespread globally and even across Australia. This adjustment to the tax regime will make build-to-rent happen. It will provide ongoing, secure, professionally managed rentals for people in perpetuity who choose to rent a place. I think that is already about a third of households. Having more of that product and more product diversity will be a good outcome. I acknowledge that and I acknowledge the duty transfer rebate for off-the-plan apartments. I will come back to sprawl again a bit later, but if we are serious about tackling the longest city in the world that Perth has become, encouraging apartments in the right place and getting the tax regime right for those is really important, as is the bonus for offering social housing. It is only five per cent. In Fremantle, we had a 10 or 15 per cent social housing density bonus. Nonetheless, it is really welcome, as is the \$350 million for

remote housing construction for Aboriginal communities. That has flown under the radar, but it is a really significant investment and it is really good to see. I acknowledge that this budget has some really worthwhile new initiatives, but I also want to state that all those bits added up make about one per cent of the budget.

This budget fails to deal with some more fundamental issues around how we will tackle the big challenges that are on our doorstep and on the horizon. Climate is key, as is transport and land-use planning, and how we deal with homelessness and affordable housing. This is where the budget is less successful. Too much in the budget is business as usual; it does not step up to take those challenges seriously and head-on.

I want to start talking about climate by noting something that was said in the Premier's budget speech that I fully agree with. The Premier said —

Climate change will be one of our dramatic changes in the years ahead. In order to guarantee our State's prosperity for future generations, we have to meet this challenge, head on.

I absolutely agree with the sentiments, but the test is: are we meeting those challenges head-on in the way that the science would say that we are? WA's emissions continue to rise. In fact, we are the only state in which emissions are rising. It is now more than 20 per cent above what they were in 2005, which is the key measuring point. Another way of looking at it is that Western Australia has some of the highest emissions per capita on the planet, if not the highest, with around 35 tonnes per person. To put that in context, that is double the per capita emissions of someone in the US. That is four times the per capita emissions of someone in China and eight times the world average, which is pretty extraordinary. I appreciate that some of those come from industry but even if we take those out, we are well above the world average. There are many, many things we need to do to challenge that.

A key part of the announcement was around the extra \$500 million that was added to the \$750 million climate action fund. An amount of \$1.25 billion sounds like a good chunk of money for a climate action fund to address climate change, and I was pretty excited to hear that. Delving into the budget paper on this, which I encourage people to look at it, we see that there are some good things. As I talked about before, there is \$62 million for Rottneest Island renewables and \$36.5 million for 10 000 rebates of \$3 500 for electric vehicle upgrades, with \$31 million for climate action research planning to support government agencies. I assume that is for the sectoral emission reduction strategies process that we will see happen in late 2023. There is another \$22.6 million for charging stations. As I turned the page, I started to lose enthusiasm because already we start to see stuff that was mentioned on the page before repeated on the following page. It has \$31 million for climate action research and planning. Then it refers to an Exmouth Gulf coordinating body. I am not sure how that or the Gngangara groundwater allocation plan or air quality monitoring at Port Hedland are particularly relevant to a climate action fund. We start to realise this fund is all pot and not much soup. It is seriously a largely empty or dry pot, and not much action is attached to it.

As we go further and further through the fact sheet, we see that it refers to the plastic bag and single-use coffee cup bans. Again, I have no understanding of how they are linked to climate action. They are good initiatives and I fully support them, but they are not climate action. I am being generous when I added these up. I added up all the initiatives I could find that related to climate action. I got to \$185 million or \$186 million of a \$1.25 billion pot. Most of that \$185 million will not be spent this financial year. There is 15 per cent of the pot and maybe half that will be spent this financial year. There is \$350 million for softwood plantations on top of that. But a key point that came out of this for me is that we might have a big pot of money and a climate action fund, but we are not doing climate action. A budget is about getting the stuff on the ground and doing the projects—not just creating a giant pot that we might use in the future for undefined projects. We are disappointed about where we are going with climate action because there is not much action in this climate action fund. It is putting money into a giant pot that is yet to be filled. That is disappointing.

As I talked about previously in this place, it is not as though we are short of ideas. I refer to the motion I did only a few months ago around quick wins. I mean, they are so obvious. They are clearly done by many other jurisdictions with good results—whether it is LED streetlighting, which would reduce emissions by 50 tonnes and save money; whether it is around encouraging net zero housing; or whether it is around urban tree planting program and electric buses. Do members know what is in this budget? It is more money for diesel buses so that we can manage the closing of the Armadale line. That is clearly in there. The Anthony Albanese federal opposition made some announcements about electric buses. There is no money in this budget to do electric buses—that I can find. There is no money for other kinds of electric transport like e-bikes and other things that give people options.

We talked about housing retrofits. That is an amazing opportunity whereby we can help the people who have the least money in our community to reduce costs in a way that would save those households up to \$1 600 in bills annually and reduce emissions by over 250 000 tonnes a year. There are many opportunities. Heat pumps is a technology that is becoming very well known and increasingly standardised globally. I noticed the whole of the Netherlands has literally banned gas and mandated heat pumps in all new dwellings. It is pulling out of gas. Heat pumps can use 80 per cent less energy and save households a huge amount of money. But we have to get them in there. I noticed that the Victorian state government as part of its budget has come out with a new 50 per cent rebate of up to \$1 000 for heat pump systems for people who live there. Again, it is because it works. It is logical stuff that we are seeing

governments across Australia doing. We have a huge pot of money. We could have done it this budget. We could have got on and done some stuff that would have seen households lower their emissions and lower their bills, but all we have done is create a very large pot with no action attached to it, unfortunately. There are many things that we could be doing in that area.

Although the funding for Rottneest was good—again, I am very happy to be corrected on this—I cannot find a single dollar in the budget for renewable investment of our main grid on the south west interconnected system. How can we have a budget with a huge surplus that has not put a cent into renewable energy? As I have said again and again, everybody who knows about climate, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and every scientist, says that this is the decade for action. Our state has about 30 per cent, up to one-third, renewable energy on its grid. We have two-thirds to go. Why are we not investing in that? This is a key question. This is the time to do it. I want to come back to this theme again. We have a budget with a huge surplus and we have the ability to speed up transition, but the government is sitting on its hands. It is sitting on a mountain of money—putting it in a pot and not spending it—when it should be doing something with it.

One of my great frustrations is that it appears, from looking at one section of the budget, that the government is going to spend money—more money will be going into this than subsidising electric vehicles, probably one bit of the budget that was pronounced as the key response to climate—by subsidising Woodside Energy to the tune of about \$52 million for the construction of a supply base and chemical processing storage facility to support oil and gas operations in the Browse Basin. To put it another way, we will subsidise a petroleum and gas company that just made a record post-tax profit of \$3.5 billion so that it can set up and create another major climate bomb, to put it frankly, which is what Browse would be. The government intends to spend \$52 million of public money to create another fossil fuel project in a decade when everybody, from the International Energy Agency to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is saying that we must stop creating new coal, gas and oil projects. We need to leave fossil fuels in the ground. We are literally subsidising these projects more than we are subsidising electric vehicles. We need to put that in perspective. That is at the heart of this budget. I often say—this is not in the press releases—that we can tell a government's true priority not by its media statements but by what is in its budget. We have seen that the government is subsidising new oil and gas projects in this budget and underspending on the Climate Action Fund. We need to be really clear about that.

The next issue I want to talk about is sustainable transport in the cities. There is no doubt that this is a very big part of this budget. Spending on road and rail transport is pretty huge. We are talking about \$14.3 billion over the next four years, including commitments of \$7.1 billion for metropolitan and regional road projects and \$6 billion for Metronet projects. The total amount committed for Metronet is around \$9.1 billion. I am on the record as saying that Metronet is a good project but it is missing some serious bits. If we are going to spend over \$9 billion on public transport, that should transform a city. It should make a city one in which people literally have good transport choices, so they can get out of their cars if they choose and move around the city in other ways. Somehow, we are spending \$9 billion and we will still be one of the most car-dependent cities in the world. That takes a special trick to work. At the moment so much of Metronet is basically focused on only extending the network into urban sprawl, which encourages further urban sprawl. We can match it up with some serious road spending.

A press release that came out prior to the budget basically stated this much more clearly than I ever could. It said that a \$100 million new Tonkin Road project would unlock 10 000 houses. In other words, the government is going to provide a \$10 000 subsidy for each of those houses on the urban fringe. Basically, that is what the press release said. Is that really what we want to encourage—that the new section of the road would unlock houses north of Ellenbrook? The main beneficiaries of that subsidy are property developers who took the punt to buy some land out there. The main cost will be borne by taxpayers who are subsidising that at \$10 000 for every block of land, totalling \$100 million. The ongoing implication is that we will end up with a city that is sprawled out even more. Research done by Curtin University showed that when we add in all the services, the average subsidy—that road is just one part of the subsidy—ends up being over \$90 000 for every building block. This is at the heart of this budget. We are continuing to subsidise the urban sprawl again and again.

Not many of the Metronet projects are in the central subregion. One that comes to mind is the Armadale level crossing project, which may be the only one. That project is about cars. If we look at Infrastructure Australia's assessment of that project, we see that almost 90 per cent of the benefit is for car drivers. It is not about public transport users. Four per cent of the benefit is for public transport users. That is the assessment of Infrastructure Australia. We talk about this as a public transport project. The truth of the matter is that from the perspective of public transport users, it is mostly a downsize. They will have a train line that will be closed for 18 months.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: At least.

Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT: Yes, at least—probably two years.

The cost benefits for a whole bunch of these Metronet projects is outrageous. The Byford rail extension is another one. The cost benefit for some of these projects is extremely poor. Projects that would give us a really strong cost benefit—I return to something that Hon Neil Thomson talked about in his speech—involve inner city transport such as light rail or trackless trams. Inner city transit options that can give us uplift would clearly provide a much better return on

investment. At the very least, we have to match the stuff we are doing on the edge—the current Metronet projects—by doing this stuff. Not even a single line in this budget refers to planning for that. It is almost like the promises that were made in 2017 to get on and do that planning, so that people living in the inner core have the option of moving around by second-tier public transport, whether it be light rail, trackless trams or rapid buses, has been forgotten. It is nowhere to be seen. All we are doing is subsidising transport to the edge and enabling sprawl in the process. That is not a smart budget. It is actually doubling down on business as usual and doubling down on a model that is not sustainable. Perth is the longest city in the world. We are only going to get longer and, as a result, it will be harder for future budgets to respond to these things. I could talk a lot more about that.

I acknowledge that \$1.25 billion has been spent on the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, which is about the same amount of money that the government is investing in the Climate Action Fund for WA's low carbon future. An additional \$400 million has been allocated in this budget for stages 2 and 3 of the BORR. That is an extraordinary amount of money—for what I am not sure. The benefits of these projects need to be criticised much more. Building the road will have some pretty clear impacts on the critically endangered western ringtail possum. Many of those individuals will be displaced as a result. Only 3 500 of these possums are left in the state. The area is a major habitat for those marsupials and the black cockatoos, which will also be impacted when 71.5 hectares of land will be cleared for the road. It feels to me like there are better ways we could do this, and better projects we could be planning.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT: I am continuing my comments from before the break, when I was reflecting on the large number of infrastructure projects, especially road projects, that this state government is focused on. It is not often that I find myself in agreement with the editorial approach of *The West Australian*, but an interesting question about the state budget is posed in Neale Prior's comment in Saturday's *The West Australian*. I am happy to table the newspaper clipping if people would like. The article is entitled, "Why the Premier should be saving for the bust". The article raises the question of why the state government is planning to spend \$9 billion on roads and \$6 billion on Metronet in a market in which it is extremely hard to get both labour and key resources. It states that the last thing business in Western Australia needs right now is a state government planning to spend billions on major rail and road project across WA. It continues, and I quote —

While we can argue about the merits of individual projects, there are multiple dangers in governments spending big at the same time as the private sector.

He states also —

But good government is about focusing on the world as it is now, and right now we are in the middle of a boom in which potential benefits for working people are being eaten by inflation.

There are interesting challenges around when some of these projects should be done and how they should be done. A key question for the budget estimates process is: when is the best time for these projects? Some of these projects may need to be done in the next financial year and the one after. However, we think that many of these projects could be delayed. The Bunbury Outer Ring Road is a good example of that. The urgency of fixing congestion around Bunbury has not ever particularly come to my mind as I have driven to Margaret River. I think there are opportunities for delaying some of these projects and using that delay to improve those projects. I again come back to the Bunbury Outer Ring Road and some of the alignments and the impacts of the massive land clearing required for that project. We also need to make sure that we get the spread of those capital works right. By the sound of it, these projects are largely bipartisan, so it is not as though they will not happen. However, there is a question around how and when we do them.

That raises a more fundamental question about this budget. I note that the constraints on delivering infrastructure and large-scale capital projects gives us the opportunity to focus the budget on things that need to happen right now. A couple of things are at the heart of this. I will come to housing and homelessness in a moment. The services in that space are very important. However, even in the transport space, which I have been talking about, there is a real opportunity to pivot to some smaller projects that will give people a real transport choice. For the benefit of those members who want to follow along, page 601 of budget paper No 2 refers to what the government will be spending in the transport sector. I am interested in some of the smaller infrastructure projects that are done by local governments to give people choice for trips that are under five kilometres, such as between their home and their local schools and shops. It is disappointing that there has been a decline in the amount of money being spent on these projects. The budget refers to some very big-dollar and high-profile projects, such as the new bicycle path across the Swan River to connect with the Perth CBD, but the funding for key projects to give people choice in everyday transport is in decline. For example, page 601 refers to the bicycle boulevards program, formerly known as the Safe Active Streets program. That program had a budget of \$4.2 million last year, and only \$2.5 million of that was spent. That program has actually been discontinued. There is no money in the forward estimates for the Safe Active Streets program. That is a good program around making bike boulevards safer for cyclists and pedestrians by slowing down cars. I thought maybe that money has been transferred to the Western Australian bicycle network program, which is listed further down that page. The 2020–21 budget allocation for that program was \$35 million, but, going forward, it drops quite substantially. The estimated actual for this year is down to \$29 million, and next year it will

drop further to \$24 million. That decline in funding is a real concern for me. We should be investing in programs that give people transport choice, such as being able to take the trip to their local schools, shops and other facilities on a bike in a safe way. However, less and less money is being spent in this area. That will require a partnership between the state government and local government, but unfortunately we are not seeing that. As I said earlier, in many of these intensive and large infrastructure projects we are also competing for resources with the private sector in a very heated market.

It is a similar case with housing and homelessness. It would be fair to say that we have a crisis in this area, or a very big challenge. I have some numbers that will give members an example of what has happened, certainly since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. From December 2019, pre-COVID, until now, applications for the priority housing wait list have increased by 129 per cent. That is extraordinary—129 per cent from the end of 2019 through to 30 April 2022. We have a very serious issue. Despite the large amount of funding that has been announced in this space, as we saw in last year's budget, and we see it again in this year's budget, much of that money is not being spent. A key example is that of the 3 300 public housing dwellings that were promised last year, only 400 have been built. We all understand why that is the case. It is a very tough market in which to get housing completed. That means we need to come up with different ways of doing things. I acknowledge that there are some good parts about this. One of those is the government's spot purchase program. That is a very logical thing to do in this scenario. We see that will expand from \$47.7 million to \$139 million over the forward estimates. I acknowledge that those kinds of things need to happen. I notice that the spokesperson for House the Homeless WA talked about this and stated —

“The WA Budget announcement of an additional \$91.6 million for spot purchasing public housing next year is a necessary and welcome expansion of this vital policy, although insufficient to address the worsening crisis. It should allow the government to acquire more than 300 new homes for families in crisis, which must be made available immediately to address soaring waitlists and a total absence of any current accommodation.”

Although some good things are happening in the housing space, there is a lack of a sense of urgency on how to get that priority waitlist down and how we address the housing crisis that is forcing too many people into homelessness. We have serious issues in that regard, and it will take more than a budget announcement from the government to address the issue. It will take serious work to get that budget money spent on the ground and delivered, which is a different thing.

There is also an opportunity for more housing reform. This is a big one. I have been watching what is happening in the ACT. It is going through a transition from stamp duty to land tax, which is really interesting. I think there is unanimous agreement that stamp duty is a pretty dumb tax; it disincentives people from moving to appropriate housing. We see lots of couples or single people floating around in very large houses because they do not see much point in selling and moving into a smaller house if it means that they will be stung with a large amount in stamp duty. There is an opportunity to do that but, of course, doing that with land tax has complications. I raise this issue now because this budget has a huge surplus and now is the time to start doing these things. The government can fund the difference between land tax and stamp duty and enable people to downsize, which will result in more efficient use of our housing stock. It will also encourage smaller, more diverse and appropriate housing throughout our community. These are some of the things that we need to do. A bizarre fact is that here in Western Australia, although we build some of the biggest houses in the world, they are occupied with the least number of people, yet we wonder why we have a housing crisis. There are many reasons for the housing crisis but, no doubt, that contributes in a way that is not good. It is not just the houses that we build, because housing affordability is also about making sure that houses are cheaper to run and energy efficient and, as we go towards affordability, making sure that they are efficient houses that are well insulated and facing the right way. All those kinds of things make a huge amount of sense, as does building them in the right place.

I come back to a theme that I have talked about again and again in this place. At the moment, we are not building houses near existing train stations and linking the two nearly enough—in fact, nearly not at all. All the new housing around the Metronet stations is pretty far out and not where people want to live. Using existing stations and transit-oriented developments, TODs, needs to be a priority of this government and of budgets going forward. We must plan for that to happen. It is stated everywhere that we want to see that happen, but it is in the budgets that we see the truth about whether it is a priority, and there is nothing about that in this budget.

I want to move on to a couple of other things. Certainly one of the areas in which the government's policy or lack of action in housing and homelessness has been sharply criticised is in the area of youth housing. I will refer to a couple of quotes on this issue from the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia, which stated that the lack of action to reduce the youth housing and homelessness crises is of great concern. It also stated that it has —

... noted a sharp increase in youth homelessness in recent years, tied to rising inflation and the impact of COVID-19 on young people and the rental market.

Urgent targeted investment is needed to relieve the burden on young people and ensure that they are not locked in insecure housing indefinitely and at increased risk of homelessness, and to support underfunded youth homelessness services.

The chief executive officer of YACWA stated —

“We cannot keep relying on crisis-based interventions—young people need approaches that prevent harm and keep them well. Young people and the community services sector have long talked about the need to fund dedicated youth housing-first models which recognise the unique causes and drivers of youth homelessness and intervene before they are entrenched.”

Those are some of the gaps in the budget as we go forward.

I turn to mental health. As I said, we are all pleased to see the significant new investment in health and mental health in this budget. We know that it is needed because the system is under immense pressure because of not only the COVID pandemic, but also the pressure it was under before the pandemic began in 2020. The role of the community-managed mental health sector is not clear; actually, it is largely absent, unfortunately, from many aspects of this budget. There has not been any meaningful change in the level of investment in prevention or community supports towards an optimal mix since the last budget. This is one of the criticisms I made about the last budget. There has been a very strong focus on the clinical end, but not enough focus on the prevention end. We need more of our mental health services directed towards servicing the community, not just the hospital system. More investment is needed to prevent people from reaching crisis point and being admitted into the hospital system. The adequate funding for optimal service mix is clearly outlined in the Mental Health Commission’s 10-year plan for 2015 to 2025. Two-and-a-half years from the plan finishing, we are still seeing disproportionate underinvestment in prevention and community support services, which, we know will enable people to continue to access the services they need close to home and, importantly, before they are in crisis and need to present to an emergency department. One of the things I would like to encourage the government to do is to increase funding in the prevention and community support space because we are far below the optimal service mix for a balanced mental system. In the 2022–23 budget, only 4.9 per cent of funding for mental service and alcohol and other drugs services is allocated to community support, and even less, 2.45 per cent, is allocated to prevention, which is nowhere near what is outlined in the strategy. Until we invest more in this space, we will continue to see pressure on the hospital system. At a time when our health system is in crisis, funding prevention and community support will alleviate pressures on EDs and hospitals and that goes without saying. Although there is good funding in this budget, we need to make sure that it is targeted to the right place.

In conclusion, one of my favourite planners is Brent Toderian from Vancouver. When he was talking about local government, he said that he does not read their vision statements; rather, he reads their budgets because that is where the truth is found. I have decided that I am going to take that and modify it a little for how we look at the state. The truth about a government’s aspirations is not found in its media statements; rather, it is found in its budget. There are a few things in this budget to illustrate that, one being the electricity credit. I appreciate that this is a very popular move, one that people like, but it is extremely expensive at a cost of \$455 million—almost half a billion dollars on electricity credit, which, I suspect—I will be blunt enough to say it—is not needed by any member in this place. I suspect that there are plenty of people who got \$400 and also \$100 if they have a holiday house. It is a huge chunk of money that was not particularly well targeted. The Western Australian Council of Social Service questioned this move when it said that one in six families goes without a meal at least once a week. Giving every household an electricity credit of \$400, whether or not they need it, is not smart. It falls short in providing targeted relief to lower income people, who have been doing it the toughest over the last two years of the pandemic. I think that is right. Rather than throwing a huge chunk of money like that back at everybody generally, it could have been targeted towards people who really need it, ensuring that it was seen as an investment to bring down household costs, not for just a year, but year after year for key people. That would have been a better use of that money. One of the key things that comes through from this budget for me is that it is a lost opportunity when we do just what is easy rather than what is best.

I return now to the theme that comes through this budget on climate action. Perhaps one of the most depressing things is that this year the budget may end up spending more on encouraging fossil fuel projects, such as Woodside’s Browse project, than it will on reducing emissions through ideas such as incentivising electric vehicles. Members should think about that for a moment: the budget will spend more on encouraging emissions to rise through fossil fuels than it will on bringing down emissions through key programs such as incentivising EVs and the like. That is a real danger. As I said before, although the Climate Action Fund contains a large amount of money, not much action is attached to that fund. It is just a pot of money that will largely remain unspent this year. That is concerning. We need to get on with it and invest in climate action to bring down emissions in this state—the highest emissions in the country, with a population with the highest per capita emissions in the world—right now, and get them down this decade. It will have to happen and the longer we wait, the harder it will get.

Another theme is around the big infrastructure that the state is investing in. The \$100 million Tonkin Highway extension to north Ellenbrook is perhaps the best example of this. It will cost \$100 million to extend the urban sprawl further into a region that we know has some climate indications around fire. Is that the best investment for the government to make now? Where is investment getting density, getting new houses where we want them, that will create a more liveable, more sustainable, more connected city? How will this city transition to net zero emissions if it keeps sprawling and extending the edges of development?

To me, those are the key concerns. As I said, the budget contains some very good individual projects that need to be scaled up and tied to proper strategic plans and strategic thinking to take the state where it needs to be, whether it is addressing homelessness and housing, the sprawl in urban planning, or climate change. All those things still need further work and focus in budgets going forward.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Pierre Yang**.

DUTIES AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading

Resumed from 12 May.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [2.23 pm]: I am the lead speaker for the opposition on the Duties Amendment Bill 2022, and I may well be the only speaker from outside the government on this. Let me say at the outset that it is a pleasure to stand up to speak to a bill that reduces the tax impost on the people of Western Australia. As much as I would like to stand here for an hour and wax lyrical about that, it is my intention not to take that level of time, but to welcome the bill and talk briefly about what it does, and make some comments around the government's capacity to provide additional tax relief, given the budget circumstances.

The opposition supports the bill. It would be very difficult for an opposition that claims economic conservatism and economic literacy to oppose the bill, and that is certainly not what we are going to do today. This is a good bill. Of course, my only argument with the bill is that the government could perhaps have gone further. However, I will not let the search for perfection interrupt my acceptance of what is feasible, given the bill before the house today.

The Duties Amendment Bill 2022 has four pillars through which it proposes to provide some relief to the people of Western Australia. The first is to align the general rate of duty with the residential rate of duty, so that the same rate will apply to all duties, not just those for residential properties. This is obviously of benefit to all those who are engaged in the selling and purchasing of non-residential property. This is a welcomed component. Currently, when duty is applied, residential transfers receive a discount that is a concessional rate of duty, whereas a higher rate of duty is applied for business transactions. Obviously, we are looking for this. For example, one might be investing in property for rent. This might be part of their wealth accumulation. I discussed this in my speech on the budget only a couple of days ago. It is good to see that the government has taken some of this on board. It is a small assistance, but every assistance is welcomed. The concessional rate will provide some discount to those who are transferring and purchasing assets that are non-residential. I note that in his second reading speech the minister said that 3 000 to 5 000 transactions could benefit from the changes proposed in the bill. By my calculation, given that the total cost expected, the total benefit, the total amount of money being handed back to taxpayers in this bill is \$7.3 million, \$7.2 million of which comes under this particular first pillar of the bill proposed by the government—I found this out partly in the briefing, but it came out in the government's press release when the bill was introduced in the other place that shall not be named—the harmonisation of the residential and non-residential property duty rate will basically cost the government \$7.2 million in revenue. If that is applied to 3 000 to 5 000 transactions, the benefit per transaction will be somewhere between \$1 400 and \$2 400 per transaction. I think that is a reasonably accurate looking figure.

The maximum benefit to any particular taxpayer for transactions under the proposal of the government is \$2 800; that is, the benefit is capped. That is an important part of the proposal before the house. If someone is transferring a \$500 million asset, they do not necessarily want to expand the level of duty rebate to an extreme level, so it is appropriate that a cap is put in place. The government has probably got somewhere near an appropriate level. It could have been more generous, but it had to pick a number somewhere and I think this is a reasonable figure. Several thousand property transfers a year will see on average a reduction in the duties payable of between \$1 400 and \$2 400, to a maximum of \$2 800. Although that may not be immensely generous, it is welcomed. Every time the government takes its hand out of the pocket of taxpayers in Western Australia and gives a little back should be welcomed by government, opposition and the business community. We will absolutely support that. I suspect that one of the key reasons the government is going down this path is the advice of the Department of Finance that has told them that they are probably losing money on the deal. By the time they go through the process of assessment and analysis and end up sending a bill and the cash is processed, they might well be losing money on the process. There is an expectation that a less complicated process will save the government some money as well. Again, from a conservative political perspective, I am very happy to see the government save money in administration, and that should be encouraged, too. In other bills I might come up with some suggestions about where the government can save some serious dollars on administration. But, at the moment, it is certainly a welcome sidebar to what is proposed in the bill before the house today.

I note that there are some caps on supply. I take this from the minister's second reading speech: the concessional transfer of owner-occupied homes and businesses for properties valued at less than \$200 000 will be adjusted as a part of the alignment of general and residential duties. Currently, according to the government's numbers—I have no reason to not believe it—and one assumes according to Treasury's advice, the benefit for owner-occupied homes cuts out at about \$116 000, whereas there will be some continued benefit under the proposals put forward by the

government. The concession will apply to every dutiable transaction under \$200 000, so there will be some additional benefit to the taxpayers of Western Australia. All those things, although modest, are welcome. I think they are a positive contribution.

The second pillar the bill examines is the abolition of duty on transaction for the transfer of mining tenements, with the exception, of course, that if a company has a mining tenement on which there has been significant development—that is, the assets are beyond simply a licence to search for minerals—then duty will occur in a separate sense in relation to those other assets. Therefore, it is not as though a company could build a mine, call it a mine, and therefore get a duties discount. This will be for undeveloped mining tenements so, in my view, it is a boost to exploration. There are tenements out there for which there has been a lack of exploration, so, a tenement could be granted, a company might take up the licence to explore it, but not have the capacity to do that and deliver and it may seek to move that asset on to a company that has the capacity to explore and potentially shore up a resource that ends up being of economic benefit to the state of Western Australia.

There is an argument that I could go into in some detail about how much time we might give companies, for example, to sit on tenements without developing them. In fact, that applies to lots of other approvals processes; once a company gets an approval to explore, how long can that go on for? I think that that is probably a debate for another day, but the argument for the opposition has always been that we want to see these things progress, if possible. Certainly, in my view there would be no loss to the state in exploring for and working out what resource is there, even if it is not realised for some years down the track. It would particularly apply to some of those rare earth minerals that companies go looking for. We want to know what is out there. The application for a mining lease does not grant permission for a mine to be developed. There are a whole series of approvals processes to go through, including environmental assessment and all those other things. It does not automatically grant an approval for the development of the mine, but it certainly would encourage exploration to a point so that some companies that have exploration licences over mining tenements could not proceed and would need to transfer them.

This is a fairly small component of the overall cost impact of the bill. Sorry; I should have started by saying thank you, minister, for the briefings that were provided. They were very good. Thanks to a good briefing—as I always say—I do not intend to go into the committee stages of the bill because the briefing covered the questions that I had. The cost saving on this second pillar of the bill—mining tenements—is expected to be about \$100 000. That is a fairly minuscule amount of money, and I suspect that is reasonable because even if there were a duty transfer, the value of the tenement—without necessarily knowing what is there, and any other assets are probably fairly small—will encourage the transfer of tenements to companies that might be able to proceed. Again, it might well be the case—even more so than the \$7.2 million that will benefit the harmonisation of the residential and non-residential property duty, I suspect—that the abolition of the duty on undeveloped mining tenements for exploration will probably save the government money because I suspect that more money has gone into trying to examine and process these things than will actually be saved. Again, on behalf of the opposition, we welcome this second pillar.

The third pillar of the four that this bill examines is some exemptions to motor vehicle licence duties. There are a couple of versions of this. The first version is the exemption of duty when a vehicle is returned to the seller. I do not know whether we call this the “lemon duty” exemption. I was trying to find a good name for it, to be honest. You cannot win with good names like Scrooge McDuck every week!

Hon Stephen Dawson: I certainly don't think it's a lemon!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It could include the lemon duty abolition!

Again, the opposition welcomes this. I think it is a very positive move. There are circumstances in which a vehicle that has been sold needs to be returned for a number of reasons. Minister, I presume there will be some checking with the Department of Finance to make sure the reasons are valid. This move is designed to avoid paying duty twice on a vehicle that needs to be returned. Again, that makes sense to me. I think that it is an obvious move. The motor vehicle sales industry welcomes this, and I think it is a positive step in the right direction. The savings in duties received by the government is again very small, but everything that the government can do to streamline the process and remove some administrative burden should be welcomed.

The sub-part of the motor vehicle duties exemption refers to demonstrator vehicles. This gives rise to the slightly confusing question: what is a demonstrator vehicle versus what is a loner car? One of the existing issues is that demonstrator vehicles in car yards are often given out to people who book their vehicle in for a service. My vehicle does a lot of kilometres and I think it gets serviced about every six weeks. I do it every 10 000 kays, and, in a normal year, I drive anywhere between 80 000 and 95 000 kilometres a year. Servicing a vehicle every 10 000 kays means I am servicing it every month and a half, but I try not to take service vehicles because I know that I am in competition with people who have a greater need. With purely demonstrator vehicles and purely courtesy cars, we currently have a duty exemption for one and not the other. However, there are a bunch of vehicles that are a combination of both, such as the demonstrator cars that are given out as courtesy vehicles. The amendment before the house will simply and effectively deal with that issue of the vehicle that is both. As the minister said in a second reading speech, it is a vehicle that is either loaned by the dealer without charge or for a nominal charge to people who are having their vehicles serviced or repaired. I understand that the point of the loan vehicle is to try to demonstrate that the

newer model that you are driving around for a day might just tempt you to purchase something a bit flashier than the one you have just taken in to have serviced. I would like to think that such advertising does not work, but we know that that advertising works remarkably well, and it is an indication of the free market. Again, the opposition is supportive of this. This has almost no impact on the revenues to the state and just seems to make sense, therefore, that this is something that assists an industry without cost to the government.

The fourth and final pillar of the bill deals with duties that arise as a result of family breakdown and orders made by the Family Court. This is another section that the opposition welcomes. Currently, if an order is made under the Family Court for the distribution of property, a duty arises upon the making of the order. Most duties are applied when property is transferred. It is a complicated process to advance the duty process. For example, there has to be an estimate of value, potentially, before the property is transferred. When the property is transferred, generally an agreed value is placed on it. It will just mean a bit less paperwork and will probably place a bit less stress on couples who are going through this difficult part of separation. It sort of makes sense that that duty be applied upon the transfer rather than a court order. Once again, the opposition welcomes this part of the bill.

Those are the four pillars on which the Duties Amendment Bill 2022 rests. The opposition supports all four of those pillars and will support the bill. I just want to complete my contribution, which will not be all that long today, much to my chagrin—we are here to help the government—with a short contribution on economic reform, because these are very good components of economic reform, although remarkably modest. I note that the net worth of the economic reform in the bill was announced by the government, as now happens, in a pre-budget release a couple of weeks before the budget. My press release followed the Treasurer's pretty quickly a couple of weeks ago. As the minister and I have debated frequently, my press release welcomed the bill. As I am wont to do, I called it for what it is. When the government does the right thing and reduces taxes by taking its handout of taxpayers' pockets and reduces a bit of administration, I think we should welcome and encourage that. In fact, I would like to see the government go much further on that, as I referred to in my contribution to the second reading debate on the budget bills.

Let me give a little bit of perspective to this, though. The government announced in its press release that this bill will provide \$7.3 million in tax reform, which I welcome. But the budget surplus is an estimated \$2.7 billion, on top of last year's \$2.8 billion—pardon me Hansard; it is \$5.7 billion, on top of last year's \$5.8 billion surplus. I nearly had an Albanese moment there for a second! That \$5.7 billion is still an estimate for this financial year and the amount may well rise by the time we get to the *Annual report on state finances*, as last year's did, drifting up by \$100 million or so. When a government has a \$5 800 million surplus—\$5.8 billion—\$7.3 million in tax reform is remarkably modest. I noticed a couple of other bits of tax reform in the budget, which I discussed in my budget reply speech. Each of those are remarkably modest. There is a reduction of duties, for example, on high-rise residential apartments that are bought new, basically, or off the plan, and there are a couple of other small bits and pieces, but, sadly, tax reform was effectively non-existent by comparison in the state budget for 2022–23. That is immensely disappointing. I have tried to make my disappointment plain. I may have been a bit subtle about it, as I sometimes am, but I have tried to demonstrate some discontent.

Hon Stephen Dawson: I have never heard you be accused of being subtle.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It is probably because people do not realise; that is probably why.

It is a very modest package. Some of the media picked this up and some did not. The government got a bit of credit for throwing money at bits and pieces like tourism funds to bring tourists in. Again, I welcome that; that is a good investment. Tourist attraction funds and business attraction funds are all good, but they are pots of money that sit there from which the government can hand out money to its favourite entrepreneurs for bits and pieces that they want to do. It is not actually taxation reform. There was almost no taxation reform in the state budget. We can read the most recent economic figures, which up until the state budget were in the quarterly financial report that came out for the 2021 December quarter, which I thought was quite instructive. For the first six months of the current financial year, general government revenue was \$2.7 billion higher than for the same period the year before, when we had a \$5.8 billion surplus. This was mainly reflected in higher commonwealth grants, up \$1.9 billion, but tax revenue was up \$844 million over that six-month period. Taxation revenue under this government has skyrocketed—payroll tax, duties. This government is dragging a fortune out of the pockets of the businesses and people of Western Australia. As I said, I absolutely welcome the fact that the government is going to take a smidgen less, but when it has a \$5.7 billion-plus surplus and its taxation revenue alone has gone up by \$844 million over just six months, I do not think it should expect a round of applause for giving back \$7.3 million. It is giving back less than one per cent of the increase over six months, which is minuscule. It is paltry. It is not quite non-existent, but in terms of rounding to the nearest 10 per cent, it is zero. I will have to do the numbers, but in terms of rounding to the nearest per cent, it might get one per cent.

It is such a small contribution that is being given back to the business community in particular, because it will be the greatest beneficiary of this. If members remember, of the \$7.3 million benefit, \$7.2 million relates to the first pillar of this bill, which is the harmonisation of non-residential duties, so I suspect that the vast majority—99 per cent of it—will go back to the business sector or people who are investing. Again, it is welcome; it is absolutely welcome.

I thank the state government for it and I thank the minister, whom I know appreciates the need for some economic reward for the community, but I do not think it should expect a round of applause for this tiny, little bit of generosity—this \$7.3 million worth of generosity—from a budget surplus of \$5.8 billion and with a set of budget surpluses worth somewhere between \$20 billion and \$24 billion over four years. It is lovely to see the government giving back \$7.3 million and the opposition will loudly and proudly support it in that process, but we ask the government to have a good look and think whether it cannot just give a bit more back. I would love to be here debating the handing back of \$70 million worth of taxation, but the government could afford to give back \$700 million worth of taxation. Those are the sorts of figures for which even I, who regularly puts out press releases saying, “Well done, government; I support your efforts”, would be forced to give the government a round of applause. Well done; it is the right direction, but instead of walking at a snail’s pace, let us go for a gallop and give some serious money back to the taxpayers of Western Australia. It is not a bad bill. It should have gone a lot further, but the opposition will absolutely support what is before us today in the Duties Amendment Bill 2022.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Emergency Services) [2.49 pm] — in reply: I begin by thanking Hon Dr Steve Thomas for his contribution this afternoon, for his indication that the alliance will be supporting the Duties Amendment Bill 2022 and for his earlier comment that this is a good bill. I note that the honourable Leader of the Opposition suggested that we could have gone further; however, I think this is a good piece of legislation, and we can both agree on that.

In relation to savings from the scale changes, \$98 a year will be saved on non-residential dutiable assets that are valued from \$120 000 upwards. For a value of \$1 million, the less duty payable will be \$2 800, just to place that on the record. The honourable member gave the average, but I just wanted to —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes. If it is less than \$120 000, they will not receive any benefit, but those are the figures from the bottom to the top, essentially. While people purchasing non-residential assets valued at \$725 000 or more will save \$2 800 in duty—this is the largest dollar reduction in duty payable—those who purchase lower value assets will receive the greatest percentage reduction. For example, the purchase of an eligible non-residential asset valued at \$120 000 will see the duty applied to that transaction reduced by \$578, which is a reduction of about 24 per cent, while a \$725 000 asset will see a reduction of nine per cent. Assets valued at less than \$100 000 will see no change, just to place that on the record.

I have another correction. This bill abolishes the duty on prospecting licences, unless they are transferred with other dutiable property rather than the transfer of mining tenements. The 2022–23 state budget includes around \$7.3 million to cover tax savings for some Western Australians over the next financial year. This bill is another McGowan government commitment to reducing red tape and simplifying taxes for Western Australians and businesses. It is not \$7.3 million alone in tax relief in this budget. In addition to the measures included in the Duties Amendment Bill 2022 as part of its \$41 million tax simplification package, the state government has a range of other things as well. I am happy to tell the member about those things later.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Again—\$41 million versus \$7.3 million —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sure. We continue to examine all fiscal settings to ensure that they are fit for purpose. We need to ensure that we have the ongoing capacity to deliver the high-quality services that the public expects, but also ensure that the overall tax burden does not act as a drag on economic activity. We have spoken in this place previously about iron ore prices, and they are anticipated to return to their long-run average over time. I do not believe it is prudent to use temporarily high revenues from volatile sources for permanent tax cuts. We have a different point of view in relation to that issue.

Notwithstanding those points, I again thank the Leader of the Opposition for his contribution on this bill. It is a good piece of legislation and I think there are many beneficiaries in the community who will also support it. I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Emergency Services)**, and passed.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading

Resumed from 12 May.

Declaration as Urgent

On motion by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That the bill be considered an urgent bill.

Remaining Stages — Time Limits – Motion

On motion by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That pursuant to standing order 25A, maximum time limits apply to the following stages of the bill: second reading, one hour and 55 minutes; Committee of the Whole House, three hours and 20 minutes; and third reading, five minutes.

Second Reading Resumed

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [2.55 pm]: I rise on behalf of the National–Liberal alliance. I am the lead speaker on the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2022. I put it on record that we will be opposing this bill for a number of reasons that I will outline over the next 59 minutes or so—hopefully a little earlier; we will see how we go. We note the desire of the government to treat this as an urgent bill. We fundamentally oppose the bill because we do not believe it is necessary, but we certainly have not opposed the motion for it to be regarded as an urgent bill because I think we are able to present our arguments in relation to this unnecessary bill in a fairly cogent way.

At a fundamental level, the issue here today is that this is just another example of the government going down a path similar to that for the debate on the emergency provisions legislation. We are using COVID as a cover for the erosion of longstanding, accepted standards and approaches—in this case, for the Planning and Development Act—for checks and balances on government. When we step up to oppose legislation like this, there is always the sense that the Liberals and Nationals are trying to stymie sensible reform—in this case in the area of development. That is not true, and I hope that those who take the time to read my comments in *Hansard* will see that we actually hold the development sector dear. We think it is a sector that is vital to the provision of affordable housing, to the economy and to employment. The residential and commercial development sectors are key components of our economy that we fully support.

In fact, in due course, as we go forward over the coming months and years, we will outline some very development sector–friendly policies, because we believe that having a strong economy is vital to our future. We balance that with the need to have robust and strong processes that maintain the accepted standards of community involvement in decision-making and that have the longer term effect of maintaining the social contract between the community and business, the community and government, and government and business. The social contract is very important aspect of the harmony and maintenance of good order within society that we have. That is why we do not just go about dismantling planning laws that have evolved over many decades—the better part of a century.

In fact, planning laws evolved from when the first pandemics and diseases were identified in the City of London in the 1800s. That is when planning laws began to be introduced. The link between disease and planning is well known. The outbreak of certain water-borne diseases in London laid the foundation of a lot of local planning laws that began the history of planning, and then the whole profession of planning was established over time. That process very much integrated local decision-making and local people to arrive at final outcomes in the form and function of what communities should look and feel like, and how they should operate. That is how we bring people along.

I understand that sometimes there is frustration for developers and a lot of comments are made about out-of-date schemes and recalcitrant local governments impacting on our planning system and decision-making. I think people should pause and think about that, because our very strong planning framework should deal with that. Before I go into the detail of this bill, I will remind people how that framework works.

The framework operates quite simply—in a cut-down version—under a strategic planning framework in the form of the broad metropolitan region scheme. That is a broad scheme that gives us all the colours on the map—the pink and yellow and other colours, and the red lines that represent the main key routes and blue lines for local roads et cetera. It is a broad framework and there have been various iterations of it over time. The Minister for Regional Development is not in the chamber at the moment, but she played a big role in setting up Network Cities, which was a big forum with community involvement that put together plans that were later developed into *Directions 2031*. That was a very thorough document that was put out when I worked with Hon John Day, as I mentioned earlier today. There was a degree of bipartisanship at that time; in fact, the whole strategic framework, the Western Australian Planning Commission’s role and the independence, to the extent to which it exists, of the WA Planning Commission—its oversight around strategic frameworks—has held us in good stead. We have actually had a very orderly system of planning.

I am talking specifically here about the metropolitan area. I know this reform will affect regional areas as well, but I will focus on the metropolitan area at the moment because I am making a point. That has held us in good stead. It has been incremental because there have been changes. Earlier today we talked about the Stephenson–Hepburn plan, which was a vital step in laying out the broad framework, but it evolved over time, and that strategic framework

should evolve. There is the strategic framework, and the next layer within the hierarchy of planning is the local planning schemes. Those local planning schemes feed into, and must comply with, the broader strategic framework, but it is up to the minister to check and sign-off on when it is presented to the minister in the process after deliberation and development by the local authorities to meet the broader strategic objectives. It has been a long-held tradition in this state that local governments create and work on strategic local documents—known as local planning schemes—in collaboration with Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage officers before being presented to the commission for consideration before the final signoff by the minister.

Again, we hear a lot of debate and discussion—it is some of the argument that has been used for this particular reform—that local governments are a bunch of recalcitrant operators that do not deliver sensible schemes that meet the broader objectives we need in our community. There is this concern about that; but, in fact, the role of managing that process is the role of the minister and the role of the Western Australian Planning Commission. It is that strategic focus on the strategic frameworks, with the broad strategic framework at the top, being the metropolitan region scheme. The next layer is the local planning schemes, which are nested within that. Of course, there are other companion documents and policies that inform the detail of how planning schemes should be implemented. Those other companion documents and policies are usually in the form of state planning policies. Again, it is very much within the ambit of the Western Australian Planning Commission to maintain those state planning policies so they actually address and are relevant to the needs of our community. They can be anything from issues such as a sea level rise through to higher level density developments through to the application of residential design codes through to industrial land. A whole range of state planning policies exist.

This framework is well established. It evolves and is not locked in stone. This should very much be the focus of the Minister for Planning. As I said earlier in my contribution to the tabling of the budget papers, I hear that there is not as much focus on that as there should be. That is a complaint I hear from people within the sector. I assure members that if I am ever Minister for Planning, I will focus on ensuring that those strategic documents actually meet the burgeoning requirements of our metropolitan area and our state. I think that I can back that up, because when I worked with Minister Day, we kept a very detailed and clear record in 2008, when the then government came to power, that compared our performance against the previous minister. I mean no disrespect, but I think that the minister who is no longer the Minister for Planning was probably one of the more effective Ministers for Planning. It is a pity that she is not the Minister for Planning now, because I am sure that this sort of ad hoc proposal would not have come through under her watch. I have noticed over the years that she engages with the community, and that has continued in her role as Minister for Regional Development to a certain extent. It is a Thursday afternoon and I am probably being a little overly generous—the minister is not here—but I can certainly say that there was a level of respect for the appointment of John Day as the longstanding Minister for Planning, before he became Minister for Health. But there was always that respect for the framework.

Underneath that framework—the third tier—in a broad sense, is the approvals process. I am talking about approvals for individual developments, not necessarily subdivisions per se, although there is a bit of blurring of the lines in this process with the state development assessment unit. I must say that there are some very wideranging approvals and we have seen some rather unusual proposals come through the state development assessment unit pathway to the commission, including unusual proposals such as the Smith Beach development. That was a very unusual proposal to be put through that process. But in the main I am talking about individual developments, such as residential tower blocks or the extension of a wharf. I think there is even an LNG plant—Mt Magnet. Some are quite considerable. They are quite large proposals. But under the previous process, these proposals would have been developed through a declaration of an issue of state significance. There would have been a level of support from various agencies under the lead agency framework and these processes would have gone to a development assessment panel.

The development assessment panel is another part of the reform; this is in the third tier. The third tier of the development approvals process, prior to the introduction of the development assessment panels, was the sole domain of local government, with a few exceptions when the minister could intervene under certain circumstances. I recall that was developed with bipartisan support. I came into the role as chief of staff to Minister Day. Some research had been done and Minister MacTiernan had discussions about the establishment of development assessment panels. Again, there was bipartisan support from the Liberal Party on that matter. That proposal was introduced and moved forward because it was understood there was a need for the development assessment panels to consider the nuance of the more important developments than would be considered solely by a local authority. Yes, there were some complaints from parts of local government that felt it was going a bridge too far. However, in the main, local government accepted the reforms. We have expert advice on those development assessments. A committee of five comprises a local representative, a chair and two professional persons. The development assessment panels were established that way to reduce the incidents of so-called recalcitrant local governments sometimes making decisions in contravention to their own schemes in the sense that the local governments did not approve developments that conformed with the schemes and the strategic framework. We saw the effect of that, and I think it was a sensible reform.

I am sorry, but this is a relatively complex process and it is pretty hard to explain it in a way that might get a headline. However, I think it is worthy having this detailed discussion. If all that failed, former Minister for Planning

Hon Alannah MacTiernan introduced call-in powers whereby the minister could use the call-in powers for a particularly thorny issue if no progress had been made due to a stand-off because of a local political issue. A member of a local council might have had pressure brought to bear on him, even if it was in the public's interest for the development to be properly and professionally considered. That was another part of the process and those provisions still exist. Numerous other pathways can be introduced, but the thing about them is that they require a level of accountability and the buck having to stop with someone. In the case of the call-in powers, the buck stops fairly and squarely with the minister.

While I was Minister Day's chief of staff, we called in only two matters to be considered. One was a development in the City of Stirling near the Ikea building. People might know the high-rise building next to the Ikea store. The history of that development is that at that time the City of Stirling refused to consider the matter even though the development effectively conformed with the scheme. That was not a case of the scheme not being up to date or a recalcitrant local government not delivering on the scheme. For whatever reason, the council would not make a decision and so the matter was called in. A deliberative process was undertaken and managed within the office and, on advice from the commission, a decision was made. It was a very rare occasion and it was highly accountable because the buck stopped with the minister. A similar issue occurred not far from Crown Perth when a decision was made on a development in the Town of Victoria Park over a similar matter. Again, the minister had to wear either the glory or the opprobrium of that decision, whichever it was to be, because it was a very rarely used power, as it should be. In those cases, the decisions conformed with the planning scheme.

What happens when a planning scheme gets out of date? That is also a job for the Planning Commission. That is exactly the role of the commission. The commission should do its job and make sure that the minister applies those provisions that are now within the act so that the minister does certain things. There were arguments in the City of Nedlands, or possibly the Town of Cambridge, and, without casting aspersions on any local government, I know there have been arguments over the last decade or so when schemes may have been considered to be somewhat out of date or the local government was dragging the chain and not reviewing the scheme within the statutory time frame. If the government put a bill before the house today to tighten up the strategic planning to make sure local government was much more accountable in the delivery of those town planning schemes, I would look very favourably at it. I want to speak to the development sector on this matter.

I think the government is completely missing on two big issues involving faster approvals. The first is the investment in the strategic planning framework to make sure that our legislation is fit for purpose so that it can deliver in the space of strategic planning within a contemporary framework. The second issue is the approvals and referrals process. I was intimately involved in trying to improve that process when I was in the planning department. We had a long history of failed information technology development, notwithstanding some minor changes involving small steps. Certainly some progress was made over time. However, we were always behind the eight ball on that. I do not see any evidence to the contrary whereby the minister has put sufficient emphasis on the referrals and approvals process, because, to a large extent, we have internal processes that are, from my understanding, somewhat manual, even though lodgement processes have been online for some time now. We would expect they would be online, given it is the twenty-first century, but it has always been a challenge. My esteemed colleague Hon Tjorn Sibma has gone on about electronic environmental approvals. It seems to always be a bridge too far, because I think that ministers and senior people in the public service often struggle to be fully on top of technology. It is a difficult area but ministers should be putting pressure on senior public servants to make sure that processes are delivered in a contemporary way.

I would be 100 per cent behind the government if it had come in here today with a bill to reform the strategic planning space and the government said that we needed much higher density, as we discussed during the consideration of tabled papers, in the middle rings of the suburbs and considerably more density within the context of the investment in Metronet and around our public transport and infrastructure corridors and around energy generation to make sure that it aligns with our future requirements for a more dense, walkable and liveable city. But this is where I believe the government is completely missing. I believe that the Minister for Transport is so focused on getting out there in a hard hat and high-vis and cutting ribbons that there has not been enough focus on this aspect of planning.

I have read the submissions from the likes of the Property Council of Australia and the Urban Development Institute of Australia. Of course they are going to support the state development assessment unit. Of course we will get representations from the likes of Adrian Fini and other major developers who think this is a great idea and that we should be doing this. By the way, I have no disrespect for any of the developers out there, but I want to say this to them: make sure you maintain an eye on what is happening here; before you jump the gun and come out and support amendments such as this, which effectively will start to undermine the strategic planning framework, think long term about your social licence to engage the community through the consultative process under the strategic framework.

On the issue of consultation and community involvement, absolutely we must have community involvement in the development of our form and function, and in the understanding and respect for a rules-based system for how our city should look and where it should go. That is absolutely the case. I do not know how many times I have to reiterate that the appropriate place for that is through the consultation mechanisms in the development of the

strategic framework, because that is where we get the buy-in. Of course, when we talk about nimbyism in the general sense, or “not in my backyard”, we will have certain expressions of that. That is fair enough. People can express their point of view, but they should express it within the context of the strategic planning framework, because that is the appropriate place for that discussion, that is the appropriate place for that consultation and that is the appropriate place for that agreement.

A very good example of this is the Cottesloe foreshore. I can see people opposite rolling their eyes: here we go again about Cottesloe, that ultra-privileged place over there in the federal seat of Curtin. I will tell members this. The government, under my former minister, John Day, undertook very deep and detailed consultation with the community through an inquiry-by-design process on the issue of Marine Parade. That was an absolutely appropriate place for that discussion to occur. After considerable detailed discussion, and in agreement with the local government, that process came up with a strategic framework that established the rules-based system, which we all had buy-in and confidence in, on the form and function that is appropriate for development at that particular location. The government might say, “That’s just a bunch of nimbys over there in the western suburbs. We have all these recalcitrant councils in the western suburbs. The Town of Cottesloe is recalcitrant. We don’t care.” That may be the attitude. I do not know. We have heard similar sentiments expressed from time to time. I can say that, actually, no—if the planning minister thinks that the strategic framework is wrong, they should re-engage with the community and get that agreement.

The bill that we are debating today seeks to extend a process under the cover of COVID. I will make comments about that cover. It is amazing to see the 180-degree change in the government’s argument about why we need to make this change. The logic has been completely reversed from the logic that was put forward when the state development assessment unit was first mooted—which, by the way, this side supported at that time. The logic that was put forward at that time was rational, but it is not rational now. The problem I have with this reform is that it will allow the SDUA to override the strategic planning framework in an ad hoc way and not take consideration of, and respect, the process that is required at that strategic level.

I come back to nimbyism. It is entirely inappropriate for persons to constantly fight development after they have had time to go through this massive strategic process, they have had buy-in from the community, and they have had their chance to consult about the form and function of their community—how it should look and how it should function. If after that process a development comes up that conforms with the framework, it is entirely inappropriate to then say it does not suit them, or whatever, and they do not want it to go ahead. That is exactly the reason we brought in development assessment panels. We believed that the right balance was to have professional input, along with local representation, to make sure that arguments at the community level were not given the weight to prevent conforming developments.

We will now have the complete opposite. We will have a body called the state development assessment unit, which has been set up on a pretext, is a complete 180-degree change, and will override the strategic framework. The very thing that this minister and this government have been arguing about, namely out-of-date planning schemes and local pressures, and not delivering on the density requirements, will now effectively be wiped out. The government’s argument is not logical. The government is now saying it does not care about the strategic framework. If that is the case, it might as well abolish the lot. It might as well come in here and repeal the metropolitan region scheme, and repeal the planning powers under local planning schemes. It might as well do that. That might sound a bit over the top, but that is the pathway we are heading towards.

The second aspect is that we have to ask why the government wants to do this. I remind people in this place of what was originally stated and what is now stated about why we need this special pathway. I will also speak a bit about the composition and nature of that pathway, because that is also important. We step back to 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Minister for Planning said in her second reading speech —

The pandemic has created an economic shock —

I am pleased this was put in the second reading speech, because it is accurate —

that will be with us for a long time to come. Every jurisdiction in Australia is seeking to rebuild economic stability and create greater investor confidence. Although direct investment by government will play a key part in our economic recovery, we must all do more to facilitate private sector investment in our economy.

In 2020, there was an incredible fear that industry would collapse. We all saw it happen. Everything stopped. The minister went on to say —

Planning reform is an enabler of better investment outcomes, together with community outcomes.

There was talk about community involvement. That was fair enough. We all agreed with that. But we had to do something to ensure that investment would continue. We therefore agreed that we needed this special pathway and a raft of reforms, because we did not know what kind of cliff we would have to go over with development and jobs in this state. That was a valid thing to do at that time. In those special circumstances, we agreed that we would put aside the normal planning processes and allow people to put up things quickly in order to stimulate the economy.

We all know that in the months after the COVID pandemic started, people could buy a nice apartment here in West Perth for a considerably lower price. People were desperate. There was a short period when we had a bunch of people overseas who were not able to come back to Western Australia. Hon Dr Steve Thomas is looking quizzical. I have checked the data on this. There was a period in the early stages of the pandemic when the market dried up almost completely. Not long after that, people started to be repatriated to Australia under the process that had been established under the pandemic, and of course the market started to lift again. We have not really looked back. We have seen even stronger growth. Along with all the infrastructure spending of the commonwealth and the state, we have seen a whole range of things happen in the state and now there is a shortage of labour. We are pretty much in an overheated market. We are starting to run out of industrial land. There was that month in early 2020 when people said, “What the hang is going to happen here? We don’t know where we are going.” That was in the context of that agreement. By the time that this process expired earlier this year in January, it was very clear that the market was back. In my view, it was appropriate at that time for the state development assessment unit to wind up because we could go back to normal decision-making within the context of development assessment panels. No problem. It was not going to stop the economy because we would not have a problem with people being out of construction work; in fact, if anything, although we would like to see more development, it comes back to making sure that we have some of those de-constraining aspects to deal with some of the headworks and strategic issues. Those are the things we should be focusing on—the areas in which government can intervene to fast-track development, not specific approvals through this process.

If we look at the argument put today, we see that the explanatory memorandum has five dot points outlining the benefits of the part 17 pathway for proponents. It states —

- a coordinated development assessment process by the Western Australian Planning Commission ...
- a more flexible and less prescribed assessment process;
- explicit and coordinated management by the Commission of the agency referral process to ensure referrals are responded to in the timeframe allocated;

I am not convinced of that but, anyhow, we see that through this body, the state development assessment unit, for the things that go through the special pathway. It continues —

- a substantially more flexible application of planning rules ...

Not really. It is saying that we do not have to apply the rules to the same extent than we might otherwise have to. It continues —

the ability to consider non-planning matters in the public interest;

That is always applied in any decision-making process. Finally, it reads —

- a much stronger degree of certainty —

Not really, because the strategic framework has been removed and there is a lot of uncertainty. It continues —

for proponents who obtain approval, ensuring other approval regimes administered by other government agencies and authorised persons ...

It then lists different things, such as building permits, liquor licences, noise permits et cetera. If we had invested in the process of electronic approvals, making sure those gaps were supported properly, we would be able to address a lot of these issues.

I go back to the first point about the role of the Western Australian Planning Commission. I have made it clear that the role of the commission is to have strategic oversight. It has always been at arm’s length from the decisions about individual approvals, with the exception of a few approvals that have involved crown land, and that is usually through the statutory planning committee, which has, by the way, a much stronger representation of planning staff and people on board. But the commission is not the right entity to make these decisions, which I will speak about for a moment. I am not sure that people understand what the WAPC is. The WAPC is a body that has strategic oversight. It thinks about the big picture. It does not think about individual developments—if anything, it loses integrity when it does that. We have this body that comprises some officers from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage doing the things that would normally have been done by local government officers who have a very good understanding of the local planning scheme, providing recommendations to development assessment panels, and still we have officers in the state department providing recommendations to the WAPC. I can assure members that this frustrates me. I think the WAPC will effectively become a rubber stamp to these developments. There might be people here who find that a bit challenging, but I am concerned about that. If I were a member of the commission, I would be worried about this reform and how it will undermine the commission’s position. It will undermine its position and status in the eyes of the community and local governments about being an independent arbiter of the statutory framework.

What is the WAPC? Who are the people on the WAPC? I do not have a list in front of me, but I can tell members the composition of the WAPC. It is mostly directors general of state departments. I am sorry; I do have the attendance

records of the WAPC here, but often they cannot attend so they send a delegate. I would like to hear during the committee stage of this bill how often those directors general, particularly the one from the dysfunctional Department of Communities, actually turn up to the WAPC when it considers a development matter that is of local importance. That is a completely inappropriate use of their time. I am sure they just get a batch to sign off and stamp. I am probably more qualified than anybody in this place to speak about this, because I was secretary of the planning commission for at least two years and I know how this works.

Hon Sue Ellery interjected.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: I am because I know—this is the planning commission. A delegated committee called the statutory planning committee deals with matters that do go through the commission's planning framework within the normal context, but we will soon have a body that gets a bunch of recommendations from state staff, state planners, on matters of local importance when it makes a decision. I do not believe it is the appropriate place. It is not the appropriate body. Okay; maybe the government should have brought a proposal to this place to consider the composition of the planning commission. There are some very good people on that commission. There are people with some planning expertise, but not many. Certainly, the majority of those on the commission do not have planning expertise. It is quite a big body. From recollection, it comprises between 10 and 15 members, and most of them, as I said, are members of the public service. There is a local government representative and an industry representative, but there is not much representation from the planning profession. It will have to make decisions about matters, such as the one that it will be confronted with in the Smith's Beach development. I asked a question in this place a couple of days ago about where that assessment was at with the Environmental Protection Authority and I got a very disrespectful response, which highlights the reason we do not support this reform. The disrespectful response was, "It's nothing to do with us; it's another agency." I am sorry; there should at least be the respect to say, "The time frame is up to them. They'll come back and, by the way, when it comes, I will make that matter public so that there is a level of transparency about that decision in terms of the environmental impacts before the final decision is made by this body called the planning commission, on advice of the state development unit." The government wonders why we get a bit wound up about this and say, "We don't really like the way this is going, because it's a dismantling of accepted standards. It's a dismantling of the checks and balances that have existed for a long time."

I have to keep reiterating for those who are pro-development in the development sector that if I were a minister, I would do a lot more for them to make sure that we see development, because I would make sure that they have an even playing field for one thing and a strategic framework for another. Work would be done to make sure that government services—those key elements of headworks and matters of shared infrastructure—were properly planned and organised so that they could get on with things and move forward in a sensible way. That would be the work I would do as a minister. That would be the work I would be arguing for—not creating some ad hoc system under the cover of COVID. It is now a completely different debate—it has turned 180 degrees—from the one we had at the time of COVID. It is 180 degrees different. The media release somehow argues—I have to find my notes—that "we need to keep the trucks rolling and the shutters open". That was said at the beginning. It has all changed now; it is about making sure that even though we have these shortages, somehow we will make sure that approvals will continue. I do not have the exact comments here, but that was effectively the nature of them. If I do find the media statement before my time is up, I will read it. Members should rest assured that the argument now is that there are shortages and the government somehow has to make sure that approvals are running fast in terms of the supply of labour and materials, whereas before we were worried that we would not even have enough labour or materials and the same outcome. It is not sensible.

What are the ramifications of this? What issues will flow from this? We will see this reform—the state development assessment unit—roll out for another 18 months or so. I guess it gives the minister time to come up with a set of regulations around reform of the development assessment panel process, which, by the way, the minister put out for public comment in February or March. The minister received a number of submissions on that, including some criticism. I agree with some of the matters raised by the Property Council of Australia, for example. There is an opportunity for alternative pathways to be chosen. Under the reform, if a local government is working well with the developer and there is an efficient pathway, maybe it does not need to go to a DAP. There should be an option. Maybe the thresholds around that might be an issue that can be considered. The opposition would be happy to consider it. The special matters DAP was the bit I was worried about because the proposal for that was effectively the same body as the state development assessment unit, except that obviously the composition of it would be a little different and in some ways at arm's length from the commission, so that is probably not such a bad thing. The draft regulations went out, but they were then pulled because they could not be implemented. The minister failed to implement the reforms to DAPs that people wanted to be implemented and the government went back to the cupboard, hoisted out the set of emergency COVID-19 provisions, and rammed them through without proper scrutiny or debate. We were notified pretty much the day before it came before Parliament. This is the pathway, because not only are we doing that, but also the state of emergency will continue for the same length of time. We are used to this now. The government does not really care about what the local community thinks as it has worked through developing those schemes. It will have this process, which is now entangling the commission in those direct decisions for specific developers. I think it is wrong, and the alliance thinks it is wrong.

Much can be done in the area of planning reform to encourage the development sector and ensure there is affordable housing and affordable commercial development. There are so many other provisions within the act that enable those rare times when there needs to be direct intervention by the minister. We should respect the longstanding traditions of the planning system while we work to evolve them, rather than completely undermine them. The potential ramifications of this reform are enshrined in the ongoing erosion of strategic planning processes that have served the state well for many decades. It highlights the failure to deliver the much-vaunted development assessment panel planning regulations, but it is no excuse for this reform. It creates an ad hoc process with a strange kind of proposal.

I will caveat my comments: there are 16 approvals and a number of applications being considered at the moment, and a number are out for public comment, which is fine. There is nothing wrong with some of the applications. The commercial and shopping centre development in Cockburn, for example, is very important. As I said, many of these applications would be fine, but, frankly, I am sure they would be fine through a development assessment panel as well, and they would probably progress. It will be interesting to see how many developers take up this process. It will be interesting because one of the questions I have—I hope the minister comes equipped with the answers to this in Committee of the Whole House—is on the performance of this body vis-a-vis the performance of the development assessment panel. Let us have some evidence of how it has improved the performance in terms of timeliness with the decisions, apart from those cases that have been highlighted when pending approvals have been given for developments that breach longstanding caps on height, for example. With the Marine Parade example, we found out that the developer had on-sold the property—so much for the COVID pandemic and needing to see development occur. It is ad hoc. It lacks transparency. It does not have the same level of control and transparency that we have through the strategic framework.

The other implication is that it marginalises local government. I am pleased that the Western Australian Local Government Association is starting to take a more robust position on this. I have been talking to WALGA through my staff and also to local governments, and generally there is a nervousness around this. There is a feeling that they are being marginalised. Local governments really are at the coalface of the feedback from the community. As I said earlier, the other implication is the unsuitability of the composition of the Western Australian Planning Commission for making these decisions. The last point on this particular implication is that, in my view, it creates an unusually dangerous relationship between the minister and certain elements of the development sector. We must be very careful. In jurisdictions such as New South Wales, we saw significant challenges. I am not saying this about our minister now, but as someone who has worked in a minister's office, I know that, as one would expect, the office gets a lot of representations from the development sector. When schemes are going through the process, the phone runs hot. That is what people do. However, Western Australia has maintained, to a large extent, despite some of the outcomes during the Burke era and so forth, a pretty good track record in land use planning, comparative to some other jurisdictions, because it has a longstanding tradition of a structured planning system. This legislation is creating an unusual opportunity for pressure. One could say that this is more a vote of sympathy. I will be keeping an eye on it for officers of the Minister for Planning. One could say that it is just a commission, but we are very close now with the department making these recommendations. There is a real risk that we will start to step too close—I have said it before publicly—and that it will reduce the distance between the minister and the decision. It is not simply a matter of making that distance shorter to get more efficient outcomes; it is a matter of making the process more efficient and maintaining those checks and balances so that we get the right outcomes. We do not support this bill, and we will raise many matters in the committee stage, particularly in clause 1. I hope that the minister comes to the committee stage prepared with data on the development assessment panel process. This bill will go through the chamber because it can, but I hope that we will see evidence of transparency and not hear offhand and disrespectful responses to the questions that I will raise in this place. If the government wants support from the opposition, a bit more transparency would go a long way, but on this matter that has not been the case, and I think that that is a poor reflection on the minister and the government.

We do not support this bill. We believe that it would have been better to focus on strategic decisions and genuine reform. This is a dangerous and yet again lazy piece of legislation because it is in response to the failure to deliver on the DAP reform. I hope local governments will take a stronger stand on this in the future because this is a wake-up call for local authorities across the city and state about the future of their role in the planning system. If this trend continues, we will see a much-diminished role for local authorities in the process of engagement. I ask: if the government thinks it is so good at dealing with local engagement, I would like to see the evidence of that. I am convinced that the body called the state development assessment unit is effectively just a branch within the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage—no disrespect again to the officers; they are doing a job. But it is just a branch. There are a few officers sitting in there, producing their reports for a body of senior public servants. I do not believe that is the right decision-making body that we need. In summary, we do not support this bill.

HON DR BRIAN WALKER (East Metropolitan) [3.52 pm]: The Acting President (Hon Jackie Jarvis) and members will be very happy to hear that I will not take nearly as long to get our point of view across on the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2022. But they might not be happy to hear that I am not of a mind—at least on our part here—to support this bill as it is. I have read the explanatory memorandum, the second reading speech and the bill. I see the good nature and good intent, but certain things cause me concern.

The first thing that bothers me, I have to say, is that this is a COVID-19 bill, and I struggle to find a reason for that. The urgency for it simply was not made clear to me. If, for example, there were a glut of projects and many people urgently wanted to work, I could see the reason for forcing this bill through in this time to allow for that business to go ahead and for people to make their living, as they should do. But that is not the case just now. We have long delays at the moment, and the urgency for this bill strikes me as being somewhat forced.

The second thing that bothers me is that this bill seems to me to be at some risk of favouring the mindset of the developers rather than the mindset of the local government. I have been in extensive consultation with a number of local governments and with people who know the business, and there were a number of common themes running through that, one of which was the lack of consultation. Members opposite might then say that they have consulted stakeholders, and I am sure they are correct in that, but perhaps we are talking about consultation on two different levels. At the moment I am seeing a building industry that is looking for support but local governments that are looking at what is right for the community. My key concern centres around the lack of community involvement, which is something that I have pointed out a number of times in the debates on the bills that have come before us. It is starting to look as if consultation is a bit of an Achilles heel for the government. It is possible that because of the government's overwhelming numbers, there is no need to consult to that extent and to satisfy the different needs of the parties, because, quite frankly, the government does not need us. But, it does not serve the government well.

We saw the same thing with the Aboriginal Heritage Bill whereby the consultation was deemed to be very adequate and I had serious concerns about that. I can well take on board the differing points of view to that, but members have to bear in mind that, as an ex-associate professor of general practice at a university, one of my jobs was to teach communication to medical students. Let me tell members a story that I used with the medical students. A patient comes to you with a sore throat. I do not know what members think of that, but if someone comes to me in my busy clinic with a sore throat, I am thinking, "Why are you here? You are wasting my time, are you not? Take some Panadol. Go away! Do not bother me! I have other important things to deal with." That is the true opinion of many health practitioners. They hear the superficial but do not go down into the depths of it, which is why we have six-minute medicine. Indeed, I believe we might have a six-minute government here in that the communication is of that superficial nature. Let me explain this. I ask the medical students the quick question: why do you think this person has come at this moment with this particular problem, ostensibly wasting your time? There has to be a reason. When you simply ask an open question, a number of answers come out. One answer may be a complete time waster, such as "I want some time off work; give me a sick note." That is true! Another answer was—this actually happened to me—when a patient said, "My best friend died the other week of leukaemia and his symptoms started with a sore throat that no-one paid attention to." He was frightened and scared that he had leukaemia and was going to die the same death as his friend.

When I was in Hong Kong, I had another person come in with a sore throat and I asked, "Why have you come to me with a sore throat? What is the reason for now, today, coming in with a sore throat?" The answer was, "I am flying to Singapore tomorrow. I have a business meeting there and \$US1 billion is on the line and I am holding the presentation, so I want to be able to speak." This is the same sore throat but for very different reasons, and there are many different reasons. What I am teaching medical students is to not ask closed questions, but actively listen and ask open questions and get into what we in the medical profession call the hidden agenda. Many members will have personally experienced going to a doctor, seeking some assistance, finding themselves with a script or a referral, but their problem has not actually been dealt with. This is very, very common. The number of times patients say to me, "You are the first doctor who has listened to me", is tragic. I fear that we are seeing the same thing in government, not because of any mal-intent—not at all—but simply because the process of consultation is not just about asking questions and writing a report.

I consider myself a friend of the government; indeed, I greatly respect the government benches. As a friend, it would be remiss of me not to point out where I think the government is falling short. That is what friends do. I think the Planning and Development Amendment Bill is a case in point whereby we could do better. What the government has done, however, is achieve the impossible; it is like setting fire to water. The government has managed to unite the Western Australian Local Government Association and Local Government Managers Australia, which are fighting each other, but are united in their stance towards this bill, which is one of concern. Both entities are strongly opposed to this bill, and they are key stakeholders. They are important entities in this consultation and both are against this! That should really be a warning flag. That would be the point at which I would tell the junior doctors to sit back, listen and ask what is really going on here, rather than ploughing ahead and saying, "Here's a script. I'll see you two weeks' time. Next patient, please!" This is a red flag.

WALGA put out a media release I think last week. For the sake of *Hansard* and the public record, I will quote from it now. The headline was "Extension of state government planning powers shuts out communities". There is a fairly big red flag right there. It states —

The introduction of legislation that will extend special COVID-19 planning powers will remove Local Governments from important planning approval processes and effectively silences the voices of communities on major planning decisions in their towns and suburbs.

It warns —

... (WALGA) has expressed disappointment and concern at the State Government's announcement ... which will re-open the State Development Assessment Unit ... pathway for significant projects until December 2023.

The meat of its complaint is that local governments develop local planning schemes in close consultation with their communities. That may be a difficult concept to grasp, but it is one that I certainly appreciate, as, I believe, does the whole community. Working with people one on one is an essential part of what I do—I listen to the people. The WALGA media release continues —

“These schemes reflect community aspirations for future planning and development in their towns and suburbs, and strike a balance between growth and protecting the unique character of our neighbourhoods.

“We cannot see a reasonable justification for the extended use of these extraordinary powers, particularly the argument that the existing planning approval pathways do not provide sufficient certainty for industry.”

WALGA noted —

“Since their inception, DAPs—which have Local Government representation—have approved over 95% of all applications,” ...

It then states —

“Approval rates for proposals determined by Local Governments over the last five years are even higher, with 99% of all proposals approved.

Here we have it: key stakeholders have not been listened to yet again, according to the numbers. I think the problem we are facing here, as WALGA and Local Government Managers Australia have been telling me—I think they have hit the nail on the head—is that the government is seeking to extend an approvals system over an assessment system, with economic interests subsuming the public interest to a worrying degree. They are saying that we should take a step back and think this one through again. I know that is not going to happen, but I will point it out for the record. It does not sound healthy to me. If a medical student or doctor was doing this, I would say, “Whoa! Take a step back. You might be allowing a misdiagnosis to happen.”

There are also concerns about the influence that industry is having on this—Nigel Satterley, for example. He is a lovely man with a great business. I do not know; I will not cast any aspersions or make any allegations, but these things would come together in people's minds and they would wonder what is happening. It brings us further into some degree of mistrust. I do not think that is a good idea. The principle I have is one of inclusion, participation and consultation. I do not see that here. Rather, it is a hammer-and-nut approach—the government is cracking it open. I think we have gone past the mark. The intent is good—I approve of that and applaud that—but I suspect that we are using the wrong measures here.

I asked a question on Tuesday about the temporary amendments and what the government hoped to achieve with the approvals and assessment system. I looked at the figures. There has been something like 98 applications to use the temporary system, but 48 of those were subsequently withdrawn. So there are 50 live applications, of which 17 have been approved to date. That was the minister's reply. I am sure it is all in process. It may be that we are comparing apples with oranges—it is possible—but that is not the 99 per cent approval rate; that is a 34 per cent rate. The other two-thirds are still in limbo. That makes me concerned. I would like this to be addressed in the Committee of the Whole House stage, because I think that if we do not address this properly, we will not be serving our community as we are bound to do.

I will make a final point on this COVID-19 urgent bill. As I was saying yesterday in this house, the measures we are taking in this bill—the things that have been brought in; the emergencies that we are creating—are based on an irrational fear. We could take a step back and take a more leisurely look at it. I praise the government for the control it has had over COVID and, indeed, all that it is doing, but we ought to be careful not to rush into this and miss some important aspects of what could be excellent legislation. I would like our community to get back to normal. I would like our local governments to be able to manage local communities without interference from the state government, and to be responsive to local communities rather than following a tick-box approvals system. For these reasons and others that have been outlined before, I will not at present be able to support this bill. I look forward to explanations in the reply to the second reading debate.

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [4.04 pm]: I want to start by reflecting on one of my favourite planning terms, which Dr Anthony Duckworth flagged in *Boomtown 2050: Scenarios for a Rapidly Growing City*, if anyone has read that. He wrote an article about something that happened in Perth following the high-rise developments of the 60s and early 70s. He used the phrase “development hangover” to explain why there had been a complete lack of good-density new projects in the 80s, 90s and early 2000s. The development hangover was caused by the community's backlash against poor development. Members can think of the classic 60s high-rises—the Buckeridge kind of towers—that felt like they were just randomly placed in suburbs across Perth. There was a real backlash against that—a hangover that actually lasted decades, when we did not get good density or good infill of anywhere

near the amount we needed. That, of course, led to Perth being one of the lowest density and most sprawling cities in the world. In fact, Perth is now the longest city in the world, partly as a result of that density hangover. What caused that was poor planning and poor approval processes. That has been rightfully fixed. As Hon Neil Thomson said, a good robust planning system was built from the bottom up on local government planning schemes and proper strategic planning feeding through. I think we were on track. It was probably not fast enough, but we were on track to getting the right kinds of development in the right places and in a way that took the community with it. That is the key bit. One of my big concerns around this bill is that we are in danger of creating part 2 of the density hangover—that the community will push back after this round of what increasingly feels like ad hoc development. Literally, it is like, “Whose got an idea to put something somewhere?” The framework and constraints in which these projects are happening feel less defined, and the community is feeling less certain about what might pop up in their neighbourhood.

Anybody who knows me and my time in local government in Fremantle knows that I have been a relentless advocate for density. I like density a lot. In fact, I rant regularly in this chamber about having to get on top of the sprawl—that we have to get proper density in our centres, in the right places, especially connected to transport. That is going to be at the heart of what this city needs to do if it is going to be liveable and sustainable going forward. I am nervous about this bit of legislation. Actually, I came to this debate on the bill today open-minded about which way I was going to vote on it. I think it had merit when it was introduced at the start of COVID. In fact, as I said to some members in this room, in Fremantle we had a whole bunch of developments that we wanted to get up that were kind of getting a bit tangled in some of the minutiae of our planning schemes, and this helped get around some of that and undo some of the pent-up demand that an inflexible planning scheme had created. Those developments are in the system now, and that is good. I really hope they happen. In fact, they include a major build-to-rent scheme in Fremantle, some new hotels and those kinds of things—all the things we were keen to encourage.

Although I am keen to support parts of this bill—namely, extending the approvals processes—I do not think we want to start undoing them or making them fall over because they cannot get built quick enough in this environment. I am very nervous about extending new approvals through this bill in what is clearly already a pretty hot market. It is not like we need more approvals or that we have a building sector that does not have enough work. It is the complete opposite right now. We actually have a building sector that is literally struggling to get materials and labour, and the market is very hot. I do not quite understand the need for a bill like this to get new developments up.

Now that the market is hot and we have plenty of developments in the pipeline, it would actually be a good time to return to ordinary planning and well-targeted developments. In fact, the more I listen to the debate on this bill, part of my frustration is that I wish we had a planning and development bill that would actually get us closer to a better strategic framework for planning—one that gets us closer to developments around train stations and targeted developments in the right places, rather than just encouraging ad hoc developments that are considered significant, despite being worth \$20 million or so. That is part of it.

I know the response from government will be that we must have regard to the planning framework. That is a pretty loose term, and I do not think it is one that necessarily gives a huge amount of confidence to the community. With regard to schemes that have gone through a lot of effort and community engagement and a long process, having regard to them is important, but I guess the level of that regard is also very important, and there may be some very nuanced community views as to why they want to see developments in particular places and not others, and the kinds of developments in those places that may be undone and undermined as we go down a less strategic and more ad hoc planning process.

Hon Neil Thomson raised a very legitimate concern about the role of the Western Australian Planning Commission in this. He is right. Despite its name, most of the people in the Planning Commission are not planning experts, let alone people who want to deal with \$25 million developments in the suburbs. This is a weird use of what should be the peak strategic planning body in our state. Hon Dr Brian Walker read some quotes from the Western Australian Local Government Association about its disappointment in this process and the disenfranchisement of local governments. I think local governments felt partially disenfranchised by the movement towards development assessment panels, but I also think that these have come to be seen as something that people largely can live with. I think they get the balance relatively right between local representation, local views and professional planning expertise. That expertise is not represented in the same way at the WAPC.

There are lots of really impressive people at the WAPC; I have worked with many of them, but planning is not necessarily their expertise. It is often something else entirely, but we are asking them to make a judgement about these things. That raises some real questions. These are extremely busy people, on multiple boards. How are they going to get their heads around a whole bunch of small developments that are not significant—they are medium-sized at best—whilst doing their other strategic work properly, and giving an appropriate amount of time to that? There is a real danger that this will be largely a tick-and-flick exercise, but there is also a more important danger here, and this is one of my concerns around DAPS: the transparency with which they work, and how they engage with communities. The agenda for local government meetings comes out four or five days beforehand, and it is made public. The meetings are open to the public. Question time is public. The minutes are published. They are made

public. That is gold-standard transparency. DAPs do not quite do it as well but they are getting there. For instance, some DAP meetings are held in the middle of the day, which is not a great time for most people to turn up and have their say in public question time, but at least DAP meetings and discussions are now open to the public. The agenda process is a little more obtuse and holding meetings during the day is less than desirable.

Has anyone ever tried to understand the discussions and debates in Western Australian Planning Commission meetings? It is a black box. If people are lucky, they might be able to come in and have a very short say but then they are asked to leave the room. It is not a transparent process. We have a non-transparent process around how those decisions are arrived at by a group that is very busy but is not expert in planning. We hope to get a better outcome than Hon Dr Brian Walker outlined, where DAP approvals are already at 95 per cent and local government approvals are already at 99 per cent. I am not sure what problem we are trying to fix here. The danger is that the solution is far worse than the problem that it is trying to solve.

It is really important that if the public is going to have confidence in this process, we need to make sure that it is transparent and that there is a clear way forward. I want this state to go on and have lots of good density in the right places that takes communities with it. I do not want us to revert to a state that has a density hangover and everybody says no to everything. That is the real danger, when we feel that developments are put on to communities without transparency and without the right level of engagement and the right processes along the way. That is what leads to nimbys. That leads me to my third term—yimbys, yes in my backyard. That occurs when we take committees on the journey with us and proceed with the kind of developments we want. I do not think that this necessarily does it.

I have a minor amendment flagged for when we move into Committee of the Whole, which seeks to raise the threshold for significant development by a small amount. There may be a place for this bill for developments north of \$100 million. I put down \$30 million because that is what the government originally proposed. It was reduced to \$30 million in 2020, though \$30 million would make it slightly better. I hope that can be considered and supported. I put it on the table that if we are going to have a mechanism like this for significant developments, they should be properly significant—that is, developments worth \$100 million plus, and probably a whole lot more. For example, the project that we did in the town square of Fremantle, the Kings Square project, Walyalup Koort, cost \$250 million, 12 and a half times the current threshold. That was a significant development. That is the kind of project that may have a place here. A \$20 million development literally can be 10 apartments on a random street in a suburb. That is the stuff that gets our committees' backs up. It is not significant and it should go through a proper and orderly planning process.

HON WILSON TUCKER (Mining and Pastoral) [4.18 pm]: I would like to put a few thoughts on the record quickly while I have a chance and also pose a few hypotheticals that I hope to get answered during Committee of the Whole. I support the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2022. I support the intention of this bill and what it is trying to achieve. I will keep my remarks very high level today, unlike my colleague Hon Neil Thomson, who was getting stuck into the machinery of this bill. I support the intention of this bill around trying to promote infill in Perth and also in WA.

Recently, the Property Council of Australia said that about \$2.1 billion is tied up in infill development projects and that people cannot get approvals through the banks because the banks do not operate as charities; they need to show that they are turning a profit and that their profit margins are not being eaten up by rising costs of labour and materials. Hopefully, this bill will help to alleviate some of that strain and cut through some of the red tape in the approvals process. We know that a large proportion of the cost of green fill and infill projects is tied up in approval processes.

When I looked at this bill, I noticed that it has a number of protections and initiatives on the developer side of the equation. I hope that is being balanced at the consumer end of the spectrum. I note that there is a petition on the wonderful e-petition service that is available to us about the builders' indemnity insurance scheme, which in WA is capped at \$100 000. That seems to be a little outdated, in my opinion. We know that a lot of people are doing it tough right now and are out of pocket after the recent collapse of several building companies.

I also point out that it is difficult to judge the usefulness of this bill in streamlining the process because there is no hard data or facts and figures in the explanatory memorandum or the second reading speech. It would have involved a lot of digging to find that out so, hopefully, during the Committee of the Whole stage we will be able to work out the exact dollar value that will be saved and how many projects currently tied up in the process will benefit from the streamlining provisions of the bill.

I also think that it is great that a conversation is now going on federally about cost-of-living pressures and housing affordability. These two issues certainly have an impact on the younger generation, especially given that wages have not kept up with the rise in house prices, and it is becoming increasingly harder for the younger generation to live out the dream of homeownership. I am also glad to hear talk about infill and density as good things. The words “expansion” and “sprawl” have often been attributed to Perth. Hopefully, we can change the meaning of those words to become more, let us say, dirty words in our lexicon and we can move forward and talk more about infill and density in Perth. Hopefully over time we will be able to change the perspective of the West Aussie dream. Typically,

when we think about homeownership in WA, it is a double carport with five bedrooms. We need to be more sensible and realistic about development in the future and the government seems to acknowledge there is a need to promote infill and density, which is a good thing.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [4.24 pm]: I think that I am the last speaker wanting to make a contribution in the second reading debate on the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2022, so I will try to finish in time so that the minister can at least start her reply. No other member is waving at me dramatically, saying, “No, no. I demand the right to speak”, so if I take up their time, I apologise, and let me know.

One of the most important things that we can learn, particularly as new members to Parliament—this might be seen as gratuitous advice on my part, but I certainly tell my new members this—is that when we get to Parliament, it is pretty easy to say what we think people expect us to say. But the wise people in Parliament say what they believe and believe what they say.

If members follow that path, it will make it much easier because they will generally be unlikely to contradict themselves. With those particular words in mind, I recall the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020 because I made a contribution to it and I have been a shadow planning minister in the state of Western Australia in the past. I go back a very long time. I started somewhere around 2006. I have been watching planning for a very long time. These words are important, so I will quote myself, which is not necessarily the done thing. We debated the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020 on 17 June 2020 to which I made a contribution that I think is relevant. I stated —

I suspect that if we get to the end of this process and discover that we can cast through projects under an accelerated or streamlined system, the question will have to be asked of government, Parliament and everybody: why would we go back? If this is about streamlining the processes, why would we return to an un-streamlined process?

There were some interjections, so I will remove those —

If the government’s agenda is to streamline the process, why would we return? I can see us back here in 18 months’ time, hopefully—perhaps not all of us, Mr Acting President —

I note this was Hon Robin Chapple at the time —

... but most of us—and potentially debating why these particular measures should not be held for a long time. It might be a particularly valid debate.

As I said, it is a good thing to say what you believe and believe what you say. That was nearly two years ago, so 18 months was not exactly accurate. One of the questions we need to address is whether we are defending a planning system that is particularly successful or is this just another incarnation of a government’s attempt to make it better? Members commented on how they think the current planning system works. It might surprise members to know that I am something of a sceptic and I think there are issues that should be dealt with around the planning system.

I will make a few important points. The first point is that our planning system to date has been remarkably reactive rather than proactive; that is, a developer comes up with a proposal for a development and government, be it local or state, tries to measure, assess and adjust that. We are not necessarily very good at longer term proactive planning that decides the best outcomes for the state of Western Australia far into the future. I do not think we do that very well. Significant improvements can be made. I was interested to hear the contribution of Hon Dr Brad Pettitt. I have not heard the term “yimby” before—yes, yes, next to me—or “yes in my backyard”. I am not sure how often we will hear that, honourable member, because human beings are naturally somewhat resistant to change. It was not me who said originally that a developer is someone who wants to build a house in the forest and a conservationist is someone who built the house in the forest a couple of years ago. But it is a particularly relevant statement around human nature in that we tend not to want development near us and we do not adapt particularly well to change, unless we see a definitive benefit for us personally as opposed to a benefit for the wider community. Therefore, I think that the system has been far from perfect. People whom I have an enormous amount of respect for in the planning sector have agreed with that.

I have a lot of time for Hon John Day. I think he was a very good minister, a very safe pair of hands and a very sensible contributor. He did that because obviously the planning system needed help. I think there is an acceptance on both sides of the chamber that the planning system, historically, has been far from perfect. I think Hon John Day’s intention was both honourable and good in that he was trying to streamline the approvals process because he understood that he could not make everybody happy all the time and that, ultimately, it was the role of government in particular to make a decision.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2560.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

The PRESIDENT: Members, are there any questions? Thank you, members. The Leader of the Opposition.

DECLARED PEST CONTROL ACTIVITIES

474. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Treasurer:

Thank you, President. Welcome to Thursday.

I refer to my question without notice 448 asked and answered yesterday, 18 May 2022, in which the government admitted to the Legislative Council that the 2022–23 budget papers contained errors on pages 111 and 118 of budget paper No 3, relating to the forecasting errors for declared pest control activities.

- (1) Is this the only error that has been identified in the budget papers to date?
- (2) If no to (1) what other errors have been found?
- (3) Given there were also errors in the explanatory memorandum of the Treasurer's first bill passed when he was Treasurer in this place—the Supply Bill 2021—that attributed \$15 billion to the wrong financial year, how can the people have faith in the Treasurer's ability to manage the budget process?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided on behalf of the Treasurer.

- (1) Yes, apart from a printing error in volume 2 of budget paper No 2, which was corrected in a corrigendum released with the budget papers on budget day.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Errors in tabled documents are regrettable, but they occur from time to time, and did so under the previous Liberal–National government. People can and do have confidence in this government's management of the state's finances. It is this McGowan Labor government that has turned around the deficits and escalating debt left by the previous Liberal–National government, with Western Australia now having the strongest budget position in the country and one of the strongest budget positions in the world.

ALBANY HEALTH CAMPUS — RADIATION ONCOLOGY SERVICE

475. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

I forgot which chamber I was in for a minute.

I refer to my question on notice 2860 answered on 13 May 2020 in which the then Minister for Health advised that the construction of the Albany radiation oncology unit would be “complete by June 2022, allowing an August 2022 operational commencement”.

- (1) Will the construction of the unit be complete by June 2022, as promised?
- (2) If no to (1), when will it be complete?
- (3) Will an operations commencement meet the August 2022 promise?
- (4) If no to (3), when will this unit be operational?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(4) COVID-19 has presented many challenges for governments across the world, and WA has not been immune. Increased demand for labour and building materials has meant that aspects of the project have been impacted. Practical completion is scheduled for late in the third quarter of 2022, with the radiation oncology service planned to be operational in the fourth quarter of 2022.

FORRESTFIELD–AIRPORT LINK — PASSENGER FARES

476. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport:

I note that the Minister for Transport is unavailable today. This question is from Tuesday, 17 May and is C488.

Noting that budget paper No 3 reports on page 181 that the Forrestfield–Airport Link is expected to have 20 000 passenger trips a day, to what extent will any single two-zone passenger fare be subsidised once the line commences services?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

The fare from the airport line will be the same as the rest of the Transperth network in that passengers will pay no more than the cost of the two-zone fare. This compares with other states where, for example, passengers on the Brisbane airport line are charged \$10 per ticket and Sydney airport passengers are charged \$15 per ticket.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH SERVICE — CHILD HEALTH APPOINTMENTS

477. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the answer provided to question without notice 452 asked on 18 May 2022 about child health appointments undertaken by community health nurses and the reference to the “COVID-19 system alert red phase up until 16 May 2022” and that the “revised definition of ‘close contacts’ supported a return to usual one-step appointments”.

- (1) In line with the decision to return to one-step appointments for child health checks, can the minister also advise whether the following are now being offered to families —
 - (a) face-to-face drop-in sessions;
 - (b) face-to-face parenting groups; and
 - (c) face-to-face child development service appointments?
- (2) If no to (1)(a), (b) or (c), why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) (a)–(b) No.
 - (c) All metropolitan child development service appointments are currently being provided via telehealth wherever it is clinically suitable. Components of services that are not clinically suitable for telehealth, such as physical assessments, continue to be provided in person.
- (2) The Child and Adolescent Health Service continues to provide services in line with the red phase of the Western Australian COVID-19 framework for system alert and response. There is currently no change to services that are provided via telehealth or in person, only a change to the length of time that can be spent in an appointment that is occurring in person. This has enabled a return to the delivery of child health checks as a single, in-person appointment instead of the two-step process.

POLICE — WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

478. Hon PETER COLLIER to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to workers’ compensation claims filed by staff.

- (1) What was the total number of mental stress claims in 2019, 2020 and 2021?
- (2) What was the total number of bodily injury claims in 2019, 2020 and 2021?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Police.

The Western Australia Police Force advises that this response is limited to claims with an accident for the relevant calendar year by police staff or police auxiliary officers. Police officers are not covered by workers’ compensation; therefore, work-related medical expenses are met by the Western Australia Police Force.

- (1) In 2019, there were 13 claims; in 2020, there were six; and in 2021, there were 12.
- (2) In 2019, there were 55 claims; in 2020, there were 54; and in 2021, there were 35.

ALBANY HEALTH CAMPUS — CAPACITY

479. Hon JAMES HAYWARD to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Albany Health Campus.

- (1) Are there any plans to increase capacity at the AHC within the next five years?
- (2) Have any scoping studies or other forms of analysis been conducted to ascertain whether capacity at the AHC is currently sufficient?
- (3) If yes to (2), will the minister table any documents that outline future capacity requirements at the AHC?
- (4) If no to (3), why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

- (1)–(2) Yes.
- (3) The future facility profile is a working document that is subject to change.
- (4) Not applicable.

KEYSTART — PRIORITY URBAN INFILL AREAS

480. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the media statement of Thursday, 12 May 2022 titled “Tax reform and incentives to deliver a housing supply boost”, specifically the new Keystart loan product that will be delivered in Metronet precincts and priority urban infill areas.

- (1) What are these priority urban infill areas?
- (2) How are the priority urban infill areas determined?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) The new loan product will be used to provide Western Australians access to affordable medium and high-density homes in locations closer to transport, services and social infrastructure. The priority locations to be included in the pilot are being finalised by the relevant agencies involved and further information will be available with the product launch in early 2022–23.

CORONAVIRUS — CONTACT TRACING SYSTEM AUDIT

481. Hon WILSON TUCKER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the Auditor General’s report titled *COVID-19 contact tracing system — Application audit* that found a number of significant weaknesses in information security controls for WA Health’s public health COVID unified system—PHOCUS. The report concludes —

In the absence of State privacy legislation, and consistent with the Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988*, people have a right to expect that WA Health will protect the privacy of their information. In so protecting, WA Health will build trust and confidence in government and uphold the universal human right to information privacy.

Does the Premier support this conclusion?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

Yes. I note WA Health’s response to the report, which states —

The Department and HSS accepts all recommendations and note the report highlights many historic items that have largely been previously addressed or were issues where existing controls were strengthened. No breach of privacy has occurred in relation to the system, continuous data cleansing and quality checking is undertaken, no inaccuracies in case status impacting management were found and no inappropriate use of the system was recorded. This demonstrates the robustness of PHOCUS and that the data is well managed and secure.

AMBULANCE RAMPING

482. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to consideration by the Premier of utilising firefighters to bolster ambulance services in Western Australia.

- (1) When was the minister first made aware of the Premier’s plan?
- (2) When was the Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Services first made aware of the Premier’s plan?
- (3) What was the rate of furlough for career firefighters for Sunday, 15 May, by —
 - (a) day shift;
 - (b) night shift?
- (4) What work has been done to date to implement the Premier’s plan?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) The Department of Fire and Emergency Services and other organisations have been in regular contact throughout the COVID-19 pandemic on how they can support and assist one another. In February of this year, DFES and St John Ambulance held discussions about how DFES staff and volunteers could be used to support the St John Ambulance service.
- (3) Nil.
- (4) Senior Department of Health and WA Police Force representatives will be stationed at St John Ambulance headquarters to assist the service. This is designed to ensure appropriate coordination of the emergency response during the current phase of the pandemic, providing certainty to the government and the public during the current Omicron wave. Commencing on Friday, 20 May, 48 career firefighters will begin to receive St John Ambulance familiarisation training.

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT — REGULATIONS

483. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the minister representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

I refer to the regulations under development for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act.

- (1) Has the minister consulted extensively with —
 - (a) small and medium-sized contracting businesses;
 - (b) trades, such as plumbers, electricians, builders and carpenters;
 - (c) farmers and their representatives Western Australian Farmers Federation and the Pastoralists and the Graziers Association; and
 - (d) the approximately 55 000 landowners with more than 1 100 square metres?
- (5) If no to any of (1)–(4), why not?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The honourable member said (1)(a), (b), (c), and (d), and then (5) “If no to any of (1)–(4), why not?” Noting that there are mistakes in the question, I have an answer for the member.

- (1)–(2) The government is undertaking a co-design process to develop regulations and other key documents that will support the new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021. The co-design process is being overseen by a reference group comprising representatives of the Aboriginal community, industry and government. There are three phases of co-design, the first of which has just been completed and included 15 public workshops in 12 locations throughout the state. The workshops were advertised and open to Aboriginal people, community representatives and stakeholders and were also able to be accessed online. Submissions were invited for this first phase of co-design and close on 27 May 2022. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is also engaging directly with Aboriginal organisations, government agencies and peak land user representative bodies, including the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, Western Australian Farmers Federation and Western Australian Local Government Association.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY — SUPPORT

484. Hon STEVE MARTIN to the minister representing the Minister for Forestry:

I refer to the recent announcement of the much-needed additional \$30 million funding for the just transition plan.

- (1) Did the government prepare a business case to determine the amount of additional funding required for the just transition plan; and —
 - (a) if yes, will the government table the business case; and
 - (b) if not, why not?
- (2) Did the government use any other method of determining the amount of additional funding required for the just transition plan; and —
 - (a) if yes, will the government please table the information used; and
 - (b) if not, why not?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the minister representing the Minister for Forestry, I provide the following answer.

- (1)–(2) Following consultation with stakeholders and a review of similar support programs that have been made available to industries as they transition, the McGowan government announced a further \$30 million for the just transition plan on 13 May 2022.

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT — MANJIMUP

485. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to the CSIRO report titled *Future climate streamflow estimation in the Donnelly River catchment* dated 25 January 2022, which states on page 41 that work done by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions shows that watertables in the Manjimup region have fallen.

- (1) Will the minister table the work undertaken to date by DPIRD and DBCA; and, if not, why not?
- (2) Will this work be completed and made public before the draft forest management plan 2024–2033 is released for public comment?

- (3) If no to (2), why not?
- (4) Are DPIRD and DBCA undertaking work on watertables in other parts of the south west and Peel regions; and, if yes, in which areas or catchments?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the fabulous Minister for Regional Development, I provide the following answer.

- (1)–(3) The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, with the support of the University of Western Australia, is undertaking a review of the southern forests research catchments, established in the 1970s to assess the change in watertables. Preliminary data was provided to the CSIRO to support its modelling. A report from DPIRD will be made available after the data has been analysed, which is anticipated to be completed by December 2022.
- (4) DPIRD is reviewing groundwater level changes across the Agricultural Region based on data from surveillance bores in unproclaimed areas on cleared farmland.

WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION — REGULATORY FEES AND FINES

486. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the “Net Appropriation Determination” table for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation at page 705 of budget paper No 2, volume 2. What accounts for the large increase in anticipated income from regulatory fees and fines, growing from an estimated actual of \$31.4 million in the 2021–22 financial year to \$45 million in the 2023–24 out year?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Environment.

The increase is mainly due to additional revenue generated from —

- (a) new fees and charges for the environmental impact assessment process under part IV of the Environmental Protection (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2021; and
- (b) a change in the way in which industry is regulated under part V of the Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2020.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH SERVICE — COMMUNITY CHILD HEALTH PROGRAM

487. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Department of Health’s community child health program.

- (1) In the 2019–20, 2020–21 and 2021–22 financial years, what was the annual target, in percentage of children checked, set by the department to provide child health checks to all eligible children across Western Australia in the following categories —
- (a) zero to 14 days;
- (b) eight weeks;
- (c) four months;
- (d) 12 months; and
- (e) two years?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) (a)–(e) The Child and Adolescent Health Service information is set out in tabular form. I seek leave to have the response incorporated into *Hansard*.

[Leave granted for the following material to be incorporated.]

	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
0–14 Days	90%	90%	90%
8 Weeks	90%	90%	90%
4 Months	90%	90%	90%
12 Months	75%	75%	75%
2 Years	75%	75%	75%

In respect to the WA Country Health Service, again that information is set out in tabular form. I seek leave to have the response incorporated into *Hansard*.

[Leave granted for the following material to be incorporated.]

	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
0–14 Days	90%	90%	90%
8 Weeks	80%	80%	80%
4 Months	70%	70%	70%
12 Months	70%	70%	70%
2 Years	50%	50%	50%

HOMELESSNESS — ST JOHN AMBULANCE

488. Hon PETER COLLIER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does St John Ambulance collect homeless people and deliver them to emergency accommodation?
- (2) If yes, how many homeless people did St John deliver to emergency accommodation in 2020, 2021 and 2022?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Under the current emergency and non-emergency ambulance agreements, the Department of Health does not contract St John Ambulance to collect homeless people and deliver them to emergency accommodation.
- (2) Not applicable.

WESTERN POWER — SOLAR FLARE EVENT

489. Hon JAMES HAYWARD to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to Western Power network risk assessments.

- (1) Does Western Power have a plan to specifically address the risk to the network in the event of a catastrophic solar flare event?
- (2) If yes to (1), will the minister table the assessment; and, if not, why not?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?
- (4) In the event of a catastrophic solar flare event, how long would it take to restore the network?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of question. On behalf of the minister representing the Minister for Energy, I provide the following information provided to me by the Minister for Energy.

- (1)–(4) Western Power has contingency plans based on network impacts and risks. This means that it is not necessary to distinguish between a distinct cause or scenario. Western Power processes are designed to respond to contingencies in the safest possible manner. The time required for any power restoration following any outage varies depending on many factors, including residual impacts of the outage cause, equipment damage and time required for repairs, and electricity demand and supply throughout the network at the time. During a contingency, these and other network factors must be assessed in order for a technically appropriate recovery plan to be devised.

ENVIRONMENT — REDUCED REPORTING BURDEN PILOT PROJECT

490. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the media statement “Reducing the reporting burden on industry” of 16 May 2022.

- (1) What is the intended period of the reduced reporting burden pilot project?
- (2) On what basis will the success of the pilot be evaluated?
- (3) How will the reduced reporting burden project encourage licence holders to achieve “good environmental performance” and how will this be monitored given the reduced reporting requirements?
- (4) Could the minister please list the categories of prescribed premises that are eligible under the pilot program for reduced reporting requirements?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Environment.

- (1) The reduced reporting burden pilot project is complete.

- (2) The project was initiated to reduce environmental reporting requirements for lower-risk industry licences, allowing the department to focus on higher-risk matters. More than 60 per cent of existing licence holders are no longer required to submit an annual environmental report. All other environmental performance requirements remain in place.
- (3) The department's monitoring of environmental performance is undertaken through various compliance and enforcement activities, which includes incident reporting, complaints monitoring, pollution response and intelligence gathering. When a licence holder does not achieve the required performance, the department has various mechanisms under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 to achieve environmental performance. It would be likely under these circumstances that more frequent reporting would be required.
- (4) All categories of prescribed premises listed under schedule 1 of the Environmental Protection Regulations 1987 are eligible to be considered for reduced reporting requirements. To identify the appropriate level of reporting for each licence holder, the department applies a risk-based approach informed by recent monitoring and compliance performance.

SERVICEWA APP — AUDIT

491. Hon WILSON TUCKER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Is it a policy of government to conduct self-initiated audits of government applications and systems to identify potential information security risks?
- (2) Since its launch, has the Department of the Premier and Cabinet initiated an audit of the ServiceWA application?
- (3) If no to (2), why not?
- (4) If yes to (2), can the results of that audit please be provided?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) It is considered best practice.
- (2) An internal audit is ongoing.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) See the answer to (2).

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES WORKER (RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS) DIRECTIONS (NO 3)

492. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the Fire and Emergency Services Worker (Restrictions on Access) Directions (No 3).

- (1) How many staff and volunteers currently comply with the direction as a percentage of total persons subject to the vaccination mandate by —
 - (a) Department of Fire and Emergency Services staff;
 - (b) the career fire and rescue service;
 - (c) the volunteer fire and rescue service;
 - (d) the State Emergency Service;
 - (e) the Bush Fire Service of Western Australia;
 - (f) the Volunteer Marine Rescue Western Australia; and
 - (g) the Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services?
- (2) How has DFES identified noncompliance with the directions?
- (3) How many instances of noncompliance with the directions to date have been identified?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The Department of Fire and Emergency Services staff and volunteers registered who currently comply with the direction as a percentage of total persons subject to the vaccination mandate are —
 - (a) DFES staff—98.4 per cent.
 - (b) career fire and rescue service—97.48 per cent.
 - (c) volunteer fire and rescue service—80.87 per cent.
 - (d) State Emergency Service—93.94 per cent.
 - (e) The Bush Fire Service is the responsibility of local government.

- (f) Volunteer Marine Rescue—89.02 per cent.
- (g) Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services—76.66 per cent.
- (2) DFES instructed employees and volunteers to provide evidence of their vaccination status, temporary exemption or medical exemption. Employees and volunteers who did not provide evidence as instructed were deemed noncompliant with the directions.
- (3) DFES—three ; career fire and rescue service—16; Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service—474; State Emergency Service—138; Bush Fire Service staff are the responsibility of local government; Volunteer Marine Rescue—172; and Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service—21.

BRAWL — DERBY

493. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to the comments made by the Commissioner of Police on 6PR on 9 March and to answers to question without notice 215 asked on 22 March 2022 regarding a brawl that occurred in Derby.

- (1) How many individuals involved in the brawl were arrested and cautioned?
- (2) Of those in (2), how many are subject to a barring notice issued by the Commissioner of Police leading to them being placed on the banned drinkers register and how many are subject to a prohibition order issued by the director of Liquor Licensing?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Police.

- (1)–(2) The Western Australia Police Force advises that suspects have been identified and the investigation is still in progress. Any charges, cautions and barring notices are subject to the ongoing investigation.

SIMCOA — FEEDSTOCK

494. Hon STEVE MARTIN to the minister representing the Minister for Forestry:

I refer to the Minister for Climate Action's comments on 17 May that the climate and environmental impacts of the government's decision to end native hardwood forestry in Western Australia were a matter for the Minister for Forestry.

- (1) Was any scientific modelling or research specific to Western Australia undertaken when making the decision to end native hardwood forestry, and —
 - (a) if yes, will the minister please table the modelling and research used; and
 - (b) if no, why not?
- (2) Was the environmental impact of importing timber in order to meet local demand considered in the modelling?
- (3) Was the environmental impact of forcing Simcoa to import and utilise Colombian coal considered in the modelling?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the minister, I provide the following answer from the hardworking Minister for Forestry.

- (1)–(2) The preamble to the question is incorrect. The Minister for Climate Action made no such comment. On 17 May, the Minister for Climate Action advised the opposition that specific questions regarding the supply of timber to Simcoa under a Forest Products Commission contract should be directed to the Minister for Forestry. Questions concerning the environmental benefits relating to the decision to end native logging should be directed to the Minister for Environment.
- (3) The government envisages that the by-product of ecological thinning in the jarrah forest will be available to supply Simcoa under similar arrangements that exist in the current forest management plan.

CORONAVIRUS — BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

495. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

This is question 416, which I lodged a couple of weeks ago. I refer to the \$72 million level 2 COVID-19 business assistance package announced on 2 March 2022.

- (1) As at 30 April 2022, how many applications had the government received for support under this package?
- (2) How many of these applications have been fully assessed to date?
- (3) Of the applications that have been assessed, how many have been deemed eligible for support and how many have been deemed ineligible?
- (4) As at 30 April 2022, how much of the \$72 million package has been paid out to Western Australian businesses?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

Can the honourable member give me the number again?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: It is question 416. There are about three of them that are very similar, but they are on three different packages.

Hon SUE ELLERY: The answer does not appear to be in my file. If it does come in, I will give it to the honourable member.

The PRESIDENT: I think you were being asked for the date.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: It was lodged on 9 or 10 May.

WASTE — LANDFILL LEVY

496. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the net appropriation determination table for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation at page 705 of budget paper No 2, volume 2. Why in the midst of heightened construction activity and the generation of additional waste volumes has DWER anticipated steady annual revenues of only \$83 million from the landfill levy?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer is provided on behalf of the Minister for Environment.

The estimated revenue from the waste levy takes into account disposal trends from the municipal, commercial, construction and demolition waste streams.

BULLSBROOK — CENTRE FOR NATIONAL RESILIENCE

497. Hon JAMES HAYWARD to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the 500-bed Centre for National Resilience in Bullsbrook.

- (1) What is the current estimated opening date for the Centre for National Resilience in Bullsbrook?
- (2) Considering the current COVID reality, does the Premier anticipate the facility being used for quarantine purposes within the next six months?
- (3) Has the government considered other potential uses for the facility if it is not used for quarantine purposes?
- (4) Will the government consider using the facility as a temporary social housing option for Western Australians who are not able to find a place to rent in the current market?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

- (1)–(4) The Centre for National Resilience in Bullsbrook is a commonwealth government project under construction on commonwealth government land. As such, questions relating to the facility should be directed to the commonwealth government.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT — REFORM

498. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the ongoing reform of the Local Government Act 1995 and Labor's own party platform that states that WA Labor will remove the right of corporations to vote in local government elections.

- (1) Is the government reviewing the enfranchisement of corporate bodies in local government elections?
- (2) Will the government commit to removing the right of corporations to vote in local government elections?
- (3) If no to (2), why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(3) The minister released the government's package of proposed local government reforms in November last year, which included electoral reforms informed by the City of Perth inquiry and other reports to government. The public consultation period closed on 25 February. The minister is currently considering public submissions, and will announce the final package of proposed reforms in due course.

HOSPITALS — MORTUARIES
HEALTH — KUNUNURRA HOSPITAL*Questions on Notice 656 and 693 — Answer Advice*

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.00 pm]: Pursuant to standing order 108(2), I wish to inform the house that the answers to questions on notice 656, asked by Hon Martin Aldridge, and 693, asked by Hon Neil Thomson, both to me as the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health, will be provided on 16 June 2022.

**COVID-19 RESPONSE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) BILL 2022**

Question without Notice 458 — Answer

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [5.00 pm]: On a point of order, I asked a question in question time yesterday to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health. It was question 458. I was advised that an answer would be provided at this day's sitting. I referred to the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2022.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have it here. It should have been put at the front of my file so my attention was drawn to it. The answer is as follows: I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Commissioner of Police on 1 April 2022.
- (3) No.
- (4) Refer to answer above for (3).

BILLS

Assent

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

1. Firearms Amendment Bill 2021.
2. Sentencing Legislation Amendment (Persons Linked to Terrorism) Bill 2021.

E-PETITIONS

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) [5.02 pm]: Members, in January this year the Legislative Council commenced a trial of facilitating e-petitions. The Clerk has sought a ruling from me regarding a small number of e-petitions that were tabled this year in a form that may be inconsistent with the intent of the temporary order. I rule that these petitions are valid petitions pursuant to standing orders and temporary orders, and I now table a copy of the petitions in full.

[See papers [1292](#) to [1294](#).]

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES HEARINGS

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) [5.03 pm]: Members, when the house rises this evening I ask that you take a moment to clear your desks of personal and work material prior to leaving Parliament as this chamber will be occupied by the Legislative Assembly next week for its budget estimates hearings. Any items remaining on desks tonight will be cleared by Council staff and retained until the next sitting week.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [5.03 pm]: President, can I just check whether the Clerks will take the things from the drawer of the desk as well as the top of the desk.

The PRESIDENT: No, just on top.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We had just started discussing the tangled web that is planning. It is the old “Oh, what a tangled web we weave”, but instead of “when first we practise to deceive”, perhaps it should be “when first we practise planning”. It is a very complicated process and the demands upon it are, I always think, remarkably extreme. We talked about where I think planning needs to go. I am particularly interested in how we make the planning process better. We had just started to discuss how long-term planning has to be a greater priority. That is the reason that Hon John Day instigated the development assessment panel review system, because he recognised in the 2008–09 period that there was an issue with getting planning decisions that were both timely and appropriate. I take the view, as I do with lots of other things, that normally the best decisions are made when everybody is a little bit unhappy. Unfortunately, the planning system does not necessarily lend itself to that. It tends to pick winners and losers out of a process. A proposal is developed and either it goes ahead or it does not. As I said to Hon Dr Brad Pettitt a bit earlier, I think it is unlikely that many proposals get vocal support, while the vast majority of proposals receive vocal criticism. That has been my experience with the issue of planning, which makes it a difficult issue for members of Parliament, because obviously we have this multistage approach.

The role of local government is important, but I have always taken the position that the role of local government has to be tempered by decisions that take into account the long-term interests of the state, far more so than I think a lot of local governments are capable of considering. In fact, in some areas, local government can be problematic for long-term planning. I say this not to cast aspersions on anybody else's area, although I think I can do that because there have been some quite interesting local government decisions of late. The latest one I note was the decision to sue the government of Western Australia for making COVID mandate rules. If a local government can get to that stage, it is an indication that perhaps the local government needs to reassess what it is doing.

Hon Sue Ellery: It might have been looking for a distraction.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Those things are possible. There are other issues that local governments sometimes look at. For example, a local government in the south west effectively wants to put in place its own water laws, so it will basically double up on what the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's planning is supposed to do. One of the issues in the south west is that there is a relatively high number of local governments that are not very far apart, and planning becomes a real issue when there are multiple jurisdictions. I have been there long enough to know that originally everybody wanted a recreation centre, so we have ended up with a plethora of them. Some recreation centres in the south west are five kilometres from one another. That is what happens when there is isolated planning. We went through that process with the recreation centres and we are now going through it with cultural centres. That is the new thing—everybody wants a cultural centre. They are now being built in the south west. Bunbury has had a cultural centre for decades. Margaret River built one a few years ago and now Busselton is building one right in the middle of the two. That spreads the patronage. Everybody might have gone to Bunbury originally, but that will now be spread over three locations, with them all trying to compete. That is the problem with having a very localised planning process, and that is why we should look at making sure that significant planning occurs in a more coordinated manner.

In the debate that we had two years ago, I suggested—I read out a piece from *Hansard* earlier—that we would be back within 18 months to again talk about making planning better. I think there was some agreement that planning processes needed to be improved to make sure that planning delivered outcomes for everybody. We have heard in the debate today that it is very important for the community to be heard, and I think that is true. But it is not necessarily the case that the community should have, effectively, a veto over development, and that is the debate that we have to get into. Sometimes development has to occur that a group of people at a local area are not going to like, so it does not work if there is a veto process there.

I have always been concerned that we treat the nimby effect as important but not overriding. I think nimby exists far more than Hon Dr Brad Pettitt's "yimby", and one day I will have to test and measure that because it is a good part of the debate. That "not in my backyard" effect is prevalent pretty much everywhere we go. It is interesting that the more isolated a region is, the less likely we are to see that effect—not universally, but generally. A small population is much more likely to embrace an industrial development than a more densely populated area. As we get a growth in population, we get economic drivers, and we get jobs. A lot of country towns out there are really struggling for industry, in particular. We do not have a good record in Australia—not this government specifically and not Western Australia specifically—for planning. We have not planned particularly well for the retention of industry in Australia, and planning is an important part of that process. Hon Neil Thomson talked about the need for good industrial planning; he and I absolutely agree on that. The outcomes are on a one-on-one basis, and there will be room I think for a variation within that debate. But good industrial planning is as equally important as good residential planning. It needs to happen at a level at which we can get that sort of helicopter view and that has been missing. I think that drove Hon John Day when he introduced the development assessment panel system.

I do not say at any point that the DAP system has been perfect. I think there have always been issues, particularly in the operation of it, that we could make better, but I say that about everything including lots of things that I do myself with all best intent! Improvements could have been made to the DAP—the communications probably being one of the more important ones. The reality is: it is a tough process. If we give someone a job to take that helicopter view, we put them under a fair bit of pressure. Local government councillors are obviously under a fair bit of pressure, and so it is difficult for them to make decisions as they are probably closest to the people. That is why we occasionally see councils completely override the advice of the officers who have the experience to tell them what should happen. We see councils that vote unanimously to override the advice of a highly trained planner who says that this thing should happen, because the councils get lobbied very hard. Therefore, there must be a mechanism that recognises that overview, and John Day introduced the DAP system to try to do that. In doing that, we, first, have to be very careful that the system does not become corrupted and, second, back the system that has been put in place.

The good thing about what I see in this debate is that both sides of politics are showing support for the DAP system, and I know that the minister is looking at a series of amendments around that. But some support for that system to make it better will obviously be highly welcome because, again, we recognise that it is an imperfect system. We cannot set the assessment criteria to whether everybody is happy, or even the majority of people are happy. Unfortunately, that just does not work in the planning system. It has to be set to the best outcome for the future of Western Australia, having in mind future generations that have to live in the system. Ultimately, that requires a bit of muscling up. It requires a bit of courage, and I know that courage is one of those times when you say, "That was

a very courageous decision, minister”, but it usually means, “Write your resignation; you are about to go out the door!” There are probably not many portfolios that require more courage than the planning portfolio, and that is probably why it was a portfolio to which Hon John Day was highly suited, because he was not flamboyant, but he was sensible, he was smart, and he was courageous. He was prepared to take decisions, and he did take decisions, as the minister, overriding the wants of some people to allow developments to occur. I did ask Hon Neil Thomson how many times this happened, and he said that there were at least two that he could recall. That is to be commended. It requires some courage to do that; it really does. It also requires an acceptance that a lot of people are going to be unhappy with you, so it probably means that it is a portfolio that lends itself to the upper house a bit—unless the member is in an electorate that has no development occurring—because it does require some courage.

Local government has an important role to play, but I absolutely understand that there are many local governments whose planning schemes are horrendously out of date, including in my patch. There are plenty of local governments that have not kept up and are only partially engaged in regional planning schemes. The Minister for Regional Development and I—the minister is absent on personal leave or urgent parliamentary business—had some great debates on this when we were both members of the place that shall not be named, because the greater Bunbury region scheme was put in place when she was the planning minister and I was the member for Capel. That was a great debate. We actually attended various community consultation areas together; not as a unit, obviously, but we were both in attendance at these things where people expressed various views. That scheme is still horrendously out of date. The region scheme is horrendously out of date, partially because town schemes are horrendously out of date. The planning system has not kept up in many cases at local and state government levels.

We add on top of that the need for it to be projected into the future. One of the issues is that we are continually trying to operate in a four-year election cycle, which is better than a three-year one, but still problematic because planning is a three-decade issue not a three-year issue. We have to get better at prioritising those future outcomes to make sure that the benefit is more focused on those people far into the future. There has to be an acceptance of increasing densities and of building higher in places. It should be strategic and targeted. We cannot be frightened by the nimby component, but we also do not have to ride roughshod all the time over local communities.

The balance is sometimes hard to reach. In terms of planning this focus, we should watch developers carefully, but they are not our enemies. A better housing policy across the board at all levels of government would be useful. We should work with development and developers to make sure there is adequate land supply, which is a bigger blockage at the moment than construction—although construction has caught up in the past 12 months and, hopefully, that will all correct itself in time. All those things are critically important in the planning portfolio.

The bill before the house today is probably a very small part of the debate that needs to be had about how we make planning better. I will give room for the minister to stand and start her reply, which she can finish in the next sitting week, but this needs to be a much bigger debate about planning. It is not right yet. I do not necessarily think this bill makes it right. A debate will have to be had over the next decade or so to try to get some level of improvement that will allow us to have confidence that we are planning for our grandchildren, so that they will have the capacity to buy a house or an apartment so that they can retire with home ownership and some assets in the density that they prefer in the circumstances at that time, but they will also need to work in with what the community, the environment and everything else can survive. It is a complex argument. I do not expect us to fix it today, but let us see where we end up.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.18 pm] — in reply: I will begin my reply on the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2022, but I will be able to continue it when we meet again. If members look at standing order 125A, they will see that there is provision for the ministerial response to continue beyond the allocated period.

I thank members for their contributions, though I note most of those who spoke indicated they will be opposing the bill. There was a bit of Jekyll and Hyde in some of the contributions. I appreciate the contribution that we just heard from Hon Dr Steve Thomas, who I think used his usual moderate and sensible language to set out the kind of balances that need to be made when we are dealing with a piece of legislation such as this. The Jekyll and Hyde bit is the way Hon Neil Thomson described part 17; he used various words, including “dangerous” and “flawed”. That part is actually the same as what he supported back in 2020, so if it is flawed and dangerous now, it was flawed and dangerous then.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I listened to the member in silence, although I was so tempted to interrupt, but I did not. I listened to him in silence, so he can pay me the same courtesy.

Another point Hon Neil Thomson made—I wrote it down—was that the Liberal Party holds dear the development sector and that the Liberal Party would soon outline very development sector-friendly policies. I am sure the development sector is sitting on the edge of its seat, waiting for that. With that, I will reserve my comments until we come back.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

JEWISH COMMUNITY — RACIAL VILIFICATION*Statement*

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan) [5.20 pm]: On 27 April, I attended the Jewish community's Holocaust commemoration, Yom HaShoah. This is an event that I have attended for many years. As members will be aware, the event acknowledges the six million Jews who were murdered by the Nazis during World War II. I was accompanied by Bill Johnston, MLA, Simon Millman, MLA, Hon Tjorn Sibma and many other members of Parliament and members of the Jewish community. It is a very solemn, moving and very sad event, especially when a survivor or a member of the family of a survivor recounts their experiences during this horrific period in our history. In my view, it remains important to continually remind ourselves to do everything possible to avoid repeating that period of history. One would hope that we would never have to deal with these sorts of atrocities again, but sadly, we saw from afar the travesty and wastage of war in Ukraine, and the brutal massacre of innocent Ukrainians. When we say "lest we forget", obviously some have.

That brings me to what I want to bring to members' attention tonight. We are seeing around the world, and in Australia, an increase in racism and anti-Semitism, with acts of violence, intimidation and, in some cases, murder. We have seen the rise of far-right groups in our country, which use symbols of hate to cause distress and fear amongst communities that have already seen the diabolical outcomes, from similar beginnings, of this type of activity, and have suffered as a result.

I note that recently the Victorian government, on 11 May, announced the introduction of a bill to ban the use of the Nazi swastika in public, the Summary Offences Amendment Act (Nazi Symbol Protection) Bill 2022. It is expected that this bill will receive bipartisan support. When it is passed, it will enable police to confiscate Nazi symbols, such as swastikas, if they are displayed in public. There will be fines of up to \$22 000 or 12 months' jail if the law is breached. Both New South Wales and Queensland are also in the process of introducing similar legislation soon. New South Wales currently has a draft bill out for consultation.

I have recently engaged with members of our local Jewish community and the vice president of the Jewish Community Council of Western Australia, Mr Steve Lieblich, to gauge their views on the local need for legislation of this nature. Their response was that although this is not currently an issue here to the same extent as it is in other states, there has been an increase in the usage of the Nazi swastika in public; flying the Nazi flag; the use of Nazi symbols in graffiti; the sale of Nazi memorabilia; and an increase in hostile actions against members of the Jewish community in schools, homes and retail outlets.

Today I have written to the Premier, the Attorney General, the Minister for Police, and the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests to ask the government to consider introducing legislation in the same vein to ban the public use of the Nazi swastika. I have sought advice from the Jewish community and support from the member for Mount Lawley, Mr Simon Millman. This legislation would send a clear message that anti-Semitic activities are unacceptable and not to be tolerated in our Western Australian community. I will note however, that the swastika is sometimes used by some religions, and culturally, in other countries, and that there is no request from the community in Western Australia to ban it if it is used for those purposes. The ban on the Nazi swastika would boost a sense of security and safety for members of our Jewish community. A number of other countries have already banned the use of Nazi symbols: Germany, France, Latvia, Poland and a range of others, who have had that real-life experience during World War II and do not want to see it repeated.

The Jewish Community Council of Western Australia is of the view that the banning of the public display of hate symbols such as the Nazi swastika will aid in countering racism, although it is not a silver bullet. I know that all members of this Parliament find anti-Semitism abhorrent. I hope that if the Premier and the Labor government can see their way to introduce legislation to ban the public display of the Nazi swastika, it would indeed receive bipartisan support across these chambers and have a swift passage through this place.

Statement

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [5.25 pm]: Very briefly, I thought that was an outstanding contribution by Hon Kate Doust. If the government was moved to introduce the sort of legislation that is envisioned, absolutely we would support it.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE 1171*Statement*

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.25 pm]: Likewise, I think that was a wonderful contribution by Hon Kate Doust and something that we should all be happy to support.

I want to reflect on a parliamentary question that was asked in the house on 14 December 2021. It was a particularly obnoxious question and was ruled out of order. On 15 December 2021, I made a statement in the house pointing out the gross inaccuracy of the question. I thought it was quite gutless that it was asked in my absence. I sought an apology from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. President, that apology has not yet been forthcoming. I was

hoping to be able to make this statement and reiterate the request for an apology for that appalling question when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was in the house, but he is regularly out of the house on urgent parliamentary business during members' statements.

If we are going to degenerate to this level of politics, it is a sad day for Western Australian politics. I want an apology for that question. It was awful. It has caused my family and I stress. I think we should be above that sort of thing. I am still waiting for an apology.

ESPERANCE CARE SERVICES

Statement

HON SHELLEY PAYNE (Agricultural) [5.26 pm]: I wanted to stand for a couple of minutes to note that the WasteSorted Awards will be presented tonight, celebrating Western Australian waste champions and the work achieved in waste reduction. There are two new categories this year—the Local Government Award and the Waste Avoidance (Events) Award. Last month, 38 finalists were announced over 10 categories. These awards will acknowledge innovative solutions to reduce waste to meet our re-use and recycling targets in Western Australia's waste strategy.

I wanted to talk about these awards because a local organisation in Esperance—Esperance Care Services—has been nominated for an award under category 3, which is a waste management award. It is up against some strong competition—an alliance of multinationals, including a metropolitan local government, the Town of Cambridge and a dedicated waste recycling company. Esperance Care Services is a non-profit community support organisation that has been operating in Esperance for the past two decades. It has an emergency relief program with community support programs. It provides advocacy and counselling and it has had the privilege to help many in our community who are experiencing hardship and crisis. Through the COVID pandemic, it has had the ability to react to crises and disasters and bring hope to people. It has done an amazing job.

Members are probably wondering why it was nominated for one of these waste awards tonight. Members might remember when Hon Ayor Makur Chuot talked about the fashion industry. A lot of members here, including Hon Klara Andric and Hon Sandra Carr, raised the issue of sustainable fashion and said that if we supported our Western Australian fashion industry a bit more, we might have a little less waste. Esperance Care Services takes a lot of donations from the community. We all know about the massive amount of waste that we create with all the clothing that our kids grow out of and the things we buy that maybe we do not really need. We donate a lot of this to those organisations. Maybe it makes us feel better that we are not putting it all in the bin. Sometimes it leaves these organisations with a lot of work to do as well. Esperance Care Services takes these donations. It has an amazing thrift shop and boutique, so people can buy clothing really cheap. It helps them. It also helps raise money for the organisation. There is not a lot of choice in Esperance. I have bought clothing from Esperance Care Services. I have even worn something I bought from there to a Labor Party dinner. It has to pay for a lot of stuff that it cannot get rid of to be taken to the tip. It asked the Shire of Esperance for a grant to reduce its tip fees, which it did for a long period. That was until last year, when one of our very environmentally savvy and motivated community members, Sue Starr, talked about signing up for the Eco Pay It Forward program. Esperance Care Services approached the shire and the shire was willing to support it to get that up and running. Eco Pay It Forward basically collects unwanted clothing and manchester, launders it and sends it back for recycling.

How does Esperance Care Services afford this program? Esperance also has an amazing local freight company called Esperance Freight Lines Group. It offered its freight services to help with sending the material to Perth. Esperance is a long way from Perth; it is a big problem getting recycling to Perth so that it can be dealt with and processed.

Esperance Care Services initiated the program. First of all, it collected the extra clothing that it could not sell or recycle and put it into wool-bale bags. It then bought a wool press to press the excess used clothing into bales. Esperance Care Services has been doing this for about a year now. It has sent about 400 bags, or approximately 63 tonnes—more than one and a half Olympic-sized swimming pools—of clothing up to Eco Pay It Forward, all at its own initiative.

Many volunteers work at Esperance Care Services and they have been nominated for this award. I really wish them luck tonight, because all these multinationals that operate in society and send all this stuff down to Esperance, whether it is food services, or Target or Kmart, just forget about us. Here is a community service organisation that has worked with the community to tackle our waste. I congratulate all the volunteers and everyone at Esperance Care Services, the Esperance Freight Lines Group and the Shire of Esperance for pulling together to start to tackle our waste. Even if it does not win tonight, it is still a really big winner in my book and for the many people in Esperance it helps. Good luck to Esperance Care Services tonight. I really hope it comes through with the award.

House adjourned at 5.32 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

HEALTH — STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS

572. Hon Tjorn Sibma to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

Since the passage of the *Public Health Act 2016*, until 17 March 2020, can the Minister please advise in tabular form:

- (a) the number of occasions a Public Health State of Emergency has been declared in Western Australia:
 - (i) the reason for that declaration;
 - (ii) if that declaration applied across the entire State or was limited to a specific region or regions; and
 - (iii) the period of time that declaration was in effect?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (a) One declaration
 - (i) COVID-19
 - (ii) Entire State
 - (iii) 7 days

WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE — FACILITIES

581. Hon Wilson Tucker to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health; Mental Health:

- (1) How many FTE nursing staff are employed at each WA Country Health Service facility?
- (2) How many WA Country Health Service facilities have reduced their operating hours in the last six months?
- (3) Do any WA Country Health Service facilities operate Alcohol or Other Drug (AOD) wards?
- (4) Are any AOD wards planned for any WA Country Health Service facilities?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (1)

Region	Nursing FTE
Goldfields	314.25
Great Southern	403.38
Kimberley	377.5
Midwest	411.86
Pilbara	310
South West	830.04
Wheatbelt	434.48

This data is current as at 24 March 2022 and does not include casual employees or agency staff.

- (2) One community hospital required a change to overnight services with an on-call arrangement, and one has had short periods of service change.
- (3) No. AOD treatment services are available throughout the State in both clinical and non-clinical settings.
- (4) No.

