



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2023

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 15 November 2023

Legislative Assembly

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

PAPERS TABLED

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

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE — STOLEN WAGES — APOLOGY

Notice of Motion

Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Premier to move the following motion immediately after prayers on Tuesday, 28 November 2023 —

That this house formally acknowledges and apologises to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who worked in Western Australia between 1936 and 1972 for little or no wages.

PRISONERS REVIEW BOARD — EARLY PAROLE — LUKE NOORMETS

Statement by Attorney General

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.02 pm]: Following the shocking murder–suicide committed by Luke Noormets against his former partner Ms Georgia Lyall on 27 July this year while on parole for drug-related violent crimes against another man, the Premier asked me to review the circumstances surrounding Noormets' release on parole and determine whether any changes are required to the parole consideration process. I have conducted that review and advised the Premier and the Minister for Corrective Services of my findings and recommendations. I table my letter to the Premier dated 15 November 2023.

[See paper [2522](#).]

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I now advise the Parliament of the outcomes of my review and the steps being taken in response.

I am advised by the board that there was nothing in Noormets' file to suggest he should not be released on parole, and there was no information to indicate any prior convictions for offences of violence or family violence. The board was provided with Noormets' criminal history, which revealed that in 2011 he was convicted of a breach of police order, criminal damage and trespass. Those offences were considered by the board and the sentencing judge to be nonviolent offences. The board advises that it was not informed of the factual circumstances of the 2011 offences, which we now know were committed in circumstances involving family violence, with the complainant being an ex-partner. Although this information was relevant to the considerations for parole, it is important to note that it may not have changed the board's decision to release Noormets on parole, noting that he was on parole for 13 months before his last violent act.

This government is committed to ensuring that every possible action is taken to prevent violence so I have therefore recommended that information provided by the Adult Community Corrections unit to the board should include a more detailed analysis of prior offending and specifically address the details of any offences related to family and domestic violence to ensure the board is fully advised of the details of a person's criminal history. This may be achieved through providing additional detail in parole assessment reports or by a standalone report.

I refer to increased victim representation on the board. Having access to appropriate information is, of course, only the first step in ensuring robust decision-making. The next step is to ensure that decisions of the board are supported by a diverse membership with sufficient training and expertise to examine the information before it. The board has confirmed that there is currently no requirement for its quorum to include members with a contemporary understanding of family violence. I have therefore recommended that a victim representative from the Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime, with expertise in family violence, should attend and participate in meetings of the board as an additional member.

Further, the board has confirmed that although it offers professional development in family violence to board members, it is not a requirement. A greater understanding of the dynamics of family violence may assist members of the board to recognise offences as potential family violence offences and characterise them accordingly. My final recommendation is that board members should be required to undertake family and domestic violence training on an ongoing basis.

As these recommendations impact on Corrective Services, the Department of Justice and the Prisoners Review Board, the next steps will be for the relevant ministers to implement these changes. Rest assured, we will make whatever changes are necessary in the interests of community safety.

The SPEAKER: Attorney General, brief ministerial statements are just that—they are three-minute statements. At the end of three minutes, I would usually say that the minister's time has expired. Keep that in mind for next time because I am highly likely to say that.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL — CRAIG STEVEN BYDDER, SC — APPOINTMENT

Statement by Attorney General

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.07 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house that Mr Craig Steven Bydder, SC, has been appointed as the Solicitor-General for the state of Western Australia. His appointment was approved by His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council yesterday.

Mr Bydder was admitted to practice in 1999. Since that time, he has worked at the State Solicitor's Office, providing advice to government and its agencies in a wide range of areas, including constitutional, administrative, regulatory prosecution, tort, local government, planning and environment law. Mr Bydder was appointed Deputy State Solicitor in 2017 and led the State Solicitor's Office's public and general litigation section. He also headed the State Solicitor's Office's advice, policy and public law section and its civil litigation section.

Mr Bydder regularly appears as counsel for the state and state agencies on high-profile matters, including in the High Court; the Supreme Court, in both the Court of Appeal and General Division; the District Court; the Magistrates Court; and the State Administrative Tribunal. In addition to his work as counsel, Mr Bydder provides advice to the highest levels of government. From 2019 to 2021, Mr Bydder played a critical role as part of the team advising the government on the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr Bydder was appointed Senior Counsel in October 2022. His skill and experience as a litigator and strategic adviser mean he will be well placed to assist the government in the years to come. We offer Mr Bydder our congratulations and look forward to working with him.

INVICTUS GAMES

Statement by Minister for Veterans Issues

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Veterans Issues) [12.09 pm]: I draw the attention of the house to the presence of Mr Adam Slot and Ms Karney Armstrong in the Speaker's gallery today—two veterans and exceptional Western Australian athletes. Adam and Karney recently returned from the Invictus Games in Dusseldorf, Germany and it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to inform the house of their achievements at those games. As members would be aware, the Invictus Games is an international event that offers an empowering experience for participating athletes, highlights the indomitable spirit of veterans and provides inspiration to people with a disability everywhere. This year, Adam and Karney joined 29 other veteran athletes from across Australia as part of Team Invictus Australia to compete in the Dusseldorf games held from 9 to 16 September 2023. Adam served in the infantry and armoured corps before being selected to the Special Air Service Regiment. He sustained multiple physical injuries and suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. At this year's games, he competed in indoor rowing, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball. Ms Armstrong served as a linguist and medic in the Royal Australian Navy and acquired chronic injuries to both hips as well as post-traumatic stress disorder. In Dusseldorf, she competed in archery, athletics and table tennis. These two Western Australians served this country with bravery and honour, sacrificing their physical and mental health along the way. Although they may no longer be in uniform, their commitment and dedication to our country remains steadfast—from serving our flag, to proudly flying it on the international sporting stage. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them on their achievement in representing Australia at the international level and for their tenacity in overcoming their individual setbacks. Their story is one of resilience, dedication to service, and inspiration—a story that serves as an example for us all.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE STRATEGY — CHARGE UP ROUND 2

Statement by Minister for Energy

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [12.11 pm]: I am pleased to update the house on one element of the Cook government's work to support the uptake of electric vehicles. Earlier this month I launched round 2 of the Charge Up workplace grants program at the EV Expo, where the WA government had a very strong presence. Round 2 has \$12.5 million available to help not-for-profits, small and medium businesses, and local government authorities to install EV chargers. In this round, fast DC chargers up to 350 kilowatts are available, in addition to AC chargers. The grants will meet about half the costs of buying and installing charging stations, as well as half the cost of smart charging software for a period of two years. In addition, the grants will cover half the cost of electricity network upgrades required to cater for larger chargers. Higher funding caps are in place for areas outside of Perth, in recognition of higher costs in regional and remote Western Australia. The Charge Up grants are designed to encourage daytime and off-peak EV charging. The grants help by making charging stations available where people typically might spend time during the day, such as tourist attractions and hospitality businesses. These charging stations enable EV owners to utilise abundant solar energy during sunny hours, which assists in stabilising our electricity grid.

Round 1 of the Charge Up grants program was very successful. Nearly \$2.4 million of grant funding was approved to install 403 chargers in 221 locations throughout Western Australia. Applications are open now and will close in

early May 2024. Applications are assessed on a rolling basis and may close early if funding is exhausted. Small and medium businesses, not-for-profits and local governments should log on to the Energy Policy WA website to find out how the Charge Up grants could benefit them. The Charge Up workplace EV charging grants program is part of the Cook government's \$60 million clean energy car fund and a feature of the state electric vehicle strategy. By working together, industry and government can position our state to be driven by cleaner energy, towards net zero by 2050.

ELECTRICITY — UNDERGROUND POWER

Statement by Minister for Energy

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [12.13 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house of another milestone in the Cook government's work to deliver underground power to Western Australians. The final two projects of the state underground power program are now underway, signalling the imminent conclusion of that program after more than 25 years in operation. The state underground power program has seen 100 000 properties benefit from over 100 undergrounding projects. The final two projects are Maylands Central and South Lake East. Construction is well underway. The program is one of four undergrounding programs in existence and Western Power is consolidating these down to two programs. The state underground power program and the network renewal undergrounding program pilot are being replaced by the targeted underground power program, or TUPP. This new program will continue the work of the state underground power program, with some important improvements. The TUPP will target projects in the oldest areas of the network, where the above-ground infrastructure is most in need of replacement. This will maximise the reliability benefit of underground projects, but it also helps maximise the financial contribution that Western Power can make. It also will increase Western Power's capacity for undergrounding, from an average of 4 000 to 12 000 properties a year across the first four years. The TUPP will change the way the state government funds undergrounding projects. State government funding will be offered on a tiered basis, informed by socio-economic indicators. That means the state government will provide greater support where it is needed most. Western Power has secured agreement from nine local governments to participate in the TUPP. Construction of the first project in Bassendean north is set to begin in May 2024. The new TUPP means we can offer underground power to more Western Australian households at a lower cost. The network-driven approach of the TUPP will be complemented by retrospective undergrounding projects. This will allow areas, outside of the network priority list, to receive underground power via a proposal from their local government. This dual-pronged approach allows us to offer underground power to more Western Australian households, all the while getting better value for taxpayers and property owners.

WATER CORPORATION — ALKIMOS DESALINATION PLANT

Statement by Minister for Water

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Water) [12.15 pm]: I rise to update the house on an important milestone in a project that is crucial to the long-term water security of over 2.5 million Western Australians who receive drinking water through Water Corporation's integrated water supply scheme. The commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has now approved the 100-billion-litre-a-year Alkimos seawater desalination plant. This follows an earlier assessment by the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority and subsequent conditions that were approved by the Minister for Environment, Reece Whitby, in August. Securing both state and federal approvals means our government, alongside the Water Corporation, is now one step closer to delivering Perth's next major, climate-resilient water source. Those ministerial conditions include ensuring net zero scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions during construction and operation through measures such as procuring renewable energy to meet the plant's total annual energy needs. Last month, the project was also granted development approval by an independent development assessment panel, paving the way for initial site works to begin late this year. The plant will be delivered in two 50-billion-litre-a-year stages, with water expected to be available by 2028. The Cook Labor government has currently allocated \$2.1 billion towards the project in consecutive state budgets. Western Australia was the first state to introduce large-scale desalination in this country. In 2007, after then Premier Alan Carpenter commissioned our first major seawater desalination plant to be built in the southern hemisphere at Kwinana, he said —

There's absolutely no doubt in my mind that we will have another desalination plant, at least of this scale, on the coast north or south of Perth in the not too distant future ... In the longer term, we'll have more than one more, we'll have several.

With this milestone, we are well on track to realising this vision.

HOUSING SUPPLY — JINDOWIE ESTATE

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [12.18 pm]: I rise to update the house on our government's progress to boost long-term housing supply, with the release of lots for 43 new affordable housing properties at Jindowie Estate in Yanchep. These residential lots, ranging in size from 250 square metres to 540 square metres, have been carefully designed to cater to a diverse range of preferences and price points. From easy-care cottage lots through

to more spacious family-sized options, Jindowie Estate has options with affordable pricing starting from \$155 000. The estate also offers more than just housing. It is strategically located in close proximity to retail and commercial hubs, primary and secondary schools, natural bushland, and the future Yanchep train station. This development aligns with our commitment to creating vibrant, well-connected communities that enhance the quality of life for residents. Construction on these lots will commence shortly, with titles expected to be available in July 2024.

I am also pleased to announce that five of these lots will be dedicated to social housing. Our government remains committed and dedicated to boosting the long-term housing supply in Western Australia. The release of these much-needed affordable lots in Yanchep is a testament to that commitment. This initiative not only provides housing options for a growing population, but also aligns with our broader vision for more inclusive communities. I am confident that the estate in Yanchep will be a much sought after community in our northern suburbs.

MINING AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading

Resumed from 22 June.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.19 pm]: I rise as the shadow Minister for Mines and Petroleum to contribute to the second reading debate on the Mining Amendment Bill 2023. I note that this bill, unusually, started its journey in the Legislative Council. That is not unheard of, but it is unusual, given that the minister responsible for the bill is sitting opposite me. I thank the minister's office and the department for providing a number of briefings over a period of time.

This bill has had a long genesis. I had some contact from the industry a couple of weeks ago, asking when the bill was going to be brought on for debate, so I think the industry will be very happy for this bill to pass through Parliament. I attended a briefing some time ago, on 2 May, and then again in August after the bill had passed through the Legislative Council. I have also spoken to a number of stakeholders along the way. The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, in particular, has been very engaged, and there has been contact with the Pastoralists and Graziers Association also, as members would expect. The parliamentary secretary in the Council, in the briefings and also during debate in that place, provided some detail on who the government consulted in its preparation of the bill. I am very pleased to report to the minister that this legislation has no showstoppers or significant issues for the opposition. We had a couple of questions and I think our members in the Legislative Council did a good job of canvassing most, if not all, of them.

Interestingly, representatives from the mining sector put forward that this legislation was not something that they had particularly asked for. Although it is a clear indication of the government's long-held position of having multiple uses for crown land, it will not necessarily altogether prevent objections to exploration in the event that there is carbon farming on pastoral or diversification leases. There were some questions about why it was required. We could probably get around those things if we really wanted to, so for me it is more a signpost from the government that there needs to be very clear outcomes for the mining and resources sector in respect of crown land uses.

As I understand it, the bill will prohibit people from lodging a notice of objection in the Wardens Court if the basis for the objection is that the activities authorised by a mining tenement would affect an offsets project. The term "offsets project" has been used, as I understand it, to align with commonwealth legislation—namely, the commonwealth Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011, which defines carbon farming projects. A significant number of such projects are either commencing or under investigation by investors. It is rare for a week to go by without hearing about the development of a new project to take advantage of this legislation.

The legislation will not prevent the public from objecting to a mining tenement on public interest or environmental grounds. Perhaps the minister could comment on the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety consultation paper on charges for objections; I think it is around the \$800 mark. That has not been in place previously and I do not know how it will operate when objections are raised. I understand that that consultation is underway at the moment, so I am happy to take advice from the minister as to how it will intersect with this legislation if objections are raised. I presume it will cover all objections to mining tenement applications.

It is intended that carbon farmers on crown land should coexist with mining projects. In my previous capacity as Minister for Water, we navigated some of these issues with pastoral leaseholders and, as I said, it is a long-held principle of government. There is a fine balance between trying to create opportunities and certainty for investors and developers on crown pastoral leases, and maintaining the right of the Crown to make sure there are broader opportunities. That is not always the easiest path to navigate and I imagine there will be a few test cases along the way once this legislation is passed. Maybe the minister would like to outline situations in which some of those concerns have been raised—that this could be an impediment, from the mining industry's perspective—and how much that drove the decision to bring this bill forward.

The aim is for carbon farmers on crown land to coexist with mining projects. Any interaction or intersection will require negotiation between the two parties, and if agreement is unable to be reached, the matter can be resolved through the normal avenue of the Wardens Court. Of course, it would be far preferable for these things to be

determined by the two parties through negotiation, but that is not always possible. The government has taken great pains to point out that crown land has already been subject to multiple land uses. We have seen uses by the resources industry and the pastoral industry and we have seen water developments. As far as we can see, this legislation is in line with the government's policy position.

It was very clear in the briefing offered by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety that weight was to be given to the benefit of mining for the state of WA versus the benefit of carbon farming. That was crystal clear, and is probably a little tone deaf in respect of balance as a whole-of-government approach, as there have been strong drives from previous ministers for agriculture, hydrogen, carbon farming and opportunities around carbon. Having worked with the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, I can understand that that is the singular focus, but the presentation struck me as being very pointed about how much wealth is generated by the mining sector—that is not in dispute—and why this is important. It is pointed out in the briefing paper that the resources sector provides around 125 000 jobs, including in the regions; about \$12.5 billion annually in royalty payments; and about half of the state's GSP. There is also a compare and contrast with carbon farming, in which it is pointed out that carbon farming does not pay royalties; creates an unknown but likely small number of jobs; and that the top 12 local government areas in WA's rangelands will potentially sequester, on average, about eight tonnes per hectare over a 25-year period.

It was very clear, from that department's perspective, why this is important legislation. That is not in dispute, but those who are interested can contrast this information with some of the government's past media statements and public commentary on carbon farming. I also take the minister to page 20 of the government's 2020 climate change policy. The statement at the top of that page reads —

Western Australia's significant land mass and extensive coastline provide enormous potential for carbon sequestration (storage) in vegetation and soils. Our rangelands occupy about 2.2 million square kilometres and can sequester large amounts of carbon, improving rangeland conditions and financial resilience for pastoralists.

It is not in dispute that the government is saying that these can coexist, but it was a stark reminder that, as usual in Western Australia, there seems to be a significant weighting of the mining industry over other pursuits.

There is a case study at the bottom of that page of the climate change policy, and a number of actions over the page, from recollection, that outline what the government is doing to promote and encourage carbon farming and storage. However, in a couple of lines in a briefing note by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety that is diminished to no royalties, unknown but likely small number of jobs and just a small amount of storage to be achieved. It is an observation. There is a lot going on in various departments. I make the point that statements like that on the importance of climate change policy and carbon sequestration cannot just be lines in a document like that in a situation whereby another piece of legislation is being brought forward that might diminish some of that importance. When the government came to power, it said that it was going to strengthen and streamline communication across government. A number of departments were merged. It might pay to have a look at some of those media statements and announcements on carbon farming, particularly from the previous Minister for Agriculture and Food, that mining trumps agriculture.

I will briefly touch on the discussions we had with the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. Obviously, most of its members fall within the remit of the impact of this legislation. I think it was more of an observation, but the PGA felt that perhaps rather than being consulted, it had been told about the legislation. We have seen a few examples of where that has occurred over the last six years. The PGA was appreciative that advice had been provided that this bill was coming forward, and I have the submission it made. The PGA holds concerns that by not allowing an objection to a mining tenement application solely based on the fact that it may impact carbon farming projects, carbon farming proponents, including pastoral and diversification leaseholders, may be disadvantaged. Although mining tenements can be excised from carbon farms with very little adverse effect, the PGA still has concerns over the timing and awarding of compensation for lost earnings, as well as delays to future restoration. It also pointed out that pastoral leaseholders who have carbon farms have legally binding contracts with the state government, and their rights need to be recognised.

Perhaps the minister can spend a little time talking about those interactions. I remember a number of Venn diagrams and charts were put forward about how this will apply, what excisions will need to occur, who will be liable for compensation, and how and in what time frame that compensation will be exercised so that those who are already in the space of carbon farming on pastoral leases will not be disadvantaged. I seek clarification on the compensation mechanism—who will pay, how will it be calculated and how will it be regulated—and whether that will be through policy or simply subject to negotiation between the two parties. I also seek clarification on how carbon farming contracts will be amended, and what role, if any, the state government will play in that amendment so that the contracts will accurately reflect what is being sought by this legislation. I understand that the mechanism through which carbon farmers seek compensation will be through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. I am happy for the minister to provide some commentary on how that will work practically once this legislation has been passed.

I ask the minister to also confirm that the government has made a commitment to pay compensation to impacted carbon farming proponents. In the first instance, has that commitment been made? Will that compensation be only in the first flush when we see impacts being realised or will it be in perpetuity? I understand that when seeking compensation, carbon farming proponents will need to provide independent and verifiable evidence that clearing has led to a loss of eligible vegetation for the project or for that designated area that would otherwise have generated the Australian carbon credit units that come as part of those projects. I still find those projects a relatively complex area. I am watching pretty closely, because a number of them are in progress in various different iterations. It certainly is an amazing opportunity for those in the pastoral industry to diversify, create value and provide rehabilitation.

I understand the importance of the mining industry and why the government may be seeking to make sure there is a very clear pathway for those in that sector to be uninhibited in their progress, or, at least, have an argument to say that a project cannot be objected to solely on this ground. But it appears to me that there are other ways to get around this, and this legislation should probably just be seen as more of a marker or a policy indicator as opposed to something that will provide any real show stoppers for either party.

With that, I am happy to take the minister's comments on those issues and anything that was raised through the debate in the other house. I will allow the member for Cottesloe to speak, who I believe has a few comments as well on this matter.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [12.36 pm]: I have a brief contribution to make on the Mining Amendment Bill 2023. It is a short and simple bill, but I think it is an important bill for the state of Western Australia. I note the comments that the previous member made on the requirement for the bill. I have a general concern about pastoral land. Traditionally, the industries established on pastoral land have been exclusively, if you like, growing cattle, and, then, of course, mining in much of that area, but increasingly we see that land being turned to other purposes such as carbon farming. Of course, we also see large tracts of land stations being purchased by various hopefuls for renewable energy generation. I think it would be a great shame to see the traditional cattle industry activity disappear. We also have goats on those pastoral stations.

I am also interested in the future of carbon offsets. I am certain that the minister and the member for Central Wheatbelt are aware that there is a lot of rethinking going on about carbon offsets and whether they are a permanent way of sequestering carbon or are in fact a temporary use. In any case, as I indicated before, I think this is a sensible change being brought forward by the minister to ensure that we do not conflict with the mining activity. We know the old saying; certainly my father used to tell me even when I was a boy: a mine begins to end the day they take out the first shovel of ore. Our mining industry critically depends on a continuous stream of new projects being brought online. It is the backbone of not only the Western Australian but also the Australian economy.

As was pointed out in the notes provided by the minister, there are objections and they are tested in the Wardens Court. This bill is important because it will remove that uncertainty and make sure it is very clear that these mining exploration activities should occur. As was noted in the report, and it is something for people to remember, there is a lot of public concern and controversy about mining, but the actual footprint of mining activity is typically a very small percentage of the lease and, in particular, the state. If we look at the land occupied by mining and the wealth it generates for our economy, despite the concern that people express, we would see that mining occupies a very, very small part of that land. I will not go on. As I said, this is a very sensible bill and is worthy of support. Again, I commend the minister's officers who prepared the explanatory memorandum. The minister and his staff provide the benchmark in explanatory memoranda. They are very clear and thorough.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.40 pm] — in reply: I will get some notes passed from the back of the room in a minute to help me with answering specific questions about the Mining Amendment Bill 2023 from the member for Central Wheatbelt in particular. Hopefully, my answers will satisfy her interest in this matter.

I address something raised by the member that is not related to the bill, which is charging for objections. I think the figure is \$827 or something like that. We have not charged for objections before, so we are looking at what the structure should be. Objections are a very important part of the mining industry, and the number of objections has been exponentially increasing and is disproportionate to the issues being dealt with by the Wardens Court. As the member knows, we appointed a second Mining Warden to try to smooth the challenges in the sector, but because of the exponential growth of objections it is not working in the way we expected, so a small charge for objections will be introduced. We are looking to see who needs to pay because there may be classes of people who we would exempt. For example, traditional owners objecting to issues regarding their own land are clearly a group of people we might exempt from needing to be charged because they are in a different position.

Of course, sometimes objections are made by other mining companies for tactical and strategic reasons, and it is a bit unreasonable that they are able to do that and spoil somebody else's proposal, literally at no cost to themselves. We are trying to work out how the Wardens Court can be strengthened, and charging for objections is clearly part of that. That is a very reasonable step forward.

Many people in the industry have been asking us for some time to charge for objections, including the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies—I think that is right. We do not intend to stop objections, because they are an important part of the process, but rather to help manage them, given that the Wardens Court is in an unusual position in that it has to be funded entirely from the Department of Justice and not the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety because of the need to have transparency and independence. We will not benefit from the charging; it is more about managing the Wardens Court process. That is just to deal with that matter at the front.

I move to the bill. I emphasise that the principle of coexistence exists on crown land in Western Australia, including on pastoral leases. There is always an intersection of interests on crown land. The department is not aware of anybody raising an objection on the grounds of carbon farming. I first emphasise that the grant of tenure is not the grant of approval to take action. It is about a delineation of the economic rights of the holder of the tenure. Often, there is a confusion that the grant of an exploration title, for example, means that there would be mining activity on the land. This legislation will unlink those two actions. Of course, when a mining or exploration company wants to do something on the land, they have to separately apply for a whole set of approvals from DMIRS and elsewhere, commensurate with the impact they will have on the ground. But the grant of the tenure is not an approval to take action. That is why it was foreshadowed in the consultation about the Land and Public Works Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 that the interaction between diversification leases and mining tenure would need to be clarified. In fact, we hoped that that clarification could be included in the bill brought forward by the Minister for Lands; however, the advice we had at the time from Parliamentary Counsel's Office was that we could not do that and we had to have a separate bill, which is the one we are now debating, to make the amendments to the mining legislation.

The Land and Public Works Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 has not been fully implemented because we are waiting for these changes so, that those matters can be resolved before the other bill is fully implemented. Again, I emphasise that this is about the grant of tenure, not the approval to take action. There will be no impact on carbon farming by the grant of the tenure because it does not authorise any activity that conflicts with carbon farming. This legislation encourages carbon farming because, for example, where there is already a mining tenure, the carbon farming could proceed as well. Otherwise, the mining tenure owner might object to the carbon farming, which is not what we want. We want to see more carbon farming. Carbon farming is an important contribution to fighting climate change. Of course, in low-rainfall areas of the state, sequestration is much, much slower, which is the issue that the member for Central Wheatbelt highlighted with DMIRS. DMIRS does its job well—let me put it that way. Its job is to regulate the mining industry, so it makes its position clear on its responsibilities to do that regulation.

These provisions do not relate to freehold land. Where carbon farming is done on freehold land, like it is in most other states of Australia, there are existing rules for the interaction between mining tenure and freehold. Many carbon sequestration projects are not impacted at all because they are on freehold land. This is about rangeland and unallocated crown land, where this principle of coexistence has been long in place. Indeed, the member for Cottesloe raised the question of the interaction between mining tenure and these large renewable energy projects supporting potential hydrogen export projects. That is a live issue and we deal with that regularly. I emphasise that when there might be approval for action, so mining activity, compensation would become relevant, not at the grant of the tenure. I think the example given in the briefing was of 100 000 hectares of land being used for carbon farming and 70 000 overlapping hectares that have been applied for as an exploration title. There would be no impact of that on the carbon farm because it would just be the grant of tenure.

If at a later stage the explorer wanted to do rock chipping of outcrops, there would again be no impact on the carbon farm because all they would be doing is harvesting rock chips from exposed rocks; they would not be clearing anything. The explorer might then want to do a drill hole, and would need to build a road and a drill pad. There would now be an impact and the mining company would need to pay compensation to the carbon farmer to the extent that it impacted on the carbon farm. If the road covered 10 hectares and the drill pad covered one hectare, that would be 11 hectares of compensation because that would be the impact from the mining activity. If the drill hit the mother lode and the miner now wanted to build a mine, that would obviously have a bigger impact. The compensation for the carbon farm would now be much larger because the mine would occupy a larger proportion of the land. Again, only the impact on the carbon-sequestration activity would be compensated and not the rest of it, because there would be no impact on the rest of the carbon-farming activity.

Compensation will be paid only when there is an actual impact. As happens now, compensation agreed to between a mining company and a pastoralist will be paid by the mining company and not by the government, as the government is not the beneficiary; apart from royalties, jobs and all the other benefits to the state, the government is not the direct investor and will not get a direct return. This legislation will simply reinforce the process of compensation.

An answer given in the other house to a question asked by Hon Colin de Grussa during the debate on 20 June states —

The preferred option for carbon farmers, and indeed pastoralists holding pastoral leases, is for there to be a compensation agreement negotiated between the carbon farmer and the mining applicant.

Of course, if there is not agreement, the warden can assist in that matter. The quote from the upper house goes on —

This was most recently recognised by Warden Cleary in a case she decided in December 2022 called *Telupac Holdings Pty Ltd v Hoyer*. To quote the warden —

... the objection of the pastoralist that there is the potential for damage or loss arising from mining operations, there being a general principle that such an objection will not stand in the way of mining activities, the resolution of that risk being rested in the compensation provisions under the *Mining Act*, and in the imposition of conditions.

That is paragraph 67 of the decision; the citation is 2022 WAMW 26.

The existing process for compensation is well understood in mining and pastoral circles. This legislation will underpin increased carbon-farming activity on the rangelands that otherwise would not be able to occur. It will reduce the conflict between mining and carbon farming because it will allow overlapping tenure. The question about the disturbance of carbon farming will be dealt with through compensation, which is an existing arrangement. If a pastoralist has existing infrastructure that needs to be moved for a mine, there is already a process in place to deal with those things. Of course, there are limits to how close a mining activity can be to a residence. All those things are already dealt with in legislation and will continue; there is no change to those. This is just about the grant of overlapping tenure.

Does the member for Central Wheatbelt have anything else that she wants to call out to me? Otherwise, I am happy to go into consideration in detail; it is entirely in the member's hands.

Ms M.J. Davies: No, I think that is it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Excellent.

I will finish by thanking the staff of the department for putting this together, and my office. I am pleased that the member for Cottesloe was so generous in his praise of the quality of the work being done by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety. I will finish by pointing out to members that there is often a misunderstanding in the community about the role of DMIRS. People forget that it is the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation that promotes investment in Western Australia. The job of DMIRS is to regulate the mining industry, whether through the granting of tenure, regulation of health and safety, issuing of land-clearing permits or with mine planning, mine closures and mine rehabilitation. That is its job. It is a regulator. The department does that effectively. The planning process for mine closures in Western Australia is outstanding; it is seen as a model around the world. It is an example of the work that is done by these clever people. Of course, the Geological Survey of Western Australia plays an important role in supporting mining activity by unlocking the geological information of the state. An immensely talented group of people are down there. However, the principal job of DMIRS, as the name suggests, is to regulate the mining industry, such as through the granting of tenure. That is where its responsibilities lie.

I thank the opposition for its support of the bill and commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.56 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.57 pm]: I am conscious that we are about to consider another bill, so I will just give the member for Vasse five minutes to gather herself. There are a few things going on this morning.

I thank the minister for responding to the questions that were raised in the debate on the Mining Amendment Bill 2023 and for providing clarity about the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety's position and responsibilities. As I said in my contribution to the second reading debate, there were no show stoppers for us in this bill and we were provided with briefings on a number of occasions. I express my appreciation to the staff who made themselves available and for the minister's explanations on this matter. As I said, I had a number of questions from industry about how this bill would progress before the end of the year. I am sure that they will be pleased to have that clarity as a result of the bill's passage through both houses of Parliament.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.57 pm] — in reply: I thank the member for Central Wheatbelt. I also thank the staff. Because the Mining Amendment Bill 2023 has already been through the upper house, it can now go to the Governor and become law, so we have acted very efficiently!

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW APPLICATION BILL 2023*Second Reading*

Resumed from 7 November.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [12.59 pm]: I rise to speak on the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill 2023. I am going to focus my comments on the final tranche of reforms, which is the reform to protect the use of the term “surgeon”. I am going to talk about this in the context of cosmetic surgery because it was concerns about the activities and regulation of certain practitioners in the cosmetic surgery business that led to this final set of reforms. As members will know, there are several tranches of reforms in this bill. We signed up to the national law approach in 2010, but we chose to sign up to it in 2010 through what is called a corresponding law mechanism. That means that the Parliament of Western Australia has to pass a corresponding law each time there is a national agreement about a new law to be passed. That means that if we do not pass the corresponding law, we will fall behind in the pace of reforms that have to be made to our framework for regulating health practitioners. We are quite far behind because we have not updated our laws for several years, and, as a result, I think we are three stages of reforms behind where we should be. I will speak about the fact that this bill will also introduce a uniform law approach to harmonising our law with the national agreement, but I will talk about that at the end.

There have been several tranches of reforms and the most recent tranche of reforms that is included in this bill deals with regulating the title of “surgeon”. As things currently stand, the position title of “surgeon” is not a protected term. A medical practitioner with any qualification, including, say, a basic medical degree, could hold themselves out as being a surgeon. In the medical community, there is an understanding that when someone says that they are a surgeon, they mean that they have a long history of additional training and they often specialise in a particular type of surgery, such as cardiothoracic surgery or reconstructive surgery. There has always been an understanding in the medical profession that when someone identifies as a surgeon, it means that they have additional qualifications, training and expertise, and those qualities enable them to do surgical work. However, the reality is that the term has not been protected, so that has allowed people who do not have the extra training, qualifications and expertise to hold themselves out to the community as being surgeons. That has become a problem, particularly in the context of the growth of the cosmetic surgery industry over the past decade.

I want to talk about how we got to the point at which we need to protect the term “surgeon” whereas we previously did not need to and what is driving that. At the end of the day, if we track back the need to protect the term “surgeon” to the growth of the cosmetic surgery industry, we also have to track it back to the prevalence of body image issues in our society and the many ways that it is difficult for all people, but particularly young people, to be happy with the body they have. We see this particularly through social media. I have an Instagram feed, as I am sure many members do. My Instagram ads are full of content that tells me about the kind of body that I should have. It is interesting that my content has changed in the last few months. My content is now about how I can be a great dad but also really super-fit at the same time. It is about how I can have morning routines and still crush my day but be a great dad. I rather suspect that the male influencers producing that content are not the great dads they hold themselves up to be. It is interesting to me, as a man in his 30s, that the algorithm for my social media feeds is dedicated to shaming me about my body. As members would have noticed over the last six months or so, it is not the case that I have become a dad and managed to maintain a fit physique. I have enthusiastically eaten every calorie that has come within five metres of me over the past six months, and particularly the last three and a half months! I think there is something about living with the fatigue and stress that means that the only solution is to just keep putting fuel into my body to sustain myself, and I have enthusiastically adopted that approach to parenting. I am constantly shown images, stories and content that are saying that my body is somehow unacceptable and I should be dieting. It is quite interesting. I have been talking with my wife lately about the difference between the content on social media for women and the content for men. A lot of the same memes or gimmicks that come up on social media are mirrored for both men and women, but different lenses are put on them. At the moment, there is the “get ready with me” meme. The one for women tells them how they can detox their body, start their day right by drinking lots of water and live a healthy life, whereas the content of the men’s version is the same but the lens is about how they can crush their day as a man. It tells them that if they start by drinking two litres of water and meditating, they are taking ownership of their life and that will lead to promotions at work and that kind of thing. There are still these archetypal sexist narratives in social media.

I think that social media has driven a lot of the anxiety that men have, but also, I want to acknowledge, that particularly women, young women and girls have. Although one in four people in Australia with eating disorders are men, that leaves three out of four people with eating disorders who are women. There can be no doubt that body image and eating disorders are a gendered issue. The member for Belmont will go into this issue in more detail. I promised her that I would not crib her material, so I am not doing that. The reality is that the intense focus that we now have on body image is driving a range of issues. It is driving eating disorders. It is driving other types of mental health issues. It is also driving the growth of the industries that prey upon people who are influenced by all those factors. I will leave the point about eating disorders to the member for Belmont, but I want to note that I was at Cockburn Integrated Health with the Minister for Health a few weeks ago, and I was there myself on Monday and saw that the South Metropolitan Health Service’s eating disorders clinic that is being opened at Cockburn Integrated

Health is really coming along. I could see that the fit-out had happened and the signage was up behind the reception area, so I look forward to that service being opened. I congratulate the minister on leading the charge in addressing some really complicated issues of mental health and eating disorders, which are often intractable and difficult-to-treat disorders. I want to acknowledge the minister for her work on that and acknowledge that a service will be opening in my electorate thanks to the great work of this state government.

One of the things that I think we have probably all noticed that shows the growth of the body image industry over the last decade or so is the explosion in the number of gyms and wellness centres, which I noticed in the late 2000s when I was at university. Gyms were suddenly popping up out of the ground everywhere. More recently, I have noticed the growth of very small boutique cosmetic surgery clinics in shopping centres. I think there are at least two, or maybe three, in Cockburn Gateway Shopping City near my office. These shopfronts offer things such as waxing and those sorts of procedures, but they also offer all sorts of other things as well, like laser hair removal and injectables, a range of things that 10 years ago we did not hear much about. We certainly did not think we would be able to wander into a shopping centre, make an appointment and get that sort of procedure. I have noticed those sorts of outfits opening up.

We have also seen the rise of television shows about cosmetic surgery and the creation of celebrity personalities. Celebrity cosmetic surgeon, Dr Daniel Lanzer, who I will speak about a little later, has, I think, now fled the country because he was the subject of a lot of scrutiny from both the media and the regulator, and also on the receiving end of class actions from former patients. These celebrity medical professionals, or maybe paraprofessionals, buy into social media and buy into the body image issues that people have and create a whole online personality around it. The cosmetic surgery industry has become enormous in the last 10 years in particular. The estimates I could find were that the cosmetic surgery industry, excluding procedures like injectables and those sorts of procedures that people can have at shopfront clinics, is worth \$1.3 billion to \$1.5 billion. But if we include services like injectables, the value of the industry rises to something like \$4 billion or \$5 billion. This is huge money that is going into people's pockets. If people are going to be making that kind of money out of an industry, if they are going to be engaging in what are in many cases quite risky procedures, even the procedures that seem simple, or procedures that people can end up with a bad result from, it is right that it should have more regulation. It is right that we should crack down on the industry. I think it will be to the benefit of the industry itself. A lot of doctors have been supportive of these amendments, because they do not want to see public confidence in the medical profession lost as result of a few cowboys running around holding themselves out as cosmetic surgeons, when they really do not have the specialist training and expertise to do that job.

I now turn to some of the revelations that came out in the media around 2021 and 2022 about practices in the cosmetic surgery industry. A lot of different journalists were involved. Adele Ferguson led the charge in a coordinated investigation between the ABC and a couple of others, including *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, which resulted in a series of programs and articles that exposed a lot of the problems in the cosmetic surgery industry. I will go to some of those examples from Adele Ferguson's reporting. I start with an article by Adele Ferguson in *The Sydney Morning Herald* from 21 August 2022. This article is entitled "'Please don't kill me': Elite soldier feared for his life after cosmetic surgeon cut him open". It really is a terrible article. I will not go into it in detail, but basically the article refers to a 24-year-old woman who had a procedure done by a supposed cosmetic surgeon, Dr Adam Najem. The procedure had seemingly gone wrong and it seemed as though the incisions had become infected. She went back to see him and he inexpertly poked and prodded around and caused her all sorts of pain and agony. The article states —

The cosmetic surgeon, Dr Adam Najem, gives the patient gauze to bite on to stifle her screams "as there are other patients in the waiting room".

That is horrific behaviour. He sent her away that day and her condition got worse, but when she went back to him and his office he told her that there was no problem and that it is all part of the natural process after the surgery. The article says —

Her condition deteriorates over the next few days but Najem advises her against going to hospital, saying, "No, it was all part of the procedure".

On June 4, 2018, the woman's cousin calls an ambulance, and she is admitted to the intensive care unit of Sydney's Liverpool Hospital in septic shock—a life-threatening condition.

It is just horrific for this woman and for her family. It also points to the fact that this patient or client of Dr Najem ultimately ended up in the public system, which had to pick up the pieces from bodgie work that had been done by someone in the private cosmetic surgery industry.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: That is just one example of when things go wrong. I quote from another part of the article. It goes on to say —

Najem runs a cosmetic clinic in Baulkham Hills, Sydney. On his website he describes himself as a reputable cosmetic surgeon who offers his patients "a high level of care".

But documents obtained as part of a joint investigation by *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and *60 Minutes* into the \$1.4 billion cosmetic surgery industry expose doctors like Najem. They reveal multiple serious failings in a poorly regulated sector that allows doctors with basic medical degrees and weekend courses to call themselves cosmetic surgeons.

...

Like most cosmetic surgeons, Najem has a basic medical degree and limited surgical training. He boasts as his credentials a certificate from the European College of Aesthetic Medicine & Surgery. But a quick look reveals this is an organisation that offers short courses in cosmetic surgery, including facelifts, which take 15 hours; or liposuction, which can be learnt in a four-hour online course followed by a hands-on training session.

This is the key point I made at the start about the use and protection of the term “surgeon”. Here is a doctor who has a basic medical degree. They were a physician, but they were holding themselves out to be a cosmetic surgeon. The only additional training they had had was, essentially, through an online qualification factory that was ran short courses on what are, it seems to me as a layperson, some seemingly pretty invasive procedures that carry a lot of risk. That is an example of when things go wrong. We have had this financial opportunity for people to tap into body image issues and the wellness industry, then leverage their medical qualifications to perform procedures on people that they really do not have the skill and expertise to be doing. That is bad for health consumers and bad for medical professionals, because it runs down public confidence in the work they do.

I will give some other general examples of the range of problems that Adele Ferguson and various media organisations found. They obviously found examples like the one I just referred to of people who have been caused endless amounts of pain, like the woman in question who had gone into septic shock and had to go into an ICU at a public hospital, and also people who might not have been unwell but for whom the procedure had gone terribly wrong. I am referring here to the transcript of a radio program on ABC news titled “The horror that prompted the new cosmetic surgery rules” of 2 May 2023. This is an interview with Adele Ferguson. Samantha Hawley introduces her. The transcript states —

Samantha Hawley: So that’s just one case that you uncovered. What else did you find out was going on in this industry in Australia?

Adele Ferguson: Oh, there were so many things. What we found was it wasn’t just the big practices that had problems. It was also the little practices that had problems. People were texting me saying that they’d had facelifts by smaller practices in Melbourne or Sydney or Perth. And you know, one woman said she looked like a monster. She didn’t want to leave her home after getting a facelift that had just gone terribly wrong. Men were contacting me, they’d had penis enlargements and now they were in debilitating pain. It just went on and on. It was just horrifying.

They talk in the interview about other issues they discovered. They found that hygiene was an issue. There was a video from a whistleblower inside one of these cosmetic surgeries showing a fly in the operating theatre. Anyone who knows the health industry knows that it is completely unheard of and completely unacceptable to have a fly buzzing around while a procedure is going on. Nurses in the footage talked about cockroaches. They showed examples of nurses when the surgical instruments were not being sterilised on the site when they got to the site. The surgical instruments were just tossed in with doctors’ shoes and dirty clothes, and fluids and other things were being drawn up in unsanitary conditions. There were real risks of contracting septicaemia and other types of infections. It is pretty awful stuff. I have spared the chamber most of the detail in these articles. They go into quite a lot of detail. I would encourage members to look this up and read it because although it is confronting, I think it is important and incumbent on us as public policymakers, to the extent that we can, to look this sort of stuff in the face and confront it. Clearly, a lot has been done by health ministers all around the country, including the federal health minister and all the state and territory health ministers. As a result of this bill and other reforms, I think we are addressing these issues and cleaning up the cosmetic surgery industry.

This is the important point: the cosmetic surgery industry is here to stay. I do not think many people in this chamber are prohibitionists on most issue. Obviously, we would be on some issues, but we have to be realistic as policymakers. This is a huge industry and clearly there is a lot of demand for it. I will let the member for Belmont talk about the sorts of things we should do to address eating disorders and the like, because there are many things we can do, but it is also about regulating the industry. If we cannot stamp out the industry, we can make sure that it is regulated properly and that people get a safe and professional service.

As I said at the outset, the key reform that I am referring to in this bill is the reform that protects the title of “surgeon”. That reform provides that when someone says they are a surgeon, it will mean something very specific about what they can and cannot do and about their experience and qualifications. Importantly, under this bill, it will not matter if someone uses the word “surgeon” on its own. The word “surgeon” will be protected even if it is used in conjunction with other words. For example, if someone calls themselves a cosmetic surgeon or aesthetic surgeon, the word “surgeon” will still be protected. The bill gives an agreed meaning to the word and will also mean that through this

bill and other reforms that protected meaning will find its way into all parts of society. A doctor will not be able to refer to themselves on their business card as a surgeon unless they meet the criteria for being a surgeon. They will not be able to advertise on social media or television and they will not even be able to introduce themselves as a surgeon or self-identify as a surgeon unless they meet the criteria. Importantly, this bill will enforce that by making it a new criminal offence for someone to use the protected title of “surgeon” if they do not meet the criteria of being a surgeon, and that offence will be punishable by a maximum fine of \$60 000 or three years’ imprisonment, or both. They are significant penalties for people who hold themselves out as surgeons and, in particular, as cosmetic surgeons when they do not have the proper training and expertise to be one.

I want to touch on the other reforms that have been brought on at the national level to address this issue. They relate to the policy generally speaking; they are not found within this bill. I want to acknowledge that the reform in this bill is situated within a series of other reforms. The first reform that has also been brought in nationally is that patients who seek cosmetic surgery will not be able to go directly to see a cosmetic surgeon. They will first have to see their GP and get a referral from the GP to see a cosmetic surgeon. I think that is great for a few reasons. It will enable that preliminary conversation between a GP and their patient and the GP can try to understand the motivations of the person who is seeking cosmetic surgery and they can have a conversation about whether it is necessary and why they think it is necessary. It will also mean that the GP can refer the patient to a specialist that the GP may be familiar with and knows what the specialist’s reputation is like, and so there will be that extra level of quality control whereby the GP may not have all the knowledge but will have a little knowledge and can speak to the patient and find the right specialist for that patient.

The second set of reforms that came into effect just recently on 1 July are the new advertising guidelines. These guidelines provide that advertising for cosmetic surgery services must not be false, misleading or deceptive, must not offer discounts without terms and conditions, must not use testimonials and must not create an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment or encourage indiscriminate use. From 1 July, in addition to those requirements, will be the following requirements: medical practitioners must include clear information about their registration type and number. They need to say how they are registered; that is, whether they are registered under a particular speciality. I know that work is being done at the national level to create a cosmetic surgery specialisation that will allow people who hold the qualifications and expertise to be endorsed with that extra registration or qualification. In addition, ads must also have clear information about risks and recovery that must be easily found, videos and images must be used responsibly and not for entertainment, and videos and images must not be sexualised or include gratuitous nudity. The use of negative body language will be banned and cosmetic surgery advertising must be identified as adult content. These represent good protections around the use of cosmetic surgery advertising and the use of body image in advertising in a way that will elevate it to an adult audience and also mean that we will not use all that negative language and sexualisation around body image, which then drives people to use services that maybe they do not actually need.

In closing, I focused my remarks exclusively on that particular part of the bill. Although it is a very small part of the bill, I think it is a really important reform that points to a larger reform agenda that governments have been undertaking at a federal level and, to the extent necessary, at the state and territory levels. I know that this minister has always prioritised the health of young people and understood the difficulties of mental health issues and eating disorders, and this is another part of that. I commend the bill to the house.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.29 pm]: I also rise to make a contribution to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill 2023 that has been brought before us. I thank the member for Cockburn for his contribution. I was very interested to hear about the details of his Instagram feed. I feel it is probably an appropriate time to share that my Instagram feed is filled with Taylor Swift videos.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: That’s much better!

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: I know. Very cheery. Instagram has worked out that I am a fan of Taylor Swift and almost exclusively feeds me that content.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: As a fellow Swiftie, I am jealous.

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: Yes. Anyway, it is better than ads for body image, so I can recommend that as a strategy.

In my contribution today, I will focus a bit on the issue of the health workforce and some of the challenges we face, not just here in Western Australia but globally, to meet the demand for the health workforce now and particularly into the future. I will come to it in some more detail as I make my contribution, but this bill addresses the inconsistencies of the Western Australian regulations versus the national regulations. As others have said, in every other state but here, the national scheme works through the operation of the department in Queensland. Western Australia adopted the regulatory framework of a corresponding law mechanism to completely adopt an act replicating those national frameworks. It means that every time the national act is modified, we also have to make the amendment in Western Australia. As others have said, we have not kept up with that, and our regulatory framework is now different to the rest of Australia. This is not a unique provision for the regulatory arrangements of only health practitioners. The issue has also arisen in transport areas as well. It reflects a policy position that

the former Liberal–National government took. It did not want frameworks in place in which the regulatory framework automatically flowed on in Western Australia. The problems with that have become evident over time. Fundamentally, the problem is that it is not an automatic adjustment to the regulatory framework; it requires specific pieces of legislation. When that does not happen, it ends up with inconsistencies. The whole point in having a national regulation scheme is to remove those inconsistencies to have a fairly efficient system. The heart of the issue is how we regulate health practitioners in a way that recognises their qualifications and delivers safe health care to the people of Western Australia. It really goes to the heart of the health workforce more broadly.

In commencing my contribution, I shout out to the people who work in our health system. There are a great number here in Western Australia. They are incredibly hardworking and professional, and day in and day out they deliver a first-rate, high quality health system that is safe for the people of Western Australia. I acknowledge that our healthcare workforce does not just comprise professionals like doctors and nurses, but also orderlies and cleaners in hospitals, all of the paraprofessionals. That increasingly large number of people in those allied health services contributes to maintaining our incredibly healthy and well population.

It is not new to say that the health industry faces pressures in meeting workforce needs, and it is not unique in Western Australia. It is a global trend. It is not new but it has become more acute. It has become apparent, I think, because of the demands that COVID-19 has placed on the health system. We have talked many times in this place about what that reality looks like. COVID was obviously a significant, once-in-a-century issue managed primarily through our health system, but in other ways as well. Its impact had a long tail, partly because people deferred essential medical care or elective surgery. People who were in a position to defer treatment chose to do so rather than access healthcare during the height of COVID. It also had an impact through staff leave and other things as well. This does not just impact on our health workforce, it also increases community expectations about what health care will look like. It is about an increasing incidence of chronic disease and illness in the community, an increase in demand due to an ageing population and an increasing awareness of issues like mental health and disability. All of these things contribute to a need to focus on how we meet the needs of health workforces into the future.

As I said, it is not just a Western Australian or local issue, it is a global issue. For some time, The World Health Organization has turned its mind to a global strategy to address the human resources required for the health system around the world. Its plan aims to address that shortage of health workers by 2030. Part of its consideration in addressing the global health workforce is looking at the disparity existing around the globe as well. It is instinctively true, and I think people understand it is the case that, in a global consideration, there is not an equal distribution of where the health workforce can be found. Interestingly, WHO has also found that about 15 per cent of health and care workers globally work outside their birth country or the country in which they achieved their first professional qualification. I think that points to a fairly high level of mobility for the health workforce in moving around the globe to deliver its very valued services. Even though the contexts in which people might apply the skills they learnt as a health professional are different, they clearly are highly transferrable, and there is a high level of mobility in meeting the need that exists around the globe.

In Australia and Western Australia, we also rely on the skills of international health practitioners. This is nothing new. In fact, I mention a fairly recent piece of work that was undertaken by the federal government on an independent review of overseas health practitioner regulatory settings. Robyn Kruk looked at how we can have a more streamlined system to ensure that Australia is competitive in attracting international health practitioners to work here. This review identifies some of the gaps that exist Australia-wide for a whole range of health professionals. It identifies that there will be a gap of about 10 000 by 2031–2032. We will likely need about 40 000 more nurses, and demands for allied professionals are also growing at a rapid rate. It recognises the increasing demand and the need for a regulatory system that allows us to attract overseas professionals. It is not just about attracting overseas professionals, because a key part of meeting that demand is our ability to encourage people to undertake the relevant training in Australia as well. I will come to that and some of the initiatives to increase that.

I will talk a bit about what the workforce looks like in Western Australia, using the data on the national register. As at June 2023, there were 88 806 on the national register with a principal place of practice in Western Australia. Our percentage of the national register is a little over 10 per cent and that is fairly consistent in terms of population. Western Australia is often around the 10 per cent mark. There have been findings of professional misconduct under that national scheme for 358 notifications relating to 271 practitioners. That scheme identifies where there are problems and then takes corrective action. The scheme is doing its job to ensure that the health workforce is reliable and safe and that the workers are qualified to do what they claim to do. The member for Cockburn's contribution highlighted some of the problems with having people operating who are not well qualified to deliver services and the importance of having regulation to ensure that when consumers make choices about accessing services that they are well informed and they have confidence in the skills and abilities of the professional they choose.

I have talked a little about the health workforce in Western Australia under that scheme. It is interesting to consider the breadth of the health practitioner regulatory accreditation scheme. The scheme is responsible for a list of registered health professionals, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, chiropractors, Chinese medicine practitioners, medical radiation practitioners, occupational therapists, optometrists, osteopaths, paramedics,

pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, psychologists, oral health therapists, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental prosthetists, dentists, nurses, midwives and medical practitioners. It is a wide range of health professionals and, clearly, allied health professionals are an important part of that. It is easy to see why that would be the case; increasingly, people rely on allied health professionals to provide health services that are often preventive or early intervention to ensure that they are healthy and well. More than 642 000 health practitioners were working in registered health professions in Australia in 2020—105 300 medical practitioners, 350 000 nurses and midwives, 21 500 dental practitioners and 166 000 allied health professionals.

I note that my son Adam recently finished his physiotherapy degree and is in the process of concluding his registration to join the allied health professional workforce, so those numbers will increase by at least one, and no doubt substantially more. I take this opportunity to wish him well for his work in the allied health profession, a very important industry in Western Australia.

There has been a steady increase between 2015 and 2020 in each of those four areas. That is no surprise. As we understand, we need increasing numbers to meet demand. There has been an increase, and no doubt that will continue as current figures become available.

It is no surprise that Australia's health workforce is predominantly female. With the exception of medical and dental practitioners, more women are joining the industry but they are concentrated in occupational groupings such as nurses and midwives and in the allied health professions. The full-time equivalent rate of health professionals who are women remains at about 2.4 times that of men. There are substantially more women. They are not all working full-time and they are obviously in certain occupational groupings. There is concern about gender segregation in the workforce. I spoke earlier about the World Health Organization's work. One of the issues on its mind is not just meeting the demand for the health workforce, but ensuring that it addresses gender equality issues as well because that contributes to inequality in the labour supply.

I will move on to the history of this bill and how it sits in the scheme of work that has been undertaken, some of which is happening at a federal level. I will begin by referencing the *Sustainable health review: Final report to the Western Australian government*. The McGowan Labor government, now Cook Labor government, has had a commitment to ensuring that it delivers a first-class healthcare system for the people of Western Australia. One of the initial important pieces of work that was commissioned by the then Minister for Health, now Premier, was the sustainable health review. For the purposes of fully disclosing my interest in it, I was part of the panel that did the work on that in a previous role. It was a root and branch look at a strategic level at what were the things that were key to delivering healthcare for Western Australians—the strategies, initiatives and things that needed to be focused on to make a real and enduring difference to the health of Western Australians. Part of that was considering the role of the health workforce. The report identifies eight enduring strategies and makes a number of recommendations. One of those strategies deals with workforce issues specifically. The others considered things such as preventive health, mental health, strategies for early life and end of life and various other enduring strategies. The health workforce was part of the primary considerations, and that is because the health workforce has been key to the delivery of the healthcare Western Australians need, and will continue to be so.

That report predated COVID-19, so the work was done and the report tabled, and shortly after it was presented to government we found ourselves in the midst of dealing with COVID in 2020. It was an incredibly challenging time for our health system and, obviously, a time that required those in the health system to focus very much on that immediate and real risk. Some of those considerations perhaps overtook some of the considerations in the sustainable health review.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: It is important to note that the workforce strategy talks substantially about not just the total number of people who work in that industry, but specifically about culture and ensuring that we have the skills and curriculum to develop the health and social care workforce of the future—a focus on ensuring that the supply pipeline of professionals has the skills and curriculum that will be incredibly valuable as we move into the future. Part of that is understanding that the context in which health is delivered is changing and that now more than ever we are considering interdisciplinary models of care rather than just professional-based approaches. I again reflect on the work my son has done through his degree in learning to work with other professionals to understand what the best model of care is for a particular person.

The future also presents interesting challenges in technology with the recognition that technology changes and how and where healthcare can be delivered. Telehealth is the most obvious example of that. There is now the capacity for people to get health care using telehealth, even if they live in regional and remote areas. We saw a significant increase in that during the pandemic. There is no doubt that as technology changes, as is the case across all industries, it will challenge many of the ways those services can be delivered. The sustainable health review is an important piece of work because it turns the mind to what future challenges might look like in the workforce—not just in terms of supply but what are the right skills and how do we have the right structures for people to operate, not just in professional silos, for want of a better word, but in an interdisciplinary way.

We know that health is never static. The COVID pandemic illustrated that comprehensively—that need to change and adapt and to recognise how things are changing. As I said at the beginning of my comments, a number of things are driving an increase in demand for the health workforce for countries around the globe. They are things like an increasing awareness about chronic health issues and mental health issues, and increasing community expectations. Having the right workforce and maximising the workforce that we have is a really important public policy consideration. As I say, it has been on the minds of many policymakers and decision-makers for some time. I want to refer to the Productivity Commission's review into *Australia's health workforce*, which is a little dated now. It is dated 22 December 2005. It was a piece of work commissioned by the federal government for the Productivity Commission to give consideration to meeting those workforce issues. It looks at the ways the workforce issues could be addressed at a national level. The commission's objective in the report was —

... to develop a more sustainable and responsive health workforce, while maintaining a commitment to high quality and safe health outcomes.

That really is both sides of the equation. It is about having a sustainable and responsive workforce but also ensuring we have the quality and safety outcomes that the community expects. The enduring focus on that is really key. There were a number of recommendations in the report and, given the time, I will not go through them all. A key recommendation was ensuring that we have national registration standards for health professionals, with the creation of a national registration board and supporting professional panels. A number of other recommendations go into profession-based accreditation. They recognise the particular difficulties for people who want to access health care in outer metropolitan or rural and remote areas, and in Indigenous communities, and the fact that targeted initiatives might be required to meet the health workforce needs in those areas. The report also recognises the need to have responsive health education and training arrangements. Again, training is a key part of it. For our purposes, the key recommendation was the question of national registration standards. It was from this recommendation in the report that we had the first federal legislation, which was adopted in 2010—the national registration and accreditation scheme for health practitioners. It is a regulatory framework. We adopted it through corresponding law. As I have explained, that requires us to pass legislation through this Parliament every time it changes. Other states adopted the scheme by way of national law, the host jurisdiction being Queensland. What would be required is agreement from commonwealth states and territories for the laws to be amended, then they would flow on automatically in other states but have to be addressed specifically here in the Western Australian Parliament.

This bill before us today is all about addressing the deficiencies that now exist in Western Australia's regulatory framework because a number of tranches of reform have applied to other Australian jurisdictions. This bill is about updating that and it is about ensuring that we have a nationally consistent framework. I want to address the importance of the nationally consistent framework because, as I have already said, it is partly about ensuring that we have a safe system so that people understand, if someone is registered as a health professional, they have met a certain standard of training and perhaps even a certain number of hours in delivering that service. It is also an important precondition to ensuring the health workforce is mobile around Australia. We often hear stories about sources of frustration if there are different regulatory systems in operation in different states and people have to either retrain or get re-recognised before they can practice their profession. That is clearly a disincentive for people being easily able to move from one state to another and enter into the workforce. I refer also to my earlier point about the work that has been undertaken to try to streamline overseas health workers and having a streamlined visa arrangement. Members can imagine the complexities there would be if there were different registration systems in every state, plus some fairly onerous visa requirements for people to be able to arrive here and start practising.

To ensure that we have the best access to the trained health professionals that we need, having a regulatory system means that we have the ability to have consistent, high-quality national professional standards around Australia. It also gives confidence to the public about what health services they are accessing. It supports mobility between states as well, either at the point of training or at the point of being able to commence working in the profession. That is why having a nationally consistent approach is so important. That is why this bill is so important; it will bring up to standard our regulatory system so that it is consistent.

Others have gone through the particular reforms that this bill will introduce. The member for Cockburn talked about the use of the title "surgeon", particularly as it is used in the cosmetic surgery sector. The laws will make that a protected title so it cannot be used by cosmetic surgeons. That is a very important initiative. It will also address changes that were made to the national regulatory framework in 2019 and in 2022.

In the short time remaining, I want to talk about a bit more about the question of training, because that is a key and important consideration. It is not just about labour mobility and whether it is labour mobility around the globe or within Australia. It is also about making sure we are encouraging people to pursue careers in the health sector and providing them with the training that they need to be able to do that. Of course, one of the initiatives that our government is very proud of and one of the things that I think is an excellent demonstration of the differences between a Labor government and a Liberal–National government is investment that we have made into TAFE and training. We have made significant investments into TAFE. That has benefited a whole range of different occupational groups, but there is no doubt that part of that has also been about encouraging people into health sector careers, specifically nursing. When the Labor Party was first elected in 2017, the McGowan government froze a whole

range of course fees, which had been a huge disincentive for young people to enter certain professions. It is impossible to talk about the health workforce without pausing to reflect on what the Liberal–National coalition government did to fees for young people who were hoping to pursue a career in nursing. Between 2013 and 2016, for a diploma of nursing, it increased fees by 409 per cent.

Mr T.J. Healy: Shame.

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: Shame—that is right. It increased them from \$1 878 to \$9 467 over a three-year period. That is a 409 per cent increase. That is a significant deterrent to people choosing to study in what we know is a key area that we need, not just in economic terms, but in providing health and welfare for the people of Western Australia. The former government did that to a range of courses, including construction, and I think we are seeing some of the ramifications of that now in labour shortages as well. There is a stark difference between the approach that our Labor government takes to investing in young people and providing them with careers and opportunities, compared with what we saw when the Liberals and Nationals were in government. That has been further improved through the partnership with the Albanese government for fee-free initiatives. This ensures, for skilled workers in in-demand occupations, including nursing, aged care and disability care, people can undertake training in those areas without incurring any fees at all. That applies to a wide range of occupations but, for the purposes of this bill, it is very important.

I am almost out of time, but I want to commend the minister for the work she is also doing to increase the supply of labour for the health workforce. One of the important things is setting modern pay and conditions, particularly for nurses with the historic introduction of things like nurse-to-patient ratios and a range of other things. I am conscious that my time is almost up, so I will bring my contribution to an end. I thank the minister and I commend the bill to the house.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 6410.]

VISITORS — MARY'S MOUNT PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CAROLINE DEMMON

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [1.59 pm]: On behalf of the member for Kalamunda, I would like to welcome the year 6 leadership group from Mary's Mount Primary School, Gooseberry Hill. They are visiting Parliament today with their teachers, Mr Steve Sorgiovanni and Mrs Erin Leech. Welcome to Parliament.

Also, on behalf of the member for Dawesville, I welcome Caroline Demmon and her friends into the public gallery.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GRIFFIN COAL — TREASURY COMMERCIAL ADVISORY UNIT

862. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Treasurer:

I refer to the commercial advisory unit within Treasury to assist the government in the consideration of emerging priorities, including assistance in and around the future supply of coal and the state's ongoing support for the insolvent Griffin Coal. Given the abandonment of proposals around Griffin's mine site to develop pumped hydro, and claims by former member for Collie–Preston and cabinet minister, Hon Mick Murray, that taxpayers are on the hook for about \$400 million for rehabilitation, I ask the following.

- (1) Has the commercial advisory unit been tasked with identifying risks to government if Griffin Coal does not have the resources to take on the rehabilitation of the mine?
- (2) Is any advice that the Treasurer been given consistent with the advice given to the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation on 1 September 2023; and, if so, will she make public the potential costs to Western Australia taxpayers?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) These are complex issues. As we seek the transition to cleaner, greener fuel sources, there are many complex negotiations and arrangements in place. Treasury always highlights any risks or contingent liabilities through the documents it produces, whether it be the budget papers or the *Government mid-year financial projections statement*. I turn to the advice to government. As I said, there continue to be ongoing negotiations and discussions about how we transition and support Collie in the meantime to make sure we have a fuel load for our energy system. I remember that the opposition was going to shut down Collie power station by 2025; that was its policy. There was no transition plan, and I am not sure what it was going to do with rehabilitation. We have a very clear, steady policy as we support the transition. In the meantime, we, of course, support the energy network to make sure we have stable and secure power supply over the longer term.

GRIFFIN COAL — TREASURY COMMERCIAL ADVISORY UNIT

863. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Treasurer:

I have a supplementary question. Will the Treasurer undertake to inform herself of the risks to the Western Australian taxpayer if Griffin Coal is unable to perform the rehabilitation?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

To be honest, mine rehabilitation is an issue across the state. It is something all governments face and will continue to face. It is a constant challenge when the state deals with mining companies, in particular at the end of the useful life of those mines or at the end of the operation of those mines. It is an ongoing issue that the state government has to handle, and we handle it in a sensitive and appropriate way, with both the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Mines and Petroleum. If there are risks to taxpayers, these will be shown in the budget papers and midyear review because there is an obligation of Treasury to do so. That is what happens.

Turning to how we handle this mine compared with other mines around the state —

Mr R.S. Love: Minister, are you undertaking to put a figure in the midyear review in terms of risk?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have said, and I continue to say it, that there is a role to highlight risk—contingent liabilities and risks. That is what happens. Going through the budget papers—I was just looking at budget paper No 3 for 2023–24, actually—there is a whole range of different risks. It is the role of Treasury to highlight risks, and people can then inform themselves of them. That is what happens.

Mr R.R. Whitby interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Pardon?

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! That question is becoming repetitive. Minister, in response, please.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, if there are acknowledged risks that Treasury believes exist, it will highlight them in the appropriate documents. Leader of the Opposition, there are risks up and down the state. As Treasurer, at every step there is a risk, but we manage those —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Geez, honestly!

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If the Leader of the Opposition really wants to go to the finances of the state, he is from a National Party that bankrupted the state. Do members know what the biggest risk is? I tell members what: if Treasury was going to do its job on risk, it would have a whole section saying that the election of the Liberal and National Parties was the biggest risk to the state's finances that anyone could perceive.

TAFE — FEES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

864. Ms A.E. KENT to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to providing quality, affordable training opportunities to all Western Australians.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house this Labor government's initiatives to restore and enhance the TAFE system in Western Australia?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house how this government's record compares with the record of the former Liberal–National government?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. A key value and pillar of a WA Labor government is that everyone should have access to quality education and training opportunities. This is integral to what we believe in; that is, we want people to have the opportunities to get the skills they need to have rewarding jobs and lives in our community, but also to contribute to the overall economy and wellbeing of our community. The opportunities that we see in TAFE are absolutely fundamental to what we believe in and how we want to make sure they continue to provide an affordable way for people to undertake courses to get the skills they need to get the jobs they deserve.

Strangely enough, those values are not shared by everyone in the Parliament. When we had the Liberal–National government, we saw what it did to training in Western Australia. It deserves reminding, and we will remind the community and the public time and again about what that mob did to training in the TAFE sector when it was in government. We saw record increases in fees year after year. Let us take a couple of examples. Some courses were hiked by as much as 510 per cent, putting TAFE out of reach for many young Australians. For instance, the cost of a diploma in mental health went from \$600 to a whopping \$6 311. At a time when we wanted more people to take up these skills due to growing demand for mental health services, that mob, in government, put them out of the reach of a lot of students. The cost of an advanced diploma in engineering technology in electricity to become an electrical engineer went from \$1 700 to \$11 256. It was an extraordinary growth in those fees. The legacy of the Liberals and Nationals

was self-evident in the plummeting numbers of people studying at TAFE. Between 2013 and 2016, there was a 25 per cent drop in people going to TAFE. That is extraordinary. There was a 25 per cent drop in the number of people getting the skills they needed to get the jobs that they deserved. As a result, apprentice and trainee numbers plummeted. At the same time, there was no real investment in TAFE campuses designed to upskill future generations. Members, it is a shameful record and period for TAFE in this state.

My WA Labor government has put a lot of hard work into repairing the damage done by the opposition because Labor governments believe in access to education and training. First, we started by freezing TAFE fees. Then, as the budget repair progressed, we began cutting fees. Then, we began upgrading our TAFEs—building better facilities and expanding courses. Under the Minister for Training we are seeing a huge investment of around \$247 million in upgrading TAFEs. I have seen this take place. I have seen it in Mandurah. I have seen it in Albany. I have seen it in north metro and I have seen it in south metro. TAFE campuses are being redeveloped and upgraded so that young people can get the skills they need, for not only the jobs of today, but also the jobs of the future, which we will absolutely depend on, particularly as we look to the energy transition that we will shortly experience. We consulted industry to ensure that TAFE courses responded to the skills required. Bit by bit, we have restored our training sector to the point that it is now world class.

Perhaps our proudest initiative has been introducing fee-free TAFE. We have had more than 30 000 students benefit from our 130 Free in '23 courses. These are incredible results. I think we were targeting around 19 000 students and it has got to 30 000. We have also partnered with the federal government to offer more free courses in 2024.

The results are black and white. These are stark statistics. In 2022, there were 140 000 people enrolled in courses, an increase of 18 per cent on pre-pandemic levels. That is an extraordinary record and one of which we are very proud. Apprenticeship and traineeship commencements are also now at the highest level in around 10 years. Just last week, we announced a further \$21.5 million expansion of our successful wage subsidy scheme to get more building and construction apprentices and trainees on the job sooner. This will result in 150 more apprenticeships in our building industry, which was left gutted and damaged by the Liberal and National Parties. This new investment is part of our plan to do everything we can to accelerate the diversification of the Western Australian economy, deliver on housing right across WA and get more young people into training.

I commend the Minister for Training, Hon Simone McGurk, who has done an incredible job in making sure that we elevate our whole training sector and that it is fit for purpose for the economic challenges of the future. Most importantly of all, she has been making sure that our young people and people who are reskilling have opportunities through a great TAFE sector that is well resourced by my government.

NURSES — ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

865. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the ongoing pay dispute with our critical nursing workforce.

- (1) Can Western Australian nurses expect another Christmas without any resolution to the Australian Nursing Federation pay offer?
- (2) Does the Premier accept a situation in which Western Australian nurses have gone from being the highest paid in the nation under the former government to the lowest paid under his watch, contributing to low morale and shortages across the hospital system?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) Once again, we hear all these falsehoods from the member for Vasse. It is simply not true. She comes in here with those sorts of remarks and puts them out there like she is giving grabs to an FM radio station, but in this place, the member for Vasse will be held to account. We will remind the members of Parliament assembled and the public every time she says these falsehoods and brings them into this chamber. Our nurses are not the lowest paid in the country. Our nurses are valued by my government. Our nurses do an amazing job on behalf of everyone in this state and provide world-class health care. They work in the best health system in this country—the WA health system. Our hospitals are performing the best in the country. That is something about which we are very proud.

We want our nurses to continue to receive great pay for providing great care to the patients of Western Australia. Ultimately, it is up to them to continue the negotiations with the state government on their bargaining arrangements. We continue to be committed to that process. We are working in good faith with the union and its members to continue to reach an agreement. But we have done more than that. In addition, we have already provided nurses with a \$3 000 cost-of-living allowance as an act of good faith in these negotiations, we have already passed on pay rises consistent with the public sector wages policy and we have committed to nurse-to-patient ratios—the biggest single reform in nursing in this state

in the last 30 years. We are very proud of the work that we have done to continue to make sure that WA's hospital system is the best in the country. We know that having valued staff working in those hospitals is key to that continued work. We will continue to negotiate with the ANF and its members to make sure that we can reach a resolution.

NURSES — ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

866. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. When will the Premier take meaningful action to address the huge shortfall of nurses across the state —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms L. METTAM: — and will there be a resolution before Christmas?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

The Minister for Health has just reminded me that we have seen an increase of 30 per cent in staffing in our hospital system. That speaks volumes about two things. The first is the fact that we are being successful in recruiting people to work in our hospitals to provide great care to the people of Western Australia. The second is that it demonstrates the commitment of my government to make sure that we fund health services to ensure that we continue to have the best hospital system in this country.

CAUSEWAY PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE BRIDGES

867. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to deliver accessible active transport infrastructure for Western Australians.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the construction of the excellent new Causeway pedestrian and cycle bridges, including how this project is supporting jobs and businesses in WA?
- (2) Can the minister inform the house how this government's record on local manufacturing compares with the record of those opposite?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. Of course, the member is a very strong advocate for cycling in this state. As the member outlined, we are spending a record amount on pedestrian and cycling infrastructure across the state. There is no better place to see what is happening than adjacent to the Causeway, with work underway on the new Causeway pedestrian and cycle bridges. As we know, this is one of the busiest connections in the state with more than 3 000 users daily. The current bridge is far too narrow to accommodate both current and future demand. That is why we made a decision to build a new cycling bridge that will be six metres wide and have space for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Just a few weeks ago, the Premier and I went down to Henderson to see the works being undertaken by Civmec. We are building this bridge locally, members. Right from the start, we made a commitment to build this bridge locally. Work is well underway, with the first deck already completed. Over 700 jobs will be created during its construction. I compare and contrast our approach with that of the opposition. Do members remember that when the previous Liberal–National government tried to build a bridge over the river, the Matagarup Bridge, it did not go local? It said that Western Australians were not good enough to build a bridge to stretch between both sides of the river. I am glad that we have talked about the statement of risks, because I thought I would go to the midyear review of December 2016 and look at the statement of risks. Do members know what was not in there? What was not in there was the Matagarup Bridge—and it should have been. I looked through the *Pre-election financial projections statement*; surely the previous government would have highlighted the massive risk of outsourcing the construction of the bridge to a company from one country to be built in another country on land owned by a South Korean wind turbine manufacturer. I think it was outsourced to a Japanese company that was going to build it in a Malaysian fabricating yard, and that yard was subsequently bought by a South Korean wind turbine manufacturer! As a result, when we won government, my first question was: where is that bridge? They said it was on the ship. I kept asking: where are the components of the bridge? Anyway, they never turned up. We made a very quick and early decision to bring the manufacturing of that bridge back to Western Australia. The Matagarup Bridge is now one of the most iconic sites in this state and one that reflects the quality of Western Australian manufacturing. Of course, we are manufacturing our new C-series railcars at Bellevue—again, a reflection of what we can do.

The new pedestrian bridge will not only be iconic and celebrate Aboriginal heritage in this state and the connectivity between both sides of the river, through Heirisson Island, but also, again, show what Western Australians can do when it comes to manufacturing in this state.

SOUTH WEST INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM

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

I refer to the Australian Energy Market Operator's 2023 *Wholesale electricity market electricity statement of opportunities* report published last month and note the comments on the unreliability of our south west interconnected system. In part, the report states —

... at this stage of the energy transition in the SWIS, the largest contingency is likely to be related to the risk of multiple generating units being unavailable due to forced outages.

Forced outages for the NIGS fleet have increased, exceeding 1.3 gigawatts ... in December 2022.

- (1) AEMO is clearly highlighting a less reliable system; why is the government failing to improve the reliability of our south west interconnected electricity supply system?
- (2) Is this further evidence that the minister is simply mismanaging the transition to renewable energy?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

(1)–(2) I mean, talk about leading with your chin! I will continue quoting from the AEMO report. It states —

In January 2023, the WEM Rules were amended as part of the WA Government's Energy Transformation Strategy, which incorporates several critical reforms to the RCM, to reflect the needs of the SWIS through the energy transition. These amendments enable AEMO to take account of the broader range of supply risks in setting the RCT, including consideration of risks associated with an aging thermal generation fleet and rapidly shifting operational conditions as a larger proportion of capacity is delivered by intermittent generation.

It said that the government changed the rules to give the Australian Energy Market Operator the tools to manage the risks. The risks exist because of a reliance on coal-fired power stations and the response is to amend the rules to make it easier for other generation and other infrastructure. I would suggest that when Daniel Westerman is here next week that the member should have an appointment with him. He is the chief executive officer of AEMO. If the member talks to him, he will point out that the best run energy system in Australia is the south west interconnected system because the government responds to the changing circumstances. There is no point pretending that coal-fired power is the solution, like the member and his friends, like Paul Murray who writes in *The West Australian*, do. We have to face the fact that there is a transition. We have to give the operators of the system the tools they need to take account of those increased risks. That is exactly what the government has done and why the Australian Energy Market Operator continues to support our government's transition plan.

SOUTH WEST INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM

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

I have a supplementary question. Who is telling the truth about our system reliability? Is it the minister or AEMO?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

This is how ridiculous it is. I have just quoted the Australian Energy Market Operator congratulating the government for making the changes that are necessary to run the system and then the member asks me who is telling the truth. I know we are going to have a private members' business debate and it will be excruciating. We will have an hour from the member for Cottesloe pointing out that he does not know anything about the energy system, we will have an hour from other members talking about individual outages for individual householders and then I will have to respond. What does the member want me to do? What I do is work hard listening to people in the sector, the people who know what they are doing and who are investing billions of dollars. I talk to the Australian Energy Market Operator, I get advice from 120 high-quality public servants at Energy Policy WA and I listen to the leadership from Western Power and Synergy. Following all that, we synthesise a plan, we get it tested by market participants and then we implement it. That is why the Australian Energy Market Operator continues to say in this report that the government is doing exactly what we need to keep the system reliable. The fact that there has not been a single outage at any time over the last seven years demonstrates the good work that we are doing.

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL — RELOCATION

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

I refer to the delivery of world-class health services by clinicians working at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

- (1) What does it mean for women and babies in my community to have maternity, neonatology and paediatric services available at Fiona Stanley Hospital?

- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government's appreciation for clinicians working at Fiona Stanley Hospital compares with those in the opposition?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Cockburn for his question. We know that no doubt the decision to relocate the new women's and babies' hospital to Murdoch alongside Fiona Stanley Hospital came as a surprise to the community and the health sector. We accept that. What we cannot accept, and what I cannot accept as minister, is the undeniable risks proposed with continuing to build on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site. The business case, the Infrastructure WA review and advice from the director general all present irrefutable evidence that to build another tertiary hospital on the QEII site would pose an acceptable and unmitigatable risk to services, to the delivery of critical services, and to access for patients and staff to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Perth Children's Hospital for up to 20 years. The only responsible decision that the government could make is to build the hospital alongside Fiona Stanley Hospital. There are many, many advantages to this approach. Women and babies coming from regional WA via the Royal Flying Doctor Service will have very fast access to emergency care and have quicker and safer access when they land at Jandakot and can go straight into adult tertiary intensive care unit services at Fiona Stanley Hospital. Importantly, women who are critically unwell following childbirth will have immediate access to expert ICU access next door at Fiona Stanley Hospital. That is not currently the case. Women at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women currently have no access to expert ICU onsite or co-located. They are not served well under the current arrangements and they cannot wait longer. They are transferred from King Edward to Charlies under the current arrangements.

Fiona Stanley Hospital is also home to the only paediatric emergency department outside Perth Children's Hospital in Western Australia. The team at Fiona Stanley Hospital have experience in dealing with paediatric emergencies and we have an opportunity to expand these services further. Fiona Stanley Hospital is already going above and beyond in paediatric care and is already working as a level 5 paediatric service. That means access to 24/7 on-call medical and surgery paediatric services, access to specialist paediatric allied health services and support services. They are going through the accreditation process to now get this formally recognised.

A senior Fiona Stanley Hospital paediatric clinician wrote to me and stated —

FSH already provides a range of paediatric services on site including surgery, neurology, feeding team, gastroenterology, endocrinology, respiratory, child protection, metabolic, and nephrology. Expansion of some of these subspecialties will support not only the NICU at the new Women and Babies Hospital at Murdoch but also the paediatric patients from South metro, avoiding their travel to PCH. This will be a huge step forward for '*care closer to home*' for the large population in South Metro, East Metro and country area health services.

Tabling of Paper

Ms L. METTAM: I request that the minister table what appears to be an official document.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I can see highlighting and pen marks from here, but is it an official document?

Ms A. SANDERSON: It is a quote from a letter that I received in my office embedded in the answer.

The SPEAKER: It is transcribed there. There is no requirement to table it.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms A. SANDERSON: The expansion of paediatric services at Fiona Stanley Hospital will mean more trained paediatric staff, from consultants to nurses to allied health. The neonatology experts at Fiona Stanley Hospital are world class. When the hospital opened nearly 10 years ago, it was suggested that it would not be safe to have specialist neonatology services delivered to Fiona Stanley and that we would not be able to recruit highly trained clinicians. These claims have proven to be baseless, yet the Leader of the Liberal Party continues to recklessly claim that women and families will somehow receive a second-class service at the Murdoch site. The Leader of the Liberal Party has shown complete disregard for the facts, advice from infrastructure experts and the expertise of highly regarded clinicians who live and work outside Nedlands and Subiaco. She says that any decision that she makes would be based on taking into account the best clinical advice. What exactly does the member mean by that? Does that mean advice?

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr P. Papalia: It was a rhetorical question.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Indeed, it was. Correct. It was a rhetorical question!

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Vasse. If you want to have the opportunity to ask a supplementary question, please do not continue to interject.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Does the Leader of the Liberal Party mean that she would not take the advice from the director general of Health, who also happens to be a clinician? Does she mean that she will not take advice from senior experienced clinicians in neonatology at not just the Child and Adolescent Health Service, but also Murdoch, Fiona Stanley Hospital, Joondalup and Midland? We on this side have to take advice from a range of people when making important decisions for this state. It is incumbent on us to listen to all voices, not just one group, because we are making decisions on behalf of everyone. When the infrastructure experts say it is not safe to build that hospital there, it would be irresponsible for me to stand up in the community and say that it was when I have had clear advice that it is not. We will build a world-class, outstanding women's and babies' hospital in the southern suburbs.

LIVE EXPORT — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY — MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATIONS

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

I refer to statements by the Minister for Agriculture and Food that the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Murray Watt, has confirmed his commitment to end live sheep exports by sea and that the horse has bolted on any backflip. I note that freedom of information requests have revealed no formal communication between Hon Jackie Jarvis or her office and the federal agricultural minister over a six-week period while the consultation was running, and further note that the WA state government has now dropped the charges in the Emanuel Exports case.

- (1) Will the Premier now give his full support to the WA sheep producers and the 3 500 people involved in this \$100 million WA industry?
- (2) Will the Premier now instruct the Minister for Agriculture and Food to get on board and start advocating to the federal agriculture minister in favour of continuing this industry?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) The Minister for Agriculture and Food is one of the best ministers for agriculture we have seen in many years. She is doing a fantastic job stewarding an industry into the modern age and making sure that our primary industries, and in particular our livestock industries, are equipped to meet the challenges of the future so that we can maintain our status as a competitive primary producer. That is one of the sectors we have identified in our Diversify WA strategy as we continue to look at how we can add value to products to produce agrifoods as a great export-oriented industry. The minister is doing an amazing job as part of that important body of work.

The minister has a very strong working relationship with her federal counterpart. One of the things that distinguishes WA Labor in government compared with the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA when they were in government is that we actually talk to and work with the federal government to make sure that it understands what the opportunities in Western Australia are, particularly the funding opportunities around major transport infrastructure and particularly for the GST. That deal has significantly put us on a great pathway to making sure that Western Australians continue to receive their fair share of the national GST pie.

The Minister for Agriculture and Food has a very strong working relationship with the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry at the federal level. I know that those opposite have done FOIs to see what written communications exist between the federal and state ministers. As they would be aware, the state minister has taken a number of opportunities, both through our fulsome submission to the review of live animal exports and, of course, in other correspondence. The WA Minister for Agriculture and Food has been in constant dialogue with Minister Murray Watts to make sure that he is aware of the challenges WA farmers face in relation to that potential decision. It is because of that that we have been able to equip the federal government with all the facts it needs to guide it on those deliberations. That stands in stark contrast to the sorry mob opposite. When they were in government, they did not talk to anyone else. The Liberals and Nationals hardly talk to each other, let alone with other levels of government. The federal government is well aware of our view on those pending decisions and we have made that very clear.

LIVE EXPORT — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY — MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATIONS

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

I have a supplementary question. Can the Premier understand why, after deflecting to the GST and having no contact from his minister for six weeks, Western Australian sheep farmers have lost confidence in the Premier and his agriculture minister?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I think the member has once again demonstrated his inability to hear the answer and therefore he has not asked a supplementary question that is relevant to the answer. As I said, the Western Australian Minister for Agriculture and Food has had multiple communications with the federal minister. The member's assertion that she has not done so is simply untrue and he should stop saying it.

POLICE — RECRUITMENT

873. Ms E.L. HAMILTON to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the record levels of local and international police recruitment by the Cook Labor government.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this significant increase of police officers will continue to keep the community safe?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government's approach to addressing crime compares with the approach taken by the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for her question and for her strong support of the Western Australia Police Force. Being the representative of the home of the Western Australia Police Academy, I understand how closely aligned the member is with the activities of the academy and the police force in general. Western Australia leads the nation in the quality of our police force and in recruiting and attracting people interested in joining the police force. On the eastern seaboard, the other police forces are struggling. They are actually poaching each other's police and people who might be considering joining the police force from interstate. In Western Australia, we do not confront that challenge. We have 1 600 Western Australians who have applied to join our police force. Beyond that, members know that we have over 1 400 qualified and experienced officers from the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand who have also applied, which means we have a big pipeline of potential recruits for the academy and our only challenge is getting them through the academy and out the other end fast enough. For the first time in a long time, we are running multiple courses at once. I am informed that by probably February next year, there will be 440 recruits at the academy at any one time.

Think about that. The government set itself the lofty aim of growing the Western Australia Police Force by 15 per cent, which is 950 above attrition. There will be 440 officers at the academy training at the same time. We will be pushing through 1 000 recruits in 12 months. It is an incredible contribution, a huge increase in the police force capacity and a reflection of the esteem in which the Western Australia Police Force is held that we have had no trouble attracting people to join. We are also equipping them magnificently. It is the best-equipped police force in this nation and one of the best in the world. People would have seen that we are buying new helicopters, and we have bought new BearCats and rigid-hulled inflatable boats for the tactical response group. All our officers have been equipped with body armour, body-worn cameras and mobile devices to keep them in contact. They have connectivity in their vehicles with the State Operations Command Centre, which is an innovation that brings together intelligence with real-time operations, and we will roll out Starlink across 550 cars in 129 police stations throughout the state, connecting our police to 24/7 support from SOCC like never before. That is an extraordinary increase in improved policing and a focus on enabling our police force to continue to be the best in the country and provide great service.

Let us compare and contrast that with the opposition. We know what it did for policing when it was last in office. It trashed it. The Frontline 2020 model effectively destroyed the capacity of the Western Australia Police Force to solve crimes and respond to and support the community, and it destroyed morale.

By the time we saw the full effect of Frontline 2020 in 2016, police morale had ebbed, the likes of which had probably never been experienced. That was rectified at the time by the Speaker, as Minister for Police, and the former Commissioner of Police Hon Chris Dawson, AC, APM, who went back to a fundamental focus on delivering good policing. This was enabled by current Commissioner Col Blanch through the provision of a State Operations Command Centre and connectivity and applying and adapting technology to deliver better police support. We have seen the benefits. The police resolve crimes like no other place on the planet at the moment. The speed with which they solve crimes is extraordinary. We have not had an unsolved murder in Western Australia in six years. Who was in charge seven years ago? Think about that. Who was in charge then? It has been that long since we had an unsolved murder and that is because of the extraordinary capabilities that our police that have applied to policing. The police service has fundamentally improved and quality policing is now being delivered.

Beyond that, we know what sort of approach opposition members have adopted to crime. They are going to go soft on it. What they are proposing with juvenile detention is extraordinary. Opposition members say that we should shut down unit 18 and put the most serious juvenile offenders in the state back into Banksia Hill Detention Centre and compromise that place, house them in demountables and let them out on the streets to commit crime at a greater rate than ever before. I could not believe it when the Liberal Party adopted that stance, but it has doubled down on it and committed to it. We know now what its stance is. It wants to immediately shut down the ability to house that most serious, complex, challenging and very often violent cohort, small numbers though it is, in a suitable facility. The Liberal Party wants to end that tomorrow and to let those offenders out on the streets. That is a sad, sad indictment on the Liberal Party.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAM — FEDERAL–STATE FUNDING

874. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Treasurer:

I refer to the announcement by the federal Minister for Infrastructure, Catherine King, that the commonwealth Labor government will be instigating —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Landsdale, please do not interject. Leader of the Opposition, please continue.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer to her announcement that the commonwealth Labor government will be instigating a 50–50 split funding arrangement for state and territory governments as opposed to the much more generous 80–20 split under the previous coalition government. I note that this follows the announcement of a 90-day review of the infrastructure investment program, which is currently in its 199th day, and the bland assurances that the Treasurer gave that our projects would not be impacted.

- (1) Can the minister now detail which projects will be axed by the federal Labor government or is she still being kept in the dark?
- (2) Will this 50–50 funding arrangement affect funding for projects already announced?
- (3) What is the economic impact on our state and the Western Australian taxpayer of this decision?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(3) That is a long question. Everyone, settle in!

In relation to the review undertaken by the federal government, upon winning government, it had a number of cost pressures across the nation, similar to what we did actually back in 2017. We have sought to work with the federal government over the past few years to look at how we can support a re-cashflow of existing projects over four to six years. We have tried to be proactive to support a re-cashflow to help the federal government deal with its budget pressures. Unfortunately, it appears it has made a decision to go 50–50 on future projects in regional Western Australia. It is not a position that the Labor government in WA supports for a number of reasons. Firstly, we have 30 per cent of the national highway, and we have seen the economic impact of what can happen where the Great Northern Highway goes over the Fitzroy River, for example. Our national highways connect WA to the other states, but, importantly, they connect major resource projects to ports to help drive trade and economic investment. That highway also supports the agricultural industry and the economic development of state. We believe an 80–20 split for national highway projects is a better fit for Western Australia. I will be deeply disappointed if the federal government goes to the 50–50.

As I said in my comments the other day, we are very keen to support the investment pipeline that we have across our forward estimates and into the future. What I said the other day is that we are committed to those projects that we have made commitment to—and to local electorates and local people. We stand behind every project that we have across the forward estimates and across our infrastructure pipeline. That has not changed, because, as I said, WA is a growing state. We are a development state, and our infrastructure projects help to connect new economic opportunities and drive national income, whether it be royalties, company tax or excise duty on fuel. As a result, we are committed to the projects that we have made commitments on. We are disappointed with the 50–50 approach for regional projects because WA has 30 per cent of the national highway, and our national highway facilitates billions of dollars in investment and royalty and company tax income for the federal government. That is our position. I have not had formal information as to exactly what other decisions have been taken in the context of the infrastructure review, but we are a development state and we create jobs. We want to make sure our regional roads are the best possible. They already are; they are the best in the nation. We want to continue to support regional WA, regional roads, regional road safety and investment that fuels economic development.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAM — FEDERAL–STATE FUNDING

875. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Treasurer:

I have a supplementary question. Is it fair to say that Western Australia's infrastructure program is better treated by a federal coalition government than by Labor?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

My understanding is that when it all comes out, even despite the challenges that I just raised, that when compared with the other states, WA will be treated better than the other states. That is my impression of what will be happening, but this will be for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the other states have projects worth —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I was going to give the member a description —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Sorry, you have had the opportunity to ask your supplementary question. The minister has fairly begun her answer.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In comparative terms in relation to this infrastructure review, we have had cost challenges. I have always said that. But I tell members what: a cost challenge on a \$200 million project compared with a \$10 billion project is very different. When a state is running \$5 billion and \$10 billion projects and there is a 30 or 40 per cent cost increase, that is major. The other states are in a very different position from us. We have managed our pipeline more effectively. We have a longer pipeline of work. We have not entered into \$10 billion public-private partnerships, which are very risky in relation to cost exposure.

We are in a better position to deal with any decision by the federal government, but, as I said, we are very pro WA and we will fight for every project. In relation to the other states, because we have managed our pipeline better, because we have not entered into \$10 billion commitments, and because we worked well with both sides of government, we are much better placed to deal with any decisions should they come.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES — SCREEN SECTOR — REGIONS

876. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to the diversification of Western Australia's economy. Can the minister outline to the house how this government's successful development of Western Australia's creative industries and the screen sector is developing new jobs in the regions?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I can and I will. I know that the member for Murray-Wellington is an avid follower of the arts, particularly the screen industry. I thank those members who attended the Parliamentary Friends of the Arts launch last evening in the courtyard of Parliament House. The production calendar for the past six months of 2023 is record breaking. In the past six months we have had an injection of nearly \$24 million into the WA economy, with \$6 million of that going to regional Western Australia because of the volume of activity in the screen industry in WA. It is remarkable; it is at record levels and it will continue into 2024 and beyond because of the significant investment by this government in the creative industries and the screen sector more specifically.

As the member knows, the government has been working particularly hard through its production attraction scheme, which involves significant dollars, over \$20 million, over the next four years to support the attraction of productions into Western Australia. Many of those will see film activity in the regions of Western Australia and we know what that means for jobs for those involved in the creative industries and in other industries that are complemented by having a strong and effective vibrant screen industry in the state. The number of jobs that are created through activity, whether it is in the metropolitan area or the filming that takes place in regional Western Australia, is spectacular. It stimulates local economies. It employs and utilises local businesses. It excites the communities. No matter where movies might be filmed in localities around the state, it excites those communities. For example, the series *The Twelve* is being filmed in York. There is great excitement in places like that. A film is being made down south with Nicolas Cage, bringing worldwide attention to Western Australia, both our landscapes and our capacity to tell stories on the screen. That highlights to the world the beauty of Western Australia and the spectacular nature of this state.

We have a few films still to come, and some of them could be analogous to the current state of the opposition of Western Australia. Some might think that the film *Invisible Boys* is a story based on the leadership of the Nationals WA, but it is not. It is a 10-part TV series based on the book by WA author Holden Sheppard. It will be filmed in Perth and Geraldton. The member for Geraldton is already up there scouting for a part in that series! *Runt* is a film —

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I know; I said that carefully!

It is a feature film based on Craig Silvey's bestselling novel. That will be filmed in both the metropolitan area and regional Western Australia. York again gets a spot in the filming. It will inject about \$4.1 million into the WA economy and create over 110 jobs. The production company is delivering a series of initiatives for emerging regional creative practitioners. People who are interested and engaged in the creative industries see a pipeline because for so long so many of our creatives have had to go east. However, this government will stop that because it is investing in the screen industry. It is why we will be building a screen production facility. It is why we have the screen incentive fund and it is why we are so carefully and closely linking in with our wonderful training institutions, including our world famous Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

We Bury the Dead is a feature film starring Daisy Ridley.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: There is a line there, but I am not touching it at the moment!

We Bury the Dead will be filmed in the great southern region in February next year. It will generate \$9.4 million into the WA economy with 200 jobs created. It is a feature film starring the wonderful actress from the Star Wars sequel trilogy, Daisy Ridley. We are attracting international performers as well as our wonderful Western Australian and Australian creatives. Why? It is because we are dinkum about making sure our economy in Western Australia is diversified. That is why we are doing a range of things in science and training and in the creative industries, including the screen industry. *The Twelve* has almost wrapped up filming in York and the metropolitan area.

This is a great news story for Western Australia. It sends a message to those young girls and boys who might live anywhere in Western Australia who have aspiration and a dream to be part of the screen industry or our creative industries in the future that it can happen; they can be a technician, a performer, a dancer or a fine artist in Western Australia and earn a living here because we are investing in the infrastructure and the supporting of that infrastructure. It is a great news story for Western Australia's screen industry and the arts more broadly. I thank the member for Murray–Wellington and other members who strongly support the creative industries going forward. It is a great story that we want to share with the rest of the world.

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

IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRES — STATELESS DETAINEES — RELEASE

877. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the confirmation by the Commissioner of Police, Col Blanch, that a victim of a family domestic violence attacker released from Yongah Hill Immigration Detention Centre is so concerned for her safety that she sought a violence restraining order. Can the minister provide an assurance to that woman and the community that the offender will be tracked through a GPS monitor?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order please, members. The question is certainly bordering on being out of order; however, given the time, I suggest the police minister make a very brief response, and there will be no supplementary, also given the time.

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Thank you, Speaker. There are a couple of things: I did not hear what the commissioner said about the matter the member for Vasse refers to; however, it is an operational matter in the first instance. What is happening with that person or the concerns around the person the member refers to would be better put to the police commissioner. Tracking devices are entirely the province of the courts, not the Minister for Police. The member can imagine if I were to order a tracking device to be placed on her ankle at my own whim, that would not be a good thing. It is not something I control.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

SCARBOROUGH LNG PROJECT

Question without Notice 810 — Supplementary Information

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [2.57 pm]: I rise under standing order 82A to provide additional information following my response to a previous question. In response to a question about the Woodside Scarborough LNG project from the member for Cottesloe on 7 November, I said that 100 per cent of the domestic gas from the Scarborough field had been contracted to the future Perdaman urea project.

My comments about Woodside's Scarborough LNG project supply to Perdaman were made based on the only currently disclosed gas contract information related to Scarborough. Woodside Energy has confirmed it is building a new domestic gas facility at the Pluto LNG project site, which will add up to 225 terajoules a day to domestic gas supply. Perdaman is contracted to take 130 TJ a day over a term of 20 years. The balance of the uncontracted volume will be marketed and made available to other customers in Western Australia. Commissioning of the plant is expected in either 2026 or 2027. Woodside's ability to supply gas to Perdaman with the remaining volume of uncontracted gas to other users is another demonstration of the effectiveness of the WA domestic gas reservation policy.

VOICE REFERENDUM — YES23 CAMPAIGN

Question on Notice 935 — Answer Advice

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [2.58 pm]: I rise under standing order 80(2) in relation to a partial response to Legislative Assembly question on notice 935, received on Tuesday, 14 November, to ask the Premier why no answer has been received to part (d) of the question on notice.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [2.58 pm]: I am sure the answer to that question will be forthcoming very soon and I will follow that up.

HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW APPLICATION BILL 2023*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [2.59 pm]: I rise today to make a contribution to yet another terrific bill by our Minister for Health, the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill 2023. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the great work that has already been done by way of investment into our health system, not just health but also mental health, importantly, since we have been in government. The amount of work that has been done is incredible. I think the Premier touched on this during question time that the overall budget towards health has increased by 30 per cent since we have been in government. That is a huge amount— a 30 per cent increase. Not only that, the workforce as well around health workers has increased by 30 per cent. That is not accidental. There has been a huge program of initiatives to attract and retain staff and workforce in the health space. We have already delivered 500 additional hospital beds and we have made a commitment to deliver a further 600 beds. I am very proud that we are building a new women’s and babies’ hospital at Fiona Stanley Hospital. We have modernised the abortion laws, which is fantastic because they were well and truly out of touch and out of step with what modern women, especially, want to see in our health laws. We are now one of only three territories in Australia to have nurse-to-patient ratios. We have voluntary assisted dying laws. We are also rolling out an electronic health record. I am not even touching the sides of the great achievements of our current Cook Labor government, and also the previous McGowan Labor government.

An important thing I want to highlight in expenditure is, in this year’s budget, we have seen a \$420 million increase in spending on mental health. The Mental Health Commission’s budget has increased by over 57 per cent. It will now be \$1.4 billion and that is significant. That is a very clear signpost to the community that we are really committed to addressing mental health right across our community, in not just hospital settings, but also the community to provide that vital service to people when they most need it.

As part of mental health, today I want to touch on the issue of eating disorders. Eating disorders are one of the most complex mental health issues that face people today. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric disorder. I was really concerned to learn recently that over one million Australians live with an eating disorder at any point in time, certainly over the last 12 months. This number has doubled since the COVID pandemic. I went on a little bit of a deep-dive into that because it is such a serious mental health issue. Through reading and research, I found that once somebody is in the grips of it, it is incredibly difficult to help them recover from that mental illness. The other thing that came up when I was reading about this mental health issue is that only a very small proportion of people actually seek help. Something like only 20 per cent of people will seek help for eating disorders. That is incredibly sad. This is from a report from a couple of years ago, in 2021. It was a national strategy for eating disorders based on research undertaken by the University of Sydney. The President of the Australian and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders said —

70 per cent of people with an eating disorder don’t get treatment, and of those who do, only 20 per cent receive an evidence-based treatment.

That is even more troubling. If one million people across Australia are living with eating disorders, that is four per cent of our population, so it is much more significant than I certainly was aware of. Of them, 500 000 are currently living with binge eating disorders; 100 000 are currently living with bulimia; 25 000 Australians currently live with anorexia nervosa; and 350 000 Australians are living with other forms of eating disorders. That is quite a broad number of eating disorders within that one million, which speaks to the complexity of how we, as governments, deal with those challenges to make sure we are providing the best possible care for people.

I want to share with the house some of the lived experience from people who have either been affected directly with an eating disorder, or have had loved ones with an eating disorder because I think it really speaks to the seriousness of it. An article gives one example that is probably the most harrowing but most impactful. It is about the tragedy of a young girl who was only 15 when she died earlier this year. Robb Evans sadly lost his daughter. She had been battling with this illness for quite some time. In the article, he speaks about how confronting it was when he went on one of many, many trips to the hospital and the doctors referred to it as a “terminal illness”. As a parent, he really struggled with that because although he could see his daughter disappearing before his eyes, I do not think he realised the severity of it. Really sadly, from reading a lot of these articles, it seems that because sometimes these mental health issues are so complex and so hard to navigate for health practitioners and also families, what can end up happening from time to time is that the parents are sometimes blamed. That is certainly what Robb Evans felt came his way when his daughter tragically died. I quote —

The doctor had said to us that if this doesn’t change in this [hospital admission] then she’s not going to be here for the next one ...

He talked about how incredibly confronting it was to see his young daughter, Liv, going in and out of hospital. That seems to be a regular occurrence for people with really severe eating disorders as they go for multiple admissions into hospital.

He said the hospital —

... was often a traumatising place for people with an eating disorder.

“[Liv] probably spent about 80 to 90 per cent of her time in the last two years in the hospital and a lot of that time was strapped to a bed with six-point restraints.

Keep in mind that she was 15 years old when she died. He goes on —

So, chemically and physically restrained and force-fed with the tube, then there are hours of screaming afterwards.

Anyone can see that is a traumatic experience for, of course the person who is being restrained, in this case a really young adolescent girl, but also for the family to have to see that and, no doubt for the clinicians who have to administer the nutrients by way of tubes. It would be awful for them to have to go through that as well.

This same article describes that a young girl, Katya Jaksi, was in hospital at the same time as Liv and they became friends. She talks about the trauma of losing a friend who was going through the same battle. This young woman, Katya, talks about how unhealthy—in fact, she uses the word “toxic”—the hospital setting is for young people with eating disorders especially. Again, obviously it is a mental health issue so it is not by way of judging; I am just repeating what has been said in this article. She said sometimes a hospital setting can make it worse —

... because the treatment is very harmful. It’s traumatic and also competitive...

She goes on to explain how patients will try to outdo one another by way of who can lose the most weight, do exercise by stealth, who can eat the slowest and who can refuse food. She makes the comment that part of the illness is someone wanting to prove that they are sick enough to be worthy of something. In her view, hospital is a totally inappropriate place to deal with very fragile people going through an extremely difficult time. It is really important that we listen to those lived experiences because they can inform our decisions for how we can appropriately deal with such complex mental health issues.

It is really pleasing to see that the federal government is doing a huge amount of work in this space, as our government is, because it needs to be addressed at all levels of government. When I was doing research, it became quite clear that in every state and territory there were big problems, especially in regions, because it is very difficult for people to access any of that specialty help.

One young woman experienced a really difficult time getting to and from hospital. Her name is Charli. She had 500 days in hospital. It is common that these people are in and out of hospital at an alarming rate. Her experience was the need to control what she ate in an environment, especially during COVID, of having a sense of very little or no control over her life. Certainly, in a broader macroeconomic context that was true, so people with eating disorders looked for ways to self-soothe in a world that seemed rather chaotic by controlling what they ate and maintaining a routine. That is seen by some professionals as one of the factors that exacerbated the rate of eating disorders. In this article about Charli from September last year, she said it was hugely traumatic to have to be admitted to Perth Children’s Hospital about 20 times. It was not just a one-off. One of the overarching themes that came through in my reading was that the person with the eating disorder would become medically stable, so they would gain enough weight to be well enough to leave hospital, but, of course, they were promptly discharged and oftentimes there was not appropriate support when they returned home, and certainly not for the families either. There was another thing that really shone through in a lot of this research.

It was very interesting to look at one story from a woman who was a doctor. She did not recognise the symptoms or the signs of anorexia in her daughter, who was 11 years old when she developed an eating disorder. Her story appeared in an ABC news article and the woman’s name is Deanna. About her 11-year-old daughter she said —

“This is a child who is a particularly gentle, generous, kind, sensitive human being. But when she’s terrified about food or if she’s stopped from exercising, she can turn absolutely demonic.”

“It’s really scary. It’s just a side of her that we never saw [before].”

She also said —

“It’s a child who would rather die than eat.”

Her daughter, whose name is Esther, similarly to the story of Charli, was admitted to hospital 20 times in just 12 months. It sounds like it was just as traumatic an experience. She was often held down against her will and force-fed with tubes. I stress again that the staff and medical clinicians do this to save the person’s life because they are so underweight and undernourished. Deanna went on to explain a day in the life and how eating disorders impact her entire family. She said that basically when her daughter is not in hospital, their every waking minute is focused on getting their daughter, Esther, to eat. That might just be thinking about it or having the constant argument. The article states —

The day begins desperately trying to convince her to eat breakfast.

She said —

“It sounds so ridiculous. ‘Why can’t you feed your child?’

The article continues —

There can be hours of screeching and extreme behaviours that are taxing on the entire family.

The battle is repeated with each of the three meals and three snacks she is meant to eat in an attempt to regain some of the weight she’s lost.

Between each meal, Deanna is constantly trying to stop Esther from exercising.

“After every meal, she has to exercise. She goes around the block and we can’t contain her. We put locks on all the doors ... that was a disaster.”

“We ended up with broken windows and her running away. Police chases. It was just absolutely terrible.”

As I mentioned before, Deanna is a trained doctor and she had her own stereotypes of what an eating disorder looked like. She was of the view—I am just referring to this article—that they were exclusive to particularly vain women who just wanted to be thin. She now acknowledges that that could not be further from the truth.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms C.M. ROWE: But it speaks to the need to have support for families and for broadening the discussion we have about eating disorders with our children. It is obviously very difficult in the environment we live in, with children being exposed to so much imagery of what is considered beautiful. This can be deeply impactful on their body image. Some of these articles prompted me to have a conversation with my 11-year-old this morning about body image and how looking at things on social media or YouTube can have an impact without her realising it and how dangerous that can be, but she assured me she looked at animal videos. She is my daughter, so I believe her because I do the same! The figures since COVID are really quite concerning. There has been an 80 per cent increase in children presenting with anorexia over the last three years. As I mentioned, it is one of the deadliest mental illnesses. From what I can gather, a lot of it is potentially going unrecognised, not just by families, but also medical practitioners. That is really concerning because it is so deadly.

I will share a few more stories, if I can. This one is about Sarah, who is 23 years of age and lives in regional Victoria. Over the past 10 years, there has been a revolving door of hospital visits. It has basically been a never-ending cycle. In Sarah’s story, the minute she gets home from hospital, things just revert to how they were previously. It is really sad. This article talks about the fact that she was home for a total of only two months in two years. Every time she finally became medically stable, she was then unceremoniously turfed out of hospital and there was not that ongoing community support for her or her parents. Sarah describes her eating disorder as a monster. Going back to the story of the mum who was a GP who had an 11-year-old with an eating disorder saying she thought it was just an issue affecting vain women who want to be thin, it is really a lot more complicated than that. We really need to continue to debunk that idea. These people have a deep-seated sense of shame and guilt around food and eating, which obviously leads to disordered eating.

One thing that parents highlighted is their constant anxiousness around what they will find when they come home when they are living with an adult family member with an eating disorder. It would be incredibly traumatic for a parent to constantly think about what they will find when they walk in the door. In another article from ABC online news from August this year, a mum said that something had to change because she was literally watching her child, who has battled anorexia her whole life, die. She was quoted as saying —

“It’s the first thing you think about when you wake up — are they going to be dead or alive in the morning? It’s just terrible.”

That sentiment has been expressed by parents.

I do not want to focus on the causal factors because I would need additional time and I am not an expert. However, I came across an interesting article that points to the rise in TikTok and Instagram. I know that we always like to focus on the negative elements of social media platforms and to demonise them, but there is a reason for that—they do so much damage, although I am sure it is unintentional. An article from ABC online news looked at a research report done by an Australian university that revealed that watching just seven minutes of beauty content in one session on TikTok was enough for young people to experience significant shame and anxiety about their appearance. I do not have TikTok, but because the content comes up so quickly, people can apparently consume multiple videos in a seven-minute period. Whether people are aware of it or not when they consume this content, they are being force-fed content around what they should perhaps look like, which is completely unhealthy and unhelpful, especially for young women. I note that young men and boys also experience eating disorders at alarming rates.

The thing to keep in mind is that we are seeing an enormous explosion in eating disorders. Perhaps it is coincidental, but I suspect not, that TikTok use actually doubled in that time as well—since 2020. That is according to the report

conducted by the University of Canberra. That is something we need to be very mindful of, as social media will play a really big role in how especially young people feel about themselves and their bodies. There are obviously other biological issues and factors as well, such as environmental factors.

I will end on that. I have other stories to share, but I think it is quite clear that eating disorders are a significant problem and are very dangerous, given the high mortality rate. However, I am really proud of our government and, especially, our Minister for Health for addressing this in a really practical way by developing a brand new eating disorder framework that will ensure that we look at new and innovative ways to prevent eating disorders or to intervene early, before they get a grip on people. We will also look at ways to provide treatment and support systems, and not only in metro areas; I was relieved to read that this will happen in regional areas as well. From some of the reading I have done, there has been a negative impact on people right across regional areas in Australia in terms of their ability to recover from eating disorders because of the need to travel significant distances to be hospitalised or due to the lack of treatment services once they are back home. That includes access, I suppose, to psychologists and the like, because it would be through telehealth. That is not ideal. I am really pleased that we are putting our money where our mouth is on this issue and looking to expand treatment options for people who suffer from eating disorders. I look forward to seeing how this will be impactful for people with eating disorders and their families. I take this opportunity to thank the minister for shepherding this bill through the house.

MS D.G. D'ANNA (Kimberley — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.26 pm]: I rise today in support of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill 2023. Since 2010, Western Australia has actively engaged in the national registration and accreditation scheme for health professions by adopting the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. This national law serves as a safeguard for the public and offers assurances to health professionals through the establishment of a consistent national framework for regulating various health professions. The current legislative proposal, the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill 2023—that is a mouthful!—seeks to implement the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, with specific modifications, as a legal framework within Western Australia. Simultaneously, it aims to revoke the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Act 2010. Ultimately, this bill is designed to bring the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law—I did not realise how many times I had written that, so excuse me—up-to-date in Western Australia by incorporating amendments introduced to the national law between 2019 and 2023. Moreover, it will facilitate the seamless application of future amendments to the national law within Western Australia, ensuring the uniform regulation of health practitioners across the country.

Essentially, Western Australia is transitioning from a corresponding laws model to an applied laws model, aligning itself with other jurisdictions. This shift will maintain the flexibility for Western Australia to introduce unique amendments tailored to its specific needs while also adhering to the broader consistency established by the national framework; we all know that Western Australia likes to do things its own way. WA has participated in the national registration and accreditation scheme for health practitioners since 2010 by adopting the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. All Australian health ministers supported the reforms to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law that have been ongoing for the past five years. It is no easy task to not only say this term, but also achieve policy alignment across the whole country. This has come about only after a lot of engagement and consultation across all levels of government, the health sector and the community.

In recent years, significant emphasis has been placed on reforming the national law to enhance the protection of both health practitioners and the public they serve. These reforms aim to bolster public safety and instil greater confidence in the health services provided by registered health professionals. The fundamental principles and objectives of the national law underwent revisions, elevating the safeguarding of the public and fostering public confidence as a key consideration in the administration of the law. The amendments also sought to advance culturally safe health services, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A key aspect of these reforms involves the implementation of various tools that empower regulators to address issues related to public health and safety effectively. This includes the authority to issue interim prohibition orders in specific circumstances; release public statements regarding an individual posing a risk to public health and safety; and share information with a practitioner's former employer if there is a potential harm to individuals or the public. Furthermore, comprehensive measures were introduced to enhance the governance and operation of the national scheme. This encompasses improvements in the registration process and the clarification of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency functions and powers. WA has actively participated in every stage of consultation and development, ensuring that the reforms align with the unique needs of the local health industry and community. By implementing these changes, the aim is to create a robust framework that not only safeguards the professionals within the health sector, but also upholds public trust and confidence in the services provided.

An example we have seen pointed out several times today and previously is the confusion around the use of the title “surgeon”. This was particularly present in the cosmetic surgery sector. The national law was changed to make sure that the title of surgeon was protected through making it an actual offence for a medical practitioner who is not a member of an approved surgical class to call themselves a surgeon. Across the country it has been a concern of health ministers that we are seeing more and more people operating in the cosmetic surgery sector referring to themselves with the title of surgeon. The main issues with the use of the term surgeon is that it could give false

confidence to patients about the experience and knowledge of the person performing a medical procedure. This reform will also add another safeguard to consumers by making sure that those using the title of surgeon have the appropriate level of surgical training to safely perform surgical procedures.

As I have said many times in this place, I am passionate about making sure my constituents, the people of the Kimberley, are afforded the same access to quality care and opportunities that people in Perth are. That goes for the people providing the care as well as the ones receiving it. I am proud to see that bolstering our state's health workforce is a key priority for the Cook Labor government. Our total health investment is now the highest per person spend of the state in Australia. This record investment is delivering more beds for our hospitals, more nurses and doctors, and reforms to ease pressure on our emergency departments. In the past two years, 547 new beds have been added to the system—the equivalent of a new tertiary hospital. This includes investing in a lot of different measures to make sure that our health workforce continues to grow and meet the needs of our community. The work of our government to attract and retain healthcare workers has seen WA's public sector healthcare workforce grow by 29 per cent since 2017. This growth occurred while we had the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and for the first time in WA's history, our health system will soon have nurse-to-patient ratios across all WA hospitals.

Introducing nurse midwife-to-patient ratios in WA public hospitals will support safe nursing and midwifery care while improving outcomes for patients. I was very pleased at this year's announcement that we are helping pay HECS-HELP loans for 350 newly qualified nurses and midwives commencing employment in regional WA, plus funding wraparound support for up to 1 200 graduates in our hospitals. I am very passionate about regional and remote people having the ability to follow their career aspirations, no matter where they live.

I welcomed the budget announcement by this government to help nurses and midwives working in country WA pay off their HECS-HELP debts sooner. A HECS-HELP debt can be a big burden for some people and having that hanging over them can be a deterrent to studying in the first place. That is why it is so important that the government has stepped in with nurses and midwives being eligible for up to \$12 000 of their debts to be paid over three years. The scheme prioritises those who are willing to working in harder to staff areas, such as mine in the Kimberley.

It is so important that we have the right settings for students to thrive in their studies. I recently had the honour of officially opening the Majarlin Kununurra new accommodation and office facilities. The project includes four fully renovated units that can accommodate 10 students at a time for periods between two to 12 weeks while they complete their required course placement work. It means that students will be able to access high quality accommodation in Kununurra, safely, while undertaking their practical training. This safe and culturally sensitive space has set the stage for successful future careers. The University of Notre Dame Australia's acting director of the Majarlin Kimberley Centre for Remote Health, Dr James Debenham—I only know him as Dr James, so I apologise if his surname sounded wrong—said that the new facilities were much-needed and would allow students on placement to focus fully on their studies during their time in Kununurra. He said —

“This is of great significance to the Majarlin family and to the broader East Kimberley community,” Dr Debenham said. “Firstly, it formally marks the establishment of Majarlin's presence here in the East Kimberley. Secondly, and I believe more importantly, it expresses our genuine intention to serve organisations of the East Kimberley community seeking to achieve holistic health and well-being through culturally sensitive, accessible, and sustainable healthcare for many years to come. As such, our objective here is to celebrate the former, and firmly state our intentions to the latter.”

An East Kimberley local and the university's cultural security officer, Maria Morgan, said that the new facilities had been designed to create culturally sensitive safe spaces for both students and staff, allowing them to complete their work and studies while feeling welcomed and supported.

I had the pleasure of attending the opening. While we were there we were welcomed by two senior Miriwoong ladies in a welcoming process called a Manthe. The Manthe allows a connection to the Miriwoong people of that country in which it is situated, and provides a culturally safe space, like a blessing, to make sure that staff and students working in that area were spiritually protected and welcomed on their land as they knew the people who were studying in those buildings would be contributing back to that community. Majarlin is one of 16 university departments of rural health in Australia funded by the Department of Health. Majarlin facilitates quality allied health and nursing clinical placements for students from all Australian universities, providing support for students through placement facilitation, supervision, education, social networking, travel and accommodation. It helps support local clinicians by providing professional development opportunities and conducting quality remote health research.

I would also like to again take this opportunity to thank the team at Majarlin Kununurra for inviting me to open the facility. I wish them the best. I have heard stories recently, in this place especially, that there are people who do not want to go to the regions, and specifically my region. I can assure members in this place that when I went to open this facility, there was a large cohort of allied health trainee workers, dentists and nurses. I had the pleasure of not only opening that building, but also joining them for dinner at an awards night at which they showed their appreciation for the support of their supervisors while they studied. They were young people—younger than me, anyway—and the experiences they shared with me were experiences of passion, pride and motivation for the things they were learning from getting that practical placement out in the remote areas.

I understand that Kununurra is a remote town, but there were opportunities for other placements to go to even more remote communities such as Balgo. They shared their experiences and stories with me, and I think we connected on a lot of matters. We have our own midwives who shared and communicated with the rest of the community. The local young ones formed relationships with those students. I heard a few of the students say that they hoped to come back and work in the region when they finished their training. The local community people were inspired by having those partnerships and working together. Although it is a hard journey, it is not impossible. One of the sayings that was thrown around that night was, “You cannot be what you cannot see.” One of the things that was quite exciting to me was the take-up and satisfaction of these young people who really want to go back into the care services and look after people, especially those in our regional and remote communities. They are lining up to obtain a place out in those communities and they felt comfortable enough in those communities in the Kimberley to want to come back.

Before I wrap up, I also want to talk really quickly about the pleasure I had with my colleagues the members for Bicton and Nedlands to host the screening of *Djäkamirr*, which is about cultural midwifery and birthing on country. That movie has been screening around Australia. Ultimately, it was for the Yolŋu people, who are in north east Arnhem Land. I acknowledge that not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the same. However, their stories were about the importance of women giving birth closer to their homelands.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms D.G. D’ANNA: That resonated with me because with my four children, I was lucky to have three of them back in my homeland. Apparently, when people aged 35 years give birth, it is considered a geriatric pregnancy, so I had to come down here for my last one. I know how hard it is. I am luckier than a lot of people back in my communities, but I know how hard it was for me to come down here for two months and leave my other three children and have to be in a new area and a new space to get care at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. It was a new experience for me. I raise that because that film was about not only the importance of women birthing on country, but also the culturally safe practices in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can contribute to mainstream or western industries such as the medical and healing industries. It was acknowledged that the two-way learning between a senior researcher and a group of senior cultural midwives who had the authority of the community to be tasked to work on a program to create a curriculum to have more cultural midwives—I do not know what else to call them; they are called djäkamirrs in the movie.

Mrs L.M. O’Malley: Doulas.

Ms D.G. D’ANNA: That is the word I was looking for. They are like doulas. The movie was quite important. It was about having flexibility. I think there is some room to move in legislation to have flexibility to acknowledge alternatives and how both western clinical medicine and cultural medicine can work side by side.

I will finish because members have put me off. These law reform measures show that this government is serious about strengthening WA’s healthcare workforce as it is the backbone of our public health system. I thank the minister for all her work and I commend the bill to the house.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [3.46 pm] — in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the second reading debate of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill 2023. The interest of members of the house demonstrates how the regulation of health professionals impacts the entire community. The broad support expressed by members also evidences the importance of Western Australia’s participation in the national scheme. As outlined in my second reading speech, WA has participated in the national registration and accreditation scheme for health professions since 2010 by adopting the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. Of fundamental importance, the national law extends public protections by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner and who are registered can provide these services, and it provides certainty to health professions by delivering a uniform national framework for the regulation of key health professions. As the member for Mount Lawley highlighted, the national law sets out the legal framework for the national scheme that regulates over 800 000 Australian health practitioners across 16 health professions. It establishes 15 national boards as the principal regulatory decision-makers for each registered profession, as well as the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, which is the administering agency for the national scheme.

As we know, national scheme reforms are necessarily subject to rigorous development, consultation and drafting processes that are scrutinised by the participating jurisdictions. WA was involved in every stage of review and reform of the national scheme through participation on the ministerial council with other Australian health ministers who collectively decide and prioritise the necessary reforms, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Inter-Jurisdictional Committee that develops policy and undertakes nationwide consultation to assess how reforms can be implemented, and the Australasian Parliamentary Counsel’s Committee, which drafts amendments to the national law to affect reforms.

The bill will bring WA up to date with the latest reforms of the national scheme and I thank the member for Mount Lawley for contributing an excellent summary of those reforms, which I will not repeat in full. However,

I wish to reiterate that the most significant of these reforms involves greater protections for people who access health services. As the member for Willagee pointed out, it is a paramount priority of the government to look after its citizens and keep them safe. High penalties, including an imprisonment term for the most serious offences, will more adequately punish serious offenders and deter others from contravening the national law. In addition, more immediate disciplinary options, including the ability to issue interim prohibition orders to an unregistered person in certain circumstances, along with wider disclosure powers, will minimise the risk of continued offending.

Reforms enacted in 2022 also included a range of measures to improve the governance and operation of the national scheme, including improving the process of registration. Ensuring this is uniform and consistent in Western Australia, as it is in every other jurisdiction, will assist in attracting health professionals to our wonderful state, a matter raised by the members for Mount Lawley and Collie–Preston, and critical to maintaining a strong health industry to serve the WA community.

I concur with concerns raised by members about the cosmetic surgery industry. Reckless practise can result in significant patient harm and, at times, tragic outcomes. In an increasingly lucrative, in-demand industry the most recent reform the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill will adopt is protection of the title “surgeon”. This change will mean that a medical practitioner will be able to use this title only if they are registered in one of the recognised specialties of surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology or ophthalmology. As one of 16 recommendations of the 2022 *Final report: Independent review of the regulation of medical practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery*, this protection will extend additional regulatory safeguards regarding the qualifications, experience and competency of health professionals who promote their services and conduct surgical procedures. The member for Cockburn highlighted some of the other 15 recommendations from this report that have been implemented by Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the Medical Board of Australia using their existing powers under the national law.

In my second reading speech, I outlined the WA modifications that represent the unique needs of the health industry and community that are retained by the bill. The majority of part 3 modifications replicate departures from the national law that WA enacted in its corresponding legislation. To reiterate, these departures have already been through the process of consultation, review and parliamentary scrutiny. Key amongst these is that only a medical practitioner, midwife, student or person acting in an emergency can care for a person in labour. This was supported in 2015 by the WA State Coroner following an inquest into the deaths of three newborns in WA as a result of care provided by an individual who was not a midwife or medical practitioner.

I note the concerns and issues raised by the member for Kimberley around models of care for particularly Aboriginal women and regional women birthing closer to home. I share her passion and her commitment for improving access to birthing on country for Aboriginal women and for improving access to qualified midwives and supports for birthing women. Many of these improvements to access do not need to be delivered through changes in regulation, but through mutual respect and understanding of the roles that people play in the birthing process, a respect and understanding of what it is that women want and their own understanding of the risks associated with birth and midwifery.

The protected title of “physician” will also be maintained. Queried by the member for Vasse, this protection is consistent with the regulatory principles of the national scheme and supports public confidence that the required standards of professional practice in medicine are maintained and that this title is not applicable to other clinical groups. The maintenance of this protection was most recently reinforced following consultation with the Australian Medical Association in July 2023.

The mandatory reporting reform is also excluded through the part 3 modifications to the national law. This maintains WA’s position since the scheme was introduced in 2010, which supports a more unimpeded pathway for practitioners and students to seek the necessary treatment without fear of being the subject of a mandatory report to AHPRA. Importantly, treating practitioners in WA will remain free to make, and have made, voluntary notifications about practitioners in their care based on ethical or moral concerns, or in the public interest.

An additional part 3 modification, which I will seek to introduce by way of an amendment during consideration in detail, will allow proceedings to be commenced at any time for certain offences under the national law—namely, the offences of holding out to be registered when not actually registered; using a protected title; undertaking restricted practices; and contravening a prohibition order. These offences are the most serious under the national law and have been made indictable in other jurisdictions. Following the advice of the Western Australian Director of Public Prosecutions and WA Court and Tribunal Services, Western Australia will not make these offences indictable. These offences will remain summary offences. This will give rise to the need to remove the 12-month limitation period that summary offences in WA are currently subject to under the national law. Removing the limitation period for these serious offences under the national law will enable better protection for the WA public as serious offenders can be appropriately punished for all their offending, not only the offending within the previous 12 months. This modification will also ensure WA is in line with other jurisdictions regarding limitation periods for these offences.

In protecting WA parliamentary sovereignty, the ability to disallow and make modifications in relation to future amendments to the national law was raised by the member for Vasse. The process of disallowance in this bill is based on applied laws mechanisms that are already in place in WA, such as the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application

Act 2022. These applied laws mechanisms have been the subject of detailed review by the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review. Recommendations by this committee have been taken on board in refining the applied laws model that we see in the bill. Notice of a disallowance resolution is to be given in a house within 14 sitting days of tabling and either withdrawn or agreed to within 30 sitting days after notice is given.

In relation to further scrutiny, the WA Parliament will also have the opportunity through referral to the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation to undertake detailed review of any amendments to the national law before applying those amendments. The WA Parliament can then disallow amendments and further modify the national law to suit the needs of the WA health industry and community.

WA has fallen behind other jurisdictions in the adoption of changes to the national law and this is partly the result of the corresponding laws model currently in place. This bill will bring WA into line with the adoption methods used in other jurisdictions and safeguard WA's participation in a nationally harmonised, contemporary, regulatory framework to provide certainty and protection for these health practitioner professions, and most importantly, the WA community.

As the member for Thornlie demonstrated through sharing his own story, fundamental to this is consistency. There is no question that the national law will continue to evolve with the changing requirements of the health industry and with the commitment of Australian health ministers to continually review the national scheme and its operations to ensure it protects the public and meets future workforce needs.

This bill will ensure WA's alignment with future reforms in an efficient and appropriate manner. It also reaffirms the WA government's ongoing commitment to participation in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, safeguarding its overarching goal to protect the public through all regulated health professions being registered against consistent and high quality, national professional standards.

Finally, I thank the members again for their valuable contributions to the bill. I thank the member for Willagee in particular for sharing Vaughn Rasmussen's story that resulted in the most tragic of outcomes. This bearing witness, and the experience endured by the Rasmussen family, reinforces the vital importance of accountable, responsible, transparent and effective regulation across our health industry. The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill 2023 contains these elements at its core, and its support will ensure our work continues in pursuit of the highest quality health practitioner regulation and protections for the WA community.

I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

ENERGY DELIVERY — GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Motion

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [3.59 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the WA Labor government for its poorly focused approach to the management of our state's energy needs that is creating increasing uncertainty over the ability of our energy sector to deliver reliable and affordable energy for households and businesses.

First of all, a vote of commiseration for the Minister for Energy, who was bemoaning today how he would have to go through the torture of listening to us.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, I didn't say that—I said you!

Dr D.J. HONEY: The torture of listening to me? The minister can stand in judgement on the others later. I will say genuinely that one of the great beauties of coming into this place as a member of Parliament is the opportunity the opposition has to raise issues with the government and to explain those issues. As we are a couple of troops down today, I am doing my level best to donate an hour of my time to the minister.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You don't have to, seriously.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Well, I will.

This motion applies to industry as well. Good electricity management is absolutely necessary for modern life and for our modern society. More so now than at any other time, we depend on electricity. We hear that some people have an ambition that in the future we will completely depend on electricity. Ensuring that it is well managed requires a constant focus on the system requirements now and into the future. The challenge that faces our state can be split into two main components. First and foremost are the problems with the reliability of our system. That needs to be tackled urgently. The second problem is the planning and implementation of increased renewable energy into the south west interconnected system. The observation from this side is that the government does not have a clear focus on the ongoing needs of that system and, more particularly, the broader energy needs in our state. There is little

evidence that the government is focused on proper systematic planning for the future, both short and long term. It is not that there is no evidence, but there is not sufficient evidence of the effort that is going on. Instead, we observe a government that runs our electricity system according to political agendas and political time lines. The announcements that are made about various activities are not based on a considered analysis, but on a wish or a hope. The Labor government is bereft of notable achievements in pretty well all its portfolios.

We see that constantly demonstrated in this place. It is beset by failures across the spectrum of the government's activities and it is becoming ever more reliant on spin and assertion about feel-good statements rather than doing its work properly. It is a recipe for mismanagement and it results in worsening problems. We see that in all areas, whether it is health, law and order, or energy, particularly as we go forward into the future.

Members may recall the range of problems afflicting our energy system that I have discussed before at length. I am not about to repeat those, but I will mention our declining grid reliability, especially in rural areas. That is an example of a poor focus on a problem. The Christmas 2020 outages stick in many people's minds. I am sure the minister remembers them vividly. More particularly, the people who were affected by those outages vividly remember them and the enormous impact they had on households across the state. One cannot state the failure of the government's approach to energy more clearly than the summation from the independent inquiry in 2021 into the Christmas outages that reported what was happening under Labor's watch. I quote this often, but I think it encapsulates where the government has got us: the data shows over a four-year period a materially worsening customer outage experience trend in the CBD. The minister has explained that it is a small fraction of a number, and I accept that, but in rural areas and with flat performance in urban areas that exposes the failure to maintain the grid in those areas. The report recommended that the government assess the grid's needs, prepare a plan for improvement that is released to the public and then implement the plan so that we can have a plan that we can follow.

Despite that—I had assurances from the minister that he has made statements in this place and other places that that is being done—we do not see the detail of that plan. We hear that Western Power is doing certain things, but we do not see that there is any systematic analysis about that. In the government's six years in office we have not seen those noteworthy things that need to be done to improve the reliability of the system. That is available in Western Power's own state of the infrastructure reports. I have raised those before and I am not about to go through them in detail this time. Those reports inform us about the ageing profile of equipment that makes up the transmission network. When I went through them, I could see that for almost every item in the report, the equipment aged under five years—the newer and, hence, typically more reliable equipment—has decreased in every category. It is no wonder that we saw that material decline in power supply reliability and it is not surprising that if ageing equipment is not replaced in a timely manner that that equipment will become less reliable and we will see more outages. It underscores the assertion that the Labor Party has not been putting the priority on ensuring reliability through the systematic upgrade of equipment.

Although Western Power will always take care of the immediate problems—it does, and we see Western Power workers out there—there is no sign of that overall system analysis and the report released to the public so that we can see what the government plans to fix. When my staff member went through the reports, there is a later state of the infrastructure report, but in only one category had there been an improvement in the zero to five years' category. In all other categories there had been a decline in those categories. That shows a lack of focus. There is nothing more important than maintaining the age of the equipment that we have in our network.

I come back to the point about the government making statements. I will address an issue that has been raised in this chamber at other times as well. The government announced the closure of the coal-fired power stations in Collie. When we raise that in this place, the government comes back—we have heard it today—with, "Well, your policy was to close the coal-fired power stations by 2025." I have explained that very clearly, and it has been explained in a number of places, that that was the policy that the Liberal Party, not the National Party, took to the last state election. Perhaps the minister could correct his barbs at the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Nationals WA that he made in the chamber today. What I made clear to my colleagues at the time, and what I have made clear subsequently, was that that was a foolhardy policy. Parts of that policy were very good. I note that the government has adopted a significant number of those policies, such as the electric highway. I hear the minister talking now about the 500 kilovolt line to Oakajee from Three Springs, because that is critical for the energy transition that we say we are going to enjoy in the state. That forced closure was wrong and we are seeing that demonstrated in spades now.

I will go through this in some detail because the minister makes all sorts of assertions about this, but that forced closure at the earlier date will cause, and is causing already, difficulties and will cause energy instability in the future. The government has announced the closure of Muja C by October 2024 and the rest of the government's coal plants by 2030. There is nothing magical about 2030 in terms of climate. I am sure the minister will correct me if I am wrong as I do not have the number off the top of my head but we are about 12 per cent of the population and we probably consume a bit more energy than the rest of Australia, but it is a small amount of energy. Australia accounts for 1.2 per cent of global emissions of carbon dioxide. China's emissions of carbon dioxide or carbon dioxide equivalent increase every six months by more than Australia's total emissions. Although the government can have

noble aspirations, the idea that anything we do in Western Australia will have any material effect on the global environment is factually immeasurable. It is nonsense. The minister might say that we are setting an example for others to follow and the like but there is nothing magic about the 2030 date. The unreliability that we are going to see in our electricity network because of that date and the threat we have right now because of it will be very measurable to the people of Western Australia.

Of course, the worst of the consequences will be after the next state election. The decision was supposedly part of the Minister for Energy's detailed and costed energy plan. I will go through a little bit of what I understand to be that detailed plan in a little while. Nevertheless, it was supposed to have been thought out. The Australian Energy Market Operator highlighted the increased risk of outages and lack of electricity supply due to the closures. What happened next? The ironclad decision that it was going to be closed by that date suddenly became flexible. The government subsequently announced that it would delay the closure of Muja C by six months to get through the 2024–25 summer. Something that was well thought out, well-planned, and well-analysed by the minister's experts suddenly was moved by six months. I will make a prediction here that all the closure dates are going to move out because they have to. They have to if we are going to have reliable energy in this state. If the minister had a detailed plan and analysis, he would give clarity to the coal-fired power stations. The government will not be able to simply keep pushing it out by six months at a time. It made that announcement without knowing how it is going to replace the power—just on a hope and a prayer that, through the mechanisms of AEMO and the market, somehow it will magically cover that gap. That is not a plan. We saw the farcical situation last summer when coal from Newcastle came in. We sort of heard it cost something around \$350 a tonne. Perhaps the minister can correct me, but I think that is about right. The next thing we saw in this farce of bringing coal in from Newcastle to replace coal that we could not get from our own coal mines was that it was of such low quality with such a high ash content that it could only be fed in at a small percentage of the total feed. Did it help? It probably helped a bit but at enormous cost. It was because the government is making these decisions on the run.

Why do I say that the date is a threat now? Will those coalmines make any significant investment in the future? Of course they will not. They will not make the capital investments that they need in the future. Both coalmines are in a perilous financial situation. I will talk a little more about that in terms of where the government has gone more recently. Both coalmines are now in a perilous financial situation with no hope for the future. In fact, the biggest risk to providing coal-fired power even out to 2029 is not the condition of the power station. I was the production manager at Alcoa's Kwinana refinery. We had a 160 megawatt power station that fell under my responsibility. That power station was built in the second half of the 1960s—I think it was commissioned in 1966. That power station ran beautifully. Why? It is because it was maintained. Yes, power stations get older and they have other issues but, if they are maintained properly, in fact they can run for a century. There are examples of that elsewhere in the world. Yes, the power stations are old and they are doing a duty that is not suited to their original design but the truth is that they can be kept in good running condition out into the future if they have to be. Both Griffin Coal's and Premier Coal's mines are at serious risk of being closed before the power station runs out of functional use simply because of the uncertainty. In fact, in this case perhaps it is a certainty that they will close. They will not make any meaningful investments. They will high-grade their mine. They will just eke out what ore they can get. At some stage, there is a high probability that the sword of Damocles will come down on the ability to finance those mines and they will disappear. If that happens, our state will be plunged into an energy crisis. That is why I say it is absolutely certain that any rational analysis of our energy demands going out even past 2030 indicate we cannot achieve a reliable power supply without those coal-fired power stations, unless there is a major upgrade in the gas generation capacity in the state. Given that existing users will remain at about the same use, that will require a major upgrade in the gas pipeline. On that other score, I think there is enormous and absolutely false optimism on the part of the government that the heavy gas users such as my former employer can make any meaningful transition away from gas as their energy supply. I am going to go through that in a bit of detail in my contribution. It is for exactly the same reason that the government, through whatever mechanism it is procuring power in the south west interconnected system, will struggle to achieve the goals that it has set.

The risk is with the announcement from the minister that the date is flexible and can be moved out. I believe that opportunity will be taken away from the minister because those businesses simply will not be making investments. Why would they when they know that their major customers are going to disappear in a handful of years? We hear lots of announcements. We hear announcements at budget time of the \$126 million for planning and early works on the grid. We talk about the planning. This was when we already had a plan, apparently, but now there is an announcement of another plan of \$126 million. Maybe the plan was not so swish after all. The other evidence is the release of the *SWIS demand assessment from 2023 to 2042*. The demand assessment report is self-described as “only the first step in the journey towards transformation of the grid”. There is a lot of work to be done yet and it is only the first step. It is a fascinating report, members. I suggest they print out the report, then get themselves a magnifying glass to try to read it! I thought this is clearly a report printed not to be read. If members blow it up on their computer screens —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, for the ease of reading *Hansard* in the future, I suggest rather than saying “this report”, you might refer to it by name.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I thank you for your guidance, Acting Speaker, I mentioned that it was the *SWIS demand assessment from 2023 to 2042*.

Mr W.J. Johnston: What's wrong with it!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have the printed version off the web, minister. I do not get the fancy versions!

Mr W.J. Johnston: You just have to know how to print a PDF.

Dr D.J. HONEY: In any case, it was not the main point of my contribution. It is a fascinating report but very thin. Amongst other highlights —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, sorry I distracted the member for Cottesloe. I apologise.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. It is a fascinating report. It is talking about having 50 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2042, something that I believe will never be achieved. This is no detailed plan. This is a thought bubble and a wish list that has been put out there. I do not think it is achievable in any way it does it, but it is not in the detail. Minister Johnston is a very responsible minister. I asked the minister whether I could meet with Energy WA. That was last week. My office contacted his office.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I've never refused a briefing.

Dr D.J. HONEY: No, he has never refused it. You are very good, minister.

I indicated that I wanted to understand the plan. On a number of occasions, the minister told me that there is a detailed plan. I want to understand that detailed plan to see where we are going. Yes, at the end of the day, we are interested here in our own advantage and proving the government has done the wrong thing, but more than anything else, I care passionately that in the next short few years, but also more critically in the next decades, we have something achievable that will not cripple our state. Unfortunately, the information I have to hand indicates that that is where we are heading with government's announcement and the way it is doing it. We do not have that level of detailed focus and analysis. As I say, we had this statement that the government was definitely going to shut these coal-fired power stations. No problems; the minister had it all sorted. Suddenly, the date is moving, and then we hear statements from the minister that, "As long as we need to keep them going, we will keep them going." That does not sound like a detailed, well thought out plan on behalf of the minister. We face serious problems with fuel supply. I have discussed serious problems with coal. I do not know what the government's contingency is if Griffin Coal and Premier Coal close—who knows whether it will be one or both—but we know the government is pouring in millions and millions of dollars. I think the government has poured up to \$30 million into Griffin, and we can see no end to that contribution. I have said in this place that the government has to do what it has to do to keep those coal-fired power stations running. When I originally raised this with the minister, I remember he said, "It's up to them; it's private. There is nothing we can do." But the minister subsequently discovered that there was something he could do.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, that was the minister for state development, not the Minister for Energy.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I bet the Minister for Energy had a fair hand in it. I would imagine that his solicitations encouraged the Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade. He can argue which minister did it, but I will talk about this government—that is, how I am told that nothing can be done, yet suddenly something can be done. Clearly something could be done about that. Good on the government. The government had to take a particular step, and it was sensible one, as opposed to the ridiculous step of getting coal from Newcastle and bringing it all the way to Western Australia at an absolutely enormous cost. It was probably six or seven times the cost of the coal from our mines in Collie. It is very clear we will need it.

The other problem we face is gas supply. The two issues with gas supply are quantity and cost. If anything is absolutely clear, it is that gas will be pivotal to electricity and energy security in Western Australia for as long as any of us can foresee—in fact, probably for as long as most of us in this chamber will be alive. This is because of the dream of renewables. Unless there is some major technical breakthrough, gas for thermal energy generation will be pivotal to energy reliability in this state for as long as any of us can foresee.

I take a slight detour to congratulate the government's support for the Hazer pilot plant in Cockburn. I visited the pilot plant and it is a remarkable piece of technology. If that process works and the cost estimates are even close to accurate, it could provide the solution for carbon-free emission hydrogen production from natural gas, and underpin a transition to carbon-free emissions in our economy and for our customers overseas. I will not go through or quote the costs it provided to me, but I was mightily impressed by those proponents and the pilot plant it is building. On that score, facilitating that pilot plant is probably the one area in hydrogen in which I give the government kudos. I see the Minister for Water sitting in the room. Minister, facilitating that pilot plant was a really positive step for this state. If it works, it will transform the state's energy situation. If it comes to pass, as believed, we will not be having this debate in the future. I know I am labouring the point, but I am genuinely very impressed by that process. I think it is a really remarkable step forward. It is the only tick I will give this government on hydrogen, because otherwise its hydrogen dreams are an illusion.

We will need coal for some time, but, in particular, we will need gas for some time. As I pointed out, the reservation policy started under the Court government; that is, the first use for all gas had to be in the state. That was then formalised under the Carpenter government as a percentage. In fact, we had the policy of first-use gas coming into the state from the start. It was then formalised under the Carpenter government as a percentage rather than saying “first use”, which was in the original state agreements. That has underpinned reasonably priced gas in Western Australia.

But there is a real threat to our gas supply. I am pleased the minister today acknowledged the statements in relation to my question on Scarborough gas coming into our system, because when I contacted Woodside about it, I was surprised by that statement. I was told what the minister was told—namely, that that gas will come to market. Whichever customer that goes to potentially provides supply, but there seems to be a new activism in the Federal Court. The Scarborough gas field project has stalled and the seismic work cannot be done. Woodside has said that it has not held up the project’s trajectory at this stage, but it will if that matter is not resolved. That would then affect Browse. Meg O’Neill said recently that that was an enormous risk for this state. We have a federal Labor government that has been silent on that problem —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Sorry. Member for Vasse, do you have a point of order?

Ms L. METTAM: No; sorry.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The federal Labor government has been silent on that. What has the state government done? It hid behind the federal energy minister, Hon Madeleine King. I know Madeleine King reasonably well. In my former life, I had quite a bit to do with her and she is a very good person. When it came to fixing the GST, we were not hiding behind a federal minister. I heard the Premier of the day, Hon Mark McGowan, over in Canberra soliciting directly on that matter cajoling the federal government to change its mind on GST, yet we see here that the state government is apparently just waiting for Hon Madeleine King to resolve it.

I want to go through the issue of the transition to renewables and more generally our immediate electricity problems. I will go through this now because I think it is extremely worthwhile. There seems to be a misunderstanding in the area of renewables. I will use very general terms. Peak demand in the south west interconnected system network is around four gigawatts. That is at peak demand; it is a bit more than that, but for the sake of argument, it is that. There seems to be a view amongst many people that, “Well, we just need four gigawatts of renewables to replace that, or maybe a little bit more.” There is a fundamental problem with renewables, and I do not think members in this place, including the minister, understand the core issues associated with the transition or the difficulty of the plan that he has proposed.

I am going to refer to some work by Mark Chatfield. The minister came into this place and made some extremely pejorative comments about Mark Chatfield that I think were beneath the minister.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I want to make it clear: he is not guilty of insider trading.

Dr D.J. HONEY: There we go. The minister can say that until the cows come home, but I believe the work he has done is important, and it is important for the minister and Energy WA to take note of that. I refer to an analysis he did. An analysis of energy in 2022 in the south west interconnected system indicated that 65 per cent of south west interconnected system energy came from fossil fuels, and it was about that in 2023 as well. Of that, coal provided 29 per cent; gas, 35 per cent; and distillate, one per cent. Domestic solar accounted for only 15 per cent; commercial solar, two per cent; and wind, 18 per cent. There was also another one per cent.

It is important for the minister and members to understand something about renewables and the contribution they make to the south west interconnected system network. If we look at the capacity factor or the average output, the capacity factor is simply the average output of an energy generating unit versus its installed capacity. If it is a 100-megawatt unit and there is an average of 50 megawatts across a year, it has a capacity factor of 50 per cent. Of the wind turbines in the south west interconnected system, the average capacity in 2022 was 40 per cent, but —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Member, do you know that that is 10 per cent higher than the world average?

Dr D.J. HONEY: Sure, yes. As the minister and I both know, there is no better place on earth for the combination of the two, particularly between Geraldton and Karratha—the midwest. But even in other parts of the state, it is pretty tidy.

That was an average output of 40 per cent, which sounds okay, but here is the rub: on any given day, the minimum output from the wind turbines was two per cent. That is for a whole day.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Yes. The output was less than 20 per cent for 27 per cent of each month and less than 10 per cent for 13 per cent of each month. The maximum output was 90 per cent; it never reached 100 per cent, and we would not expect it to because of maintenance and other issues. The biggest surprise to me was domestic solar. We are looking at a doubling of domestic solar; we have about 2.5 —

Mr W.J. Johnston: It’s 1.8.

Dr D.J. HONEY: We have 1.8, heading for two, and that is going to double up, but the annual capacity factor of domestic solar was 14.4 per cent.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, but the problem is that it is almost like 80 per cent; therefore, all other forms of generation get killed, particularly coal.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is right, which implies something, in terms of —

Mr W.J. Johnston: It means that coal can't survive.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It implies something in terms of what we have to prioritise. I know the minister is preparing for that; he has made changes to the regulations so he can switch it off.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I cannot comment on what the shadow Minister for Energy has said in relation to that, but I will say that it is absolutely clear that if we are going to maintain a reliable energy system, we have to have the capacity to curtail all renewables, including rooftop solar; otherwise, we will end up with a serious problem. The problem is the intermittency of that energy source and the fact that batteries cannot provide the substantial backup that we require to keep our energy network reliable.

I will go through that in a little detail. I refer to an example I gave in this chamber earlier. On 10 August this year, before we had a debate on energy, the totality of renewable generation on that day was 6 000 megawatt hours. For non-renewables—coal and gas—it was 56 000 gigawatt hours. The Kwinana 200-megawatt-hour battery array has been installed for \$150 million. If we were to provide all that backup with battery, it would be a \$50 billion investment. I know that it is not the government's plan to back it all up with battery, but that illustrates that the idea that we can get rid of natural gas in the longer term is wrong. Unless there is a major technological breakthrough in energy storage—the only candidate would be hydrogen—or the Hazer Group technology works at the cost that it says will be economically viable, we cannot do that. Batteries are useful in the network but they are only part of the solution, and they are an extremely expensive solution for the reliability they provide to the grid.

The major problem with batteries is that they discharge and have to be recharged. The problem with the scenario presented by the government in respect of batteries in the grid is that on many occasions batteries will need to be recharged by gas-fired power. The problem is that once a battery discharges and there is insufficient renewable capacity, the days around that will have insufficient capacity as well. It is not as though we can discharge a battery for four hours and then magically charge it up. As I said on 10 August, every single bit of renewable energy for that entire day was being consumed by the network because it was such a low return on all the units. It was a cloudy, windless day. That is true across the year, and this can be modelled in detail.

The idea that we can have a battery that can magically recharge itself is wrong; the battery does not magically recharge itself. The battery can only be recharged if there is excess capacity coming into the grid. That point seems to have escaped the minister. I have discussed this point before, and the minister says, "Oh, no, don't worry. The battery can be recharged, so you recharge it and discharge it." That is only the case if we have that excess capacity.

I mention those low-capacity factors because with renewables we do not need twice or three times redundancy; we need four, five or six times redundancy in terms of total generation capacity to provide stability in the grid. One might say, "So what?" But the minister knows that if we have that additional redundant capacity in the network, someone has to pay for it. The government is not building it; private operators are building it, and they will only build that capacity if they have a guaranteed market—either take-or-pay or some other arrangement—to pay for that capacity. Who ultimately pays for that? It is the customer. That is the problem with renewable energy.

Let us just stick to the four-gigawatt peak; I know it is not that exactly. If we have 12 000 megawatts of installed capacity, on any given day we can only use 4 000 megawatts of that capacity, so most of that capacity is not used. We cannot charge for that capacity on a fee basis unless we want massively, wildly varying energy prices, which I think we have avoided well in this state, which I have discussed before. We have to pay for that installed capacity. We pay for that; it is contractual. In this case, it would have to be Synergy providing that through the arrangements made by the Australian Energy Market Operator for people to provide that installed capacity, but, in fact, if we look at the plan going forward, most of the time, most of the renewable energy capacity will not be used. I have heard the argument in this place that other industries will pick that up. No-one is going to build a major industrial facility that is based on intermittent energy supply—no-one. Those facilities need a steady supply of energy. Unless it is using that intermittent energy to displace and be backed up by hydrocarbon source or some other stored energy source—it is not going to be batteries because they are simply unaffordable—then it will be paying an enormous price for its electricity.

There is one absolute certainty with the plan put forward by the government at this stage, and that is that energy prices and costs in Western Australia, like the rest of the world, are going to escalate enormously, and that escalation will be particularly accelerated as we take coal out of our fuel mix and move to the commitment of an 80 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030.

I will not have time to go through all this. Perhaps I will go through a bit of the battery cycle analysis. We can go through and do the analysis. The minister has mockingly said to me in this place before, “You don’t understand, member; those batteries get discharged and recharged.” As I have said, they can only be recharged if there is actual excess energy in the grid. We can go through it; this is not a hard analysis to do. The analysis that Mark Chatfield has done in this paper is not based on a hypothetical; it is based on a full year’s real data. It is real data.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, it’s not. That’s not correct.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I do not think the minister has even seen this presentation, so I do not think he can say that. If he looks at it, he will see that there are extended periods in which the only way someone will be able to recharge the batteries is by recharging them with gas. Batteries make very little difference. If we look at a system and go across the data from that period, if we go from one battery to eight batteries—these are the 200-megawatt hour—and we look at the cost, there is a cost here of \$8 a gigajoule for gas, which is probably realistic for the future; it is maybe a little more than some contracted prices at the moment. If we have that much battery power in the system, we will save \$66 million per annum in gas costs, but we will spend \$1 billion in batteries. If we go to 50 batteries, we will save \$120 million on gas—we would pay an enormous amount for curtailed energy—but those 49 batteries would cost \$7.5 billion. That is the problem with batteries on any mature analysis of our electricity system; most of the time, we do not use them, so most of the time they sit there idly, and when they are discharged, we have to recharge them. That means that to provide even that small amount of electrical stabilisation, batteries are enormously expensive. Again, who pays that cost? It is the customer of Synergy—the person who is buying that electricity.

What we have seen right across Australia and will see in Western Australia is that as we move to a higher percentage of renewables in our network, our electricity prices in this state will go higher and higher. Prices will go higher than they would need to if we had a more ordered transition that was not relying on hope and was relying on proven technology to provide energy stability in the state. That is why we need a costed plan. Our costed plan not only includes the cost of the technology, but also has to include an accurate forecast of the cost. The trouble is that this minister and others come into this place and talk about the levelised cost of energy. They say that for a given unit of generation, the levelised cost of energy, which is the average cost of energy across the life of the asset, is lower than gas, for example. That would be true if all energy could be provided by that facility at the required capacity, but what I have pointed out is that we need many times the redundancy in the network. When we look at the levelised cost for all that redundant equipment, we see an enormous increase in the unit cost of electricity—why? It is because most of the time, that excess renewable generation capacity is not working. Once the network has reached capacity—in this case, we will say four gigawatts—and once the batteries have been charged up, all those facilities have to be turned off, because the grid cannot take in any more energy.

It was interesting to listen to the minister. I think I have heard this question asked in this place at least half a dozen times, but even today we had a Dorothy Dixier about the coalition and its record on energy prices versus the Labor government. The minister’s memory of history is very convenient, but the collective memory of my colleagues goes back a little before that. Minister Johnston replied to a question asked in Parliament on 21 March 2023 about energy costs to the state, and again in the chamber today he talked about the 97 per cent electricity cost increases under the Liberal government.

Of course, what the minister conveniently forgets and does not report in this place—I think it is misleading for him not to do this—is that that was a direct consequence of a Labor government policy. These were Gallop–Carpenter changes. I have here a press release from 4 April 2008 titled “State Government to phase in electricity price increases” from the then Premier, Alan Carpenter. It states —

The State Government has rejected an Office of Energy recommendation increasing residential electricity prices by 47 per cent in 2009–10 and 15 per cent the following year.

That is a total of 62 per cent. Instead, it was going to increase that cost by 10 per cent a year, year on year, for six years—so, from 2010 to 2016. Of course, what happened was the Liberal government inherited the utterly failed so-called reforms of our energy sector by the Carpenter government, and those massive cost increases were borne and responsibly dealt with by that government. It is utter nonsense to say that that was somehow due to Liberal government decisions, and it is utterly misleading to say that it was due to some mismanagement of the Barnett government.

What have we seen under this government? Since 2017, supply charges have increased by 127 per cent. I might say for those members in this room who care about people who are doing it tough that the one thing they cannot escape is the connection fee or that supply charge. They cannot escape that, and they got belted over the head with it.

The electricity price has increased by 16.4 per cent, so it is still significantly above average inflation over that time, but it is a more moderate increase.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Inflation is five per cent!

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is now, but it was one per cent and so on for the first couple of years, so as I have said —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, but over seven years, 16 per cent is way lower than inflation.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I know; I am not caning the minister for this one. I am saying that is a moderate increase, but what people cannot escape is the supply charge. What we will see with absolute certainty in the future because of the policies that this government has brought in now is very substantial increases over the next few years. These are not only my concerns. Regarding supply, I covered the *2023 Wholesale electricity market electricity statement of opportunities* a little today in a question to the minister. Let us look at a couple of highlights out of that report. It states —

- **The supply-demand outlook indicates an urgent need for investment by capacity providers to supply the SWIS to meet the WEM reliability standard ...**

...

The anticipated **exit of coal-fired power generation capacity** within the next decade will result in a substantial reduction in overall supply capacity.

...

- **To meet the reliability gap and satisfy the RCR —**

That is the reserve capacity requirement —

for 2025–26, expedited progress of a robust pipeline of probable projects is necessary.

For the interest of members in the chamber, this is the gap that the Australian Energy Market Operator is forecasting. This graph is the 2023 WEM statement of opportunities versus the forecast available. That is an enormous gap. Even the member sitting next to me thinks that is an enormous gap. The minister says, “On a hope and a prayer” that we will have that met. Regarding the reliability of it, which I covered today in my question, it is very clear from this report that we have seen declining reliability of this system.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, we haven’t.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Yes, we have. I was fascinated that the minister said today that we had not had a blackout in seven years.

Mr W.J. Johnston: We haven’t had an outage in seven years.

Dr D.J. HONEY: We have not had an outage in seven years.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Tell me one!

Dr D.J. HONEY: We have had plenty of blackouts in that time. I know what the minister is saying. He is saying that in terms of the capacity to supply, we have had the capacity to supply. AEMO has made it clear that we have seen an increase in the unavailability of units. That is a decrease in reliability of those units. That is in the hands of the government. As I have pointed out, I have worked in this environment. Yes, as equipment gets older, we have an issue with reliability, and the job is to maintain the equipment to keep it operating.

Regarding the overall demand in the network, removing the coal-fired power stations will take out almost 1.4 gigawatts. If we look at the potential for the Bluewaters power station shutdown, there is an even greater —

Mr W.J. Johnston: What does the AEMO report say about Bluewaters?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will read it out if the minister likes. It states —

Accounting for recent challenges in coal supply, mounting economic pressures posed by alternative energy sources, escalating fuel and operating costs, and increasing demand for sustainable energy, AEMO’s modelling assumes that the Bluewaters Power Station will exit the WEM from 2030–31.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That has nothing to do with the government of Western Australia.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It absolutely does, minister, because who is a significant customer of Bluewaters power station? It is the government.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is into the south west interconnected system.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That is not correct.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is not incorrect. It is correct. It provides power into the SWIS and it is obviously critical for the Worsley Alumina refinery.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Not according to AEMO.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It absolutely is, in terms of providing emergency backup for it as well. The coal from that coalmine is absolutely critical. If the Bluewaters power station closes, I cannot see how it will be possible for that coalmine to keep operating.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Have you read what South32 is doing?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have seen what it is doing, minister. I have gone down and spoken with South32.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It is converting to gas.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is, but that is a managed and extremely expensive program for that refinery, and it is being forced by the potential closure of that power station.

Some CEOs are happy to stand next to the minister and agree with whatever he says, but a number of CEOs are becoming increasingly concerned about this transition and the forced closure of the coal-fired power stations. One of those CEOs is Ryan Stokes, the chairman of Boral, amongst other companies. He is a very impressive individual, I might say. He is talking about this issue Australia-wide, but these comments apply to Western Australia as well. Ryan Stokes says —

“We run the risk of sleepwalking into an energy crisis”.

Moving steadily to renewable energy makes sense, but he believes it is crucial that gas is fully harnessed as a transition fuel and that it is nonsensical to retire coal-fired power stations before a fully reliable replacement system is up and running.

The minister has not demonstrated that we have a plan to deliver fully reliable power in Western Australia, and he has not presented that plan with detail. I will contextualise this. When we look at the *2022 Western Australia gas statement of opportunities: Market outlook to 2032*, and the two lines on this graph, we see that the lighter line is the 2021 gas statement of opportunities and the purple line is the 2022 gas statement of opportunities. That is when the coal-fired power stations are closed. Look what it does to the gas requirements in this state, because the only way that we could even get close to providing reliable power is if we have a significant increase in the use of gas in Western Australia. When we look at that gas statement of opportunities, we see that we are facing a potential gas shortage as well. As I said, if we have the push out of Scarborough and Browse, that will exacerbate this difficulty. The minister has to come to us with the detail. I am looking forward to the presentation from WA Energy, because I do not believe that sufficient account has been taken of the intermittency of renewables. There is an enormous amount of wishful thinking. It is not the amount of energy over a day but the amount of energy over those much shorter periods that will define whether we have reliable energy in this state.

I do not believe the minister has demonstrated that he has a plan for reliability going forward. In particular, the minister should come clean to the people of Western Australia about what this transition will cost, and how much it will cost if we see the premature shutdown of the coal-fired power stations in Collie. I will hand over to my fellow member.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [4.57 pm]: I am very pleased to contribute to the motion —

That this house condemns the WA Labor government for its poorly focused approach to the management of our state’s energy needs that is creating increasing uncertainty over the ability of our energy sector to deliver reliable and affordable energy for households and businesses.

I note that during question time, the Minister for Energy commented that this debate would start off with an hour-long presentation from the member for Cottesloe, and then a series of opposition members would get up and rehash all the issues that exist in their electorates. I do not want to disappoint the minister, so I will begin by talking about the situation in my electorate in the midwest area of the state.

During some of this discussion, I will refer to Western Power’s recent report *Electricity Industry (Network Quality and Reliability of Supply) Code 2005: Annual reliability and power quality report for the year ended 30 June 2023*. This was released at the end of September. It is quite a current report, I should think. I acknowledge the work that has been undertaken in the midwest to wash and silicone-coat power insulators in the area, but I still note that the report makes reference to areas in the midwest that have experienced more than 16 interruptions in the 12 months to 30 June. The total number of payments for extended outages for supply interruptions exceeding 12 hours is valued at \$2 325 960. I do not yet have the latest figures for the local government areas, but the report outlines a 12-month period that reinforces that regional people experience poorer power reliability, particularly in the midwest where it is still woeful. I have said many times in this place that it is unacceptable that the local government areas I represent have such poor provision of power. The environmental conditions have not changed dramatically in the midwest. It has always had dry, hot summers, wind, dust and salt spray, and it appears to have always had unreliable power. One would think that after 50-odd years of providing unreliable power, some solutions would have been found, but they have not been. I will highlight a couple of issues outlined in this report. The report is from September and it outlines the reliability of power supply. It states —

The standards prescribed in the Code require the reliability performance measures to include all interruptions, greater than one minute in duration, with no exclusions. The Code sets a higher standard of reliability performance than historically required under Western Power’s Access Arrangement as approved by the Economic Regulation Authority. Western Power is developing a long term program of work to target the measure in the Code which does not result in significant cost to the customer for the higher levels of reliability.

We can see an expectation that the reliability will improve. As we go through this, I might just reflect on how that has been undertaken. The report mentions under “Targeted activities” —

- Temporary deployment of generators and portable connecting transformer (injection units) for selected regions. In the 2022/23 period, temporary islanded networks were created for some periods of time in Kalbarri, Mullewa, Port Denison/Dongara (prior to installation of a static solution in February 2023), Perenjori —

And, in the member for Central Wheatbelt’s area, Quairading and Pingelly. It also mentions —

- Extensive work with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to enable the review of our outage restoration process to enable faster restoration.
- Fire risk assessment methodology has been reviewed and the bushfire response has changed accordingly. The aim is to improve fire movement prediction and to find improved and safe ways to reduce power outages duration.

I have raised these matters many times going back to 2013 before this government was even in office. There have been issues during total fire bans and during the harvest movement bans for regional people who are experiencing power outages not being able to have their power reconnected. It is encouraging to see those words in the report. Summer is coming and the proof of the pudding will be in the experience of the people in the regions. We can only surmise that especially things like the silicone coating of certain power lines will assist, but I am certain that I will receive many phone calls in my office over the next few months from people who are very grumpy that their power has been out for several days. The report goes on to say —

... the 2022/23 plan to supplement its existing fleet of emergency response generators for summer readiness and remains on the path to acquire further generators.

I suspect that many of those will be required in my electorate. The report ends that section by saying —

We note that some programs of work for regional areas have improved the customer’s felt reliability experience, —

Apparently, a “felt reliability experience” is a term that is used —

but not necessarily improved the overall reliability performance due to the small number of customers impacted. This however is important work as many of these small regional towns have longer term reliability challenges. We are committed to not becoming fixated on overall average performance to the detriment of reliability of small regional communities.

That is very laudable but the felt experience that is still being reported to my office is not positive. These communities are extremely fatigued by the many years of unreliable power and, until now, apparent brickbattening about any problems that have been reported. I note that there is a claim that changes are being made. We will pass judgement at the end of summer about the effectiveness of those.

I refer to the heading in the report “Performance — Interruptions exceeding the permitted number of times”. That refers to the level of performance for different areas of the state. One area is called “other areas”. Apparently, everyone in my electorate lives in “other areas”. A table in the report shows the urban areas, including the Perth CBD, urban areas outside Perth and “other areas”, which is my area and, I would assume, the electorates of other members of Parliament. Within my electorate, there are many, many very small communities and they are the ones that are the most impacted. The report goes on to say —

Customers in Other Areas who experienced more than 16 interruptions were predominantly located in the Mid-West region.

That is my “other area” of the other areas.

I will highlight some of the performance matters for those other areas in terms of the length of time of outages per annum. I note there has been a fall in the length of time per annum for outages in 2022–23 compared with 2021–22. It has fallen from 1 077 minutes, which is actually quite a lengthy period, to 718 minutes per annum. Minutes per interruption, which is the average time for that event for each particular interruption, is 144 minutes, which is two hours and 22 minutes without power.

In the areas that were impacted by cyclone Seroja around Latham in the Shire of Perenjori and areas east of the Shires of Coorow and Carnamah, there has been a program to put in standalone power units. The report notes the effectiveness of those units. We can see that the average length of all disruptions for the new standalone power systems stands at 509 minutes and the average number of minutes per interruption stands at 769. That looks like it is typically at least 12-plus hours for each interruption.

These units are remote from a town. They are located on an isolated farm or some other location. It has been reported to me—I have mentioned this to the minister before—that people have had problems with power reliability from

their standalone systems. The minister is aware of that. I think that some of those situations have been addressed after some toing and froing, but it is not a panacea and there are still issues when a system is remote from the service centre and it could take some time to address if there is an outage. However, the total length of interruption seems to have significantly improved, although the average length of interruption is very long. Hopefully, that issue can be addressed in the future so that the average length of interruption time can be brought down.

Another thing I want to touch on that has been touched on before is still an issue. I refer to the time it takes Western Power to get connections to developments across Western Australia. We know that power connection times have blown out to up to 18 months. That is how long some people are waiting to get their power connected. This is at a time when we have a housing crisis and we need development to occur and for people to get into their houses and businesses so that we can keep the state moving. There is quite a history of this. The minister is well aware of the issue; we have brought it to his attention. He has not really been able to advance any solutions to this issue at this point. An article by Kim Macdonald in April 2023 states —

Year-long power delays add further risk to the housing crisis

It refers to the threat to new housing and heaping costs upon developers —

Construction of the Mandurah development will be finished in October—with tenants due to move in immediately—but Western Power will not be able to connect it to the grid until the middle of next year.

That report is dated back in April. The same journalist wrote a more recent article dated Wednesday, 25 October titled “‘Unacceptable’ delays for power hold back opening of Fini Developments’ new East Vic Park daycare centre”. That is another instance of the impact this is having on an important facility. We know that along with housing, child care is another area of critical shortage. Surely we want to see these development getting underway as quickly as possible. The article states that Fini sought a power upgrade in September last year, but it is not going to get it any time soon—the middle of next year is the expectation. From September last year—not this year—14 months has passed, and it will be another seven or eight months into the middle of next year before the upgrade occurs. It does not say the actual date in the article, not that I have seen.

That article illustrates that this is an ongoing issue that is affecting critical development in our state, so it needs to be addressed. This is further evidenced in a WAtoday article of 14 November last year titled “Western Power chokehold blocks Perth home builds”. Again, this goes to show just how long this has been going on. This problem has not been addressed. A year ago, in November last year, the article by Sarah Brookes outlines —

... the shortage of tradies and supplies hampering the construction of new homes in Perth, with industry insiders reporting land is sitting idle for months while developers wait for approval to build power infrastructure from Western Power.

That situation continues and I do not think it has been adequately addressed. If housing supply is to increase, it is critical that projects like this can have their power connections taken care of. We cannot have people waiting around for 18 months. Recently, I presented to the house and to the Minister for Energy a number of instances in my own electorate in which the power connections have been woefully slow, holding up important developments in those towns, such as motel apartments, industry blocks and housing—all sorts of development in Western Australia is being held up by our monopoly supplier, Western Power, not doing its job properly. It needs to actually meet these needs in a reasonable length of time. Like everybody else, I am sure Western Power is under pressure, but this is a critical issue. It has been going on too long and it needs to be addressed.

I would like to thank the member for Cottesloe for outlining many of the issues that affect the long-term supply of energy through not only the electricity system, but also the gas industry. I think he has done a good job of addressing that, but I point to the opinion piece today from Senator Susan McDonald outlining the threat to gas supplies that the federal Labor government in Canberra appears to be letting loose upon the gas industry. The Scarborough and Browse projects and Santos’s Barossa off the coast of the Northern Territory are important to the future of gas supply for our country and our customers overseas. The issues need to be taken very seriously. We know that the federal government is funding groups like the Environmental Defender’s Office to make these appeals in an attempt to slow down or stop the development. I am sure it wants to actually stop the developments, not slow them down.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: We need this government to push back, to demonstrate some strength here and to not be rolled over by the federal Minister for the Environment and Water and the green brigade from the inner city in Sydney and Melbourne who want to stop gas production. We have heard from the member for Cottesloe how critically important it is for not only Western Australian householders, but also Western Australian industry. We know that gas is an essential part of reinforcing the electricity network in Western Australia as it can actually kick in and out whereas coal cannot. That is why coal is being phased out over a period of time. We need that gas supply to provide for those variable situations that occur when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine. Those are issues affecting our state.

I go back to the motion itself. I have spoken about reliable and affordable energy for households and businesses and the government that oversees the situation. We know that Synergy has reported a very heavy loss of over \$600 million. In its 2023 annual report, David Fyfe the CEO states —

Synergy's financial year result for 2022–23 was a net loss before tax of \$732.6 million, which compares to a net loss before tax of \$429.0 million in the previous year. The net loss in 2022–23 is predominantly due to onerous contracts of \$773.7 million, where the unavoidable costs of meeting the obligations under the contract exceed the economic benefits received under the contract.

The roots of this have been known for some time. In Synergy's 2019 annual report, the then chief executive officer was Jason Waters, who is now at the Gold Corporation but heading to the Perth Airport. I wish him well in his next career. He states in that report —

The decline in revenue across the reporting period is consistent with the trend experienced by Synergy in recent years which has resulted in a \$376.2 million revenue decrease since FY2014–15, due to year-on-year declines of electricity sales despite annual tariff increases.

It goes on to refer to the challenges facing the industry, the adequate levels of revenue available through the franchise and contestable and wholesale markets. It states —

Synergy also faces a significant challenge in not being sufficiently compensated for a raft of services that it provides to ensure the stability and security of the South West Interconnected System ... particularly those related to the increasing penetration of intermittent renewable energy.

In the 2019 report, these losses are being directly attributed to that transition. In the more recent report, we are told that the cause is onerous contracts presumably around some legacy contracts that Synergy faces. On that basis, there is a cost to the state, which is a cost to all Western Australians. Western Australian householders initially might be shielded from that because it is on the state budget and not the household budget, but, as we know, eventually that will flow through to household charges because money, even for government, does not grow on trees. It must be found from somewhere, presumably from customers at some point or the taxpayers, who are largely the same people in any case.

Another matter that should be of concern in terms of affordable energy and part of the Just Transition plan at Collie is the rehabilitation of the mine site there. In question time, I raised the issue that has been raised in the other place by Hon Dr Steve Thomas around the potential for the Western Australian taxpayer to have to step in to fund the rehabilitation of the Griffin Coal site. We know that Griffin has to be supported by the Western Australian government and that that support is quite considerable. The Premier said on 30 August —

... I can confirm that the government has provided \$4.1 million to stabilise Griffin Coal's operations under the process agreement, in addition to the \$23.2 million provided for the period January to June 2023.

He then went on to say that KPMG had been engaged to provide advice to government on those matters. I asked a question of the Treasurer today about that and the response was not helpful, to say the least, in terms of whether there had been any quantification of those costs. I understand that the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation has prepared a report. I do not know whether that report has gone to the Treasurer. I tried to find out whether she had received that report—again, through questions by Hon Dr Steve Thomas—but we did not get any understanding on that. We will be looking at the midyear review. The Treasurer said that if there are risks, they will be outlined in the midyear review. I will be looking for the outline of the contingent liabilities that might be faced by the state.

I will just go back to this question from Hon Dr Steve Thomas because I think it is quite interesting. Part of the question was: who is responsible for the rehabilitation? The answer was —

Griffin Coal Mining Company is responsible for rehabilitation costs of the Griffin mine site.

We are funding a company to the tune of over —

Mr P.J. Rundle: It is \$32 million.

Mr R.S. LOVE: — \$32 million a year just to keep it going. A former Labor minister and member for Collie, a person who has been involved in the industry for many, many years, claims that the cost of rehabilitation is at least \$400 million. One would think that alarm bells would be going off somewhere, which is why, with a commercial advisory looking at the Griffin situation, I asked the Treasurer that question today. The opposition will be looking to see whether anything is reflected in the midyear review, but woe betide this government if it is covering up a situation and not reporting when it should a potential cost to the state, just as it should if there are any further changes in the situation with Gold Corporation, another body the Treasurer has had a review of through that commercial advisory.

I return to the point that affordability is not the cost to just one sector, but to the whole state, whether or not things are able to be done affordably. It certainly becomes more difficult if our gas supply is interrupted. Apart from the need for the government to properly recognise significant financial threats going forward, this government needs to

do more to push back against the federal Labor government, which is threatening the gas supply of Western Australia into the future by its interventions in environmental approvals by allowing a situation to develop whereby our companies and great industries are facing hurdles that could mean that projects do not go ahead. If those projects do not go ahead, our gas supply will be at critical risk. This is of utmost importance to the government, as is the situation around infrastructure. The Treasurer spoke strongly in this Parliament today, but she needs to be on the phone and going to Canberra to talk to the ministers there and to make those points to them. It is not much use making the point to me; she needs to strongly support Western Australia against the federal infrastructure minister's plans to cut back on infrastructure spend in this state and she needs to make those interventions on behalf of the people of Western Australia. I will wind up my contribution and allow others to have their say.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.24 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to support the member for Cottesloe's motion that this house condemns the WA Labor government for its failure to adequately prepare our state's energy network and industry for shortages and challenges ahead. I compliment the member for Cottesloe on his contribution today because he covered a lot of territory. In particular, his explanation of the overall energy system—gas, batteries, solar, renewables and coal—and some of the challenges this government has in front of it summed it up pretty well. I understand the aspirations of the government, but we are seeing cracks starting to appear. The other matter the member for Cottesloe spoke about was the correction of the record in relation to the Liberal Party's energy policy announcements in the last election period. I am glad he clarified that today for the record.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Sorry; are you saying that that policy was stupid?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: No. I am just saying that I am glad he corrected the record.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Do you support it or oppose it?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It certainly was not my policy, put it that way. It would not be fair to comment on that.

Mr R.S. Love: We rejected it.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, we did reject that policy, Minister for Energy, but I am glad the member for Cottesloe corrected that record today.

I have gone back to look at the Western Power vision. The minister has had in the past a massive workload with the likes of corrective services and energy. The previous Premier seemed to load him up with a number of portfolios, but I think energy is something that will need to be focused on very strongly over the next few years. When the power goes out for 48 hours—this is what a doctor in Geraldton told me a few months ago, and I reflect on it every now and then—there is anarchy and chaos. There are people lining up at the fuel station. There are real issues within the community after a 48-hour period. As I think about it, that is a correct statement, and I am worried what we are going to see over this summer.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, are you talking interjections?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Not particularly, thanks.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The Minister for Housing is in here each —

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: On a point of order —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Thank you, everyone.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think you know the point of order, Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I absolutely understand, yes. Members, the member for Roe is not taking interjections. Go ahead, member for Roe.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I was going to point out that the Minister for Housing comes in here every day and makes announcements during question time about how he is going to deliver more social housing and housing. However, people all over Western Australia, and property developers, actually want to build houses. They want to get connected to the Western Power network, and they cannot get connected. Someone in Katanning said to me the other day that they wanted to build four houses on their rural block to help with the housing crisis and to increase rentals in the Katanning region. What happened? He rang up and was told, "Oh, we might assess it somewhere in the next nine months, and you might be lucky to be connected in the next 18 months." He actually wants to help; he wants

to help with the housing and rental crisis, and that is what he was told. The minister tries to announce things every day in question time in Parliament and he has a real issue. He has to talk to the minister who sits diagonally over the back from him about connecting to Western Power. Property developers are ringing us every second day, almost, saying they cannot get the connection and cannot build those properties. It is quite an interesting conundrum in which the government is trying to build houses and social houses, and trying to improve the rent situation. We also have private people who want to connect their businesses. They are landowners, developers and the like, and also business owners; I have a few in my electorate. It is the same thing; they cannot get assessed. This is the conundrum that people face in not only regional Western Australia, but also metropolitan areas for many of these new land developments.

I come back to the vision statement of Western Power. It says it is “results focused” and —

- We spend our time and money wisely
- We set challenging goals, work hard and hold ourselves accountable to deliver for our customers

That is a good vision statement, but the challenge is for this minister to deliver on that vision statement. I want to put on the record that the Western Power workers who are out and about are doing their best. I know the challenges the minister has with the labour force and so forth. Last night in Katanning, we had thunderstorms and the power went off at around about midnight, but it was reinstated by early in the morning. Certainly, our Western Power workers are valued. The challenge for the minister is where he is going to get enough workers and enough qualified people to alleviate the issues that the Minister for Housing has. That is a little bit of a summary.

As I said, I am happy with the government’s aspiration to look at the renewable situation, but I am worried about what the member for Cottesloe explained very well—the blend of whether it is coal, gas or battery backup. These large companies need a constant supply of power to operate properly. That is the challenge. I want to report on some of the information that has been gathered in relation to access. A report from Western Power talks about managing ongoing residential and commercial customer connection delays. There are land development processing delays. There is also the AA5 access expenditure arrangements, which talk about an arrangement between the Economic Regulation Authority and Western Power. The ERA WA report states, commencing 1 July 2023, the forecast average change in prices for the period is about seven per cent. It continues —

Prices are forecast to increase by around 7.5 per cent each year for the remainder of the AA5 period, —
That is a five-year period —

based on current forecast inflation.

We know that is what is forecast. As highlighted in the report from the Economic Regulation Authority on 31 March 2023, funding has been included for Western Power to develop and trial a strategy to improve regional reliability. The member for Moore and I talk about regional reliability. Ravensthorpe in my electorate is right at the end of the south west interconnected system network. The minister knows all about it. We talk about this reliability in the regional areas, but what I want to read out is from the budget papers. I quote —

The distribution network is facing both reliability and safety challenges in the regions. To address these issues, Western Power is working to underground more of the metropolitan area network to increase network capacity and prepare for an electrified future for customers, including electric vehicles.

Mr W.J. Johnston: What page is that on?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am trying to work out how increasing underground power in the metropolitan area —

Mr W.J. Johnston: What page?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: — is improving —

Mr W.J. Johnston: What page are you quoting from?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It is from the budget papers.

Mr W.J. Johnston: What page?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have not got the page on hand, minister. I will let you know tomorrow if you like.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Ms L. METTAM: I have a point of order. The member for Roe has stated he is not taking interjections.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): That is not a point of order, but I hear what you are saying.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you; I have a lot to get through.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I have a point of order. Could I just clarify that the member was quoting from a document? Could he name the document and the page number? If he is quoting from a document, he must be holding it in his hand. If he is not quoting from a document —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Thank you, minister. That is not a point of order, and I have been advised that he does not have to quote the document, minister. Go ahead, member for Roe.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. As I said, it is from the budget papers. The commentary goes on to say —

In regional areas Western Power is installing stand-alone —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! The member for Roe is not taking interjections.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It reads —

In regional areas Western Power is installing stand-alone power systems and smaller microgrids in areas where it makes sense. This shift towards a modular grid will ultimately help deliver a more resilient electricity network for the community.

I am just reading out from the budget papers.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, thank you.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: They are quotations from the budget papers. Thanks, Madam Acting Speaker.

From the *Annual reliability and power quality report 2023* for the year ended 30 June 2023, the total payments for supply interruptions exceeding 12 hours were \$2.325 million. If I can, I want to go on to March 2023, when supply to around 43 000 customers was interrupted across the network during pole-top fire activity. In the Perth metropolitan area, 35 000 customers were impacted, with a further 8 000 customers impacted mainly in the south west and wheatbelt regions. I am trying to give a picture of reliability. We know the member for Moore, the Leader of the Opposition, gets up and talks about these issues in his electorate time after time. I am trying to point out some of the issues that we are facing in our electorates. Western Power's own comment about regional service delivery was that it notes some programs of work for regional areas have "improved the customer's felt reliability experience" but not necessarily improved the overall reliability performance due to the small number of customers impacted. It said this, however, is important work as many of these small regional towns have longer-term reliability challenges.

I am trying to put a summary here. I want to go on to pole-top fires, which the minister is certainly well aware of. He received my grievance back in May 2023. As he knows, last summer I had a massive amount of inquiries and complaints from shires in the likes of Wagin, Kulin, Pingaring, Lake Grace, Newdegate, Kojonup and Broomehill, and the list goes on. I want to point out the impact this has on some of our communities. Farmers are sitting out there in the paddocks with their firefighting units, waiting for Western Power to turn up. They lose the whole day or the whole couple of days if the local firefighting unit is occupied.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Swan Hills.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: They are trying to run about their normal day of business —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, thank you.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have a point of order. The member for Swan Hills will have every opportunity to make a contribution of her own. She does not need interject on this member.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. Thank you, member for Swan Hills. Member for Roe, you have seven minutes; let's go.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am trying to point out the challenges with government infrastructure in regional areas. Through no fault of their own, it has a flow-on effect on people's occupations, whether because they have to sit out there for hours on end waiting for a Western Power crew to fix the damage caused by a pole-top fire or there is a fire like the Narrogin fire, when wires unfortunately clashed. That was a tragic fire; it was one of the worst days

in that area in living memory. There was a massive loss of livestock, whether it be sheep or pigs or the like, as well as fencing. That fire devastated 18 000 hectares in the Narrogin and Wickepin shires. These are the issues that affect the daily lives of our constituents. It is pretty frustrating, to say the least.

I was pleased when I heard the announcement by the minister of the pole-top fire maintenance program, which from memory will involve about 12 shires over the forthcoming summer.

Mr W.J. Johnston: They are using helicopters. It's extraordinary. It's the first time in the world.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes. I certainly welcome that as a method of improving the scenario with pole-top fires.

Something else that the minister knows I have been talking about over time is solar energy connections—I guess they are smaller industrial connections in some ways—in some towns around the wheatbelt. Energy suppliers are looking to connect into the system. There was a trial of the 32-amp or 63-amp scenario that the minister ran over six months.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It got fixed; there is no longer an issue.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It was certainly a good result for regional solar energy providers. That was, I guess, overturned after that trial.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It wasn't overturned; it was that the engineering allowed something else to happen.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I guess part of that, minister, is that we are still having challenges, obviously with wi-fi connections and switchboards. These are the challenges of regional Western Australia, and the minister needs to keep them in mind. A lot of our farms do not have wi-fi connections on many occasions, so trying to work out an arrangement through a switchboard can become challenging. Of course, there are also challenges for some of our local electricians, who do not want to touch solar jobs, and problems with our transformers as well. A lot of the time, a transformer is not up to scratch as far as having enough power to get the job done. That, of course, is fine; people just have to pay another \$20 000 or \$30 000 for another transformer! That makes a solar connection unviable. They are some of the issues that we highlight. There are also some barriers that companies are up against. Even the online applications through Synergy are quite challenging. It is quite difficult to gain access to information through the online Synergy system to hook into the solar scenario. They are some of the challenges.

The other one I will briefly talk about while we are talking about energy is the wind farm situation. I spoke about this a couple of months ago, but it does worry me. A quote from an ABC online news article of April 2023 sums it up. The article, headed "Australians are cashing in on rapid wind farm expansion, but it's tearing some towns apart", states —

... power and money are pitting neighbour against neighbour as this old farming community grapples with a new, rapidly growing industry.

It is very important that we understand that this is creating division in a lot of communities. In my electorate, I have places like Broomhill, Kojonup, Narrogin, Williams, Darken and Ongerup. Collie is on the edge of my electorate as well. These are real issues out there. It is going to create generational grief.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It is important that we understand the challenges we are up against in relation to neighbourhoods and families being against each other. I have spoken briefly to the Minister for Planning as well. From my experience, I do not think there is enough regulation of this relatively new industry in Western Australia. I think it will be a challenge for the planning minister going forward.

I will wrap up with a couple of quotes. One is from an article under the banner "The Mining and Resources Sector: Building a Better WA". It probably sums up a little of what the member for Cottesloe spoke about. It states —

Some of Western Australia's largest and most strategic resource projects are at risk due to uncertainty as to whether the state's new low emissions, reliable and cost-competitive energy system will be delivered to the scope and timeframes required.

The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of WA's (CME) Chief Executive Rebecca Tomkinson said the timely delivery of a low emissions, reliable and cost-competitive energy system was required to decarbonise industry's existing operations and deliver globally competitive green industries in WA, including critical minerals and value-adding.

"There is no net zero without the WA resources sector ...

The final paragraph that I will read states —

"While we welcome the WA Government's direction for transition of the state's main electricity grids, and their constructive engagement with the industry, we urgently need the WA Government to move from admirable aspirations to tangible actions."

I think that comment sums it up.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [5.47 pm]: I also rise to contribute to the energy debate presented and led by the member for Cottesloe. I will speak in support of this exceptionally important motion, especially in the face of rising competition overseas, the rising cost of living here at home and escalating geopolitical tensions as well. Much of my focus will be on the need for this government to stand up for Western Australia in the face of some challenging issues from a regulatory perspective.

The member for Cottesloe, as the lead speaker in this debate, has already spoken about the ongoing concerns in WA from an energy reliability point of view. What I want to focus on is Western Australia's unique position. WA is rich in resources, such as oil, gas, critical minerals and rare earths. It is unlike any other place in the world. This means that we are in a prime position to support economic growth, job creation and prosperity in this state. We cannot tackle the cost of living without having a strong and competitive state economy. We must ensure that our state is a destination of choice for the many billions in global investment dollars that are waiting to be spent in support of decarbonising our economy. We need to continue to look at ways that we can attract investment to this state. We must ensure that there are avenues available to maintain a skilled workforce, which is part of this, and that we are able to keep up with the productivity requirements of the industry.

Others have already touched on some of the recent statements from the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia and leading market players, who have all raised some concerns about these areas. This is crucial for our state economy in not only raising our capital base and expanding our export markets but also creating jobs, raising living standards and developing our regional communities. Western Australia's influence on global markets for LNG, renewable energy and critical minerals should be dominant. We are, after all, a low-cost energy jurisdiction and we have significant land mass. Our potential for leading the world's decarbonisation efforts is second to none, but it is only potential if it is not effectively harnessed. There are hundreds of billions of dollars at stake here that could give a leg-up to multiple generations of Australians and Western Australians.

The taxation streams of government, in the form of company tax and payroll tax, are significant and obviously cannot be taken for granted. Investment in these projects will go beyond the resources. Significant capital investment is often sunk into the development of public transport, infrastructure projects and the expansion of energy projects and networks into local economies, and it produces so many benefits for our state. We need to ensure that we are on the front foot and doing all we can to entice investors; otherwise, we will risk losing them to foreign markets.

Competing with the generous financial incentives on offer, as some of our allies do, is something that we are challenged in, but we have levers to pull with regard to our regulatory processes. Balancing the need to get projects off the ground in a timely way with efficient environmental approvals is obviously absolutely essential. Unfortunately, under both the state Labor government and, concerningly, the federal Albanese government, there are significant concerns in this space, such as red and green tape, regulatory approvals, industrial relations threats and mismanagement. It is clear that there is much more we need to do to have a more competitive environment to ensure that the confidence of current and future investment in Western Australia remains steadfast. The most recent example in all Western Australians' minds would be the embarrassment that was the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act. These laws went too far and were too complicated. Premier Cook himself admitted that the legislation went too far. He stated —

The complicated regulations, the burden on landowners and the poor rollout of the new laws have been unworkable for all members of our community—and for that, I am sorry.

I wonder what foreign and interstate investors would think about the unprecedented repeal of that legislation.

Since then, we have heard concerns from industry about the duplication of regulations under the Environmental Protection Act. It is clear that, in the face of concerns from the community and industry, the government's first response was not to listen to those concerns but to resort to racist slurs. Our state deserves a leader who unequivocally stands up for the interests of Western Australians above all else. We cannot afford this weakness when the Premier stands up for the likes of Prime Minister Albanese and east-coast Labor. It is no secret to industry that since the federal Labor government came to power there have been extensive and costly delays for environmental approvals. There are concerns about further issues in this space and what that reality will be for the gas sector.

This is not particularly surprising, given the government's obsession with eliminating all forms of energy that do not start with the word "renewable". Not only does this risk our domestic gas supply, it also constrains the role that gas can play in Australia's energy transition towards net zero emissions. If we are going to lower our emissions, it must be done in a way that does not come at an increased cost for Western Australians. Hundreds of thousands of people are already struggling with the rising costs of living and higher electricity bills. This will only tip more of our community into financial insecurity. Our reliance on gas to do this is absolute. We on this side of the chamber understand that, but it is increasingly obvious that the government does not. We call on the Premier to stand up to the federal Labor government.

Ryan Stokes, interim chair of Beach Energy, said at that company's annual general meeting yesterday —

“The current ambiguity and complexity of the environmental plan approval process is a major risk to new projects.

Processes that may previously have taken months are now taking close to two years. It is easy to understand where these delays are occurring when it comes to government. If there is a will, there is a way, and it is clear right now that there is no will from the Albanese government to get these approvals off the ground. Mr Stokes also warned —

... the industry must have confidence in a supportive regulatory environment, otherwise our domestic energy transition is at risk of failure.”

The reality is that the federal government is making it much harder to get projects off the ground. Imposing onerous and lengthy regulatory requirements on these businesses has had an adverse impact on their bottom line. It further frustrates investment and will undoubtedly have an impact on Western Australia if our Premier does not stand up for this state. Not only is industry competing with a poor federal framework, it is also keeping a close eye on the horizon towards the Albanese government’s so-called closing the loopholes bill. The federal government, if successful, will make life extraordinarily difficult for Australian businesses by increasing the costs and complexity of red tape. Minister Burke admitted in a speech at the National Press Club that the bill would add complexity to an already unduly complex system. These industrial relations changes are of significant concern to industry leaders and advocates in this state.

Tania Constable, CEO of the Minerals Council of Australia, stated in a media release of 4 September —

The Albanese Government’s latest industrial relations legislation changes are some of the most extreme, interventionist workplace changes that have ever been proposed in Australia.

...

For Australian mining, this excessive burden and workforce rigidity will put the industry’s ability to deliver the full economic and social benefit from the emerging clean energy mining boom, under serious threat.

We ask the question: where is Premier Cook in all this? He needs to stand up to his federal colleagues, given the significant impact this will have on Western Australia and Western Australian industry, and given the green views of his counterpart. If the Premier believes that a one-page letter to the Prime Minister is enough to demonstrate that he is standing up for Western Australia, he is surely mistaken. We are hearing the real concerns of industry right across the board in WA. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia has released a report called *Green web: How environmental approvals could trap Australian investment*. Businesses are increasingly reporting frustrations and considerable challenges with our state’s Environmental Protection Authority as well, and some have described working with the EPA as “laborious and frustrating” with “ever-changing guidelines and shifting goalposts”. The report goes on. The CCI believes that there are several issues at play. It notes five key issues, one being a high turnover of long-term state government employees leading to a deficit in corporate knowledge. It also refers to arbitrary rule changes being made mid-project, an inadequate level of available resourcing, continually shifting goalposts due to inconclusive science and the EPA’s intersection with cultural heritage protection.

We are now at a point at which the normal expectation for a mine to come online is blowing out to about eight to 10 years, which is double the traditional expectation of four to five years. Boards across the country will be looking at the situation in Western Australia. I know these issues were raised directly with the Premier when he recently visited Japan, and I certainly hope that the Premier gave some assurances about what he is doing to stand up for Western Australia. Again, this will impact upon our capacity to meaningfully contract with the global energy transition and capitalise on the resource requirements that we have here. If we make it increasingly difficult for companies to mine and export lithium, nickel, cobalt and other rare-earth minerals, they will seek alternatives and invest elsewhere. Just as we are seeing across multiple portfolios, it is becoming increasingly clear that this government is led by a leader who is not prepared to stand up for WA and does not know how to govern. Once again, as outlined in the *Green web* report, the social and economic benefits for Western Australia are at stake here.

As we know, WA is the engine room of the Australian economy. We saw during COVID that the mining sector kept not only our state but also our nation afloat, but right now, it is anticipated that about \$381 billion worth of known investment projects in the pipeline are yet to receive environmental approval. Those projects could create 106 000 additional jobs. Of the people the CCI surveyed who indicated that approval times were longer than expected, 40 per cent were at risk of abandoning their project altogether. That concern is certainly shared by the opposition. It does not take a rocket scientist to work out the significant contribution that represents to the state as well.

This government needs to step up before we lose this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity at a cost to the next generation of Western Australians. We need to ensure that we have the energy reliability and prosperity that our future generations dearly deserve. With those comments, I note that the Minister for Energy would also like to respond, so I will leave my comments there —

A member interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: Sorry? I leave my comments there and look forward to the response.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.04 pm]: It is hard to know where to begin. A part of me wants to say it is groundhog day, because here we go again with yet another futile, nonsensical, totally un-researched and poorly thought out contribution to the debate of probably the most important set of challenges

facing the state of Western Australia—there is that. But, firstly, I thank the member for Vasse for regurgitating Premier Cook’s economic policy platform on the importance of energy transition to the state. I am glad she was listening at the Premier’s Leadership Matters breakfast. I wonder whether an original thought ever comes into the policy minds that sit behind the Liberal Party; I do not think, to date, we have seen much evidence of that, but at least it demonstrates that they are listening. I will say that I thought the member’s comments on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act were in poor taste and beneath her. I think she could do better. I will leave it at that.

It is groundhog day for energy policy debates in this place. It is always Labor governments that take the necessary steps to reform our energy sector, because, as I have said, the pool is a little shallow when it comes to policy development on the opposition benches. It is always Labor governments that step forward in partnership with industry to ensure that we deliver the state secure, reliable and affordable sustainable energy. It has always been the case and it always will be. It is because we take the time to listen, we do the work, we trust the experts and we take the time to understand. We are not driven by blind ideology or bright shiny baubles that we sound bite out in election campaigns that come back to significantly bite us. We think hard about energy policy. We do the work. We do important reform, and it has always been so. Under the Carpenter government, Labor embarked on the most ambitious program of energy reform that this state has ever seen. It was a Labor government that created the electricity market, established the Economic Regulation Authority, established the Energy and Water Ombudsman, introduced the new access rules for the electricity network to attract private sector generation investment, introduced the Independent Market Operator, designed the reserve capacity mechanism to attract private investment into new generation and ensured that sufficient volumes of generation capacity would be delivered into Western Australia and the south west interconnected system to meet our energy supply needs into the future. It was a Labor government that wrote the market rules that promoted competition and efficiency. It was a Labor government that introduced the Electricity Industry (Network Quality and Reliability of Supply) Code, requiring suppliers to meet more stringent standards of electricity reliability and quality. It was a Labor government that kept the Western Power successor entities in public hands, and what a great decision that has ended up being; it has meant that we have full control over our energy destiny. We are able to implement substantial energy policy reforms that I will go on to speak about. It is Labor governments that established the consultative frameworks to evolve these market rules, constantly review the reserve capacity mechanism, develop the protection frameworks and codes of conduct with respect to small-use customers, monitor retail licensing to make sure that our retailers are doing the right thing, oversee market conduct and institute the mechanisms under which the market is regularly reported upon. It is Labor governments that have done that. It is always Labor governments that do that. It was a Labor government that introduced the domestic gas reservation policy to make sure that we had sufficient fuel for industry, small and medium enterprises and households. We have always done the forward planning. We have always consulted industry when we have done that. We have always listened to the advice of the public service experts, we have always followed the science and we have always done the work.

I have spoken previously in this place about the laughable efforts at policymaking undertaken by the Barnett government, and the state energy initiative launch up at Fraser’s at which Hon Peter Collier waved a flippy pamphlet around.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Never to be seen again.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Never to be seen again, and rightfully so. In fact, I cannot even find it on the internet. I googled it this afternoon because I thought I would not mind another look at it. I thought it was four pages, but it might have been six or a couple more. It was a nice, glossy pamphlet that contained a few motherhood statements and a speech given by Hon Peter Collier when he said he preferred the education portfolio and then delivered a speech about education policy at Fraser’s to the Australian Institute of Energy. Everybody was aghast. I thought it was quite insulting to the energy sector participants who had engaged in good faith in that consultation process and who were genuinely looking to that policy document for guidance. The company that I worked for at the time needed to see where the state government intended to take the energy sector because it had significant implications for our own asset planning and the way we would choose to commercially structure the arrangements around our assets. There was no clarity, no certainty and nothing that provided the sort of investment environment that we could have any confidence in. It was a farce. As I said, it was insulting to all those people who spent hours preparing submissions and providing input. There was no certainty, vision, strategy or guidance—nothing. It was a complete waste of time.

The big energy ideas that the then government took forward were to hike power prices to small customers—mums and dads and small businesses around the state—by more than 90 per cent and to cease the apprenticeship programs. We saw apprenticeships dry up in Western Power to dramatically restructure its workforce arrangements. I thought about that and have mentioned it in the past, although only in private; I have never mentioned it before in this place. But in private, I thought at the time that I knew there were a couple of parties running the ruler over Western Power. It is obvious in hindsight that the former government was dressing it up for sale. The former government was hiking up the electricity prices and stripping back the workforce so it looked like the operational cost basis was a lot lower. It was not investing in the forward workforce, which we are paying the price for now, in much the same way that it shamefully increased TAFE fees. The former government was doing all sorts of things to gut the trading enterprises of capability and hiking up the prices in the pursuit of dogma and ideology in the Liberal Party’s endless

thirst for and pursuit of its privatisation agenda. All that pain and short-sightedness was inflicted on the energy sector workers and the mums and dads of Western Australia to pursue the Liberal Party's privatisation agenda. As I said, thankfully, it did not win.

I will diverge a little. Part of the reason that I ran for Parliament was that I could see the changes underway in the sector and that there was an absolute policy vacuum, whereas the now Minister for Energy got on a roadshow that I went to at the Mundaring Town Hall where there was a big meeting and the minister talked about privatisation and outlined his vision for energy policies in Western Australia. It was great to hear one. It was a vision that I could get behind and was a big reason that I chose to run for Parliament. I thought I could either join the Liberal Party and do nothing, sit on the sidelines or actually get behind a party that had a meaningful agenda and a strong plan. The Labor Party always has had a plan and has always been prepared to make the big energy policy decisions for Western Australia.

As I said, it was obvious when we came to government that the energy economy was in transition and that someone needed to act. We had rapidly increasing volumes of renewable energy, very different generation dispatch and very different gas consumption patterns on the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline. The WA State Energy Initiative did not say anything about how to deal with that. The Labor government did what we do best: we listened, designed and acted.

In his opening remarks today, the member for Cottesloe said there was little evidence that the Cook Labor government had a proper systemic plan. He said that in six years in office, there was no evidence that the Labor government was doing any work on energy reform. Members, he sat on a 2020 inquiry that took reams of evidence on what the state government had already done and was planning to do. I will quote from the eighth report of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee because I can tell members that we sat for hours. We went through this report line by line and sentence by sentence. I refer to the heading on page 2 titled "State Government action in 2019". It says —

State Government action in 2019 reflects the pace of change in the energy sector. Western Australia is seizing the opportunity to plan and deliver a new energy future.

In March 2019, the State Government launched its *Energy Transformation Strategy: A brighter energy future* ... The Energy Transformation Strategy is the Government's work program to ensure the delivery of secure, reliable, sustainable and affordable electricity to Western Australians for years to come. The reasons for energy reform noted in the Energy Transformation Strategy reflect a number of findings in the Interim Report.

We had done the interim report and made a heap of findings about things that needed to happen. The government was right onto it. It released reports and was getting on with the job. The report continues —

The Energy Transformation Taskforce ... established in May 2019, is responsible ... for delivering a two year program of work across three interrelated areas:

- whole of system planning;
- DER —

A distributed energy roadmap, and —

- foundation regulatory frameworks ...

The Taskforce and Energy Policy WA, working with the Australian Energy Market Operator ... Western Power and other stakeholders, are developing plans —

Which, according to the member for Cottesloe, apparently had not been done —

and roadmaps at a fast pace. The Taskforce delivered the DER Roadmap to the Minister for Energy ... in ... December 2019.

Energy reform will involve legislative change. For example, the Government recently tabled the *Electricity Industry Amendment Bill 2019* ... to implement reforms relating to SAPS —

Standalone power systems —

and electricity storage, and reforms to the regulation of the electricity network in the Pilbara.

Further detail ... is provided in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven.

In my foreword, I noted —

Due to the State Government's impressive progress on energy reform, this report is necessarily different to one the Committee would have written only a few months ago.

That is because of the planning and the work that was being done by the state government in real time. The Economics and Industry Standing Committee received evidence about all that was going on every week in its hearings. I wonder whether the member for Cottesloe was asleep during that process or he was ignoring all the people

who had taken the time to do the work and prepare their submissions and appear in front of those hearings. In chapter 4, the committee went into detail about the structure of the market. In chapter 5, it covered technical and operations factors, including system planning. The committee recommended that regulatory changes should be made to allow greater visibility and control and that a register be created for distributed energy resources. In chapter 6, the committee covered market reform and regulatory reform. In only the last sitting period, we sat in here and discussed the legislation that now incorporates all these changes. We talked about roles and reform structures which —

Mr W.J. Johnston: And totally reported on and updated where we were at.

Ms J.J. SHAW: The minister is jumping ahead in the slide deck. I have a reading list that I would like to recommend. Only during the last sitting, we discussed the legislation that now incorporates all these reforms. We talked about roles and reform structures. The member for Cottesloe has debated these issues. He has debated the architecture for reform that today he has said we have done nothing about. This government is getting on and delivering. We discussed the reform and the legislation and the further architecture of ongoing reform mechanisms that were created in the legislation, and tomorrow we will probably debate even more reform that we will be doing on alternative electricity services and ensuring customer protections. If the member for Cottesloe wants a little cheat sheet on what has been done, I have a 32-page document that was tabled in this place in September. It provides an update on the progress of the implementation and outlines many of the plans. It is a 32-page document. It is an extremely short summary of incredibly complex plans and policies that are being actioned in real time. I think that at 32 pages it is probably 28 pages longer than the Liberal Party's state energy initiative, a process that took it years to do and which contained motherhood statements. Here we have a brief summary that references many more documents that outline the plans this government either has undertaken or is undertaking to progress energy reform. The little reading list that I suggest the member for Cottesloe takes up includes, the *Whole of system plan*, the energy transformation strategy, the distributed energy resources road map, the implementation updates all through Energy Policy WA's website, and the SWIS demand assessment.

Mr W.J. Johnston: This!

Ms J.J. SHAW: The minister is going to table them; I am sure that they can all be made available. They include the *State electric vehicle strategy for Western Australia*, Western Power's transmission system map, Western Power's network opportunity map, the information papers on changes to the electricity networks access code, and the information papers on changes to the reserve capacity mechanism. The Australian Energy Market Operator also publishes a significant number of documents on an annual basis on the Electricity Statement of Opportunities, the Gas Statement of Opportunities, the summer readiness overview—all these documents. For the member for Cottesloe to state that there is no plan is such an insult to the incredibly hardworking people at Energy Policy WA, AEMO, the Economic Regulation Authority, the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, government trading enterprises and all the industry associations that are working so closely and collaboratively with government. These people spend their waking hours and probably lose a fair few hours of sleep worrying about this stuff. They are working together on the energy future for this state and they are a remarkable group of people. If the Liberals win government in 2025, and if the “shadow-shadow Minister for Energy”, the member for Cottesloe—because we know that Hon Dr Steve Thomas is actually the shadow Minister for Energy, and I will go on to explain why. I wonder how all those people will feel if the “shadow-shadow” goes on to become the Minister for Energy, knowing how worthless he thinks the work is that they have put in over the last six years. I wonder how they will feel about that. They have sat in front of a parliamentary inquiry. They have provided thoughtful, considered feedback to parliamentary inquiry processes that the member himself sat through. They have given really considered feedback on central developments and on what can happen. They have appeared in front of estimates committees as agencies and answered questions, some of which have been really quite banal. They have provided answers to questions on notice that take an incredible amount of work to prepare. They have shared ideas.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.J. SHAW: I wonder how they feel when they know that the true position of the Liberal Party, as outlined today, is that their contribution and their work matters nought and that the Liberal Party thinks that they have done nothing and they have no clear focus on the energy needs of Western Australia. These are the organisations that the member would purport to lead if he were the Minister for Energy, and he thinks their work matters nought.

This whole issue is not about a minister. It is not about a man, a woman, a leader of this organisation or a leader of that organisation. The energy challenges we face are such that we must work together. Industry and whole of government, all agencies across government, must work together. They are remarkably complex issues. They are not simple. They require sustained effort and collaboration and trust in the evidence of experts. We all need to work together on the most significant challenges to face the Western Australian economy and we all need to be part of the solutions.

I reflect on the Economics and Industry Standing Committee process and, as I have said before, the former member for Warren–Blackwood demonstrated bipartisanship and what could have become a politicised inquiry did not. It

actually focused on really finding those collaborative and important solutions that the government was working on in real time and has continued to implement beyond the inquiry. It is really disappointing that the Liberals cannot get behind that process. It is frightening if they cannot get behind it because they do not understand it, and that is a huge risk. That is a real risk going into the 2025 election because when members do not do the work and when they do not listen, we end up with crazy policy ideas. We can all remember that disastrous press conference and the “big energy vision” that was released at the last election. The shadow Treasurer could not understand how he was going to pay for it, the Liberal Party leader could not understand it and the shadow Minister for Energy could not explain it. I remember that one part of it was about closing coal-fired power stations by 2025. Members opposite are now criticising us for aiming to close them by 2030. That is interesting. I remind members of the article in *WAtoday* of 11 March 2021 titled “Liberals’ ‘shambolic’ election promise cost reveal lacking underlying analysis”. It outlines a big discussion on the shambolic nature of policy development under the Liberal opposition in the lead-up to the last election. I will skip over the parts on the shambolic construction of the figures and where it states that there was “no analysis or calculation of the underlying items that made up each individual commitment”. I note that it states that the Liberal Party provided its energy commitment at \$3 billion, saying it would cost the state only \$260 million. It was labelled shambolic by the then Treasurer Ben Wyatt, who likened it to an episode of *The Three Stooges*, and the Minister for Energy’s analysis revealed that the actual costings were closer to \$16.7 billion. On ABC online news of 15 March 2021, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, the real shadow Minister for Energy—*The Real Slim Shady*—stated —

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

Not much has changed. Members should do the work, listen to industry, take the best possible advice, take a long view based on physics, science and facts, try and work with industry and try and get behind a transformative agenda that will set our economy up for decades to come.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [6.26 pm]: I am pleased to make some remarks because it is important that the member for Cottesloe confront a challenge that he seems to ignore. He has quoted individual lines from the Australian Energy Market Operator’s report titled *2023 Wholesale electricity market electricity statement of opportunities*, but not the report itself. If he actually read the report and understood it, he would see a couple of things. Firstly, he would see that the Australian Energy Market Operator is part of the process of planning for the south west interconnected system. I pause at that point and also remind everybody that there are actually three separate and unrelated energy systems in Western Australia. There is the south west interconnected system, the so-called north west interconnected system, that is not technically interconnected in the way that we would normally think, and then there is the off-grid space. As much energy is produced in the north west interconnected system plus the off-grid part as there is in the south-west part. When people talk about energy supply in Western Australia, like the member for Cottesloe did now, they often incorrectly refer to the SWIS without realising that there is as much energy—in fact, more—outside the SWIS than there is inside the SWIS. I want to clarify that because it is a planning process that the government of Western Australia has commissioned the Australian Energy Market Operator to do. It does it on an annual basis and that is why it is a “statement of opportunities”. It is not a “statement of crisis”. It is a statement of the opportunities for private investment into the future. I also want to go to the executive summary on page 3 that states —

A recent change to the WEM Rules **broadens the scope of emerging supply risks considered by AEMO**, ensuring a more comprehensive coverage of assessed supply risk in the RCT determination.

The point is that the purpose of the reserve capacity target and the reserve capacity mechanism is to deal with risk. That is the purpose of those processes. We create the target and then we go out and procure the supply. We have changed the rules and that has required AEMO to take account of more risk so it has changed the target for which it is procuring energy capacity. The reason there is an increase in the RCT is because we have asked AEMO to do that. It is not a gap. I will come to the gap later on. The RCT change is not a gap, but a change in the desired figure for the future. By definition, that figure must be higher than the past figure because the past figure took account of only limited risks and now we are taking account of more risks. That is the whole point. This is a risk-mitigation strategy. Every day that the last government was in power, it used the reserve capacity target and the reserve capacity mechanism that are part of what the member called “failed reforms”. Every day that his government was in power, it used exactly the same mechanisms.

Ms J.J. Shaw: And it has been globally recognised.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In the western world, most places are moving to capacity markets—Japan, Europe and most of the United States. That is the purpose of the capacity market: we identify the risks and come up with a plan to fix them. It is not that we identify risks and then ignore them; we identify them and then solve the problem. That is why it is done. To say that the capacity gap identified in the Australian Energy Market Operator’s *2023 Wholesale electricity market electricity statement of opportunities* is because of a failure of planning is just mind-blowingly stupid. It is the planning document that outlines what has to happen next!

Ms J.J. Shaw: It is literally the blueprint.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is literally the blueprint! The report says —

- **Beyond 2025-26, the outlook for long-term reliability is expected to improve** due to strong capacity investment signals and planned transmission expansion, demonstrating a commitment to achieve a sustainable energy future and maintain power system security and reliability.

The report, in single words, rejects the entire assessment that was included in the member's 56 minutes of conversation in the chamber. It is as if he has never read the report and does not understand the words on the piece of paper. It is mind-blowingly silly! Let us go on.

Mr R.S. Love: He must be confused.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Clearly he must be confused, because otherwise he would read the document and understand it! The fact that he comes in here and quotes a document that he does not understand is not my fault. I did not ask him to fail to understand the English language. He is so silly. He has got a PhD in chemistry. I would think he could read a document and understand it.

Mr R.S. Love: I think he can.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Well, why doesn't he? Why did he not explain?

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am not taking interjections from the silliest person in the building. We call him 59.

The report goes on. Page 6 of the document states —

In January 2023, the WEM Rules were amended as part of the WA Government's Energy Transformation Strategy, which incorporates several critical reforms to the RCM, to reflect the needs of the SWIS through the energy transition.

Oh, my god! I would think that the government had a plan that the Australian Energy Market Operator knows about! For crying out loud; how clearer could it be? The Australian Energy Market Operator, independently of government, is saying exactly the opposite of the member's commentary in a report that he said he has read! How silly is it that a member comes into the chamber and quotes a document that proves that what he is saying is not true? It then goes on. Page 7 states —

... AEMO's modelling assumes that the Bluewaters Power Station will exit the WEM from 2030–31.

It makes the point. In its forward planning, the Australian Energy Market Operator is assuming that there will be no coal-fired power stations beyond 30 September 2031. That is not my assumption: that is the independent market operator's assumption. Anybody who thinks that coal —

Dr D.J. Honey: But you changed the law and you have said that you are going to close them.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am sorry; I do not have anything to do with Bluewaters. I wish I did.

Dr D.J. Honey: You said that you would not take any power from them.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: From 2025, once the current contract between Synergy and Bluewaters expires, we will not renew it because it is unbelievably expensive.

I will go on to page 8 of the report that the member says he understands. It states —

This 2023 WEM ESOO forecasts the RCT to grow at an average ... rate of 3.7% over the outlook period, in comparison to the expected 0.8% annual growth rate in the 2022 WEM ESOO.

Let us understand this. The planning assumption has changed by three per cent a year. When that is forecasted out over 10 years, it is over a gigawatt of additional demand. It has nothing to do with the closure of the coal-fired power stations because it is always assumed that the coal-fired power stations will close. It is saying that demand growth will increase. In the last 15 years, demand has basically been flat, but we did not realise that it actually started to increase again a few years ago.

Why is that demand growing? It is because of industrial load. It is not households that are driving this growth—for the first time in 20 years, it is industrial loads. It is as though the member has never read the report or he does not understand the words that are written on the page. It sets out in black and white exactly what is occurring. It is public and was done by an independent organisation. Why is the independent organisation doing it? It is because we have commissioned it to do it! It is in the legislation: this is its job. It is as though the member does not understand that this, along with the work of Energy Policy WA, is the planning for the south west interconnected system.

Dr D.J. Honey: It is not the planning; it is the mechanism.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Oh, my God! How stupid are you? This is so stupid! I did not interject on you. Please show some control.

The report continues —

The significant near-term capacity needs identified in this report may not be fully mitigated through the RCM, or have not been mitigated for Capacity Years with assigned Capacity Credits, which has necessitated AEMO seeking additional services through the following frameworks ...

It then talks about the supplementary reserve capacity and the non-co-optimised essential system services. Guess what? Those are the tools that the government created for the Australian Energy Market Operator to use. The NCESS that it ran this year was fully subscribed. Through the NCESS, 532 megawatts of capacity were fully subscribed to. The SRC was run last year and I think it got over 170 megawatts of additional supply. We expect that additional supply to be available again this year. If the member reads the report instead of just talking to himself, he will see that it makes it fully clear and sets out that it has the tools.

Let us understand what the RCT does. It tells the private sector to invest because then it has a guaranteed income. I accept that nobody is going to invest just on the basis of the capacity market, but think about it—somebody needs the energy and is going to pay for it. The member was so silly as to say that no major industrial user would contract with renewable energy supply. Well, guess what?

Dr D.J. Honey: I did not say that. I said that it would not —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, you said they would not do it.

Guess what? His own former employer, Alcoa, is sponsoring major renewable energy projects in Victoria to do exactly the thing that he said it was not going to do! On 6 September 2022, BHP Nickel West —

Dr D.J. Honey: They are not going to run them.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Stop flapping your gums, mate!

BHP Nickel West put out a media release outlining all the wind farms that it is contracting to provide electricity for its decarbonisation efforts in the nickel business. That is exactly what is happening. It is as though he does not know these things and he does not know that BHP, Fortescue Metals Group and Rio Tinto are all publicly saying that they are building three gigawatts of supply of renewable energy in the Pilbara to decarbonise iron ore operations. It is as though the member does not even know that, even though they have made public comments about that. This is just so silly.

Dr D.J. Honey: You know it is only a small part of their energy use.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He keeps flapping his gums as though he does not know any of these things and that these companies are doing exactly what he says they are not going to do!

He then went on about the delayed closure of coal-fired power stations. Let me make it clear that we have not announced a delay of the closure. We have said that we are going to put it in an outage format so that if the Australian Energy Market Operator believes it needs it over that one summer, it would be available to be recalled. It is not going to be operated or used unless there is an emergency. It is belts and braces. There is absolutely no expectation that we will use the Muja C unit 6.

I want to remind everybody in this chamber and anybody who reads this debate about the difference between my behaviour in opposition and the behaviour of the shadow Minister for Energy. In 2015 when Hon Dr Mike Nahan announced the closure of the Kwinana power station—the so-called triple-fueler that was built as a coal station and ended up being able to burn fuel, oil and gas as well—I supported it because it was common sense. KPS was an old unit and was becoming unreliable and it did not fit into a future-facing energy system.

I remember a journalist rang me up and said, “Do you think this is a bad idea?” I said, “No, of course it is a great idea because it’s old-fashioned.” When Hon Ben Wyatt closed the Muja AB station for the second time after the Liberal Party spent \$320 million failing to bring it back online —

Mr D.J. Kelly: That was a great investment!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It was such a great investment! I wish I had \$320 million to spare now. The Liberal Party never said a word because it was too embarrassing for it. Now, the Australian Energy Market Operator has endorsed the process we are doing, the private sector and the investors in the system have endorsed what we are doing, and we have a plan. We have already announced KBESS1—the Kwinana battery storage system. It is already underway. KBESS2 is under construction. For CBESS, the Collie battery energy storage system, the earthworks and other things are starting now. Those three battery projects are all underway.

The member complained we had not yet announced which wind farms we are building, but there is a reason for that. We are in commercial negotiations with the providers of those wind farms and we do not want to tell them that they are the only option, because they are not; we are negotiating with a range of people. When the commercial terms are agreed, we will make it public in the scene as we did with KBESS1, KBESS2 and CBESS. It is not complicated. I speak to people in the industry all the time. Imagine if you told somebody they had an exclusive right to negotiate with you before you set the price. What would happen to the price? It would go up! It is just mind-blowingly silly to try to suggest we should tip off a provider of commercial services that they have a deal.

The member went on about gas infrastructure. It is as though he has not read the *SWIS demand assessment*. He complained that he had printed it out wrong. That is not my fault. I want to show members something on page 8 of the SWISDA. It shows the very large growth in flexible gas infrastructure. We have been criticised by the Greens for predicting a tripling of gas generation over the next 20 years. The Greens say we are bad people for doing that. Of course, we also say that the frequency of use will go down, but the total capacity will go up. That is why there is no shortage of gas. As the renewables grow, people will use gas less, but when they need it, they need it. The member spoke about charging the batteries. It is as though he has never seen the operation demand on any particular day. I have two charts here, which I am happy to table at the end of my speech. One shows the operational demand for winter in 2022 for a week between 25 and 31 July. The other chart I have is the operational demand for summer 2022—week 2 from 2 January to 8 January. It was randomly chosen by Energy Policy WA. I just asked for a winter week and a summer week. Members can see that the amount of electricity used at any particular time goes up and down. The generating capacity still exists so people can charge batteries in the low periods and discharge it in high periods. That is the reason the batteries are so good. The other thing about batteries is they are instantaneous. Even a gas peaker can take 15 or 20 minutes to come online but a battery is instantaneously online. That means it is perfect. Do not forget that on during trading intervals when the power system does not need much electricity, we disconnect wind farms from the system because we cannot put them in. We have to not use them, so if people are using a battery, we can just use the wind farms that are otherwise switched off. The other thing that people do not understand is that the price of electricity at wholesale level in the middle of the day is negative. People talk about how to pay for it but they are being paid to take the electricity and put it in the battery. They are not paying for the electricity to put in the battery; they are being paid to take the electricity. The reason for that is the complexities of the way the electricity system works.

Nobody on the Liberal or National side of Parliament has mentioned that on 1 October, we went to the new market. We actually created a new electricity market in Western Australia on 1 October. We replaced the rules that were set back in 2006. Nobody has talked about it. It is as though they do not even know that those changes were made. We did not put out a media release on that because it was inside the beltway, if you like. It was an energy nerds thing because it did not change the way that electricity is dealt with by consumers but it was a radical change to the way we manage the electricity system to take into account a high renewable energy future. One element of that change is moving to five-minute settlements. Previously, before 1 October, the settlements—the financial affairs of the market—were settled every 30 minutes, but that meant that renewable energy would not always be able to be dispatched for the whole 30 minutes. There might be a wind drought over 10 of the 30 minutes. That meant it could not settle in the market, which allowed the thermal generators to settle. Reducing it to five minutes makes it easier for renewable generators to set the market price. Guess what? Renewable energy is the cheapest form of generation. It is what is called in the system a zero marginal cost. In other words, the cost of generating electricity or not generating electricity is zero because it is a capital business. Because they can set the market at a lower cost because they do not have to pay for their fuel, it pushes down the average price of electricity over time. It is one of the most important changes we have made in the system since 2006.

The opposition talked about the firming systems and the services that are provided automatically. The Leader of the Opposition quoted from the 2019 Synergy report that those were the services that Synergy was providing the market without payment. Guess what? We now value those services and reward people for them. Guess what, again? The batteries are very good at providing the services so, actually, the costs are going down because we can use these other mechanisms to provide essential systems services. That is why we also have the non-cooptimised essential systems services; that is a wonderful phrase. It is every energy nerd's favourite. It is because those systems services are not being provided with energy. They are being provided separate to the provision of energy because, up to now, they have been embedded into the system. Now, we identify them and deal with them.

The opposition talked about who is going to pay the costs. The member for Cottesloe drew attention to the chart on page 9 of the report showing a very significant increase in demand. Guess what? The people who need that electricity pay for it. That is where the money comes from. They pay for it. We are not giving electricity to industrial users for free. They pay for it. Synergy is replacing Synergy's coal plant. If I have not said this 100 times, I have had said it 150 times: the reason the coal-fired power stations are closing is that they are no longer economically capable of sitting inside the south west interconnected system. Of course, we get a massive advantage from reducing carbon emissions but, even if we did not have a carbon constraint, the coal-fired power stations would necessarily close. We need to have the infrastructure in place to replace them. I think we had about 1 000 megawatts looking back, including Muja 5; we had about 1 000 megawatts of coal and we have 800 megawatts of batteries. We have almost exactly closed out the gap. Remember, we often do not need it and that is only the battery. There will still be other energy sources, so we know that we can entirely replace our coal-fired power stations.

The member asked where our plan for the grid is. Of course, we are required now by our new regulations to have a whole-of-system plan every five years. This is it, here. We also have done the *SWIS demand assessment*. This is it, here. For the north west interconnected system, for the first time ever, we got all of industry together and they all agreed that we should move to a common-user basis. We are not yet at economic dispatch but we can see that that will be the future. What I mean by "economic dispatch" is that the generators get turned on and off on the basis

that they are the lowest cost. At the moment, there is very little trading of electricity in the north west and no commercial balancing because, generally speaking, mining companies provide their own energy or it is provided through their power purchase agreement providers. However, we can foresee a situation in the future in which there will be commercial balancing. We are working together with all those people in the north west to make sure that they are taken account of.

What else have we got?

Ms J.J. Shaw: Maybe the problem, minister, is that the documents are so long. They are not like the *State of the energy market* reports. Maybe if they were glossy and only four pages.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: All I ask is that the shadow shadow minister go and talk to the Australian Energy Market Operator a couple of times. Kate Ryan is well known to the member for Swan Hills. She is the Western Australian lead. She has a long title that includes “strategy”, and she is responsible for the Western Australian operations. As I said, Daniel Westerman will be here next week for the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council meeting. The member should go and talk to them. Rather than coming in here and quoting the documents without having ever spoken to them, he should go and talk to them.

Dr D.J. Honey: That’s not true. I’ve met them a couple of times.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If the member for Cottesloe has ever talked to them, he never listened to them because otherwise he would not say the silly things that he says.

I go to the coal supply. There was a mix up in the member’s presentation about the difference between the coal that we took from Newcastle as an insurance policy and the question of Griffin Coal. The coal that Synergy bought from Newcastle was not related to Griffin in any way. We do not buy coal from Griffin; we buy coal from Yancoal through Premier Coal. People know that in 2022, Premier had challenges in meeting its contractual obligations to Synergy. Therefore, we were nervous about the position of the coal stockpile. The media and the Liberal Party called for the government to take urgent action to ensure that we would not have any trouble. We got Synergy to buy 100 000 tonnes of coal from Yancoal—sorry, that is not actually true; we bought it from Yancoal, but we got Yancoal to get it from New South Wales. People ask how much it cost. I have always said that it was the international price. I think the member said \$350. I am not confirming that, but let us assume it was, so 100 000 tonnes times \$350 would be \$35 million. The actual shadow Minister for Energy said it was \$100 million. He is obviously mathematically incompetent because that would mean that the coal was \$1 000 a tonne. Given that I have never seen anybody quote \$1 000 a tonne for coal, I do not know where he got that idea from. I cannot confirm what the price was because it was a commercial matter for Synergy. As everybody knows, and as it was under the former government, nobody talks about the commercial arrangements that Synergy enters into. In the end, Premier Coal got back on target and delivered the tonnes that were required.

It is true that the ash content of New South Wales coal is higher than Western Australian coal. Of course, the energy content of New South Wales coal is also higher than Western Australian coal. I actually said that in the chamber when I announced the decision to bring the coal from New South Wales. It was later reported in the media to be a shock, even though I had publicly said it. Again, it was as if the people who reported on the issue had not read the *Hansard* from this chamber as it came as a surprise to them that I had publicly announced that the coal would have to be blended. The coal was blended in a particular ratio. The shadow Minister for Energy asked about that blending. It is true that the blending ratio increased over time. As we became more and more confident of our coal position, we were able to lower the blending ratio so that there were no challenges with the plant, because obviously the plant is optimised for particular coal sources.

The other thing, of course, is that the end cost of that is not yet complete. When we burn the coal, it becomes electricity, and we sell the electricity into the market and people pay us for the electricity. It is not as though buying the coal was the end of the matter, because we can make money out of selling electricity. That is one thing that people have not appreciated. It is not actually correct to say that, in the end, the cost of the coal was the cost to Synergy because Synergy turned the coal into energy and got a reward for that. Synergy managed that on a commercial basis.

There was a discussion about the rehab obligations. The rehab obligations are whatever they are. At the moment, the government of Western Australia has no obligations with respect to rehab obligations because we do not own the mines. I think there are 18 000 abandoned features across Western Australia that are the responsibility of the government. We disclose those issues in the *Annual report on state finances*, the quarterly reports and elsewhere. If the Under Treasurer believes that he needs to make a disclosure, he does. The government cannot control that, because the Financial Management Act sets out what he is required to do. Do members know what? The Auditor General has to sign off on those annual reports. It is not possible for the government to not bring to book an obligation that it has because the Financial Management Act requires the Under Treasurer to disclose it. At the moment, we do not have any obligations with respect to those rehab obligations and we never said that we would take them on. Of course, we are negotiating with Premier about the coal supply. Remember, as I said even on the day that we announced the coal station closures, we will need coal until we do not need coal. We have to work with Premier Coal to make sure that we have the coal that we will need until we close the coal-fired power stations. One challenge we have is

that if Premier decides to close before we are ready to close the coal-fired power stations, we might have a bit of urgent action to take. I can tell members that we could fix it, but we do not want to do that. Of course, Griffin might go under. That might not affect Synergy, but it would affect South32. South32 realised that its coal provider was in trouble, so it is moving to use gas instead of coal at the refinery. Interestingly, doing that will reduce its carbon emissions.

It is as if the member for Cottesloe does not know these things. It is as if these are new issues to him. He called the *SWIS demand assessment 2023 to 2042* a thought bubble. If he read the report—I apologise if he could not print it out in a format that he could read—he would know that it sets out the modelling that was done, the demand growth that we expect to respond to, and the generation and storage that will be needed et cetera. They are all set out in here. Indeed, it sets out what projects are in stage 1. On page 13 of the report, metro north to Neerabup, Neerabup to central mid, and central mid to midwest are all listed under stage 1. Kwinana to metro north is listed in stage 1. Eastern goldfields to mid east and mid east to south west are both listed in stage 1. I do not know why he said that he does not understand what we have set out in here. This is the high-level plan. We still need to implement it. We gave the money to Western Power that it asked for so that it could go and buy long lead items that it will need—if you do not order them, you do not get them—plus there is the detailed planning. That is exactly what the government should do. It is a plan. If we look up “project management” in the dictionary, that is what project management is—you set out your high-level agenda and then you operationalise it. It is exactly the same as we have done on the coal-plant retirements—we took account of all the challenges, worked out a business plan and then implemented it. That is the definition of planning. It is as though the member has not read the *SWIS demand assessment 2023 to 2042*, the *Whole of system plan*, the *Distributed energy resources roadmap*, the energy transformation strategy stage 2, the *Electricity networks access code*, the Electricity Industry Act and the regulations that sit under it, the *Distributed energy resources roadmap: Two-year progress report*, the *Electric vehicle action plan*, the reserve capacity mechanism review or the progress report on recommendations from the member for Swan Hills’ committee.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Which he sat on!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is as though he does not know about any of those things, much less the Australian Energy Market Operator’s annual report.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES — DOUBLE SHIFTS

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

I refer to the practice of double shifts being undertaken by Western Australian nurses and midwives, across the WA health system and I ask:

- (a) How many nurses undertook a double shift in August 2023; and
- (b) How many nurses undertook a double shift in July 2023?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

(a)–(b)

Nurses and Midwives		
Months	July 2023	August 2023
Double shifts	752	712
Headcount ¹	621	605

A double shift occurs when an employee works two consecutive standard working hour shifts, with a break between the two shifts.

Consistent with the *WA Health Australian Nursing Federation – Registered Nurses, Midwives, Enrolled (Mental Health) And Enrolled (Mothercraft) Nurses – Industrial Agreement 2020*. The hours worked in any one day will be a maximum of eight hours for a standard shift, unless an agreement to vary the hours and roster has been made in accordance with Clause 28 – Flexibility in Hours and Rostering of the above Agreement.

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL — CLADDING

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

I refer to concerns raised with respect to flammable cladding on public and private buildings in Western Australia following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017 and ask:

- (a) Since my earlier question in February 2023, has work to replace cladding on Fiona Stanley Hospital been completed:
 - (i) if not, why not; and
 - (ii) what was the total cost of the works; and
- (b) Has work to replace combustible cladding at Perth Children’s Hospital, the QEII Medical Centre and the Joondalup Health Campus commenced:
 - (i) when will these works be completed; and
 - (ii) what is the total cost of these works?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) (i)–(ii) Construction works at the Susan Teather Early Learning and Development Centre on the Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH) site began on 26 September 2023. Tender processes for other buildings on the FSH site are in progress, with total costs yet to be determined.
- (b) (i)–(ii) As a result of the complex design and construction of Perth Children’s Hospital, the preparatory works, to remove selected panels for fire testing, is a significant undertaking. A crane is on site at the Perth Children’s Hospital in preparation for the fire testing of the panels and investigative works planned to commence in early 2024. Joondalup and QEII are remain under consideration by Government.

PRESCRIBED BURNING — SOUTH WEST

930. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to prescribed burning targets in the South West, and I ask:

- (a) For each of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 what were the prescribed burning targets for the South West region; and
- (b) For each of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 what was the actual area subject to prescribed burns in the South West region?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

(a) The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) aims to maintain a fuel age of less than six years since last burnt in at least 45 per cent of the landscape on DBCA managed lands across its three south-west forest regions.

(b) The area of DBCA (and its predecessor) managed lands treated by prescribed burning across its three south-west forest regions per year was:

2015/16	154,149 hectares
2016/17	247,360 hectares
2017/18	218,965 hectares
2018/19	168,043 hectares
2019/20	132,940 hectares
2020/21	171,236 hectares
2021/22	192,257 hectares
2022/23	175,414 hectares
