



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2021

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 24 November 2021

Legislative Assembly

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

VISITORS — BANKSIA GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LESMURDIE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.03 pm]: Members, on behalf of the member for Wanneroo, I would like to welcome the student leaders from Banksia Grove Primary School. Welcome to Parliament.

On behalf of the member for Kalamunda, I would like to welcome the student leadership group from Lesmurdie Senior High School who are visiting Parliament House today.

I am guessing there is another school group up in the gallery. Welcome to all of you as well.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE — MARSHALL ROAD, WHITEMAN

Petition

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.03 pm]: I have a petition, from one petitioner, that has been certified by the Clerks as conforming and is couched in the following terms —

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

We, the undersigned, support the protection of the amenity of the community infrastructure on Marshall Road Whiteman, including the local shopping facilities and the Potters House Christian Centre as located on Marshall Road Whiteman. These facilities are the only community infrastructure in the area. The Christian Centre caters for around 800+ people on a regular basis and engages the broader community for Anzac, Easter, and Christmas services. A new Metronet stop will be located only 200 metres from the Centre and it is proposed to construct Western Power/Traction electrical infrastructure immediately adjacent to the church, despite there being other suitable nearby locations.

We therefore ask the State Government to consider moving the proposed Western Power infrastructure to a nearby suitable location that is not directly adjacent the Church.

And your petitioners as duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition 22.]

PAPERS TABLED

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

BILLS

Notice of Motion to Introduce

1. Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Amendment Bill 2021.
2. Animal Resources Authority Amendment and Repeal Bill 2021.

Notices of motion given by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)** on behalf of Mr R.H. Cook (Minister for Health).

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM BOOLA BARDIP — FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [12.06 pm]: I rise to update the house on the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip celebrating an incredible opening year. It was only a year ago on 21 November 2020 that Boola Bardip was officially opened. It was a very special day—my birthday—yes! To mark the one-year anniversary and milestone, Boola Bardip hosted a weekend of celebrations including free tours, music performances, expert talks and family activities. During the weekend, the Museum welcomed its 700 000th visitor, Julie Doessel from the Swan Valley. Her family was presented with a Boola Bardip birthday gift bag, featuring a toy of Otto the blue whale and the *Sharing Stories* commemorative book. In the year since opening, Boola Bardip has won a number of prestigious awards including, but not limited to, awards for excellence in construction, architecture, landscape architecture, exhibition and gallery fit-out and interpretation, learning and audience engagement. The Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip is an extraordinary cultural tourism attraction that showcases the stories of our state. Western Australians have embraced the new WA Museum and shown their enthusiasm with over 700 000 people visiting over the past year, and a 99 per cent satisfaction rating from

visitors. We are still trying to find who was the one per cent! Repeat visitation is also on the rise. Western Australia has a vibrant culture and arts sector, and major developments like the Museum continue to draw people to the city, contributing to the vibrancy and activation of our state.

PRO BONO SERVICES MODEL

Statement by Attorney General

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.08 pm]: I am pleased to table the first *Western Australian pro bono services model: Report on pro bono for financial year ending 30 June 2021*. The report gives an overview of the model and provides key findings about the types of pro bono services provided by private law firms under the model. Under the government's program, law firms that provide legal services for the state government must subscribe to the national pro bono target, a voluntary and aspirational target of at least 35 hours of pro bono services per lawyer per year. Law firms providing legal services to state government agencies must also deliver pro bono services for approved causes to the value of at least 10 per cent of the total fee charged to government agencies.

Fifteen law firms undertook pro bono work in 2020–21 under the program. The total dollar value of the legal services provided to government by these firms was around \$25 million. These firms went above and beyond their obligations under the program, delivering almost 13 000 hours, or more than \$4.8 million, in free legal support to the WA community in the program's first year. People affected by cyclone Seroja were amongst those who received legal advice, tenancy support and financial counselling from dedicated teams set up to assist those impacted by the cyclone. Under another initiative, private, community and public sector lawyers joined forces to deliver free wills to people in the West Kimberley, assisting individuals in the Djarindjin and Beagle Bay communities with the preparation of wills, enduring powers of attorney and enduring powers of guardianship. The program has a strong focus on helping individuals from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds secure access to justice. Aboriginal people, domestic violence survivors, elderly people, people with disabilities, people with limited English language skills, people with mental illness and homeless people are amongst those who have benefited from the program.

I would like to thank those firms that provided pro bono legal services under the program, and more generally throughout the profession: Law Access, the Department of Justice and the various community legal centres for their ongoing work, as well as the State Solicitor and his office for administering the model. I table the report.

[See paper [835](#).]

DRIVING ACCESS AND EQUITY PILOT PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Transport

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [12.11 pm]: I wish to update the house on work being done to improve access to a driver's licence, which was a key barrier to employment identified at the skills summit. In August we announced the \$4.9 million driving access and equity pilot program to help disadvantaged people obtain a driver's licence. We acknowledge that some people struggle to meet the requirements to become licensed. This may be because they cannot access appropriate services, professional instruction, a driving supervisor, a vehicle or the funds to pay for the process of obtaining a driver's licence.

Since my announcement, the Department of Transport has consulted widely in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions to discuss the issues faced by local residents. As a result of this consultation, we have committed to improving access to services by doubling the capacity of remote services officers in the Kimberley, Pilbara and midwest from five to 10. This will help more people in remote communities obtain and maintain their driver's licence, with services commencing next year. Consultation also identified the need for culturally appropriate publications. The Department of Transport will work with Aboriginal translation services to provide bespoke publications for the Kimberley and Pilbara regions. In addition, the Department of Transport intends to increase current agreements in place with providers who live and work in local communities to provide oral or paper-based theory tests for learners. These measures will assist people whose first language is not English, or for whom literacy is a barrier, to obtaining their learner's permit or driver's licence.

To support learners, the Department of Transport is inviting up to 20 identified organisations established in the Kimberley and Pilbara to apply for grants to fund projects that help people obtain their driver's licence. The grants will fund up to 100 per cent of total project costs, and can include costs associated with providing access to a vehicle, employing and training a person to become a driving instructor, and providing an allowance for a volunteer driving supervisor. A grant can also subsidise the costs associated with obtaining a driver's licence when no other funding or subsidy applies. Grant projects must help people enter, participate and exit the licensing process with a driver's licence, and I look forward to announcing successful recipients in early 2022.

CARERS RECOGNITION ACT — REVIEW

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [12.14 pm]: I rise to table a review conducted by the Department of Communities into the Carers Recognition Act 2004. In 2004, Western Australia became the first Australian jurisdiction to introduce carer-specific legislation. The Carers Recognition Act 2004 commenced on 28 October 2004, with the object of recognising the role of carers and providing a mechanism for their

involvement in the provision of services that affect them and their role. All Australian jurisdictions—the commonwealth, states and territories—have since implemented legislation to recognise carers. A person is defined as a carer for the purposes of the act if they provide ongoing care or assistance to a person with a disability; a person with a chronic illness, including a mental illness; or a person who, because of frailty, requires assistance with carrying out everyday tasks. The act has been in operation for 17 years now, and the length of operation coupled with our growing awareness of the important role that carers play in our community warranted a review of the act to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

The review has been managed by a working group comprising Communities staff, representatives from the ministerial carers advisory council and Carers WA. The council and Carers WA are key partners in the state government's efforts to support and recognise carers. The review makes 13 findings and 12 recommendations. The findings demonstrate an emphasis on the importance of educational initiatives to continue to improve carer recognition. Communities will work with key stakeholders, including the council and Carers WA, to design an implementation plan and develop and deliver appropriate and targeted response initiatives. The review has shown that the recognition of carers has positively progressed since the introduction of legislation in 2004 and since the statutory review of the act conducted in 2008. I thank all people who have contributed to this review and the ongoing implementation of the act, and I now table a copy of the review.

[See paper [836](#).]

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK — CONSULTATION

Statement by Minister for Environment

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Environment) [12.16 pm]: Today I would like to inform the house that on 10 November 2021, Hon Don Punch, Minister for Fisheries, and I attended the first ministerial panel event to commence community consultation for the proposed south coast marine park in Esperance. The proposed south coast marine park is part of the McGowan government's commitment to establish five million hectares of new terrestrial conservation estate and marine parks in five years under the Plan for Our Parks initiative. I am pleased to inform the house that over 60 people from the community attended the event. The Minister for Fisheries and I answered questions from the community and provided assurances that the community would be consulted widely and given every opportunity to provide input to the planning process.

A marine park on the south coast will make a significant contribution to the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative marine reserve system in Western Australia. The jewel in the crown for any marine park on the south coast would have to be the Recherche Archipelago. We all know that the south west of Western Australia is a global biodiversity hot spot. Not many of us know, however, that this rich biodiversity extends into the marine waters. The south coast is a very important calving and feeding area for whales, Australian sea lions, New Zealand fur seals and many other marine species. The Recherche Archipelago contains species found nowhere else in the world.

The McGowan government is committed to ensuring that this marine park creates new economic and social opportunities for the people of the south coast, including Aboriginal traditional owners, while ensuring that existing commercial and recreational pursuits are minimally impacted. Traditional owners on the south coast have been invited to partner with government agencies to jointly manage the marine park once created. I recently advised the successful applicants of their membership to the locally based community reference committee that will play an important role in providing advice to the planning team from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. The McGowan government is progressing the establishment of three new marine parks in the Buccaneer Archipelago in the Kimberley. These parks will be jointly managed with the traditional owners of the area and provide opportunities for the employment of Aboriginal rangers to care for sea country and protect important cultural sites and places of great significance to the local Indigenous communities. These benefits could also be realised for the Aboriginal communities on the south coast. I look forward to the planning and creation of the south coast marine park to add to the state's marine reserve system.

INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

Statement by Minister for Innovation and ICT

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Innovation and ICT) [12.19 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I stand today to advise the house about the 2021 Western Australia Innovator of the Year winners, having attended the program's award ceremony on 3 November. The program is the state's flagship innovation program. It is a very valuable initiative that provides support to innovators and entrepreneurs while promoting job creation and economic diversification in Western Australia. Since its inception by the Carpenter Labor government in 2006, Innovator of the Year has showcased innovative and entrepreneurial individuals, businesses and creative minds.

This year's awards were particularly exciting as a brief hiatus of the program took place in 2020 due to COVID-19. The major aim of the program is to acknowledge and reward exceptional innovators in Western Australia who have developed an outstanding innovative product, technology or service that is at the emerging innovation or growth phase of development. The program involves cash prizes, promotional videos and photography, business capability training, and networking, which assists successful applicants to take their innovation from its current stage of development to commercialisation.

Vision Pharma Pty Ltd, a subsidiary company of PYC Therapeutics and the Lions Eye Institute, was named the WA Innovator of the Year 2021 and was awarded \$70 000. The RNA therapeutics startup received the award for developing the world's first precision medicine to treat the blinding eye disease retinitis pigmentosa type 11. Winners were named in five other categories and shared in prizes totalling an additional \$70 000. In the Rio Tinto Growth Category, the award went to Roofus Tools Pty Ltd for its multipurpose angle square. In the Rio Tinto Emerging Category, the award went to Navier Medical for its advanced coronary artery assessment project. The Business News "Great for the State" Platinum Award went to VeinTech for its VeinWave project; the Wesfarmers Wellbeing Platinum Award went to VitalTrace Pty Ltd for its novel device for monitoring babies during childbirth; and the Woodside Oil and Gas Platinum Award went to Sapien Cyber Ltd for its building management systems cybersecurity project.

The WA Innovator of the Year is one of the new industries fund's key programs. At the awards ceremony, I announced that the NIF will receive an extra \$16.7 million over the next four years to continue supporting innovation in WA as part of the larger \$100 million investment attraction and new industries fund election commitment.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Statement by Minister for Disability Services

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Disability Services) [12.21 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the McGowan government's support for celebrations to mark this year's International Day of People with Disability. Held on 3 December each year, International Day of People with Disability is a United Nations-sanctioned day to increase public awareness of the importance of access and inclusion, promote understanding and acceptance of people with disability, and celebrate the many ways that people with disability contribute to our community. Every year, the United Nations announces a theme for International Day of People with Disability. The annual theme provides an overarching focus for how society can strive for inclusivity. The theme for 2021 is leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world. There are many ways in which this theme is being lived out in Western Australia. There are about 411 500 people with disability and approximately 230 000 carers in our state. It is a very significant cross-section of our very diverse Western Australian community. Western Australia is richer for the contributions and diversity that people with disability bring to our community. We are more connected, creative, innovative and resilient—things from which we all stand to gain.

A Western Australia for everyone: State disability strategy 2020–2030 acknowledges the most important shifts we need to make, including celebrating our diversity, recognising the achievements and everyday experiences of people with disability; increasing visibility and understanding of disability; and greater representation of people in leadership roles. Across the world, events are being held to mark International Day of People with Disability.

I am very proud to inform members the state government has made \$100 000 available in grants for organisations to host inclusive events and activities in Western Australia to celebrate International Day of People with Disability. Developmental Disability WA has been funded to provide 100 grants of up to \$1 000 for community organisations to recognise people with disability and to celebrate this important day. The 100 events and initiatives will raise awareness and inform the broader community about people with disability in Western Australia. Events that empower people to achieve their goals and emphasise the importance of access and inclusion for people living with disability will also be eligible for grant funding. Events that are being held to celebrate International Day of People with Disability this year throughout metropolitan and regional Western Australia include community luncheons, public awareness sessions, funfairs, picnics, sporting events, art exhibitions and much more. The funding for the grants aligns with the vision of the *State disability strategy 2020–2030*, to build a more inclusive Western Australia and empower people with disability to be part of all areas of society.

Being able to actively contribute to the community is central part of living a good life, by participating at school or work, being a representative on community groups, volunteering and being included in social activities. With the support of the McGowan government and the grants available to help the community celebrate this special day, International Day of People with Disability 2021 is likely to be our most memorable yet!

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY — CORONAVIRUS — MANDATORY VACCINATION

Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [12.25 pm]: I move —

That —

- (1) In order to protect the health and safety of members and parliamentary staff and to give effect to the Chief Health Officer's published health advice, this house requires members of the Legislative Assembly attending the chamber, Parliament House or the Legislative Assembly Committee Office to be fully vaccinated during a lockdown or similar restrictions.
- (2) Members must provide proof of their first and second COVID-19 vaccine doses, or proof of a valid exemption, to the Clerk by 31 January 2022.

- (3) Unless otherwise ordered, any member who has not complied with the requirements set out in paragraph (2) is determined to have failed to comply with an order of the house and therefore is suspended from attending the chamber, Parliament House and the Legislative Assembly Committee Office during a lockdown or similar restrictions.
- (4) If a member who is suspended under paragraph (3) provides proof of their first and second COVID-19 vaccine doses, or proof of a valid exemption, to the Clerk, their suspension is immediately lifted.
- (5) For the purposes of this resolution:
 - (a) “COVID-19 vaccine” means a vaccine to protect a person against SARS-CoV-2 that has been registered or provisionally registered by the Therapeutic Goods Administration;
 - (b) “proof of their first and second COVID-19 vaccine doses” means forms of evidence approved by the Chief Health Officer; and
 - (c) “proof of a valid exemption” means forms of evidence approved by the Chief Health Officer.
- (6) The Clerk:
 - (a) must ensure all information provided under this resolution remains confidential and is stored securely; and
 - (b) must destroy all information provided under this resolution at the end of the session or an earlier time determined by the house.
- (7) The house may agree to further resolutions to:
 - (a) vary or amend this resolution; or
 - (b) provide for arrangements for sittings in 2022 based on health advice.

As members would be aware, the mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations directive was issued some weeks ago and comprises three key sectors. The first category of mandated occupations listed under the directive are required to have their first dose by 1 December 2021 and to be fully vaccinated by 31 December 2021. The second category is those occupations deemed critical to the ongoing delivery of business and functioning of the community. Again, a range of occupations are listed. People in that category are required to have their first dose by 31 December 2021 and to be fully vaccinated by 31 January 2022. The third category is for a range of occupations, which, of course, includes members and staff of members of the Parliament of Western Australia, in the event of a lockdown or similar restrictions. In order to prepare for compliance with the directive, it is important for the house to ensure that members comply with the same obligations as members of the public. That is an important consideration, and the drafting of this motion has been done in consultation with the Presiding Officers—I understand a similar motion will be moved in the other place—and the Clerks of the chambers.

As members will see, the motion before us includes several paragraphs, the first of which outlines how a member will be able to ensure that they comply with that directive. Paragraph (2) highlights that members must provide proof of their first and second COVID-19 vaccine doses or proof of a valid exemption to the Clerk by 31 January 2022. This will ensure that we align and that we are ready when Parliament resumes, as is proposed, in February 2022. Paragraph (3) highlights that unless otherwise ordered, any member who has not complied with the requirements set out in paragraph (2) will be deemed to have failed to comply with the order and therefore will be suspended from attending the chamber, Parliament House and the Legislative Assembly Committee Office during a lockdown or similar restrictions. Again, I remind members that this is in the event of a lockdown or a similar restriction being ordered. Under paragraph (4), if a member is suspended under paragraph (3) and provides proof of their first and second COVID-19 vaccine doses, or proof of a valid exemption, to the Clerk, their suspension will be immediately lifted. Paragraph (5) effectively contains the definitions of “COVID-19 vaccine”; “proof of their first and second COVID-19 vaccine doses”, which relates to appropriate forms of evidence approved by the Chief Health Officer; and “proof of a valid exemption”, which also relates to forms of evidence approved by the Chief Health Officer. Paragraph (6) refers to confidentiality issues for the storing and ultimate destruction of information provided under the resolution at the end of the session or an earlier time determined by the house. Paragraph (7) allows the house to agree to further resolutions to vary or amend this resolution or, indeed, to provide for arrangements for sittings in 2022 based on health advice.

As members will be aware, in 2020, the house was subject to arrangements for how Parliament and the chambers would operate. Members will recall that we had social distancing processes in place for the seating in this chamber. There were also arrangements for question time et cetera. These are possible measures that may be introduced next year, depending on the circumstances and the directives at the time.

In framing this motion, it is important to note a couple of things about mandatory vaccinations and members of Parliament. As we are all aware, parliamentary freedom of speech is guaranteed by article 9 of the Bill of Rights

and is one facet of the broader principle that what happens within Parliament is a matter for control by Parliament alone. Essentially, that is why we are doing this. It is up to our Parliament to make a determination about the public health directive, and that is why this motion is before us. This is known as the principle of exclusive cognisance, which recognises that each house has the right to manage its own affairs without interference from outside Parliament. We are aware that it is the duty of each member of this place to attend the house when it is sitting and any committees on which the member may serve. It is true that the imposition of such a requirement on a member of this house to be vaccinated before he or she can attend this house or a committee office cuts to the core of the privileges of the house and its members, but it can be imposed upon only the Assembly itself. That, again, is the intent of the motion before the house this afternoon.

By this motion, the house is giving effect to the Chief Health Officer's published advice by recognising that members fall within the category of workers who need to be fully vaccinated to attend work in the case of a lockdown or similar restriction. Members may ask why we are doing it this week. The simple reason is that this is the last scheduled sitting week of the Assembly; therefore, in order to prepare in the event of a lockdown and to prepare for next year's sitting schedule, this will need to be in place for us to comply with a health directive.

By this motion the house will impose a sanction on members who do not provide proof of their vaccination status to the Clerk by 31 January 2022. They will be suspended from attending the chamber, Parliament House and the Legislative Assembly office in the event of a lockdown or similar restriction. However, as I said earlier, their suspension will be immediately lifted if they provide proof of their first and second COVID-19 vaccine doses. As I said, members will be aware of the directive that has been highlighted. It is important that members are aware of our obligations in regard to that directive and, indeed, our obligations in terms of the health and safety of our members and, of course, the staff of this place. I commend the motion to members.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [12.36 pm]: Thank you, Leader of the House. I rise on behalf of the opposition to say that we are supportive of the motion before the house and to note that the leader of government business noted that last year when we made certain arrangements to accommodate that state of emergency so that Parliament could continue. At the time the opposition worked collaboratively with the government on an arrangement so that we could come to Parliament, ask questions and continue to perform our duties, albeit with some restrictions. Some members of the opposition could not take their seat on that occasion, but they were extraordinary times. We understand that there is a requirement on us to work with government and to make sure that this Parliament can continue to operate.

It was noted when the transition plan and mandatory vaccination announcement was made that there would be some technical difficulties around implementing this from a parliamentary perspective. I think everyone in this house understands those difficulties. It is harder to explain, perhaps, to those who are not across the conventions of the house the inability to force members of Parliament or impede members of Parliament from taking their seat and performing their duties. Therefore, the solution that has been reached from the advice that has been provided to the house today is that we are the masters of our own domain and we can set those requirements.

I would say, given that we continually get asked for bipartisanship on these types of matters, that it might have been nice to have sighted these directives before they were read in and to have gone through them to provide us with an update. But, certainly, from our perspective, there is no question that we have a responsibility to make sure that this workplace is safe not only for MPs, but also the staff who provide support and to make sure that it continues to operate seamlessly on a day-to-day basis. We have a responsibility to be vaccinated and we consistently point to that in the broader community to say that we cannot be outside the actions that we are asking every other member of our community to take.

I will take this opportunity to say that I am completely appalled by some of the behaviour of the public that we have seen in relation to mandatory vaccinations. I have said publicly on a number of occasions that I am distressed by the level of misinformation, manipulation, anger and violence that has been displayed as people express their views. Everyone has a right to an opinion, but they do not have a right to use violence or threats to express that opinion, and they should be condemned for that. The behaviour of some people in making those views known crosses the line. By all means peacefully protest, but we live in a society and we cannot act as individuals and expect there not to be ramifications for our fellow community members. There is a requirement for us to make sure that if we are able and eligible to be vaccinated, we go out and do that so that we can protect those who are unable, ineligible or not yet eligible in the case of our children and those with medical conditions. The very strong message is: get vaccinated; do not wait. That is our way out of this and our way to protect our community. Certainly, members of Parliament and everyone who operates in this place should be included in the discussions that we are having at a broader level around protecting workplaces and essential workers.

The opposition supports these changes to our standing orders. I will just say that it would have been preferable if we had seen these changes before they were read in yesterday. I think that when we are asked to take a bipartisan approach on such serious matters like this, it would have been a professional courtesy to offer the opposition an opportunity to go through the government's reasoning rather than having to wait for the government to simply read it in. With that said, I am very happy to offer the opposition's support on this matter.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.41 pm]: I rise, as the shadow representative in the alliance, to make a couple of points and back up the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in support of this motion that has been brought before the house. We certainly support what this motion represents. It is important that we, as members of Parliament, set an example. Given the expectation on people to get vaccinated to keep our communities safe in the face of the threat of COVID-19, it is important that all members of Parliament meet that standard and are vaccinated for the safety of our community, our loved ones and the vulnerable. As the Leader of the Opposition has also stated, as an opposition, we have been very supportive of and have taken a bipartisan approach to many of the emergency and extraordinary measures that have been brought before the house with regard to COVID. It is with that same level of support that we support this motion that has been presented today. I would also like to put on the record the condemnation we feel towards those whom have used threats of violence and aggression, particularly towards our Premier and other members and ministers of Parliament. We respect the right to peaceful protest, but there is certainly no room for that level of aggression, and obviously it should be condemned. With those words, I again put on the record our support for the motion. I encourage people to get vaccinated for not only their own health, but also the health of their loved ones and the vulnerable in the community.

Question put and passed.

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr P. Papalia (Minister for Police)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [12.44 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Firearms Amendment Bill 2021 includes significant reforms that advance the McGowan government's commitment to community safety and combating serious and organised crime in Western Australia. These new laws target criminals and other dangerous people's access to, and possession of, firearms. The reforms aim to take firearms, including handguns, out of their hands and off our streets.

Outlaw motorcycle gangs and firearms are synonymous. Over decades, there have been numerous examples of the violent use of firearms by OMCGs here, interstate and overseas. Last year's assassination of the Rebels OMCG president at the Perth Motorplex in Kwinana Beach highlighted how readily and recklessly bikies turn to firearms to further their criminal activities. This year we saw further examples of this contemptible and criminal behaviour, including an incident linked to organised crime that saw a man arrested in East Perth after holding a motorist at gunpoint during a carjacking on the Graham Farmer Freeway; and a drive-by shooting in suburban Port Kennedy, which targeted the home of a Mongols OMCG member. Offenders involved in all these incidents have been taken into custody. I would like to take this opportunity to commend again the police officers in Taskforce Ravello who apprehended and charged the criminal subsequently convicted of the murder at the Perth Motorplex and the OMCG member who allegedly procured it. I also acknowledge our gang crime squad, which is tireless in its determination to see the 99 per cent prevail over the one per cent.

This bill will strengthen the Western Australia Police Force's enforcement activities targeting serious and organised crime, including by providing police with the ability to prohibit criminals, OMCG members and dangerous people from possessing a firearm; and the introduction of new unlawful manufacturing and firearms technology offences, and tougher penalties.

The bill contains four key reforms. The first reform introduces a firearms prohibition order scheme into the Firearms Act 1973. Under these amendments, police will be able to make an FPO against anyone who, if in possession of a firearm or related item, would likely result in undue danger to life or property; or if the person is not a fit and proper person to possess a firearm; or it is in the public interest for an FPO to be made against the person.

The second reform is new, and refers to illegal manufacturing, participating—termed “take part in”—in unlawful firearms activity and firearms technology offences. The amendments will keep up with technological advances by making it illegal to possess or use “firearms technology” to manufacture plastic 3D firearms. The use of this technology has been on the rise in the United States of America, and can produce firearms capable of firing live bullets and which are difficult to detect through traditional metal detectors and scanning equipment. Although there have so far been very few detections in Western Australia, the McGowan government is seeking to get ahead of this trend.

The third key reform is a suite of increased penalties for firearms-related theft offences under the Criminal Code and the offences targeting drive-by shootings or discharging a firearm at a house or other building under the Firearms Act.

The final reform is to legislate a permanent firearms amnesty.

Importantly, this bill will also complement and add to the enforcement provisions in the Criminal Law (Unlawful Consorting and Prohibited Insignia Bill) 2021 introduced by the Attorney General just a few weeks ago. These two significant reforms are the first part of a reform package being progressed by the McGowan government to leave OMCGs, other criminal organisations and serious offenders in no doubt that Western Australia intends to be the most hostile jurisdiction for them to pursue their criminal activities.

I will now turn to the bill in more detail. The Firearms Amendment Bill 2021 will amend the Firearms Act 1973 and make a number of consequential amendments to other acts to reduce criminals' and other dangerous people's access to firearms within Western Australia.

Clause 6 of the bill prescribes some new definitions, including those germane to the new firearms prohibition order scheme and new manufacturing and firearms technology offences, and modernises some existing definitions including the definitions of "ammunition" and "firearm". Other new definitions include "major firearm part" and "prohibited firearm accessory" that have been introduced to better capture and regulate parts of firearms that are just as dangerous as complete firearms. Many of these new and amended definitions, and other provisions in the bill, draw on the recommendations in the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's *Review of the Firearms Act 1973 (WA)* published in October 2016.

Central to the bill is the introduction of a firearms prohibition order scheme, under clause 53 of the bill, which will insert new part 8 into the Firearms Act, to provide police with new powers to ban individuals from possessing firearms, including handguns.

The FPO scheme will give the Commissioner of Police or his delegate the power to make an FPO against a person who should not be in possession of a firearm. Although members of OMCGs are clearly target candidates for FPOs, terrorist suspects and family violence offenders are among others who will also fall within their remit. The bill prescribes that a decision to make an FPO can be delegated to a police officer of the rank of commander or above. An FPO can be made on a person regardless of whether they have, or have ever had, a firearm-related licence or approval, and regardless of whether they are in a category of person who would be usually exempt from licensing requirements, such as a juvenile. An FPO must be served in person and remains in place for 10 years from the date of service.

Once served with an FPO, the person will become a "prohibited person" subject to a number of conditions to prevent them from having access to firearms or related items, including: all licences, permits, approvals and authorisations issued to the prohibited person under the Firearms Act are revoked; the prohibited person must surrender all firearms, parts and ammunition; the prohibited person is prohibited from acquiring, possessing or using firearms, major firearm parts, prohibited firearm accessories and ammunition; and the prohibited person is prohibited from certain conduct such as entering or residing at certain places where firearms are present, and associating with persons in possession of a firearm.

Where an FPO is in place, police will have a number of enforcement powers to determine whether the prohibited person has committed an offence in relation to their FPO, including: to stop and search the prohibited person and a person who is in their company; to enter and search any place occupied by, or under the control of, the prohibited person, including any vehicle at the place; and to stop, detain and search any vehicle being occupied by the prohibited person, regardless of where the vehicle is located.

Several offences will be introduced to support the enforcement of the FPO scheme. These offences will apply to prohibited persons who breach their FPO. Depending on the nature of the offence, a person in breach will face maximum terms of imprisonment of one to 14 years and fines between \$4 000 and \$75 000. Offences that will apply to prohibited persons include: failure to surrender firearm-related licences or permits; failure to surrender firearms and related items; acquiring a firearm or related item; entering, remaining or residing at places set aside predominantly for activities involving firearms—that is, a shooting range, firearm manufacturer, paintball club; entering or remaining at a residence where a firearm or related item is stored; residing at a residence where a firearm or related item is stored; and being in company with a person who is in possession of a firearm. For offences relating to firearm possession/acquisition, the offence will be considered more serious if the firearm is a handgun, prohibited firearm or a major firearm part relating to these items. For this reason, offences involving these items will attract a higher penalty.

As previously mentioned, the Firearms Act provides that a licence or permit cannot be issued to a person under the age of 18 years. Given the purpose of an FPO, such orders will be able to be made against persons under the age of 18 years. This reflects FPO schemes in other Australian states and territories. In Western Australia, police anticipate that an FPO will be rarely made against a young teenager, and more commonly made against a person under 18 years when there is a clear need—for example, when the juvenile is associating with persons who are involved in illegal activities involving firearms. This measure aims to prevent serious and organised crime groups from engaging juveniles to carry out illegal activities in place of adults who have been issued with an FPO. Further, in order to give effect to corresponding laws, it is necessary that FPOs issued in Western Australia can also apply to juveniles in Western Australia. Western Australia's new FPO scheme will be similar to schemes in other Australian jurisdictions. As five Australian jurisdictions have legislated corresponding firearms prohibition order schemes, the bill will also introduce provisions to enable FPOs issued in other states to be enforced in WA. Once enacted, WA will seek similar corresponding recognition of our scheme.

Although the new FPO scheme is necessarily strong, appropriate safeguards are included in the bill. Clause 35 of the bill will provide that the decision of the Commissioner of Police, or their delegate who must be of the rank of commander or above, to make an FPO will be subject to review by the State Administrative Tribunal. An FPO decision as affirmed or varied by the SAT, or one that is substituted, may be appealed to the Supreme Court. Importantly, the bill will also provide that, in order to protect sensitive police information, the Commissioner of Police will be provided the opportunity to withdraw any confidential information from proceedings.

I turn now to the second key reform in this bill—the illegal manufacturing and firearms technology offences. Clause 43 of the bill inserts new offences so that a person who unlawfully manufactures, repairs or deals—“firearms activity”—a firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition, commits a crime. It is currently an offence under the Firearms Act for a person to repair or manufacture a firearm or handgun. However, the new offences will provide stricter penalties for illegal manufacturing and repair, and expand the offence to dealing in firearms.

The bill will also insert a new offence for a person who participates, or “takes part”, in the unlawful firearms activity. A person will be deemed to have participated in any of these offences if the person takes, or participates in, a step, or causes a step to be taken in the firearms activity; provides or arranges finance for a step in the firearms activity; provides the place in which a step in the firearms activity is taken, or allows a step in the firearms activity to be taken at a place of which the person is an owner, lessee or occupier, or of which the person has care, control or management; or is in possession of, provides or supplies a firearms precursor for a step in the manufacture or repair of a firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition.

The new firearms activity offences will not be contingent on whether the firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition is actually manufactured into a functioning firearm. These offences will ensure that any person who has contributed to the production of an illegal firearm will be guilty of a crime, and reflect outcomes supported nationally by the former Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management to address the illegal manufacture of firearms. These offences are intended to capture anyone involved in the process of manufacturing firearms, from the people involved in financing to providing premises, equipment and materials.

The penalty for these offences will be 14 years’ imprisonment. This is in line with the penalty provisions for the illegal manufacturing offences in New South Wales, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria. The general defences in the Criminal Code will apply to these offences.

The bill will also insert new offences relating to the unauthorised possession, unauthorised creation or development, and unauthorised dissemination of firearms technology. These offences are aimed at preventing the increasing development of firearms through technologies such as 3D printing.

“Firearms technology” is defined in the bill to include a thing that is programmed, configured or otherwise enabled to carry out a step in the manufacture or repair of a firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition, or to change an object into a component of one of those items. A “thing” is a reference to any machinery, equipment, object or device such as a 3D printer, moulding device, milling device, remote-controlled device such as a drone, electronic firing mechanism, railgun technology or any other prescribed thing; any type of digital or electronic reproduction of a technical drawing of the design of a firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition, including hard copies; or a plan, drawing, instruction, template or computer program, in digital or electronic form, for the manufacture or repair of a firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition, including hard copies. The penalty for these offences will be imprisonment for 10 years, with the summary conviction penalty being imprisonment for three years. There will be a number of exceptions to these offences, including if the conduct engaged in by the person is necessary in conducting scientific, medical, educational, military or law enforcement research that has been approved in writing by the Commissioner of Police. These offences are similar to those enacted in New South Wales.

In order to investigate these technology-based offences, clause 47 of the bill will provide police with the power to access electronic devices. If police suspect on reasonable grounds that a person is in possession of firearms technology—for example, electronic plans stored on a computer—police may direct that person to provide a password, device or other information to enable access to the firearms technology. The penalty for failing to comply with this direction without a lawful excuse will be 10 years’ imprisonment, and the summary conviction penalty will be three years’ imprisonment.

The third key reform advanced by this bill is to increase penalties in the Criminal Code and Firearms Act for the offences of stealing a firearm, being in possession of a stolen or unlawfully obtained firearm, and discharging a firearm in danger or in a manner to cause fear to the public or an individual. The former amendments respond to a number of incidents involving the theft of firearms, including from firearm storage facilities. Under section 378 of the Criminal Code, a person convicted of stealing a firearm is currently liable only for a general stealing penalty of seven years’ imprisonment. Clause 68 will insert into section 378(5) a special case of stealing a firearm, which will attract a higher penalty of 14 years’ imprisonment. Similarly, a further amendment at clause 69 of the bill will insert into section 417A a special case of being in possession of a stolen or unlawfully obtained firearm, which will attract an increased penalty of 10 years’ imprisonment. Currently under section 417, persons in possession of stolen or unlawfully obtained firearms are liable only for the general penalty of seven years’ imprisonment. The

increase of these penalties is intended to deter individuals from being in possession of unlicensed firearms and from obtaining such firearms unlawfully. In terms of the offence in section 23(9a) of the Firearms Act, clause 42 proposes that the maximum penalty more than double to seven years' imprisonment, with the fine for a summary conviction to increase threefold.

Clause 60 provides for the fourth key reform by inserting a permanent amnesty into the Firearms Act. This provision is similar to the amnesty provisions in the Weapons Act 1999, which prescribe that a person does not currently commit an offence for carrying or possessing a prohibited weapon if the person is doing so only to deliver it into the custody of a member of the WA Police Force. As there is no similar provision for firearms under the Firearms Act, the bill will insert an amnesty provision for firearms so that members of the community may hand in their unlicensed firearms, major firearm parts, prohibited firearms accessories, sound suppressor or ammunition without fear of prosecution for possession. During the 2017 national firearms amnesty, approximately 57 000 unlicensed firearms were surrendered across the country, with 1 242 firearms surrendered in Western Australia. Police ministers across Australia have agreed to a permanent amnesty to provide people with an ongoing opportunity to hand in firearms and other firearm-related items. As part of this general amnesty, over 560 firearms, including more than 50 handguns and over 22 000 rounds of ammunition were handed into the WA Police Force between 1 July and 1 November 2021.

Finally, it is also worthy of note that, under clause 62, the bill will require the new provisions to be reviewed and a report tabled in Parliament five years after they come into force.

This bill sets out strong, targeted firearms reforms to address the fact that illegal and licensed firearms in the wrong hands can have deadly and dangerous consequences. These amendments are aimed squarely at those who are not fit to possess a firearm and who threaten our community by illegally manufacturing, stealing or discharging firearms. As the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission has stated, illicit firearms are a desirable commodity and enabler of criminal activity. This bill will give police another strong and effective tool to thwart serious and organised crime and their violent use of firearms in WA. The bill is the latest measure in a suite of reforms that will leave outlaw motorcycle gangs and other criminals in no doubt that WA is not the place for them to peddle their drugs, intimidation and violence. The McGowan government is resolute in its commitment to sending that message loud and clear.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms L. Mettam**.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER AMENDMENT (REPORTABLE CONDUCT) BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Ms S.F. McGurk (Minister for Child Protection)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [1.06 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Bill 2021 into the house today. The introduction of the bill is a critical milestone in delivering on the McGowan government's commitments to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and will help keep children safe. The royal commission found that organisations need to improve their responses to allegations of child sexual abuse and recommended that state and territory governments set up schemes that oblige heads of organisations to notify an independent body of reportable conduct by their employees, volunteers and contractors.

The development of the bill has been informed by extensive consultation with government and non-government stakeholders. This included the tabling of a green bill in Parliament in November 2020 after which stakeholders and the public were invited to provide submissions until the end of January 2021. The bill incorporates amendments to the green bill arising from the public consultation process, with feedback showing strong support for the establishment of a reportable conduct scheme undertaken by the Ombudsman of Western Australia.

The bill seeks to establish a reportable conduct scheme, as recommended by the royal commission, which will compel heads of organisations to notify the Ombudsman of reportable allegations or reportable convictions involving the organisation's employees, volunteers and contractors. The Ombudsman can then review investigation findings or undertake investigations of their own motion. The reportable conduct scheme will also allow the Ombudsman to provide scrutiny of the policies and procedures put in place by organisations to prevent child abuse and for handling and responding to reportable allegations or convictions. Significantly, the bill will provide that the Ombudsman, and any other person performing functions under the scheme, must regard the best interests of children as the paramount consideration. The types of conduct that will be required to be notified to the Ombudsman will include a sexual offence or sexual misconduct against, with, or in the presence of a child; physical assault committed against, with, or in the presence of a child; significant neglect of a child; any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; and other prescribed offences.

An estimated 4 000 government and non-government organisations in Western Australia will be covered by the reportable conduct scheme, including accommodation and residential services; religious institutions; childcare services; child protection and out-of-home care services; disability services; education services; health services; and justice and detention services. The scheme will not apply to organisations that do not exercise care, supervision or authority over children.

The scheme will be phased in, with childcare services, child protection and out-of-home care services, education, health, justice and detention services covered in the first year, and the remaining services after 12 months of operation of the scheme. The type of conduct will also be phased in, with sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical assault and other prescribed offences covered by the reportable conduct scheme in the first year and the remaining types of conduct after 12 months of operation of the scheme. The phased commencement of the scheme over two years will assist organisations to prepare for the new requirements.

The scheme will require affected heads of organisations to have certain systems in place. That will include systems for preventing, notifying and dealing with any allegations or convictions of child abuse involving an employee; notifying the Ombudsman about any allegations or convictions of child abuse involving an employee; investigating any allegations or convictions of child abuse involving an employee and providing a report to the Ombudsman at the end of the investigation on any findings made and actions taken; and reporting to other bodies, such as the WA Police Force, the Department of Communities or professional bodies as required.

The Ombudsman will work with organisations covered by the scheme to build on existing procedures and reporting requirements. The Ombudsman will assist organisations to identify, notify and investigate reportable conduct by their employees; provide oversight of the organisation's investigation of reportable conduct by an employee and the action taken if a finding of reportable conduct is made; and, if it is in the public interest to do so, undertake its own investigation and make recommendations to the organisation. The Ombudsman will also monitor the organisations' systems for preventing, notifying and dealing with reportable conduct and report to Parliament on the scheme.

Importantly, the reportable conduct scheme will be complementary to, and not replace, the obligations for the head of the organisation to notify the WA Police Force and the Department of Communities of child abuse. The bill provides for the Ombudsman to consult and share information with police and key institutions to better protect children from abuse and harm. The green bill included a provision that a finding of reportable conduct will trigger an assessment or reassessment under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004. This is still the intention, but the government proposes to deal with it as part of the forthcoming reforms to the working with children act.

The introduction of the reportable conduct scheme will also complement the recently passed Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021, which implements a recommendation of the royal commission to require ministers of religion to report child sexual abuse, including when information is gained during confession. Safety of children is at the heart of the mandatory reporting reforms, which will better protect children by increasing the number of people who are legally required to report child sexual abuse.

As well as ministers of religion, the changes will extend mandatory reporting laws to early childhood workers, out-of-home care workers, registered psychologists, school counsellors, youth justice workers, Department of Communities' officers, and assessors appointed to visit residential care services and secure care. The establishment of the reportable conduct scheme will implement a key recommendation of the royal commission. It will establish a scheme in Western Australia that will enhance the existing child safety framework by providing oversight of organisations in the best interests of children.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms L. Mettam**.

POLICE AMENDMENT (COMPENSATION SCHEME) BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 21 October.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [1.14 pm]: I rise in support of the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021. I represent the shadow Minister for Police, Hon Peter Collier, in the Legislative Council. We support the bill that has been put forward. I appreciate the work and the fight that the WA Police Union has undertaken over several years to see such a bill implemented, which will compensate police officers who are medically retired due to work-related injury or illness. Importantly, the bill will also ensure that the existing areas of compensation and entitlements post-service are also maintained.

From the outset, I put on the record what an outstanding job our Western Australia Police Force has undertaken and continues to undertake, in particular over the last 21 months in response to COVID. WA police have certainly gone beyond what is normally required of our police officers, and the community has much to thank them for in the role that they undertake not only in the response to COVID, but also out there in our community. Police officers go towards dangers and threats that many of us rightfully flee from.

The moment we heard the news that Cleo Smith was rescued will forever be ingrained in our memories. At the time, I was at a mine site with a couple of colleagues from this place. What an extraordinary moment in WA's history. It was a moment that we shared not only across the nation, but also globally. I put on record our appreciation for the tenacity, hard work and all the efforts that went into that rescue. Obviously, not all investigations into missing children have such an outcome, and we understand that by the very nature of the work of the WA police, it often involves some very difficult scenes to have to deal with.

As a regional member, I am acutely aware of the role that WA police play in attending traffic crashes. When I last checked, there have been some 147 fatalities on our roads, 60 per cent of which happened in regional WA in this year alone. With those events, WA police are often very quickly on the scene not only responding to the urgent danger and the tragic circumstances, but also providing much comfort to the families and the persons surrounding such traumatic events.

We note that the bill relates to not only WA Police Force and our officers, but also Aboriginal police liaison officers. We appreciate the work that they do and the fact that they are exposed to violence and horrific scenes, sometimes seeing fellow citizens at their very worst. They are exposed to some of this violence and are put in harm's way in the line of duty to protect our community. Western Australia Police Force has a role in enforcement, but, as I have witnessed firsthand, along with many others, in being first responders they provide enormous comfort and support for individuals in times of extraordinary stress and tragedy. At a local level, I have seen the great encouragement and support they provide our youth and the vulnerable, some of whom do not have homes to go to. These young children deserve that level of support. We have also witnessed in the local community the extraordinary work that WA police do in being role models and providing guidance. Importantly, they also ensure that law and order is upheld and that individuals can be directed to the support they need.

I note that there is a lot of support for the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021. A number of police officers have been very outspoken in giving this bill the support it deserves after finally coming before this house. I refer to a *Mandurah Mail* article of 23 May 2019 about former police officer James Yates. It states —

James Yates, who spent four of his 10 years working as an officer in Mandurah, saw no other option but to retire after developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from years of violence, including being stabbed with a syringe, being bitten and bashed on multiple occasions.

The Dudley Park resident welcomed new legislation introduced to state parliament on May 8, allowing officers to retire with dignity, who can no longer serve due to injury or illness.

Mr Yates is quoted as saying how he was —

“Tossed out of a job with no benefits, no aftercare, no disability. It needs to change.”

I certainly commend the Minister for Police and the government for ensuring that this change has happened.

I quote another article from ABC South West from 6 January 2020 —

The night before Christmas Eve almost 20 years ago, after four years in the West Australian Police Force, Mark Glenn Harmony was told he was no longer a police officer.

...

Mr Harmony remembered one day vividly:

“The first four callouts, three were sudden deaths—suicides—so before lunchtime I'd already had to attend three suicides,” he said.

“Basically you're taught from day one not to show any weakness, not to show these incidents have impacted you or have an effect on you.”

I think I join others in this place in saying that there is certainly no weakness in what these officers have had to face, and we certainly commend our officers for the amazing and extraordinary job they do. At a local level, I have also spoken to many who, in the absence of this legislation, have been able to receive ex gratia payments. They have had to go through challenging processes to ensure they receive the compensation they deserve. One officer in particular has been exposed to injury and PTSD and has gone through a great deal of suffering. This bill will provide a great deal of assurance for local police, as I have discussed in my local electorate as well. It allows police officers to retire with the dignity they deserve in acknowledgement of this service and the personal toll of their commitment to the community.

The bill provides for a new police compensation scheme that provides compensation to police officers and Aboriginal police liaison officers who are medically retired due to work-related injury. It is understood that police officers are not currently included in the state compensation scheme, given they are not seen as employees in the eyes of the state and are generally not covered by the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act. The bill will make changes to the Police Act and the Industrial Relations Act. There are a number of aspects to that that the minister has outlined. There are a number of questions I would like to ask in consideration in detail. I hope we can go through that when time permits after others have spoken.

A dedicated compensation scheme is something that the Western Australian Police Union of Workers has been fighting for for some time. The bill acknowledges the contributions of our officers and the extraordinary job they do. It allows for a dignified departure for our dedicated men and women who have served us, ensuring that the cost they have borne as a result of their service, whether physical or psychological, is acknowledged and compensated for by the state. Importantly, as I have stated, it does so without removing existing entitlements, and it acknowledges loss of income and the importance of vocational rehabilitation. I will go through that in consideration in detail. I will leave my comments there. I commend the bill to the house.

MS K.E. GIDDENS (Bateman) [1.26 pm]: I am also very pleased to rise to make a very brief contribution to debate on this important Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021. I have a large number of colleagues who are very keen to make their contributions, and I pre-emptively acknowledge them. I would particularly like to pre-emptively acknowledge the contribution that will shortly follow from the member for Burns Beach. As a former police officer, he is a fierce advocate in this house for the needs of WA police as well as in his work, particularly on providing support for people with post-traumatic stress disorder. I would like to acknowledge that.

I will not go into the technical details of this bill as it will be covered in consideration in detail. I want to cover this bill from a slightly different perspective—that of my own experience as a partner of a serving police officer and what this bill will mean for not only serving officers and former officers, but also their dependants and family members. It is almost exactly 10 years ago that my husband graduated from the WA Police Academy in Joondalup. That represented a lifelong ambition for him to serve his community and it was one he was very proud to achieve. He absolutely loved the job. He served as a general duties officer in Gosnells, Wyndham and the Kimberley. He went on to be a youth crime intervention officer in Kalgoorlie, and, later, when we briefly relocated to Tasmania to support my sister through some health issues, he joined Tasmania Police and served there. I remember very clearly the stories he would tell coming home when he started at Gosnells. I would ask him the usual question, “How was your shift, honey?”, and there were all sorts of interesting answers. One day he came home and showed me a photo of a smashed fence. I asked him how it happened and he said he had run through it. I said, “No, you didn’t”, and he said he did run through it. I asked him why he would do that and he said he realised it was easier for him to go through it than over it.

Mr M.J. Folkard: I can understand that!

Ms K.E. GIDDENS: He would tell stories about running over rooftops, tasing offenders, having different types of weapons pulled on him and having cars driven at him from the wrong side of the road. Yet, strangely, despite the risk that was evident in the stories he would tell me, when people asked him whether I was worried about my husband, I would truthfully answer no. The reason for that answer was that I had—as I realise now—a false belief that his training, his instinct and his judgement could protect him from physical harm. I put my faith in him and I also strongly believed in the important job that he was doing. I was aware of the psychological harm. I was alert to that because it would manifest in our house in different ways. He would come home and perhaps be short-tempered and grumpy, and speak in a tone of voice that indicated to me that it was time to suggest that he go for a surf! He was very responsive to that support at home and personally managed that kind of pressure very well. But the physical risk was something that I had diminished. One day while I was at work, I received a text message from my husband—it just contained a photo. It was a photo of my husband in the back of an ambulance sucking on the magic green whistle. My first reaction to that photo was not to wonder what had happened; it was anger. It was not anger at what I will shortly share is the story, but it was anger at him. I was angry because my belief in his ability to stay safe had been shattered in that moment. I realise now that that was my coping mechanism as a family member. It was the story I told myself to protect myself from the risks that he engaged in on a daily basis.

My husband was operating undercover on a special secondment, and had turned up to a job. Unrelated to that job, he saw a prolific family and domestic violence offender who had been wanted for a long time; he was a pretty nasty character. When this character spotted persons whom he instantly recognised as police—despite the fact they were undercover—he put the car he was driving in reverse in an attempt to escape. There were two young children in the back of the vehicle and a woman was standing in the passenger doorway with the door open. When this vehicle was put in reverse, the woman was dragged under the door of the vehicle. The police officers, including my husband, jumped out and tried to stop this happening. When the offender stopped the vehicle momentarily, my husband made a decision to jump into the open passenger door in an attempt to stop this offender from continuing with these two young children in the back of the vehicle. The offender continued to drive. As the car accelerated at speed and my husband was half in and half out, he had to make the split-second decision whether to try to remain in the vehicle or eject himself from it. He made the decision to eject himself from the vehicle and, in doing so, obviously hit the kerb and bounced a couple of times. In that process, he smashed his wrist and broke his leg. He obviously had concussion and bruising but was very lucky, given the circumstances, not to sustain a serious head injury.

They were the circumstances of my husband’s incident. As it turned out, that was his very last day on the job. He did not know at the time he was taken away by ambulance that he would never put on a uniform again. The nature of the injury itself did not stop him from continuing in the police force, but it was certainly devastating for our family, and me as a partner, to have our confidence shattered.

We returned to WA. My husband's injury was part of the conversation about the risk that police officers face when they are in the job. His accident occurred while he was serving Tasmania Police. Had it occurred when he was a serving WA police officer, he would not have been eligible for workers' compensation. I am really proud that this bill will address inequity; that is, that some police officers in this country receive workers' compensation but Western Australian police officers do not. While I have this moment, I would like to acknowledge my husband's service because he did not have the opportunity, leaving as he did in the back of the ambulance, to have a standard farewell. I would like to acknowledge his service and say on record how proud I am of the work he did and his contribution to the community both in Western Australia and Tasmania.

In the same vein, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of all serving and former police officers. We know that their work is tough and that they face risks every day. I would like to thank them for the very, very important task that they do and the risks that they take on behalf of our community. I would also like to acknowledge the Minister for Police for bringing this bill to house and the former Minister for Police for her contribution to this bill as well. I want to put on the record how important this legislation will be for not only police officers, but also their family and dependants and the people who rely on them. I commend the bill to the house.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale) [1.35 pm]: I am delighted to speak on the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021; its gestation has been long and tortuous. The introduction of this bill has been described as "landmark" and "historic", and for that reason I am loath to delay its passage for much longer than necessary.

I will rephrase the oft cited quote that a society can be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable to: a society can be judged by how it treats its police officers maimed and traumatised in the course of their duty. If that is the measure, until recently we have found ourselves sorely wanting. Officers injured in the course of duty have, according to one of their number, been thrown on the scrapheap. It is only through the suite of measures introduced since 2017 by the McGowan government that we can now say the hazards and suffering directly attributed to Western Australian police officers' public service are more appropriately acknowledged and addressed.

As we heard in the second reading speech, there have been a suite of legislative measures since 2017 that have significantly ameliorated the injustice meted out to our police officers injured in the course of their duty. The police redress scheme provided funding for police officers who in the past were medically retired due to work-related injury. The second and related measure concerned the unedifying situation whereby those officers who were forced to retire due to injury or illness were removed under section 8 of the Police Act 1892. This section deals with a loss of confidence and was also used when the Commissioner of Police believed an officer's integrity was in question. It was unfair that injured officers were treated in the same class as those found guilty of misconduct or corruption. Now, medically retired officers are treated as a separate class, without stigma, and are given a significant honourable discharge.

For these first two reforms, I congratulate not only the WA Police Union for its persistent and tireless advocacy on behalf its members, but also members of the Medically Retired Western Australian Police Officers Association, in particular Dave Nelson, David Bentley and David Matthews, who were extremely effective at making us, as legislators, and the general public aware of the huge and unacceptable burden they and their families had to bear for years following their medical retirement. More about them later in the context of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The bill we are dealing with today puts police on the same footing as workers covered under the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act when a work-related injury or illness occurs. They will now be entitled to receive a lump sum on retirement.

I also recognise the hard work of the Minister for Police, Hon Paul Papalia, and the former minister Michelle Roberts and their teams who have laboured assiduously with the full support of the Premier to make these laws a reality.

Two past well-publicised cases readily come to mind of officers who had to fight tooth and nail for ex gratia payments that demonstrate how flawed and unfair the current system is. The first is the case of Senior Constable Matt Butcher. In February 2008, he was felled by a flying headbutt while trying to break up a drunken brawl at a tavern in Joondalup, ironically called the Old Bailey Tavern. As a result, Senior Constable Butcher had permanent brain damage and partial paralysis. In March 2009, the participants in the brawl were found not guilty after a six-week trial.

In July 2009, Senior Constable Butcher returned to work as an analyst at Warwick Police Station, no longer able to perform the duties of a frontline officer. In September 2010, the WA Police Union lodged a claim on behalf of Senior Constable Butcher for an ex gratia payment of almost \$5 million. Fast-forward to January 2011 and the state government awarded Senior Constable Butcher an ex gratia payment of \$3.3 million. In February 2011, the participants in the brawl, who were acquitted, commenced a civil action against Senior Constable Butcher for wrongful battery. In February 2015, the action was finally dismissed by consent. Although this was a relief to Senior Constable Butcher, he still has the legacy of the injuries from that fateful night: he still walks with a stick, his left arm does not work, he has a loss of vision and peripheral vision, and he cannot drive a car. Finally, in 2017, Senior Constable Butcher received a medal for bravery. Constable Butcher is quoted as saying that he does not dwell on his injuries but concedes that there are things he will never do, including kicking a football with his children. Not only was Senior Constable Butcher's health taken from him, but also he had to deal with the aftermath, which took almost a decade of his life. I am happy to say that he now works in a non-police role at police communications.

The second case that I want to refer to started in August 2007, when Constable Ryan Marron graduated from the WA Police Academy. In April 2011, he contracted Murray Valley encephalitis while relieving at the Balgo multifunction police facility. The disease left him paralysed and unable to talk, and from that point he required 24/7 care. A year later, Ryan travelled to the world-renowned Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, where he had access to the latest rehabilitation techniques and state-of-the-art technology in brain injury expert care. He received six months of intense treatment, which contributed significantly to improving his wellbeing. From recollection, the police paid for part of that journey and there was also some crowdfunding. In July 2014, three years later, lawyers acting on behalf of Ryan lodged a claim for an ex gratia payment, requesting \$12 million for his future needs, including 24/7 care. In September of the same year, the state government requested additional information to support the application, and in August 2015, almost a year later, Ryan's lawyers provided additional information.

In November 2015, during the WA Police Union annual conference, the then president of the police union put the state government on notice about Ryan's ex gratia payment. He told the conference that the state government was dragging its heels and that the case needed resolving as a priority. In December 2015, the state government offered Ryan Marron an ex gratia payment of \$5.5 million, but that included the \$1.3 million cost of trustee fees, which of course had to be deducted from the offer. In February 2016, Ryan's lawyers invited the state government to meet the cost of the trustee fees so that the entire \$5.5 million could be invested in his future care needs. In March 2016, the state government advised that there would be no further negotiation and declined the offer to pay the trustee fees. In March 2016, Ryan's father and the then president of the WA Police Union conducted a media conference and described the government's offer as mean-spirited. Finally, in November 2016, the state government agreed to top up the compensation to \$6 million in light of Ryan's severe disabilities and agreed not to include the trustee fees within the compensation. In May 2017, a decade after Ryan first joined Western Australia Police Force, Constable Marron was officially retired from the force. *The West Australian* describes that occasion —

With his family again proudly watching on as the latest batch of young graduates was paraded, Mr Marron was given his own ceremonial march-off followed by a standing ovation from the crowd that included several senior-ranking police.

...

He was ... presented with the first Police Star, a newly minted medal to recognise officers who are injured in the line of duty and cannot continue.

...

Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan said he was sad to farewell an active and well-respected officer but that it was not practical for him to continue.

He also reiterated his previously-stated desire to see an injury compensation scheme set-up.

Then Commissioner of Police Karl O'Callaghan is quoted as saying —

“I've always been an advocate of workers' compensation and I am now working with the current government —

Which, at that stage, was the McGowan government —

on what that might look like,” he said.

There are other cases in which the quantum of ex gratia amounts have not been as large and in which the claimants believed that they had received inadequate payment and asserted that the calculation of an appropriate amount lacked transparency. I highlight these two cases because they illustrate the struggle and imposition of this added burden on the sick and injured while fighting to recover of having to go cap in hand to government for fair compensation and to wait literally years for the request to be acceded to.

In the remaining time that I have left, I want to quickly canvass issues around post-traumatic stress disorder and the toll it takes on many police officers, many of them still serving officers. One of the most exceptional features of the recent recovery of Cleo Smith by WA police detectives is that it is rare that police get to experience a happy outcome such as that. Their hard work and persistence was rewarded. Cleo, outwardly, looked unfazed and her parents were over the moon. The community was at one in its praise of police officers. It was a great few days at the office. However, what confronts police in their day-to-day work is usually grim, confronting and soul destroying and their faith in human nature is eroded to the core, yet police must soldier on in what can be the most horrifying and upsetting of circumstances.

In September 2012, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee tabled a report entitled *The toll of trauma on Western Australian emergency staff and volunteers*. I am very proud to have participated in that inquiry and I consider, even after the passing of time, the report to still be of great relevance. In that inquiry, we sought evidence of first responders, police, ambulance officers and firefighters. As well, we spoke to psychologists both here and overseas and examined the aftermath of 9/11, hurricane Katrina and the Christchurch earthquake, and the impact that involvement in such critical incidents has on first responders.

In that inquiry we heard from David Matthews, David Bentley and David Nelson, all medically retired police officers. Mr Matthews told the committee that in 1989 —

I shot and killed a man in the line of duty. It took some six years for that nervous breakdown to happen, but I received absolutely not one shred of counselling from the police department.

He went on —

I had no idea that killing someone would have the effect it has had on me. I lasted another six years doing operational police work. I wore a firearm every day and I had to draw my firearm after that numerous times. I do not think it is in human nature to actually have to kill someone. I had no choice; he was holding a female hostage. He actually had two female hostages, one escaped and called the police. It was only when he went to plunge the knife into his victim that I fired one shot and killed him. It is just I feel like I was a judge, jury and executioner and all. That has worn on my shoulders and that resulted in my nervous breakdown.

He continued —

I just soldiered on. I could not let that incident get in the way of my police work because I would not have been able to wear a gun if that was the case.

He also said —

That happened in '89, but in 1994 I was involved in the police central siege where a gunman took some police hostages and I was one of the first responders to that. It was 11 months after that incident; and that person was shot and killed by members of TRG. I think it got too close to home again and 11 months later I had my nervous breakdown and had to be retired. It was a couple of instances that I saw people killed at the hands of police officers, by myself, and it is not a good thing.

Mr Bentley told the committee —

Police officers are not quite like other people. They are quite a unique brand of people. What we do, and what we do on a daily basis, is actually go into situations where normal people would turn away and run. We are compelled because of duty, because of our desire to actually help and to prevent injury or death to others ... We go to traumatic incidents. In my case it was an accumulation of attending fatalities and other types of crashes. I joined the job in 1973 as a police cadet. Within four weeks of joining I was attending my first post-mortem involving a lady who died of cancer. Within a week of that, I then went on to carry a deceased child from the mother's arms while a police officer drove to the mortuary for a post-mortem to be conducted, because the child had died of sudden infant death syndrome ... That was the first one but it certainly was not the last time I did that. It then became a number of suicides—bodies that had been left in the open ... I signed up when I went through fully expecting to be involved in brawls, fisticuffs and injuries in cars. I did not have any problems with that. What I did not sign up for, and what I was not told, was the cumulative effect psychologically on a person attending these incidents. I did not expect it to affect my family. I did not expect it to affect people that I knew, but it does.

David Nelson also gave evidence at the inquiry, but in December 2016 he was interviewed for PerthNow by Regina Titelius. The article, titled “Mental toll of police legacy: medically-retired cops left out”, states —

Dragging a lifeless boy's body from a water-filled mine shaft. Saving a baby held at knife-point, only to suffer broken ribs in a brutal attack by the child's family.

These are just two of the moments that haunt David Nelson from his 17-year career as a police officer in WA. But there's also the times the Bull Creek father can't remember, particularly the horrific road deaths. Doctors believe his mind has blocked them out.

Medically retired since 1993, the 56-year-old says his children—a 15-year-old daughter and 22-year-old son—have “never seen me a day in their life where I've been well”.

Mr Nelson this week shared his battle with post-traumatic stress disorder as the WA Police Union continued its fight for medically retired officers to receive retrospective compensation.

A workers' compensation scheme announced by Police Minister Liza Harvey last month does not provide ... for the estimated 500 medically retired officers in WA.

Ms Harvey has indicated this would be a separate body of work.

“How many more years do you think people can hold on for? There's people committing suicide, there's families breaking up, there's children growing up without both parents, people losing their homes,” Mr Nelson said.

He said the years of abuse and neglect of police officers dealing with mental trauma needed to be addressed through an independent inquiry ...

Mr Nelson's PTSD went undiagnosed for years despite dozens of trips to the police doctor, time at the former Heathcote Mental Hospital and repeated stints of sick leave.

Despite his psychological struggles, Mr Nelson said he was told by his superiors to “get over it” and was pushed back on to the frontline.

After an ex-gratia application was rejected in 2009, Mr Nelson helped establish the Medically Retired WA Police Officers Association.

Despite the heartache, Mr Nelson counts himself as “fortunate” his wife Stephanie remained by his side.

“Every day for two decades I have worried I would come home to find my husband had killed himself to relieve his own sufferings,” Mrs Nelson said.

On that sober note, I commend the bill to the house.

MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach) [1.54 pm]: I rise to speak to the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021. Before I begin, I would like to publicly state that the Western Australia Police Force is one of the finest police forces in Australia. I have not come to this conclusion recently. Most concluded that after the fantastic investigation involving young Cleo Smith, who was abducted from the Blowholes near Carnarvon. Nor have I come to this conclusion after the diligent investigation that occurred in the apprehension of the soldier of fortune, cum-sniper, cum-contract killer who murdered Nick Martin and the apprehension of the person who ordered that assassination.

I have known for many years that WAPOL is the finest operational police force in Australia, if not the world. I witnessed this when I was deployed to East Timor during its troubles. I worked with numerous sworn police officers from all over the world and from all over Australia. I saw the finest attributes of WAPOL. They are the best police officers in the world. There is a uniqueness about Western Australian police officers. They understand isolation and selflessness, they appreciate what hard work is and what it takes and go the extra yards without fear or favour when it comes to apprehending and protecting our community.

The police compensation bill is part of a series of commitments that the McGowan government gave prior to the 2017 election. The three commitments were: a police redress scheme; reform of section 8 for medically retired officers; and, finally, a police compensation scheme for medically retired officers. No government in the last 100 years has given such a commitment to our police force as the McGowan government has achieved. Make no mistake, this is an outstanding piece of legislation.

For those members who do not understand what a section 8 process is, it was a process whereby corrupt officers were removed from the police force. It was also used to remove medically injured officers from the workforce. If a police officer were removed as a result of a section 8 process, it did not matter whether they were injured, ill or corrupt, the same process was used. The result was a public perception and belief that if they were broken, they were a menace to the community. The process led to numerous suicides of ex-officers. I know this for a fact as I attended several funerals and presented the police Bible on behalf of Western Australian Police Legacy to the families and representatives, as I was an office-bearer for police legacy.

In 2019, the government changed that. It gave officers who were injured in the workplace the ability to retire with some dignity. As a result, 265 officers who had been retired using the section 8 process and had missed out on any formal workers' compensation from work-related illness or injury received payments between \$20 000 and \$150 000. They also received honourable discharge certificates. Some were presented with the WA Police Force Star medal for their service.

It concerns me that it has taken over 100 years to achieve a compensation scheme for our police officers. Winston Churchill said, “We sleep soundly in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm.” We have an obligation to look after those who have looked after us. Why has it taken so long for a compensation scheme to be introduced into this place? It is a question that I struggle to come to terms with. Policing is unlike any other occupation that I know. There is a reason they call it “the job”. It is because it is unlike any other work or occupation that we can encounter in the workplace. You can experience the most perverse actions that one human can do to another and, in the next heartbeat, experience the most wonderful things one person can do for another human being.

Although this legislation is a vast improvement from existing legislation, I am concerned about three critical points that have been missed in this bill that could be further strengthened by incorporating them in the near future. This legislation does not address the fact that police officers are still not employees, as set out in the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act. In every other state in Australia, police officers have the same rights as normal employees but Western Australian police do not. I was a police officer for nearly 30 years and, in that time, I have spoken to more police union directors than I care to number. All of them in unison dreamt of a police officer being recognised as an employee. Why has this been allowed? I do not know why but I believe there has been a disconnect between government and police, which has been in place for generations. I do not think the hostility has been generated from our elected members, but I think it has come from the administration.

That statement sounds bold but I can never forget payroll negotiations at which industrial lawyers would attack the police medical benefit or their sick leave entitlements in an attempt to be traded for salary increases or changes

to their award. I remember Mike Dean, a past legendary president of the WA Police Union, describing to me the negotiations that used to take place. He used to say how frustrating it was that people sitting opposite him in wage negotiations were never police officers who would understand the dangers and extreme stresses that police officers went through during a regular shift. They never understood that a police officer was on duty 24 hours a day; whether at work or at play they were always accountable whether they were on duty or off duty, and their pay never reflected that.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5865.]

VISITORS

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Just before I ask for the first question, on behalf of the member for Murray–Wellington, I welcome the parish priest of Harvey, Father Jess; Vicki, a Filipino leader; Virma Symons, the Philippine Consul; and the Filipino workers from Harvey Fresh, Arnove, Ramil, Lilibeth, Gary and Fermin.

On behalf of the member for Victoria Park, I also want to acknowledge Mr Russell McFarlane and a year 11 student conducting work experience, Sammie Ward. I understand that Sammie is a politics and law student from All Saints' College.

On behalf of the member for Scarborough, I would like to acknowledge Scarborough Primary School and its principal, Sarah Dawson, in the Speaker's gallery.

On behalf of the member for Forrestfield, I would like to welcome Mr Batt and the students from Edney Primary School.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PUBLIC SECTOR — AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

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

I note the report released today, which reveals that this government has been handed the highest number of audit qualifications ever issued by the Office of the Auditor General.

- (1) What is the Premier's explanation for the more than quadrupling of qualified opinions reported since 2018–19?
- (2) Does the Premier now concede that his machinery-of-government changes have undermined and stretched the public service, leading to a very concerning and significant upward trend in qualifications and breakdown in controls in our government departments?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) The answer to the last question is no. In relation to the broader question, the Auditor General's report acknowledges the massive additional workload the public sector is under to respond to COVID-19, including over \$9 billion in measures to respond in capital services, recurrent spend and other initiatives that were taken across the entire public sector.

In the wake of the Paul Whyte corruption scandal in Housing, which occurred from 2008 to 2019, a range of significant reforms were put in place to financial management, including improving internal governance and audit arrangements across the public sector, ensuring the segregation of duties and payment authorisations so the officer issuing the invoice is separate from the officer paying the invoice; the regular rotation of accounting firms conducting internal audits; and mandating that agencies have independently chaired audit committees by a person external to the agency, which we brought in after the Paul Whyte affair came to light.

In addition to that, we resourced the Auditor General to undertake targeted forensic audits of agencies, supported by data analytics. As a result of our new mandatory requirements, this has identified weaknesses that had existed prior to us resourcing the Auditor General to undertake that work. That shows that the additional resources we gave the Auditor General to do this sort of work are bearing fruit. I expect agencies to work with the Office of the Auditor General, Treasury and the Public Sector Commission to find a way to eliminate any weaknesses. The reforms have meant that qualified audits on procurement controls received by the housing function within the Department of Communities have been removed by the Auditor General in the 2020–21 financial report. There are two other things we have done to mitigate any of these issues. Firstly, the \$500 million investment in the digital capability fund will ensure that there are enhanced cybersecurity initiatives, additional funding for payroll, and HR initiatives to support the public sector. Secondly, we also announced recently, and funded, agency capability reviews across the public sector to ensure performance and accountability and to drive improvement.

PUBLIC SECTOR — AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

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

I have a supplementary question. I thank the Premier for his answer. The Auditor General commented that there are —

Too many qualifications related to significant deficiencies in payroll and procurement controls, and information system security. This is an indicator of significant shortcomings in these critical areas of financial management and business continuity, and a concerning trend.

What does the Premier say to this comment, given that some of these problems are a repeat from last year and have not been addressed?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

A couple of things. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition listened to my answer. In the 2021–22 budget, we have funded a \$500 million investment in the digital capability fund to deal with some of these things. Secondly, we also funded the agency capability reviews to examine agencies and to ensure performance and accountability and drive improvement. Thirdly, we provided additional funding to the Auditor General to uncover these things via targeted forensic audits, and we made a number of reviews to the public sector following the Paul Whyte corruption scandal. All those things have happened. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition was listening before, but some of the internal governance and audit arrangement changes were very wise in light of the Paul Whyte affair, and that included the segregation of duties between the officer paying and the officer issuing invoices, which I think is entirely sensible; the rotation of accounting firms; and for audit committees to be independently chaired by a person external to the agency. All those things have been put in place to make sure we improve the situation.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — SUMMER VAX DRIVE

829. Ms E.L. HAMILTON to the Premier:

I refer to the state government's efforts in driving up Western Australia's rates of vaccination as we head towards the state's safe transition and the target of 90 per cent double dosed eligible Western Australians. Can the Premier outline to the house how the Summer Vax Drive announced today will help make vaccinations more accessible for those Western Australians who have not yet received their vaccinations, and how this will also support the uptake of vaccinations amongst vulnerable groups?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for the question. In the two and a half weeks since we announced the safe transition plan, around 120 000 additional Western Australians have received their first dose of COVID vaccine. That means that our vaccination rate is now at 85.3 per cent for first doses for those aged 12 and over, and more than 73 per cent for double-dose vaccinations. The number is climbing each and every day despite all the difficulties we faced, including criticism from people like the opposition. We did not have the extra Pfizer vaccines that New South Wales and Victoria received—the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of extra doses early on. We did not have the mass outbreak that they had, which obviously drove vaccination there. Despite all that, Western Australia still has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, and it is climbing each and every day. We want to get to the 90 per cent target as soon as we can and we have put in place a range of measures and initiatives to make sure we do that. The border controls that we have in Western Australia will not be there for much longer. They will ease in late January or early February and, at that point in time, we expect some COVID-positive people will come into Western Australia. That is why people need to get vaccinated.

Today, we announced a three-week Summer Vax Drive, a targeted campaign to lift our vaccination rate. During the Super Vax Weekend in November, we saw a 12 per cent surge in vaccinations through our state-run clinics. Our Summer Vax Drive will begin on Saturday. At the Women's Big Bash League final at Optus Stadium, people will be able to go along, watch the game and get vaccinated. People will be able to go to a pop-up clinic on 8 December at Optus Stadium for the Perth Scorchers men's team opening BBL match, watch the game and get vaccinated. People will be able to go to a range of Woolworths and Aldi stores around the state—11 in the city and five in regional WA—from Thursday, 2 December until Sunday, 5 December and get vaccinated while they are doing their shopping.

We have also announced the COVID-19 vaccine community funding program, administered by Vaccine Commander Chris Dawson. Under that program, \$5 000 grants will be made available to not-for-profits, Aboriginal corporations and local governments with the aim of driving up the vaccination rate, particularly amongst disadvantaged and priority groups such as Aboriginal groups, people with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, homeless people and those sleeping rough, and those with mental health problems.

All that will be happening as part of the Summer Vax Drive. I encourage everyone out there to get vaccinated as soon as possible. As we saw yesterday, 19 people died in Victoria from COVID-19, 17 of whom were not vaccinated. Please learn the lessons from what is happening around Australia and the world and go and get vaccinated.

HYDROGEN INDUSTRY

830. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer the minister to the Chamber of Minerals and Energy's hydrogen report released today that highlights that this government's hydrogen initiatives are under-resourced and its regulatory approach is uncertain and opaque, and also the fact that Fortescue Future Industries is being forced to go to the east coast, the United Kingdom, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere. Under this minister's management, how did Western Australia get so far behind in the global green hydrogen race?

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

The SPEAKER: I give the call to the Deputy Premier, not the member for Mount Lawley, thank you.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the member for Mount Lawley for the interjection.

With 3.9 per cent unemployment and an economy that is going full bore, I can understand why the member for Cottesloe is struggling for content for his questions. This government has a Minister for Hydrogen Industry who is focused on making sure that we do everything appropriate to support that industry, because we know that it will provide the future for our energy transition and make sure that Western Australia can undertake its role and take its place in the energy transition process, ensuring the future economic wealth of this country.

We are putting in a range of measures at the moment and working closely with dozens of proponents in relation to hydrogen to make sure that we have in place a regime that ensures we respect current land interests, including those of native title holders and pastoral lease owners, and, at the same time, ensures we have a regime for the hydrogen proponents that allows them the opportunity to bring their great technology, their investments and their economic prosperity and opportunities to Western Australia. But we will do this in a way that is responsible and makes sure that we can guarantee the future of this industry. We are working very closely with all the proponents, including Fortescue Future Industries and a range of others, to make sure that they have the best possible environment to work in. What detracts from that environment is those who wish to talk down the performance of Western Australia. Let us face it, we are in an exciting place. We have very low unemployment rates and we have significant levels of investment going on in our community, including recently by organisations such as Perdaman and Woodside. This is an exciting time in Western Australia's economic future. What we do not need is someone continuing to talk down the economic future of Western Australia. Fortunately, no-one is listening to the opposition. They are listening to the McGowan government and what we are doing to chart the future for Western Australia's economic prosperity.

HYDROGEN INDUSTRY

831. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I have a supplementary question. When is the minister going to stop with the meaningless platitudes and plans with no substance and start providing meaningful regulatory certainty —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Dr D.J. HONEY: — and the critical infrastructure of power, roads, water and industrial estates in the midwest and the north of the state?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Madam Speaker, speaking of substance —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mr R.H. COOK: We will take a lot of advice from a lot of people in relation to economic infrastructure, particularly energy. We will not be taking that advice from the member for Cottesloe. We will continue to work with everyone involved to ensure that we provide the very best investment environment for these organisations. They are excited about the future of Western Australia. It is unfortunate that the Liberal Party and the opposition are not as excited and continue to talk everything down.

SOCIAL HOUSING — 2021–22 STATE BUDGET

832. Dr J. KRISHNAN to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant efforts in reforming the delivery of social housing in Western Australia, including the record \$875 million investment as part of this year's budget.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the government is overcoming the significant challenges within the building and construction sector in delivering social housing across the state?
- (2) Can the minister also advise the house how this investment is supporting local jobs and local businesses?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his question. It is great to provide a wrap-up of our social housing program. I want members to think about when COVID first hit; there were very dire projections about the state of the economy, and in particular the state of the housing market. In fact, what we have seen is quite the opposite. Our management of the economy and COVID has delivered a safe state, with a very strong economy, the strongest in Australia, with low unemployment. Of course, our building bonus grant has fuelled incredible growth in construction and housing. That is providing thousands and thousands of jobs to Western Australians, with 27 000 building approvals, and nearly 4 000 Keystart approvals. That has meant that thousands and thousands of first home buyers have entered the market to secure a new home. Of course, we are very cognisant of the pressures as more Western Australians have returned home, and with the tightening of the market. That is why we have announced the largest injection into social housing in the state's history, \$875 million, which will take the total social housing investment over the next four years to more than \$2.1 billion, to deliver 3 300 new homes.

We do face challenges in delivery. We have a heated construction market and a booming housing sector. That is why I am leading a very strong reform program within the agency and within delivery so that we can pivot as we need, to ensure that we get the best outcomes as fast as possible. That is why we have announced a modular program, with nearly \$100 million for 200 modular homes, 150 of which will be in the regions. That is why we have embraced timber. Where we have shifted from double brick to timber, we are seeing homes delivered within five months. That is extraordinary given the heated construction market we face.

We are also boosting our spot purchasing program so that we can provide instant injections. We are also converting our standard stock that is sold to the market under the Department of Communities, and nearly 500 of those are being converted to social housing. We have our regional renewal program of \$20 million across Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton, where we are tackling those more difficult issues, where there is high social density and where we are trying to encourage greater liveability but also ensure that we retain and refurbish social housing. Of course, given the heated construction market, we are creating a pipeline of work, with \$522 million set aside in the out years so that when those 27 000 building approvals are completed, we have a serious amount of funding to fuel a number of projects across Western Australia—to provide that delivery of work. I am deeply proud, as the new Minister for Housing, as part of the McGowan government, that we are driving a very clear, accelerated program to deliver social housing in Western Australia.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AUTHORITY — TRANSIT OFFICERS

833. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to startling revelations reported by WAMN News of a toxic culture permeating Perth transit guards and a Public Transport Authority statement issued in response last week.

- (1) Is the minister aware of these reports, and what investigation into the culture of PTA guards has she undertaken?
- (2) Will the minister commit to ensuring that the cultural awareness training required as part of the guards' essential training is reviewed and improved?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I am aware of the reports that the member has alluded to. However, I can assure the member that all transit officers undertake cultural awareness training by recognised providers as part of their training. That cultural awareness training has received positive feedback, and we continue to reinforce cultural awareness training as part of the work that transit officers do across the network. Transit officers operate in tough environments across the network and they are doing a very good job in helping to assist and protect the public. If the member has a specific allegation against a particular officer, he is invited to write to me or, of course, refer it to the appropriate authorities. Cultural awareness training is part of what the transit officers do, and, as we know, many of them are doing a very, very good job across the network, making sure that our public transport system is safe.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AUTHORITY — TRANSIT OFFICERS

834. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

I have a supplementary question. Is the minister satisfied that there is sufficient oversight of the transit officers by the Public Transport Authority, given that they have powers to use force and arrest people?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

Yes.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING — PRACTITIONER TRAINING

835. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to providing dignity and compassion to terminally ill Western Australians. Can the minister update the house on the implementation of this government's historic voluntary assisted dying legislation, including how many practitioners have registered for training?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question and for his care and compassion for his community. It was in December 2019 that we as a Parliament entered this legislation into an act, to provide a compassionate and dignified way for people to access end-of-life choices. Since then, the Department of Health and the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board have been working assiduously to bring that act to life, and they did so in July this year. For the past four months, the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act has been operational in Western Australia. Over this time, 169 practitioners across WA have registered to access and undertake the WA voluntary assisted dying—approved training. We have had 43 practitioners complete that course so far. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank those 43 practitioners who have taken their time to access and complete this course, which is integral to the process. These healthcare professionals are now assessing patients and assisting them through the process of their journey. Their efforts in, support for and dedication to person-centred care is invaluable. I would also like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to the staff of the statewide care navigator service and the statewide pharmacy service, which make sure that people, wherever they live in Western Australia, can access quality palliative care and the full range of voluntary assisted dying—related services, which we all envisaged in this place back in 2019. These are critical components of the ways in which our community is able to access additional choice at end of life. I have been informed that 288 first requests have been made by 211 people for access to voluntary assisted dying, and that of those, 125 first assessments have been completed. The majority of patients that have been assessed have been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Since 1 July, 50 people have completed the process under voluntary assisted dying.

When we started this journey under the guidance of the member for Morley as Chair of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, the Parliament undertook a very important process—a process to make sure that the Parliament listened to people who wanted choice at end of life, to make sure that we put in place a regime that showed compassion but also protected people along the way, and to make sure that, as a Parliament, we could enter into law very sophisticated and complex laws that really embrace all the values that we consider most dear at end of life. I am very proud of the work that has been done by the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board and everyone who has been able to bring these laws into being.

SIR CHARLES GAIRDNER HOSPITAL — CODE BLACK DECLARATION

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

I refer to confirmation from the North Metropolitan Health Service that there was a bed state black at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital yesterday. How many patients were discharged as a result of this capacity issue; and what time was the bed state black resolved, or is the bed status still black at this hospital?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. To make sure that people are familiar with what is involved in a bed state black, in our hospitals there are a range of processes that allow them the opportunity to alert staff in the emergency departments and inpatient areas of the hospital about the status of capacity and available beds. At any point in time, beds can be on any number of codes; it may be for a minute, it may be for 30 minutes. I can confirm that yesterday there was a code yellow for the ED at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital between 1500 hours and 2030 hours. I can confirm that it is not the case that there was a bed state black at this time, but obviously code yellow means that we need all staff to take the opportunity to discharge patients where appropriate and ensure that everyone is vigilant for opportunities to make sure we have extra capacity in the hospital at all times. I can guarantee the member that people would have been discharged during that time; other people would have been admitted. Hospitals—particularly hospitals like Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital—are big institutions, where there are flows of many hundreds of patients in the course of any one day.

This government is investing more than any other government in history to increase the capacity of our hospital system, with the inclusion of 46 new beds in Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital alone. Over the course of this government, we have committed to increasing the capacity of our hospitals by over 900 beds across our hospital system; that is the equivalent of a very large tertiary hospital. As members will all appreciate, a significant amount of investment is going into the bed capacity and the workforce capacity of our hospitals to make sure that we can deal with the current peaks of demand and that we are ready for any increase or surge in demand as a result of COVID-19.

SIR CHARLES GAIRDNER HOSPITAL — CODE BLACK DECLARATION

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

I have a supplementary question. Why did the North Metropolitan Health Service confirm that it was a code black, and how do these ongoing capacity issues at our hospitals fit in with the minister's promise 20 months ago to be battle-ready for COVID?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

At all stages of the COVID-19 pandemic our hospitals have served the Western Australian community well and we are proud of their efforts. At any particular time in an outbreak, all our hospitals have responded, whether it was bringing people off ships when they were stricken with the disease or looking after people in our hotel quarantine facilities. At any point in time, our health teams have done an outstanding job in making sure that people are made safe. In my previous answer, which the member for Vasse clearly did not listen to, I said we were significantly increasing the capacity of our hospital system, and that is a hospital system that will be well and truly armed for any surge in demand as a result of COVID-19. In the meantime, they are dealing with constrained workforce and an increase in demand, as opposed to deferred care in 2020, and the acuity associated with the post-pandemic period. They are doing an extraordinary job and this government is investing heavily in a hospital system to make sure hospitals can have the resources they need to continue to do outstanding work.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

838. Ms J.L. HANNS to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to protecting the environment, including through its historic decision to end logging in our south west native forests. Can the minister update the house on the work underway to further improve our environment, including through reducing waste, phasing out plastics, expanding our conservation estate and encouraging the take-up of electric vehicles?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for Collie–Preston for her question. I was delighted to join both her and the Premier at Wellington National Park on Sunday, last weekend, to announce an expansion of Wellington National Park by another 7 000 hectares, which brings it to 25 000 hectares. It is a really important national park on our doorstep. We checked out the 15 kilometres of mountain bike trails that are being incredibly well used. I have to say it was cranking down there. It is so busy that we have to expand the car park. It is a really important part of our Plan for Our Parks. There is the expansion of five million hectares of our conservation estate on land and sea country. That is an important part of the preservation and protection of our important environment, whether it is the rangelands, the Kimberley, the Pilbara or Esperance. This is a really important policy and achievement from the state government.

We have also created the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park and committed \$10 million to its ongoing better protection and management. We have also expanded Murujuga National Park, as well as Yalgorup National Park by over 1 000 hectares. We are in the process of creating Fitzroy River national park, Buccaneer Archipelago marine park and Matuwa and Kurrara Kurrara national park, and have created Kalgulup Regional Park in Bunbury. All this is complemented by the \$50 million Aboriginal ranger program, which is a policy and program we are very proud of in this government. We have a renewed focus on co-design with Aboriginal people and traditional owners on that program with the funding. I think that will roll out spectacularly for those communities over the next four years.

As the member said, our native logging policy, announced earlier this year, complements our expansion of the national parks, and was clearly vindicated by the COP26 decision, which called on governments globally to end logging within 10 years. It was clearly vindicated as an important tool in our toolkit for fighting climate change. We have also announced our native vegetation policy, which aims to understand what native vegetation we have across the state and to prioritise rehabilitation where we need to, as well as assist in offsets and where we can prioritise them.

As the member mentioned, we have fast-tracked our Plan for Plastics. By 31 December this year, a whole range of single-use plastics will be banned, and by 31 December 2022, we will move to harder plastics, such as thick plastic bags and coffee cups. That will reduce millions of tonnes of plastics that go into our waste stream and our oceans. We are spending \$21 million on implementing the longest network of electric vehicle charging stations in the country. That will be outstanding, so people can have confidence that they can travel around Western Australia in their electric vehicles, be able to charge their cars and get to their destinations.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — INTRASTATE BORDER RESTRICTIONS

839. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Tourism:

Noting the government has made public comments that there will be many intrastate borders in regional Western Australia if WA does not meet a 90 per cent vaccination threshold, which is a trigger for the WA border reopening, what support and guidance will be provided to tourism operators impacted by booking cancellations as a result of the government's intrastate borders?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The minister, and only the minister, please.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. As the member knows all too well, we have made it very clear that vaccination is the way forward out of this. Every member in this place should be doing absolutely everything they possibly can

within their communities, talking to their communities, talking to community organisations and to their constituents, to highlight that by reaching the targets that the Premier has highlighted continuously over a long period that that will be our way forward.

I want to congratulate the tourism industry. I, along with the member for Swan Hills, my parliamentary secretary, have been visiting the regions, as we have done with our tourism roadshows. We have been through most of the regions now; we have still got a couple to go. A range of operators and peak stakeholders and bodies have been doing their part because they realise that their wellbeing relies on high vaccination rates.

This government's key focus is on highlighting to everybody in Western Australia to get vaccinated, to not listen to the rubbish that some people are peddling on social media and other means, to stop listening to people like Hon Nick Goiran in the other place and remind themselves, their families, their loved ones and business owners that by getting vaccinated and achieving the targets that have been set that we will be on a very, very positive road forward. The member for North West Central needs to do that. It is incumbent on all of us to do it, particularly those people in regional Western Australia, particularly those people in the north west of Western Australia, because we recognise the take-up has to improve. The Premier was up in the north west only this week and, of course, the Commissioner of Police is also actively working within those communities, working with local members to highlight the importance of the vaccination rates.

As we reach towards our targets, a range of measures will need to be put in place to continue to protect Western Australians, to continue to protect those people who are working and living in regional Western Australia, as well as the metropolitan area. I can assure the member for North West Central and all other members here that our primary focus is to continue to protect our tourism industry and other businesses by achieving the vaccination rates. We know that in regional Western Australia particularly, the intrastate campaigns, including the Wander Out Yonder campaign and others, have been highly successful. In our regions, there have been record numbers of visitation, which is tremendous. When Western Australians were asked to wander out yonder and support local communities, regional communities and businesses and tourism enterprises, they did it in their tens and tens of thousands. Thank you to the people of Western Australia for doing that.

Now it is incumbent on all of us to achieve those vaccination rates. The member for North West Central has a key role to play as a local member. Show some responsibility and support the government's campaign.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. Catania: I have a supplementary question.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Sit down, you mug!

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr V.A. Catania: What did you call yourself?

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water —

Mr V.A. Catania: What did you call yourself?

The SPEAKER: Please sit down, member.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! Minister for Water, I ask you to withdraw that remark.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Please stand.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I withdraw that.

Questions without Notice Resumed

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There must be a drip in the house!

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Will the minister commit to providing financial support to tourism businesses —

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, I am guessing you do not want your question heard because you would not have made a smart-arse remark at the start, if you actually wanted your question treated seriously. I will give you one last chance. Please stand, ask your question, and I would like to hear it in silence.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — INTRASTATE BORDER RESTRICTIONS

840. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Tourism:

I have a supplementary question. Will the minister commit to providing financial support to tourism businesses directly impacted by the government's measures to protect regional businesses impacted by the government's future decisions?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

Members opposite continue to demonstrate that they are not genuine about supporting the government's campaign. They might say a few words here and there but they have not been genuine. This is the problem that the opposition has created in many communities. The member and members of the alliance, as it is called, have demonstrated that they do not understand that by reaching and exceeding our targets we will increase the protection of all Western Australians into the future and ensure that businesses and enterprises, be it tourism, small business or larger scale businesses, will be in the best position to not only work through the COVID-19 experience, but also, of course, prosper. We are seeing that. We have the best economy in Australia and, indeed, in the world now, because of our approach—the Premier's approach—of using a highly targeted strategy.

I will say this: we have seen a range of measures introduced over the COVID-19 period, but, ultimately, getting vaccinated is going to make the difference, and it is going to rely on all of us, as elected members of our communities, to stand and say, "Please, for the benefit of your family and loved ones, your businesses and the local enterprises in your community, and in others across the state, vaccination is the answer!" That is what members opposite do not seem to get, and that is the message that we will be hammering out there in places and spaces throughout the state. Western Australians are responding; today, 85 per cent have had a single dose and we are moving towards that target for double dosage.

Member, please, we will keep supporting lots and lots of enterprises by keeping this state safe and by encouraging vaccination throughout Western Australia.

HOMELESSNESS

841. Ms C.M. TONKIN to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to breaking the cycle of homelessness. Can the minister update the house on this government's unprecedented investment in tackling homelessness and the evidence-based initiatives it is implementing to deliver lasting solutions to this issue?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I can certainly address the issues that the member outlined. I thank her for the question.

Members would have heard me speak in this house before about the state's first ever homelessness strategy *All paths lead to a home*. In fact, the sector calls it a world-leading strategy and plan. We have not only taken the time to develop that plan, but also committed significant new funds on top of the \$108 million that government already spends supporting important community organisations throughout Perth and regional Western Australia, including Uniting WA, Centrecare, Anglicare, Ruah Community Services, the Salvation Army Western Australia and St Patrick's Community Support Centre to name a few. Those organisations are out there every day supporting people who are experiencing homelessness, and we are happy to support them. In addition to that we have invested \$73.5 million for two Common Ground facilities. There will be a facility in East Perth and one in Mandurah. Those facilities will deliver more than 160 apartments for rough sleepers and low-income earners. Members might have seen on social media that just yesterday I was pleased to share the design images for the East Perth facility. It is an exciting milestone in this project for Perth and Western Australia.

We have also invested \$34.5 million over five years for the implementation of the Housing First approach across the Perth metropolitan area and the regions of Geraldton and Bunbury. In addition to this, we are investing \$6 million in local government to co-fund local responses and, for the first time in Western Australia, we have given a contract to an Aboriginal-controlled organisation to run the Boorloo Bidee Mia facility in Wellington Street.

The Housing First initiative is an important program that is delivering new staff on the ground out in metropolitan areas and, as I said, in Bunbury and Geraldton. They are working with people who are experiencing homelessness to provide them with case support and to help them find and maintain a home. In Bunbury, this has been delivered by a consortium of Anglicare WA, Doors Wide Open and the Breakaway Aboriginal Corporation. They have been working since the beginning of the year to set up that organisation. They are working with the social housing organisation Housing Choices Western Australia to prioritise the securing of housing for people through the Housing First initiative. In Bunbury alone, already three rough sleepers have been relocated to their own homes, with another five expected to be placed in the coming weeks.

We are responding to the emerging needs and opportunities in the community, but also the evidence. We are drawing on the evidence base of what we know works—what the research tells us we know works—to support vulnerable people and give them the best chance of being able to find and stay in their forever home. Homelessness needs a whole-of-community response from all levels of government, but also the services sector and the community itself.

I am pleased to say that the McGowan government is taking the lead. I am actually out there meeting people who are not only delivering those services, but also receiving those services, and I am very proud of the work we are doing. It is making a difference to people's lives. I am meeting those people in my own electorate of Fremantle, in regional Western Australia and in the city. We are changing lives and I am very proud to be part of a government that is committed to doing that.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — DVASSIST

842. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the role that the statewide regional domestic violence helpline DVassist has provided in supporting 33 local government communities across regional WA and the fact that people in regional WA are three times more likely to be exposed to family and domestic violence. Will the minister commit to working with the organisation ahead of the next state budget to ensure that it can continue its critical work across the state, particularly in the regions?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am pleased that the member has asked me a question about domestic violence, because it was pointed out to me just recently that of the 50 media statements that the member for Vasse has put out through the Leader of the Opposition's office since the election, not a single one to date has been about family and domestic violence.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please. That is not an invitation for others to comment.

Ms S.F. McGURK: On the eve of our 16 Days in WA campaign, I thank members who have donned their badges early for the campaign that commences tomorrow. This is a community-led campaign that says that everyone has a role to play in understanding the extent of violence against women and calling it out, so I thank members in advance for their support of that campaign.

With regard to the McGowan government's focus on and record investment in addressing domestic violence, I stand very, very proud of the work that we have done—the focus, determination and cooperation across portfolios. There has been significant and nation-leading law reform in concert with the Attorney General and there is the perinatal screening that is occurring in health. I was at the North Metropolitan Health Service just a few weeks ago to announce its protocols in screening not only staff, but also patients, for domestic violence. In education, we have the Respectful Relationships program through schools. With Housing, we are prioritising and making sure that women experiencing domestic violence are able to get into housing. Also, of course, there will be amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. When I look across the portfolios of government, every other minister and every other government department has worked in cooperation to make sure that this is a whole-of-government effort. The Minister for Police just pointed out how the firearm prohibition amendments before the house now will benefit and make sure that anyone who is identified as a perpetrator of domestic violence or a risk will no longer be able to hold a firearm licence. The dollars, also, have been significant in regard to the effort by this government. I can talk across any range of initiatives that we have put in place.

The program the member asked about is called DVassist and was funded by the federal government. I think it was coordinated by the federal member of Parliament Nola Marino, who organised some federal funding for that program, which was initially led by an Esperance woman with lived experience. I made it very clear to the woman who initiated that program, and to the organisers since, that this program is not in our budget agenda. We committed, in the last election, to fund two new women's refuges and since building those refuges we have committed to double their capacity under the COVID recovery money. We have funded two new hubs. I have outlined all the other initiatives that we have put in place, so I have made it very clear to DVassist that it is not something that we are able to fund—we are able to step up when the federal government puts money into an initiative and steps away and expects that the state government can pick up the tab. We cannot do that. We cannot keep stepping up when the federal government makes initial funding and then steps away. It did it with Safe at Home.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms S.F. McGURK: It did it with Keeping Women Safe in Their Homes a couple of years ago, which is an important program in which women and children are prioritised to stay in their homes. The federal government pulled funding out of that and we had to step up and plug the gaps.

I have met with DVassist a number of times and I have made no criticism of the work that it is doing, but we cannot continue to step up when the federal government pulls out of its funding commitments in this state.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — DVASSIST

843. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I have a supplementary question. Given that the delivery of these critical services is actually the responsibility of the state, will the minister commit to ensuring that this important work continues beyond next year?

Several members interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I do wonder sometimes whether members of the Liberal Party or Nationals WA ever direct those questions to their federal counterparts. Do they ever ask them what they are doing to deliver improved services in Western Australia? Do they ever do that?

Several members interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Do they ever do that? Never. I am absolutely proud of the work that we have done. I am determined to make clear to the public of Western Australia what we have done as a government in providing focus, renewed effort and resources to combat domestic violence. It is in huge contrast with what occurred under the previous Liberal–National government. They did absolutely nothing.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms S.F. McGURK: This government to date has funded over \$120 million in new initiatives. As I said, across a range of different portfolios, I can talk about the initiatives that we have put in place. I stand very, very clear on and am proud of the work that this government is doing to combat domestic violence.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.

POLICE AMENDMENT (COMPENSATION SCHEME) BILL 2021*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach) [2.54 pm]: I will continue. My main concern is that we may develop two streams of employees in the WA public service—police and the rest of the workforce. I have post-traumatic stress disorder. I am public about my injury and have had many years to come to terms with it and its impact upon my family. I did 27 years of active frontline policing. I have served all over the state and in East Timor during the troubles. My policing was hard policing. I was always in the thick of it. Trouble always found me; I never went looking for it. It was always there. I have had road crash victims die in my arms. I was the first on the scene when I found a former colleague of mine who had murdered his partner and taken his own life through untreated PTSD. I have attended so many fatal traffic crashes that my stomach still knots every time I hear an ambulance siren. I have been thumped by idiots, stabbed, shot at and spat at with blood, and the list goes on. I was a member of the original vehicle crime unit. I have chased stolen cars through the streets of Perth at speeds that would scare professional race car drivers. I have stood in front of loaded shotguns. You name it—I was either there, knew the officer who was, or was standing beside the officer when it happened. As a result of my service, my PTSD manifested itself in anger, heightened emotional sensitivities—members may have seen that earlier—a loss in my ability to concentrate and the collapse of my immune system, which led to my type 2 diabetes.

PTSD is an interesting illness. Every day I learn more about it and its impact on not only myself, but also others. For those who do not know what PTSD is, it is, simply, a physical change that occurs in the brain that is brought on by critical incident stress. It cannot be cured, but it can be treated. The treatments can be very, very successful. To demonstrate this, during my trauma treatment plan and program, six individuals joined me. Of those six, one has recently been nominated for the highest bravery award that a police officer can get, another was recently nominated for police officer of the year, and one is a member of Parliament. If a sufferer gets the right treatment, the sufferer becomes bigger, better and stronger.

I received my diagnosis after around 22 years of service. It probably started about 15 years into my career. I spent about seven years being undiagnosed with PTSD. PTSD, or post-traumatic stress injury as some refer to it, is a mental health injury. It is not visible. It is not like having a broken arm or leg. It is an injury a person carries that cannot be seen. The World Health Organization stated that suffering from PTSD is the equivalent of paralysis. That is a fact. On a bad day, I agree with that statement. It is crippling. My experience within the WA Police Force would scare some of the members in this place.

On receiving my diagnosis from my clinical team, I began my treatment. Until then I had not disclosed my illness to the agency. During my treatment, I formed the opinion that I had to disclose the condition to the officer in charge. It was after my disclosure that I encountered arguably the most distressing and heartbreaking years of my career. My disclosure to the agency effectively ended the career I loved. I was overtly and covertly discriminated against. My promotions and future career were curtailed through a culture that actively sought out and victimised officers

who had disclosed their injury. It started off with duties being taken off me without consultation and being advised that it would make things easier for me, but it had the by-product of actually hindering my treatment program. There was and still is a failure of management within the agency to understand the condition. More importantly, how do we help individuals who suffer from the condition? For the record, I never received my Police Star.

The lack of understanding of PTSD can be evidenced in the report of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee titled *How do they manage? An investigation of the measures WA Police has in place to evaluate management of personnel*. The committee heard several accounts from medically retired officers. The member who spoke previously quoted some of the transcripts of retired officers who laboured under the burden of post-traumatic stress disorder. The official acknowledgement and nature of the prevalence of this condition is shamefully low. I note that it is highly disappointing that the police management response has been sclerotic—I think that was the word mentioned. I can remember looking at the time lines when preparing this speech and reviewing the *Hansard* transcript of the evidence given by former Commissioner of Police Karl O’Callaghan and his denial that PTSD was an issue within the WA Police Force. I recall at the time he said that it was not an issue within the job. I had an officer in my arms who had attempted suicide and failed. My anger is driven by the fact that this officer had been referred to a department-preferred psychiatrist who misdiagnosed her for five years. If it was not for my intervention, I do not think the officer would be alive today. WA police officers are so scared of coming forward and admitting they have PTSD because when they do, a course of victimisation, intimidation and bigotry is standard from senior officers within the agency. I have anecdotal evidence from my own experience to prove this. I have evidence from other officers, both serving and retired, who can further attest to this issue.

Through my journey with PTSD, I have learnt to mentor other officers to ensure that they get the best possible treatment. I have taken numerous officers on a fortnightly or monthly basis down the journey and shared my advice to ensure that they get the best possible treatment. I have had officers and their wives crying in my arms, so scared to admit that they have PTSD and so worried about admitting they needed help. What underpins this? It is fear. The reason I have raised PTSD in my speech is that I believe it is a missed opportunity. PTSD sleeps. In some ways, it is like asbestosis; we may not be affected by the symptoms for many years after leaving employment. This bill only covers officers who disclose that they have PTSD while they are still serving in WAPOL. Currently, if we utilise the Beyond Blue figures, one in four officers will have PTSD. If we use Phoenix Australia’s research coming out of Melbourne, Victoria, that figure changes to one to three. I also understand that contemporary research is coming out of North America that indicates PTSD may be as high as two out of three, depending on the context, of our first responders. Let us put this into context. On average, every month, about 20 officers retire from the Western Australia Police Force. Approximately 14 of these officers may have a sleeping fatal condition linked to their service that they are not going to get help for. It breaks my heart.

Members may ask why I took the choice of being discharged from the force and did not utilise section 8. I did not want the stigma. I did not want my PTSD to destroy my future job opportunities. I own my PTSD. I never want any involvement from WAPOL when it comes to my treatment of my injury.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: To reinforce this, I was recently advised by senior members within the human resource portfolio that during a WAPOL briefing, some of these individuals referred to injured officers as “munts”. I am not going to explain—this is language that I would not use in this place—but I suggest that people google it. In a normal workplace, the likelihood is that if someone’s injury can be linked back to their work, they have the opportunity to get fair compensation to help with their medical costs et cetera, so why not for our police? That is just a thought.

The last issue I wish to raise is presumption. After a certain period of service, the likelihood that someone will have some form of PTSD can be presumed. There is a current presumption for firefighters that after a certain period of service, due to their exposure to fire scenes and the hazardous nature of their work, certain cancers are determined to be as a result of that service. There is no current presumption of likelihood that a police officer will have some form of PTSD after a predetermined length of service. It is not there. Current contemporary research tends to indicate that 15 years of service is about the right time for presumptive legislation. The figure for paramedics is about eight years and for firefighters is 20 years. That research is based on ethical, peer-led, peer-reviewed, credible investigations.

I have previously stated that I own my condition—absolutely—but I have to say that I am not wallowing in my self-pity. Over the past two and a half years, I have been working to build a research foundation here in Western Australia. This foundation has the sole focus of undertaking research into PTSD. The foundation has three focuses: the prevention of PTSD, the treatment of PTSD and organisational change. Cutting-edge research on PTSD is currently being done at Oxford University in the United Kingdom and Washington State University in North America. It is not being done here in Australia. That is about to change.

In relation to the treatment, the foundation will be looking at better drugs, better therapies and the improvement of a combination of drug therapies to enhance recovery. When it comes to organisational change, imagine an organisation that partners with those who suffer, their clinical treatment teams, their families and their support circles, all working together to enhance the recovery of the first responder, making them bigger, better and stronger. The organisation does it because not only it is the right thing to do morally, but also they can demonstrate that it

is probably the most cost-effective way to address the organisation's duty to its employees. With proper, ethical, peer-led, peer-reviewed, credible research, I am certain that, armed with this information, the leaders within our organisations can make the best decisions to enhance their workforces. I understand that these three issues are not part of the bill, but this bill is the first step. Police officers have had nothing for so long. This is a fantastic, good step forward. For the last hundred years, police have not had a compensation scheme. This is arguably one of the best packages of reform for the welfare of police officers for generations.

I entered Parliament knowing that I could not change the world in one step. It takes small steps. This bill is a good first step. I wish to thank the Minister for Police, the Premier and my colleagues in this place for supporting this bill. I am proud of their efforts for a job well done. I will continue to fight for greater care and compassion for our first responders. I will walk through walls for those in need of help, to ensure that they and their families are safe and their future is secured. It is in my nature, and I will continue to do this. I will finish with my favourite Latin phrase—I hope I pronounce this right—*Frango dura patientia, quamdiu spirabo, numquam despondebo*, which translates to “I break hard things through perseverance, and as long as I breathe, I will never quit”. Thank you.

[Applause.]

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka) [3.10 pm]: I also rise to support the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021. I reflect on the excellent contribution from the member for Burns Beach. I want to thank him for his personal account of how important this bill is, and for sharing so generously with the house his own experiences in a very moving way. He really captured the personal stories that sit behind this bill and why it is so important to our police force. It is, of course, customary to congratulate the minister for bringing a bill to the house, but on this occasion I want to give my very hearty congratulations to the Minister for Police and, indeed, the former Minister for Police, now our Speaker, for the work that has gone into formulating this bill and getting it to the house today. I again reflect on the contribution from the member for Burns Beach because it summed up that it has been a long journey to get to this point. It is a particularly warranted piece of legislation. It has gone through a long period, under not just this government but also the former government, which was unable to reach a resolution with the police force. I again congratulate those who contributed to reaching this outcome, which will provide a compensation scheme for our police force that will ensure that they are protected as they go about their important work of keeping us safe.

As others have outlined, this bill is one of a number of reforms—three tranches of reform—that were committed to prior to the 2017 election. Each of those reforms is very important in its own right for the recognition and rights it will give our police force. The first was the police redress scheme for officers who had already been medically retired, which others have talked about. The second element of the reform was the reform to section 8. The member for Burns Beach gave a really excellent outline of why that was so important for police officers. It meant that police officers who were no longer able to perform their roles because they were unwell could retire honourably from the police force, and that a distinction would be made between them and those who were dishonourably discharged. The final part of the reforms that were committed to is the introduction of this provision—a compensation scheme for police officers who have to retire for medical reasons. It will ensure that those officers will be able to receive a lump sum benefit on their retirement.

As others have said, this is a unique scheme that has been crafted specifically to meet the unique needs of our police force. Members of the WA Police Force are not considered to be employees. There is no employment contract, which employees usually have, and they do not attract the same entitlements as other occupational groups. Specifically, police officers are not covered by the general workers' compensation scheme that is in operation throughout Western Australia and by and large covers the majority of workers in this state. That has not been well appreciated by the public at large. I commend the WA Police Union for the work it has done in raising this issue in the minds of the general public, so that they can understand that distinction—that police officers have not received the same entitlements as the general population. Although there have always been very good in-service arrangements for police officers who are injured at work and good arrangements for the payment of their medical benefits, which is perhaps not dissimilar to the general workers' compensation scheme, they were not eligible for a lump sum payment in the event that they were not able to continue to perform their work. If they were medically discharged or retired at a young age, they would face a very uncertain future. The solution to this set of circumstances was not to include the police in a general workers' compensation scheme, as that would have resulted in a reduction in their overall entitlements if they were injured at work and remained employed.

The Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021 has been specifically drafted to make sure that injured police officers will have access to good entitlements that are in line with what exists for other workers who are unable to continue working. People have already touched on a number of the main elements, but, importantly, the compensation payment will be in line with the workers' compensation scheme. It is based on an assessment of the permanent injury suffered by the officer and will provide compensation that I believe is capped at \$239 179 and adjusted over time. Payment will also be made for vocational rehabilitation. This, again, aligns with the general workers' compensation scheme and is a really important element to ensure that if people are required to retire from the work that they have been performing, they are able to receive professional assistance and support to assist them to retrain into another career and other work. A payment for vocational rehabilitation is an important part of

recognising and supporting career change when it has to happen. The scheme also includes the potential for an additional amount up to 70 per cent of the prescribed amount when the officer suffers a total incapacity. It will take into account their social and financial circumstances and recognise that indeed people may not be able to work again because of the nature of the incapacity.

This is a really important bill. It is one of a number of bills introduced to this house by the McGowan Labor government that has, at its heart, achieving justice and fairness for working people in this state—in this case, our police officers. At the moment, the general community in Western Australia well understands the importance of our police force and how essential it is to keep us safe. The pandemic brought this to the fore. We have relied, as never before, on our excellent police force and for the dangerous work that the police do to keep our community safe. Clearly, the finding and rescuing of little Cleo Smith has, for many people, underlined just how outstanding our police force is. That is a clear demonstration of the essential work that they do to keep us all safe, so it is only right and proper that they should be protected with fair employment conditions that recognise their unique circumstances. This bill does exactly that. That is why I am very proud to have the opportunity to rise and speak in support of the bill, and to particularly acknowledge the very long path it has had to reach this place.

I do not want to speak for long, but I want to reflect a little on some of the issues in this bill canvassed by other speakers, including the growing recognition that injuries at work do not include just physical injuries. Up until the recent changes to our occupational health and safety laws, the workers' compensation laws did not recognise that injuries at work could include psychosocial injuries. This bill in particular underlines that. The nature of the injuries so well described by the member for Burns Beach underline how going about police work puts a police officer at risk of not only physical injury, whether that is a broken arm or leg or some other physical injury, but also psychosocial injuries. A growing awareness in a suite of legislation goes exactly to this point and recognises that we need to provide not only compensation for those psychosocial injuries, but also a framework for work health and safety laws that also recognises the need to provide protection from those kinds of psychosocial injuries. This is a really important development. It has been happening over a number of years. I want to commend the work that was done by Marie Boland in her review of the federal model work health and safety laws, in which she identified the importance of this issue. She was talking about this issue in the context of the work health and safety laws. A body of work has been done that has brought to the fore the need to not only provide appropriate compensation for workers who experience psychological injury at work, but also ensure that we have a framework that will protect workers as they go about their day-to-day work.

I did not want to take up too much time today on the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021. I am very happy to have had the opportunity to talk on this bill. It will do important things for our police force. It will provide an important compensation scheme. It also recognises their essential work in keeping us safe. It is another important piece of work that acknowledges the impact of psychosocial injuries experienced at work.

I have already commended the Minister for Police for bringing this bill to the house. I recognise the long period of work that has gone into it. I also want to commend the staff of the minister's office, some of whom have been working on this bill for many years. It is an important piece of legislation. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to speak on it, and I commend the bill to the house.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [3.21 pm] — in reply: I want to thank all those members who contributed to the debate on the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021, and those who I know would have appreciated the opportunity to contribute but have restrained themselves because of the need to pass this very important legislation through this place and get it into the upper house so that it will become law and we will be able to care for our police officers more effectively.

I will acknowledge what members had to say about the bill, without going into their individual contributions. The contributions of all those members were appreciated and worthwhile. They gave important insights into their experience and appreciation for the police and the work that they do, and their knowledge of the potential negative consequences that may—not always—be inflicted upon police officers in the course of doing their duty.

I appreciate the comments of the member for Vasse in recounting the story of one of her local constituents. I think I can safely say that this is a thread that has gone through all of the contributions today about the historical treatment by the Western Australia Police Force and the nature of the support—or lack thereof—that was provided. I am very comfortable in saying in response that the Western Australia Police Force has progressed significantly in recent times. The way in which the Western Australia Police Force treats officers who suffer either physical or psychological injury during the course of their service has changed vastly in only a short few years. The experience of a police officer who was medically retired only some three or four years ago was completely different from the experience of those who are proceeding through that process today. The experience will again be significantly different for the people who will come in a year or so after this legislation has been passed. That is not just because of this legislation. It is also because of the actions that were taken by my predecessor and that have been taken by the agency in recent times in enhancing support through the \$16 million redress scheme to acknowledge the significant injuries that have been sustained by people who have been medically retired in the past, albeit that it will never be adequate to compensate for the extent of those people's pain and suffering. That was a significant change—a very big moment.

That, coupled with the acknowledgement of and appreciation for the service of those individuals, was a serious change in attitude by government and by the Western Australia Police Force. It demonstrated a change of attitude and signalled appreciation of what those officers had done and what they had sacrificed in the course of their service.

That was followed by the very significant, albeit not as costly in terms of government response, change in treatment of medically retired officers from being considered under section 8 of the act to having a separate administrative process to address their transition out of the police force. That was a very big change. It means that the treatment experienced by officers who suffered the ignominy of having to leave the police force under the same headline banner as those who had lost the confidence of the commissioner or who, on other occasions, had actually committed crimes will never happen again—and it is not happening today. Anyone who has experienced that and is articulating their disappointment with their treatment by the Western Australia Police Force and is somehow suggesting that is continuing is wrong. It is sad and wrong that that happened, but it is not the case that officers are being treated in that way today.

Of course, this legislation is another significant change, a massive change, in the way we treat officers. It is a direct result of a commitment made by my predecessor Hon Michelle Roberts, MLA, and the Premier, Hon Mark McGowan, prior to the last election. It was a commitment that should this government be re-elected it would introduce a police compensation scheme with every single one of the provisions that are being delivered—no more, no less. That was agreed to prior to the election by the Western Australian Police Union and understood by all those who stood and applauded the Premier in December last year when he made that commitment. That commitment is being delivered. It means that forever more Western Australian police officers will enjoy medical entitlements that are far in excess of any other public servant in the Western Australian public service; they will be preserved, and they will also benefit from this compensation scheme.

That is a change that no-one who has given evidence to prior parliamentary committee inquiries, no-one who is or has been part of the Medically Retired Police Officers Association and no current or former officer has experienced—that is, until this legislation passes and is enacted and is being applied. All those prior experiences are sad, tragic and wrong, but they are not necessarily relevant to the way people will be treated in the future, subsequent to this legislation passing. That is important to note because some of the observations made publicly in recent times suggest that nothing has changed.

The member for Bateman gave a very poignant and moving contribution with respect to the impact of police officers' service and the trauma that police officers are exposed to on their families and partners. That was a valuable insight into the extent of the impact of that trauma reaching beyond the individual concerned and into their family. The member for Landsdale made a very knowledgeable and extensive contribution on the long history of these matters. I will respond to her observations on Matt Butcher and Ryan Marron, which are very important. The member made an essential point: the opportunity to seek act of grace or ex gratia payments is not removed by this legislation. In the future, should a police officer be tragically afflicted with or subject to some horrible outcome, as Matt and Ryan were, it will not prevent them from applying for this compensation scheme and receiving the benefits associated with it. It also will not preclude them from seeking redress beyond the scheme through act of grace or ex gratia payments. That is an important point to make.

The member for Burns Beach's contribution was probably the most specifically relevant one, and I want to address it with regard to the management and command of the Western Australia Police Force and the structures within it for dealing with health, welfare and safety—all of which was not part of what the member experienced as a police officer. I appreciate the extent of the pain, suffering and trauma that the member has been confronted with, and I absolutely acknowledge and thank him for his service. I also acknowledge the post-traumatic stress disorder injury he has suffered as a consequence of his service.

There are no questions around those observations, but I must make this point: the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021 will deliver on the commitment that was made by the government and will make a massive change to the compensation processes for police officers who have been medically retired. It will not, however—this was never countenanced—make a presumption of PTSD as a consequence of service. I have served in the military, and there is currently a royal commission inquiry into suicide amongst veterans. A lot of the traumas and psychological injuries inflicted on the police are replicated in the military—there are many similarities—which is one of the reasons why I am so proud and enjoy so much fulfilling the role of Minister for Police. It is a very similar environment and common experience; being in uniform, carrying out service, having a sense of duty and fulfilling all the roles of a police officer is very similar to what people in the military encounter, particularly if they are involved in conflict.

This is not to make any judgement about any observations on or contributions to this debate, or about the no doubt horrific and tragic stories that will emerge from the royal commission into veterans' suicide, but I am concerned that the focus on the extent of injuries sustained by people who undertake service will overshadow the fact that the vast majority of people who undertake service do not end up in the circumstances that we will hear described in the royal commission. The vast majority of police officers will very likely encounter the sorts of traumatic experiences that can, for some individuals, result in injury at some time further along their life path; that is also true of the military.

However, the vast majority of people who serve in the police or the military will not suffer to the extent of the stories we will hear from the royal commission, and that is an important point to make. This will give us an opportunity to seek out measures for ensuring that people are helped to become more resilient, and for ensuring that we assist people to be able to encounter these situations and traumas and not suffer to the extent that some people do. It gives us clues about what measures may be valuable in boosting resilience and defending against this threat. I am absolutely confident that a lot of the measures currently being employed in the Western Australia Police Force, which were not being employed only a few years ago, will do that. They will assist a much greater number of our police officers to encounter this trauma, encounter the challenge and deal with it in a way that does not leave them being overwhelmed by that experience.

We now have more people engaged in the health, welfare and safety division, I think, than any time before in history. We are recruiting more people. There are external service providers to ensure that people can seek out assistance in the event they want to talk to someone who is not directly associated with the Western Australia Police Force. We have more chaplains than we have ever had, and they are engaged in 24/7 provision of service in the event that anyone requires it. We have peer support programs, and I am of the belief that they are probably the most significant contribution we can make to ensuring that the resilience and the strength of our police officers in encountering these experiences is boosted. They will be everywhere. We can train and encourage more police officers to undertake that role. It is a completely voluntary role. They are given a few days' training and it enables them to get out there and be visible as a point of contact for a peer—a colleague who is experiencing the exact same life and challenges as the individual who may have some concern. They see that person as someone they can talk to and share with at that moment or immediately thereafter. That is far more likely, I feel, to have a positive impact and will ensure that that individual is less likely to be vulnerable to the experience they have encountered. We are growing those numbers. I want to encourage the Western Australia Police Force in that endeavour, because it is a great program. It is probably the most immediate source of support that anyone can have, and the most valuable, because it is from colleagues and peers.

That aside, as I said earlier, I turn to the experience some officers have had. Firstly, the member for Cockburn in his speech indicated that the previous Commissioner of Police dismissed—they are his words; I do not know whether it is true, as I was not there—PTSD as an issue. I can guarantee that the current police commissioner does not do that. I witnessed his performance and resolute focus on the welfare and care for his officers from the moment I took on this role and actually before that. Undeniably, he is one of the best police commissioners, if not the best, to have served this state. It is his number one priority. He does everything else to the best of his ability and to the full extent of his capacity, but I have witnessed that his number one priority is the health and welfare of his officers. That is a true leader, a good leader. It confirms that concerns from officers who have served in previous eras are not relevant today. It is relevant that police officers encountered issues and trauma that could potentially inflict damage upon them, but it is not true to say that the command and the management are like they were before. It is not true to say that the service provision is like it was before. It is changing every day. There is more to be done, and there will be. We are growing our capacity and looking for more opportunities.

One of the other fields of endeavour I am absolutely focused on in an effort to prevent us having to be concerned about officers after they have left or encountered this trauma is assisting them if they become incapable of serving through physical or psychological injury in transitioning in a healthy manner from their service into other employment, into post-service life. If we can ensure that they have a successful transition and they get another form of employment or professional pursuit, and they make a positive contribution and they know that, that boosts resilience. If a police officer is clear that what they do is valuable and valued, that is the best possible medicine for anyone who may be vulnerable to succumbing to the challenges that they have confronted in the past. Most of them have lived, from a very young age, in a team environment in which their peers have provided them with the camaraderie and the esprit de corps that they experienced on a daily basis. It boosts them and gives them capacity to deal with all manner of challenges. If their transition out of the police force is not done successfully, they can easily become vulnerable. They can become isolated and lose their sense of worth and they can spiral, and are more likely to be impacted by the trauma that they have encountered in the course of their career. The best thing we can do is ensure that bit does not happen. They go from one environment where they are supported and valued into another one where they are contributing in a positive way; they are supported and valued. That is the best treatment, in my view. That is something that the police force is focused on. It is already engaged in assisting transition.

We also have the veterans issues portfolio. We are engaged in trying to do the same thing for veterans in Western Australia. I intend to ensure that the veterans issues and police portfolios collaborate to ensure both are afforded this opportunity with the resources that we have at our disposal. To the best possible extent of our capacity, we will be ensuring that police officers who leave are supported—it may not be through injury; it may just be time for them to go from the police force. If we can get them into employment in Western Australia, we value them, we desperately need good people, not just in the police force, we need them in the public sector, we need them in the private sector. If we can get them to transition successfully, that will avoid some of the negative consequences we hear frequently about people, as a result of their service, succumbing to the trauma that they encountered many years before.

In conclusion, I reiterate what I said at the outset: this is a significant moment. We have transitioned from only a few short years ago when there was no redress scheme. Officers leaving the force through medical retirement were

treated as though they had lost the confidence of the Commissioner of Police and there was no police compensation. We will have that shortly. This bill will deliver a very significant and positive change in the treatment of officers. I will say the same thing I say to police officers as I go around the state meeting them, particularly the young ones: I hope they do not ever use this legislation. It is not a good thing. It is a good thing that we will have this system; it is a great thing that we will have a much better system to support people, but I hope they never get to use it. If a person is at the point of being incapable of working and needing the full extent of the measures available in this initiative, that means a lot of damage has been done. I prefer that we do a whole lot of other things to avoid that happening in the first place. As I said earlier, that is the case for the vast majority of people. They will have a great career. There will be hard times, there will be traumatic times and they will confront incredible things that many other people will not, but they will be able to deal with it. We will assist them even further in coming years to be able to do that. This system will be here for those who succumb and are not able to.

I would like to join others in thanking the people who have really done the work on bringing the legislation to this point. Most are here today as advisers. Assistant Commissioner Properjohn, Karen Roberts and Malcolm Penn are here and I will introduce them more formally shortly. Their work in delivering this outcome has been extraordinary. It has been 158 years or so in coming and it is a really significant moment; they should be very, very proud of what they have achieved. Again, I acknowledge Hon Michelle Roberts, the Speaker, for her role in driving this legislation from opposition in 2016. I witnessed her at a Labor Party state conference introduce and give a platform to the Medically Retired Western Australian Police Officers Association. She then drew a motion of support for police compensation from the entire floor of the Labor conference. That will not be forgotten. That was the starting point. Actually, the WA Police Union got on board after that conference. I can tell members that it was difficult getting the union to embrace the whole concept prior to that time.

Finally, I would like to again acknowledge my chief of staff, Rachel Sackville-Minchin, who has, in my predecessor's office and in mine, been right at the forefront of developing this bill within government. Clearly, she has been totally committed to it; her partner being a former police officer meant that she had no choice! But she was a driving force within government and she has provided exceptional service as a fine public servant of the state, who is very much on the side of police officers.

I will conclude with those observations and commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Ms L. METTAM: I would also like to thank the advisers for their attendance.

What is the process for communicating the time line and what does the minister anticipate will be the time frame for the regulations that will sit behind the bill?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am advised that subject to the bill passing through the upper house this year and then receiving royal assent—the regulations are being worked on right now—we hope that the scheme will be operational from 1 January. It is just subject to getting the legislation through Parliament, but the regulations are already being worked on. It is probably worthwhile stating that there will still be a process. Once the scheme is operating and an individual applies, there will be a process beyond that. It will not be immediate for them. They will have to be assessed and determinations will have to be made about their entitlement. It will not be the fact that they get the money immediately. A process will commence subject to everything passing by 1 January.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2: Commencement —

Ms L. METTAM: Once this bill passes, will an ordinary worker be entitled to any compensation that a police officer will still not be eligible for?

Mr P. Papalia: Do you mean an ordinary public servant?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes, sorry—an ordinary public servant.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Unlike public servants, a police officer will not be able to receive a compensation payment for injury and remain in service, because that is just the nature of police service. This will be an entitlement on medical retirement. Beyond that, the entitlements will be commensurate with compensation schemes for the wider public service. As the member is aware, police officers have other entitlements that public servants do not have post-retirement as well.

Ms L. METTAM: The minister has perhaps answered this, but once this bill passes, will police officers be eligible for any compensation that ordinary public servants are ineligible for?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is not compensation, but police officers have an entitlement to the post-service medical benefits scheme, which is currently operational. The former officers' medical benefits scheme was established to provide former police officers and Aboriginal police liaison officers with support for medical expenses related to a physical or psychological injury that occurred while serving with the WA Police Force. Again, this is one of those things that I was referring to that did not exist in the past, so people's experiences are not of this system. The former officers' medical benefits scheme is governed by the Police (Medical and Other Expenses for Former Officers) Act 2008, which prescribes their entitlements. This is different from the medical expenses provided by the WA Police Force for serving officers. Former officers with accepted claims are entitled to the prescribed amount, which is currently \$71 754. Once this amount is exceeded, they may apply for an increase in the amount—up to \$50 000. This is provided for in clauses 18A(1), 18A(1a) and 18A(1CA) of schedule 1 of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981. Once the amount of \$50 000 is exhausted, a further amount of up to \$250 000 may be applied for. This is provided for in clauses 18A(1b), 18A(1d) and 18A(2aa) of schedule 1 of the aforementioned act. However, under regulation 9A(1) of the Police (Medical and Other Expenses for Former Officers) Regulations 2009, this entitlement to apply for a further amount of up to \$250 000 is subject to a time limit of five years from the date of the claim.

I must state at this point that based on State Solicitor's advice, the Insurance Commission of Western Australia advises that it is unlikely that a psychological injury would be able to satisfy the statutory requirements outlined in clause 18A(2aa) of schedule 1 of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981 for a further increase in funding up to the \$250 000. I must also state that nothing in the compensation that is being delivered will extinguish rights to post-service medical benefits. That is something that other public servants do not get; police do, and that will be preserved once this legislation is passed.

Ms L. METTAM: Will any compensation be available to dependants once this bill is passed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This scheme does not extend to dependants. However, in the event of an officer's death, their dependants will be entitled to compensation under the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act, like other public servants.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Part 2D inserted —

Ms L. METTAM: Proposed section 33ZR(b), "Summary of Part", states —

the Police Commissioner's decision that the former member should be retired on medical grounds was attributable to a medical condition related to their work as a member.

Under the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act, a medical practitioner determines whether a medical condition is work related. Why does the government's bill stipulate that the Commissioner of Police, rather than a medical practitioner, will determine whether a medical condition is work related?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am advised that this is essentially a self-insurance scheme. The insurer will be responsible for determining liability, so the commissioner will have that responsibility. A medical board will advise the commissioner on the capacity of an officer to perform their duties. It will be a decision of the commissioner as to whether or not those injuries were sustained as a result of service.

Ms L. METTAM: Proposed section 33ZR(a) states —

the former member ceased to hold office as a member because they were retired on medical grounds under Part IIC ...

Why will the government's bill limit eligibility to those officers who are diagnosed with conditions after their retirement? I know that is a big part of the bill, but what was the decision based on?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think the member is getting at the question that has been posed by some people about whether, some years down the track, those officers can apply for compensation under this scheme. Is that what the member's question related to?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes, it is. The flip side of that is why would the government deny those people an opportunity to seek compensation after they had decided to resign?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The scheme is all about people who are compelled to medically retire. It is not about people who might have partial incapacity or things of that nature. They can no longer perform the duties of a serving police officer and are therefore compelled to medically retire. I think that is the right angle. In the past, those people would have had fewer opportunities for compensation than this scheme will afford them. It will address the lack of support that was endured by many of the officers who gave evidence before a lot of the committees and the like that people have referred to.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — PRIORITIES*Motion*

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

That this house condemns the Labor government for its abuse of power, using its majority to manipulate parliamentary processes instead of focusing on and prioritising the needs of Western Australians.

This is the last private members' business motion for the parliamentary year. That is worthwhile noting because it has been an extraordinary year. There is no getting away from it: there are six of us sitting on this side of the chamber and every week we have turned up and made sure that we asked the government the questions that get asked of us in the community. We tried to provide balance and scrutiny to a government that has an enormous amount of power. We would like to think that we would get to the end of the first parliamentary year of this term of government and have more complimentary things to say about the government with its enormous power. We would hope that we would get to the end of the parliamentary year and say that the government used its numbers judiciously and that we did not see abuses of its power in this Parliament, yet we have seen numerous examples of incredibly important legislation rammed through. The government's priorities were askew. Our communities and the state as a whole faced critical issues, but we saw this government being opportunistic about its priorities and ensuring that it could get through its very important political priorities, including the one vote, one value, or electoral reform legislation, that was just recently passed. This is the last opportunity the opposition has to move a motion under private members' business in the Legislative Assembly before the house rises for the year. It is a good time for us to reflect on the way this government has spent the first year of its second term. I want to go back to the beginning of last year, which seems like a long time ago. It was pre-COVID, pre-pandemic really—certainly “pre” any serious arrival of the disease in Western Australia. Some issues had already been ignored or failed to be addressed by this government. Issues relating to our health system were certainly prevalent and had been raised again and again by the previous opposition. Those matters were unaddressed.

I want to focus on what occurred when COVID hit. I spoke about this earlier when addressing the motion we supported to ensure that everyone in this house, members and staff, is vaccinated in the case of a lockdown. We had to come up with rules to deal with COVID in a state of emergency—in the very real sense that it was an emergency. It was very uncertain at the time, with no surety about what was going to happen in the state. A decision was made by the previous opposition and the Nationals WA that support needed to be offered to the government to allow it to make the decisions that it required. Advice from the Chief Health Officer, the police and all the emergency entities fed in to ensure we had the right legislation and we responded appropriately. At very short notice, we agreed to change the standing orders. We dealt with legislation that was sometimes handed to us as we walked into the chamber. Changes were made between the two chambers because legislation was drafted at very short notice. We made a conscious effort to provide support to the government. We wanted to work together. We accommodated that. As a result—I think I mentioned this earlier—on some occasions certain members could not come into this chamber and ask questions or represent their electorate on particular issues because we did not have capacity to have everybody in here at the same time. It was a very new and different working environment, but we accommodated it and we made it work because it was important. That is the kind of courtesy and, I guess, respect for this place that we displayed in quite different circumstances, and we thought we might see the same consideration from the government this year with its enormous majority. Before the election, the Premier said —

My promise is simple—I will lead a sensible, responsible, and experienced Government.

I did not hear the Premier say that he would introduce one vote, one value legislation to reduce regional representation in the upper house. I did not hear him say that he would ignore parliamentary processes and checks and balances when appointing the Corruption and Crime Commissioner—a very important role. I did not hear him say that the government would make a decision summarily to end native forestry. I did not hear him say that the government would make a decision to declare urgent bills, such as the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill that just went through Parliament, to gag debate and to then move them through. They are all very serious issues that Parliaments through time have had to consider. Governments have used the processes of Parliament to ensure that outcomes are appropriate. I refer particularly to those pieces of legislation, but also the way in which the Corruption and Crime Commissioner was appointed and the decision was made to end native forestry, which was a policy decision. That decision would not have come to Parliament, but we will be required to debate some legislation to put into effect some of the impacts of that decision. It would have been prudent for the Premier, knowing that he had an enormous amount of power, to be seen to be using it appropriately.

Any reflection on the last nine months, including gagging debate, briefing at very short notice on serious and significant issues that will have long-term impacts and ramifications, and being downright deceitful on electoral reform because the Premier said before the election that it was not on the agenda and then made it a priority as we came to this house, does not reflect well on a government that has a Premier who said, “I will lead a sensible, responsible and experienced government.” To me, it says government members have allowed that power to go to their heads. The Premier is right at the centre of that.

I thought, perhaps naively, that the Premier would understand the gravity of having such enormous power, that he would not want to be perceived to or actually abuse that power, but I have to say how wrong I was. Over the last 12 to 24 months, a cult of personality has been built around the Premier. He is the answer to everything in Western Australia. Not five minutes after the last election when such extraordinary numbers were delivered, he took on the role of Treasurer. It is clear from these benches that the government is the Premier. Anyone else has very little look-in. The fact that the Premier cannot delineate between the adulation that he gets on his social media pages and when he is in the public and some forums—although that is starting to change a little now—and his role to provide that solid and steady governance will be a failure for this government in the end. As reporter Gareth Parker so succinctly put back in August —

... spin might get you through the daily news cycle, but the work of governing catches up with you in the end.

The government made a decision to ram through legislation on electoral reform, which is going to reduce regional representation in our state's Legislative Council at the next election, through gagging debate and without allowing the people of Western Australia to have their say, or even sending it to a committee. There is no use of the committee system. I do not know what the committees are doing in the other house. I know that the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations is working incredibly hard. The estimates committee has some very hardworking members on it. It has just recently been successful in putting together a homelessness inquiry. I look forward to the findings that the committee comes up with. I have served on some of the committees. I would have thought that the Standing Committee on Legislation would have been the perfect place to park the electoral reform legislation to allow for proper and appropriate scrutiny. Instead, debate was gagged and the government refused to contemplate any amendments or consider that a referendum might be held before it is enacted. The legislation could go through but a referendum could be held to see whether it is something that the people of Western Australia support. Instead, it was simply, "We've made the decision. We're pushing it through." In all honesty, it has been pushed through so that the Premier and the government can move on and they are betting on the fact that the people of Western Australia will have forgotten by the time we get to the next election. I can guarantee that they will not have, but that political opportunism should not preclude the Premier following due process. Gagging debate is a blunt instrument. That is just one of the examples we have seen over the course of the last nine months.

I go back to the comment that Gareth Parker made so succinctly back in August. He said —

... spin might get you through the daily news cycle, but the work of governing catches up with you in the end.

It has caught up, because in the last week and especially today, the Auditor General has tabled a couple of reports that go to the fact that this government is failing on the bread and butter of managing government departments, being accountable and dealing with those issues that are so very important. The *Audit results report—Annual 2020–21 financial audits of state government entities* was tabled today. I am quoting directly from the Auditor General's introduction. She says —

Of great concern in this year's results is the number of entities with serious deficiencies requiring a qualified opinion on financial statements, controls or key performance indicators, increasing from 7 entities last year to 17 this year, with 31 separate qualification matters. This is the highest number of qualified audit opinions ever reported by my Office. Too many qualifications related to significant deficiencies in payroll and procurement controls, and information system security.

...

A qualification is a serious audit matter and almost always requires additional audit effort.

Those are the words of the Auditor General. I will just take members back —

This is the highest number of qualified audit opinions ever reported by my Office.

That is very concerning. The table at page 11 of the report clearly indicates that the number of qualified issues has increased, as has the number of qualified entities. Figure 1 on that table is very informative. Over the course of this government, there has been a significant increase in the number of qualified audit opinions for state entities. The report continues —

Seventeen entities received qualified opinions in 2020–21 compared with 7 entities in 2019–20. A number of entities had more than one qualification within the audit report, and overall there were 31 discrete qualifications across these 17 entities, compared with 11 in the prior year. This is the highest number of audit qualifications ever issued by our Office. Qualified audit opinions matter in the public sector as they are integral to providing assurance that public funds and resources are being properly accounted for and well managed.

The report continues —

Too many qualifications related to significant deficiencies in payroll and procurement controls, and information system security. This is an indicator of significant shortcomings in these critical areas of financial management and business continuity, and a concerning trend.

I take members back to the Premier's comments that he would lead a sensible and experienced government. This report suggests that this government is failing to actually manage the state and the state's departments. My question to the Premier today was: what responsibility does he take for that, given that when he came to government, he overhauled the public service with the machinery-of-government changes that we know threw the public service into an enormous amount of disarray? We saw this in every estimates committee that we attended. I think of in particular the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. It took until this year for that department to be able to table an organisational chart that actually outlined its roles and responsibilities. That is four years for one department that is responsible for a significant amount of the business of the state government. The Department of Communities features significantly in this latest audit report. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries features heavily, as does DPIRD, as I said. These are significant departments that have been mashed together. The Attorney General made the observation —

... what these results highlight most clearly to me is that government entities do not have unlimited capacity and capability. Strong foundations in financial management and governance are essential for supporting long-term confidence and capability in our public institutions ... this focus can inadvertently slip when entities take on additional functions and responsibilities over shortened timeframes.

I have no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a factor in this over the last 12 months, but the machinery-of-government issue that has been well canvassed across the last four years is the enormous amount of disruption within those mega-departments. Multiple people report to the directors general and it has caused an enormous amount of concern and disruption. That is now playing out in the record number of qualified audits that are of serious concern. If anybody is in any doubt, they should start reading from page 24 of the audit results report. In the first paragraph under each item that the Office of the Auditor General has looked at, which includes expenditure, payroll and human resources, governance, assets, accounting procedures, revenue, liabilities and inventory, it states how many controlled weaknesses have been identified and how many of them are repeats. These results are based on not just the last two years, but also matters that have been identified explicitly by the Auditor General and then not dealt with by those responsible—and, ultimately, the government is responsible.

I remember getting audits when I was a minister. I had to sit down with the Auditor General, who took me through what was likely to be in the body of the report and then asked for the response. From time to time we were then asked how we were progressing in dealing with those audit reports. Clearly, there are ministers who have not done that. They have failed in their duty to follow up a qualification provided by the Auditor General. It has been pointed out in black and white to them, and then repeated, with a few extra qualifications added on top of that. That is a serious concern. I go back to that comment from Gareth Parker —

... spin might get you through the daily news cycle, but the work of governing catches up with you in the end.

Directors general and executives are stretched beyond their capacity because the Premier swept in and mashed everything together as a part of the machinery-of-government plan. Those decisions are now coming home to roost. Instead of focusing on providing strong and steady leadership, this government has put the public service under further pressure. It has then used this Parliament to serve its own political purposes by taking advantage of its enormous majority. It has also sought to avoid scrutiny and accountability. The Premier's response in question time today avoided all responsibility for the qualified audit findings that have quadrupled under his government's watch—quadrupled! He completely ignored the incidents identified in last year's audit that have been unaddressed. I go back to the comment made by the Auditor General in the report —

This is the highest number of qualified audit opinions ever reported by my Office.

This government has been relying on spin and fluff. The agencies and public servants that this government relies on are under extraordinary pressure; they are stretched and it is starting to show. Nine months in, when we actually need our departments and agencies to be working at peak—just like we have been saying ad nauseam about the health department—some serious cracks are showing. I wonder whether the Premier actually asked the Auditor General whether those emerging pressures could have been avoided if those directors general were presiding over smaller departments and whether those mega-departments have contributed to those pressures. I doubt it, because the Premier made the decision.

These fractures have emerged because of the changes introduced by this government. As I said, people working in the Department of Communities or interacting with that agency regularly report to us that they are under extraordinary pressure and it is chaotic. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is a monolith that has not realised the efficiencies the government said would come from putting all those agencies together. It is absolutely disastrous for this government to finish the year with an independent report from the Auditor General that says it has the dubious honour of receiving the highest number of qualified audit opinions ever, on top of the vaccine rollout audit that came out last week and concluded that the state government had failed to put in place processes to manage its responsibility. The work of governing catches up with a government when it relies on daily press conferences, spin doctors and media grabs to get through. Those cracks eventually show. As we said yesterday in the debate on the matter of public interest, all the questions that we asked about the vaccine rollout out were reasonable. The Auditor General's report underlines that, because the Auditor General was asking the same questions.

I will continue by going through some of the decisions that the government has made, or not made, throughout the year. I start with hotel quarantine. That was an extraordinary situation. There had been a breach in our hotel quarantine system. There had been breaches in every hotel quarantine system around the nation, so that was not a surprise. What was concerning was the lack of action from the Premier and the government at the time. Reports has been done by Professor Weeramanthri. Those reports were kept under wraps for weeks and weeks after we had had the breach. It took multiple questions and repeated requests to the Premier and to the Minister for Health to prompt the release of those reports and, after those reports were released, for the government to tell us what it was going to do about quarantine breaches.

One of the actions that the government said it would take was to form a quarantine advisory panel. There were further questions from the opposition about who would be on that panel, what its terms of reference were and when it was going to meet. Those questions were all met with, “We can’t answer that; we don’t know.” We asked multiple questions about this serious issue. That is on record in *Hansard*. The important issue that we needed to focus on at that time, along with the need to resource the health system, because we knew that was failing, was ensuring that the hotel quarantine system would be able to respond to the threat of COVID coming into our community. We asked multiple questions. Again, ministers walked into this place and chose not to be accountable but rather attack and deflect. Ultimately, it came out. The reports were released. The questions that we had asked through the processes of the Legislative Council and the media eventually showed that the government had dragged its feet in responding to those reports. Essentially, that meant that people had been placed at risk, because the government had been unwilling to deliver bad news. It preferred not to release that information and be held accountable. The opposition has said consistently that when a government has the numbers that this government has, it has to be completely accountable and transparent in the way that it makes decisions. That is especially important when it comes to issues like the management of COVID.

We then had the debacle of the SafeWA app. The use of that check-in app is very, very important, and it will become even more important as the borders are relaxed and eventually, to some degree, COVID comes into Western Australia. We all remember the promises that the Premier made about the importance of ensuring the safety of that data. However, it became evident that that data had been used by the police and there was a gap. The Premier and the Minister for Health chose not to tell the people of WA when they found out about that. Again, that had to be dragged out of them. Everybody will remember that the opposition was then alerted to a piece of legislation at 10.00 am. I cannot remember exactly what day that was; I suspect it was a Tuesday. We were told about it at 10.00 am and we were briefed at 5.00 pm, because that would have been the first opportunity that we had in a sitting week. We were then expected to pass that legislation by 7.00 pm. That is a pretty familiar format that we are getting used to in opposition at the moment. That piece of legislation was rushed in to deal with that loophole and to cover up the fact that the Premier had made a promise and then discovered that he had not kept it. The Premier could have come clean at the time and told everyone. Instead, we had this rush, and the opposition was asked once again to deal with a piece of legislation that we had seen for only five seconds.

That is just part of a pattern whereby the Premier refuses to be questioned. The Premier will not be questioned. That pattern was set very early in the piece. The Premier showed such arrogance in such a short period. This was at the very beginning of the parliamentary year. There was more to come. I spoke briefly about the appointment of the Corruption and Crime Commissioner. I do not want to dwell on this, but it was of major concern to the opposition, not because of who the Premier appointed, but how it was done. It was a well thought out process that had been laid out in legislation. The Parliament had gone through the appropriate processes to create an act that governed and guided the way that commissioners should be appointed, so that the government, the executive of the day, was removed from politicising the role of the Corruption and Crime Commissioner, who has such an important oversight role. The Corruption and Crime Commission should be above the political fray and what goes on in this house. The whole system was designed to avoid politicising that position. This government, and this Premier, in particular, chose to ignore all of that. With great arrogance, using its numbers, the government simply introduced a bill that inserted the name of Mr McKechnie into the legislation. It was a blunt tool that has set a very dangerous precedent.

Dr D.J. Honey: It is a political appointment.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is a political appointment—absolutely. It sets a very dangerous precedent, Leader of the Liberal Party. It is a very dangerous precedent for future governments.

I went back to look at the media coverage of this appointment. Of course, because there was so much spin around the appointment at the time that the processes of this house and the integrity of how this place operates was lost in the public conversation. For those of us who were in here and understand those processes, that should have rung very serious alarm bells. An editorial comment by Paul Murray’s on 12 June was spot on. He stated —

The McGowan Government is now totally responsible for tainting McKechnie as “Labor’s man” which is unfair to the former Commissioner.

He went on to observe —

That appears to be of no concern to a government with a big enough majority in both Houses that it can do what it wants in Parliament regardless of precedent, protocol or the rules.

What we are seeing is a ruthless exercise of power without responsibility that should make people fearful of what else might lie ahead.

That is very succinct—maybe we should have read that in as the subject of private member’s business instead! He was very succinct —

What we are seeing is a ruthless exercise of power without responsibility that should make people fearful of what else might lie ahead.

We have seen the issues over the appointment of the Corruption and Crime Commissioner. We have seen legislation being rushed in to cover up and correct loopholes at very short notice. Then we came to electoral reform. We can add electoral reform to this list of the “ruthless exercise of power without responsibility that should make people fearful”, because what could be more arrogant, wilful or deceitful than the Premier denying that he was going to do something before the election and then making it his first order of business after the election? What could be more self-serving than to use the government’s majority in Parliament to permanently change the way that people are elected to this Parliament, when the Premier failed to tell the people whom it will impact most that that was his plan when he was asked directly? Again, the Premier is front and centre of this deceit. It was “not on the agenda”, according to the Premier! He was asked about this many, many times. He said, “I have been clear and I will be clear again. It is not on our agenda.”

I look around this chamber and wonder how many regional members of the Labor Party will face their constituents on this issue as they head back to their electorates. I wonder how they will have those conversations after they have failed to stand in this house and explain their support for this legislation. They failed to do that, and it was significant. We can only assume that all regional members opposite are in full agreement with the Premier and are prepared to have those conversations with their constituents, because nobody stood up to say otherwise. Instead, they chose to follow the political edict of the Premier and concentrate the state’s power and influence in the metropolitan area, because that is the outcome of that legislation. That is what will happen. It was incredibly disappointing to be a member of Parliament in this place while that legislation was going through, because being a member of Parliament with a voice for your community actually means something. Being fearless in your representation for those people and communities means something. On a number of occasions when such significant legislation has gone through the house, we have seen those who either should be speaking to make sure their constituents’ voices are heard, or explaining for the public record why they have chosen to support the legislation, simply sitting down and voting. As a result, we will have a permanent reduction of representation for regional Western Australians.

When we get to 2025, some serious thought will have to be given to how we make sure we do not lose the value the Legislative Council adds because of the way it has been constructed. It is not there to act as a rubber stamp for the Legislative Assembly; that is not the purpose of the Legislative Council. It does not have to provide unfettered support to the executive government and this house; that is not what this system is designed for, but that is the intent of the Constitutional and Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Equality) Bill 2021, as described by the Attorney General and the Premier. The votes in this house are here forever. There are members in both chambers who had opportunities to be courageous and on the right side of the argument, and to explain why they chose to support that legislation, but no-one in this house apart from two cabinet ministers stood up to speak, and the ministers were compelled to as a result of their cabinet solidarity. I am incredibly disappointed.

We accept that governments get to make policy decisions and bring policy through that we will not always agree with; that is the nature of government and opposition. But policy decisions aside, it was the process that was, once again, most disappointing. The policy was denied before the election, and then there was the appointment of a sham of a ministerial expert committee. When the committee was created, it called for submissions and then, two weeks later, a consultation paper was released to assist with the submissions. When we pointed that out, the committee had to extend submissions for a further two weeks because we wanted people to be able to respond to the submission paper that came out two weeks after the first call for submissions. It was a shambolic process, and window dressing at best. The expert committee was a farce.

We then saw the bill, and I think we were debating it the next day, from memory; it might have been the week after. But we were then asked to sit to all hours of the night to get through the bill, and there was a very clear gag order to make sure that the government could keep to its own time line. It all smacked of political opportunism. Despite the fact that the bill was delivered by the Minister for Electoral Affairs, the Premier was the one pushing this. I am not sure that that is something that anyone should be proud of. If we are going to change the way that people are elected to this chamber, it should be done in a very measured and respectful way, but the way this government did it was anything but that.

While we were dealing with that legislation—which I would argue should never have been a priority, but was clearly made a priority—we could have dealt with some of the issues I tried to raise with the Attorney General, such as the splitting of superannuation for de facto couples. The Constitutional and Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Equality) Bill 2021 was the government’s number one priority and was the issue that was pushed through in the first nine months of this term of government. Regardless of whether we agree with it, it will not be needed until at least a year out from the next election, yet it was pushed through. I have attended functions and forums in my capacity as shadow Minister for Women’s Interests and have had a number of different organisations raise

their concerns about legislation to enable the splitting of superannuation for people in de facto relationships who are separating, yet that issue has not come through this Parliament. I would have thought that would have been right up the alley of members on the government bench. I would have thought that they would love to hang their hat on resolving that issue, which has been around for a long, long time. Instead, the Minister for Electoral Affairs focused on electoral reform, which will not be needed for at least another two years. It is just remarkable.

The most recent example of the frustrating ways that the government has chosen to use this Parliament is the debate on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill. I am not going to dwell on this too much, because we finished talking about it at 12 o'clock last night, but just so we have it on the record as part of this debate, it is another example. The opposition was briefed on the bill on Tuesday, we started debating it last Wednesday —

Mr V.A. Catania: We were briefed on the overview.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Sorry, we were briefed on the overview. We had not actually seen the legislation. We debated it on Wednesday and were told it needed to be through on Thursday. The shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs negotiated so that we could debate it until midnight last night, and the debate was still gagged, so we did not get through all the clauses. That is a serious piece of legislation. I said that, and so did all our members on this side. We made the most sensible contribution we could make, not having been able to go through that legislation, to consult, to talk to our constituents and to invite comment from stakeholders. I received some in the few days we debated this bill that did not correlate with what the government is doing. We were given no courtesy or opportunity to test any of that appropriately. That is on something that will have long-reaching ramifications for this state.

It is an abuse of the way this house should work. When we are dealing with issues like the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill, electoral reform or any of the matters we have in here, there are processes in place to make sure that we get the best possible outcome. All this place is to the current government is a big rubber stamp. The government is setting a very dangerous precedent. The government thinks it is above questioning. The government should be willing to stand next to legislation it brings to this place and allow it to stand up to scrutiny, allow it to be questioned, if it has that much confidence in what it is doing. The government should plan its time better. Someone is not managing the time very well, if the government has to shove something like that through when we have had a whole raft of other pieces of legislation. If that was the most important thing we needed to do this year, it should have been on the agenda so that we could have dealt with it in a respectful way. It is disrespectful, and not just to the opposition, because this is about far more than the six people sitting on this side of the chamber. It is about all those stakeholders who took time to contribute and who look to this place as being sensible and measured—outside question time, which is clearly not sensible and measured! When we deal with legislation, those processes are typically about getting down to the business of being parliamentarians and making sure that we get an outcome. It is extraordinarily disappointing that legislation on such an important issue was rammed through this house, and the same will happen in the Legislative Council.

We believe this government should prioritise the needs of Western Australians, instead of using its majority to serve its own purposes, which is what we can see has happened over the last nine months. That is with real regret, because we see so many challenges in our community. We have a health system in crisis. We have skilled worker shortages that are having a real impact on not only the tourism industry, which was raised by the shadow Minister for Tourism today, but also the agricultural sector, our business community and the mining sector. That is a real and present concern. Prioritise the needs of Western Australians, look after our health system—make sure we are using that \$5.8 billion surplus.

I refer to the question about DVassist from the shadow Minister for Health. I get the political answer. It was the easiest one to come back with—that is, throw it back at the federal government and make it its responsibility. The question was whether —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central! Minister!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It was a serious question, and there has been support from the federal government. The organisation is looking to expand. Discussion about lobbying the federal government to maintain its funding and about the state government providing support out of the \$5.8 billion surplus it has in its back pocket should have been responded to. The organisation continuing to offer support to regional families across the state is something that I thought should have been responded to rather than simply going straight to, “It’s not our fault; it’s the commonwealth’s fault.” The government could have done that. Instead, we heard the list of things that the minister is doing. I applaud her for investing in new domestic violence accommodation and programs, but the reality is that they impact on the people within proximity of those facilities. I wish we had one in every community in Western Australia, but we do not. DVassist is so important because it is a gateway and a signpost to supporting people who are in real need. Instead of saying in the run-up to the next state budget, “Yes, we will find a way, out of the \$5.8 billion surplus, to make sure that the federal government maintains its investment and we will put some money on the table; we will be able to expand and support that organisation to provide support to women and families right across this state”, that is how the minister could have answered the question.

They are the things that we mean when we say “prioritising the needs of Western Australians”. This past nine months has seen the pursuit of political agendas by this government. It hopes to get all the very distasteful things out of the way, which it knows will not be viewed well in advance of an election, to the detriment, I have to say, of the bread-and-butter issues that governments should be paying attention to. Our health system is in crisis, we have a housing shortage and we have a looming education crisis. We cannot get an answer about whether there is a plan to make sure there will be schoolteachers in front of students next year. It is all very well to say these are challenging times, but governments are charged with coming up with plans to address that. If there is one, please share it; if there is not, admit it, but do not tell us that we are asking unreasonable questions. It is a perfectly reasonable question that every parent, teacher and school community is asking in advance of the next school year. Those are the things that this government should be focused on. Instead, we have seen a manipulation of this Parliament for political purposes. A most disappointing precedent has been set in terms of the appointment of incredibly powerful people who oversee our government departments and Parliament. Outcomes in terms of one vote, one value legislation and the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021 could have been dealt with in a far more courteous, professional and reasonable manner. As Paul Murray has observed in his articles, and others are starting to write more and more, this government is ruthless—ruthless in its application and pursuit of power.

Dr D.J. Honey: I wish they were ruthless!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Ruthful—sorry; it was the wrong word. It is ruthless in its pursuit of power and in holding onto that power. It will be its undoing. At the end of the first nine months, the report card from not only the opposition but also the Auditor General, and any objective assessment of what we have seen happen in this chamber over the last nine months, says that this government is on a rocky road for the next three years if that is what we are going to see and that is how it will behave. That disappoints me greatly. I suspect no-one will lose much sleep over that in this chamber, but I happen to think that we should behave appropriately and be respectful of the processes that this Parliament stands for. I certainly have not seen a great deal of that over the past nine months.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.48 pm]: I also rise to strongly support this motion. I want to continue the points that the Leader of the Opposition made. This government does not just get frustrated about being questioned, it also does not think it should be questioned. This government thinks that it is above being questioned. That behaviour is seen by the other side of the house. We saw that when we considered the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill and other bills before this Parliament. Ministers get upset and frustrated that we would question their bills because everything they do is perfect. When they do it, it is above reproach. It is above questioning. It is above any scrutiny. If we scrutinise legislation, it is somehow an insult to the government. There are mature heads on the other side of this chamber. I think that any members on the other side of the chamber who care to reflect would welcome being questioned and challenged, and would explain where they think that is wrong in a respectful way, not in an abusive and insulting way, and would accept when —

Dr A.D. Buti: You are the one who was insulting and personal last night in your third reading speech. That’s the thing with you, Honey, everyone else is wrong. Okay; the member for Cottesloe.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The member for Armadale should address the Leader of the Liberal Party in the appropriate and correct manner. He should apologise.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will refer to him as the member for Cottesloe, but definitely not the Leader of the Opposition, because that is a joke.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Just wait; I have not ruled on the last point of order. There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, please stop interjecting.

Dr D.J. HONEY: We see once again that the government believes that it is above any criticism or questioning. The government gets upset when it is questioned. The Premier behaves like that in the chamber. During question time, the Premier was visibly upset. The Premier and the Minister for Health were lining up to shout abuse across this chamber —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I cannot hear the Leader of the Liberal Party, who is right next to me, because the member for Armadale continually interjects and the diatribe coming out of his mouth is poisoning this whole chamber.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Minister, please refrain from interjecting.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: We saw the Premier and the health minister literally shouting abuse across this chamber. They are two of the most senior members in this government —

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think the Leader of the Liberal Party is impugning the Premier and Deputy Premier with “shouting abuse”. I think that is contrary —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Member for North West Central!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think it is contrary to the standing orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order. If we could all just refrain from arguing with each other and let the Leader of the Liberal Party speak.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Shouting abuse across this chamber because —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

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

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much.

As I say, what we see—we are seeing it demonstrated now in spades—is a government that believes it is beyond reproach. I know there are some sensible heads on the government’s side of the chamber, although that is not being demonstrated now —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Acting Speaker, I do not seek interjections from the minister and he is constantly interjecting. I ask that you ask him to desist.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have already asked him to do that.

Dr D.J. HONEY: As I said, we are seeing that demonstrated now. We have a new minister —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Point of Order

Ms L. METTAM: The member for Cottesloe, Leader of the Liberal Party, has stated he is not taking interjections and I am trying to hear his speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Member for Vasse, we have had this discussion.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: As I say, it is being demonstrated here with a new minister who cannot take the fact that the government is being criticised. Mature heads on that side of the chamber would reflect and say, “Do you know what? I am open to criticism. I will respond in a mature and appropriate way, and if I ever think I am above reproach or questioning, then I will know that I’ve lost the plot and it will lead to trouble.” It will lead to an arrogant government full of hubris that will ultimately fail in what it sets out to do. That should be a warning sign to the other side.

Mr V.A. Catania: Lots of alarms going off.

Dr D.J. HONEY: There should be lots of alarms going off on the other side, member. Members opposite think they are beyond reproach. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, there has been a complete abuse of the processes of this Parliament. When emergency legislation had to go through for the COVID pandemic, we on this side accepted

that we should not expect to review that in the normal way. I will not repeat the Leader of the Opposition's contribution, because I have other valuable points to make. However, we are seeing an abuse of the processes. The government thinks that we should not be able to scrutinise legislation, its legislation is so good that it is above scrutiny and we should not be able to consult the community as it has already consulted everyone who matters. When we point out that many other people have not been consulted and we have not had the chance to have that feedback, we are ridiculed, mocked, laughed at and insulted across the chamber, and the government just ruthlessly shoves it through. The government does not think that it should have to listen to another point of view. It thinks it has done it all perfectly. We can see it in the indignation of members on the other side. We have seen it on display again and again—the indignation of a government that thinks that it cannot be brought to task on any matter. That should be the warning bell for this government: “Hang on; we're losing the plot here. We shouldn't be shoving legislation through this Parliament when it's not urgent. We should be allowing the opposition to scrutinise.” A good government would want scrutiny from the opposition. But, again, we hear the mocking, the ridiculing, the constant reference to the number of members here and the like. All I can say is that the six members on this side collectively have done about 10 times as much work and contributed about 10 times as much in this chamber as the 53 members on the other side have. What do we see? We see a handful of people who are allowed to speak. We see the designated heads who are allowed to speak and everyone else is told to be silent, and we saw that happen with important legislation.

Let me get on to the substantive matters that I want to cover. We have a government that thinks that because COVID has been managed well in the state of Western Australia, that is all there is to government. That is all it has to do; everything else is subsidiary to that. That is the only measure of the government's performance. Clearly, protecting the health of Western Australians is a core function of government. It is an important function, and when there is a global pandemic, that function is even more important. We on this side have said that the government has done a good job of that and it has kept Western Australians safe, and we have supported the government in that process. Throughout the early days of the COVID pandemic, we supported the government in what it was trying to do. We supported whatever the demand was to get any legislation through this place. We met every single deadline; we did not hold up a single piece of legislation because we knew it was important and a genuine crisis. Of course, there is much more to government than managing COVID. Yes, it is important that that existential threat is managed, but, equally, we know that COVID will pass. As I have said many times in this place, it is not going to pass quickly; there will be lingering impacts from COVID for potentially decades. Certainly for the next few years, that is going to be a significant factor affecting our community and the way that government has to work.

This government has a golden opportunity—an opportunity that has not been afforded to any government for some considerable time and one that I think has not been afforded to a Labor government in the history of the Parliament. I am being a student of politics here, so I am sure that the Leader of the House can correct me if I am wrong in that statement. This government has an opportunity to set an agenda for the future of the state of Western Australia, but that is what we have not seen. We have not seen any agenda for the future of the state of Western Australia. What we see—it is the modus operandi of this government—is lots of plans. It has lots of plans. We heard that in response to questions in question time today: “We've got a plan.” The Premier's substantive answer to a question about the preparation of the health system—the Minister for Health gives the same response—is, “Yes, things are pretty terrible. We have been in power for only a bit more than four and a half years, but we've got a cracking good plan.” The government has a plan and it releases a glossy plan. It is what we saw in all the announcements about Metronet—the release of a glossy plan. It gets a group of bureaucrats together and writes a strategy. We saw it with the sustainable health review. The sustainable health review was done at the start of the last term of this government. What did it lead to? We have a hospital system that is quite literally in crisis and quite literally getting worse. Since the member for Vasse raised these matters last year, at the start of this parliamentary term, every measure has got worse. We have gone from code yellows to code blacks being a regular feature, but the government has a cracking good strategy.

The trouble with a strategy is that it does not do anything or achieve any particular outcome. We have seen it in the government's so-called hydrogen strategy. Members know that this is an area about which I am especially passionate. The government mouths the words: “Yes. Hydrogen is the future. Hydrogen is the future for manufacturing.” But, in fact, in substantive terms, this government has done nothing. We have seen the rest of the world and the rest of Australia get on with this, but we have seen nothing here other than small projects. We have seen a blue hydrogen project that will have a green hydrogen aspect to it, but, overwhelming, that project is based on natural gas with some convenient hydrogen out of spare electricity from, mostly, solar panels on roofs in Western Australia—that is it. When it comes to substantive major hydrogen projects, which should be the future for Western Australia, we see nothing. The responsible ministers—the Minister for Energy and the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade—should really be ashamed. Their performance, not their spin—their spin has been world class—has been absolutely woeful. They have delivered nothing in terms of meaningful green hydrogen projects in the state of Western Australia. We see small-scale projects; meanwhile, in the rest of Australia, this is improving.

The Minister for Energy likes to make fun of the energy policy that we went to the last state election with. The reality is that the larger part of that policy, if this government had actually implemented it, would have meant that we would have been well on the way to a sustainable green hydrogen industry in Western Australia. Instead, what

do we see? As I said, we see nothing meaningful from this government in this space other than statements, spin and platitudes. Why is that? The reason is that the state has done nothing to establish the critical enabling infrastructure for that to occur. It has done nothing to make sure that the principal industrial area that should be dealing with this—Oakajee—is even beginning to be readied. It is still, literally, a bare paddock. In fact, the ownership of that estate has changed from the government. It was used as part of the compensation settlement for the extinguishment of native title in the midwest. The ownership of that land has now changed from the government to another group. That will add another level of complexity for anyone who tries to develop it. There is nothing there. We have seen the consequence of that. In other areas, we have seen that there is no available land for the development of that project.

This is a globally competitive market. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia recently—in fact, today—came out with a report on this. I am talking about the Chamber of Minerals and Energy. I think we could easily say that the government has been happy to stand with arms around shoulders saying that the Chamber of Minerals and Energy supports this. This is what the CME had to say about the government's hydrogen strategy. I will quote one section of it—

... initiatives are under-resourced relative to international competitors, and industrial development support is yet to emerge to fully take account of the significant economic and technical challenges. Furthermore, legislative and regulatory reform is often uncertain and opaque, and hydrogen policies are not fully integrated into an energy-systems and economy-wide abatement framework.

That is what the Chamber of Minerals and Energy had to say about the government's hydrogen policy. This is a group that, as I said, the government is happy to quote from and say that it supports the government's legislation that it brings before Parliament. The government is happy to go to the functions and all the opening ceremonies and the like, but that is what the CME had to say, and it is precisely correct. The government does not understand it. Everyone knows that the midwest of Western Australia has world-class renewable energy assets. That is apparent, but it has nothing to do with the government. It is a quirk of geography that that is the case. That is the only reason it is there, but it is there. We are blessed with that, and everyone knows it. The government thinks that because we have that first-class renewable energy asset, all the other things will follow and the government will not have to do much other than lean on industry to do all the other things. Clearly, that is completely unsatisfactory.

What have we seen? We have seen the pre-eminent Western Australian company in the renewable energy space, Fortescue Future Industries, investing a full 10 per cent of all its profits out of Fortescue Metals Group into it. Fortescue was desperate to do a project in Western Australia, but what happened? It had to go to Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland, the United Kingdom, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Papua New Guinea and other jurisdictions offshore to develop its projects. I have spoken with Fortescue's senior managers. Fortescue is desperate to do a major project in Western Australia, but the lack of preparation by this government is so great that it has not been able to do it. This is not a spat by some fly-by-night group that just wants to prove a point and punish the government. Fortescue's preference is to do all this in Western Australia if it can. That is where it would do it. Instead, the literally billions of dollars that it is investing outside some R&D work that it does, mostly associated with its mining operations, is being spent in other places. Ultimately, that is thousands and thousands of the highest quality jobs—the sorts of jobs any member would be proud to have and that members would want their children to have in the future. They are high-quality, exciting and leading edge jobs, yet none of that is happening in a meaningful way in this state.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: Fortescue is not the only company that has to leave Western Australia. Good Water Energy is a geothermal energy company. For a number of years, it has been trying to work with the state government to establish geothermal projects. Geothermal energy is the poor cousin, if you like, of renewable energy in the state, but it is an extraordinarily exciting opportunity. The reason for that is that geothermal energy provides genuine baseload energy and, effectively, inexhaustible renewable energy. It has a very small footprint compared with solar cells or wind turbines and it has a very low environmental impact, particularly compared with wind turbines, which have a significant environmental impact, particularly on birds. Geothermal energy is a fantastic opportunity. Good Water Energy tried and tried. It tried everything in this state. It had meetings with the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade and with the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, because it requires drilling a hole in the ground, and that requires the minister's assent. Good Water Energy identified areas that it could go to and it worked with major Western Australian companies to set up projects. At every turn it was worse than the government not facilitating this; it was blocked by the government. It is as though the government does not want that development to occur. What happened? Good Water Energy had to go to the Northern Territory. It is now investing tens of millions of dollars on its first project in the Northern Territory instead of in Western Australia.

This technology is not as well developed as solar and wind. If geothermal technology even partially meets the expectations that the proponents believe it can and this technology bears fruit—again, these are not speculative people who are looking to pull money out of the share market; these are people who want to work on substantive, major projects—it will revolutionise renewable energy around the world. The company that I am talking about has a substantive track record in core technology for geothermal energy. It has had to go to the Northern Territory to

get support. In particular, it is a quirk of geology in this case that Western Australia is a particularly good jurisdiction to utilise this technology. This is not the conventional geothermal energy extracted from so-called hot rocks; this is another form. We have an enormous potential opportunity. If it comes off, effectively, we will have clean energy for every purpose that we can imagine. It is a remarkable technological feat. Why would this state government not do everything in its power to facilitate that energy? As I said, from what I have been told, it seems determined that it will not happen. It is extraordinarily disappointing. Yet that company went to the Northern Territory and immediately got support from the Northern Territory government. I was dumbfounded by that. Again, we have a government that talks about its commitment to green energy. Here is an emerging technology and the government is doing nothing to help it and everything to frustrate it in this state.

There is one thing going on at the moment that is extremely disturbing when it comes to proper governance. We heard the announcement from the government that it will hand out section 91 licences to allow access to land. In questions in the upper house, we learnt that vast areas of the state are being handed over to organisations under these section 91 licences, one involving 660 000 hectares, another involving 1.75 million hectares in the goldfields–Esperance area, and others involving 120 000 hectares and 10 000 hectares in the midwest. There has been zero transparency—none whatsoever. It is completely unclear what governance controls this. It is completely unclear and disturbing that we could see land banked by companies that have no intention of developing their project, but they are taking up valuable real estate, which is critical to realise this world-class renewable asset that we have all the way from Geraldton to Karratha. Then they will monetise that land in another way. This is really disturbing. I understand that 90 more applications are being considered. We are seeing vast tracts of the state tied up in this way. We have been told that those areas will potentially be converted under an exclusive licence.

If these projects are genuinely funded—not speculative but effectively shovel-ready and the companies have the finance, so all they need is the land—I would applaud the move and say it is good that the government is providing land because a certain surface area is needed to generate that energy. If this process is speculative and a case of first come, first served or the government is looking after its mates, that is profoundly disturbing. We will find out in the fullness of time. That will become apparent. At the moment, that whole process is completely opaque. It is a case of first come, first served. When a company comes in, it gets consent. What is the basis for that? What is the criteria? That is something that disturbs me, and I think it should disturb most people in the Parliament.

Let us look at the area of critical minerals. We hear the government talk about critical minerals. I will show members the government’s output in critical minerals after four and a half years. I have here the state government’s output in critical minerals in four and a half years. It is a six-page glossy brochure. That is it. We hear the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade and others talk about critical minerals. It took the government four and a half years to produce a six-page glossy document that is full of platitudes. It is just another bit of spin: “We’re doing something on critical minerals. Look, here’s our six-page glossy document.” That is the government’s response. The federal government has also been doing this. The federal government knows that critical minerals are the enabling plank to the renewable energy industry. It knows that all the rare-earth minerals are critical in catalysis for fuel cells in high-efficiency electric motors, which again are critical in the renewable energy world. It knows that those rare-earth minerals are critical. The federal government produced a 172-page detailed strategy, the *Australian critical minerals prospectus 2020*. It identifies every single critical mineral producer and mine site or prospective mine site in Australia. It has all the details. It was developed as part of the strategy to broaden critical minerals markets outside China. This document is an enabler, so that any company in the world can come here and will know who to contact. The federal government is facilitating this. It is a detailed, meaningful strategy. That is what a critical minerals strategy is, not a six-page glossy so that the government can say it is doing something.

As I said, we hear lots of lectures and sanctimonious comments from the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, saying that the government is world leading but the reality is that the Western Australian government is asleep at the wheel on critical minerals. Yes, we have some critical minerals, particularly nickel and cobalt. It has nothing to do with the state government. Those projects have occurred under the Mining Act and other acts that have existed through time immemorial. I will give credit to both sides of government in Western Australia, which have been good at facilitating mining, but there is nothing new here. There is no new initiative or strategy coming out of the document. I will not go through the detail but, honestly, anyone who is looking for a strategy or a way that the state government is actually assisting the critical minerals industry would be bitterly disappointed by this document. It delivers nothing for the state of Western Australia. I am glad to see the Minister for Mines and Petroleum here.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It is interesting that I was just in a meeting with a company in that sector that was complaining about the behaviour of the commonwealth government.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It has actually done some work, minister, not just produced a six-page glossy brochure.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You have no idea!

Dr D.J. HONEY: A six-page glossy brochure; that is your contribution. I have seen your output. It is like the —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is like the *Yes Minister* guide to political speak. It has been demonstrated here that this government, with an absolute majority in both houses of Parliament, achieved that majority through a lie. This government knows that if it had gone to the public of Western Australia and said, “Elect us and then we are going to fundamentally change the electoral system in this state to take away people who are designated specifically—18 members of the 36 upper house members—to represent the regional areas. We are going to make it a statewide electorate”, it would not have received the upper house votes in those electorates. That is a fact and government members know it. That is why the Premier denied it seven times before the election. Go back and look at the interview panel at which Peter Law asked the Premier about it. Peter Law is an experienced and quality journalist. He was very specific. He knew what Labor was likely to want to do, so he asked the Premier in the clearest, most specific way what he intended to do and whether he intended to bring in electoral reform. The Premier said repeatedly that it was not on his agenda. The government has absolute control of Parliament through a fraud and through deliberately misleading the public of Western Australia. We now see a government that, as I said, believes it is above any questioning and any reproach. It cannot stand questioning. It cannot tolerate it; government members get upset, furious, wild and abusive whenever questions come across the chamber.

Mr R.R. Whitby: Look at us; we’re furious over here. We are sitting here so furious! We are very relaxed.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Can I say, minister —

Mr R.R. Whitby interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Minister, I will devote a little bit of time to this. Other than the minister’s last little contribution, can I say, if the other ministers handled themselves, by and large—other than in the last 20 seconds—in the respectful and competent way that the minister does in his areas, maybe we would have a government that is worthy of respect overall. Unfortunately, you are a gem in the rough, minister. I am sorry if that hurts you politically.

Mr R.R. Whitby interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Do not go and bring the tone down now, minister! I tell members that what they see on this side is an opposition that is passionate about the state of Western Australia, that cares about what happens in this chamber and is prepared to ask the questions that need to be asked on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Thank you.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is what they see, as opposed to a government that is arrogant and full of hubris. This government does not care about what anyone in the state thinks because it has the power and the numbers and no-one else in this state can challenge it because it has absolute control.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [5.20 pm]: I am very pleased to make a contribution. I would not normally make a contribution this early, but I have been roused by some of these comments. It is interesting that the Leader of the Liberal Party highlights a number of things.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Excuse me, Leader of the House. Are you the lead speaker for this motion?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, but I will not use all my time, because I am happy to have some debate on this. Of course, this government was elected overwhelmingly by the people of Western Australia for a number of key reasons. In the first term of this government, we ensured the safety of Western Australians.

The repair of the economy was also a key focus. If members remember back to the lead-up to the 2017 election, the other side in power had allowed debt and deficits to explode. It had left the economy in an appalling state. That is what it left the incoming Labor government in 2017: a budget that had been blown and was heading towards record levels of debt that would, of course, have a great impact on future generations. It left a list of projects that had been promised but never delivered. Of course, we have numerous examples of that, including the Ellenbrook rail line, amongst others. Promises were made and were not delivered. Some good economic times were totally squandered. We came to government faced with these appalling economic circumstances. The McGowan Labor government set about repairing the budget as its first course of action. Under the stewardship of the then Treasurer, Hon Ben Wyatt, that is what we did, because discipline was required with regard to the economic circumstances that we faced.

In the lead-up to 2019, indicators were already showing that this government’s intervention in the perilous state we were left with was beginning to turn around our economic circumstances. Then, of course, COVID struck in 2020. This government, focusing very much on the health and safety and wellbeing of Western Australians, set about making important economic decisions that would also protect our economy. What have we seen in five years? We have seen very, very clear positive outcomes for Western Australians—things that the people opposite, including the member for Cottesloe, hate. They hate the fact that Western Australia is now enjoying record levels of employment.

Dr D.J. Honey: No, we don’t!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: You hate it! You hate it because your born-to-rule mentality is that only one party in this place can ever achieve those sorts of outcomes. We have demonstrated very clearly, and been supported and acknowledged by Western Australians, that Labor in government can not only deliver high-quality outcomes in

terms of the economy, but also sustain those outcomes. Our unemployment level is now at a record low of less than four per cent when compared with rates in other states and territories of Australia. Our practices in terms of the health and safety and wellbeing of Western Australians and our border policy has kept us safe; members opposite forget that. To say that they have supported the government's measures against COVID is a crock. The member for Cottesloe and his party were out there supporting Clive Palmer and others to try to bring down a number of our —

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The leader of government business, the lead speaker on this motion, is misleading Parliament with his comments. He should withdraw those comments.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): This is a debate. There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course there is no point of order because they do not like it. They hate the fact that there they were, hand in glove with Clive Palmer, and when they were found out, they hated it. They are still doing it. They hate it. They hate the fact of this.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Ms L. METTAM: The Leader of the House is speaking untruths and he is misleading the house.

Mr V.A. Catania: I would say that it's a lie!

Ms L. METTAM: Lie.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): This is a debate and there is no point of order on the debate. You will have an opportunity to reply.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Gee, they have got glass chins. They hate this! They hate the fact that we have unemployment figures at record lows.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for North West Central.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They hate the fact that the economy of Western Australia is lauded not only around the state, but also around the country and, indeed, around the world because of the way that this government has managed it. They hate the fact that we have low unemployment levels and record numbers of people doing well.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members for North West Central and Vasse, you will have your opportunity.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They hate it and they will always hate it because they have a born-to-rule mentality. They think that it is a natural cause that the Western Australian public should always elect a Liberal–National alliance because they manage the economy. We saw what happened to the economy under the previous Liberal–National government in the eight and a half years before this government was elected. We repaired the economy, and then COVID came and we kept the state safe, but we have also managed to keep the economy strong. Members opposite hate that and they will always hate it. Why? It is because they have been found out.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Let us look at unemployment. Let us look at what this government has done in terms of manufacturing. We have returned manufacturing of railcars to Western Australia. Remember the famous Matagarup Bridge —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! This is really entertaining for the last Wednesday of the year, but Hansard cannot hear. Can we just have a return to the Leader of the House. The member for North West Central and member for Vasse will have an opportunity to speak.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Liberal–National government wanted to build and manufacture the Matagarup Bridge in Malaysia because they had no confidence in Western Australian ingenuity. What did we do when we came to government? We reversed that decision because we actually believe that Western Australians and Western Australian ingenuity can manufacture a whole range of products for not only our state and our nation, but also the world. We have returned railcar manufacturing to a new factory in Bellevue in which railcars will be assembled and constructed as rolling stock for Metronet. Let us look at the Metronet program, which members opposite hate. The other day, they said, "We represent everybody." The member for Cottesloe was loud. He does not represent anybody. One of

the great challenges that the National Party now has as an opposition is that there is a vast number of people who will rely on a high-quality, expanded Metronet program in the metropolitan area. We are delivering routes to Thornlie and connecting to Cockburn, and routes connecting to Two Rocks. We will also have routes connecting to Ellenbrook, which the former government promised about four times but failed to deliver; in fact, they kept cancelling it. It is no wonder that when the people of Ellenbrook see a Liberal come doorknocking, they almost do terrible things to them, because they remember! You took the people of Western Australia as fools, and you were punished, because you deserved to be punished.

Let us look at TAFE fees. Before the McGowan government was elected, you, under the former member for Scarborough as the responsible minister, hiked up TAFE fees across the board, some of them by 400 to 500 per cent. What did we do? We said no; how can you not have a functioning, effective TAFE system? You have to make sure that the courses are affordable. We saw in the TAFE sector that enrolments were going down. Of course they were, because you had hiked up the price of courses by thousands of dollars. The numbers of students were going hugely down. You took the Western Australian public for fools, and you hated it. So, what did we do? We froze TAFE fees, and then we reversed them. We now have many more people enrolled in TAFE across the board in a whole range of courses, because it is affordable. If you want to train Western Australians to fill jobs in Western Australia, train them, but please make it affordable. That is what this government has done. That is what you failed to do. You failed to do it, and you hate it, because you have been found to be wrong. You hate it!

We have also done a whole range of other measures. We now represent people across the sector. We have got people in the western suburbs who are very proud to have their local members representing them. I have to tell you, and this comes to the very point, “Mr Silver Spoon” from Cottesloe, of why you are so wrong, that the fact of the matter is that there are now people —

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Acting Speaker, point of order.

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The Leader of the House more than anyone else should know that he has to use the correct reference to members of Parliament, and he cannot use the slang expression that he involved himself in then.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Cottesloe represents those born with a silver spoon in their mouth, not the people who live there, but he himself. He is the one with the silver spoon in his mouth. The reality is this —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Leader of the House! I have not ruled on the point of order yet.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Sorry.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I just want to remind the Leader of the House to use the correct title for the member for Cottesloe. Thank you.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Member for Cottesloe, I have to tell you something, and you will hate this, too. I tell you what: the member for Nedlands and the member for Churchlands are out there campaigning. They are doorknocking. They are communicating with their communities. Do you know what the feedback they get is? People have never, ever heard of the Liberal members before, those in Nedlands and those in Churchlands and in South Perth, those electorates that you took for granted for so long, some of them for over 100 years. What has happened? We have got members in those places now, who are out there campaigning, who are out there selling the message of the McGowan government and who are out there explaining that it is important to invest in TAFE, it is important to invest in schools, it is important to invest in local manufacturing and it is important to invest in local jobs. That is the message they are taking out to those people on the doorsteps in Churchlands, in Nedlands and in South Perth. What are they getting as a response? First of all, it is, “We’ve never seen this happen before.” That is because your former members took them for granted. You know that deep in your heart, because that is what your own polling and your own review of your campaign showed. You are full of hot air and full of rhetoric, but when the hard work on the ground was required, you were vacant for many, many years. I am so proud of the members that we have in this place, from the Kimberley through to Esperance, with our upper house members down there—right through. You can jump on the Forrest Highway and not cross through a conservative electorate, and I am proud of that! You can get right down to Albany, and I am proud of that. The member for Warren–Blackwood is working hard.

The simple fact is this.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What is wrong with you?

The simple fact is this.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Geography was not a strength of mine; nor was maths IV in Northam Senior High School!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the House! Sorry, I am on my feet. This is really good, but think of Hansard, please.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I have done only 11 minutes; I thought I had done more than 11 minutes!

Members opposite hate it, and they have been found out. I think that one of the interesting things that came out of the 2021 election was this: people recognise if you do the right thing, keep people safe, focus on key messages and make sure that the messaging is all about taking action. That is what this government has done. Members opposite come in here and say that we have abused parliamentary processes and all that sort of thing. We are getting on with the job of governing Western Australia because that is what we were elected to do. We put through very important legislation this year and I will go through some of it. We passed a whole range of things. I will then talk a little bit about the opposition's so-called guillotining and other processes. Some members opposite were not here during the Barnett period.

Mr V.A. Catania: He never guillotined.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, he did!

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Colin Barnett, one of the former Leaders of the House who then became the Premier, actually put out a media statement heralding a new time management system that was introduced to the Legislative Assembly. It was a system to progress legislation through the house in an orderly fashion. He argued that the government had used the system on only 10 bills in the previous 18 months. He talked about his time management system.

Mr V.A. Catania: That was the 90s!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It does not matter! It does not matter when it was. He did it during your time! He did it during the Barnett years, mate!

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, you did! You guillotined things quite often. I was here. I do not know where you were. You were in the other place for the first half of it! You still do not know quite where you fit.

Mr V.A. Catania: I was on your side!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, but I did not like you then; now I do not like you more!

The fact of the matter is: we are elected here to govern and that is what we have done. I will go through some of the important legislation that has been introduced, including electoral reform. Sorry! For 100-plus years, one of the priorities of the Labor Party has actually been to reform the other place.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am sorry, but it is! We have done it.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The simple fact of the matter is this: that has always been something that the Labor Party has believed to be unfair and we fixed it. We have brought in important financial legislation, including, of course, the state budget. I might say that of all the budgets in Australia, the budget that was handed down by the Premier; Treasurer was one of the most amazing because it was the only one that delivered a surplus. Why? It is because we kept the state safe and we believed that we have to protect those industries that were delivering for the economy. And what has happened? Record employment, so we now have the interesting situation whereby we need to make sure that we train people to fill the positions that we need to fill.

The opposition members are using this motion and their arguments because they are lazy. That is the simple fact. They are lazy.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It was in their report.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, it was. When you had the opportunity, member for Cottesloe, to demonstrate leadership, to stand up against a whole range of distasteful attributes of a member in other place, you were found wanting. You could not even bring yourself to say that that behaviour was not acceptable. You could not even do that. Why did you not stand up to them? We know you cannot stand up to Hon Nick Goiran because you are powerless. In fact, your own preselection process highlighted how hopeless you are, and they saw that before you were elected to this place. The Liberal Party had the opportunity to preselect a high-quality candidate. We thought the person who we expected to be preselected for Cottesloe, who had a corporate background, would be magnificent as a candidate. You were found wanting. We have all seen what "The Clan" said about you.

The Liberal Party has this person now, and he has no control. He could have stood up and said, "Right, there is a range of things we must stand against", including some of the distasteful things within his own party, and he did

not do it; he failed to do it. That was a test of his leadership, and he failed. He then comes in here and says that everything is out of control on this side. I am sorry, but we have been a very disciplined government because we have focused on the things that are important for Western Australians: keeping our economy strong; training future generations through our TAFE and education systems; returning manufacturing industries back to Western Australia because we believe we have the capacity and innovation to be able to deliver; and delivering a record infrastructure spend, whether in health, education or innovation. That is what responsible governments and governments that are focused on action do.

Western Australians broadly understand the direction in which we are steering this state, and they acknowledge that a lot of hard work has been put into it. Members opposite do not like that, and I get that they do not like it. I get that it can be pretty lonely over there. I have sat on that side of the house in various roles, and one of the things that amazed me about the current opposition is budget day. I can remember budget days in opposition. As soon as the budget was handed down, we had a team of people going through it forensically, line by line, hungry to find the things that had not been provided for under the Barnett–Grylls government. What did opposition members do? They said, “We’d better find a couple of vibes to talk about and we’ll go and do a bit of press.” There was no hunger, because they still think this is easy and that the electorate will just change its mind and vote for them.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe, if you continue to interject, I will call you to order.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The reality is that the Premier has set a course of action for our economy, for building the state and for trying, as best as possible, to cushion the impacts of an international pandemic. Up to this time we have done brilliantly well, and that is because the people of Western Australia have been with us, but at every opportunity, members opposite have tried to undermine us. Then suddenly in today’s motion, it was, “Oh, we’ve been supportive all the way through.” Well, history does not show that. It does not show that in respect of who the opposition supported against us. The Leader of the Opposition in the last Parliament, the former member for Scarborough, was out there calling for the borders to come down. While we were making sure that the safety and wellbeing of Western Australians was the primary concern, she was calling for the borders to come down.

Can members imagine if we had done that? Look at Australia more broadly. Look at what is happening around the world now with COVID-19. There are fourth waves in a number of countries that have already been decimated by the pandemic. Sadly, older generations in particular in some countries, like Italy, have been decimated. Austria is going through a fourth wave now. The Netherlands is getting it; Germany is getting it. The United Kingdom has been going in and out of it and now Belgium is getting it. We are so privileged in Western Australia; we are so safe. It is because of the steadfast focus of the Premier and the government, bringing with him and the government the people of Western Australia who have done what has been asked of them in order to ensure that safety, health and wellbeing are protected. We know that when we reach the thresholds of vaccination in the months ahead that we will face a new challenge, because COVID will make its way here when we open up our borders. But we are so much better placed to face that challenge than many other places in the nation and, indeed, the world. I reckon the government should get some credit for that. I tell members what: the Premier has put up with an absolute load of the proverbial from a whole range of sources, and in many respects it has been aided and abetted by you guys.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It has. It has been aided and abetted by you guys. A classic example is the vaccination issue. The opposition has been pulled, struggling. It hated having to support the effort. It still has not done it properly.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore, you will have your opportunity.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The fact of the matter is that we know that if we are able to get to 80 per cent and then 90 per cent vaccination, we will at least be in a better position than many other states and territories have found themselves in. The race in New South Wales and Victoria is because they were so badly hit by COVID. Their economies have been decimated. Small businesses and a whole range of businesses have been absolutely decimated because they were hit hard. The Premier has had to put up with so much rubbish from people. He has had his family threatened and he has been threatened, but he is steadfast about making sure that we protect Western Australians. He called out the dog whistling of the Prime Minister late last week. It was just appalling, because the Prime Minister’s words played to those people out there who believe that they can be violent and make threats. I have listened to some of the things that the Premier has been receiving on his phone; he has played some of them to me. They are bloody appalling; they are absolutely appalling. He is getting them all the time.

I tell members what: this state is in a great position because of the work of government and the people of Western Australia. That has been supported strongly by business and a whole range of key stakeholders, but the ones we have heard less support from sit over there. The ones we have seen undermining and sitting on the fence and who have not been quite as strong or passionate as they could have been to encourage people to do the right thing sit over there. I know where I sit. I am proud to sit with all these people on this side of the house, because I know they are working hard in their electorates. I know they are out there expressing the important messages of government.

We are doing stuff. That is what governments do. The opposition may not like that, but that is what governments do, and this government will continue to do it over the next three and a bit years. We have a program for infrastructure, we have a program for our health system, we have a program for our education system and we have a program for science and technology. We have a program for bringing tourists and visitors back and sharing this wonderful state with them. We have those things in place. It is not just a plan; it is an active journey. It is working because there are many, many people across this globe who would love to trade places with us. We should respect how privileged we are. That is why we will continue to introduce legislation that is focused on doing the right thing by Western Australians. That is why the opposition's motion is so out of kilter—it is so wrong. We are prioritising the needs of Western Australians. We have done it from day one. We fixed up the previous government's problems when we came to power in 2017, and will continue to do it. This government will always focus on the interests of Western Australians. It will always be our priority. That is why there is absolutely no way we would even entertain supporting rubbish like this!

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [5.50 pm]: What a performance by the retiring member for Mandurah! I will read out what the Premier does to people on this side of the house. I will read what he said in this chamber, when I was not present, on 23 August 2018.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Sit down, member for Armadale, you have to listen to this as well!

I will tell members what happened when members of the opposition wanted to visit Moora Residential College—a college that this government cut funding to. Remember the Save the Schools of the Air campaign? That campaign was run because the Premier cut funding. He wanted to get rid of them. The opposition said, "We'll go to Moora Residential College to champion the cause to try to save it." I was approved; the former member for Warren–Blackwood was approved; the local member, the member for Moore, was approved; the Leader of the National Party was approved; and a couple of other upper house members were approved. Suddenly, at the eleventh hour, the member for Warren–Blackwood and I were not allowed to go to the college. The member for Warren–Blackwood asked why that was the case. We had gone through the appropriate processes and protocols and it was agreed to by the education minister, Hon Sue Ellery, that we were allowed to go. Suddenly, that approval was cancelled. This was the Premier's response to why I, the member for North West Central, was not allowed to go to Moora college. I quote —

... it ... does not sound like a wise idea to me to have the member for North West Central visiting primary schools.

...

I cannot be clearer: I would not allow the member for North West Central to visit primary schools.

Mr W.J. Johnston: What is wrong with that?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: As a father of five children, for my family to hear—the member can read anything he wants into it—what the Premier was trying to intimate back then was absolutely outrageous and shows the type of person this Premier is.

The Leader of the Opposition wrote to the Speaker and the Premier, and of course the backtracking began: "The reason why I said that I can't have him going to primary schools is because he changed sides." Really! We have to stand here on a day-to-day basis and hear personal attacks by the Premier. The fish stinks from the head down, and the head is the Premier! People like the member for Armadale, the member for Cannington and the member for Bassendean try to mimic what the Premier does. It is not honourable. It is not what this place is all about. The Premier, in his attitude towards this place, is dictatorial.

It is announcements with no detail. We have just heard the announcement of \$1.9 billion for the health system. The health system is in crisis. We hear about the amount of money that goes to housing. Housing in this state is in crisis. It is in crisis, members. We hear these funding announcements, but with no detail and no action. The government has missed the boat with the health and housing systems. The government cannot claw that back by making announcements. It will take years to claw back what the government has done to the health and housing systems in Western Australia.

I will talk about what just happened with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill. The issue here, members, is that the Labor Party went to the election with a draft bill by Hon Ben Wyatt, the former member for Victoria Park and former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, but the bill we have now has 100 clauses that are different. We got that bill at the eleventh hour—5.10 pm on a Tuesday—and had a briefing on the overview at lunchtime. We had to debate it the next day, on the Wednesday. The bill has 260 pages and 353 clauses. There were 100 changes from the draft bill the Labor Party took to the election. Aboriginal organisations and communities are outraged. On the member for Kimberley's patch, the Kimberley Land Council has rightfully said that it has not been consulted. Banjima elder Slim Parker has not been consulted. The government has brought in legislation that no-one has seen that will change the landscape and the way that this place operates. Why? It is because the legislation is being rushed through. There is a lack of detail. We are working it out. The guidelines will be co-designed afterwards. When did that come in? I know when; it was when this Labor government took power in 2017. The government has changed the way that this process in this place works—allowing the opposition to scrutinise legislation.

The government has another bill that it said would—I am glad the member for Cannington is in the chamber because he was part of this move—protect subcontractors. It was a policy the Labor government took to the 2017 election. The government’s own report said that the legislation should have cascading trusts —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It said the legislation should have cascading trusts to protect subcontractors.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The minister does not like hearing it. That is why he is yelling out. He is squealing over there—a little squeal. He does not like the truth—squeal away.

Mr W.J. Johnston: There he is dishonest again. Every day another dishonesty—another Liberal lie.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Labor members went to the election saying that they would protect subcontractors. What happened after that? We have seen company after company go bankrupt under the government’s watch —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Another Liberal lie.

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Minister, you cannot call the member dishonest. Can you retract it, please?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: But we all know the member for Cannington lied to the people of Western Australia about subcontractors, because he promised to protect them and he did not!

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member cannot do exactly what the Acting Speaker instructed me not to do. I cannot see how the member for North West Central can do what you said I should not do. If I can withdraw without hesitation, I would appreciate if he was asked to do the same.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): I am sorry I did not hear what was said.

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Therefore, if you did not hear what he said, he will confirm that he said that I lied in the community and that I told a lie. He will confirm that and that is on the *Hansard*. So given that he said that, he is obliged to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, can you please withdraw that comment?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: As I said, the government went to the election in 2017 promising to protect subcontractors. It did not do that.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It ignored its own report and draft legislation.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The government misled every subcontractor in this state, and they will not forget.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister! I will call you to order.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Of course, the minister does not care because he is retiring as well. We all know that he is jumping ship at the next election. Here we go.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: When it came to lockdowns, the government made these announcements that these businesses were going to get the funds needed.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you. Please think of Hansard.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: When we had the lockdowns, the Premier came out and made an announcement, after being pushed and shoved to support those businesses financially, but the businesses did not receive the money until months and months afterwards. Yet again, it was an announcement with no detail. The criteria applied to only a select few. What we saw then is happening now after tropical cyclone Seroja. We keep hearing that this is the biggest investment ever. It was a pretty bloody big cyclone that caused a huge amount of damage! The government made all these announcements, yet the \$20 000 grants came out only a couple of weeks ago. We still have not seen accommodation for the workers—the people who need to rebuild Kalbarri—which is what the government promised.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I seek your guidance, Acting Speaker. Given that the motion relates to matters inside Parliament and the member is now raising something that is not related to any business of the house, I wonder whether you could let me know whether that is relevant to the motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): I think the member is talking about the latter part of the motion. There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There you are. Kalbarri is trying to rebuild. It was promised accommodation for the tradies, but there has been nothing. The government sent up, I think, member for Moore, eight or nine or maybe 11 caravans.

Mr R.S. Love: Eleven caravans.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Eleven caravans. Firstly, they were not registered. The government made the announcement, and then months after, it came up with caravans that were not registered. I think Kalbarri may have two of those.

Mr R.S. Love: They looked pretty in the yard for about seven weeks.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There you go. We have this smoke and mirrors that this government is all about. It is about spin. That is why it has all these spin doctors. That is why the government resorts to personal attacks. It does not like to be questioned inside or outside this place. That is what companies tell us. They are fearful of the government's behaviour and retribution if they speak out. In actual fact, if companies have issues, they are told by ministers and government members who come to my electorate that if they go to the local member—me—they will not help them. They are told that the government will not fund them if they go to the local member. Let me tell members that that is what they say. They tried, but they failed to beat me. And that hurts—I know it hurts. I am still here trying to keep account of what they are doing or not doing. The smoke and mirrors and the spin that comes from this government is amazing. Ministers and members do not provide any notice to opposition members that they are coming to their electorates. It is a matter of protocol. It is a matter of just showing decency in the job. But they cannot even do that.

As I said, the fish stinks from the head down, and the Premier stinks. We have the Minister for Police and the way that he responds to crime that is out of control in our regional communities, like Fitzroy Crossing and Carnarvon. What he had to say is an absolute disgrace.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: When we have got —

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: When the member for Bassendean walked across this chamber in the last term and feigned a headbutt to the Leader of the Opposition —

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That matter was investigated by the Parliament and that allegation was shown not to be true. I am not quite sure why the member is doing this again. He made that allegation. It was investigated by the Parliament and shown not to be true.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): Excuse me! While I hear the point of order, there will be no interjections.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The actual conclusion was that there was insufficient evidence.

The ACTING SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I saw it happen.

The ACTING SPEAKER: No, no, no. I am ruling on a point of order. Please take your seat.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for North West Central just made an allegation that the member for Bassendean breached the rules of Parliament. He can do that only by substantive motion. He cannot stand in the chamber and make a false allegation against another member. If he wants to do that, he should suspend this matter and bring in the matter about the member for Bassendean, and then we will deal with it. But he cannot do it like this. This is grubby and deceitful behaviour.

The ACTING SPEAKER: That is a personal reflection. It is disorderly. Can you withdraw that comment?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Sorry; withdraw which comment?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Withdraw unreservedly.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Okay. I withdraw.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Hang on, what's he withdrawing, Acting Speaker?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I do not have to explain. I withdraw.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am going to begin to call members to order. I have sat here so far and allowed a certain amount of interjection. It is becoming unruly and I will not sit over an unruly house. There will be warnings given. My patience has now run out. Withdraw the comment and the imputation that you made in regard to the minister on this side, and then please return to the point of this motion.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

Dr A.D. Buti: You haven't withdrawn it.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I withdrew it before, thank you very much!

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Can I continue, please?

The ACTING SPEAKER: You may continue.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: During that period, the Premier was asked a question about what happened in the chamber at the time, and the Premier's response was, "I didn't see it, so it didn't happen."

Mr W.J. Johnston: That's not what he said.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: "I didn't see it, so it didn't happen"—that was the response of the Premier at the time. That just shows the point that we are trying to make: the arrogance, the dismissive and bullish approach, and the personal attacks from the Premier and his apparatchiki who are trying to emulate the Premier to win favours to be ministers.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The ones who have been pushed to the side are the ones who often sit there and tell the truth because they have been pushed to the side by the Premier. They were very good ministers, but to keep the factional process going in the party, they had to miss out. As I said, we have now got all the Premier's comments —

Ms S.E. Winton: He's run out of puff.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: What actually hurts? Member for Wanneroo, you tell me if this is sound. We have the Cleo situation, when the Premier flew up to Carnarvon on the morning after they found Cleo. Here we had a little girl, four years of age, in a room with a stranger, surrounded by her dolls. The Premier, a stranger, went to visit that little girl and brought teddy bears.

Mr R.R. Whitby: Careful.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I question the motives for that visit, because that little girl still had not been seen by police to find out what happened until the afternoon.

Mr R.R. Whitby: You don't know what you're talking about.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I know exactly what I am talking about.

I find it absolutely concerning that the Premier would do that. I do not mind the Premier visiting, but that was the wrong point in time to go and visit. A strange male going after —

Mr R.R. Whitby: The police would know more than you, mate.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I question the motives of the Premier, because we know that the Premier is all about spin. He is all about the Premier. He does not care about you guys. He does not care about his ministers. He is all about Premier Mark McGowan. That is the way he operates. There is no plan for the state. When we look at tourism and what other states and countries are doing to ensure that they can kickstart tourism and get people to go there, we can see that we will miss the boat because there is no plan. The government will not put up its hand for the Commonwealth Games to give the city an injection of what it needs, and that is people in 2026. Why is the Premier not advocating to get as many events as possible so that we can continue the so-called high that members opposite say we have? I admit that it is a high, but not in the hotels or businesses in the Perth CBD. They are suffering. Whether they can survive is another matter. That is why we need to look ahead to the future. We need to look at the Commonwealth Games and at what other opportunities we may have to attract events to our great state.

The question I asked the Premier today was: what financial support has the government put in place for those businesses that may be caught up in the regional boundaries that are drawn up because the vaccination rates in regional WA are very poor?

[Member's time extended.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Why are the vaccination rates very poor? The Auditor General highlighted it. We always see the Labor government blame the federal government. We know it is because the federal election is around the corner. This federal government has done more for Western Australia than ever before in terms of the GST and the money it has put into infrastructure around the state. It is huge. The state government will, at any opportunity, blame the federal government for its own processes. Who does the government blame for the health crisis? The government blames the pandemic. We have not had the pandemic here.

Dr A.D. Buti: Why not?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Do we have COVID rampant in our communities?

Dr A.D. Buti: Why don't we have it?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Why do we not have the world's best health system? Why do we have a housing crisis? These are the questions that the Premier needs to answer. Why has he let the health system fall into a state of disrepair? We cannot repair it at present, because it will take years to claw back the lack of investment that the government has neglected to put into the health system. It is the same with public housing. What is really concerning is the press conferences that have been happening for nearly two years. The Premier uses public servants to stand next to him and validate what he says. That is a concern. The government is using public servants to validate what the government says. We have heard a lot of spin. It is political. The Premier is making public servants, be it the Commissioner of Police or the head of the Department of Health, stand next to him to validate the decisions that he has made without showing any of the health advice. The government will not conduct any inquiries and it will not let committees assess the actions of the government. A pretty normal process in the Parliament of Western Australia involves enabling committees to provide that check and balance of government departments. Yet that is not happening. The government controls every committee in this house.

If the government has confidence in the decisions it makes, it should welcome any scrutiny.

Mr W.J. Johnston: We do.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The government does not because it rushes through legislation and it stops referrals to committees that look at legislation in more depth. This is what the government does. It avoids scrutiny; it does not respond to questions; it does not give notice of legislation; and it does not consult. We hear the language of this government. It says, "We're a government making decisions." Let me tell members that is what the public fear! The Labor Party went to the election saying that there would be no electoral reform, and it changed the voting process. It went to the election promising to protect subcontractors, and it did not. It went to the election saying that there would be an opportunity under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Amendment Bill to appeal decisions made by the minister. The government took that out of the legislation—in fact, it made 100 changes.

I say to members opposite—members of the Labor Party—that the actions they are not taking speak louder than their words. The government talks about closing the gap. Its talks about protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage, yet the legislation does the complete opposite. We have a movement starting in Western Australia. The government said that it would deliver on those commitments. Suddenly, it is starting to add up. That is why the member for Cannington, the member for Mandurah and the member for Bunbury will retire. The member for Baldivis will like that because that is how he climbs to the top!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, the member for North West Central has repeatedly sought interjections and repeatedly invited them by asking questions, but it is difficult for Hansard. It is with Hansard in mind that I ask you to please ignore the member's invitation for interjections. Member for North West Central, I ask you to direct your comments through the chair.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We are seeing a total transformation of how Parliament operates. That is what this government is doing. The government has such a glass jaw that it reacts to any scrutiny by making personal attacks and threatening industry and people in my electorate if they do not go the way that the Labor Party wants them to go. That is a concern. That is when people in the community say, “Whoa, whoa! I think we need a bit more balance in this absolute majority that we’ve given the Labor Party.” That will come in 2025. In fact, bring on the election in 12 months and will see how that goes! Members opposite have some good, honest people, but do not be influenced by the fish head that stinks. That is the Premier. We all know —

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr A.D. BUTI: I think referring to a member of Parliament in those terms is a personal slur and should be withdrawn.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): I will rule that disorderly. Can you withdraw the comment?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The point I am trying to make is that the fish stinks from the head down. Members opposite, do not fall into that trap. We all know what the Premier is like. I know what members opposite all think of him. They did not really like him prior to 2017. In fact, I remember when they tried to get rid of him and the member for Cannington led the charge!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: He instigated former Minister for Defence Stephen Smith —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The member for Cannington led the charge; I forgot about that!

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, I have asked you to direct your comments through the chair.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The member for Cannington lead the charge to get rid of the then Leader of the Opposition.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Mines and Petroleum, I am very close to calling you to order.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: He does not like the truth.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is quite serious when we have legislation with no detail being rushed through. The personal insults and the way members opposite are behaving with interest groups and industry is really starting to shape what people think of them; that is, as a dictatorial government because they are using their numbers to change the way the voting system works and how this place operates. That is what dictators do—change the way people vote and change the way they are scrutinised in Parliament. Look at the definition —

Dr A.D. Buti: Democracy decided the last election.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There is no democracy. That has been lost and it has become a dictatorial government. That is what people are saying.

Ms S.E. Winton: What people? Who are you talking to?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is the people of Western Australia who are now waking up to the fact that the government said it would keep us safe and strong, but we have a health crisis that will not be able to cope with an outbreak of COVID-19, particularly in regional Western Australia. We will hear more tomorrow about the state of the health system in regional Western Australia. We have a crime problem that the government will not address. It will not address the housing crisis. The government is all about spin—all about the headline without any substance. We hear the announcements without any action being taken. The people of Western Australia are waking up to what this government is all about and members opposite have just confirmed it over the last couple of days.

We are here to make decisions. I would have thought that if there is a mandate for the policies that the government set out prior to the election, that is all very well, but the government is now introducing legislation that was not part of its election campaign, not to mention closing down the forestry industry down in the south west. Members opposite do not have a mandate to do those things. That is when people start to think, “Hang on a second, it is becoming a dictatorial government; the government is making decisions, but without our approval.” To members opposite and those new ministers, the ones who are retiring should give them some good advice. That is to stay true to yourself and do not get caught up in the spin, personal attacks and vitriol that the leader throws at members on this side and now out to the community.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [6.23 pm]: I am always amused by the member for North West Central lecturing people about fidelity to their promises because I was the state secretary of the Labor Party when the member for North West Central, not once but twice, signed a pledge to serve in this Parliament as a Labor member of Parliament. He now comes in here —

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I cannot see under standing order 78 how this is relevant to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for North West Central went on for 30 minutes talking about people's integrity, and when I point out the basic element of the integrity of the member opposite, he gets to his feet to object. I am just looking for his inaugural speech, which I have downloaded onto my phone. I really love his inaugural speech. In the last line of his inaugural speech in this chamber he said that we do not need royalties for regions because the Labor Party looks after country. I agreed with his inaugural speech. He made comments of integrity. Unfortunately, he has walked away from that integrity, and he now sits there as the person whom nobody in the Parliament has any respect for. This is what he forgets. The Liberal members do not give him respect, but even his own party does not give him respect. Nobody in this chamber holds this member with any respect at all. That is one of the problems.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I cannot see any relevance of this line of debate that the minister is leading at the moment to the motion that the Leader of the Opposition has brought to the house. Madam Acting Speaker, I ask you to bring it back to the motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): There is no point of order, but I will ask the minister to continue with the motion. Thank you.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Sure. I am just making the point. This is a motion about abuse of power and manipulating parliamentary processes. That is what has been talked about. That is what members opposite came in here for. We are talking about manipulating parliamentary processes. Imagine someone getting elected saying that they would support the Labor Party and then ratting on the Labor Party and ratting on the signature that they themselves put on a document that said they would serve as a Labor member. In fact, the document goes further. It says that if they do not serve as a Labor member, they have to pay for the cost of the election for their replacement.

Mr V.A. Catania: But you didn't spend anything on mine.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is interesting. The member called out, "Not that you spent anything on mine." Of course, he knows that I gave him a \$3 000 cheque from my campaign account to cover off the unmet demand, the campaign material that he himself had ordered from the party office and did not pay. That was actually reported in *The Australian* at the time that he defected from the Labor side to the National side.

Mr V.A. Catania: Do you want to say that outside the chamber?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am happy to say it outside the chamber because it is not a defamatory comment.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister! Member for North West Central, I ask you to cease the interjections. If you have a point of order, raise it. If you do not, cease the interjections.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Point of order, Madam Acting Speaker. The member for Cannington is casting aspersions on my character and making false accusations about money, and you are saying that I have to be silent? How about you ask him to go to standing order 78 and actually be relevant on the motion that has been put forward?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As I said, the member spent 28 minutes talking about integrity and the motion itself talks about integrity. It talks about abuse of power. Abuse of power is a question of integrity. I am just making the point that we should judge the member for North West Central, not by my standards but by his standards. When we do that judgement, we find that he does not meet the standards that he says should be implemented. As I say, that is why the member for North West Central is so lonely in this place.

I want to thank the member for North West Central because we would not have industrial manslaughter legislation in Western Australia if it were not for him. The member for North West Central approached me in the lobby of the

Parliament to say that he thought he could get the Nationals WA across the line to support industrial manslaughter legislation, and I actually thanked him in the chamber in my third reading speech as we were passing the industrial manslaughter legislation. I want to congratulate him. I am no longer the Minister for Industrial Relations, but I make that point. The other day, the member for Roe, I think it was, asked the Minister for Emergency Services a question about the impact of the work health and safety legislation on volunteer firefighters. I make the point that the reason those impacts are there is that the member for North West Central engineered to get the National Party to support the legislation.

I want to thank him for that, and say that whenever a National Party member asks these questions, they should first turn to the member for North West Central because he will explain that the National Party facilitated that legislation through the Parliament.

I am proud that the Labor Party brought the legislation in. But of course we did not have control of the upper house. Until the 2021 election, the Labor Party never held control of the upper house. That made us unique, because, generally, since World War II, two parties have formed government—the Liberal Party with either the National Party or the then Country Party, and the Labor Party. They have been the governments ever since World War II. Up until this year, only the Liberal Party and the National Party have had control of the upper house when they were in government.

That is an important element to consider. That meant that the only legislation that we could get through in the last Parliament was the legislation that the Liberal Party and the National Party or some of those crossbenchers would support. We could not get our agenda through. We had to compromise all the time to get our agenda through. That was not true during the time of the Barnett Liberal–National government, because it had control of both houses. The member for North West Central, with this pretend indignation that he has, says, “Oh, well, the government would not refer a bill to a committee.” Tell me: can any member guess how many times in the eight years of the Liberal–National Barnett government it agreed to refer a bill to a committee? I can tell the member it was zero. I know that, because I often stood as an opposition member to move that a bill be referred to a committee. Zero. It never happened. The member for North West Central laments the fact that there is not a majority on any parliamentary committee in the Assembly. There is a reason that is the case. It is because that would mean that the opposition would need to have all its members on just two committees. The opposition actually has no member on one of the committees. We have five Labor members on one committee. That is because the opposition has not brought forward any member for that committee. The opposition then criticises us for the fact that it does not have members on a committee. That is just bizarre. Which world do you live in, member? It does not make any sense.

The opposition used some tabled report from the Auditor General and said we are not being transparent. The Auditor General is part of the methodology of transparency. That is why the Labor Party introduced these transparency mechanisms. That is why the Labor Party appointed the current Auditor General. That is why the Labor Party introduced the idea of an Ombudsman to review administrative decisions of government. That was introduced by the Labor Party. We are the party of accountability. The fact is that we have been honest not just with the community; we have been honest with our electors as well.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Finance) [6.32 pm]: I would like to make a contribution to this debate that has been brought on by the opposition. They talk about question time and that we do not answer questions. I have now been in this Parliament for 11 and a bit years. I have never seen an opposition that is so inept at framing its questions, and then, 99 per cent of the time, their follow-up supplementary questions have no relevance to the main question. They do not listen to the answer that has been given; they just go ahead with what has been written down by their researchers or themselves. It is absolutely farcical for the opposition to criticise the way we answer questions. We can only answer the questions that are put to us, and nine out of 10 times their questions are farcical, and their supplementaries have no relevance.

I turn now to the “Comment for Hire”, also known as the member for Vasse. She has a comment on everything. Her comment on the AFL grand final was very misplaced. She said we had spent millions of dollars to obtain the rights. We spent zilch. But that did not stop her from going on 6PR Radio and saying that we spent millions of dollars. We gave \$250 000 towards the half-time entertainment. To obtain the grand final here, we did not spend a cent. The reason the grand final was held here was because of the COVID-19 management of this government. I know it is hard for the opposition to understand or admit it, but that is what happened. What does the member for Vasse do? She asks a question and 99.9 per cent of the time it is to the Minister for Health. She does not actually listen to his answer because she is always on the phone while he is giving a response. She then has a follow-up question that nine times out of 10 he has already answered in the main answer. It is just appalling!

The members for North West Central and Cottesloe say that we do not accept criticism or allow for scrutiny of a bill. The member for North West Central talked about the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill that was brought on for debate last week. We debated it most of Wednesday and all day Thursday, besides grievances, question time and for maybe half an hour. We debated it into the evening last night. The opposition, of which, I will say, the members for North West Central and Cottesloe were the only two who were really involved, had the weekend to look at the legislation. They had Friday and Monday, but they came back to this house without really having looked at the bill

over those four days, because during consideration in detail yesterday, they were flicking through pages trying to find the next clause to look at: “Oh, yes, we’ll do that one there.” Members opposite had time over the weekend to research and study, but they did not do it. It would not have mattered how much time we had given them to study the bill, they would not have put the hard yards in and spent time examining and researching it. That is what we did in opposition; we went away and we researched, but they do not do that.

During the second reading debate on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021 —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! The Minister for Finance —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore! The Minister for Finance is not inviting interjections. Cease!

Dr A.D. BUTI: During the second reading debate when all the members of the opposition spoke, they were teasing and galling the member for Kimberley: “Oh, we’re waiting to hear from you, member for Kimberley. What have you got to say, member for Kimberley? Oh, member for Kimberley, I know about your community. When are we going to hear from the member for Kimberley?” The member for Kimberley got up and you should have seen their faces. They were hiding. They did not want to look because she did one of the greatest speeches —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, I call you to order for the first time! I have been very clear with my instruction and I will begin to call further members who interject.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you, Acting Speaker.

It was one of the greatest speeches that I have heard in the 11 years of my time in Parliament.

Ms D.G. D’Anna: And I wrote it, by the way, for those who thought I didn’t. Yes—I heard that people thought that I didn’t.

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Rubbish! You were all teasing her and galling the member for Kimberley to speak. You thought she was not going to speak or that she was going to criticise. But the member for Kimberley made an outstanding speech and you were all embarrassed. You were embarrassed.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: Point of order, Acting Speaker.

Dr A.D. BUTI: How can there be a point of order on that?

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is because the minister was saying that I was teasing the member for Kimberley. I was not in the chamber when she made her speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: When members opposite spoke during the second reading debate, they all made a particular reference to the member for Kimberley. Why? Why would they do that?

Mr V.A. Catania: Because the KLC, which is the Kimberley Land Council, is vehemently opposed to this legislation.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It was not last year, though. The point is that the member for Kimberley got up and she put you in your place.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Then in the debate, the member for North West Central mentioned “1 100 square metres” 37 times. The member for Cottesloe mentioned it 14 times. They were obsessed by the 1 100-square-metre issue in the bill. If they had actually known the current bill, they would have understood that there is no size restriction. They were trying to argue that this was imposing —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, I have called you to order once. I will not hesitate to do it again. Consider that my generous reminder.

Dr A.D. BUTI: They were trying to imply that this bill would be an onerous task for people who have landholdings of 1 100 square metres or more, when at the moment they can have 200 square metres and fall under the current legislation. What was even worse was the member for Cottesloe’s use of the word “mob”. Although the member for

North West Central flip-flops and tries to back both sides, he at least has a history of showing interest in Aboriginal issues; I grant him that. Unfortunately, the member for Cottesloe has shown no interest in Aboriginal issues, and his contribution to the debate was appalling.

Mr V.A. Catania: Member, I use that term quite often, but —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, there was no invitation for an interjection.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am not asking for an interjection.

He did not just say “mob”, and I was not referring to the member for North West Central. The member for Cottesloe used the word when we were debating the issue of Aboriginal inspectors who can co-opt other inspectors to help them. He said, “This could result in a wild mob in the community.” What was he implying? When I asked him, “Why would you say ‘mob’?”, he replied, “What, are you saying I’m racist?” I never used the word “racist”, but he knows it is connected and that the term was used in a negative manner against Aboriginal people. Shame on him; absolute shame on him. When people read the debate on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021 in years to come and read the member for Cottesloe’s words and questioning, I think they will form a very dim view of him.

After the member decided in his contribution to the third reading debate to indulge in a personal attack, I could have responded in kind in my reply, but I thought the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021 was too important for that, so I did not, but I can now. His questioning was absolutely appalling. He was hardly ever concerned about Aboriginal cultural heritage in his questioning; it was all about the landowners and how hard it was going to be for them. When we debated the issue of the inspectors, we saw that the powers in the bill are no greater or lesser than those in two or three other pieces of legislation, including the Biodiversity Conservation Act, which was passed by a conservative government. It is also no different from the powers under the Heritage Act. It is apparently okay for an inspector to have those powers to protect non-Aboriginal cultural heritage; no problem. The member for Cottesloe does not complain about that, but he complains when we want to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage. Shame on the member for Cottesloe, and I wish he was here; I really wish he was here. He will go down in history for his contribution to the debate on that legislation.

My criticism of the member for North West Central is that he was trying to play politics by taking both sides, but that is nothing compared with what the member for Cottesloe did. It was absolutely disgraceful. Yes, inspectors can have those powers when it comes to wildlife, and they can have those powers when it comes to non-Aboriginal cultural heritage, but we dare not give Aboriginal inspectors that power —

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: We have this continued attack on a member of Parliament for contributions that he may or may not have made. The minister had an opportunity in his reply to the third reading debate to comment on that. I think this is disrespectful, disingenuous, and does not reflect the content of the motion before the house to discuss today.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): The motion is very broad, and it goes to parliamentary processes and prioritising the needs of Western Australians. On that basis, I find no point of order. The Minister for Finance has the call.

Debate Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: Today the member for Cottesloe referred to Peter Law as being a very credible journalist, and I totally agree. He is the main political journalist for the main newspaper in Western Australia, *The West Australian*. No argument from me; he is a very good cricket player, too! Obviously, one takes note when Peter Law writes an article. I refer to an article in *The West Australian* of 29 July 2021, “Where exactly is ‘Dr Who’?” The article states —

There was a rumour on the radio a few months ago that Liberal staffers were being asked to refer to MPs by their honorifics.

In the case of WA Liberal leader David Honey, that would be “Dr Honey” thanks to his PhD in chemistry at the University of Western Australia.

But Honey, the party’s fourth leader in four years, has picked up another moniker: Doctor Who.

...

If Honey believes that the public perceives the Government as failing and that affluent electorates will just swing back at the next State poll in 2025, then he is delusional.

He is a very credible journalist, as the member for Cottesloe said today. I totally agree. The article also states —

What no one can understand is why Honey handed himself a suite of dull but worthy portfolios—State development, energy, hydrogen, science, innovation and ICT—that means he is rarely in demand from the media.

That is certainly true. “Comment for Hire”, also known as the member for Vasse, is always in the media for the Liberal Party. I know the member for Cottesloe is called the Leader of the Opposition, but really that is just a name. He has no power. In many respects, it is quite sad.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is also erroneous. The Leader of the Opposition is the member for Central Wheatbelt.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Okay. Exactly right. He is the so-called Leader of the Liberal Party

Debate Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is quite pathetic. He knows that “The Clan” on WhatsApp, in the two powerbrokers, Hon Peter Collier and Hon Nick Goiran, said he was a joke. But he has not had the temerity, the courage or the strength to go to the media and stare them down. That is what a strong leader would do. He would stare them down. The only time he gets up is when we refer to Hon Nick Goiran. He stands at the defence of Hon Nick Goiran, who thinks he is a joke. That shows how pathetic he is. He knows that his leadership depends on the support of Hon Nick Goiran. He will allow Hon Nick Goiran to make a joke about him, but he will still get up and defend him.

He will defend Hon Nick Goiran, but he will not get up and defend the Premier of WA against personal attacks by anti-vaxxers. He will not make a comment out there in the public. Why did you not bring a motion to the Parliament tonight to stand together against those threats that the Premier received on the weekend about being beheaded—him and his family? That is what you should have brought to the Parliament today, not this silly motion you have brought on. You should have been standing here as one with the Premier against the threats he has received—that his family has received and his staff. He has had to close his office because of the threats his staff have received. You have been silent. I think the Leader of the Opposition has made some comments, and the member for Vasse made a slight comment in Parliament today that these comments were terrible. Why do you not go out there in public? You are doing what Prime Minister Morrison does—dog whistling, pretending you are on one side and going on the other, giving comfort to the anti-vaxxers and giving comfort to those people who go to freedom marches. Why would you have a freedom march in WA? It is unbelievable.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: Surely we cannot listen to this discussion all night long. It has no relevance whatsoever to the motion that has been brought to the house, and it is in fact erroneous.

Dr A.D. Buti: Erroneous—I don’t think so.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Claiming that the opposition has not stood by the Premier is not true. We have actually made comment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): I am going to rule on the point of order. I have heard your point of order.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Wanneroo! As I have already noted, this is a broad motion; the Minister for Finance, in my opinion, is addressing that motion, and he has the call.

Debate Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is abuse of the parliamentary process and an abuse of their responsibility as a member of Parliament for members not to stand and defend threats against any member of Parliament. Opposition members basically have been silent on this issue. Where are they? Where are their Facebook posts? Where are all their Twitter posts? Why are they not standing in front of the media? Why has there not been a joint media conference with the Liberal and National Parties on the steps of Parliament denouncing the behaviour of the anti-vaxxers? You have been silent; you have been moot. It is a disgrace! There have been threats by these anti-vaxxers —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am not asking for interjections, Acting Speaker.

Mr R.S. Love: Don’t say things in the house that are not completely true!

The ACTING SPEAKER: That is not open for debate; thank you, member for Roe.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I tell you what is not a lie, member for Moore: you have not done a press conference standing as one, as a group of National–Liberal Party members, out the front denouncing the anti-vaxxers or denouncing the threats to the Premier.

Mr D.R. Michael: Would you stand for the Liberal Party? Seriously!

Dr A.D. BUTI: No; that is right.

One would think that the threats against the Premier, particularly the ones on the weekend, which came out yesterday — Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! I do apologise, member for Moore, that I did wrongly name you as the member for Roe. Member for Moore, please cease the interjections.

Dr A.D. BUTI: In my 11 years in this house I have not experienced the threats against any political member that the Premier has had to endure due to the anti-vaxxers and the so-called freedom march people. There have hardly been any lockdowns in WA, so it is hard to know what they are arguing about, but anyway—so be it. Then they come in and ask questions. This is where the dog whistling of the Prime Minister comes in. They come in and ask questions: “Oh, due to the mandate policy, what will happen if we don’t have enough teachers?” But they have not said whether they believe in mandatory vaccination. Do they believe in it? Do they support it? I do not know. I do not hear it. I have not heard them say it in Parliament. Of course there will be difficult decisions. The government made a decision that we need to have mandatory vaccination. It is not mandatory in the sense that people will be physically compelled to do it; they have a choice. It is basically a condition of employment. We have conditions of employment for everything. Teachers have to have a teacher’s registration; it is just a condition of employment. Why do they not come out and say where they stand on it? Or will they say what the Prime Minister said: “I can understand their frustrations”? Is that what they are going to say? I must say that I am absolutely amazed that the opposition has not come out loud and clear to denounce the threats that the Premier and his family have received.

Mr R.S. Love: You’re not listening then, are you?

Dr A.D. BUTI: And his staff.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore, I call you for the first time.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Excuse me!

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore, you were called to order for the first time. Member for North West Central, you are called to order for the second time.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Moore would say I am not listening. What do you mean I am not listening? I have not heard the member for Moore once in this Parliament denounce the attacks against the Premier. If he wants to bring me *Hansard* tomorrow to show me, okay, I will stand up and apologise. When have you got up and denounced them in Parliament?

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: You haven’t done it in a press conference. You have not done it!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister for Finance! I have given very clear instructions and warnings throughout this last 50 minutes. Member for Moore, you are called to order for the second time.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The Minister for Finance is baiting the opposition to get a response by accusing us of not doing something that we have done through the Leader of the Opposition. The member for Moore was called to order when the Minister for Finance accused the opposition of something the opposition has not done; that is, stood by the so-called anti-vaxxers or stood either side.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is simply not true.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: Could I seek an extension of time, please?

[Member’s time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: As we head towards the end of the parliamentary year, I have a couple of things to raise. I do not know whether this is the member for North West Central’s new ploy, but he keeps saying that this member or that minister is going to retire.

Ms C.M. Rowe: It’s ageist.

Dr A.D. BUTI: If the member for Belmont remembers, in the last term of Parliament, the member for North West Central, the former member for Darling Range, the former Leader of the Opposition and the former member for Churchlands day after day would point at us and say, “You are not going to be here. You are not going to be here. You are not going to be here.” Out of that gang, the only member who is back is the member for North West Central.

Ms S.E. Winton: And just.

Dr A.D. BUTI: And just—the others are gone. Now the member is announcing a new wave of retirements, but we will wait to see what happens. Members of the opposition do not have to worry about retirement because they get booted out. We have really got to feel sorry for the member for Cottesloe because he is surrounded by a sea of red. His only hope is to dive into the Indian Ocean and head out west. Where would he land? Rottnest Island. Who is the member for Rottnest Island? It is the member for Fremantle! He cannot escape a sea of red.

The other day I mentioned that the member for Cottesloe is the Rip Van Winkle of Western Australian politics. He fell asleep in about 1975, as colour television was being introduced to WA and Sir Charles Court was the leader. Although I thought many of his actions on Indigenous issues were appalling, no-one can doubt that he has been a strong leader. The member went to sleep in about 1975 and woke up after the 2021 state election and found, “Gee, I am now the Leader of the Liberal Party, but I am not the Leader of the Opposition.” The sectarian agrarian socialist party, also known as the Nats, which rhymes with rats, which is very appropriate because it has the member for North West Central in its ranks, is the opposition. The Nationals WA is the opposition; it is just amazing. He wakes up to that. He also wakes up to find that there is a thing called WhatsApp. He finds out about “The Clan” and that it had been discussing what a joke he is and that his preselection was a joke. He has no semblance of self-respect. How could he stand up and constantly defend Hon Nick Goiran, when he knows that Hon Nick Goiran thinks he is a joke? Surely he has to have some self-respect. He has to place his leadership on it and denounce it. He has to be a strong leader and come out against Nick Goiran and Peter Collier, but he will not do that. That is quite appalling.

I will tell you one thing, Acting Speaker, it is most appalling that the opposition is not standing up and speaking out loud and strong, not just in whispers, against the anti-vaxxers and the threats against the Premier. The opposition has not done that. That is an absolute disgrace and the opposition wears that. The members for North West Central and Cottesloe can go on and say that we are arrogant and do not make decisions. The fact is that governments are elected to lead, and that is what we are doing.

Mr V.A. Catania: What about the leak?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Member for North West Central —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Finance, thank you. You are on two warnings, member for North West Central. We have limited time left, but it is probably enough still to get to four.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Member for North West Central, when you referred to “the leak”, what were you referring to?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Finance, are you inviting an interjection?

Mr V.A. Catania: Those leaks that came out of the caucus room or people taking photos —

Dr A.D. BUTI: Okay, member for North West Central, if you want to go down this rabbit hole —

Mr V.A. Catania: I know that you were accused wrongly.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes. That is where I would stop if I were you, okay. I do not want bring in other family members, so just stop.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Just stop. I do not want to bring in other family members that know something.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, thank you. Minister for Finance, thank you. Members, I would suggest a deep breath and a count to three—five if you require it. You can even go to 10. What I do suggest is that you all think very carefully about what comes out of your mouth in the few minutes that are remaining. Minister for Finance, you have the call.

Dr A.D. BUTI: During the debate on the last private member’s motion for this year, there was an opportunity to talk about something of substance. To give the Leader of the Opposition credit, she did try to make a contribution of some substance.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am not taking interjections.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am not taking interjections. Acting Speaker, I seek your protection.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore, I call you to order for the third time.

Dr A.D. BUTI: At least the Leader of the Opposition tried to debate the substance of the motion. It was an appallingly drafted motion for a start, but at least she tried. But it all went downhill when the member for Cottesloe got to his feet, and then obviously the member for North West Central did not make it any better.

They will go down in history for not standing up and denouncing strongly and loudly the threats against a political leader in Western Australia and, more so, his family and his staff. Shame on them. It does not matter what happens over the next three years. Shame on them. Shame on every single one of them for not standing up, and for being equivocal in the anti-vax debate by saying, “Oh, you impose a mandate; what is going to happen if there are some problems?” No. We still do not know what your position is on mandatory vaccination. What is your position? There is silence now, but they have been interjecting. That is a classic! They know they will not be called out. What is your position on mandatory vaccination?

Mr R.S. Love: Mandatory vaccination? When it is supported by health advice, we support it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So do you support the current mandatory vaccination policy that is based on health advice?

Mr R.S. Love: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So why do you keep standing up in Parliament and questioning the possible consequences of it? Why do you do that? Why do you not work with us? Why do you not go outside and say that you support it, instead of doing the typical dog whistling of the Prime Minister: “Yes, you shouldn’t do this, but I understand your frustration”? It is appalling.

Debate adjourned pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
