



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2021

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, 11 May 2021

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) took the chair at 2.00 pm, read prayers and acknowledged country.

CARAVAN AND CAMPING GROUNDS REGULATIONS 1997

Petition

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [2.03 pm]: On behalf of Hon Simon O'Brien, I present a petition containing 22 signatures couched in the following terms.

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

We the undersigned are **OPPOSED** to the Caravan and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 (Regulations) in its current form. We believe that the Regulations are outdated, inadequate and do not accurately reflect the needs of the community, local businesses, and the quality of self-contained habitable vehicles and trailers (mobile dwellings).

Self-contained mobile dwellings represent a suitable affordable housing option for many different people in our community, particularly for retirees, small families and seasonal workers. The need for low cost, mobile dwellings is especially important in the current environment of rental housing shortages and unaffordability affecting our community.

We therefore ask the Legislative Council to recommend the following modifications to the Regulations:

1. Create a new term and meaning to accurately categorise self-contained mobile dwellings, including tiny homes on wheels, caravans and motorhomes. Self-contained mobile dwellings should not be classed and regulated the same as non-self-contained vehicles or tents, and, as such, should **NOT** be defined as “camping” while they are being inhabited on private property.
2. Introduce new provision for self-contained mobile dwellings to be inspected and certified as being self-contained (e.g., containing a chemical or composting toilet system) by an authorised local government health officer.
3. Under Part 2, Section 11(a): Exclude both non-self-contained and self-contained mobile dwellings from the 3 night per 28 consecutive night camping limit on private property. This exclusion is under the condition that there is a primary dwelling on the property with access to waste disposal services on site. In the case of non-self-contained mobile dwellings, evidence will need to be provided to the local health officer that there is dedicated access to a toilet and bathroom facilities.

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

[See paper 175.]

PAPERS TABLED

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

VETERINARY PRACTICE BILL 2021

Notice of Motion to Introduce

Notice of motion given by **Hon Alannah MacTiernan (Minister for Agriculture and Food)**.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 6 May on the following motion moved by Hon Pierre Yang —

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Honourable Kim Beazley, Companion of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the state of Western Australia and its dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia —

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our most gracious sovereign and thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [2.08 pm]: Madam President, as I make my last speech in this place, there is something that comes to mind very clearly; in this Parliament, time goes by extremely fast. Of all the occupations I have had over the years, I think for parliamentarians, with all the things we have to deal with—committee meetings, coming to this place, dealing with constituents—the years go by very quickly, so it hardly feels like I have been

here for eight years. Back in 2012, we formed the Western Australian branch of the Shooters and Fishers Party, which had been established in New South Wales in 1995. We were registered with the Electoral Commission very late in 2012—I think it might have been around November. We ran a campaign and, as fortune would have it, I was elected, winning a seat in the Agricultural Region.

When I look around, I see quite a few members are still here from the class of 2013 and plenty of them will continue on. Some will retire and some will go on to do other things in this place. I came in here completely unprepared and inexperienced in any way with anything to do with politics. But fortunately, the fellowship and the assistance of all members of this place, regardless of their political leanings, was invaluable. I found many people were always willing to help, whether it be the clerks or other members of Parliament, to give me a bit of a hand in getting myself organised to operate as the single member of my party. I remember meeting Hon Barry House, the former President, in the corridor after I had been here for about six months. He said, “Rick, when we first heard that a member of the Shooters and Fishers Party had been elected, we were expecting this gun-toting redneck to come in here, but you’re actually quite reasonable!” I did appreciate that he thought I was quite reasonable.

I have had a lot of occupations over the years, which has helped me a lot to relate to people and understand some of the problems in the community. Over the years, I have been a spare parts assistant at a tractor dealership, a motor mechanic, a small business owner, a cleaning chemicals salesman in the hospitality industry, a real estate agent, a TAFE lecturer, an insurance broker, a settlement agent, and a farmer. It might surprise some members that I also spent some time as an armed guard delivering payrolls to the Collie mines. That was a very interesting couple of years. We would get the armoured vehicle from the depot, which, ironically, is now where my former business partner Alex Marra operates his real estate agency from, and drive to this bunker in Bunbury. You would have to see it to believe it! It is all underground and concrete-lined. We would load these containers full of cash into the back of this rickety old truck and then drive down the South Western Highway, up the Coalfields Highway and into Collie to the ANZ bank, where we would unload the cash. While we had a cup of coffee, the bank would distil all the cash into little brown envelopes, which many senior members here might remember being the form of payment before electronic funds transfers. Employees would all line up to get their little brown envelope, showing their name, designation, how many hours they worked and their pay rate on the front of it. We would then drive out along the Mumballup road and onto the long mine access road, and there we would see the line of workers waiting for their pay. We would get out and there would be jeers and sneers as we got the cash to the paymaster, who would then unpack the containers and we would go. We did that on the same day, at the same time, every single week. How we never got robbed is still a mystery to me today! There were obviously no serious crooks out there, or the Collie coalminers had warned everybody off from touching their pay! For some reason, every couple of months we had to go to the local sporting shooters association’s pistol club for some practice. With all respect to my two colleagues at the time, they were well into their retirement years, so when they held out their .38 Special revolver, they were very shaky and they rarely hit the target. I soon learned that if I was going to hit the target with the revolver that was issued to me, I had to aim a metre and a half to the left. I am very pleased that no-one took us to task, because the white flag and the hands would have gone up straightaway, I reckon!

Not long after I was elected to this place, on the advice of my very experienced electorate officer, Anne Fergusson-Stewart, we thought we would have an office opening that would showcase the Shooters and Fishers Party a bit. Many of you attended that office opening. In fact, when we were cleaning out the office, I found the menu for that event. I will read out some of that menu. We had wild harvest pork and venison bratwurst-style sausage and panini with special mayonnaise and green tomato chutney, flash-fried breast of quail on crispbread, and venison skewers. The wines, of course, were Mazza Wines from Dardanup, if anybody wants any of those! We also had wine from Victoria’s game-hunting region—Ladies who Shoot their Lunch, which Hon Sue Ellery found quite amusing at the time, and Are you Game? from Fowles Wines in Strathbogie. That was quite a good night. Unfortunately, at the time, Hon Barry House was hosting a delegation of MPs from Canada—I think they might have been from Saskatchewan—and he gave his apologies. He said, “Look, I’m really sorry, Rick. We’ve been invited to Government House, so we’re going there.” I said, “Priorities take their place; no trouble at all!” As the night started to wind down at about 8.30 or nine o’clock, in rolled Big Barry with the whole delegation behind him. He said, “Mate, they heard all about it and they wanted to come, so here they are.” We had all the Canadian MPs there. We put the burners back on and we fired the whole thing up again. I will never forget that a First Nations female MP was there making her way through this big plate of yabbies that a Boyup Brook farmer had provided to us. I do not know what discussions they had in the car, but she looked at me and said, “Rick, if this is being a redneck, then I’m a redneck!” That was a good opening.

During my time here, I was fortunate to get a few inquiries started. One of the first was to get a review of the Firearms Act. Some members may remember that there was a massive fee hike on applications of some 400 per cent, so I moved a disallowance motion. At the time, a couple of government members actually crossed the floor and supported the motion with the opposition, but, unfortunately, the disallowance motion did not succeed. However, what it did do was to instigate an inquiry, I think by the Joint Audit Committee at the time, which outlined some anomalies in its report. The Attorney General at the time then asked the Law Reform Commission to undertake a review over two years. The Law Reform Commission did a forensic review of the Firearms Act; it heard a lot of evidence and travelled to other states. It looked at it dispassionately. A lot of witnesses were interviewed, including

members of the Western Australia Police Force. That review resulted in 143 recommendations. Unlike with a lot of these reviews, both the firearms community and WAPOL were comfortable with most of the recommendations, so we looked at implementing them. The former police minister, Hon Michelle Roberts, formed a ministerial working group for firearms reform, and we worked for about 18 months on that. On that group was Ron Bryant from the Western Australian branch of the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia, Bevan Steele from the Western Australian Firearm Traders Association, myself and WAPOL. WAPOL had broken the recommendations up into three tranches. Obviously, the easier ones—the low-hanging fruit—were in the first tranche, which we had agreed upon. We put that tranche to the minister, but for some reason it never got to the Parliament. I asked questions about it, but it never got here. I recall that amongst the manifesto of things this government wants to achieve in this term, as outlined in the Governor's speech, is firearms legislation reform, so I am hopeful that the new minister, Paul Papalia, will reinstate the ministerial working group, look at the Law Reform Commission's report rather than reinvent the wheel, and put forward some amendments that are consistent with that very good Law Reform Commission report project 105.

The next inquiry I managed to convince this house to set up was an inquiry into a recreational hunting system, which was undertaken by the Standing Committee on Public Administration, to which I was co-opted. Hon Jacqui Boyde and Hon Darren West were also members of that committee. Witnesses ranged from representatives of the Wildflower Society of Western Australia to the Commissioner of Police. It was a really interesting inquiry and it did entail some travel. A few of us travelled to New South Wales to look at the recreational hunting system in that state that had been implemented only 15 years earlier. It was a very sophisticated system, with very good technology. People had to book a forest block online, which limited the number of people who could go there. There were also phone apps. Through GPS mapping, forest blocks could be switched out if other activities were occurring there, such as a mountain bike competition, harvesting of a forest coupe or whatever the case. NSW suspended its recreational hunting system for about 12 or 18 months. It moved from the Game Council of NSW, which had a few issues, into the Game Licensing Unit under the Department of Primary Industries. While we were there, two things of interest were explained to us. One was that the Game Licensing Unit had found that the amount of illegal activity in the forest had reduced because there were more eyes in the bush and more reporting back to it about issues that should not be going on—maybe some cropping there or whatever it was. The other thing was that during the suspension of the system, a lot of complaints came in from country New South Wales, because these towns were getting a lot of revenue from recreational hunting. It was helping their economy by people going there and paying for accommodation, supplies and that type of thing. That really helped those rural communities. Those rural communities were happy when the system was reinstated. It also had a big impact on the amount of expenditure that the state government had to undertake as far as pest animal control was concerned.

We then went down to Victoria where recreational hunting systems have been in place for probably 60 or 70 years. I think Hon Steve Dawson might have been involved in that at one stage or had worked in that department. Victoria has a very good system. Of interest there was that recreational hunters take something like 157 000 feral deer out of the forest system a year. If the deer were left to breed, they would really impact the forest. A study 10 years ago, or thereabouts, found that there was about \$439 million of value to the Victorian economy in recreational hunting. One of the highlights of that trip was when we visited an area called the Heart Morass. I recently watched a TV program about the Heart Morass. It was really something to see. We learnt that a morass is a wetland that is lower than the bordering river's watertable level. The Heart Morass near Sale in Gippsland had been deteriorating and over-grazed for many, many years, and it was a mess. We saw all the old photos of how bad its condition had been. In 2007, Field and Game Australia in that state bought one parcel of land in the Heart Morass through funds granted by the Hugh Williamson Foundation and it set about rehabilitating the land. Obviously, it was looking to improve the habitat for the lifestyle of duck hunting that occurred there at certain times of the year.

Later on, the association bought another two parcels, with a total cost of about \$2.4 million, and it now encompasses 3 200 acres. It is really good example of practical conservation in practice. It is not someone tying themselves to a bulldozer; it is actually doing something. The association planted 60 000 trees. It worked with the catchment council in that state. It worked out when to drain areas and where not to drain. A lot of acid sulphates are in the soil there, so people have to be very careful when they drain areas. A lot of grasslands were replanted, and if people were to see it now, they would see it is absolutely pristine. The comment my colleagues made on that trip was that they could not believe there was not one empty beer can or one piece of paper lying about. It was absolutely and totally pristine and had been rehabilitated to a fantastic level.

In that area now, obviously duck-shooting season is only a few weeks a year, so when they are not using it, all members of the Field and Game association pay \$70 for a key that gives them 12-months' access. They can go and use the wetlands for camping, family picnics or whatever they like. School tours go there so kids get to learn all about the environment and what they can do to actually help the environment. The bird observation society goes there to identify birds. It works together with the association. It puts up nesting boxes. Even the local community gets to use it as a walking trail in the off-season. It is a really good example of hunting and conservation together. That was a good inquiry that I enjoyed. Some recommendations in the report have not been implemented, but there have been some alternatives presented, which I think are a good start.

The next inquiry was quite a controversial one. It was the Select Committee into the Operations of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc). I have since found out that that select committee had been, for some reason, the first select committee established in about seven years, yet, in the fortieth Parliament we had select committees established every other week. It was controversial, and, I must admit, at times it got a little bit uncomfortable. There were debates in the other place in which we were accused of being a committee of assassins and that it was a witch-hunt. The RSPCA certainly took umbrage at us looking into its operations. However, I am glad that we undertook that inquiry because quite a few things came out of it. Ironically, other states in Australia were at the same time undertaking similar inquiries. In the UK—the birthplace of the RSPCA—similar inquiries were also being undertaken.

Without going through the full report, one of the things that stood out the most was the fact that the RSPCA, as a private charity, does not have any legislative power at all to investigate or prosecute—zero. A lot of people do not understand how that connection and what an RSPCA officer can do that. How it works is that, under the Animal Welfare Act 2002, the CEO of the Department of Agriculture and Food appoints general inspectors. They also appoint RSPCA employees, which is also required under the Animal Welfare Act; council rangers; Department of Environment Regulation rangers; and, in a couple of cases, people who have operated animal shelters, which I do not think is a very wise move. Part of the problem is that those appointments, which last for five years, have no conditions on them. Unfortunately, there was a lot of tension between the RSPCA and the Department of Agriculture and Food, to the point that they resented each other a lot. What the general inspectors were doing was taking all their direction from the RSPCA, not from the department. Justice Corboy, in one of his findings, said that the general inspectors are an agent of the Department of Agriculture and Food, and it follows for me that an agent should always refer to their principal for direction or reporting. These very same issues were being investigated in the UK. One MP in the UK said that the functions of campaigner, fundraiser, investigator and prosecutor should have oceans of blue water between them instead of Chinese walls. In fact, what should happen is that, like in Scotland and Ireland, they can investigate but then provide a brief to the state, and it should be the state that, in its own impassioned assessment, looks at whether charges or prosecutions should commence. I know that the Minister for Agriculture and Food is looking at a review of the Animal Welfare Act and I think that that is very important.

Then, of course, we have the *Private property rights: The need for disclosure and fair compensation*, which was the thirty-third report of the Public Administration Committee, which I was not co-opted onto, but I did attend some of the hearings as an observer. I think it was a really useful report. I think it was very accurate. I commend the committee members on the level of investigation it did and for being able to capture the issues that affect the community where private property rights are concerned. This affects the community directly. This is not some sort of airy-fairy thing that we might do to improve the community. It actually affects lives with things like environmentally sensitive areas or conditions on titles. Therefore, I think it is very, very important that at some stage the report be referred to. I know we had an inquiry into property rights in 2005—I think Hon Sue Ellery was on that particular committee. That is going back a while, but I think much came out of that. It was a very good report, too. I encourage the government to have a good look at this thirty-third report and make some changes so that people's lives are not so badly affected.

In his contribution last week, Hon Ken Baston spoke about the wild dog bounty that he had implemented while he was Minister for Agriculture and Food. I had many discussions with the minister at that time about this bounty because it is used extensively in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland as a means of reducing numbers of wild dogs and even foxes. For some reason the department here has a lot of resistance to it. The questions I asked in this place revealed that over 520 dogs had been taken within a very short period of time and it cost the state only about \$52 000, which is really good value for money. But for some reason there seems to be resistance to that. I know that Victoria has bounty systems for foxes and wild dogs and sometimes there is a bit of political pressure and the state backs off but then it reinstates the bounties again because the number of dogs and foxes start to climb. In the overall management of wild dogs and foxes, I know we have exclusion fencing, which is very important, and we also have doggers, which is also very important, but I think we should not underestimate using ground shooting and bounties as a way to also reduce those wild dog numbers. Pastoralists are not the only ones affected by this; members can imagine the devastation on wildlife and the pastoral regions by wild dogs. Some of the pastoralists who I have spoken to said that there used to be lots of goats, kangaroos, marsupials and everything else there but not anymore. They are all gone; the wild dogs have eaten them all. Therefore, I think that this should be revisited and I congratulate Hon Ken Baston for having the courage to actually do something about that at the time but unfortunately it did not continue.

Madam President, I would just like to touch on the fact that you, as the first female President of this place, showed a lot of courage in protecting the conventions, the privileges and the institution of the Legislative Council. Listening to the condolence motion for Hon Clive Griffiths, I heard a common thread from all the speakers: that the protection of the conventions and the privileges of the upper house is paramount. Hon Clive Griffiths served under both Liberal and Labor governments, and he pushed forward that the protection of the Legislative Council is paramount. Madam President, you took your solemn duty seriously and you have protected as best you can the privileges of this Parliament. We will wait to see how things turn out with that. I certainly encourage the new

President, whoever that might be, to also look at the fact that this is not about party politics but the institution of the Legislative Council, and that democracy relies on all the pillars of democracy, including privilege. I think to erode that is the start of a slippery slope. Looking back through the centuries, a lot of blood has been spilt and lives lost in the forging of the democratic system.

Depending on electoral reform, I look forward to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party contesting the next election in 2025. I raise that because I was listening to some talkback radio while on the south coast a few weeks back when the Attorney General flagged that there would be a review of the Legislative Council electoral system, and a lot of talk was about one vote, one value and that a vote in the Mining and Pastoral Region in particular had a weighting of about 6.5 times that of someone in the city. I have great concerns about that. In fact, I heard on the radio Hon Darren West reply to a question on that. The Australian Senate has 12 senators per state. If we had one vote, one value for elections to the Australian Senate, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland would have far more senators than we would. I do not think Western Australia wants to see a reduction in the amount of representation we have in the federal Senate. Western Australia is definitely the powerhouse of the entire country's economy; therefore, we need to have 12 senators to represent us. If we look at the Mining and Pastoral and Agricultural Regions, sure they do not have the population, but they are the powerhouses of the state economy. There are many challenges in those regions that city people do not have when it comes to essential services, and just getting around the place because it is so huge. I think it would be a travesty to reduce representation for those regions. Some reform could be required. But what shape that would take, I do not know—whether we adopt a Senate type-system or New South Wales-type system or whatever. I think that one vote, one value is fraught with a lot of problems, and I would not like to see it in place. The SFFWA will go into caretaker mode for now. Where we go will depend on how that electoral reform works out, but hopefully we will be back to have another go.

As I come to the end of this speech, I would like to thank a few people. First and foremost, would have to be my wife, Brenda, who has been by my side the entire time and has always encouraged me. When I was licking my wounds, she would always give me a pat on the back and a red wine to calm me down. She has always been there supporting me all the way through, and I am very grateful for that. I also thank my family—my parents, my children, my grandchildren and my soon-to-be great-grandchild in November. You have always been very supportive of me right through.

I thank my electorate staff. Anne Fergusson-Stewart has been there from the beginning. She is a very experienced electorate officer; she has worked for ministerial departments, both federal and state. She certainly helped me to get up and running, and I am eternally grateful to her. Lucy Radzikowska has been with us for this term of Parliament. She is a brilliant research officer. She actually reads legislation and *Hansard* for fun! If I ever needed anything, I had it in a hot second. Her intellectual capacity is beyond reproach. I thank Lucy very much for her service. Tim Williams came to work with us at the beginning of the fortieth Parliament as a young journalist. He has been an assistant research officer. He has handled a lot of media for us, prepared a lot of speeches and done a lot of research as well. As a young man, he has grown to be a very, very capable research officer. What weighs heavily on all members of Parliament who were not re-elected is their responsibility to their staff and that they are now unemployed and will have to look elsewhere for employment. That weighs heavily on me, but the quality of those people means that it will not be too long before someone picks them up.

I would also like to thank some of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party executive, in particular Ray Hull and Mark McCall, who have been there from the very beginning and are still on the executive. Ray was chairman for a period of time and Mark McCall has been our treasurer for the party's existence. I thank Stuart Ostle, our current chairman; Stef Colaguri; Clinton Thomas; Ron Lean; Trevor Ruewaldt; Fiona White-Hartig; and Joe Gerek. They are all dedicated people on our state executive.

I would also like to thank all members and the Clerks for their fellowship over the years. I have really appreciated that support across the divide. I wish all re-elected and newly elected members all strength in continuing to keep the other place to account, and in reviewing and improving legislation, as this house has a duty to do. Madam President, lastly, I wish all those members who did not contest or who were unsuccessful at the election all the very best for the future.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hon Rick Mazza. We certainly wish you the best for the very exciting next chapter before you.

HON JIM CHOWN (Agricultural) [2.35 pm]: I am sure that most members struggle with the content of their valedictory address; I know I certainly have over the last few weeks. I have so much to say but, as always, relevance is important in a speech, so here we go.

Madam President, I will commence by saying that I am bitterly disappointed your tenure as President of this house will not continue into the forty-first Parliament. It has been my absolute privilege to be a member of this place with you as the first female President of the Legislative Council in the fortieth Parliament. Madam President, you have presided over a number of controversial and at times adversarial debates in this place, and you have conducted

your presidency in a highly professional and nonpartisan manner. You are also President of this house when it is being challenged on what is the most fundamental requirement, whether spoken or written—that is, the basic democratic right of privilege. Privilege for members of Parliament allows them to represent their communities and issues within those communities as they see them, and allows them to do so without fear of legal retribution. Madam President, you have fearlessly represented the current rights of this house and have done your best to maintain over 300 years of tradition to uphold democracy as we know it today. On this matter, I will repeat the Governor’s speech when he opened Parliament two weeks ago —

With your election, you constituents have put their faith in you.

That is a solemn responsibility. As we look around the globe, we see that faith in democratic processes is declining.

This is dangerous because the only alternative to it is authoritarian Government. The first step in the process is always an attack on the integrity of the democratic system. In Australia we protect that better than anywhere else.

I fully agree with Governor Beazley’s comments; however, he omitted to say in his speech that democracy as we know it today is being challenged in Western Australia. It is my opinion that the barbarians are at the gates on the fundamental right of parliamentary privilege in this place. I fully comprehend the pressure Madam President must have come under on this matter, as I spent some time last year being publicly vilified by the Premier and the Attorney General for doing nothing more than carrying out my responsibilities, as enshrined in legislation, regarding the appointment of the Corruption and Crime Commissioner. These comments were inappropriate. They were lies and they have no foundation in fact and were unworthy of the Premier. I think it is absolutely abhorrent that any member of any committee of this Parliament should be vilified in this manner because a government was unable to get its way. The Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission rejected the Premier’s nomination not once, but twice—on two separate occasions. That rejection was carried out as there was neither majority support nor bipartisan support for the nominee. Parliamentary committees and their members carry out important work on behalf of the Western Australian community on a plethora of subjects, and they do so, on the whole, in a bipartisan manner that rises above daily political argy-bargy. This is the fundamental reason why committee deliberations remain within the committee. Once proven, a breach of these confidential discussions by a member of the committee is considered to be a contempt of Parliament, yet here we are. A member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, which I belong to, took it upon himself to breach this convention and had the protection of the government in the other place during a motion that could possibly have put him before the privileges committee. As I understand it, he is to be rewarded as the new chair of the incoming CCCC. I remember an occasion on the farm when one of my young daughters, one of the twins, asked me how to tell the difference between a snake and a worm. My response was that snakes slither, they have scales and are completely untrustworthy. There is no such thing as a good snake, and the best policy is to give them a wide berth. Madam President, I conclude this portion of my address by saying that you have been magnificent as President of this Council. I wish your successor the very best during these turbulent times. I believe that it is worth repeating: the barbarians are truly at the doors of democracy in this great state, and if all else fails, lock the doors!

I will now move on to more pleasant matters. A valedictory address is really a speech on self-reflection. Before I get to some of my achievements as a member of this place, I would like to share with members a couple of humorous moments made by members of this Council that have been in my memory for years and will probably forever remain there. One of the great things about spending time here is listening to members on their feet and participating in their conversations through interjections, when the time permits. The first interjection that I recall is from the late Hon Jock Ferguson. Jock became a member of the thirty-eighth Parliament in September 2008. Sadly, he was not with us for very long before he went off to that great trades hall in the sky. We all enjoyed Jock’s company. I know I certainly did, although he had a very annoying habit of first addressing any Liberal member he came across as comrade. The occasion that I am alluding to is when Hon Norman Moore had carriage of a bill and during Norman’s second reading speech, Jock interjected with a comment that I recall, to the best of my knowledge, went along the lines of, “This legislation is as useful as a glass eye that has a crack in it.” Another interjection that is indelibly etched in my memory was from Hon Sue Ellery who, as the Leader of the Opposition at the time, interjected on a government Liberal member who only on very rare occasions rose to his feet to address the Council. On one of those rare occasions, the member was on this his feet giving a five-minute dissertation on what was wrong with the world when Hon Sue Ellery interjected with the pithy comment, and I quote once again from the best of my memory, “What a shame the member’s political career peaked in opposition.” We have some fun in this place from time to time. If the Leader of the House cannot remember who she said that to, I will remind her later.

I am sure that every member who arrives here does so with the intention of achieving positive outcomes for the electorate that they represent. I know I certainly did. I will now touch on some of the achievements that I successfully accomplished as a member over the last 12 years. When I first arrived as a member, I was a very nervous Nellie. I did not sleep for the first nine months, especially after the house sittings, because my mind was in turmoil trying to catch up on what had happened. I will move forward to what I was going to say. On 29 December 2009, in the early years of the Barnett government, a massive bushfire raced through the town of Toodyay and its surrounds,

totally destroying about 28 or 29 homes. Toodyay was closed off. No-one was allowed in and only residents were allowed to remain in Toodyay. The day after the fire, one of the Premier's principal advisers, John Hammond, called me. He said that the Premier was going up to Toodyay and asked whether I would like to come. I said I certainly would but that I was in my shorts and thongs. He said that I needed to get changed and they would pick me up in half an hour. The Premier arrived at my house and off we went to Toodyay in the morning. On the way up there, we were discussing what had happened. I had had a bit of feedback from people up there already and I said to Colin, "You understand that at this stage over 20 homes have been burnt to the ground. Most of those residents are actually left with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They are living in the town on charity from friends and relations or anyone who can help. Wouldn't it be good if we could give them some of their dignity back and give them a cash grant so that they could have some independence over their life going forward until they re-establish themselves? They've lost their bank accounts, their wallets and have no identity at all, other than the people who know them. They could then buy a meal somewhere and repay their hosts in this terrible time." There was silence and then he said that it was a good idea and he asked me how much I would suggest. I thought that was above my pay grade—you're asking me how much! Quite conservatively, I thought about \$2 500 per home would be more than adequate. He thought in silence for a minute and said to make it \$5 000, and that is what happened. We arrived in Toodyay the day after the bushfire and attended a town hall meeting packed with Toodyay townspeople, many of whom were in severe distress. The emergency services and police got up and talked. The town hall meetings occurred on a daily basis for more than a week so that the people were informed of what was happening, what was going to take place and on how the government and the emergency services et cetera were going to come to their aid and help re-establish their lives. The Premier got up and said a few words and then he made the announcement that we would be allocating a \$5 000 grant to anybody whose house had burnt to the ground. He pointed to me and he said, "You're the man. You'll have to come up and do this." I was appointed as the Premier's coordinator to deal with the community issues up there. At the town hall meeting the next day, the town hall was again absolutely packed with people and the emergency services went through the process again. I sat down with the shire clerk at the time, who had the deeds of all the houses. We knew exactly who the residents involved were and I signed \$5 000 cheques for those unfortunate people. That was a Saturday morning, and I had arranged for Bendigo Bank to open its doors so that those people could go across and either cash their money or open an account and put the excess into an account, and that is what happened. After that meeting, I went outside, and had a cigarette, as all members know is my habit, and a lady came up to me. I will not even try to guess her age. She told me that she had been nominated to thank me. I asked her what for. She pointed to a group of people and said that they had all lost their homes and that for the last three days she had nothing with her but the clothes that she was wearing and that she had been living with people whom she did not know. She told me that I had given her and the group their dignity back and that they now had some individual freedom in regard to what they could do. She said they felt like they had been brought back into the community at large. That particular \$5 000 grant was carried out throughout the whole of the Barnett years, especially for homes that were lost in bushfire disasters. I am very happy to see that this government has something similar in place. I know that a \$5 000 grant is now being allocated to those poor, unfortunate people who lost their homes during the recent cyclone Seroja.

There was another occasion that I was highly involved in. A good friend of mine Graham Nixon was the chair of the McCusker Charitable Foundation at the time. He contacted me and asked me if there was any way I could get some money out of the new government to give to the McCusker foundation. I had no idea what the foundation was about. I looked into the McCusker foundation and met Professor Ralph Martins, AO, for the first time. The foundation does a fantastic job with its research into Alzheimer's disease. We are all growing older, we are all living longer and Alzheimer's is becoming more prevalent in our community. If we look at the figures going forward to 2030, 2040 and 2050, the number of people who will succumb to this disease is mind-boggling.

Troy Buswell was the Treasurer at the time. As always with these matters, I tried to be highly professional. I understand that ministers and Premiers are extremely busy. I prepared one page of the relevant points that needed to be discussed and set out why I was pursuing a particular outcome. I badgered Troy on a number of occasions for some money to be donated to the McCusker foundation. I did not get a response. When the budget was brought down in 2011, I think, Troy came to me and said that there was some money for the McCusker foundation in the budget. It turned out to be \$2.2 million. That money was sourced from moneys in the Carpenter government's science and innovation fund. I was very grateful to Troy. I could not find it in the budget. It was not a line item. The McCusker foundation was very grateful for that money. It triggered another substantial donation from the commonwealth. In turn, as Ralph told me on a flight back from Queensland, when I happened to be sitting next to him, it also triggered substantial funds and donations from the United States of America. I wish the foundation all the very best. I know that it will continue doing fantastic work, especially in trying to find a way—it is nearly there, if not already—to make an early diagnosis of this particular disease.

At that time, Terry Redman was the Minister for Agriculture and Food. I had been down to Katanning and met with people from the Shire of Katanning. It had an issue with its saleyards, which were located in the middle of town. The saleyards did not meet animal welfare requirements. Access to the saleyards by modern transport was tight, if not totally inadequate. When over a million sheep are put through a particular saleyard, anyone anywhere in the town would know when it was sale day because they could smell it. It was as simple as that. The shire wanted to

move the saleyards to another location and make them more modern. In the meantime, I had been to a briefing in the Liberal party room, which was organised by Terry Redman, the Minister for Agriculture and Food at the time. He also wanted to build new saleyards but he wanted to move them to Arthur River, which was some way from the town site of Katanning. Once they were built, he wanted the new Muchea saleyards and the new Katanning saleyards—a combined value of around \$80 million has been spent on them—to be leased to a superannuation investment company called Palisade Investment Partners, which was leasing and administering saleyards in the eastern states. I did not think that was a great idea, considering that we had only two large saleyards in the state. I was not happy about it, and I walked out of the briefing.

Once again, I went to work and put a briefing paper together. I went to the Premier's office and spoke to one of his advisers. I said that I had been to Katanning and said the shire believed it could build new saleyards, once it found an appropriate place for them, for \$20 million, but it would like \$17 million from the government because it can find the rest. I heard nothing back. If you are persistent and professional and until somebody says, "No, go away", you will not get rid of me. After a few more weeks, I repeated that exercise. I went back to the Premier's office. One of his people sat down with me. They were very respectful. I spent half an hour going through it again. I still heard nothing. One day, probably three or four weeks later, I got a phone call. Timing is important in life and in politics, believe me. This particular person from the Premier's office said, "What are you doing at three o'clock this afternoon, Jim?" I thought that nobody from the Premier's office would ring up and ask that question without a good reason. I asked why. They said, "We'd like you to meet the Premier at three o'clock to discuss your proposal of a grant for the Katanning saleyards." I said that I was happy to meet the Premier. I asked why it was suggested that we meet at three o'clock. They said, "He's meeting Terry Redman at four o'clock and we want him to say yes to you first before he says no to Terry's proposal." That is exactly what happened. A grant of \$17 million came from the Barnett government. Those saleyards are state of the art. It is the largest undercover area for sheep in the southern hemisphere. It cost \$26 million, which is virtually half of what the Muchea saleyards cost. It was built by locals. It is still managed by the Katanning shire. If members are ever down there, I suggest they look at the saleyards. They have done a fantastic job. When the saleyards were opened in May 2014, Hon Ken Baston was the minister. I went down with him and the Premier.

Another matter that I became involved with was the year 7 transition. All members know that that is when the year 7s go off to middle school. The Leader of the House would certainly know that. It was a proposal adopted from the eastern states. It was going to have a pretty negative effect on a number of schools in my electorate. I wrote to every P&C president in my electorate. I was told what was likely to happen and that I was happy to receive feedback on how this matter could be resolved. Members from the Agricultural Region would certainly be aware that a number of small primary schools in WA are quite isolated. To use their year 7s in a cliff face arrangement would take the student numbers in some schools down to critical levels. The Standing Committee on Public Administration looked into the matter. It had hearings, wrote a report and made recommendations. I never read the report because I knew exactly what I was going to do about this matter.

Every year, I conducted a tour of the Agricultural Region with the Premier. These tours would be held over one or two nights. They were timed to the minute. Public meetings were always held in places of interest. They were highly successful. I am pretty sure that Colin enjoyed them. We would start at seven o'clock in the morning and we would not get to bed until 10.30 at night. On this particular occasion, I decided to take our tour from here to Geraldton. I organised a large public meeting in the Shire of Coorow, at which over 100 local people turned up. I knew that the local John Deere agent was a very good orator. When Colin gave his address, the agent said to the Premier, "What's this year 7 transition thing about? Don't you understand that, firstly, if these children suddenly have to go to a high school or boarding school somewhere else, it is at great expense to the parents, and most of them have not saved for that expense? Secondly, you are cutting into my workforce. A lot of these children who go away, if they had stayed in the community, they would become my apprentices." Once children in rural communities leave, they rarely come back. We stopped in Geraldton that night. I think Colin got the message. Over dinner and a bottle of wine, he said, "I know you've been on about this year 7 transition. What's your solution?" I said that it obviously could not be stopped but I suggested we have some sort of gradual process, so that people could get used to it and families could make their own arrangements over a period of time. That is pretty much what happened. It was decided that this transition would be voluntary for certain small primary schools on a parent's application. A number of schools adopted that. I think the transition period finished in 2017. Now year 7 students go to middle school somewhere else. My daughter's child will soon be going from Kalannie to Dalwallinu, which involves an hour and a half bus ride in the morning and an hour and a half bus ride in the evening. That is three hours on a bus, five days a week, for a year 7 student. He will not be the only one. This is replicated throughout the region in a number of small primary schools.

I am, and always have been, a believer in competition. I think competition gives the best service. It will also give the best price and the best product. I refer to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd in this state. I was involved at a commonwealth level with some great people, including Ian Bradley, who is no longer with us. I went on trips to lobby the Howard federal government to take the monopoly away from the Australian Wheat Board. In the end, it was a Labor government that did that. The outcome is beneficial to Western Australian growers by millions of dollars a year. However, we now have a similar monopoly in CBH. I am not decrying the fact that CBH is the monopoly

grain handler in this state. I am not saying that CBH is inefficient, but I know that it can do better. Bunge, the second largest grain acquirer in the world, came to me when it wanted to start exporting grain out of Bunbury port. Once again, Troy was the Minister for Transport and ports. There was not going to be a lot of public moneys involved. It just wanted the licence and the land allocation at Bunbury port to set up a receival point. After some lobbying, that actually happened. Bunge eventually had a receival point at Arthur River and another one further inland. It spent \$90 million building a state-of-the-art receival point at Bunbury port. Its handling charges were less than CBH's by a good number of dollars. One grower in the area said that he would save \$50 000 to \$80 000 a year by going to the competition. I was involved in that at a very high level. The minister made the final decision, but it would not have happened unless Bunge had come to me and I had gone through the process. One of the great things about being in government is actually being able to achieve things.

To cut a long story short, it was an absolute failure for Bunge. CBH met the local marketplace. It lowered its handling fees. That was fine; that is what competition is about. Bunge could not sustain its commercial interest because it had started to lose tonnage. I understand that it is now on the market as a non-operating entity.

I was not a student at Muresk, but as a member for Agricultural Region I certainly believe Muresk has a lot to add from an educational perspective, and it has in the past for agriculture. There was a time when Muresk—I cannot remember what it was combined with locally; it was one of the universities.

Hon Sue Ellery: Curtin.

Hon JIM CHOWN: Curtin University, yes. After a few years, that arrangement went by the bye, and the Muresk Institute virtually closed down. Then it started up again in partnership with the University of Queensland. I went up there and became a little involved and encouraged them. At the time, 22 students had enrolled in a two or three-year course. I asked, "How can I help you?" They said, "We need more students. We need some encouragement. People have lost a bit of faith in Muresk because it has been irregular." I said, "If I can arrange a scholarship program and you guys could advertise that there is a scholarship program, it may encourage other people to become students." They said that was great. I came back to the Liberal party room and put forward a proposal. It was to be a \$5 000 scholarship called the Sir David Brand scholarship program. The Premier said that was fine. I spoke to all members and they approved it. The Premier said the only caveat was, "Things change in politics, Jim. The best thing to do is only make this a four-year or a government-term contract because there may be fewer members after the next election," and there were. That program commenced and that is what happened.

I will not bore members any further with some of my achievements, but the list is long.

Hon Nick Goiran: It certainly has not been boring, honourable member.

Hon JIM CHOWN: It has not been boring at all; it has been quite exciting.

One of the most satisfying aspects of being a member of Parliament is the opportunity to help individuals with difficulties that they are experiencing. Most of the time it is listening to their grievances or helping them to gain access or find the right direction for departmental inquiries and resolutions. It is my experience that most people access a member's office when the wheels have truly fallen off the matter they are struggling with. I am sure we have all had similar experiences. I wish that people would utilise the services our offices provide more often and earlier, when the wheels start to wobble and the problem is easier to overcome, rather than trying to rectify something at its terminal stage.

We have all helped, and we continue to help, individuals from our electorates on a whole range of subjects. I find getting positive outcomes for people most gratifying; I am sure we all do. At times, it takes a great deal of work and more work than the person you are trying to help actually realises. One of the most gratifying incidents my office has dealt with took place in the dying years of the Gillard federal government. One of my girls received a call as I was leaving the office. She said, "Jim, you need to take this call." When my staff say that, I know that they are serious. I took the call from a young lady. I will not mention her name. She is from quite a large country town in my electorate. She said, "Mr Chown, I'm just ringing you because I hope you can help me. I am being deported within two and a half weeks." I asked her how long she had been here. She replied, "I've been here for over five years. I fled the UK. I now have a partner; I've integrated in the community; I've got a job; I love being here; but the problem is, if I'm deported, my life will be in danger." I said, "Why is that?" She said, "I have my daughter with me in this country as well. When I was 21 and my daughter was less than 12 months old, my partner tried to stab me to death." She was attacked and was almost killed. She said, "I recovered from that and left the UK." She had lived on an island off the mainland. She said, "This deportation order will put me in jeopardy because the perpetrator of the crime is due to leave prison at about the same time I will get back home. I only have one place to go, which is back to my mum on this island." I said, "How do you know this?" She said, "He has tracked me down through social media. I have emails and messages from him that are all subtly threatening and I am very concerned." At this time Sue, my wife, was working for Senator Mathias Cormann in his Canberra office. Part of her role was liaising with the department of immigration. In fact, she had such a good rapport with the department that for at least two years after she left Mathias's office she would get calls from people seeking help or thanking her. Some of the calls were from Europeans trying to find out how they could become Australians. She went in to bat for this lady with the department.

In the meantime, we needed to verify that what this girl was saying was correct. We tracked down the perpetrator's court case on the internet and found that everything she had said about the knife attack on her was correct. We had the dates. The immigration department, through Mathias's office, told us that we needed to verify that her life would be in danger if she returned to the United Kingdom, and we were given a two-week time frame in which to get this done. The court case detailed that the first responder to the incident had been the local sergeant, so I found out where he lived on this island and contacted him. He remembered the case. He knew both people involved in it well. He had just retired. I explained the situation to him and asked him to please write a letter giving his opinion on whether this lady's life would be in jeopardy if she returned. That letter came back within 48 hours and backed up everything she had said. In fact, he was explicit: he said that if this young lady returned to that place, he had no doubt that once the perpetrator was released from jail, he would find her and certainly try to finish the job that he had nearly succeeded in doing on a previous occasion, because he knew him very well. That letter went off to the immigration department. The commonwealth minister has the ability to change deportation orders, and that is what happened. This lady was given permanent residency and is now a citizen of this country. She has remarried and has another child. Quite frankly, for me, as a humble member of this place, that was a really great occasion and a very positive outcome.

I am proudly standing here as a supporter of the voluntary assisted dying legislation. The young gentleman beside me, Hon Tjorn Sibma, and I were the only Liberal members to support that bill. I also supported a number of the amendments to the bill that were put forward by Hon Nick Goiran and others in this place. If the McGowan government achieved anything in the last term, that is one achievement that it needs to be proud of. I think the community at large is most grateful that we now have that sort of legislation in place in this state of Western Australia.

I was quoted in the press on more than one occasion as being undecided on the bill. I had a reason for that, I might add, which I might get into. One day I had a phone call from my mum—she is 96 years old—saying, "Jim, what are you doing?" I asked her what she was talking about. She told me that she had just read in the paper that I was undecided about the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. I said, "Yes, that's right, mum." She then said, "Don't you realise I may use it or need it at some time?" I explained to her that she was in great health and that I doubted very much she would need it, but I thanked her for the phone call! I was undecided, and I put forward a motion in this place about palliative care. Hon Nick Goiran and others have done a great deal of work on that subject. My motion was supported. I was undecided because I believed that if this government wanted to go forward with the VAD bill, it needed to put more money into palliative care. I made public the deplorable state of palliative care in this state, and certainly in regional Western Australia. Of course, the government has now spent nearly \$40 million over and above its normal expenditure on palliative care and there are programs in place. I am very happy to have been part of that process. I still do not believe that palliative care is at the level it should be in Western Australia, so I encourage government members to remind the Minister for Health the next time they see him, regardless of whether we are in a crisis, that there should be programs in place for palliative care and certainly increased funding going forward, as we have an ageing population.

I will now move on to a series of thankyou's. I would like to thank two of my longstanding staff in my electorate office, Marion Lehman and Kylie Watkinson. They are two highly professional ladies. I would like to thank them sincerely for keeping both of my feet on the ground. I thank them for the many robust discussions we have had on all sorts of matters. I certainly do not thank them for all the occasions they ganged up on me and won when I decided to put these discussions to a vote—two to one does not work!

I will tell just a couple of little anecdotes about these ladies. When Mike Nahan was Leader of the Opposition, we went on a charter flight to Esperance. Mike had a staff member with him, Senator Brockman had a staff member with him, and Kylie was with me. We had a great day in Esperance. Kylie had organised where they went, helped them with their baggage and gave them directions et cetera. I was talking to the pilot when the others got off the plane and I noticed that she had grabbed their bags and then had stood at the end of the wing. Everyone lined up in a queue and, as they walked past Kylie, they took their bags, shook her hand and had a bit of a laugh and giggle before they moved on. That had never happened before; it was very strange. On the way back in the car, I asked her what it was about. She said, "They were thanking me for the assistance during the day, and they were also wondering how I put up with you!"

Here is another anecdote. Marion is a great person. She is great at her job and great with people, but she is very, very shy. During debate on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, Andrew Denton came to our offices. I was in my office and I think Kylie was momentarily away at a medical appointment when Denton came and knocked on the door. Marion went to open the door but was overcome with shyness, so she ran off to the kitchen, leaving poor Andrew standing there looking through the glass and wondering whether he had just grown another head! I was sitting there wondering when she was going to open the door and bring him in, so I got up and went out. Andrew was still standing there, so I let him in. She did not come out of the kitchen until he had left! I had a great discussion with him on VAD et cetera.

I thank both of you sincerely, from the bottom of my heart, for being such great people.

I would also like to thank Peter Collier. For the past eight years, Peter has been Leader of the Liberal Party in this house. As a leader, he has been completely inclusive, generous in his remarks and generous with his support to all of us, including me. He has shown great leadership skills. In opposition, those leadership skills, along with those of Hon Michael Mischin, came to the fore as he harnessed the sentiment of the crossbenchers in this place. To my

colleagues here, I think you are a bunch of wonderful people. We do have some good times together. I cannot remember what bill I was talking about, but one of the Greens members came into the house as I was saying that during a discussion over our dinner break, we had decided that a particular course of action was the best to undertake. She asked, “Do you really discuss things at dinner?” It was you, Hon Alison Xamon. I said, “Yes, we do, and we have a lot of fun as well!” That is what real teamwork is about: it is about trust in each other; it is about giving each other a leg-up; and it is about supporting each other when the occasion arises. I thank you for all of that.

I would like to thank my wonderful family: Sue; my twin daughters, Aleca and Rebecca; and my youngest, Tiffany, who has been in London for a couple of years now doing fantastic things over there; their spouses, Doug and Edward; and the five grandchildren. I thank you for your support. I will not say too much because I will get too emotional! I will now have more time on my hands and I am prepared to undertake any task that you may push my way, but I will draw the line, Edward and Aleca, at walking Oscar. He is too long, his legs are too short, he is too old, he is too grumpy and it is just embarrassing when his tummy gets caught on the kerb as he is crossing the road. You will see more of me, for better or for worse. I am very proud of you. I am proud of what you have achieved as young people. You are great citizens of this great state in this magnificent country. Just before COVID, we were very lucky because, as a whole family, we went to the United Kingdom and had Christmas with Tiff over there. We travelled around Europe; there were 14 of us. When we got back, three weeks later, COVID broke out. I hope we can do it again at some stage in the near future.

To the staff of this Parliament, from the Clerk to the chef, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your professionalism, how you make people feel welcome and how you discharge your duties is quite outstanding. As a new member when I first came here, I thought: the staff know my name! How can that happen? They knew the names of all the new members. They knew everybody’s names. I thought that they either went to a special school to rehearse or they had fantastic memories. A number of years later, I happened to be in the kitchen just after the 2013 election. There, on the kitchen wall, were photos of all the new members and their names. I thought: there is the secret. They will eventually remember who is who! I think this place would be nothing but a hollow shell if it were not for the staff. Once again, thank you. Keep up the good work. I am sure you will be adequately rewarded by the members voicing their gratitude on occasions such as this.

I wish all members of this place the absolute best into the future. I thank them for their tolerance in having me as a serving member in this place.

[Applause.]

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Martin Aldridge): Well done, Hon Jim Chown. Best of luck wherever your future takes you.

HON LAURIE GRAHAM (Agricultural) [3.23 pm]: It is my pleasure to stand here today to make a short contribution on my exit from this house. Being here has been a fantastic opportunity for me. I would like to particularly acknowledge the Deputy President and Madam President herself. They have been very fair and the way they have dealt with us all has been fantastic. I think it is a very hard task to undertake. I initially tried that chair and I found that the ejection seat was the best thing for me. I must acknowledge that Hon Adele Farina, who took over from me, did a much better job than I was ever likely to do. So I found my rightful place back on the back bench. I will start with the staff here. They have been fantastic. I would hate to pick out individual members of staff, but as was commented on earlier, they all welcome you. It is great to see the way they interact with us. Anthony, down at the members’ bar, has my mark with the coffee. These days I do not even have to suggest what I want; he is making it before I arrive. There is a bit of humour in that, I think. I am terrible at names and he thinks I have forgotten it every time, so I have to look at his badge to make sure I have Anthony right.

I need to thank a number of people but, before doing that, I want to touch on a couple of matters. I will tend to be fairly brief as I go through my contribution. I believe I was really fortunate to be a member of the house during the passing of the landmark voluntary assisted dying legislation, which had strong community support. Obviously, as a Catholic, it gave me some heartburn to look at the issue, but as I talked to all the constituents, it was very clear that a vast majority supported the legislation. I think people are elected to the house to represent people. We are also elected to bring our own views, but I believe we should, wherever possible, support the views of our electorates. I was very pleased to be party to voting for that legislation. The interesting thing is, in recent times, as that legislation is about to get underway, some people who were not supportive of VAD whom I talked to at the time are now wondering whether there should be more liberal conditions. They have obviously looked at the recent situation with COVID, including what has happened in nursing homes. Lots of people do not want to go to a nursing home. I am certainly one of them and I would like to think that I could sign a bit of paper in advance to say “I’m outta here!” But that is obviously up to a Parliament in the future.

My four years went in a flash, but when COVID arrived, that seemed to bring it to an end much quicker. Everything stopped for the better part of six months. I am in the over-70s group. The first time the COVID legislation came to the house, I got the phone call from my friend here to tell me that it was the best idea for me to be paired for the day. I found it difficult to accept at the time. However, on reflection and looking at what has happened elsewhere, it was certainly the right decision for those of us in the more elderly group not to be here. We did not need to be here;

everyone was going to vote for the legislation. It was a crisis that the state was trying to stop happening, as we could see it happening in other countries. Acting on health advice, the Premier made some tough calls on COVID in the early days. I remember people lobbying all sorts of ways, particularly business interests, asking whether I would advocate for them. Like most people, I was very “wait and see”. It became apparent that this was the right call. I should acknowledge the Premier in the President’s gallery; thanks very much for coming down, Mark. It was well done by the Premier and his team. Most people I talk to believe that there will be ongoing issues until vaccination is complete. Although I have not received the jab myself, it is only because the doctor who I thought was going to do it is not now having a clinic. At the first opportunity, I will ask to be vaccinated.

I would like to talk about committees for a while. It is a shame that Hon Michael Mischin is not here because, along with Hon Pierre Yang and Hon Robin Scott, we were on the driest committee that one could be involved with: the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review. I think the committee probably needs to be made up of four solicitors, but I think they would have a hard time coming to any agreement. It was great. The members made what was a dull committee very enjoyable. Regarding the Select Committee into Local Government, although I voted against that legislation—I was one of a number of people—I was told I would be the deputy chair of the committee! I am pretty passionate about local government and I was very pleased to be given that opportunity. I was extremely disappointed that, again, COVID intervened with reporting on that legislation. We did not end up holding country hearings or doing the task in a way that it should have been undertaken, but no doubt that will happen in the future. Despite cutting it short, I believe there are a number of good recommendations around the current legislation and whether it is appropriate for all local governments. I like to think we will come up with a tiered system for local government at some time in the future. I am not suggesting we have an A, B and C-type arrangement, but with very small local governments that have large tracts of gravel roads and not much else relying on grants funding, there is not much point them doing rates returns, filling in squares and carrying on; it would be much better if they went back to the old system that was in place many years ago.

My hope for reform in local government is that local governments themselves will jump up and determine the best way to address the matter in the interests of their ratepayers. I am sure that some of them will have problems, but every time we get close to the fence, they run away. It has proved unsuccessful to date, but I am still optimistic they will do it in the future.

I would briefly like to talk about council amalgamations because I have been involved in them, particularly at the Shire of Greenough when it amalgamated for the first time as Geraldton–Greenough. That amalgamation was successful. Unfortunately, at that time, the rural ratepayers wanted to be part of the city. I believe the recent amalgamation with Mullewa has made that council doubtful as far as the community of interest is concerned and perhaps at some stage, when we have reform, we will have more logical local governments, like coastal local governments, where there is community of interest on coastal strips and also with rural and city people, who all have different views about how life should be. They are all worried about cross-subsidising the rates.

I also take the opportunity to highlight the Geraldton election commitments. In the run-up to the 2017 election, commitments were made for \$45 million for the Geraldton Health Campus upgrade, which was subsequently increased to \$90 million when it was found that it was a much bigger job and the emergency department needed more beds. I am very grateful to the government for committing to that and for the support that upgrade has received generally from within this house.

The step up, step down facility is another project that was not on the radar when I was elected and it is great to see that that facility is now up and running. That is another issue that was identified quickly and was addressed.

Commitments to community and sporting facilities were well received in Geraldton. People in Geraldton are sports mad. When I was younger, there were a couple of thousand people playing basketball. Today we have the same number playing basketball, but I have no doubt that as facilities improve, we will see even greater numbers participating.

In 2021, the government’s commitments included \$2 million to basketball. I am pleased to see that the association has planning approval in place through the City of Greater Geraldton for four new basketball courts, which will keep the costs down a bit more than if it had received that approval later. The current courts have been unable to cope and, obviously, with climate change and other things, parents are not prepared, like we were when my children were younger, to put them on the outdoor courts and allow them to fall over and scratch their knees. I would say some children are a bit precious these days! However, it is a different standard and they are paying fairly big money to participate, and it is great to see that commitment by the government.

Early in 2000, when I was on the Shire of Greenough, we identified the need for boat ramps, north and south. I was pleased to see that this year, after our continued lobbying in this area, the government committed \$3 million for coastal protection and the boat launching facility at Drummond Cove. I believe the community will very much appreciate that. Hopefully, the city can secure the additional funding it is now seeking through other sources and build a bigger and better facility and locate it so that it has minimal impact on residents in the area.

Cycleways was another item that was unexpectedly approved this year. I know there is great drive for that. In 2017 a report identified the need, but I did not think the government would fund it so quickly but it has committed \$4.3 million.

I would like to touch on a couple of items. My colleague Hon Darren West covered the other three electorates in the Agricultural Region, so I will touch only on Geraldton and some of Labor's very good commitments at the 2017 election. I will not go through them all, as the list is extensive. One was providing food at Foodbank. There was the commitment to the Mid West Sports Federation for the expansion of the current cycling network—that was a big allocation. Ngala community services was funded to run the youth program. I know my colleague Hon Darren West was a driving force and put money into that, in addition to our commitments from the election campaign, to see that delivered in the best possible way. The Geraldton Police and Community Youth Centre was funded for young people to upgrade their midget vehicles that have been lying dormant for many years. That was a great contribution.

I will move on to the 2021 commitments and will run through the list for the record. Commitments were made to the Geraldton Yacht Club to replace one of its rescue boats; to Marine Rescue Geraldton to provide some outdoor facilities for its generator that was rusting away in the wind; and to the Geraldton Bowling Club. It was great, in particular, to commit to this. It was a \$30 000 project that looked to harvest water and put it back into its sump. The beauty of that investment is that the club spent probably \$50 000 or \$60 000 doing all the preliminary work and it asked for funding to reseal the area. The Geraldton Community Toy Library was allocated a \$40 000 grant to expand its services, and the Wandina Playgroup outdoor facility was allocated \$50 000. Centacare Men's Health and Wellbeing was allocated funding for transportation services. The government funded a bus there. I was there recently. It was interesting to turn up to that facility and find that Centacare, to its credit, funded a coordinator for the first 12 months, and that commitment will enable it to take him on for another 12 months. Centacare will obviously continue to seek money for a coordinator, but it is great to get infrastructure to allow it to pick up the clients who are most disadvantaged in the community and bring them to those sorts of facilities. Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation is another group that benefited from Lara's election commitments. The Quarry Street youth facility refurbishment was way overdue, so that \$200 000 commitment was great.

There are a number of other commitments that I will not touch on, but I mention the Geraldton Hockey Association. It was great that we could make a contribution of \$220 000 to the hockey association. I was at Busselton the other day watching the hockey. The existing turf is very tired and upkeep is obviously very difficult for sporting bodies. Perhaps it could be said that they mismanaged this or that they were a bit unlucky in that the cockatoos turned up and ate their field! It is great to see new fields and new facilities provided to them.

It has been my pleasure being a member of the house, especially with the cordial manner that all members in this chamber have treated me. I came here with some reservations, expecting it to be cliquey, with members on this side or that side and no one would talk to you, but it has been great to see that people are very cordial.

I need to acknowledge some members in person. I acknowledge the esteemed Leader of the House, Hon Sue Ellery, for putting up with us and continuing to carry on. We certainly test her! I do not know how she does her job. To the Leader of the Opposition in the fortieth Parliament, Hon Peter Collier, you always went out of your way to acknowledge me and have a chat in the corridor—as did all members on the other side—and that was very much appreciated. I need to comment on my friend here, Hon Pierre Yang. He was the Whip and I was the deputy for that short period of time. I would describe Pierre as the extraordinaire control freak. He knows exactly what is going on and what everyone should be doing. I was doing a job and I received a message that said, "You're down to 12; do something"! It was great, Pierre. It was my pleasure to do that task for the balance of the term.

To the Premier, Mark McGowan, your leadership of the party during my term has been outstanding, and no-one disputes the way you have handled the COVID crisis. I do not know how you sleep at night and carry on and get up in the morning. I know that you enjoyed the roadworks this morning as you arrived, and I should comment on that, I suppose. Like all people in regional WA, I now have to add 15 minutes to every trip because there will be roadworks somewhere in the state. It will be wonderful and great when we see the majority of the big road projects completed. Certainly, Geraldton is 20 minutes closer to Perth as a result of the freeway extension, and after other extensions it will be 30 minutes closer to Perth.

I will conclude my remarks by acknowledging those who I have worked closest to during the election campaigns, both in 2017 and 2021. First, I would like to thank the members and supporters of the Roe, Central Wheatbelt, Moore and Geraldton campaigns whose hard work was the contributing factor in the Labor Party winning the second upper house position in 2017 and, this year, seeing us win three upper house positions. Although I expected us to have an increased vote in the seat of Geraldton, I did not expect it to be by that percentage, nor did I expect to see that the other electorates would improve by so much. Congratulations to Lara Dalton, who was elected, and also Shelley Payne and Sandra Carr, who worked very hard during the election campaign. I am sure the result was a reflection of the level of work they put into it.

I have to move on to my friend Hon Darren West. He has given me a hard time, and members would have heard him give me a hard time again the other day! It is my opinion that the success of Labor in winning the seat of Geraldton would not have been possible without the establishment of the Labor office back in Geraldton after it had ceased. Kim Chance was there for many years and then we had a gap and then Darren went back. In 2017, Darren put his all into the Geraldton campaign as well as the other three campaigns. He had the unfortunate position of running four campaigns during the 2017 election and to get a swing in not only the Geraldton seat, but also the Moore seat

was fantastic. His willingness to share his offices and staff during the past four years made my job much easier. It helped us to better cover the four electorates. Lesley, I know that you are here today, and thanks very much for those beds in the middle of the night when we turned up at all sorts of hours as we were driving past and Darren invited us in for a bed. I think that sometimes your son was sent out for the night to find another bed elsewhere because we had taken them all!

I would like to move on to the staff. I employed Mark Cairn as a temporary electorate officer at the Geraldton office while I was waiting on an office in Northam. Mark had worked in the Geraldton office for some period doing relief work and taught me where we were going in life.

During my term, Jodi Ingram and Geoff Cannon worked as my permanent electorate staff. I was indeed fortunate to recruit you, Geoff, from the ABC news as my research officer in Geraldton. I thank Darren for hosting that position for the four years. You quickly learnt the ropes and became a very valuable member of our team. With my decision to not seek nomination, I was concerned about what the future held, but with your appointment to Lara's staff, that is now secure.

To Jodi, who is here today as well, I was very pleased when I received your application and I was able to appoint you to the electorate officer position in the Northam office. With your deep involvement in the community to facilitate the establishment of the first Labor office in Northam for many years, your work ethic is second to none, and Darren's decision to recruit you to continue to work in that office has been a great outcome.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Barni Norton, who provided relief in the Northam office from time to time, and Adam Dusty, who has worked for me in the Geraldton electorate office since the election, when I transferred back to Geraldton.

Donna is here today, and although Donna Plumber and Judy Riggs both worked for Darren West, they provided support and backup not only to myself in Geraldton and Perth, but also to Geoff and Jodi. I have to say that there were a number of occasions, Donna, when I said that I was going to do something and you said, "No, you're not!" I did appreciate that very strict advice! Donna, you are the most experienced and capable political staffer I have ever had the pleasure to work with. Your help in Perth, at country shows and with running election campaigns was fantastic. Thanks, Donna.

Judy Riggs assisted me greatly in my role, especially in the Geraldton area, where she looked after all my commitments. Judy's compassion for helping constituents, especially those most disadvantaged, is amazing. I have never struck an electorate officer who can have someone at the counter going ape and sits there and patiently talks to them. Judy talks them down, finds out what the problem is and endeavours to solve it. She is an amazing lady, and, Lara, you are very lucky to have her on your staff.

I have left Lara till last in the staff acknowledgements, but I have to thank Lara. In 2017, Lara achieved a remarkable swing, but she fell short by a small margin. I was very lucky that that big swing, together with the increased vote in Moore, saw me elected and, as I said, get Labor two positions in the Agricultural Region for the first time. Lara gave it her all again in the campaign, and the massive swing this year was largely due to her own efforts. I am sure Lara will continue to be a great advocate for the people of Geraldton and the broader midwest community and be able to hold the seat for an extended period of time.

Last and by no means least, I would like to acknowledge and thank my family for embracing my decision to seek endorsement in 2017 and acknowledge the impact that it has had on them. I was in retirement mode and things all changed. After I ran for the seat of Geraldton in 1996—an election that Labor had little chance of winning—I made a commitment in 1997 that I would not stand as a political candidate again. However, I negotiated approval with my wife, "the boss", to be on the ag ticket in 2017. In doing so, I gave her the assurance that although I may assist Lara in winning the seat of Geraldton by being on the ticket, the chances of me being elected were very remote. History says otherwise. I know that Darren and other members such as Ian Blayney saw it coming, but I certainly did not.

While I am speaking about my family, I would like to give a special thanks to my daughter Stacey, who I have stayed with for the last four years and have disrupted her family life. I am sure that she will not miss my impact on the family as I came and went at all hours of the day and night, and she accommodated my ever-changing arrangements and always produced a meal on the table whenever I arrived unexpectedly.

I am sure my wife, Heather, will wish that I was back here again after I am under her feet for an extended period of time! I think the new dog, Rain, will appreciate having me home, however, and maybe the veggie garden will flourish again.

Members, I have no definite plans for future work or community involvement. But I will continue to remain involved in organisations like Joblink Midwest as long as they want me and several parties have expressed an interest in me taking some active part to assist them in their projects. Mr Acting President, it has been a fantastic four years. Thank you, one and all.

[Applause.]

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Martin Aldridge): Thank you for your service, Hon Laurie Graham. All the best for the future.

Hon LAURIE GRAHAM: Thank you very much, Mr Acting President.

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [3.50 pm]: I understand that no-one else is seeking the call at this time, so it will be my pleasure to continue my remarks as a sort of filler. Now is a good time for urgent parliamentary business if anybody needs it!

Looking at the Governor's speech, I noted the financial situation and the McGowan government's plans for this term of Parliament and answered some of the questions posed, probably rhetorically, by the Leader of the Opposition. I placed events along a time line, because it is good to look back and recognise the past. There is the old saying, "If you do not take note of the past, you are doomed to repeat it." In some instances, that is a good thing; in some instances, it is a bad thing. To recap very briefly, I referred to a number of articles and media statements. I want to read one of those to give members very quickly an idea of where I was up to. In 2008, coming into an election, the then Treasurer put out a statement that basically reflected the view of Moody's Investors Service. The first paragraph reads —

Western Australia's sound economic base and responsible fiscal management have again been lauded by credit ratings giant Moody's which has reaffirmed the State's Triple A credit rating.

In its latest analysis, Moody's again highlights the State's 'stellar financial performance' and 'prudent fiscal management'.

That is where we were in 2008. Again, in attempting to answer the question posed by the Leader of the Opposition, at that time there were two great things about our economy: debt was at \$3.6 billion, which was very low, and, better still, inflation in the current spend was at a very low level. Things were all good at that time. We lost the 2008 election and handed over the reins to the Liberal and National Parties. Moving on apace, because I have made a number of comments about the period from 2008 to the 2017 election, I would like to read a piece that paints a picture of the financial situation going into the 2017 election. The ABC online article reads —

The West Australian Government —

That is the Barnett government —

has been hit with another credit rating downgrade from rating's agency Moody's.

The agency has downgraded WA from AA1 to AA2.

WA lost its AAA credit rating with the agency in August 2014.

A few years later, in 2008, after lauding how well our finances were, in 2014, we had moved to a AA2 credit rating after a number of downgrades. In my view, the real problem was that the expansion in the government's recurrent spend was out of control. That was the opinion of not only Moody's and, may I say, Standard and Poor's—I will not go into that because at slightly different times it basically mirrored Moody's rating—but also the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, which is another organisation that would normally say the Liberal and National Parties were better economic managers. The ABC article continues —

WA Chamber of Commerce chief executive Deidre Willmott said the State Government needed to do more to contain spending.

"What Moody's have made clear today is that this is a spending issue," she said.

"And it is about policy setting to reduce spending, and particularly to reduce spending growth."

I concur. The real problem was not the spending on infrastructure, because that is often good spending. If governments have to borrow to do that sort of spending, it often has a payback later on down the track. The problem is with recurrent spending. As I said, I associate that with a family making decisions based on receiving regular overtime payments as part of the main income coming into the household. Families cannot make those decisions for the household's recurrent spend and I do not believe that the state should make decisions based on things outside its control. The only way to look after the state's finances is to have checks and balances to make sure that the recurrent spend does not get out of hand.

On my time line we are leading up to the 2017 election. The 2016 budget papers showed that the Barnett government's recurrent spend was growing at just under six per cent. Everybody understood that that was not sustainable, so they decided all of a sudden that they would forecast growth of 2.7 per cent. That is a massive reduction in the growth of recurrent spending and it is very, very hard to do. It is like trying to turn a ship on a dime. It is very, very difficult to do. I am getting closer to answering the Leader of the Opposition's question. The 2016 budget papers acknowledge that the state had about \$33 billion of debt. That is roughly where we were at. Even if one can believe that the Barnett government could bring recurrent spending growth down to 2.7 per cent, people were still predicting that debt would reach above \$40 billion by 2020. As I said, that was expected.

Of course, the biggest problem with the forecasts by organisations like Moody's was that there had been no evidence that the Barnett government could rein in its spending. I briefly mentioned concern about the GST at the time. There was a rumour at the time, going back a number of years before 2016, that the Barnett government's approach to the GST was to keep spending and put the federal government in a position whereby it would have to put a floor under the GST if it wanted to support the state government. I think the biggest problem was that the federal government was also of the view that the Barnett government could not contain its growth in spending. The federal government—again, a rumour—seemed very loath to engage with the calls by the Barnett government to change the GST so that the Western Australian finances would not fall off a cliff. It seemed obvious to everybody that the GST would be pulled back because of the income the state was getting from royalties in the early stages of the Barnett government.

As I said, the GST is an equalisation payment. It is accepted that the states can raise their own money through royalties, for instance, and that the federal government can take the GST and redistribute it. The amount that gets redistributed will decrease when there is an opportunity to raise a lot of money at a state level. There is a lot of unfairness in the GST system. I mentioned that the eastern states rely a lot on gambling revenue, but that is not taken into account when looking at the GST redistribution. Another cliff we faced was that if we did not rein in spending, we would see a downturn in royalty revenues at the same time as there would be a downturn in the redistribution of GST funds to the state, after a bit of lag. It was predicted to go as low as 30 per cent. The Barnett government hoped that it would be able to convince the federal government to change the way it calculated the GST and avert falling off the cliff that we were heading towards. That is how we went into the 2017 election. Before I talk about the 2017 election itself, the answer is that at that time we had about \$33 billion in debt. That includes all the loans that had been made during the Barnett government years and the initial \$3.6 billion plus in interest. As an aside, one of the problems with having a lower Moody's rating is that the interest payment on the borrowed money is higher. It is a self-perpetuating problem.

Before I talk about the election, I want to pay a compliment to Colin Barnett because, as I indicated, I admired him in some ways, although in many others I did not. One thing he did while in power was introduce fixed-term Parliaments. I think that is tremendous. He was very courageous because it is obviously a benefit to a Premier, or a Prime Minister for that matter, as we lead up to a federal election, to call an election at the time of one's choosing. Colin Barnett gave that up on a matter of principle. He believes in fixed-term Parliaments, and I admire him for doing that. It should be the same at the federal level as well, in my view. It seems inappropriate for either a state or a national constituency to hold its breath waiting for an election to be called while trying to make decisions based on when the election will come about. I compliment him on introducing fixed-term elections.

With regard to elections in this state—this is very much a personal point of view—I understand that pre-polling is very popular, and I think there is probably a place for pre-polling leading up to an election. Again, it makes it very difficult for the parties, but so what? That is part of being in government and in opposition. However, I would say one thing about pre-polling: if we are to have pre-polling, I would have organised the election date to be in the first week of the school holidays, because that would have given us an opportunity to use the schools—a fairly standard place for elections—as the pre-polling places in which to vote. Because the Electoral Commission has to lease a place for only two or three weeks, it is very much at the mercy of what is available. That means there may not be a good spread of where they are located, and there are all sorts of inconveniences, particularly when the pre-polling places are located in shopfronts. The only comment I would make is that if it were done during the two weeks of the school holidays, we could use the schools, which would provide revenue for the schools, and pre-polling could be conducted in a reasonable way.

I think the Labor Party ran an outstanding election campaign going into the 2017 election. I have been involved in elections for probably the last 40 years. I must say that during most of that time I was not very keen on phoning constituents in the evening or on doorknocking. I did it—everybody who helps a political party does—but I was not overly keen on it. During that campaign, the leadership of Patrick Gorman and Lenda Oshalem in the lay party, as they were at the time, reinvigorated how the Labor Party conducted its elections. After getting training and seeing things a little differently, I understood that people like to see their member of Parliament. The problem, of course, is that people often see their member of Parliament in the last month or so just before the election, whereas if we start campaigning six or eight months out, they are surprised to see their local member, but they believe that they can have some input. That approach involves people in the decisions, and they appreciate it. We had a very good doorknocking and telephone program. We engaged with our constituency.

I was mainly involved with two elections. One was the Balcatta campaign with my good friend, the now member for Balcatta, David Michael. I was involved with him getting elected for the first time. That was a very positive campaign, and a lot of volunteers and laypeople came to help. I really enjoyed that campaign. The second campaign I was involved in, to a lesser extent, was for the member for Kingsley, Jessica Stojkovski. Both of them are wonderful local members and I am proud that I was involved in their campaigns. They engaged with their constituents, which they did so before the election and certainly after the election. I was also involved a little bit with the Scarborough and Churchlands campaigns. However, they were not seen as key seats. As 2021 taught us, in the past, we may have given up on some of those campaigns before we had even started. When I get to the 2021 campaign—if I get

time—I will talk about how amazing it was to go into those areas that we thought would never be held by Labor, such as Churchlands, Nedlands, Scarborough and Carine. I often think that maybe we had given up too early on those campaigns and that if we had run a more vigorous and resourced campaign, we may certainly have held some of those seats more often.

I think that the Labor Party ran a fantastic campaign in 2017. I was very, very pleased with the ones that I was involved with. However, on the reverse side, and coming back to the financial aspect, it was no surprise to anybody that the electorate viewed the Barnett government as having mismanaged the state's finances. It was also seen to have done that in a fairly arrogant way. I keep stressing that I have no problems with the spending of the Barnett government, but it did let everything get out of hand, including the recurrent spending. Another thing that happened during that campaign that I am very, very pleased with is that the Premier, Mark McGowan, insisted that if the Labor Party made an election promise, there would need to be a very, very good reason why it would not follow through with that election commitment. It is a promise to the electorate. The things that really went against the Barnett government were the decisions, the counter decisions and the change of mind about the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line. It was almost comical to see that debate going backwards and forwards. I am pleased that that was one of the things that the Premier committed to, and it is going to happen. When we make a commitment, we need a very good reason not to follow through with that commitment.

I return to the Leader of the Opposition's question. In the 2017 election, the state owed \$33 billion.

I wish to talk a little about the 2021 election. I do not think the Labor Party did too badly in the first three years of the fortieth Parliament. We were going very strongly. A lot of the decisions that the McGowan government made were coming to fruition. It honoured all the commitments that it made. Irrespective of whether it was criticised for honouring those commitments, it honoured all the commitments that it made. It built a very professional relationship with the federal Liberal government. It continually astonishes me how much this federal Liberal–National government supports the McGowan government of this state. It supported a change to the GST, which was nothing short of remarkable. To be able to negotiate that change and implement it during the last Parliament greatly assisted the finances of this state. The other thing that continues to amaze me—it does not amaze me that we make good arguments for infrastructure in this state—is that the federal government is a willing partner of ours to support building infrastructure in this state. I put that down to the good arguments put by the state government and the good relationship that we have with the Morrison government. That is in stark contrast to the relationship that the previous government had with the previous federal government. It was not just obvious to the Labor Party, Moody's Investors Service and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, but also obvious to everybody that the Barnett government had lost its way financially. Any sound organisation is not going to put good money after bad. I think the federal government saw that if it put more money into the state under the Barnett government, it would just be spent and there would be no reversal of the path that it had laid.

During that time—between 2017 and 2021—we also had an extremely good Treasurer. I pay homage to Hon Ben Wyatt for the work he has done with our finances. I will read a bit of a statement he made because it draws a contrast between where we were in 2008 under the then Treasurer, Eric Ripper, during the Barnett government years and where we are after just four short years of the McGowan government. Ben Wyatt made a statement on Thursday, 29 October. I will read parts of it, so I do not lose too much time. He stated —

Ratings agency Moody's has today affirmed the McGowan Government's strong Budget management and economic response to COVID-19, with Western Australia retaining its strong credit rating—Aa1 with a 'stable' outlook.

The 'Aa1' credit rating from Moody's is the second highest rating available and is one notch below 'Aaa' —

I hope we get back to that Aaa rating at some point —

and follows the assessment of the 2020–21 State Budget released on October 8, 2020.

Western Australia's credit rating was upgraded in June 2019 to Aa1, following multiple downgrades under the previous ... government.

Moody's rating assessment is based on the view that Western Australia's 'large economy will remain resilient to coronavirus related disruptions and underpin its capacity to service the State's growing debt burden over the next three to four years'.

Moody's has credited WA's 'rapid' economic recovery with the early easing of restrictions in the State, due to the hard border, and a strong mining sector.

Moody's expect that the 'State's economy will continue to outperform its Australian peers over the next two to three years ...

In essence, without reading the whole statement, the former Treasurer managed to achieve what the Barnett government had predicted was needed—that is, to bring the recurrent spend down to roughly 2.7 per cent, so that it could bring down that recurrent spend into the future and, in that way, start capping the burgeoning debt and start on the path of getting some surpluses.

During the last part of this election cycle—just leading into the election—we had a COVID pandemic. I can do nothing but commend the Premier for his handling of the state at that time. He managed to stand up to the federal government whilst also continuing to have a good relationship with the federal government. It is a very professional relationship. It has served the state very well. That is all to the good of our constituents. In the last Parliament, the fortieth Parliament, the Treasurer managed to contain the growth of spending and have surpluses, and he has managed to put some money towards expenditure that was required to keep our economy going. All the boxes have been ticked. We are very lucky to be in this state. That is what we were going into the 2021 election with—great work in the first three years and then fantastic handling of the economy, even with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Going into the 2021 election, I was involved in a number of campaigns, again with the honourable member for Balcatta, my good friend Mr David Michael, MLA. He is a great local member. I was so honoured to be part of his campaign. I was also involved with Paul Lilburne, MLA, the new member for Carine. That was a big surprise. He managed to run that campaign without resources. It was a real grassroots campaign but he still managed to win his seat. I was involved with Stuart Aubrey, MLA, the new member for Scarborough. More resources were available for that campaign. That member put in some very hard work. I was also involved in the campaign of the new member for Churchlands, Christine Tonkin, MLA. Again, that was a wonderful win based on hard work and dealing directly with her constituency. The two other members, which were fantastic wins for the Labor Party, were Katrina Stratton, MLA, the member for Nedlands, and Caitlin Collins, MLA, the member for Hillarys, who put in a lot of hard work and received due credit from their communities. Thank you very much, Madam Acting President.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [4.19 pm]: It is a pleasure to rise to address the motion moved by the chief government Whip, Hon Pierre Yang, with respect to the Governor's speech delivered in this chamber on 29 April this year. It was interesting listening to the Governor's speech. I think it was Governor Beazley's first opening speech to the Parliament because it was Governor Sanderson who gave the speech on the previous occasion. The personal remarks made by the Governor added to the ordinary convention; that is, reading the speech prepared by the government. A lot of members have remarked during their Address-in-Reply debate on some of those personal messages for not just retiring members but those members continuing to serve in this forty-first Parliament.

I would like to start by congratulating the Australian Labor Party on its re-election. There is an old saying that the voters never get it wrong. I would not dare to question for one minute the judgement of the voters at the election. My speech will address a number of issues related to the election, but I would like to start by congratulating the ALP on its re-election and formation of government.

It was always going to be an extraordinary election. I remember speaking to a number of journalists in the lead-up, and even in the days and hours before the polls closed. I certainly did not predict, or certainly did not believe the predictions, that the swing at the election would be so significant. The notion that the National Party would be thrust into official opposition status and the Liberal Party diminished to a few remaining members was something that I did not think was possible; it was fanciful. I am not sure whether many members could stand in this place, hand on heart, and say, "I knew all along that was going to happen; it certainly transpired the way that I thought." That certainly was not the case for me. Elections are always full of triumphs and tragedies; this one perhaps more so than usual in terms of those two things. If there were ever a presidential election in Western Australia, which I think are becoming more and more presidential over time, this election was certainly that.

We talk about the influence of COVID-19 on the election. That fact is undisputed. One thing I learnt quite early on in response to COVID-19, and was surprised by—I was not surprised about people's fear of the unknown—was people's appetite for restrictions. Obviously, the odd constituent would say, "How dare you encumber my life with roadblocks and checkpoints and wearing a mask," but I think they were a rare breed and a rare exception. The thing that surprised me, and perhaps I had not appreciated pre-COVID, was the extent to which people had an appetite for, or felt safer by, restrictions and lockdowns.

I remember some early COVID discussions about whether we should wear face masks. The health advice was that there was no significant health benefit in wearing face masks. We had the whole debate about schools. In the early days, certain people were calling for regional borders, and for international travel to be stopped, but they were dismissed. How quickly things change. As the fear built and people's expectations built, governments—I am not talking specifically about Western Australia—across the world responded to a significant extent to the concern that played out in the community.

Hon Martin Pritchard talked about pre-polling. If I had my way, early voting would not exist; or, if it existed, it would exist in a very minor way. Pre-polling over the best part of three weeks is just ridiculous. The sooner a standing committee gets the Electoral Commissioner before it and questions him on the operations of the last election and the ability of the Western Australian Electoral Commission to do its job throughout the early voting period, the better, and we can debate what is an appropriate form of early voting. Keep in mind that at this election we regressed in the fact that we no longer had electronic voting available in the form of iVote. I remember Hon Peter Collier, as the Minister for Electoral Affairs in my first term, passing legislation to allow for technology-assisted voting. It was quite contentious at the time. I was arguing as a government backbencher that we should be going further, or at least have statutory provisions to allow the government to go further. We did not have any technology-assisted

voting at the 2021 election, apart from a phone-based system. No internet-based system was available for people to utilise. The explanation was that we relied on a New South Wales system, which was no longer available to us, and the cost of developing a system was too onerous on the state and there was insufficient time to achieve it.

I hope that we can have a proper debate about these types of issues. That may get lost in the next four years in the context of electoral reform more generally, but it is important to have a proper debate about those types of issues in the conduct of the election. The other place often tasks one of its standing committees on community justice and other things to report on the most recent election. Obviously, the Western Australian Electoral Commission produces its own election report. The number one recommendation in its report into the 2017 state election was a complete overhaul of the Electoral Act. That did not transpire. In the dying days of the fortieth Parliament, the Legislative Council received a bill that was attempting to achieve a number of election commitments that the Labor Party took to the previous election but did not achieve—namely, recommendation 1 of the commission’s report into the 2017 state election.

Another observation I would like to make about the election and COVID was that it was smack bang during the election campaign that this state faced its first COVID-19 lockdown. I remember getting a tip-off by a journalist that something was going down and that a press conference was imminent; a lockdown was coming. If it was not certain already, it was definitely certain at that point that the election would be won in favour of the incumbent government. As we came out of that lockdown—I think it was the second lockdown we were coming out of—there was one active case of COVID. Sorry, one active case caused the first lockdown. Remember the fellow who did his best to spread the virus, but actually did not spread it to anybody, which was quite extraordinary. He went everywhere and saw everybody. He went from east to west and north to south. Queensland was going through some issues at the same time. I remember it was the lead-up to Easter. I think I am getting my dates confused here, but it was the lead-up to a long weekend. The lockdown in Queensland was not going to lift until 5.00 pm. There was concern about people rushing to leave for the long weekend. The Queensland Premier said, “We’ve only had one confirmed case of community spread today, so I’m going to release everybody from lockdown. Please leave early and safely on your long weekend and look after each other.” It was interesting.

Obviously, in the early days of the COVID pandemic, 12 months or more ago, there was no playbook and international experience was still developing. It was interesting to compare the experience in Queensland and Western Australia. In the space of a few days, we were going into lockdown with one case of community transmission and it was coming out of lockdown because it had only one case of community transmission. Some of these things are hard to reconcile and are part of the reason that we in the Nationals WA have been pursuing, for some time, a form of independent public inquiry into the COVID-19 response. It is not to hold people accountable for their decisions but to actually make sure we, as a state, are better prepared to respond to what the future holds. There is no better case in point than what has been developing in hotel quarantine in recent weeks and months. A person is more likely to get COVID in quarantine than they are outside quarantine.

[Leave granted for the member’s speech to be continued at a later stage of the sitting.]

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 373.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

IRON ORE ROYALTY REVENUE

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

I refer to the 2018–19 to 2020–21 mini boom in iron ore royalties and to articles in last week’s *The West Australian* suggesting that “Expectations are rising that benchmark prices can get to \$US200 a tonne as Chinese steelmakers ramp up” and “sky-high commodity prices” are fuelling confidence and business investment.

- (1) What modelling has Treasury done on high iron ore prices remaining for —
 - (a) the rest of 2021; and
 - (b) the entire 2021–22 financial year?
- (2) Please provide that modelling.
- (3) What is Treasury’s predicted spot price for iron ore for —
 - (a) the rest of 2021; and
 - (b) the entire 2021–22 financial year?
- (4) Is an iron ore spot price above \$US130 a tonne for the rest of 2021 “highly unrealistic”?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. I note that this answer is current as at 6 May.

- (1) (a)–(b) The Department of Treasury made a budgeting assumption in the 2020–21 *Pre-election financial projections statement* that the iron ore price would revert to its long-run average by August 2021.

- (2) See the answer to (1).
- (3) (a) Iron ore price forecasts are based on whole financial years.
(b) It is \$US65.60 per tonne, as per the 2020–21 PFPS.
- (4) The iron ore price is highly volatile and there exists a large range of plausible price paths over the remainder of the year.

HOUSING — BUILDING BONUS SCHEME

70. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Minister for Finance:

Ten billion bucks! I refer to the state government's \$117 million building bonus scheme, announced on 7 June 2020, for the provision of a \$20 000 grant to new home buyers with an estimated processing period of eight weeks.

- (1) What calendar month grant applications is the Department of Finance currently processing?
- (2) If the applicant must have had financial approval, signed a contract and started construction to the point of having earthworks or demolition commenced, is this scheme more of a cashback scheme than a stimulus scheme?
- (3) If no to (2), why not?
- (4) If no to (2), how can an applicant incorporate the grant into their decision to proceed if they have already signed a contract to proceed?
- (5) Is the grant therefore unable to be considered by a financial institution when considering a funding application?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question.

- (1) The Department of Finance is currently assessing applications submitted before 17 December 2020.
- (2) The building bonus is an important stimulus measure introduced as part of the WA recovery plan. It was designed to create a strong pipeline of work and create certainty for the building industry as Western Australia recovered from the economic impact of COVID-19. To apply for the building bonus grant, an applicant needed to sign a new contract with a registered builder between 4 June and 31 December 2020, with construction needing to commence within 12 months of the contract date. Owner-builders were required to complete laying the foundations of the new home on the land by 31 December 2020. The strong performance of the housing construction industry, as evidenced by our state's record low unemployment rate and strong building approvals data, is proof that this stimulus program has been incredibly successful in supporting the sector through the uncertainty of the pandemic, as was intended when the policy was introduced.
- (3) See the answer to (2).
- (4) The building bonus is not guaranteed to every applicant and will be paid only if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements.
- (5) The grant is unable to be taken into account by a financial institution when considering a funding application, for the reasons described in the answer to (4), which aligns with the federal government's HomeBuilder program.

CORONAVIRUS — SMALL BUSINESS — IMPACTS

71. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Small Business:

I refer to the impact of lockdowns on the small business sector.

- (1) Is the small business sector consulted ahead of any proposed lockdowns; and, if yes, how?
- (2) Has ongoing consultation with the sector occurred during the pandemic emergency period; and, if yes, when?
- (3) Is the impact on businesses considered when a decision to issue a lockdown is made?
- (4) What is the total compensation paid to date across all small business assistance packages since the COVID-19 pandemic began?
- (5) How many individual businesses have received compensation and how many have been rejected?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide the following answer on behalf of the Minister for Small Business.

- (1) The Western Australia Police Force conducts a weekly industry liaison group meeting with business stakeholders to discuss how previous lockdowns have been implemented and identify how businesses can prepare for any future lockdown. The Small Business Commissioner participates in these meetings.

- (2) See the answer to (1).
- (3) The impact on the entire Western Australian community, including the business community, is considered when making the difficult decision to direct a lockdown.
- (4) Across a wide range of assistance packages, a total of \$1.2 billion in relief initiatives has been provided to businesses.
- (5) There is no aggregated data available to answer this question. It is expected that the small business lockdown assistance grant scheme will be provided to 15 000 businesses.

LOTTERYWEST GRANTS — VICTORY LIFE CENTRE

72. Hon PETER COLLIER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the proposed changes to the “Our commitment” document of Lotterywest to update equality, diversity and inclusion, which have been delayed due to the controversy surrounding the rejection of the Margaret Court Community Outreach application and which were requested by me under supplementary information E1 during the budget estimates hearing on Thursday, 19 November 2020.

- (1) Will the Premier provide a copy of the proposed changes, as requested on 19 November 2020?
- (2) If not, why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) Yes. It was proposed that the “Our commitment” statement in the Lotterywest strategic plan be amended as follows. The present “Our commitment” statement reads —

We are a government enterprise that aims to be the preferred provider of lottery games, optimise delivery, and maximise returns and value to Western Australians.
- (2) Not applicable.

COMMUNITY SERVICES — FUNDING

73. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the minister’s joint press statement dated 14 December 2020, titled “McGowan Government delivers funding boost for community services”. Will the minister list the community service providers that received funding as part of this announcement and a breakdown of the funding allocated to each?

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

As per the media announcement on 14 December 2020, the McGowan government will provide a \$15 million funding boost to support eligible community service providers. A total of \$9 million of the announced funding was allocated to the Department of Communities for disbursement across eligible contracts, including family and domestic violence, homelessness, mental health and out-of-home care services. A breakdown of the disbursement of the funding will be provided before the end of the current financial year once recipient organisations have been informed. The remaining \$6 million was allocated to the Mental Health Commission for disbursement across eligible contracts.

COURTS — AVAILABILITY

74. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer to concerns raised with the Attorney General by the Law Society of Western Australia about the availability of courtrooms for criminal trials.

- (1) Is the Attorney General aware that the Law Society has said that this is making the operation of the criminal justice system in this state almost unworkable?
- (2) Is the Attorney General aware that the Law Society has asked him to urgently commit to an additional four, but preferably seven, new courts for criminal trials in Perth?
- (3) Did the Attorney General convene a roundtable discussion in response to these concerns, as he said he would in a recent radio interview?
- (4) When did this roundtable discussion take place and who attended?
- (5) Will the Attorney General table the minutes, notes or other documents created by him or his staff at this roundtable discussion?
- (6) What action will now arise as a result of this roundtable discussion?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(6) The Attorney General is aware of the Law Society’s position. A roundtable discussion with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Chief Judge of the District Court and representatives from the Department of Justice and the Department of Finance is scheduled for 18 May 2021.

PLANNING — APPEALS

75. Hon ALISON XAMON to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the outstanding and urgent need for a third-party right of appeal process.

- (1) Will the minister commit to developing a third-party right of appeal process for development applications?
- (2) Will the minister commit to developing a third-party right of appeal process for local planning scheme amendments?
- (3) Will the minister commit to developing a third-party right of appeal process for metropolitan region scheme amendments?
- (4) If no to any question, why not?
- (5) If yes to any question, when?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

- (1)–(5) No. This matter was detailed and addressed in the Legislative Council’s consideration of the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020.

POLICE DOG — BROOME

76. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

Over the weekend, it was reported on social media by Broome residents that the greater Kimberley region will be losing its only police dog, Hank, when he and his handler, Ben, are relocated to Perth this week.

Can the minister confirm whether it is true that Hank and Ben have been recalled from Broome; and, if so —

- (a) can the minister please offer an explanation as to why this is being done, given Hank’s valuable and successful service in the Kimberley; and
- (b) does the government have any plans to reinstate Hank in Broome or replace him with another valuable police dog?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

No; it is not true. The WA Police Force advises that Hank will remain posted to the Kimberley.

CORONAVIRUS — HOTEL QUARANTINE

77. Hon COLIN HOLT to the minister representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the state government’s management of hotel quarantine.

- (1) Regarding the Mercure, Four Points by Sheraton Perth and Novotel Perth Langley hotels, on what date will each hotel be decommissioned for use by returning travellers?
- (2) On what date will each hotel receive their final intake of guests?
- (3) Regarding yesterday’s mandatory vaccination deadline for hotel security guards, how many guards did not begin the vaccination process prior to 10 May?
- (4) Can the minister confirm that those guards are no longer employed in hotel quarantine security roles due to not receiving the COVID vaccination?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

- (1) For Mercure, the last guest departed on 10 May 2021; for Four Points, the last guest is scheduled to depart on 16 May 2021; and for Novotel Perth Langley, the last guest is scheduled to depart on 11 May 2021.
- (2) No further guests will be allocated to the Mercure or Four Points hotels. Novotel Perth Langley will no longer be a quarantine hotel and will receive only seasonal workers going forward.
- (3) Unknown.
- (4) Yes.

NUMBAT HABITATS — PRESCRIBED BURNING PROGRAM

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

I refer to the minister's answer of 4 May 2021 concerning the DON 100 Weinup prescribed burn, conducted by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and the burn's impact on one of two endangered numbat habitats.

- (1) How many numbat dens were identified by the DBCA and adjacent property owners prior to the prescribed burn, and how many dens remain?
- (2) How many numbats were observed before, during and after the prescribed burn, and in what condition were these animals at each of the three occasions that observation took place?
- (3) When were the above observations undertaken and how were these observations recorded?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

- (1) Seven marked numbat dens were identified prior to the burn and five of these have been observed since the burn.
- (2)–(3) The following numbers of numbats were observed incidentally in the DON 100 Weinup prescribed burn area: 15 numbats between 3 September 2019 and when the final cell burn commenced on 25 March 2021; three numbats during the burn on 25 March 2021; two numbats after the burn on 26 March and 1 May 2021. All numbats were reported as active.

The observations were made in the field by both staff of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and members of the public, and were recorded on a report form and transferred into the department's fauna file reporting system.

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE BILL 2020

79. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

I refer to the consultation process for the draft Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2020. I apologise; it probably does not mean "2020".

- (1) Who has the minister met with so far?
- (2) Who is the minister planning to meet with?
- (3) When will these meetings take place and by what means—that is, is the minister visiting local communities, inviting community leaders to Perth or via videoconference?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The previous Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and I have met with a number of stakeholders where the agenda included the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill. I ask that this part of the question be put on notice.
- (2) I or my staff are meeting with representatives of organisations who want to bring their views on the bill to my attention.
- (3) These meetings have been or are being held in Perth, on country and via videoconference, where appropriate.

NIELS HANSEN BASKETBALL STADIUM

80. Hon ROBIN SCOTT to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I refer to the McGowan government's pre-election promise to spend \$5 million on upgrading the Niels Hansen Basketball Stadium in Kalgoorlie.

- (1) Does the government intend on honouring its promise?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If yes, how long can the people of Kalgoorlie expect to wait until upgrade works are underway?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder and the Kalgoorlie–Boulder Basketball Association are developing a project time line that identifies key project milestones. This information will be made available to the public in due course.

PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

81. Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN to the Leader of the House:

I refer to the answer to my question without notice 43 of 5 May 2021 regarding discussions with the Premier about the change of President of the house on 22 May.

- (1) Has the Leader of the House had any discussions with the Premier regarding the appointment on 22 May of the new President of the Legislative Council—yes or no?
- (2) Was the termination of legal proceedings being taken by and against the Legislative Council discussed; and, if yes, what was the substance and outcome of those discussions?
- (3) Was the prospective new President a part of those discussions or informed of them; and, if yes, what action was agreed to be taken?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I am not sure this fits within standing orders, but in any event I will provide an answer.

- (1)–(3) The Premier does not appoint Labor nominees for parliamentary positions. The process of electing Labor Party parliamentary positions is done through the state Parliamentary Labor Party caucus. Nominations are called for and, if necessary, a ballot is held. Every member of the state Parliamentary Labor Party caucus is entitled to discuss the positions to be filled with other members of caucus. I had numerous discussions with many members about filling those positions, and those discussions are private.

MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

82. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

I refer to an article published in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* on 5 May 2021 titled “MP Kyle McGinn says he will listen to his electorate before making any decisions on electoral reform”.

- (1) Given the comments of the recently elevated Labor frontbencher, will Labor MPs be able to express their vote freely and in response to their electorates’ views on any proposed electoral reform?
- (2) If no to (1), why does Hon Kyle McGinn appear to be misguided about his ability to vote in the interests of his electorate, rather than his party?
- (3) I note that the terms of reference for the ministerial expert committee cite the term of appointment as eight weeks from cabinet appointment. What was the date of cabinet appointment?
- (4) What is the cost of the ministerial expert committee to date and the expected total cost?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

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

- (1)–(2) Just as in the Nationals WA party room, all members of the Labor caucus are entitled to freely express their views in caucus and vote in accordance with them.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The parliamentary secretary is providing a response to the question that was asked; let him provide it, please.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Thank you, Madam President.

- (3) On 28 April 2021.
- (4) Costs to date and final costs are currently being determined.

ALCOA — BAUXITE

83. Hon DIANE EVERS to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer to Alcoa’s recent application—EPA assessment 2253—to directly exploit 2.5 million tonnes of bauxite each year.

- (1) Will the minister please advise how much jarrah forest will be cleared to produce 2.5 million tonnes of bauxite; and, if not, why not?
- (2) What will be the economic cost in loss of habitat, social surroundings and biodiversity of the areas to be cleared?
- (3) What is the estimated revenue per annum that the state will earn from bauxite royalties associated with the 2.5 million tonnes of bauxite?
- (4) Will the minister please table working arrangement documents mentioned in the referral regarding the management of mine operations between —
 - (a) Alcoa and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; and

- (b) the Water Corporation and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation?
- (5) If no to (4), why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The following information has been provided by the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade.

Further time is required to answer this question, and the information will be provided to the member by 13 May 2021.

CYCLONE SEROJA — DISASTER RECOVERY FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

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

I refer to the Premier's announcement of 9 May 2021 that grants of \$4 000 will be made available to small businesses and residents severely impacted by cyclone Seroja.

- (1) What is the specific financial and geographical criteria for a small businesses and for residents to access the \$4 000 grant, and will the Premier table the criteria?
- (2) Which small businesses will be eligible to apply for the \$4 000 grant?
- (3) What is the government's applicable definition of a "small business" deeming it eligible to apply for the grant?
- (4) How was the figure of the \$4 000 grant arrived at or calculated?
- (5) Who will be assessing the grant applications, and what right of appeal does a small business have in the decision-making process?
- (6) Is the grant a tax-free payment for small businesses?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

- (1) Further details of the application process will be available shortly, as highlighted in the media statement released on Sunday, 9 May.
- (2) As noted in the media statement, the sectors will include, for example, small retailers such as specialty shops, hairdressers and bakeries; tourism businesses, including tour operators and fishing boat charters; and hospitality venues including accommodation providers, cafes, restaurants and pubs.
- (3) See the answer to (1).
- (4) The \$4 000 grant aligns with the support to residents for loss or significant damage to homes and recent assistance in response to the Wooroloo bushfires.
- (5) See the answer to (1).
- (6) The tax treatment is a commonwealth matter. However, the grants are expected to be tax-free in accordance with other disaster relief payments to individuals and businesses.

DANGEROUS SEXUAL OFFENDER — NIGEL PINDAN

85. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer to Nigel Pindan, an offender with a serious criminal history, and the concerns about his placement upon release in the same complex of units as female victims of sexual assault.

- (1) Is the Attorney General aware that the State Solicitor's Office argued against the offender's release on the basis that the proposed accommodation was not suitable?
- (2) Did the Attorney General take advice on an appeal of the decision of Justice Hill?
- (3) If yes to (2), from whom?
- (4) If no to (2), why not?
- (5) What action does the Attorney General intend to take as a result of this decision?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide the following answer on behalf of the Attorney General.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The Attorney General did not receive advice that there was anything appealable in the decision of Justice Hill.
- (5) See the answer to (4).

BARNES FEDERAL THEATRE

86. Hon ROBIN SCOTT to the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to the McGowan government's pre-election promise to spend \$100 000 on renovating the Barnes Federal Theatre in Leonora.

- (1) Does the government intend to honour its promise?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If yes to (1), how can the people of Leonora expect to wait until renovation works are underway?
- (4) Will the government commit to spending the extra funds required to bring the Barnes Federal Theatre back to an operational standard?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(4) I do find the member's line of questioning really quite surprising. I think that it is fair to say that we have been in government for less than two months and, of course, member, we have every intention of honouring all our election commitments. Obviously, we do not just have piles of cash lying around and then put them into envelopes and post them out. There is actually a budget and governance framework. But we have made it very clear that those small election commitments, such as this one, have priority and are being worked on.

The Goldfields–Esperance Development Commission is ready to enter into a formal funding agreement with the Shire of Leonora, which I expect will be forthcoming in weeks. The commitment that was made for \$100 000 was part of a larger project. It was a contribution to the project, and the shire advised us at the time that this was what it thought was needed from us. It would enable the shire to leverage further grants once it had this money. We understand that the shire is working on that leverage and is completing the plans for the renovation as we speak.

MANDATORY SENTENCING

87. Hon ALISON XAMON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Will the Attorney General commit to introducing legislation to repeal and eliminate all remaining mandatory sentencing provisions?
- (2) If yes to (1), when and which specific provisions?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide this answer on behalf of the Attorney General.

- (1)–(3) The Attorney General has a full suite of reforms that will be delivered in this term of Parliament as part of the McGowan government's agenda to keep WA strong.

MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

88. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

I refer to Legislative Council questions without notice 24 and 58 regarding the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform.

- (1) How many of the committee members currently reside in regional Western Australia?
- (2) Are any of the committee members previous or current members of the Labor Party or staff to Labor members of Parliament?
- (3) On what date or dates did the minister consult with the Electoral Commissioner in relation to the establishment of the expert committee?
- (4) Why is the Electoral Commissioner not considered an expert on electoral affairs and represented on the committee?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide the following answer on behalf of the Minister for Electoral Affairs.

- (1) None.
- (2) No committee member is currently a member of the Labor Party. I table their CVs.

[See paper [176](#).]

- (3) The minister has spoken to or met with the Electoral Commissioner on more than one occasion since being appointed Minister for Electoral Affairs. The last meeting was on 1 April 2021, and electoral reform was discussed at that time. The commissioner was notified in writing of the cabinet decision to establish the expert committee on 30 April 2021.
- (4) The Electoral Commissioner is an expert and will be consulted in relation to the committee's recommendations to the government.

MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

89. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

To continue that deep, deep vein of questioning, I refer to the government's expedient decision to prioritise electoral reform of the Legislative Council despite the Premier ruling this out repeatedly during the election.

- (1) Was it cabinet's decision to break an election promise and overturn Hon Jim McGinty's legislation or was this decision taken by the Premier and Minister for Electoral Affairs alone?
- (2) Did the Minister for Electoral Affairs devise the construction and membership of the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform and when was this decision taken and how was it communicated to members of the committee?
- (3) Who drafted the committee's terms of reference; for example, were the members of the committee consulted in the process?

The PRESIDENT: Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General—I think there is probably one part of that question in relation to a matter dealt before cabinet that you probably will not be able to provide a response to.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

Thank you, Madam President. I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide the following answers on behalf of the Minister for Electoral Affairs.

- (1) No election promise has been broken.
- (2) I refer the member to Legislative Council question without notice 24, which previously answers the first limb of this question. In relation to the second limb of this question, members were advised in writing on 29 April 2021.
- (3) Members of the committee were consulted during the drafting process and there is no present intention to extend the deadline.

ALCOA HUNTLY MINE

90. Hon DIANE EVERS to the minister representing the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer to Alcoa's Huntly mine in the Darling Range.

- (1) Satellite imagery reveals a growing, 300-hectare mining pit, which is two kilometres wide, and located south east of Kamet Prison Farm. A network of such pits extends over a range of approximately 20 kilometres and new pits contain islands of habitat that are disconnected from the remnant forest nearby. Will the minister please advise —
 - (a) is there is a maximum limit to the size of these pits;
 - (b) is there is a maximum to the percentage of cleared forest in a mining envelope for an approved mine;
 - (c) what measures are taken to protect animal and plant species in those stranded habitats;
 - (d) are fauna and flora management plans for these areas available to the public; and
 - (e) do species survey data before and after mining exist; and, if so, will they be made available?
- (2) If no to any of (a)–(e), why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade has provided the following information.

More time is required to answer this question. The information will be provided to the member by 13 May 2021.

CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE SCHEME

91. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to Legislative Council question without notice 1046 in relation to Containers for Change and a number of refund locations not yet established, requiring my constituents to travel long distances in order to receive a deposit refund.

- (1) What is the status of establishing refund points in Gingin, Kojonup and Morawa?
- (2) I refer to the interim services mentioned in the then minister's response to parts (2) and (3) of the aforementioned question of October 2020. Have these interim services now been established?

- (3) Does the minister believe it to be acceptable for residents in Morawa to be forced to travel to Port Denison, a return trip of 232 kilometres, to get their 10¢ refund?
- (4) As Minister for Environment; Climate Action, what assessment has been done of the carbon footprint associated with the Containers for Change scheme and, specifically, the transportation of containers?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

- (1)–(3) The network in place at scheme commencement on 1 October 2020 exceeded the requirements set out in the minimum network standards. The network is required to be at 100 per cent of these standards by 1 October 2021.

Since the then Minister for Environment responded to the honourable member's question in October last year, I am pleased to advise that a very successful refund point has been established in Northampton and is run by the local men's shed, and the All Good Refund Depot has opened at Lake Grace. Lancelin-based Eco Exchange is working with the Shire of Gingin to establish a mobile service. This mobile service is expected to commence in early June 2021. Motown Community Shed has been appointed to operate a depot refund point at Morawa. The Morawa refund point was scheduled to start on 6 May; however, cyclone Seroja caused damage to the shed and took out power to the town. With repairs being completed, it is estimated operations will commence late June 2021. Katanning Environmental Container Cash In, the Katanning refund point operator, is working with local businesses and the shire to establish a refund point in Kojonup. A bag drop is expected to commence on 30 May.

- (4) The environmental impacts of transport were a significant consideration in designing the logistics network for transporting containers, both in regional areas and in the Perth, Peel and wheatbelt regions. The regional transport network takes advantage of backloading to minimise unnecessary truck movements. Remondis was chosen to operate the collection and processing of non-glass products for our container deposit scheme for the Perth, Peel and wheatbelt regions. In a first for schemes in Australia, Remondis uses onsite and rear-lift truck compaction to reduce the amount of air and increase the number of bottles able to be collected and transported. This model has significant benefits in terms of reducing its carbon footprint, increasing efficiency, lowering costs and providing a safer work environment through reduced vehicle movements. Remondis was recognised and highly commended at the recent WasteSorted awards for its innovative approach.

PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — AISHWARYA ASWATH

Question without Notice 62 — Answer Advice

HON MICHAEL MISCHIN (North Metropolitan) [5.02 pm]: I was promised an answer to a question I asked last week.

Hon Sue Ellery: Was it to me?

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: It was directed through Hon Matthew Swinbourn to the Attorney General. There was no time to investigate and provide the answer at that time. I was promised an answer today.

The PRESIDENT: We may very well get to that with further answers, or the honourable member might provide the answer at that point.

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.03 pm]: I do not have an answer, but the commitment was given to give the answer this week, not today. It will be provided to the honourable member this week.

METROPOLITAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — WAIT TIMES

WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE — CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — WAIT TIMES

Questions without Notice 56 and 67 — Answer Advice

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Mental Health) [5.03 pm]: I would like to provide answers to Hon Donna Faragher's questions without notice 56 and 67, which were asked last week. I seek leave to have them incorporated into *Hansard*.

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

Question without notice 56 —

Answer

I thank the Honourable Member for some notice of the question.

For the quarter Jan-Mar 2021 the median waiting times for the metropolitan Child Development Service for children in the primary years of schooling (3.5 years – 12.5 years) were:

- (a) Speech pathology – 7.9 months
- (b) Occupational therapy – 6.7 months
- (c) Physiotherapy – 6.5 months

Question without notice 67 —**Answer**

I thank the Honourable Member for some notice of the question.

Region	Median Wait Time (Months)		
	01/01/2021 – 31/03/21		
	Speech Pathology	Occupational Therapy	Physiotherapy
(1) Kimberley	2.8	3.7	4.6
(2) Pilbara	0.9	2.3	3.0
(3) Midwest	2.8	3.1	2.6
(4) Goldfields	1.2	0.7	1.9
(5) Wheatbelt	1.3	2.7	1.1
(6) South West	1.0	1.2	1.8
(7) Great Southern	0.9	4.6	1.9

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON MICHAEL MISCHIN (North Metropolitan) [5.04 pm]: Madam President, it is 10 days shy of 12 years since I first took my seat in this place as a newly minted member of the Parliament of this state. I delivered my inaugural address on 23 June 2009 in the course of the debate on the Loan Bill of that year. Now, almost 12 years later, it will gratify many members in this place to learn that I am delivering my farewell.

An inaugural address is a challenge for a new member. There is a desire to do it right. One feels the need to say if not something profound, at least something that is not embarrassing or will not embarrass one in the future. I confess that after having proofread my inaugural speech for the purpose of its publication in *Hansard* back in 2009, I had not dared look at it since—until last night. I felt that I needed to do so, if only to refresh my memory on what I might have said that was germane to this occasion and my departure.

The idea of a valedictory is also a challenge. It is the last opportunity one has to say something in this forum. It is a benefit that comes with the post of being a member of the Legislative Council to know the date of your impending doom and demise as a member. It is something that is frequently denied those in the Legislative Assembly. There is always that hope for members there that they will resume their seats in the future. Here, we at least know that the sword of Damocles is about to fall and can make our plans accordingly. But that does not make it any easier. There is pressure to say something, let us say Churchillian, that will be replete with quotable quotes for the future. Hon Clive Griffiths made some such comments, but I will not aspire to that standard. Other members can take comfort that I have chosen to eschew that course so as not to embarrass them.

I make no assessment of the literary merit of my inaugural address but will refer back to it for a couple of purposes. At that time, I expressed my belief that I had something to offer—that I could contribute to this Parliament and to the body politic of Western Australia. I said that I looked forward to working with my parliamentary colleagues and with, or, if necessary, opposing, my political opponents.

Over the last decade and more, I have had that opportunity. I have also had other opportunities, more than I had hoped for or expected at that stage. I have been able to contribute not only as a member of this place, but also as a representative of the Liberal Party in my electorate office and, by virtue of my legal background, by providing some assistance to others in Western Australia who have been referred to me in my capacity as a member of Parliament. I have contributed to the work of this house as a sometime presiding officer when I was a Deputy Chair of Committees, as a member more generally and as a deputy chair and chair of a diverse range of committees over the course of the last 12 years. I also had the privilege of being a minister for two portfolios, being Attorney General and commerce. In opposition, I had the responsibility of being shadow minister for those two portfolios and also heritage and culture and the arts.

I served as Deputy Leader of the Government when we were in government, alongside Hon Peter Collier, and I served as Deputy Leader of the Opposition, also alongside Hon Peter Collier. I have had the opportunity to make, influence and amend laws. I have had the opportunity to help my constituents, both as a group, or segments of that constituency, or as individuals. I have been graced. The experience, for all its ups and downs, disappointments and rewards, has been wonderful and is one for which I am truly grateful. I will be sorry to leave. I have learnt much and I have got to know many people not only outside this Parliament, but also the members of this place over the last 12 years—those who were here when I arrived and who have since gone, and the newcomers, although there has been a turnover of some of them as well. That has been an enriching and rewarding experience.

I am sure that it will come as a disappointment to all members that I do not propose to traverse the detail of my career and my experiences. I have chosen instead to devote my time to a number of issues that are of concern to me and that I think will endure into the next Parliament. However, before I do that, I have many people to thank for the opportunity to be here and serve as a member of this place and to rise to the position of responsibility that I held for some four and a bit years as minister.

As I mentioned in my inaugural speech, to attempt to identify all those people to whom I owe a debt of thanks would not only take more of the time of this house than I could reasonably expect to use, but also get a little tedious. It also runs the risk that at some point I will give apparent priority to some over others and that I will omit some or not give the thanks to which they are due. However, it would be remiss of me not to mention a few. Firstly, I would like to thank the Liberal Party of Western Australia of which I have been a member for some almost 30 years now and for which I have striven to represent in this place to the best of my abilities and with honour and some dignity. I have been proud to do so and to promote the Liberal cause and the values of the party. That is not to say that the Liberal Party is any different from other parties in respect of its having flaws—no political party is perfect; each political party has problems with its operations from time to time. However, the Liberal Party's values endure, and I am proud to represent those. I wish it the best into the future. It has had its ups and downs since its founding by Sir Robert Menzies. One of its earliest victories as a political party, if not the earliest, was in this state. I am sure that this period will be an opportunity for the Liberal Party to rebuild and reinvent itself and proceed into the future as a refreshed party that will be a formidable opponent and, in due course, government, in alliance with its Nationals WA colleagues in this state for the benefit of Western Australians.

I would like to thank my parliamentary colleagues in the Liberal Party with whom I have served. I thank them for their collegiality, humour, fellowship and support, especially my fellow upper house members. As Hon Jim Chown said only a little while ago, and certainly in this period of office, we few, we happy few, we band of brothers and one sister have been a great team, and I have very much enjoyed working with and among them. I shall miss them and I shall miss being able to work with them in this place.

In particular, I need to acknowledge my friend Hon Peter Collier. Without his faith in me, I would not have been here in the first place. I hope that I have not disappointed him in the trust he put in me and the confidence and support that he has demonstrated to me over the years. I am very grateful to him. As I said, notwithstanding the downs, this is an experience that I would not have missed. The journey to this point is something that is denied many people, or at least they do not have the opportunity to do it, and however it ends, the journey itself is a rewarding and important experience that is not to be despised.

It is axiomatic and fashionable nowadays that people despise politicians; they feel obliged to do so. It is ironic that nothing adds cachet to an event than having a member of Parliament turn up to it, let alone a minister. It has been humbling to see in many circumstances the respect that has been accorded to me and other members of Parliament when we have attended events. One that springs to mind and impressed upon me the need to maintain that dignity and to respect members of the community was one of my very first appearances as a member on behalf of Hon John Castrilli, who was then the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests. I went to a small gathering at the Girrawheen community centre, run by the Mauritanian Association of Western Australia. All of them were refugees who had spent much of their life in a neighbouring country before coming to Australia. Some of them had had their children in a refugee camp and others had families here. I felt the palpable gratitude that they felt to have a member of Parliament drive up and stay at their little event rather than turning up in a motorcade, plundering their village and moving on. They were, I think, surprised that in this system in Western Australia, people as important to them, having the status of members of Parliament, were prepared to go and talk to them as people. One of the things that touched me was that they had festooned the hall with copies of the Mauritanian national flag. They had cut green cloth and pasted onto it gold stars and a crescent; that was their makeshift flag. They were overjoyed when I promised that I would get them an Australian flag, a state flag and a real Mauritanian flag that they could display. It is those little things that we as members can do, not to win points, not to win votes, but simply to show our respect for the people in our community, and I was very moved by the experience.

I thank Hon Peter Collier and my colleagues. I should also mention Hon Norman Moore, who was the Leader of the House when I first arrived in this place and who warmly welcomed me as part of the Liberal Party team—the “Black Hand Gang” as I found we called ourselves; an appellation that had been assigned to us by jealous members of the Legislative Assembly many, many years before. I think it was a sign of their fear of our intellectual superiority and moral rectitude and ability to run our own affairs without being told what to do by even the Premier of the day. I understand that the Labor Party has a somewhat different system—caucus makes the decisions and so forth—but one of the traditions that we have jealously guarded in the Liberal Party is that our upper house members are their own bosses. We decide who our leader will be, and we decide when we are in government who our president will be, in collaboration with other parties. The collegiality of that particular group, the welcome I received, the counsel that I received from Hon Norman Moore, and the information, was invaluable to me as a neophyte.

I want to express my appreciation and respect for the many members of all parties with whom I have worked, particularly on committees. It has been difficult as a minister, because we have to resign from committees and

the like in order to focus on our other functions, and it would be a conflict of interest, anyway. However, I have had the pleasure of serving with a number of members of the government backbench over the last four years—Hon Pierre Yang, Hon Laurie Graham, Hon Kyle McGinn and Hon Samantha Rowe. I have also served with Hon Alison Xamon, Hon Aaron Stonehouse and Hon Robin Scott. If I had omitted anyone, I apologise. I have very much enjoyed that experience, and also the opportunity to get to know them better and to understand what makes them tick. One of the things I vowed to do when I entered this place was to appreciate the differences in points of view. I know that in the political turmoil that occurs from time to time, that can be forgotten and you have your own views of things and the pressures get on. If I have given offence to anyone on a personal level, I do apologise for that, but I have always tried to deal with my colleagues, my political opponents, and others, with respect, and decently. If I have fallen short of that standard, I very much regret it.

I would like to thank my friends and supporters in the Liberal Party for their generosity of spirit, which has sustained me over the years. There are too many to name, and I hope none will be offended if I single out only one in particular, whom I got to know better after my election. That is my very good friend and the current state president of the Liberal Party, Fay Duda. Her energy and commitment to the party is second to none. I thank her for her good humour and her moral and emotional support over the years.

There have been my ministerial staff during my years as Attorney General and Minister for Commerce. I will not embarrass them by naming specifically; they know who they are, and I am in touch with several of them. It is very touching that they still say that they enjoyed working with me and under me, and for me, and I very much enjoyed working with them. My time with them made the challenges of ministerial responsibility not only bearable, but fun. I wish them well in the future. As any minister who has served before will appreciate, the day when they realise that their office is no more and that they will no longer work as a team is a very hurtful one for a member. It was a very, very sad occasion after the election in 2017, quite apart from the political loss and the loss of government, to tell the people who had worked with me and with whom I had worked that their jobs were no more and that they had to pack up and split up and that their futures were uncertain. Likewise, the various departmental officers whom I have worked with over that period of time, their quiet dedication to duty, their commitment to public service, and their apolitical professionalism was something that as a former public servant myself, I respected, I admired and I appreciated.

I would like to thank my wife, Laraine, who has endured the demands on me for the bulk of my parliamentary career and the highs and lows that go with it. Her love and her friendship, and her moral and emotional support, have allowed me to continue and have sustained me until now, and I am confident shall sustain me into the future. It is not a life that is an easy one for a partner, and it involves some sacrifices, if only of potential privacy and the ability to plan events that must necessarily give way to one's political responsibilities.

I have been struck by the professionalism and dedication of our parliamentary staff, not only those in this chamber and the officers of this chamber, but the Assembly as well—the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Clerks and the chamber staff, and also the other staff that make Parliament tick and able to run.

One of the first things that impressed upon me, and that personally I was a bit self-conscious of, was when parliamentary staff would refer to me as “Sir” or “Mr Mischin”, or, in the case of being a minister, as “Minister”. It was that level of formality that I found a little embarrassing, I suppose. I was not used to it. I was used to a far more informal working environment. One thing it did do, though, was apprise me of their professionalism. But also it made me want to live up to the dignity and the respect that they had shown to me, and not to disappoint those titles that they were according to me and the respect that they were showing to me, and to aspire to be better. I am pleased to say that I think I have had a very good relationship with the staff of this house and of the Parliament generally. I will miss them, too. Nothing seems too much for them. Their respectful manner, and the way in which they deal with members, even the newest, serves to inspire one to live up to what is expected of a member.

Lastly, and by no means least, I want to thank my electorate office staff. My electorate officer, Sherryl Paternoster, and my research officer, Peter Ramshaw, were with me at the beginning and they are with me at the end. In my 2009 inaugural speech, I thanked them for their enthusiasm to join me in what promised to be an exciting and rewarding adventure, and so it has been. They have served me loyally and faithfully supported me for these 12 years. They have also been the first contact point for the needs and expectations of the electorate. In the course of that, they have done an incalculable amount of good for our community. They have given me their friendship through the good times and the bad, the highs and lows, and I thank them for being part of my life for over a decade and for the sacrifices that they have made for me and for the service that they have rendered our constituents.

In the course of that time, they have had to put up with a fair share of abuse. One price, I suppose, that one pays for being a member of Parliament is that we seem to attract the ire of those who are disappointed by government or life generally, or have problems that they are emotional about, and our electorate office staff, being the first point of contact, sometimes encounter personal abuse and threats. They have borne with that and done their best to calm the abusive and the querulous, and to try to achieve for those people the best possible result, but often they cannot. But what does disturb me is that although members ought to expect that as part of the job, they should not expect it from fellow members of Parliament. I fear that from time to time, the standards of debate and conduct, at least

in the other place, fall well below what ought to be the case and do members of Parliament no good. Some members feel the need to play the man rather than the ball. Some members feel the need to deride and insult when they cannot critique policy, and that is regrettable and I think unworthy of them. I may be wrong. Maybe it is reflective of their character and their worth. I suppose I should find it flattering that they have thought it necessary to debase themselves and to descend to that level, but I feel that it sets no good example for new members and it degrades the dignity of the Parliament when that happens. I am pleased that the standards in this place have been different. I think that is attributable not only to the traditions of this house, but also to our Presiding Officers, whether they be in place of the President or the Presidents themselves. I have had the privilege of serving under two Presidents. When I arrived here, it was Hon Barry House, suitably avuncular and dignified in his carriage and demeanour. After his retirement, we had Hon Kate Doust. Both have discharged their office with dignity and have earned respect across political divides. I have to say that I am sorry to hear that Hon Kate Doust is not continuing in that role. It is also disappointing if that were to be the case, and I will come to that in a moment.

As I mentioned, the Liberal Party has a tradition—a convention, if you like—that our leaders in this place are chosen by our “upper house party room” as it were. We do not get dictated to by the party room generally or by our leaders. To my mind, much of the maintenance of standards and many of the restraints upon the use and abuse of power are occasioned by respect for traditions and conventions. They are the unwritten restraint upon the use of unfettered power. When those are dispensed with, we need to be genuinely worried about the consequences.

That brings me to another aspect of my inaugural address. In the course of it, I made several allusions to the risks of concentrating too much power, throwing our body politic out of balance. I mentioned in respect of our constituents—our state’s population—that we owe it to them to maintain a balance between the powers of this Parliament, those of the executive and those of the judiciary, and we also owe it to them to rebuild respect for the institution of Parliament. In the past, I made mention of the lessons of history. Although I am not drawing an analogy, the lessons of tyranny have impressed upon me the dangers of concentrating too much power in one set of hands and how badly power can be abused. I mentioned that I was an admirer of our institutions that we have inherited from Britain—ideals such as an independent judiciary, an independent civil service and the concept of a bicameral legislature. I also mentioned the vitally important role of our Legislative Council in our system of government. I see that now being threatened, and it does concern me. We are told that electoral reform is in the wind and that some of it will involve changing the composition of this house. Once the membership of this house changes, there will be no bar to that happening. There will also be no imperative on the part of the government or a desire, I suspect, to refer those alleged reforms to a committee of this Parliament, let alone to have multiparty comment on them. Any government with an overwhelming control will descend into hubris and will abuse its power. I hesitate to repeat the old adage that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. I hope that I will be proved wrong, but I do see threats to the integrity of how this Parliament will run and the respect that will be accorded opposing views in the search and desire to maintain control of our body politic by the government of the day now that it has the opportunity to do so. It is no respecter of conventions.

The Commission on Government, after the good old WA Inc days, specifically recommended against having a parliamentary cabinet secretary. It recommended a public servant. That was one of the first things the current government dismissed—disregarded—even though previous Premiers such as Hon Geoff Gallop supported that recommendation. I emphasise that I do not criticise His Excellency the Governor. I found him a very hospitable and decent man with high ideals and standards, and I have enjoyed being in his company and that of his wife, Ms Susie Annus. However, there had been a convention for some 70 years that you do not appoint ex-political people to the post of Governor, but that was done. It was quite blatantly admitted that it was for a political friend and mentor. So much for that convention. I hope that members of this place who will be continuing will remember that if there is a change of government, there are now no conventions. Precedents have been set.

We have had the stacking of committees. Traditionally, the estimates committee of this place is chaired by someone from an opposition party. It was not during the last term. I understand we had a convention in the past that if electoral reform legislation is introduced, there be consultation with the other parties. That was not done with the last raft which came in here last year. We have had the stacking of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission. In the past, it consisted of two members of the Assembly, one from the government and one from the opposition; and, in the Council, one from the government and one from the opposition. The last time that happened—I make no criticism of Hon Alison Xamon, whose integrity I respect enormously—the idea appeared to be to leave only one Liberal member and to have those parties left of centre, including the government, on that committee in the expectation that the Greens would be at the Labor Party’s beck and call. They were gravely disappointed, but that was an example of the dispensation of convention and understanding.

A number of things have flowed from that. In the case of the appointment of a Corruption and Crime Commissioner, the government sought a particular person’s appointment—the government would say “reappointed”. Let us face it, it is an appointment. Each appointment goes through a process set up by this Parliament that, back in the days when the act was passed, was considered by this house, by a committee, which decided that leaving it in the hands of government ran the risk of making it a political appointment. So, it set up a system—an imperfect one—which was a three-stage system. One involved a nominating committee and a submission of three names to the Premier,

that is stage 2, but also that a joint standing committee consider those nominations and accept or reject them. Everyone has abided by that over the years, but this government has chosen to disregard that. On the strength of stage 1 of the process and the Premier desiring that particular person, it dispensed with convention and decided that it would move heaven and earth, and even legislate specifically, to name a person it wanted to be commissioner. That is notwithstanding there was no bipartisan or majority support for that person by the joint standing committee.

I know the focus has always been on the Liberal Party blocking the appointment—that has been the political theme—and, regrettably, it was also something that was taken up by the ex-commissioner. The Liberal Party was blamed, ignoring the fact that there was one other parliamentarian with responsibility on that committee. At least two people out of that four-person committee did not support that nomination.

Sadly, another convention has been broken: one member of that committee decided to grizzle about the process in public. Rather than having it investigated in order to see whether a breach of privilege was involved or there was a crossing of the line, after he had shown to the other members of the committee that anything they say might end up being revealed to the public, have we had an inquiry into it? No; it was blocked by the numbers in the Assembly. So much for that and that level of accountability. In fact, that member was hailed by our Attorney General as being courageous and a hero for doing so. That set a precedent. I know Hon Pierre Yang is concerned about precedents—that is another precedent that has been set.

For political gain, we have had misinformation about the process. We have had the Attorney General seeking and obtaining from the then commissioner, who he wanted to reappoint—the evidence is that is unprecedented—a list of ongoing and prospective investigations by that commissioner. What an astonishing thing to do! The pretext is, “It makes me understand just how important this particular person is,” but it also tells our Attorney General who is being investigated, who is going to be investigated, who is not being investigated and who is not going to be investigated, if that commissioner is reappointed.

We have had the Premier breaching another convention—just because he can, he told us, in answer to a question that I asked in this place—revealing the names of the unsuccessful applicants in order to humiliate and embarrass them. I add to that that in a speech last year, the ex-Corruption and Crime Commissioner said, to an audience, that he was not only the “outstanding” candidate but also that the others were only “suitable”. That is what he told his audience. What an appalling way to treat unsuccessful applicants for a position!

We are going to restart the process now, which is supposed to legitimate what has been done. But who would be inclined to put their name forward knowing that the government does not want anyone except its chosen appointee and might very well reveal the identities of those unsuccessful applicants, and indeed whether the nominating committee thought they were “outstanding”, “suitable”, “so-so”, “unacceptable” or “mad”? Seriously! That was a disgraceful breach of trust.

This house has had to take legal proceedings. Conventions that were meant to be struck between the Corruption and Crime Commissioner and this body were never settled. Instead, it appears there were discussions between the Attorney General and the then commissioner that resulted in production notices and the like, but the process was abandoned before coming to an agreement. Since then, we have had the astonishing spectacle of an Attorney General taking action against the Presiding Officer of the Legislative Council. If I were the Attorney General, I would have moved heaven and earth to try to come to some kind of settlement that would not embarrass the body politic and preserve the complicated and delicate relationship that needs to be observed between the three arms of government: the Parliament, the executive and the judiciary. The CCC commissioner is a part of the executive, although he wants to be above and beyond and not answerable, it appears, because he thinks that he ought to be reappointed. He told people that his reappointment had been blocked and that he had been disqualified for reasons he cannot understand, as though there were some expectation that he should be. That balance needs to be maintained. It is being shifted and it threatens to be destroyed in the foreseeable future. There seems to be a sense of entitlement on the part of the ex-commissioner, having had one box ticked and having had the favour of the Premier of the day, that Parliament is of no account and ought to have no say, and that anyone who opposes his appointment is, by definition, corrupt and may be subject I suppose, if he succeeds, to being investigated.

We have another situation now. I very much respect Hon Kate Doust and Hon Adele Farina for the positions that they have taken in respect of this particular issue. Hon Kate Doust has put Parliament and principle above party and politics. What is regrettable is that she has been punished for it. I do not care whether it is a decision of the Premier, a decision of the caucus or a decision of those members in this place, which unfortunately it is not, but there is no other way of reading it. Hon Kate Doust put Parliament and principle above party and politics and has been punished for it. I just hope that her successor will also put Parliament and principle above politics and party and preserve this chamber, its privileges and the conventions that have allowed it to function as a chamber of review since its inception. That is not to say that it always has been perfect in its judgement, and there are things that governments would disagree with, but governments come and go. Indeed, they should come and go when their time is up, not be here forever because the system has been changed to suit them retaining power. But I hope, and I have no reason to suppose otherwise, that the successor will also be as principled as Hon Kate Doust is, and also as principled as Hon Barry House was.

There is another factor to that, and I will not go into it in detail, but the ex-commissioner is now a political appointment whichever way it goes, if he gets reappointed. He delivered a speech in November last year to an audience, which has displayed—well, it is wrong. I have read it through and there are so many assumptions in it that are simply wrong. It is false about the Liberal Party, its motivations, whether it has influenced that process of the appointment of a commissioner, and shown astonishing disregard for the role of Parliament as opposed to party. He seems to think that a leader shows leadership by telling a member of a parliamentary committee what result they want. Well, what is the point of a parliamentary committee? Let us just give it to the leaders of the party to decide. Why do it for legislation? Why have members, such as the ones I have served with, put aside party allegiances to the extent one sensibly can in preference to objectivity and a dispassionate examination of the evidence and what is good for the community as a matter of principle? What is the point? It would save the public an awful lot of time and effort if the two leaders—the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition—just decide these things, instead of going through what apparently the previous commissioner, the previous Attorney General Hon Jim McGinty, the current Attorney General, and the Premier think is a farce. It ought to really be just doing what the leaders of the parties say. Let us save a bit of time and effort if that is the case. The fact that the previous commissioner thinks that that is the way it ought to function just shows that he misunderstands his position. In any event, there is more that can be said but I will not.

In the time available to me, I want to mention two bits of unfinished business. We have all worked on matters over the course of our times in Parliament when we do our best for people. Sometimes we succeed, sometimes we cannot. I am involved in two current cases, which I hope will be resolved in favour of the people concerned. I have mentioned both of them in the past. One is the case of the Mettimanos, residents of Yanchep whose house is sinking into the earth not through any fault of their own. They purchased it on a mortgagee sale and they live in it with their young family. It turns out that, through some fault, the ground was not properly compacted and the latent defects have been exposed and indeed were apparent, but not revealed by those who sold the house to them. The faults were known to the builders and the City of Wanneroo, fascinatingly enough, which was responsible for the building licence, has lost its records. In any event, I am pleased to say that my colleague Hon Tjorn Sibma will assume responsibility for that case. It is one that demands some assistance from government, if only because it demonstrates a weakness in our building laws and our indemnity insurance scheme. It is because time limits have expired, these people have no recourse. Apparently it cannot even be investigated in order to determine who was at fault because of time limits. That these sorts of latent defects that become obvious only many, many years after the event can have such catastrophic results for innocent parties are a fault in the system. I urge the government to help out these people, identify the faults in the system and rectify it into the future. The fact remains that if the government purchased the land and fixed the compaction problem, it could probably sell it at a profit in the current environment. But what is important is that these people not have to live in a house that is falling down and may be unfit for habitation. They are working extra jobs in order to pay off mortgages for a wasting asset. There must be a solution. I hope that Hon Tjorn Sibma and others who have been engaged in the process will arrive at some assistance for them.

The other unfinished business is the case of the family of young Cohen Fink who committed suicide. He was a troubled youth with problems. Hon Sue Ellery, in her capacity as Minister for Education and Training, is aware of the case. The Fink family want an inquest into his death. After the coroner had decided no inquest was necessary, through their own efforts and investigations they came up with material that suggests that there may have been flaws in the manner in which the department and the school had dealt with the matter. I am not saying that there was, but it raises the question. The Attorney General has told us that he cannot use an apparently obvious power under the Coroners Act 1996 to direct the coroner to hold an inquest, which is why I asked the question the other day about the incident at Perth Children's Hospital where Aishwarya, a young girl, died waiting for medical attention. Apparently, now, the Attorney General can direct an inquest at any time; hence the further question to the parliamentary secretary to the Attorney General, which I asked last Thursday. I am awaiting a response to know how he reconciles those conflicting sets of advice, one to the Fink family telling them it is too late to do anything and another one saying now is not the time to do anything; he can do it any time. I look forward to receiving that. I am pleased to say that Hon Nick Goiran, in his capacity as shadow Attorney General, will take over from me the oversight of that matter and its pursuit, and I wish him the best. I will conclude on that note.

I just want to say, once again, what a privilege and a wonder it has been to take this journey through Parliament. It is something that, even on those mornings when you get up and think, "Why am I doing this?", you reflect that not too many people have the chance. Even when you are in opposition and even when you are in a minor party, you get opportunities that others would not have. You have experiences, opportunities, you learn a lot, you have your chance to change things, and to do good. I am sure that everyone in this place entered it to do that in what they saw as the best interests of their community. And for that, everyone in this place deserves our respect. On that note, I bid you all farewell and wish you the best. For the members of the Labor Party, not absolute best—only the best within reason! And if I might quote Mr Spock, may you live long and prosper.

[Applause.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

HON AARON STONEHOUSE (South Metropolitan) [7.31 pm]: I rise today to give what may be my last speech in Parliament. I would like to begin by perhaps reflecting on where this all began four years ago when I gave my inaugural speech. I remember that when I began I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. I spent weeks and weeks before I was sworn in stressing about what I would say in my inaugural speech, revising draft after draft, bouncing it around confidants and receiving feedback. Eventually, I ended up with a speech that I was happy with and I read it verbatim with my head down, looking at the lectern. I thought I would do it a little differently for my valedictory. I have a few notes, but I have not prepared anything; nothing is set in stone, so we will see where this leads us.

Some members may not be familiar with the story of how I found myself elected, but it was something of a fluke. I volunteered to be a candidate for my political party when a call went out for willing and able bodies. I remember at the time speaking to then Senator David Leyonhjelm, who was rallying party members and looking for candidates for the 2017 state election. I surveyed the room and saw that a few people were interested but not too many, so I put up my hand. At the time, I was only 26. When I spoke to the then senator, he asked me, “Do you want to run to win or do you just want to be a warm body and run as a paper candidate?” I said, “I don’t know; you tell me. I’m 26 years old; what should I do?” He said, “You’re too young for this; politics will ruin your life. It’s a terrible thing to get into. We’ll put you down as not wanting to win.” That is how he recorded me: “Aaron Stonehouse does not want to win.” After that, there were some vetting processes, some interviews and some discussions. Eventually, I found myself as the lead candidate for South Metropolitan Region, very much not expecting to win. The party hedged its bets; it was expecting to win in the Agricultural Region and so put its star candidate in the Agricultural Region and put me in South Metro, where I was not expected to win.

I went to bed on the night of the election. I helped out where I could; I volunteered. There was not much for me to do as a paper candidate. I went to bed the night of the election at probably 10.00 pm and I got a call at 11.00 pm from the then party president, Mr Connor Whittle, and he said, “Are you looking at the election results?” I said, “No, I’ve been asleep.” He said, “Well, it looks like you’re probably going to win. The first thing you should do is delete your social media profiles.” I followed his advice and deleted them, but that was not before somebody snagged a picture of me drunk as a skunk at my brother’s wedding, smoking a cigar and probably making some lewd hand gesture. Nonetheless, I found myself suddenly propelled into a position of being a member-elect of Parliament. It was almost a sinking feeling at first. Damn! I had to quit my job. I had just been offered a promotion. What was I going to do for the next few weeks? I was in a weird transitional period of having quit my job but I was not yet sworn in as a member, so I had no income, and I quickly burnt through what savings I had.

I then found myself here in Parliament. My gosh; it is really a transformational experience! It really changes you quite a lot, and for the better—absolutely. I am a little older, perhaps a little wiser, a little more cynical certainly and a little bit lighter. I think I might have lost 20-odd kilograms over the course of four years, which I am pretty happy with, but there is still a long way to go.

You learn a lot and meet some incredible people. It is a unique experience; there is no other job like it. I was elected by a complete fluke—by chance. By a quirk of the electoral system, my name drew a very good position on the ballot. Not through my own merit, I found myself elected. I would like to think that I have contributed something to the Parliament of Western Australia. I have tried to represent my constituents and the broader state properly and well, and have taken my responsibilities very seriously.

It took me a little while to find my feet, maybe a few months, but then I really hit the ground running and I dived into committee work. I served on a couple of standing committees and several select committees. I was co-opted onto other standing committees. In fact, I think some of my committee colleagues probably wanted to throttle me at the end of it, because I was creating more and more work for the various standing committees. I found myself co-opted onto the Standing Committee on Legislation, for instance, on a motion of my own to refer a bill to it, which it otherwise would not have looked at. The members probably thought they had better things to do. But I was glad to do that kind of work, even though it filled up my calendar pretty quickly.

I would like to reflect on some of the things I was able to achieve over the last four years. Something to bear in mind is that as a member of the crossbench, you are in a unique position. You are not in government; you cannot really effect the kind of change you want to. You come to Parliament with bright ideas, with your own agenda and your own policies perhaps, but you are not in a position to enact them. Nor are you in the opposition; you are unable to take a message to the electorate that says, “If you vote for me, this is what I will implement.” You can to an extent, but you do not really have that same legitimacy or authority that the opposition parties have, so you are sort of stuck in the middle. You have to take the wins where you can get them. You have to navigate, horsetrade and wheel and deal a little bit to try to eke out a little of your agenda where you can.

I quite often found myself representing unpopular characters. I found myself on the side of ticket scalpers, wheel clampers, gamblers, tobacconists, unpopular mining billionaires, shooters, and all manner of misfits and unpopular folk. It sometimes felt like I was the member for vice! I am glad I had a chance to represent those people because I firmly believe that everybody, even those who are unpopular, deserve political representation. They deserve to have their voice heard, they deserve to have a fair go and they deserve justice. I am glad I was able to do that. Although I may not have always won, I was at least able to give those people a voice at times when they needed it.

Not alone, but through some pretty rigorous lobbying, I was able to get the Attorney General to agree to a desktop review of the criminal property confiscation regime that we have here in Western Australia. That is probably one of the things I am most proud of. Members may have heard me talk about it before. We have a criminal property confiscation scheme in this state whereby people convicted of certain crimes can have their property confiscated. This is not necessarily for proceeds of crime—we have that too. Property that they already own that was legitimately bought can be confiscated if they commit certain types of crimes. That may be reasonable in certain circumstances, but it is unreasonable if quite often innocent third parties get caught up in that scheme. The estranged spouse of a convicted criminal may find their share of their home forfeited because of the crimes of their estranged husband or wife. It leads to some serious injustice that would require only a few small changes to the Criminal Property Confiscation Act and the Misuse of Drugs Act to remedy. I introduced my own private member's bill to try to address some of these issues but, of course, being a member of the crossbench, private members' bills do not go far. However, I was able to get the Attorney General to agree to a desktop review conducted by Wayne Martin, who produced a report that made some recommendations that could help alleviate some of the unintended consequences of the criminal property confiscation scheme. My regret is that I will not be here long enough to see some of those recommendations implemented. I really hope that a future government will pick up those recommendations and implement them to address that injustice.

I also had the privilege of working on the Select Committee into Alternate Approaches to Reducing Illicit Drug Use and its Effects on the Community. That was chaired by Hon Alison Xamon and comprised members of the Liberal Party, the Nationals WA, the Greens and the Labor Party and me. We had a fantastic opportunity to look at illicit drugs and drug control regimes of various countries and around the state. The committee came up with some fantastic recommendations with bipartisan or cross-party support. I really hope that we have the opportunity to deliver some of those changes. I really am no bleeding heart, but when we see some of the harm being caused around Western Australia, particularly in regional communities and we see that there are alternative ways to approach this issue to reduce the harm and, in the end, the use of illicit drugs, I think that committee did fantastic work. I hope a future government looks at some of those recommendations.

I also had the opportunity to chair the Select Committee on Personal Choice and Community Safety, which looked at some very wideranging and interesting issues such as bike helmets and the like. It also made some very interesting findings around responsible regulation and holding bureaucratic agencies to account for the red tape and regulations that they impose on the rest of society, and had some fantastic ideas about introducing a regime of regulatory responsibility, similar to what New Zealand and New South Wales have. We are told that Treasury is working on that. I hope, when I am long gone, we might see it implemented in Western Australia. It might help reduce the burden of red tape.

I also had the opportunity to advance a motion for self-defence for vulnerable people—women, the elderly and those with disabilities—and that motion was agreed to. That was around ensuring that vulnerable people who carry pepper spray, for instance, do not find themselves on the receiving end of a fine from the police. The motion was successful and the house supported it unanimously, but unfortunately it did not get too much further than the Minister for Police.

Many others have commented on this, but I had an opportunity to contribute to the voluntary assisted dying debate. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019 was a pretty significant piece of legislation that saw us sitting here all hours of the night and for very extended periods of time. In the passage of that bill we were able to make a few changes that tightened up some of the controls to try to prevent, for instance, beneficiaries of wills from signing off on the paperwork required for voluntary assisted dying. There were a couple of things lacking in that bill. There were some issues with reporting obligations that I am disappointed were not addressed in the debate and the legislation was not amended when we dealt with it. The legislation also had inadequate protections for conscientious objectors, and that remains a concern for me. I have used my platform in Parliament to fight for the right of conscientious objectors at every opportunity, and I am disappointed that the voluntary assisted dying regime does not include protections for those people. I hope that any future review of the voluntary assisted dying legislation looks at the lack of protections for conscientious objectors and whether there are any unintended consequences from it, as I predict there might be.

I also had the opportunity to advocate for the protection of Western Australia's heritage, history and culture. In particular, I have taken up the cause of a small ragtag group of activists who are trying to prevent the destruction of family headstones at Perth's premier cemetery, Karrakatta. For members who are not aware, renewal at the cemetery is ongoing, which essentially means that headstones are removed and new plots are dug in between the existing plots. The argument will be made that these are old gravesites that nobody visits anymore and, therefore, we need to make room for new gravesites. The problem is it seems—certainly the activists I have spoken to are concerned—that headstones are being removed without family members being reached; the efforts to contact family members are insufficient; and the threshold for what is deemed to be a historically significant site that should be protected and not have its headstone removed is too high. Therefore, sites that mark the graves of Western Australia's war heroes or its pioneers or people who built this state are being removed because they do not quite meet the standard of the panel that decides whether they are historically significant.

I have been advocating for a review into that matter. I am glad that a review was announced prior to the election. We will wait to see what the outcome of that review is. That is an example of one of the kinds of issues that is

often ignored by major parties in government or opposition. This is a very difficult issue to address. Sometimes opposition spokespeople for local government will say they are happy to review the situation and put an end to renewal, but once they find themselves in the seat of a minister, it all becomes too difficult and too hard. The former Minister for Local Government, David Templeman, said he would review it, then when he was the minister said he would not. He then announced a review, but now we have a new minister. We will see how that goes. I will be watching keenly from outside Parliament.

Ultimately, I wish I had more time. There were so many issues and so many constituents who deserved to have their concerns heard that I simply did not have the time for. I did not have the time in Parliament to advance their issues or perhaps I learnt about their issues too late in the game to formulate some policy or strategy to help them genuinely. For instance, I think of those people who have been affected by criminal property confiscation—innocent parties who have lost their house or will lose their house because the Director of Public Prosecutions has gone after their property for the crimes of their estranged spouse. Those are people who I cannot help anymore. Even if I were still in Parliament, they would probably still lose their houses due to the independence of the DPP, but they desperately need some help and need Parliament to listen to their concerns and pass legislation to address that injustice. A lot of people out there like that need help; they often slip through the gaps. Maybe they are not as popular or maybe they are not as numerous for major parties to pay attention to, but they still need representation. My regret is that I have not had enough time and I will not have the opportunity to help those people from Parliament anymore.

I would like to move on to giving some recognition and thanks to various people who have helped me along the way. But first, I thank the President of the Legislative Council, Hon Kate Doust, for her exemplary work in defending and preserving the institution of Parliament and of the Legislative Council more specifically. I think she has done a tremendous job and she has done it in the face of criticism from everyone—from her own side to the media to political pundits far and wide. She has done an absolutely remarkable job. For those who are unfamiliar and who may be reading or listening to this speech, Hon Kate Doust finds herself facing legal action for carrying out what I, and I think a lot of members, regard as her duty as the President of the Legislative Council. That is quite a remarkable situation to find ourselves in. The Supreme Court will litigate that action and we will learn the outcome of that in due course, but really something quite important hangs in the balance and that is the institution of parliamentary privilege, which underpins everything that Parliament does. It is an incredibly important institution. It allows us to say what we like in here and to criticise the government without fear of prosecution from the police or some other agency and without fear of retribution from an angry executive government. That might sound far-fetched; we might think nothing like that could possibly happen in a liberal democracy like ours here in Western Australia. But it is an important institution and it is there because human nature is human nature. Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. We have to have those checks and balances in place. The executive government as an institution is not inherently corrupt, necessarily, but people are always corruptible. People are always prey to their weaknesses—to look at things they perhaps should not look at or to pry into things that they perhaps should not pry into. People can be petty, nasty, jealous and vindictive; that is human nature, so it is important to have an institution like parliamentary privilege to ensure that the Parliament can do its job and hold the government to account without fear of retribution from the executive government or agents acting on its behalf.

Hon Kate Doust, the President of the Legislative Council, has done a fantastic job of upholding those values and protecting that institution. I have to say that I really think it is a shame that she will not continue in that role. She has set an excellent example for all of us and she has hopefully set an excellent example for whoever will take her place in the next Parliament. I hope that those who follow after her in Parliaments to come will look back to the example she set and the examples that previous Presiding Officers have set on the importance of protecting that institution; to protect not just the functions of the Legislative Council but also the relevance of this chamber.

While we are on the topic of accountability and protecting institutions, I might touch briefly on the question of electoral reform. It is something that I have spoken about previously when the topic has come up for debate on private members' bills or on other occasions. There is an argument around the suitability of group voting tickets. I will not talk about that today; I have spoken about that before. What is perhaps more contentious right now is the question of one vote, one value, and the malapportionment of votes to country regions. There is an argument that country representation should be lowered to increase representation of the metropolitan regions. The argument goes that it is unfair that a handful of people in the country should be represented by the same number of MPs as many hundreds of thousands of people in a metropolitan district. I think there is a real danger in accepting those assumptions at face value. The Attorney General, in his role as Minister for Electoral Affairs, has made the very emotive argument that it is unfair for country people to be over-represented and that metro people should be under-represented. We have to keep in mind that a system like that is put in place for very specific reasons: to ensure that we do not have centralised control of the entire state merely in highly populated areas. It is to ensure that we do not have a tyranny of the majority.

If we did away with the current regions of the upper house and had perhaps an open ticket or only a handful of country members elected to each country region, with more members elected to the metro regions, country regions would perhaps be more fairly represented in terms of total population, but they would have very little say in the affairs of the state. We would find ourselves in the situation of Perth dictating to the rest of the state. There would be very little reason to campaign in country regions, to ensure that country regions get what they need, to ensure that vital

infrastructure is built out there or to ensure that constituents out there are looked after. A party would merely need to campaign and pick up enough seats in metro regions and it could control the rest of the state. It would also control the house of review, denying people in country regions a fair say in what happens.

The Attorney General and others would argue that it should be set out in the terms of reference for the expert ministerial review panel that representation should be equal and that we should be moving towards something that more reflects a direct democracy. I do not necessarily think that direct democracy is a good thing. There are different forms of democracy: representative democracy, trustee delegate models and direct democracy. We live in a representative democracy in which geographical regions vote for a member to represent their interests for four years. We do not have a direct democracy in this state. The Constitution does not lay out a direct democracy. There is nothing that really informs the value of a direct democracy over any other model. At least the current system that we have, with its malapportionment of votes, ensures that country regions are represented, that they cannot be dictated to by the city and that more voices are represented. If we are going to go down the route of direct democracy, with a handful of people not being allowed to elect one MP, that really flies in the face of ideals of diversity in Parliament. Quite often the same people will argue that we need diversity in Parliament: that we need people from different ethnic groups, people of different genders and people from different religions represented in Parliament. If that were the case, any group or any demographic that was less than three per cent of the population would not be represented in Parliament. We would likely never have someone who was born in India represented in Parliament if that were the case. We may have one Aboriginal representative because about three per cent of the population of Western Australia is Aboriginal. But we would not have any group that is smaller than that demographic represented in Parliament. It would be a shame if we moved towards some kind of model of direct democracy in which the number of a population makes up their parliamentary representation automatically rather than perhaps the merit of their ideas or their values, whether they are a good person, whether they are intelligent or whether they care for their constituents. I would really be cautious of any electoral reform that is proposed.

Members of the new Parliament and members who are continuing into the next Parliament will find themselves in an interesting position of having to balance not only their duty to their political party, their constituents and their electorate, but also their duty to the wider state. They cannot simply toe the party line and do what is only good for their constituents within their electorate. Sometimes they will have to think about that. Members continuing into the next Parliament and members-elect will find themselves in that situation. When they approach questions of electoral reform or any further attacks on the institution of Parliament or parliamentary privilege, I hope they will be thinking about the bigger picture, not just their party, not just their constituents in their electorate or what is good for the state as a whole.

Finally, I will get back to those people that I would like to thank, in no particular order. I would like to thank Hon Peter Collier, whom I have had the absolute privilege of working alongside these last four years in his capacity as Leader of the Opposition. He often worked pretty closely with us on the crossbench. It was an unruly bunch at times but we have worked collegiately; we have worked really well together. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the crossbench, whom I have worked with very closely. We are not a party; we do not caucus. But when you are not in a party—when you are on your own as a single MP—it can certainly get lonely, so it is nice to have friends along the way, whom, despite our political differences at times, we can work with and have a chat with.

I would also like to thank Hon Simon O'Brien, who is away on urgent parliamentary business. When I first started, I had no idea what I was doing. Hon Simon O'Brien reached out to me. He was the only MP to do it at the time. He invited me to lunch at Parliament House. It was an act of kindness that has stayed with me this whole time. He is a very nice man and he took the time to make sure that I had some encouragement and a friendly face in Parliament to show me around and to help me find my way when I began. For that, I am thankful.

I would also like to thank the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and all the staff of the Legislative Council. I would also like to thank the committee staff, who put up with me and my select committees and inquiries and all the extra work I created for them. They really did a fantastic job. I would also like to thank all the staff of Parliament House, including the Parliamentary Services team. In particular, I would like to thank Deb. Deb is an institution in herself. She is fantastic. Every day she prepares a lovely afternoon tea for us. I mentioned Hon Peter Collier earlier. Hon Peter Collier has a ritual. Every single day at afternoon tea, he goes up to Deb and gets a cup of coffee. When he has had it, he goes back to her and gives her back his cup and says, "Deb, that is the best cup of coffee I have ever had." He says it every single day. I think he genuinely means it; he is that kind of guy.

I would also like to thank my electorate staff, who have done a fantastic job. Everything that I have done over the last four years has been achieved through their hard work. The life of an electorate staffer is a thankless job at times. They work behind the scenes; they are unknown. Nobody knows who they are and nobody sees them, but they are busy writing press releases, organising things and making your member of Parliament look good. Again, in no particular order I would like to thank Nikola Kaurin, Kate Fantinel, Craig Buchanan and Jack Taylor. They have been working very hard in my office, making my life easier and making me look good.

I would also like to thank those who have volunteered for me, especially during the election campaign. We put together a fantastic team and we worked really, really hard. There are too many people for me to be able to mention

tonight, but I would like to acknowledge at the very least Matthew Thomson, who stepped up to a leadership position within my party and helped me along the way. A lot of the work we did over the last few months would not have been possible without the hard work and leadership of Matthew Thomson. Thank you, Matthew.

I would also like to thank someone without whom I could not do any of what I do, probably the most important person in life, my girlfriend, Emma, now my fiancée, Emma, as of last night.

[Applause.]

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: She does a fantastic job of supporting and encouraging me. I am not a particularly outgoing or social person, but she does a good job of dragging me out of my shell and encouraging me to be a better person every day.

Mr Acting President, I would like to think that I have really grown throughout my time in Parliament. I have changed my outlook on a lot of things. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I am sad to not be here for another four years, but so it is. I will go on to the next chapter. If I were ever lucky enough to be here again, I certainly would not waste any time picking up those issues that I left off with and was not able to finish.

I am truly, truly thankful for the opportunity to have served the people of Western Australia for the last four years. Thank you.

[Applause.]

HON TIM CLIFFORD (East Metropolitan) [8.02 pm]: Kaya. Hello. I pay my respects to the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on today, the Whadjuk people, and for the contribution that they make to the life of the city and this region.

Mr Acting President, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Legislative Council at the end of what is the fortieth Parliament of Western Australia.

I am sorry if I miss out anyone in these thank-yous. There are a lot of people to thank, but I will thank you in time.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the very valued friendships that I have made across all sides of the chamber. Your support and kindness has been appreciated. I am doing the thank-yous first because I get a bit emotional about these things. I know many of these friendships will continue beyond this place and I hope to catch up with you in time.

I would like to thank the party because without it, I would not be here. To my colleagues, Hon Alison Xamon, Hon Diane Evers and Hon Robin Chapple, I thank you for all your support throughout the years. This place is tough and you need colleagues to pull you up when you are not doing the right thing and you need colleagues to give you a bit of guidance when you need a helping hand.

To all the stakeholders who over the past four years supported us throughout the many campaigns, your support and determination really helped us to put the things that matter on the agenda.

To the President, the Parliament and the committee and chamber staff, I thank you. From the moment I walked in, you were kind, welcoming and always willing to help. I will never forget that.

To my staff: yes, I was the MP, but I could not have done all the things I did without the support of my current and former staff or, how I like to put it, my workmates. We fought the good fight. You all should be very proud of your work. You did everything you could to help me get re-elected. I am really thankful for what you did in helping me be the person I am today and for all the things you did to protect the most vulnerable in our community. Emma, Talitha, Connor, Grace and Alison should all be proud of the work they did in my office because they are an amazing group of people. I wish them the best in their futures.

All of my East Metro candidates did an amazing job: Jessica Openshaw, Manny Singh, Rachel Wright, Clint Uink, Brendan Sturke, Lee-Anne Miles, Tomasz Kielce, Melanye Wawrik, Matt Lacey, Mark Cooper, Emma Pringle, Charles Pratt, Lucy Nicol, Caroline Perks, Callan Gray and Beth McMullan. I cannot tell you what your contribution meant to the Greens WA and the progressive movement as a whole. We will be back and I will be with you all continuing to fight for a better world.

To my East Metro campaign team and organisers, Mark Cooper, Zia Hakimi, Kit Sainsbury, Matt Roberts, Sophie Greer, Georgia Blackburn and Dylan Eagles, your tireless volunteer work was really the strategic glue that pulled our campaign together. I thank you all. I thank the other staff that I might not have picked up in this section.

I also want to thank the many hundreds of people who took part in our East Metro campaign. You were willing to do many things including standing at polling booths, knocking on doors and making phone calls. You stood for everything that our movement represents. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

To my close mates, Aaron, Ash, Luke, Chris and Chantal, thank you. To my basketball team—I know they are listening tonight—thanks for your perseverance with a teammate who is a member of Parliament. Thanks for switching nights! That is a bit of an inside joke. I know we have to work late on Tuesday nights.

Looking back, I kept politics at arm's length prior to joining the Greens in early 2011. After finishing a six-year period as a FIFO worker, I enrolled at Edith Cowan University as a mature age student. I had no interest in becoming an MP or a leader, but my motivation for getting involved was simple—fairness. I had a sense of urgency about the decision because it was concerning to witness the long march towards the Americanisation of many institutions in our country through the actions of, first, John Howard, and then Tony Abbott. Howard's lockstep support of the US plunging us into the Iraq war, his harsh treatment of refugees and his endless pursuit of crushing workers through his unfair WorkChoices legislation really impacted me as a construction worker. It was unfair for companies to use workplace agreements as a weapon against workers. The power imbalance between myself, the labourer, versus engineers and company lawyers was a real shock to me. The deck was always stacked in their favour and at that time it was a light-bulb moment that encouraged me to look more closely into what agendas were at play between the political parties vying to govern our country.

During that time, I also followed with dismay the accession of Tony Abbott. Tony Abbott's approach was a win-at-all-costs mentality without any regard for the people he claimed to represent. He used dog-whistle politics to pit community members against each other through fear. I was also frustrated as Abbott worked to dismantle our social safety net, making it harder for people to go to university. He also undermined our health system. The question going through my mind was: What is the Liberal Party's endgame? What do these people want? I still ponder that as the federal Liberal government defies economists' and scientists' advice and works to underwrite a dying fossil fuel industry.

Looking back at what motivated me to join the Greens, I find myself coming full circle because the fire I had in 2011 is still with me. Now, more than ever, I believe that we must fight to keep building a positive movement to prevent the privatisation of our public institutions, to prevent inequality and to ensure politics is accessible to all people and not just the privileged few.

Since election day, I have had a bit of time, and I have been reflecting on quite a few things in the past few weeks. There is a lot from the previous four years to reflect on, but I thought I would highlight just a few of the issues I have fought to raise during my time in Parliament. Coming into this Parliament was not easy for me—processes, the echo of the chamber, the ridiculous amount of pressure I put on myself through expectations and the drive not to let anyone down. I remember thinking, "How will I ever work my role out? How will I work out what we call the 'Legislative Council'?" But things become easier. Bit by bit, things clicked, which helped me prioritise exactly what to pursue and what parliamentary levers I could pull to raise relevant issues. I thought about my approach to politics and how we conduct ourselves, through my observations in this place and from outside the chamber, and I came to the conclusion that there is a lot to say about kindness. I remember someone telling me years ago that I was too soft for politics, but my reply at the time was, "Please do not mistake my kindness for lack of determination", and that is what I believe I have been about. My determination has been motivated only by the issues. I did not come to this place to score cheap political points—because I am on this side of the chamber and you are on that side. I came here to work with you all to get outcomes. Yes, we might have disagreed, but I never believed that any issue should be all or nothing. I know the concept of kindness does not sit well in the current global political climate with many operators who believe the ends justify the means, but we need kindness now more than ever. We are living in a world in which adversarial politics and machine politicians executing agendas of self-interest have sadly become the norm. We all know what happened following the recent United States elections: the storming of the Capitol and the emergence of insidious things like the anti-science movement and white supremacy. It is critical that we do not forget who we are and where we have come from. We need to show some kindness and rise above the toxicity and outside noise and just work together. That is why I took that approach to everything I did.

Looking back at what I wanted to put on the agenda over the four years, I really hit my stride in 2018, after all those other things clicked, because at the beginning of 2018 I sought to raise the issue of the rights of the many renters within our state. The 2018 renters campaign was close to my heart, as I saw firsthand what happened throughout the mining boom of the 2000s. I said many times during that campaign that we had to reform our Residential Tenancies Act to reflect the reality of the day and to avoid the negative outcomes of the boom-bust cycle that we have experienced in the past in Western Australia. Previous booms did mean prosperity for investors, but without proper policy frameworks in place, it came at the expense of others. Renters have faced unreasonable increases as people take advantage of rental shortages. Fast-forwarding now to the post-COVID housing and rental markets, we see very similar issues being driven not by the mining boom, but by a state that has pretty much had to work under the COVID regulations of the previous year and a half. Just to put things into perspective, we ran a series of surveys online, and I received one email from a constituent that I thought I would read out tonight. I think it is important because it summarises the situation. I spoke to this family and they highlighted their struggle. These were people who worked. They had full-time jobs, they studied, they did the right thing, but through these circumstances they faced hardship and an unfair rental system. I think we need to listen to these stories and ensure we apply them to whatever legislation might be put forward in this Parliament. This is what the constituent's email said. It was written just before the rental moratorium was about to expire. I quote —

As a member of the voting electorate and a member of the Perth rental market I am writing to express my concern regarding the upcoming removal of rent restrictions. Similar to loosening of covid restrictions there needs to be a controlled and planned exit strategy that allows owners to raise rent at a reasonable and controlled rate.

As it stands the rental market is cut throat and the moment that the restrictions are removed there will be a dramatic and unsustainable increase, this will have a profound impact on peoples well-being, financial status, marriages, and mental health. Homelessness will rise along with suicide rates, substance abuse, and domestic violence.

I am personally experiencing this, over the past year we have experienced a lot of financial and mental hardship. A family of 5, our youngest daughter with special needs was diagnosed with Leukemia early March 2020, her treatment required full time hospital care, this resulted in my wife becoming her carer and losing her job (\$40,000 loss in income). To help we had to get a special visa for my mum to fly in from Ireland, flights and quarantine cost \$12,500. 3 weeks ago my wifes mum was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, my wife will need to return to Ireland to help look after her for a duration between my wifes nursing semesters, estimated \$7,000 in flights and return quarantine, plus extended loss of income.

On top of this my wife is in her second year of nursing, which she managed to keep on track while supporting our daughter during chemotherapy. Nursing involves up to 8 weeks of unpaid placement, no dole, no food expenses, no childcare covered, no fuel—nothing—basically free apprentice labour—this does not happen in any other industry.

This week we have had a notice that on the 05/04/2021 our rent will increase by \$100 (approx. 22%). This has potential to send us homeless. I am currently applying for second jobs to try and make ends meet. Our finances have been decimated with approx. \$60–\$70k in reduced income. Now any spare cash that we have for our kids will now go to a greedy money hungry landlord.

I am one of thousands of stories across Western Australia that will be facing financial decimation once the ban is removed completely. This restriction needs to be removed in a controlled manner.

My vote this election time will go to whoever places controls on the out-of-control dictatorship that is the real estate rental market. I have nothing against rent increases, in line with inflation, interest rates and wage increases.

That is only one of many heartbreaking emails that I received in response to one of the multiple surveys I circulated in the community. The surveys really helped to make renters rights an election issue and highlighted the fact that, yes, we do have a housing crisis that still needs to be dealt with.

The other thing that was close to my heart during this period was tabling the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020. When it comes to the climate crisis, I believe there was a shift within the public's attitudes and psyche during this term. The years 2018 and 2019 saw what I call an "awakening" when it comes to the climate issue. This awakening saw millions across the globe take to the streets calling for meaningful action on climate change. I was proud to also march alongside many, including the School Strike 4 Climate and many non-government organisations. Throughout that time, in 2018 and 2019, my office was busy planning on formulating a climate bill. In my view, the introduction of this climate bill was to meet the climate challenge and hopefully encourage reform to ensure Western Australia was doing its bit to mitigate its emissions and encourage the uptake of renewable energy. I was so proud to see that become a reality when I read in the bill in March 2020. Yes, I am proud to have brought in the climate change bill, but we are still living in a state that does not have any legislative targets that actually reduce emissions. We need to continue to hold the new Minister for Climate Action to account to ensure appropriate outcomes for the community.

The other issue that I really looked at throughout my time was inequality, which goes to where I came from. The ongoing fight to address inequality has never ended with me. I did what I could to continue to call out the actions of both state and federal governments to ensure that they did something to address the growing inequality gap in our country. We did what we could for everyone who walked through my office door and even conducted a food hamper drive last year not long after the first lockdowns. Many people were desperate, and I personally delivered most of the hampers we put together. The conversations I had with the people who requested food hampers will stay with me forever. We need to recognise that things are getting worse, not better, for many people in our community and it is going to take the work of policymakers to address those issues on all sides of Parliament. I urge the government to look at this issue and work with the federal government of the day to ensure that these people are protected.

Throughout my time it has been very tough to put many issues on the agenda over the four years, as many people in this chamber know. It is a difficult task being a member of Parliament, even more so when the pandemic hit. COVID-19 consumed everything and exposed existing underlying flaws within countries across the world and, sadly, WA was not spared from this. Yes, the government has a mandate and majority in both houses, but it is what it does with the opportunity that counts. I note the Whitlam government's achievements. Should we judge his government on its short tenure in office, or the policies of free education and equal pay for women? History has proven the latter. It is up to you, who continue in this place, to show courage, work across the aisles, ignore the vested interests and work together to protect future generations. The burden of responsibility lies with you and you should not be surprised at unrest growing in the community if you fail to protect the community from things such as the catastrophic impacts of climate change or the housing crisis.

With reflection, no doubt, I start looking toward the future. Immediately after the election result was declared, I went back to my safe space, which is before Parliament and the person I was then. Before the fortieth Parliament, I was defined by my upbringing. I was a kid from social housing, a former labourer and construction worker—the guy who many said was too nice for politics. That may be, but this was never about me; it was always about bringing the community together and working together. I was and still am just a person who carries the belief that when we work together, we can solve issues that sometimes appear too hard to overcome. I know that many people within the Greens movement are disappointed with the result, but you must know that your work contributed to so much furthering the causes that we fought for, and that is why we must look forward to continuing to build our movement. We must also continue to rebuild, because so many within the community depend on us to continue to put these issues that matter on the agenda.

I have been very moved by many of the messages of support since the election, messages from unexpected places and from across the political divide. Many people are asking me, “Are you going to make a comeback in four years?” I had to put it down, because it is hard to respond, but I would like to say to my friends and foes alike that there are too many doors left un-knocked, too many meaningful conversations not had and too many issues negatively impacting our community and environment not to continue the fight. So watch this space, because I am going to do what I can to rebuild from the setbacks of this election and win back this seat.

[Applause.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Colin de Grussa**.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COMMITTEES — MEMBERSHIP

Statement by Leader of the House

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [8.25 pm] — by leave: I inform the house that agreement has been reached behind the chair with Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Leader of the Opposition in the National and Liberal Alliance, about the chair and membership of two standing committees of the Legislative Council following the change of Council membership on 22 May 2021.

The agreement is that I, as Leader of the Government, will propose membership and chairing of the following standing committees in the forty-first Parliament and government members will vote in support of my motion: the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, Hon Peter Collier, who shall also be the chair; Hon Nick Goiran and Hon Brad Pettitt; and the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review, Hon Donna Faragher, who shall also be the chair.

The agreement with the Leader of the Opposition is conditional upon the withdrawal or defeat of motion 1, Select Committee into the Transparency and Accountability of Government—Establishment, standing in the name of Hon Nick Goiran.

COVID-19 RESPONSE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) BILL 2021

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [8.36 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

Western Australia, and indeed the rest of the world, is continuing to face an unprecedented emergency. This bill is vital to ensure the safety of the community of Western Australia. It supports our emergency management personnel who are doing an incredible job on the front line managing the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis. This is the first time Western Australia has experienced an emergency of this scope and magnitude. In November last year, this house urgently moved to ensure that the state continued to have access to the necessary powers to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, which is continuing to pose a risk to our community. It is integral that we ensure that our legislative framework to deal with the COVID-19 emergency continues into the immediate future. We must urgently pass this bill to ensure that the state can respond to the challenges that we are facing.

By way of background, in April 2020 urgent amendments were passed to enhance the state’s capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and safeguard the health and safety of the Western Australian community. The amendments included those made by the Emergency Management Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020 and the Criminal Code Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020. I will refer to these collectively as the COVID-19 response amendment acts. These amendments have been vital to the state’s management of COVID-19. The amendments strengthened our legislative framework and have allowed Western Australia to effectively respond and deal with the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 emergency. The COVID-19 response amendment acts introduced measures to respond to the pandemic and included sunset provisions to limit the measures to the pandemic hazard. The amendments introduced by the COVID-19 response amendment acts will cease to operate on 4 July 2021.

COVID-19 is still a risk to the community, as we have seen recently with our three-day lockdown. Due to the fast-evolving situation and the possible threat, we introduced measures when two positive COVID-19 cases emerged. Since then, we have introduced measures to limit and reduce the risk of spread from another group of infections. This bill will extend the operation of the operative provisions of the COVID-19 response amendment acts by a further six months to 4 January 2022.

Before turning to the bill itself, I will outline the provisions that are subject to sunset clauses and explain why it is important that they are extended to ensure that the state can continue to respond appropriately to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Emergency Management Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020 introduced, among other things, section 72A into the Emergency Management Act 2005. Section 72A provides a catch-all power that enables a hazard management officer or authorised officer to effectively manage the response to an emergency. It includes the ability to direct a person or class of persons to take any action that the officer considers reasonably necessary to prevent, control or abate risks associated with the emergency. Section 72A also contains important information-gathering powers.

Over the course of the past year, a large number of directions have been made in reliance or partial reliance on this section. Those directions include, but are not limited to, current versions of the Contact Register Directions, Controlled Border for Western Australia Directions, Safe Transition for Western Australia Directions, Isolation (Diagnosed) Directions, Quarantine and Isolation (Undiagnosed) Directions, Gatherings and Activities Directions, Face Covering Directions and Presentation for Testing Directions.

Pursuant to sections 2(c) and 10 of the Emergency Management Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020, as amended by the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Act 2020, section 72A will be deleted from the Emergency Management Act 2005 on 4 July 2021. The intent of this sunset clause was to ensure that the section 72A powers were applied only to the circumstances of an appropriate emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On the sunset date, any existing directions that rely solely on section 72A will no longer be valid as there are no transitional provisions to continue the operation of those directions. Further, it will not be possible to rely on section 72A to make any new directions.

Ensuring that these provisions endure in the act for a further six months is vital. Extension of the state of emergency will continue to be based on expert advice from the State Emergency Coordinator and the deliberations of the State Disaster Council. However, it is essential that every tool that has served our state so well to this point remains available to keep us safe in these difficult and uncertain times. The powers under section 72A have been vital to effectively direct the isolation and testing of people arriving in Western Australia from overseas, and we must have the capability to continue to make such directions. Australians located overseas are still returning home. Many are returning from countries that are severely impacted by the pandemic. It is important that we effectively manage that risk.

Over the past year, we witnessed some states and territories grappling with community outbreaks of COVID-19 and the devastating impact on those communities. In response to these specific outbreaks, Western Australia issued directions which were supported by section 72A powers. Even with open borders within Australia, we need to be able to respond to outbreaks in other jurisdictions and require this power to put restrictions in place as required. It is important that, based on the current health advice and Western Australia's susceptibility to a COVID-19 outbreak, we have in place measures to manage our borders if required and ensure that appropriate strategies are in place. The powers under section 72A have supported our border management and the issuing of directions to present for health testing, isolate or attend hotel quarantine. They have been and continue to be critical to this strategy.

Section 72A powers are also essential for the government's implementation of physical distancing measures appropriate to the health advice. This has supported the easing of restrictions for social venues such as theatres, concert halls and cinemas and the need to strengthen restrictions as and when required. As we move forward, and in the event the state of emergency continues, section 72A will continue to be relied on to facilitate community-based events in a COVID-safe manner, while having the agility to swiftly respond to any need to put in place temporary restrictions.

One of the key directions for using the section 72A information-gathering powers is the Contact Register Directions. Contact information records and the continued use of the SafeWA app are integral to the state's ability to efficiently respond to and control ongoing pandemic risks. We only need to look at our recent three-day lockdown to see the importance of contact tracing in being able to rapidly respond to and isolate the risk of spread within the community. The government's decisions in responding to and managing the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be based on the best available health advice. Directions relating to contact tracing and quarantine that rely on section 72A are integral to any ongoing scenario. Section 72A will ensure our emergency management personnel have the powers available to continue to help us overcome this pandemic and maintain the responsible and flexible framework that has served the state so well to this point.

I turn now to the Criminal Code Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020. The Criminal Code Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020 amended the Criminal Code to increase the maximum penalties for the offences of serious assault and threats committed in the context of COVID-19. The increased penalties reflected the

seriousness of such assaults and threats against public officers, including frontline workers, in the context of the pandemic. Our frontline workers have been outstanding during this state of emergency. These amendments sent a strong message of support to these officers for their sustained efforts in such challenging circumstances.

The amendments to the offences under sections 318 and 338B of the Criminal Code were made in response to several concerning reports of people here, across the country and internationally claiming they had COVID-19 and deliberately coughing, spitting or worse on public officers doing their jobs. This was happening or at risk of occurring to frontline essential staff who work tirelessly to keep our community safe and to stop the spread of this disease. The increased penalties reflected the seriousness of this unacceptable conduct and conveyed that the government and the Western Australian community do not accept such conduct.

The Criminal Code Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020 as amended by the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Act 2020 has a sunset date of 4 July 2021. Unless extended, the increased maximum penalties for the offences committed in the context of COVID-19 will be deleted. As we continue to live with COVID-19 and rely so much on our frontline essential staff, it is critical that people who assault or threaten to infect them with COVID-19 can be dealt with appropriately. The bill before us today will extend the operation of the respective sunset clauses under the COVID-19 response amendment acts for a further six months, with a new effective sunset date of 4 January 2022. It will ensure that the powers under section 72A of the Emergency Management Act 2005 will be available should the state of emergency in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic continue and will ensure that higher penalties continue to apply to serious assaults and threats against public officers committed in the context of COVID-19.

We are facing uncertain times as we continue to respond to and manage the pandemic. This bill will help us maximise certainty that we have the tools in place to do everything we can to protect our state, our people and our economy with both the short-term response to any risks and the long-term strategy as the world continues to grapple with COVID-19.

It is vital that the bill is passed before the sunset date of 4 July 2021. Any gap in these laws in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will potentially present an unacceptable risk to the health, safety and financial security of Western Australians.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and I table the explanatory memorandum.

[See paper [177](#).]

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

ABORIGINAL CORPORATIONS AND CHARITABLE TRUSTS — GOVERNANCE

Statement

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [8.38 pm]: About three years ago, I had some conversations with the Attorney General and the former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs about the problems associated with Aboriginal trusts. I make it very, very clear that I work resoundingly well with and supportively of Aboriginal organisations across the state. A large number of Aboriginal beneficiaries are carrying out their fiscal duty of governance exceptionally well. But many Aboriginal beneficiaries are what would be deemed vulnerable due to the lack of governance training and have issues with financial and general literacy. Many are elected to the boards of these corporations without proper director training and induction and are elected due to their cultural authority rather than their fiscal authority. Many make decisions not knowing the detailed construct of what they are voting on. The state and commonwealth legislation that regulates Aboriginal corporations and trusts is grossly inadequate. The state government argues that it is powerless to do anything because the legislation provides it with very little power to intervene. The Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act does not involve the same level of accountability as the laws governing regular corporations. The agency is under-resourced and has to engage the services of often inexperienced consultants to step in for a period. Often these consultants are unaware of the internal politics within the corporation and the wider group and work with the minority group that controls the corporation and not the wider group, which only adds to the problems and it is rare for incidents of fraud or theft to be prosecuted. It also leads to a structural breakdown within Aboriginal corporations and Aboriginal society, so there are the haves and the have-nots.

I quickly want to give members a classic example. Recently, an auditor was unable to identify a centralised document management system where all the board meeting minutes were held. The auditor was unable to locate a policy or procedure in relation to board meeting minutes and their subsequent retention. From the examination of electronic devices and various emails, the auditor identified the various dates of board meeting minutes for this corporation. There was a mixture of both draft and final versions of the minutes. This was possibly a breach of part 5–4, “Minutes of Meetings”, of the CATSI act. The auditor was also unable to identify centralised document management systems where the policies and procedure of the corporation were held. It goes on and just about on every occasion,

the auditor was unable to identify a central document management system where the employment policies and employment contracts were held. Again, when it came to purchase orders, invoices and batch payments, the auditor identified that there was no centralised document management system where all the purchase orders, invoices, batch payments and reports are kept. The auditor went on to say that they were unable to locate purchase orders for all the transactions.

It is an absolute shame that Indigenous corporations are suffering at this level. It is not the fault of the Indigenous people. It is the fault of fiscal management by other parties. This report contains page after page of a litany of proper governance failures.

There are many things around this. Non-Indigenous consultants and staff financially benefit from trusts. We have seen this previously with the Innawonga Aboriginal Corporation and the Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation from which money was taken for someone to run as a candidate in the Victorian election for an organisation called Transport Matters Party. They get a slap on the wrist and nothing ever actually happens. I really am very, very concerned. As I say, I raised it with the Attorney General about three years ago and with the former Minister for Indigenous Affairs, but the situation is getting worse.

This document basically points to that failure. Deficiencies consistently arise from annual general meetings and other meetings. Some groups are paid to attend and are handed cash at the meeting. Many of those who attend do not have any understanding of what a meeting is for and are not provided with adequate details prior to the meeting on any matters that will be voted on at the meeting. When they ask questions at the meeting, their questions are either ignored or not answered fully or they are advised that the trustees or lawyers cannot answer the questions. Some elders are bussed in before the meeting and told how they will vote. In some instances, other people raise their hands for them, when it is clear they do not have the capacity to understand what they are voting for.

This is a systemic issue and it is going on all through my electorate. Having said that, I point out that some corporations have had long-term governance management, which is working well. But I will say that the crisis is getting worse. We have had many instances of this. The Attorney General looked at the issue of the management of the Njamal People's Trust, but he could not do anything about it. I urge this government to have a look at some of these reports. Indeed, something has to happen. If it is the last thing I do in this place, I call on the Attorney General to have a good look at what can be done. He has stated repeatedly that he is concerned about this area and I really want to see something happen. On that, I will sit down.

Point of Order

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The honourable member seemed to quote from a couple of different documents. The documents he quoted from at the beginning and end of his contribution seem to be general, and one was specifically about an auditor's report. I am interested in the issues so I wonder whether the member might table those reports, if they can be tabled.

The PRESIDENT: First of all, member, perhaps Hon Robin Chapple might cite the names of the two or more documents and then he might seek leave to table the documents if he wants to.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: The first document is a draft report into the Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation, dated 4 March 2021. The second is a series of notes that I have created for myself.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Is the first document the member referred to the auditor's report?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: It is an auditor's report on Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation.

The PRESIDENT: Member, before you decide whether to table that document, is it confidential in any way, shape or form? Is it a publicly available document?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I believe it is confidential.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think you should be tabling that document in that case, really. The member has cited the name of the document. Hon Dr Steve Thomas might want to have talk with the member behind the chair about that document. But if it is a confidential document, I do not think you should be tabling it at this point.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I am more than happy not to table it. I just thought Hon Dr Steve Thomas needed it tabled, but maybe that is up for discussion.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: If is confidential, I will not. It is Madam President's ruling.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I am more than happy to table my notes.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I seek that the honourable member tables his notes.

The PRESIDENT: Is Hon Robin Chapple happy to seek leave to table his notes?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Yes. I seek leave to table my notes.

[Leave granted. See paper [178](#).]

HOMELESSNESS

Statement

HON PIERRE YANG (South Metropolitan) [8.47 pm]: I intended to rise tonight to let members know that I will be again participating the Vinnies CEO Sleepout this year. I was going to ask members for support again, but I will not do that today. I want to share tragic news that has come through in the past few hours. At about five o'clock Perth time, SBS reported that a young boy of Aboriginal heritage died in South Australia. He and two of his young friends had been sleeping in a bin, and when the bin was being emptied, he was crushed and he died. The report states that the tragedy happened in Port Lincoln in South Australia. The police officer in the community noted that Port Lincoln has an issue with homelessness. I rise to share this terrible news. We all know that homelessness is terrible in many communities across our country and across the world and that sometimes it has deadly consequences for people. In this incident, it was a 13-year-old young boy.

GREAT SOUTHERN MOTORPLEX

Statement

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [8.49 pm]: I rise briefly to talk about the Albany motorplex. I have mentioned it a few times in here and I want to give a bit more depth to the story. Since I was on the Albany council more than 20 years ago, the community has been looking for a new place to race its vehicles. There is a current racetrack, but the spread of housing out there is getting very close to it, so the community needs to find a new place. Everywhere they go to put a new motorplex, the residents around it all say, "No, not in my backyard. I don't want it here. Put it somewhere else." I recognise that there are people who like to race vehicles and the community should get to put it somewhere, but this has gone on for 20 years. To race these combustion engines makes a lot of noise and they have a lot of fuel spills, and there are other issues that go with them.

Multiple possibilities have been put forward, but, as I said, the community has opposed these. Recently, a council member who was also a candidate for the Nationals WA became very involved in finding this spot. I am not sure to what extent his interest is included, but he found a place on Down Road in the industrial area. We would think that an industrial area sounds good, but this industrial area still has a few places. It has CBH, the woodchip mill, the Sandalwood Shop and a place that seems to have been a bioenergy sort of enterprise a couple of times. The area is not too developed yet, but the area that has been chosen at Down Road is in the water catchment for the city; it goes into Marbelup Brook. It is a designated water catchment area, which we want to keep clean. An active group, the Torbay Catchment Group, of which I am a member, has been trying to keep it clean. It is unfortunate, because there seems to have been very little looking into this. It seems to have gone through the processes very quickly. It went through the council with the councillors' support for it. It went to the Environmental Protection Authority and it said that there was no need for an assessment, even though it is in a water catchment area. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation put in some advice, but it did not really have a say in what happens with it. The area also has native flora and fauna and some endangered species.

It is interesting that it already appears on Google Earth as the Albany motorplex. That is interesting, because it is still just farmland. Jump the gun; get it on there. It was passed through council easily and no EPA approval was necessary. But, unfortunately, there are a lot of issues with it, including the noise. There is a house less than half a kilometre away from the site. There are many houses within a couple of kilometres and I know how noisy this can be, because I live about seven kilometres as the crow flies from the current motorplex—or whatever they call it. On Saturday nights it gets a bit noisy in the summertime, so I have to close the windows to continue watching television or whatever. That is the noise from seven kilometres away, so we can imagine what noises will come out of the new Albany motorplex. It will not be only Saturday nights. They will have seven-day racing, through the day and into the evening, so every day the people living near there, within seven or 10 kilometres or so, will hear the racing engines. It does not seem to be right.

It is a difficult decision. I recognise that people still want to race internal combustion engines and that until we, as a country, support the electric vehicle industry and move on to racing faster electric vehicles, we will still have to put up with this polluting, noisy and damaging sport. My concern is that we really need to look again at this issue and ask, "Is this what we need? Is this good long-term planning? Do we need to put the motorplex at Down Road? Is there somewhere else we can put it?" I do not know the answers, but this place seems to be the wrong place.

To branch out from that, I would like the government to think about this and see whether there is some way that it can step in, listen to the community there and find the right spot. The airport is not too far away; the airport already has some noise. Maybe it should be closer to that area. It would be out of the water catchment area and, chances are, there would not be too much flora and fauna. Maybe that has already been looked at. That is not my role, but I am raising this issue. Members have to realise that Albany is my home and I will be back there a lot, so they will hear a lot more from me, outside Parliament, fighting for the people of Albany and what we need down there.

Members might remember that I mentioned Down Road, which is where Co-operative Bulk Handling and the woodchip industry are located. When the woodchip industry started there, it spent money on building a rail line

straight from the woodchip mill to the port to get the woodchips to the port by rail. It was very forward thinking and it worked well until someone decided that the trees could be chipped onsite and not at the mill. The woodchips could then be trucked to the port, which meant more trucks on the road and a \$175 million road for the trucks to travel the extra 10 kilometres to get to the port. The woodchips could have been taken to Down Road and put onto rail. CBH is also at that industrial area. It is located just a couple of hundred metres from the end of the railway line. CBH was looking to extend that rail line to its hub and make it another place where the grain trucks could store the grain at the Down Road industrial site before putting it onto the rail to send down to the port so that there would be no need for the \$175 million road that adds 10 kilometres to the trip for those trucks just to get them out of going through the roundabout. The trucks would not go to the top of the roundabout at Albany if they could just go to Down Road. I think what I am getting at here is that given it is in my own patch and that I will be down there a lot more soon, we really need to look at planning. I look at it from the point of view of what we need in Albany, but it also applies across the state. If I get the opportunity to represent a wider area of the state when we change the composition of the upper house, maybe I will be able to look more widely at the tier 3 rail line issues again, because more still needs to be done there.

It was pleasant to see that the federal government recognises that we need more infrastructure. Unfortunately, in its \$10 billion plan, it is road, rail and freight, which does not make sense because I thought that freight was on road and rail. I get what the federal government means, but I hope that we continue to consider the options for freight into the future and that we look at long-term planning involving the communities in the area so that we do not do long-term planning just for the best financial outcomes and the people who are developing them, but for the communities. If we have community buy-in, it lasts a long time—a lifetime—and it keeps people happy and voting as we would like them to vote because they can see that the government has their interests at heart. The more widespread that is, the more votes we will get. Keep the people happy and involved in the decisions and make long-term plans that benefit all of us.

ABORIGINAL CORPORATIONS AND CHARITABLE TRUSTS — GOVERNANCE

Statement

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [8.57 pm]: I will be brief. I was not going to speak tonight, but I just want to make a comment on what Hon Robin Chapple talked about tonight. This is an area that I have previously spoken to the Attorney General about on many occasions over about four years. I have had a meeting with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs virtually every six months on this issue. In fact, my first meeting on this issue was on my second day of Parliament with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the former Parliament. It is a topic that I am passionate about. The things that Hon Robin Chapple spoke about are common sense, and there are things that this government can do. I really hope that this government takes on this issue. This is an area that the government can get its teeth into and make the changes that will make things a lot better. Aboriginal trusts, in many cases, have been mismanaged for many, many years. When we look at the way the public responds to that and the way the media writes about it, we can see that it causes damage across the board in Aboriginal affairs, in the relationships between the greater population and Indigenous people, and in the stereotypes that come from those conversations, especially through the newspapers and television. This is something that the government needs to look at. It is costing Aboriginal people, this state, and the people of Western Australia and Australia billions of dollars. It is allowing less than honest people to get involved in that industry and make hay with the loopholes in the law when it comes to trusts. For instance, directors of a trust can actually advise their members to invest in companies that they happen to be directors of; that is one of the loopholes, and there are many others.

I have taken up this discussion with an honourable member from the Nationals WA who has been talking about this in the lower house, and I will continue to have discussions with those people even after I am no longer a member, and I know Robin will as well. I just want to plead with the government: please look into this, and please support the Attorney General and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs—who happens to be in this house—to really get into this and try to make the changes that are needed.

POLICE — LAURIE MORLEY — EX GRATIA PAYMENT

Statement

HON COLIN HOLT (South West) [9.00 pm]: In November last year, I asked a question in this house of the minister representing the Minister for Police about an application for an ex gratia payment for a retired police officer, Mr Laurie Morley. The response I got then was that the minister was waiting for advice from the State Solicitor's Office before the government could proceed with it. I made a member's statement on the issue the day after that, about the government pressuring the federal government to make a decision on the Collins-class submarine maintenance contract. The state government pursued an advertising campaign to say to the federal government, "Come on, make a decision because we're waiting for that decision." I used that to tie back to the case of retired police officer Laurie Morley, to say, "Here is the guy who is waiting for a decision from the government." Unlike the state government, he did not have the means to take out a full-page advertisement to say, "Please can you make a decision on my behalf?"

I followed that up with a question last week, again seeking some information about when Mr Laurie Morley can expect a decision from the government. I asked whether the state government had received advice from the State Solicitor's Office. The response from Hon Stephen Dawson, representing the Minister for Police, was —

Mr Morley's many years of service to the Western Australian community are acknowledged and appreciated. The Western Australia Police Force advises that the State Solicitor's Office has provided advice on this matter that cannot be disclosed as it is subject to legal professional privilege.

I have no problem with that. The answer continued —

A decision has not yet been made. Applications such as these are complex and require detailed review and thorough consideration to ensure that comprehensive advice is provided and to ensure that an informed and proper decision can be made.

That sounds like it has come straight out of the federal government's submarine maintenance playbook, and has been repeated by the state government in respect of Mr Morley.

I understand that this matter is complex and I also acknowledge and appreciate Mr Laurie Morley's service to our community, but at some point a decision has to be made. Do you know what? The complexity of this issue is not going to go away. At some point, the minister is going to have to put his head down, get some clarity and make a decision.

I know we have had a change of police minister. Frankly, I did not expect any different from the previous minister because we were coming up to an election. Now the election has come and gone, we have a new police minister who has an opportunity to make this right.

I know Mr Morley very well. He has ongoing medical issues. All he is asking is for the state to not only acknowledge and appreciate his service, but also give him an *ex gratia* payment that acknowledges and pays for some of the hurt he has suffered. He has been waiting now for two years. I really encourage the minister representing the Minister for Police in this place to take this up.

It is no surprise that there are a few members' statements from retiring members, because there is always unfinished business in this place. The one for me is Laurie Morley from Harvey, who is waiting and waiting. The response we get back from the police is that they want a redress scheme for police officers. This is not a redress scheme for police officers; we are asking for an *ex gratia* payment in recognition of the injuries Mr Morley sustained while dealing with criminal activity. I just ask the government again to get on with the job of seeking clarity, if that is what it needs, and make a decision on the application by retired police officer Mr Morley for an *ex gratia* payment. He and his family are waiting. They are trying to get on with their lives, but this would be so much more helpful.

I would love the WA Police Union to take out a full-page advertisement and say, "It's time to make a decision on Mr Morley's case." It is trying to work with the government, too. But should it really come to that? Should a private citizen have to go to that extent to get the government to make a decision?

I am pleading with the minister representing the Minister for Police in this place to go to the Minister for Police, who is a new minister. Here is his opportunity to start off with a great decision for one of their own—one of the people whom the government has acknowledged for his service over 40-odd years—and make things right.

I urge members, if they think there is any doubt about the pain Mr Morley has gone through, to google "Laurie Morley and WA Police Union" and watch the 40-odd minute presentation that he did at the WA Police Union's annual conference, because they will come back convinced that the government needs to make a decision on this matter.

House adjourned at 9.05 pm
