



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2023

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 28 November 2023

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 1.00 pm, acknowledged country and read prayers.

**VISITORS — HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN, MERVYN STREET,
CHARLENE DAVIS, LORRAINE MORRISON AND BARBARA PICKETT**

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [1.01 pm]: Members, I have some special guests to acknowledge. Firstly, I acknowledge Alannah MacTiernan, former member and minister in this house. Welcome, Alannah. On behalf of Minister Buti, I also welcome Mr Mervyn Street, his niece, Ms Charlene Davis, and Mr Street's legal advisers to the Speaker's gallery today. On behalf of the member for Murray–Wellington, I welcome Lorraine Morrison and Barbara Pickett to the Speaker's gallery today. Welcome to all of you on what is a really important day for this house.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER — PHOTOGRAPHER ACCESS

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [1.02 pm]: Members, I advise that I have approved media requests for photography and filming to take place from the press gallery during the first 10 minutes of the apology.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE — STOLEN WAGES — APOLOGY

Motion

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Premier) [1.02 pm]: I move —

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

I acknowledge that here in the Speaker's gallery today are Mr Mervyn Street, and Mr Peter Salmon and his brother, Alan. I take the opportunity to acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have joined us in the gallery today.

Today's apology follows the settlement of a class action led by Mr Mervyn Street on behalf of Aboriginal people across Western Australia. The class action started in 2020 and sought justice for people who, over a long period of time, were subject to discriminatory legislation. This legislation was supposed to protect Aboriginal people, but instead resulted in hardship and exploitation. The controls imposed on Aboriginal people impacted on where they were allowed to work, travel and live. It also impacted on how much money they were paid, how they were paid and how they received their wages and entitlements. Legislation of this kind, particularly in the earlier period of WA's colonial history, resulted in Aboriginal people working long hours without receiving any pay or an appropriate amount of pay. Instead, they were often paid through rations such as flour, sugar, tea and tobacco. The "book down" system, in which people bought necessities on credit at the station store, also meant that some people never saw the money they were meant to be paid. Although the laws changed over the period, many controls remained in place until 1972.

Aboriginal men, women and children worked hard and made enormous contributions to the economic development of this state. However, they received only a fraction of their worth. I am the leader of a party borne out of the union movement—a party that embraces fairness, justice and equality. The fact that this mistreatment existed for Aboriginal workers for decades is a blight on the legacy of successive governments. The fact that our laws facilitated these outcomes brings great shame. For that, we are sorry. These workers—men, women and children—worked under oppressive conditions. In many cases, there was the threat of violence. The impacts of these laws were felt across the state in a range of different work settings. The issues in this matter were complex. I acknowledge that each individual Aboriginal person's work history will have been unique. However, as a community, many of these experiences were common. During the hearings in the class action proceedings, stories were told of Aboriginal people living and working in harsh conditions. We heard about men working 14-hour days as stockmen and musterers on pastoral stations; women working as domestics, cooking, cleaning and caring for children in homes all over Western Australia; and, on missions, young people working long hours before and after school, including in laundries or on farms attached to the institution.

In 2006, the commonwealth Senate Standing Committees on Legal and Constitutional Affairs called on governments across Australia to pay adequate compensation for the hardships and injustices in the stolen wages period. In WA, the 2008 Stolen Wages Reparation Taskforce report looked in detail at the laws and policies that were established to control the welfare and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. It is clear that it has taken too long for the implications

of that report to be fully addressed. I also acknowledge that the 2012 reparation scheme was inadequate and excluded many workers who were impacted by these laws. I say to all Aboriginal workers that today, the government of WA recognises that those laws and policies were wrong. We acknowledge and apologise for the fact that those laws and policies caused great harm and disadvantage. An apology does not change what happened; it cannot. However, it recognises the importance an apology has as recognition, a move towards reconciliation and a step in a healing process.

In bringing a close to this shameful part of Western Australia's history, on behalf of the state of Western Australia, I apologise to the Aboriginal men, women and children who worked in Western Australia between 1936 and 1972, often for decades, for no pay or not enough pay. We acknowledge that many of these people have not lived to see this day. For their family members who remain, we are sorry for the hurt and loss that your loved ones suffered. Their strong shoulders carried the weight of their families and communities. Their strong hands built up this state's economy. Their strong minds and spirits pursued justice in the decades that followed, leading to this moment and the recognition they rightfully deserve.

To you all, we say sorry.

Members: Hear, hear!

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [1.08 pm]: I acknowledge all those Aboriginal people throughout Western Australia who were affected by the laws and policies we are speaking about today. I take a moment to recognise the strength and leadership of the lead applicant in the class action, Mr Mervyn Street, who I have had the great pleasure of meeting and talking with. He is in the chamber to bear witness to this apology. Mr Street is a Gooniyandi man and a traditional owner from the country around Fitzroy Crossing. Mr Street worked as a stockman on sheep and cattle stations and is a well-known and respected leader. In my meeting with Mr Street, he told me some of his story, including the hardships endured by his mother and his father, Mr John Cox. Some members may be familiar with his artwork, which has featured in many prominent galleries, including the collections at the National Gallery of Australia. I thank you, Mr Street, for being here today. I want also to acknowledge other Aboriginal people who have been involved in this fight to address a historical injustice. I thank them for helping to bring this matter to a resolution. I also acknowledge and welcome other class action members who are in the chamber today, including Mr Peter Salmon, who travelled from Carnarvon today. To all other class action members who may be listening, I pay my respects to you all.

We have just heard from the Premier, Hon Roger Cook, who gave a formal apology to those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Western Australia, who between 1936 and 1972 lived and worked under laws and policies that resulted in them receiving little or no pay. This violates a core value of the labour movement—a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. The policies and practices that saw Aboriginal people being exploited or, in true Australian language, "ripped off", must be seen in a broader context. The underpinning philosophy of those laws and policies was based on a settler Australian society view that Aboriginal people were not as worthy of equal rights as other Western Australians. Through much of this period, Aboriginal people were not allowed to vote. They did not have freedom to move from place to place. Their families were broken up through forced removal of children. They had to get permission from white authority about who they could marry, and they were granted citizenship rights on the condition that they would not speak their language or practice their culture. This was a shameful period of our history. It is not about guilt that we view this history; it is about doing the right thing as contemporary Western Australians who believe in a fair go for all. That is why our government has reached a settlement on this appalling and, up until now, unresolved chapter of our history.

The legacy of these laws and policies continues to affect Aboriginal people and communities today. This legacy has contributed to the gap in life outcomes between Aboriginal people and other Western Australians, causing broad social and economic harm, including intergenerational impacts on Aboriginal people, their families and communities. The Cook Labor government recognises that this gap marks a deep injustice and is committed to addressing it through the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. I also acknowledge that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are no longer here to witness the Premier's apology. Sadly, this moment has come too late for many.

The Premier highlighted some of the common experiences of the many Aboriginal men and women who provided evidence in this case. I want to give special mention and thanks to those Aboriginal men and women who gave evidence in the hearings back in June and July 2023, in Broome, Fitzroy Crossing, Beagle Bay, Bidyadanga and New Norcia. I acknowledge the courage and determination it took to give this evidence and the toll that reliving those experiences has taken on them and their families. I thank those people who shared their experiences, even when telling their stories would have been distressing. I acknowledge the great strength they had in telling their stories. I also want to acknowledge the sadness they may feel for relatives who are not still living to witness this apology.

In a society in which so much value is placed on economic aspirations and the drive to build a better life for oneself, it is important to acknowledge that for these First Nation workers, state laws and policies worked against those kinds of aspirations. Aboriginal people were unable to build wealth. They were unable to buy their own homes.

They were unable to pass accumulated wealth and capital down to their children. These laws and policies limited their potential for a dignified and prosperous life. Aboriginal people were denied the opportunity to create meaningful and comfortable lives and to create future opportunities for their own families. This settlement is an opportunity to acknowledge the valuable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made to our state, both past and present.

I hope this moment can create a foundation for moving forward together. I acknowledge the enormous contribution that Aboriginal people have made to the economic development of the state, which has never been properly recognised. My hope is that this historical settlement provides some measure of recompense and some measure of hope that the Western Australian government can continue to work together with Aboriginal people to listen to their experiences and to learn the lessons of the past.

Members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Just before I give the member for Kimberley the call, I did say at the start that we are allowing photography for the first 10 minutes. I am prepared to continue to allow that approved photography to continue for the duration of this motion.

MS D.G. D'ANNA (Kimberley — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.15 pm]: I rise today to add my voice to this important apology. This settlement agreement is an acknowledgement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who worked between 1936 and 1972 but were paid little or no wages. As the Premier and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs mentioned before me, these wages were not stolen by accident. The stolen wages were a result of legislation and policies inflicted onto Aboriginal people by governments of the day. In fact, many of those atrocious laws were agreed to right here where we are standing today.

The class action had been ongoing for many years, and I am very proud of Mr Mervyn Street, a Gooniyandi man from my electorate in the Kimberley, who was the lead in this charge. Both of Mr Street's parents worked on the same station for most of their lives, but they never earned a wage. Mr Street has been tirelessly working to have this past discrimination acknowledged, and I look forward to catching up with him again in Fitzroy Crossing soon.

In the Kimberley, a lot of Aboriginal people were displaced from their homelands and ended up living and working on cattle stations. Many Aboriginal men and women worked on these stations for little or no money. Even the Chief Protector of Aborigines, Mr Neville, linked the reality of what was happening on these stations to slavery. In 1925, he wrote that many Aboriginal workers in Western Australia existed under a system of semi-slavery.

The pastoral industry remains a part of the Kimberley's contemporary identity to this day, and the immense contributions of Aboriginal stockmen and women must be acknowledged and celebrated because the reality of the history of the state is that Aboriginal people have been the backbone of the cattle industry. Business and non-Indigenous people have gained financially off the slavery of Aboriginal people. Former chairman of the Kimberley Land Council, John Watson, described it this way; these are his words —

From the early days Aboriginal people were forced to work on the stations. All the stations came to depend on cheap Aboriginal labour. The Aboriginal people knew they were being exploited, but they didn't have any choice. Then during the 50s and 60s, Aboriginal stockmen started pushing for better wages. They didn't realise the drastic effect it would have on their lives.

Some very distressing stories about inhumane treatment and conditions for so many Aboriginal men and women have come out of this case. As distressing as they are for our people to hear, they need to be told because I do not think our country knows the extent of our history. The true history of this country and this state includes these atrocious stories of discrimination, cruelty and violence. Moments like these are important because we cannot heal from these deep wounds if we do not acknowledge what went on in this country. Financial compensation is one tool that the government has to acknowledge the injustices and suffering caused by past government policies. It does not correct what has happened, but it offers a way forward. The settlement agreement provides for an amount of up to \$165 million for up to 10 000 or more eligible claimants. This will be paid into a settlement fund. An additional fund of \$15.4 million has been set aside for some of the applicants' legal costs.

It is a significant step, but it is not just about financial compensation; it is about recognising and rectifying a grave historical wrong and is just the beginning of a path towards healing and reconciliation. As we navigate the significance of this decision, let us embrace truth-telling as a guiding principle. It beckons us to listen and understand and acknowledge the stories that have been obscured. In truth, we find the foundation for justice and reconciliation, a foundation laid by brave individuals like Mr Street who stepped forward to share their experiences. I also acknowledge Mr Salmon, Mr Newry from Kununurra and the many others who contributed to this case.

May the truth revealed through the stolen wages decision serve as a catalyst for a more compassionate and equitable future in which the power of storytelling fosters understanding, empathy and a collective commitment to justice. Let this be a beacon guiding us towards a future in which the resilience of our Indigenous communities are celebrated and their contributions to our state and nation honoured.

In closing, I also acknowledge this government for its apology, and I offer my sincere apology to all those who have been affected. I hope that the families who are hurting are feeling a sense of healing today, and let our journey towards truth and reconciliation be guided by the light of a shared understanding and mutual respect. Thank you for your leadership and your guidance. I am sorry, too.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [1.21 pm]: Most Australians, if not all, would agree with the expression “a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work”. Today, this house acknowledges a group of people who did not receive fair pay for their many days of work. Today, we acknowledge and apologise for the longstanding injustice experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Western Australia. Between 1936 and 1972, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders worked across our state by providing labour that was crucial to our state’s development, yet their compensation was woefully inadequate. As the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Nationals WA, I support the motion for a formal apology to those who were affected. This apology represents an acknowledgement of those past wrongs.

I acknowledge in the Speaker’s gallery the presence of Mr Mervyn Street, a Gooniyandi man and traditional owner, who I had the pleasure to briefly meet today. As the lead applicant in the stolen wages class action, Mr Street embodies the resilience of his people. His life story, marked by years of unpaid labour on various stations, is testament to his unwavering spirit. Despite these challenges, Mr Street has become a prominent figure in his community and is celebrated for his commitment to culture, art and advocacy. Through his art, Mr Street has pointedly captured the essence of his people’s struggles and triumphs, preserving the rich heritage of Indigenous culture. His leadership in art and cultural organisations highlights the importance of maintaining culture and the benefits of Indigenous people living in their traditional homes.

The announced settlement agreement amounting to \$180 million is a substantial acknowledgement of past injustice. Although the opposition was not privy to the discussions that arrived at this amount, it recognises this significant step towards acknowledging the suffering endured. I trust that this apology and the settlement will bring a sense of recognition and respect to those who were treated so poorly.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [1.23 pm]: I also start by acknowledging Mr Mervyn Street, who led the stolen wages class action, for his extraordinary efforts in this space on behalf of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this state. I rise to speak on this matter of great significance, one that speaks to our shared history, our commitment to justice and our responsibility to right past wrongs. Our nation’s history is marked by moments of triumph and progress, but it is also stained by instances of injustice and great shame. One such dark chapter is the systemic withholding of wages from Indigenous workers in Western Australia. These workers who toiled on stations and farms contributed to our state’s economy, yet they were unjustly denied their rightful earnings.

The 2019 stolen wages taskforce played a pivotal role in uncovering the truth. Comprising historians, legal experts and community representatives, the taskforce examined archives, oral histories and government records. Its tireless efforts revealed the extent of the injustice inflicted on our Indigenous communities. Through its work, we learnt that the exploitation of Aboriginal labour was not an isolated incident, but a systemic practice. The taskforce documented cases of wages being withheld, misappropriated or outright stolen. It traced the threads of this injustice across decades, connecting it to policies, institutions and discriminatory practices. The stories it unearthed are heartbreaking; its report laid bare the truth. It revealed that the wages of thousands of Aboriginal workers, often meagre to begin with, were systemically siphoned away. These workers faced not only economic exploitations, but also the erasure of their dignity and agency. Today, we acknowledge the pain, loss and resilience of those affected, and we are sorry.

The stolen wages reparation scheme recognises the need for restitution and seeks to address the economic injustices of generations of Indigenous Western Australians. It is a step towards acknowledging the profound impact that the withholding of wages has had on individuals, families and entire communities. We acknowledge the courage of those who came forward to share their stories, shedding light on a painful history that many would rather forget. It is our responsibility as a society to confront this truth, learn from it and ensure that such injustices are never repeated. In implementing this scheme, we are committed to ongoing dialogue with Indigenous communities to ensure that their perspectives are respected and unique needs are addressed. True reconciliation requires a collective effort. It requires us to confront uncomfortable truths, emphasise the experiences of others and actively work towards a society in which every individual is treated with dignity and fairness.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to all those who played a role in bringing the stolen wages reparation scheme to fruition. Formally, I would like to apologise to Mr Mervyn Street and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across this state. On behalf of the Liberal Party, we are sorry for the harm and disadvantage caused to the Aboriginal men and women across Western Australia who worked for no pay or not enough pay. This is a sorry chapter of our history and we sincerely apologise.

Question put and passed.

[Applause.]

BILLS*Assent*

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

1. Main Roads Amendment Bill 2023.
2. Mining Amendment Bill 2023.

**DUTIES AMENDMENT (OFF-THE-PLAN CONCESSION
AND FOREIGN PERSONS EXEMPTIONS) BILL 2023**

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

PAPERS TABLED

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

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE — INQUIRY INTO THE PUBLIC TRUSTEE'S
ADMINISTRATION OF TRUSTS AND DECEASED ESTATES
EDUCATION
HEALTH — MANAGEMENT**

Removal of Order — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [1.31 pm]: I inform members that in accordance with standing order 144A, private members' business orders of the day 1, "Referral to the Public Accounts Committee"; 2, "Western Australia's Education System"; and 3, "Management of the Health System in Western Australia", have not been debated for more than 12 calendar months and have been removed from the notice paper.

COUNCIL MESSAGES — CONSIDERATION ON DAY OF RECEIPT*Standing Orders Suspension — Notice of Motion*

Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —
That for the remainder of this year so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — TEMPORARY ORDER — SITTING HOURS*Notice of Motion*

Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —
That the following temporary order applies for 2024 —

- (1) The house will meet on Tuesdays at 1.00 pm.
- (2) If the house is required to sit beyond 7.00 pm on a Tuesday evening, such as to require a dinner break, the Speaker will advise the house of this before question time on that Tuesday.
- (3) Standing orders are suspended accordingly to the extent necessary to effect these arrangements.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — TEMPORARY ORDER — DIVISIONS*Notice of Motion*

Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —
That, until the end of 2024, the following temporary order in relation to divisions applies —

- (1) Standing order 137 be amended in suborder (2) by deleting "will not leave the House and".
- (2) Standing order 139 be replaced by the following —

Procedure for division

139. When a division has been called for —

- (1) Strangers will withdraw from the Chamber.
- (2) The Speaker will state the question and direct members to exit the chamber and re-enter through the door behind the Speaker's Chair.
- (3) The Speaker will direct the "Ayes" to pass to the right of the Chair and be marked off as they pass by a Clerk at the Clerks' Table and the "Noes" to pass to the left of the Chair and be marked off as they pass by a Clerk at the Clerks' Table.

- (4) The Speaker will appoint at least one Teller for each side.
 - (5) The Speaker will order the division bells to be rung for two minutes.
 - (6) After passing the Clerks' Table members will either resume their seat or leave the Chamber.
 - (7) After the two minutes have expired, voting will continue until either the Tellers agree and advise the Speaker that all members present have voted, or until a period of one minute has elapsed from the last member to record a vote.
 - (8) After counting the votes the Tellers will sign their respective lists, and the Speaker will declare the result of the division.
- (3) Standing orders 138, 140 and 141, in relation to divisions, remain unchanged.
 - (4) Standing orders are suspended accordingly to the extent necessary to effect these arrangements.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — TEMPORARY ORDER — E-PETITIONS

Notice of Motion

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

- (1) That the recommendation of the fifth report of the Procedure and Privileges Committee, *Electronic petitions*, that the Assembly adopt a new temporary order regarding e-petitions, be agreed to for a trial period as follows —
 - (a) the trial shall commence on Tuesday, 13 February 2024;
 - (b) any posted period for an e-petition must not extend beyond Sunday, 11 August 2024;
 - (c) the last date for presentation of an e-petition by a facilitating member shall be Thursday, 15 August 2024; and
 - (d) the trial period, and the temporary order, shall expire on Friday, 16 August 2024.
- (2) That the Procedure and Privileges Committee be requested to review the operation of the temporary order upon conclusion of the trial period.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — TEMPORARY ORDER — MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Notice of Motion

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

That, as a trial until the end of 2024, the following temporary order in relation to members' statements applies —

- (1) Standing order 147 be replaced by the following —
 - Members' statements**
 - 147.** Once in each sitting week, at a time decided by the Speaker, the Speaker will call for statements by Members, and up to eight Members, other than a Minister, may make a statement not exceeding two minutes each.
- (2) Standing order 101 is amended in "Members' statements" by deleting "90 seconds" and substituting "2 minutes"; and by deleting "Maximum of 6 members" and substituting "Maximum of 8 members".
- (3) Standing orders are suspended accordingly to the extent necessary to effect these arrangements.

BILLS

Notice of Motion to Introduce

1. Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2023.

Notice of motion given by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)** on behalf of Mr J.N. Carey (Minister for Housing).

2. Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.

3. Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Safety Levies Amendment Bill 2023.

Notices of motion given by **Mr W.J. Johnston (Minister for Mines and Petroleum)**.

4. Casino (Burswood Island) Agreement Amendment Bill 2023.

Notice of motion given by **Mr R.R. Whitby (Minister for Racing and Gaming)**.

SCHOOLS — STAFF — GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE*Notice of Motion*

Mr P.J. Rundle (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That this house condemns the WA Labor government for its failure to alleviate teacher shortages and provide a safe and supportive workplace for school staff

COMMUNITY SAFETY — FRONTLINE WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS*Notice of Motion*

Mr R.S. Love (Leader of the Opposition) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That this house applauds our frontline workers and volunteers who work hard to keep Western Australians safe and notes that the Western Australian Labor government is failing in its promise to do so, instead continuing to disregard the concerns of frontline personnel.

BUSHFIRE — MARIGINIUP*Statement by Premier*

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Premier) [1.38 pm]: I rise to update the house on the Mariginiup fire, which has devastated and deeply impacted on the community of Wanneroo and surrounds. On 22 November, a devastating fire broke out in the pine plantation national park in Mariginiup, quickly transforming into an out-of-control major bushfire. The conditions faced by our firefighters were unimaginable, with intense heat and winds fuelling a fire that moved unpredictably and grew rapidly. Sadly, it has been confirmed that 18 homes and 37 sheds have been destroyed, with additional structures suffering damage, including electricity and water infrastructure. Although the fire is now contained and controlled, the site remains dangerous. Approximately 2 000 hectares have been scorched, with a 64-kilometre perimeter under continued management. Restoration efforts across the fire site are underway, with service outages being addressed.

Joint commonwealth–state disaster funding recovery arrangements have been activated to provide affected individuals, families, primary producers and small businesses with emergency assistance. The Centre for National Resilience in Bullsbrook has also been opened for the first time to house those who have been displaced by the fire. Acknowledging that the affected individuals will endure an incredibly challenging time ahead, residents whose houses were destroyed or damaged are able to receive Premier’s relief payments of up to \$4 000, providing immediate financial assistance to pay for food, clothing, personal effects, transport and emergency accommodation. For those who have lost homes, the emotional toll is profound and our hearts and thoughts go out to them.

All Western Australians must stand together, supporting those affected by this event and honouring the bravery of those who will be leaving their families this year to protect life and property. More than 1 000 people came together to respond to, support and manage this incident. On behalf of the state government, thank you to everyone who was involved in responding to this event. To the emergency services personnel and firefighters, both staff and volunteers, thank you. To the staff across government agencies in the Department of Communities, the Western Australia Police Force and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions who coordinated the response both on and off the ground, thank you. To the Cities of Wanneroo and Swan, and the countless volunteers, businesses and community organisations, your support is immeasurable. The tireless efforts of these individuals deserve our utmost gratitude and admiration.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services has advised us that we are in for a long, hot and dry summer, so please ensure that you have your bushfire plan in place to keep you and your family safe.

TRADE MISSION — CHINA*Statement by Premier*

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Premier) [1.41 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the Western Australian government’s recent trade mission to China, my first mission to China as Premier, which took place from 20 to 23 October 2023. Western Australia’s mutually beneficial relationship with China is incredibly important to growth and prosperity for both regions. Western Australia accounted for 52 per cent of Australia’s total traded goods with China over the last financial year, trading \$158.1 billion in goods. As China is Western Australia’s largest trading partner, I was pleased to hold high-level meetings with Chinese government and industry leaders to promote positive outcomes between Western Australia and China, and explore new investment and trade opportunities.

Arriving in Chengdu, in China’s south-western Sichuan province, I met with Chinese government leaders, as well as representatives from the aviation and resources sectors, including Tianqi Lithium, which owns and operates the lithium hydroxide plant in Kwinana, along with the Greenbushes lithium mine in the south west with US miner Albemarle Corporation. The Western Australian relationship with Tianqi is integral to the future of energy transition and the future diversification of the WA economy. Home to more than 83 million people, south-western China has

become an increasingly important economic hub in recent years. The Sichuan province has long been considered the gateway to the region and my visit to Chengdu was the first by a Premier or minister of the Western Australian government, highlighting its importance to our future economic relationship.

In Shanghai, I held a round table with key stakeholders in the energy sector focused on attracting further investment in the development of WA's energy sector. Further meetings with the resources and aviation sectors were held to help raise the profile of WA in China, build further awareness of the state's strengths and capabilities, and deepen the bilateral relationship. This included a constructive meeting with China Eastern Airlines, and I am pleased to report that the WA government has secured a seasonal direct flight between Perth and Shanghai beginning on 20 January next year. Supported by our government, thousands of Chinese visitors are expected to travel nonstop to Western Australia on board China Eastern Airlines' special direct flights during the four-week period aligned with Chinese New Year celebrations early next year. This is an important first step in securing a long-term commitment for a direct aviation route with our biggest trading partner.

I now table an itinerary for the mission.

[See paper [2552](#).]

COERCIVE CONTROL — COMMISSIONER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME — REPORT

Statement by Attorney General

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [1.44 pm]: Today, on day four of the 16 Days in WA — Stop Violence Against Women campaign, I rise to inform the Parliament of the work that the government is doing to address one of the more insidious forms of family and domestic violence—coercive control. Coercive control describes how perpetrators exert power and dominance over victim-survivors by using patterns of abusive behaviour over time that create fear and deny liberty and autonomy.

Last year, I asked the Commissioner for Victims of Crime to lead a consultation process about potential legislative responses to coercive control in Western Australia to identify areas for reform and to inform the government's approach. The consultation found that urgent systemic and legislative reform is required now to improve the way that legal and support systems respond to coercive control. The report recommends a phased approach to legislative development and implementation, similar to the approach taken in Queensland.

The key reforms we will immediately introduce include, firstly, amending the Restraining Orders Act to better reflect the patterned nature of coercive control, its cumulative effect on victim-survivors and the range of relationships in which coercive control may exist; secondly, developing evidence-gathering tools to help victim-survivors document coercive control behaviours; thirdly, improving the application process for family violence restraining orders and changing the way we respond to breaches to better recognise the patterns of behaviour inherent in coercive control; fourthly, providing specific training on coercive control for police and justice professionals to enable them to identify behaviours and respond in a trauma-informed way; fifthly, improving information-sharing and risk-assessment tools to assist in the identification of patterns of coercive behaviour; and, sixthly, developing and delivering community education campaigns to increase awareness and understanding of coercive control, for which funding has already been announced.

The report advises that the immediate introduction of a new criminal offence without first implementing systemic reform, education and training would not be effective and could, in fact, lead to adverse impacts for victim-survivors. As such, we will undertake a phased approach to the criminalisation of coercive control, taking the necessary steps to ensure that our system is able to respond appropriately to criminalisation before legislating for it. I will work closely with the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence and the Minister for Police to implement the recommendations of the report, which I now table.

[See paper [2553](#).]

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (FINANCE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2023

Council's Amendments — Consideration in Detail

The following amendments made by the Council now considered —

No 1

Clause 61, Page 71, line 21 — To delete “Friday” and insert —
Thursday

No 2

Clause 78, Page 97, lines 1 to 6 — To delete the lines and insert —

- (j) in paragraph (c) delete “or deputy returning officer, who shall forthwith,” and insert:
for the whole of State electorate or returning officer for a district who must,

No 3

Clause 128, Page 244, after line 20 — To insert —

eligible SCA nominee, in relation to a political entity, means —

- (a) for an endorsed candidate — the political party that endorsed the candidate; or
 - (b) for a candidate included in a group — the group; or
 - (c) for an elected member —
 - (i) if the elected member is a member of a political party — the political party; or
 - (ii) if the member is a member of a group — the group;
- or
- (d) for an associated entity — a political party, or the party group of a political party, to which the associated entity relates;

No 4

Clause 128, Page 245, line 25 — To delete the line and insert —

Penalty for this subsection:

No 5

Clause 128, Page 245, after line 28 — To insert —

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply if —

- (a) a political entity (the *relevant political entity*) who or which is not a group, political party or third-party campaigner, does not have a State campaign account because the relevant political entity intends to make use of the State campaign account of another political entity; and
- (b) the other political entity is an eligible SCA nominee in relation to the relevant political entity; and
- (c) the other political entity consents to make payments for electoral expenditure on behalf of the relevant political entity out of the other political entity's State campaign account; and
- (d) the responsible person for the relevant political entity lodges a notice under section 175LN(1).

No 6

Clause 128, Page 246, lines 5 and 6 — To delete the lines and insert —

(a) that the political entity —

- (i) has a State campaign account; or
- (ii) intends to make use of the State campaign account of another political entity named in the notice that is an eligible SCA nominee in relation to the political entity and has given the consent mentioned in section 175LM(2)(c);

and

No 7

Clause 128, Page 246, line 12 — To delete “subsection (1)(b) or (c)” and insert —

this section

No 8

Clause 128, Page 246, lines 16 to 18 — To delete “stating the changes within the period of 5 business days after the day on which the change occurs.” and insert —

stating, within the period of 5 business days after the day on which the change occurs, details about the changes to the information, including —

- (a) if the change is that a new State campaign account is established — the information about that State campaign account mentioned in subsection (1)(b) and (c); and
- (b) if the change is that the political entity intends to make use of the State campaign account of another political entity — that the other political entity is an eligible SCA nominee in relation to the relevant political entity and has given the consent mentioned in section 175LM(2)(c).

No 9

Clause 180, Page 352, after line 11 — To insert —

- (2A) For the purposes of sections 175LM, 175LN and 175U(1) and this section, the first participation day of a person who is, on commencement day, an elected member is the day on which the elected member was nominated for election at the most recent election for which they were a candidate.

No 10

Clause 180, Page 352, after line 31 — To insert —

- (aa) the responsible person for the political entity complies with section 175LM(2) by the end of the period of 5 business days after commencement day; or

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I move —

That amendment 1 made by the Council be agreed to.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Could the minister walk through why this was amended in the other chamber and give us some context on what the amendment achieves? After the discussion that we had here and, I gather, in the Legislative Council, I understand that it will change the day to provide more time for how-to-vote cards. Perhaps the minister could give some background about how this came about and why. We raised a number of concerns in this chamber about how-to-vote cards, particularly around the timing of being able to get the sign-off for them and then get them processed appropriately. I am curious what conversations were had in the Legislative Council after the discussion in this chamber for it to have come back again.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The amendment came about because after debate in the Legislative Council the date was brought forward by one day to doubly ensure, as a safety net, that all the how-to-vote cards would be approved in time for all the parties to get them out immediately.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: So that it is very clear in this house, can the minister run through what the process will be from the close of nominations on Thursday in terms of approvals and how it will work from the Electoral Commission's perspective?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: On Thursday, the nominations will close. On Thursday afternoon, the ballot will be held and how-to-vote cards can then be lodged on Friday, a business day, rather than on the weekend.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I gather from that that there will be a turnaround of a day and on that Friday how-to-vote cards will be approved by the Electoral Commission so that we can get them in the post and on their merry way to wherever they need to be before pre-poll commences. The concerns raised by the opposition were about the time it would take, given there are likely to be a number of how-to-vote cards submitted. We would then have a quick turnaround time to have them printed then get them to whatever courier or Australia Post to reach the furthest corners of Western Australia so that when pre-poll opens, we have approved how-to-vote cards sitting with those polling booths. Is that the guarantee being given? Is it that there will be a turnaround within a day so that we can do that on the Friday and get them on the road?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Sitting at the ministerial table, I never hand out guarantees. That is, however, the clear ambition and it will be 10 days before the opening of pre-poll. We are putting in this extra day in the hope that it will all be cleared on that day. That is the ambition and it will be 10 days before pre-polling.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I move —

That amendment 2 made by the Council be agreed to.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have some of the notes that were provided. I thank the minister for the briefing provided yesterday. It was brief and appreciated. Perhaps the minister, for the sake of the record, could explain what we are doing here and why this amendment was required to come about?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Certainly. At proposed section 78(2)(c) we will remove the reference to “deputy returning officer”. References to a deputy returning officer were removed elsewhere in the legislation, but this one was omitted. The concept of a deputy returning officer has been replaced with a reference to the returning officer for each district.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I thank the minister; that is in the note in front of me. It is obviously an oversight in drafting.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That might have been picked up if the bill had gone to the Standing Committee on Legislation. I see that the committee has had one of the most innocuous bills referred to it. Innocuous—is that the right word?

Ms L. Mettam: I think so in this case.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is not controversial is what I was looking for, minister.

This is the only error or oversight that we are dealing with in this suite, because, as I understand it, the remainder of amendments have come about as actual changes as the bill has continued to be considered. This was in essence an oversight that potentially could have been picked up had there been slightly more consultation and perhaps a referral to the legislation committee.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I move —

That amendment 3 made by the Council be agreed to.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Perhaps the minister could explain, for the purposes of this chamber and for the record, what this amendment does. It was explained that it clarified some matters around state campaign accounts, but from my recollection, and I had a look at *Hansard* from when we had this discussion, it was very clear to me after we had this debate that there was going to be a requirement for state campaign accounts for every candidate and political party. I will let the minister explain how this has come about, then perhaps I will ask some questions. We spent a fair bit of time on this one in the Legislative Assembly, but it has come back slightly different with some additions as result of discussions in the Legislative Council.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes, my recollection of the discussion in the chamber was that the party could run a state campaign account. This amendment will make it clearer that that is the situation: a candidate can nominate the state campaign account of the party that has endorsed them. The purpose of the amendment is to provide greater clarity and flexibility in relation to the state campaign accounts and operational matters. They would allow for candidates, elected members and associated entities to rely on the state campaign account established by their relevant political party or group, rather than having to create their own for the purpose of electoral expenditure. A new defined term, “eligible SCA nominee”, is created to clearly set out the relationship required to nominate.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 6664.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES POLICY

894. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

Before I ask my question, I acknowledge the people who have lost their homes—18 homes have been lost—and the significant damage that has occurred across the Cities of Wanneroo and Swan. I also acknowledge and thank the many firefighters and community services who have been involved in protecting and supporting families and individuals at this time.

I refer to the strained wage negotiations between this government and sections of the public sector that have now evolved into calls for the government's blanket policy to be scrapped and has forced nurses and police to consider running for Parliament to be heard. Why has the government managed to find a solution for Department of Fire and Emergency Services technicians, but it has refused to find solutions for frontline services such as nurses and police? Perhaps they could be reclassified as the government supposedly did with the DFES technicians.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question and echo his sentiments that were similar to mine in my brief ministerial statement thanking everyone part of the efforts to resolve the issues around the Mariginiup bushfire emergency.

In a word it is called “negotiation”, member. It is not something that you in government were known for when it came to the wages and conditions of workers. Over 90 per cent of public sector workers are now covered under the arrangements associated with our public sector wages policy, and we are very proud and pleased with the progress that we have made around these things. The key issues that our friends at the Australian Nursing Federation were looking for included a wages outcome, which we have provided to it, including a \$3 000 cost-of-living allowance and the nurse-to-patient ratios that we have committed to as well. I know that the Australian Nursing Federation believes that more should be on the table in relation to that, but we have come substantially towards its position, and continue to negotiate and discuss in good faith in relation to that. But we have our public sector wages policy, and over 90 per cent of workers are now covered under that. We have one agreement to go. I am not quite sure why the member believes that represents a process that is strained or has come to a halt when there is 90 per cent coverage and only one agreement to go.

We continue to talk with our public sector unions and their members about what the future looks like for the next round of agreements. I addressed a town hall meeting of well over 500 workers, just a few weeks ago now, to talk to them about their needs as public sector workers and their cost of living and how we can work together in the next round of negotiations. Just yesterday, I met with and addressed a meeting of the WA Police Union with the

Minister for Police. We are working through all these issues. Quite frankly, I am not quite sure why the member believes that this is a situation that he would draw to our attention, because it allows to us reflect on the fact that, yes, we had a wages policy. It was tough. It was called budget repair. It was about fixing up the mess that the previous government left us—the ruinous state of our state finances because of you. The fact of matter is that we needed to do budget repair, and part of the costs for government is wages; therefore, that had to be part of the equation and the toolbox that we used to remedy the situation. We will continue to make sure that we work with workers and negotiate with them. That is what we do. We negotiate as part of a strong relationship to make sure that we produce a great outcome.

The nurses' federation has said that it is interested in running candidates at the next election. So be it. That is its right. It is the right of everyone to put themselves up for election. I am not concerned about that. I embrace democracy. I look forward to the contest of ideas. I think the Leader of the Opposition is the one who should be more concerned about them running a candidate.

PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES POLICY

895. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Does the Premier concede that it is this government's inability to listen to police and nurses that has led to this extraordinary situation of them running for Parliament?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

We actually settled with the police. We have an agreement with them. That was done through listening and talking and responding and negotiating and reaching an outcome. That is what we do. We are very proud of our record to date of making sure that we can provide appropriate wages growth, particularly for the lower paid workers in our public sector. When we applied our \$1 000 limit associated with the first round, it elevated some of the lower paid public sector workers by significantly more in percentage terms. That was a very good outcome.

Another thing we have been able to do is that, as a result of looking after the state's finance, we are now in a position to invest more, which means we can address the cost-of-living pressures that we see evident right across the community. That includes the second tranche of our \$400 household electricity credit. That is such an important opportunity to provide cost-of-living relief to not only public sector workers but all workers and all households. We are able to do that because, firstly, we are committed to a fair and balanced society that recognises when people are doing it tough and reaches back and brings them with us; and, secondly, we protected the state's finances, having fixed them after you and your Liberal Party friends destroyed the state's finances, and we are now in a position to help people who are doing it tough.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — PREVENTION

896. Ms C.M. TONKIN to the Premier:

I refer to the state's ongoing efforts to reverse the cycle of family and domestic violence in Western Australia.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house how the government has collaborated with the Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce to develop a package of important targeted investments?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house how these investments will support victim-survivors and help prevent abuse before it happens?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Churchlands for the very good question. Let me publicly acknowledge the member's commitment around the issues of family and domestic violence. Before I respond to the question, I acknowledge the lives lost and the lives impacted by family and domestic violence in WA.

On Saturday, the annual 16 Days in WA — Stop Violence Against Women campaign began. This is the seventh iteration of this campaign and an important opportunity to remind everyone about the devastating impact of family and domestic violence. We have these campaigns because family and domestic violence continues to cast a shadow over our Western Australian community. Until it is stopped and there is a broader understanding of the insidious forms of abuse, we are the poorer for it. As Premier, I am determined to lead a government that plays its part in reversing this pattern of violence, and I am resolved to continuing to build the community's understanding. We owe it to the victims, we owe it to the survivors and we owe it to society as a whole to continue on this mission.

This Labor government has taken this issue seriously from the start. Over the past six years, we have invested more than \$300 million into vitally important programs and infrastructure to address family and domestic violence—from building FDV one-stop hubs to critical legislative reforms that support victim-survivors and hold perpetrators to account. We also committed to stronger laws around GPS monitoring of family violence perpetrators. The first tranche of these reforms is expected to be introduced into Parliament this week.

Recently, in the wake of some horrific FDV tragedies, Minister Winton, a number of cabinet members and I attended a family and domestic violence forum. It was convened by the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing. A key request from attendees was to establish a family and domestic violence taskforce. We have since put that taskforce in place. Today I can give members an update on the input in the form of new funding.

Today I attended the Seven West Media family and domestic violence breakfast at Burswood with the minister, a number of other ministers and the member for Vasse. This morning I updated the community on this. I announced an investment of \$72.6 million to stamp out family and domestic violence. This will be split into two streams: family programs that support victim-survivors; and funding to help stop abuse before it happens. We will invest \$22.6 million into the Stirling Women's Centre—a crisis accommodation centre for those escaping violence at home. We will launch a two-year public education campaign to challenge outdated and dangerous views, including the insidious threat of coercive control, more education in our schools and online. It includes expanding the Respectful Relationships program, which is a program vehemently opposed by members of the Liberal Party. Funds will also go towards grants, expanding perpetrator programs and enhancing the Safe at Home program. I want to thank the FDV taskforce for its ongoing work and input so far. I understand its work will wrap up around April next year.

Although there is much to do, there has been progress. We are at a time when there has never been more reporting of domestic violence to our police, there has never been more information about the shape and form of domestic violence and there has never been more community consensus about the fact that it is never okay. Yes, FDV remains an ominous cloud that looms over an otherwise prosperous state, but with continued investment and attention from the bright minds in this state, together we can stop the cycle of abuse.

COERCIVE CONTROL — LEGISLATION

897. Ms L. METTAM to the Attorney General:

I refer to the Attorney General's brief ministerial statement today regarding legislative responses to coercive control in Western Australia.

- (1) Given that the report states that urgent systemic and legislative reform is required to respond to coercive control, why has it taken 18 months since consultation closed for the report findings to be released?
- (2) How long will it take for the appropriate systemic reforms and education and training to be put in place to enable the legislation to be introduced?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

- (1)–(2) Cabinet has accepted the report of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime on coercive control. It is a new area to the law in Western Australia. It will take some time to socialise the legal profession, the police and other justice people to the pattern of behaviour of coercive control because if we look from outside a relationship, any particular act might be innocuous, as pointed out in the report. A man who catches a train to work every day might take the car one day, and it looks innocuous. If he heard the night before that his wife was planning an outing with her friends from whom he was trying to isolate her, we can see that that becomes another circumstance of coercive control.

I have cabinet's permission to move to draft legislative reforms in the restraining order area to identify coercive control as one of those areas upon which the court can find domestic violence and issue a restraining order. Over time, I think the community and the courts will become educated in coercive control and how to best deal with it in a court setting.

COERCIVE CONTROL — LEGISLATION

898. Ms L. METTAM to the Attorney General:

I have a supplementary question. When can we expect to see this proposed legislation introduced?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

It will be given high priority. A number of pieces of big legislation are being drafted at the moment but that will be interrupted to give this legislation high priority —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Deputy Premier. The Attorney has the call.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Community Services, you, too. The Attorney has the call.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I give this Parliament and the community of Western Australia my undertaking that this will be dealt with as a priority in terms of getting the instructions to the drafters.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Ministers, I am trying to give a member the call for the next question.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: You could be the first minister ejected in this term, Minister for Community Services. You do not interject on the Speaker.

METRONET — ARMADALE RAIL LINE — SHUTDOWN

899. Mr H.T. JONES to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record investment in public transport infrastructure, which is creating local jobs and supporting local businesses.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the progress of this government's transformation of the Armadale line, the biggest in its 130-year history?
- (2) Can the minister outline what this means for the communities that live along the Armadale line?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Darling Range for the question. Last Sunday night, as Coldplay finished its last song, the Metronet team was out getting ready for the biggest transformation of the Armadale train line in its history. A few hours after we closed that rail line, we started removing the boom gates. I acknowledge all the work being undertaken by the workers across the entire area—from Victoria Park, Cannington, Beckenham, Armadale, Byford and through to Thornlie. The workers have been working through this extreme heat to progress the Armadale line transformation. The boom gates that have been removed were at Oats Street, gone; Welshpool Road, boom gates gone; Hamilton Street, Wharf Street, William Street, Armadale Road, Forrest Road and Church Avenue. All those boom gates have been removed. We started the demolition of the stations. In fact, Carlisle station has now been removed. Cannington is now a pile of rubble, member for Cannington.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The station.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The station is a pile of rubble.

This work will make way for a brand new set of stations. It will mean no more boom gates in those areas and of course reduced congestion and a better public transport experience.

Member for Darling Range, we were out there in Armadale, and through to Byford. We have already seen the work that has been done on the Thomas Road rail line overpass. Unfortunately, the member for Armadale could not do much work with his injury, but he came out and we looked at the boom gate removal from Church Avenue. People were surprised that we were removing the boom gates from Armadale Road, which is a major congestion point.

Touch wood, as I always say, what we have seen with the Western Australian public is patience but also people getting on with it. We have seen incredible results across the network. We were estimating that 55 per cent of those using the Armadale train service would move on to our bus replacements. That has now moved to 76 per cent. We estimated 55 per cent and we are getting 76 per cent on our public transport replacement services. Importantly, also in relation to traffic, we were estimating 17 per cent extra vehicles on the roads. Last week, I am happy to report that the number of extra vehicles ranged from four per cent to 11 per cent in the morning peak, less than we forecast. Member for Bunbury, we also took that journey on the last *Australind* train before it was replaced with a new locally manufactured train.

I thank the Western Australian community for its patience and for being excited about the future of that corridor. The feedback that I get is that people understand that although it may take a little longer, they know the transformation that is coming. I also thank the workers out there. As I said, when we closed that rail line, I wanted to see activity the next day, and we definitely have. People in the member for Darling Range's electorate have already seen a lot of activity through Darling Range. Very soon we will start seeing new rail lines, the new viaduct structure in place and also the construction of new stations, in particular, Byford train station, a station that this Labor government is proud to be delivering.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK

900. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the south coast marine park, a process that is not only dangerously lacking in consultation but also relying upon the advice of the United States-based lobby group Pew Charitable Trusts as opposed to science-based information.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Noting that the trust purports to speak on behalf of 27 environmental lobby groups, I ask the following.

- (1) Did it design the map for the park or was it determined through community consultation?
- (2) Has the minister presented the advice or plans from Pew Charitable Trusts to his counterpart in this project, the Minister for Fisheries?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

- (1)–(2) Thank you, Speaker. I know the member for Roe is a lot of things; I did not know he was a comedian as well. Seriously, that question is a load—I have used the phrase before—of pure, unadulterated malarkey, and I am about to tell the member why. The member for Roe is nodding away, which is great because this is good information. Today they tried to rev the member up; they gave him some angry pills and wheeled him in. He is still grinning, which I love—I love that about him! I am delivering a wonderful outcome for the member in his community. There has never been a consultation process more exhaustive than this—more inclusive, more involving of local community groups from right across the landscape down there. We have had six community reference committee meetings over a period of 18 months. We have had consultation. Every licensed fisher was contacted and asked to give their view. Not all the fishers involved wanted to avail themselves of that service, but 31 did. We met them wherever they wanted to meet, whether it was Albany, Hopetoun, Esperance or Perth. We have 10 different sectoral advisory groups representing recreational fishers, commercial fishers, conservation interests and community interests. The extent of consultation continues to this day. The member for Roe is making assertions about the process. It is not over yet. The member has not seen the information going to the public on which we will invite public comment. Indeed, people who have already contributed to the process will get a second go and be able to make their views known.

I will just follow up on this issue about Pew. The member for Roe seems to have an issue with an organisation that has its origin somewhere else, as if it is some dark, mysterious, evil empire or organisation undermining our very way of life.

Mr P.J. Rundle: It started in May 2020.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Member, this is good stuff. You should wait to hear it!

I wonder what the member thinks of the Salvation Army, the Red Cross or the RSPCA. Will he ever put any trust in these organisations that have their origin overseas? They must be evil; they must be un-Australian! Pew is an organisation that has its origin, its genesis, overseas. It has Australian members, Australian management, making Australian decisions, consulting with the community, in the same way that we have an RSPCA, a Red Cross and all sorts of organisations that might have had their origin overseas that have a valuable contribution to make in Western Australia. Pew is one group. As I said, there are 10 different sectoral advisory groups, all with a chair, that all go out to their various sectors to consult and make a contribution to the process.

I say again that this is the most thorough and extensive consultation and it goes above and beyond statutory requirements. Already, we have had input that has seen some of the sanctuary areas come back. I point to the removal of 118 000 hectares, or 147 kilometres of coast, that has been taken out of the sanctuary zones on the basis of feedback and consultation. Five proposed sanctuary zones have been removed entirely, 11 have been amended significantly and another nine have also been altered. We are open and are hearing input from all sectors.

I have to say this: not one group deserves to have 100 per cent of its desires met. This is a grown-up process. This is about reaching a consensus and striking the right balance. We will listen to all people with a view, as we have commercial fishers or people with an environmental or conservation interest, and we will make the right decision. We will consult. We will continue to consult and there will be opportunity for public comment. I am extending that commentary period from three months to four months, again, beyond statutory requirements, because we are going the extra length.

This is an incredible part of the world. Scientists are still discovering species almost annually down there. It is such a special part of our state. The member for Roe should be leading the push to have it preserved and protected for the community for all time.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK

901. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Environment:

I have a supplementary question.

The SPEAKER: Supplementary question—hopefully it can be heard in silence.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Minister, this is one of the most woeful consultations —

The SPEAKER: Sorry, not an introduction, just a question please.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can I take it from those comments that the minister is very comfortable that the United States-based Pew Charitable Trusts is leading this process ahead of local community consultation?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

What the member for Roe is saying is a complete and utter fallacy. Pew is not leading anything. It is part of a process just like recreational and commercial fishers. It has no more or less say than anyone else with a seat at the table. The member's opportunity here is to get on the right side of history and support this, not to undermine it and cause angst and uncertainty to good people in the community who earn their living from working in the sea. The member should be thinking about them because this nonsense argument and these falsehoods that he brings to this place almost daily are causing unnecessary anxiety. This is a good process. It is a proper process and we will get a good outcome.

SELECT COMMITTEE INTO CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — INTERIM REPORT

902. **Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the interim report of the Select Committee into Child Development Services, *Child development services in Western Australia: Valuing our children and their needs*, tabled in the Legislative Council today.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government continues to improve the delivery of paediatric and child health services in WA?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how the government will respond to findings and recommendations in today's report?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Kingsley for her question and for her ongoing advocacy for child development services and their access to the community. The Child Development Service in Western Australia is unique in the country. There is no other publicly run service that does intake assessment and treatment in the public system, so it is a unique service. In fact, with our private sector partners, families move to Western Australia to access services, particularly those with kids with autism. I thank the committee for its very thorough consideration of this issue. The government supported the establishment of the inquiry, looking for very practical suggestions to a very complex issue. The interim report has delivered some very simple and practical findings and recommendations, so I thank the committee, and in particular Hon Dr Sally Talbot, for its work and commitment.

There is no question that demand for both public and private developmental services has exploded over the last few years. The report outlines that both public and private services are overwhelmed by demand. There are a number of reasons for that. In fact, referrals to paediatricians have increased by 123 per cent and referrals to clinical psychologists have increased by 114 per cent. The workforce has not grown in that time at that pace. Add to that an increase in the complexity of clients, more complex social factors and the requirement for multidisciplinary care from multiple highly skilled health practitioners to provide interventions for these children.

As outlined by the report, this is not a Western Australian challenge. It is not even just an Australian challenge; providing multidisciplinary interventions for these kids is a global challenge. However, I can reassure the community that the Child Development Service is a priority for both myself and the government. I am listening to parents, the Child and Adolescent Health Service and non-government organisations and will carefully consider the recommendations of the interim report.

I understand the challenges that families face when they have challenging circumstances and a child who needs assessment. We are working on what this will look like and how we can better meet those needs. I have to give great credit to the Child Development Service because it is implementing really innovative solutions in the meantime, including piloting a joint nurse–paediatrician medication review pathway so that children on medication through the CDS do not have to see a paediatrician every time they need a review. We are using nurse practitioners at the top of their scope to do those reviews and support those families. Of course, that also frees up space for that paediatrician.

We are piloting a combination of service planning and assessment appointments. It will create more efficient appointments for those families so that they do not have to take time off and come back many times. We have also opened some CDS sites on weekends. The reality is that families work and going to multiple appointments during work time is extremely onerous and challenging for families, so we are trialling Saturday appointments. In credit to those in the healthcare workforce, they have embraced that with open arms because they know it is making a difference to those families.

We are creating more flexibility in the way that we deliver services. We are transitioning to electronic referral processes, reducing administrative burden, and are moving to a hub-and-spoke model. The Murdoch and Midland hub-and-spoke sites are currently under development. That is where the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and mental health, behavioural and developmental experts will all be together in the same building so that families will get that genuine multidisciplinary approach, instead of having to go to different sites on different days to see different healthcare workers. We are putting the patients, children and their families at the very centre of those services. That is exactly the way that health care should be; it is about putting patients and families at the centre.

I also have to say that we are also seeing a significant number of private paediatricians ageing out and retiring. I get regular heartbreaking letters from families whose private paediatrician is retiring and not referring them onto other paediatricians. They are not being case-managed into another service. They are simply being dropped. The CDS stood up an entirely new service to support those families for ongoing medication management. It stood up an entirely new service, with a finite workforce that had to be drawn from other parts of the service, to fill the gap that paediatricians are leaving as they retire.

We do not get to close our books. The government service does not close its books and it does not get to reduce its hours or pick and choose its clients. A number of consultants will not see certain conditions and medication requirements. That is not the case for the state government. We see everyone, no matter where they live, their condition or their personal circumstances. That is the great strength of the Child Development Service.

We are very committed to providing ongoing support for the Child Development Service, expanding it and doing things better with what we have got. I thank the committee for its inquiry, particularly for its interim findings. We will examine them closely and seek to work better with CDS in the future.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK

903. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the draft consultation for the south coast marine park and accusations that the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions has mapped the reserve with little regard for local impact on community or industry—a point made by the minister’s own department.

- (1) Does the minister agree that the current plans for the south coast marine park, which are backed by a United States lobby group, are not in the community’s best interest?
- (2) Has he raised concern with the Minister for Environment directly, given his department’s comments that based on the draft zoning scheme, it will likely result in the loss of several south coast fisheries and impact the livelihoods of numerous fisheries?
- (3) Why has this consultation process been delayed by more than six months?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for his question. The member is a specialist in hearsay. He is a bit like a bottom feeder, crawling around trying to find some piece of information to use in a very sad way. All I have heard from the opposition has been fearmongering designed to cause anxiety and upset. At the end of the day, I cannot help but be cynical and think that this is not about the fishers, but is all about votes. It is trying to grab votes in cheap, nasty and divisive way.

The Minister for Environment has outlined the process. I have yet to receive the information that requires my concurrence or otherwise to take the process forward. When that process comes to me and moves on, there will be a four-month consultation period in which I expect everyone with an interest—conservationists, fishers, recreational fishers and community members—to have a good look and decide what they think fits and does not fit with their community.

I draw the member back to his earlier comments and I certainly thank him for enlightening me about the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I know that the members opposite are very quick to note the work of the Marine Stewardship Council and take its advice on sustainability. Where is the Marine Stewardship Council based? It is in the United Kingdom.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: When the member wants to come in here and talk seriously about fisheries, ask some sensible questions or take the offer of briefings on the sustainability of fisheries or whatever, I am more than open to having that conversation. However, he should not come in here with half-truths, hearsay and innuendo that are all designed to simply grab a headline and cause angst in a community that does not need to have angst. It will have its say.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK

904. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Fisheries:

I have a supplementary question. Given the comments from the minister's own department criticising some of these issues, does he accept some responsibility that this flawed consultation process has placed serious emotional pressures upon south coast families whose livelihoods may be impacted by targets set by foreign overseas lobby groups?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! I am waiting to give the minister the call.

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

I recall the Premier being asked this question a while back. He made it very clear that departments engage in debate with each other on so many issues. I engaged in debate when I was a CEO at the South West Development Commission. In fact, I remember engaging in debate with the Great Southern Development Commission that the member was a chair of! I am sure that he would not like some of those debates put out into the public realm well after the issue has been debated. The comments that the member is referring to were from very early in the process. He has put them out there with his colleagues and implied that that is the current state of play. This is an intricate process. Departments will have robust debates. I expect them to have good debates, but I expect them to work collaboratively and reach a conclusion. It will happen when the Minister for Environment receives advice from his department and it is conveyed to me to seek the advice of my department. That is how the government works, something that the member is clearly not capable of understanding.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

905. Dr K. STRATTON to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record \$2.6 billion investment in housing and homelessness services. Can the minister outline to the house how this record investment is supporting vulnerable Western Australians across our state to secure housing?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for Nedlands for her strong commitment to assisting the most vulnerable in Western Australia. We know that COVID has radically reshaped our housing markets and rental markets. Members have seen from our government a range of announcements by the Premier only recently with regard to rental relief and short-term rental reform, but we are continuing to deliver our social housing agenda. To date, despite the toughest construction market, we have delivered just over 1 700 social homes with more than 1 000 under contract or construction.

Another part of the story that gets less attention is our work in the homelessness sector. I am deeply proud of the sector's leadership and work and our partnership with it to assist the most vulnerable. I want to go through it because we are strongly committed to the Housing First Homelessness Initiative approach, which at its heart is about providing people with a roof and a home, but also the intensive wraparound support services to sustain their tenancy. Boorloo Bidee Mia has been an outstanding success that was launched by the previous Minister for Community Services. The former Murray Street hotel that we purchased I am pleased to say demonstrates thinking outside the box. Koort Boodja is now almost at capacity with 24 residents who had previously been rough sleeping now at that accommodation.

Our supported landlord model is part of the Housing First approach. We spot purchase a unit and then Housing Choices as the landlord provides the support to sustain the tenancy with Housing First wraparound services available. This goes from Perth and Peel to the Bunbury region. We started in January, and to date we have added 70 properties supporting 112 individuals who were sleeping rough at the beginning of the year. It is helping to change lives. Of course, we made a \$49 million commitment to extend that program at a slower pace because of some of the constraints in regional Western Australia.

As part of our community cabinet, I was yesterday out with the Stirling outreach team and Uniting WA and provided a grant of around \$180 000 to provide an outreach service five days a week in the northern suburbs. I give a shout-out to the leadership of the City of Stirling and the mayor who take a caring, kind and compassionate approach and are really endorsing this outreach program.

That is in contrast, I have to say, to what we are seeing in the Safe Night Space for Women service. I want to put this on the record once and for all about Safe Night Space. We have seen a vast range of excuses made by the City of Perth. First, it was about a lack of funding. We believe there is an expectation that a capital city council has a responsibility to fund that service. When it decided not to fund that service, the state stepped in and said, "Okay, you've made your decision. Despite every other capital city supporting services, you've made that decision so we will provide you the \$3.14 million over two years." Secondly, the City then said it is about the location and it is not warranted. I put on the public record that it was not the state that picked the location; it was the City of Perth. I want to put this on the public record because this is not politics here. I said this on 14 January 2022 —

I want to personally recognise the Perth Lord Mayor for championing this proposal and the council for supporting it — it's clearly working, and has assisted some women transition into housing.

That is what I said and I had a picture taken with the mayor outside Ruah headquarters. The councillors are now complaining about the location. They picked it; they determined it.

Thirdly, they are now saying that homelessness is not a responsibility of local government. Ask the City of Stirling, because I see the leadership at the City of Stirling standing up. The mayor said to me yesterday: “All tiers are responsible for this critical issue.” We sought to assist Ruah—we are, through the Office of Homelessness, working to find an alternative location. I want to put that on the record. I note this, and the media have not run this. At a council meeting on 28 February 2023 this year, the Perth city council endorsed this motion —

REQUESTS the CEO to investigate the feasibility of continuing this service or a version of this service at another location and present this report to elected members at an EMES in due course.

The council endorsed a motion, despite flagging of the closure, that it would report back on the feasibility of a different location. I have spoken to Ruah, and it has indicated to me that there has been no assistance and no advice from the City of Perth administration, and the minutes speak for themselves because there is no report back to council.

We have a last-minute chance. There is a last-minute chance for the City of Perth leadership at a moment in time. Put aside some of the Liberal activists like Councillor Fleeton who takes photos of homeless people in the city and posts them on Twitter; I will get to that at a different stage of political discourse and debate. But the political leadership of the council has a clear choice. There is a choice about continuing a service in the 16 Days in WA period for women, the majority of whom are fleeing domestic violence. We have stepped up. We have said that we will provide the funding now. What we ask is that the City of Perth provides that location, which it provided and selected previously, that was vacant at that time and help us to continue this service at this critical time in our state’s history.

METRONET — ADVERTISING

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

I refer to the taxpayer-funded advertising campaign for Metronet projects, and note this Metronet program of works originally promised to be delivered for under \$3 billion is now skyrocketing to probably more than \$11 billion with no end to the continual blowouts in sight.

- (1) How much is the minister spending on the advertising blitz to convince Western Australians that these billions of dollars’ worth of projects are being run responsibly?
- (2) Amid a cost-of-living crisis, is it appropriate that the state government throws these taxpayer funds at a navel-gazing campaign about these projects?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. I was hoping to get a question from the member for Moore, the Leader of the Opposition. He was out there on a trackless tram last week saying how he thinks the trackless tram can deliver for regional towns. Talk about worrying about overseas influences! Where did that trackless tram come from, member? He is worried about where an international environmental organisation came from, but where did this trackless tram that he loves so much come from? He loves this trackless tram. Where did it come from?

In relation to the Metronet issue, we are seeing the biggest transformation of the public transport system in the state’s history.

Mr R.S. Love: The question is how much are you wasting on the advertising campaign.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If the member wants detailed information, we have already provided that in the other place.

As we know with Metronet, a fair bit of disruption is happening. Of course, we have to inform people about the disruption. We shut the Armadale rail line. Does the member think we should not inform people about that? Does he think we should keep it a secret and not tell people about all the alternative services that we are providing? The member thinks we should have shut the Armadale rail line. We are building 5.5 kilometres of elevated rail, seven new stations and an extension to Byford. We know that the member does not support Metronet or essential services to suburbs like Byford, Ellenbrook and Yanchep. The member does not believe in public transport. When it comes to cost of living —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member asked the question; I will answer it.

Let us talk about cost of living. Who capped public transport fares at two zones? We did, saving the people of Dawesville about \$3 000 a year. There have been thousands of dollars in savings through our Metronet capped zone fare system. That is what we have done. We know that we have created some inconvenience for the people of Armadale and that entire corridor, so we have given them free public transport for six months. That is a pretty good cost-of-living initiative—free public transport for six months. Seventy-six per cent of passengers who were catching trains are now getting free travel on replacement buses. That is a pretty good cost-of-living initiative.

Let us go through the cost of travelling on public transport versus cars. The estimated cost of holding a vehicle is between \$15 000 and \$20 000 per annum; we are looking at depreciation, vehicle costs and maintenance. The more people we can get onto public transport, the better it will be for their budget. This is one of the best initiatives we could do to support people on low incomes, fixed incomes and across any income, because public transport is a much cheaper travel option than using a motor vehicle. That has been established time and again.

Yes, I am proud that the people of Byford will get a brand new station, capped fares and a new rail line from Byford to the city. I am so proud that people in the Ellenbrook corridor will get new train stations. I am so proud that people in Butler, Yanchep, Alkimos, Eglinton and Canning Vale will be getting brand new public transport options. Of course, our priority is to benefit the entire area. We are not only benefiting the people who use public transport; we know that not everyone can use public transport, such as tradies going to their jobs or going to other work sites, but the more people on public transport, the fewer people on roads. We are saving people time and money by reducing congestion on our roads.

Yes, we are informing the public. The opposition spent \$25 million on MAX light rail—a project it never actually ever built. We did not create hats for projects that we did not deliver! We did not create USB models for projects we have not delivered! I know it is really strange, but we are advertising real things—things that actually exist. We are advertising things that are happening in real life: the biggest transformation of public transport in this state's history, and the opposition cannot handle the fact that the people out there love it and support it all the time. You guys want things to fail! It is desperate.

Let us talk about cost of living for a second and regional capped airfares. We understand that people in regional WA do not have access to our capped public transport fares. That is why we created a 50 per cent fare discount for the *Australind* replacement; we halved the price of travel to Perth from Bunbury and all the towns along the *Australind* route. For those who rely on air travel, we introduced a two-zone capped fare for air travel for the first time in this state's history. We will provide more updates on how many people have used that service. As people have told me, this is the best initiative ever rolled out in Western Australia in relation to cost of living.

METRONET — ADVERTISING

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

I have a supplementary question. Apparently the minister does not know how much money has been expended on advertising. Does this explain why all her projects —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr R.S. LOVE: Does this lack of detail explain why all the minister's projects continually blow out in time and cost?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

Do members know why the previous government's public transport projects did not blow out? It did not build any! If you do not do anything, it is really easy to manage cost pressures! I do not know what bubble the Leader of the Opposition is living in; some sort of bubble of negativity. We have three leaders of the opposition: The Lord Mayor of Perth, the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Opposition. There are three leaders of the opposition at the moment. I know the opposition loves privatisation and contracting out, but I never thought it would contract out the position of Leader of the Opposition to another group down the road! It has taken privatisation and contracting out to the next level by contracting out the role of opposition leader to a council! Its obsession with privatisation and contracting out has no end; as we have seen, it has actually contracted out the role of Leader of the Opposition.

In case members opposite did not realise, there have been some significant challenges with building things across the nation. I am very proud of the work that is happening out there; I am very proud of the workers who are out there, in the heat and at night, delivering projects that will transform this state, including the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, the Albany ring-road or the Fitzroy River Bridge, which the opposition claimed we would not deliver on time. Members opposite should go out and apologise for all the scaremongering they did to all the freight operators and tourism operators in the entire north. That project cost a bit, but do members know what? We delivered it. We are delivering a massive program of building.

The member can go out there and oppose Metronet; go ahead. He can go and tell the people of Byford that they do not deserve a rail line. He can go and tell the people of Yanchep that they do not deserve a rail line. He can tell the people of Ellenbrook—the people he lied to, again and again—that they do not deserve a rail line.

16 DAYS IN WA CAMPAIGN

908. Ms M.J. HAMMAT to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's 16 Days in WA campaign to raise awareness of family and domestic violence. Can the minister advise the house how this government is providing targeted investment to address family and domestic violence; and can the minister outline to the house how this government's recent announcement of new initiatives will address the critical areas of education and primary prevention?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

Before I answer the member's question, I acknowledge the incredible work of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Department of Communities and so many voluntary organisations that have worked so hard to keep Wanneroo safe over the last week. Thank you very much. I would also like to acknowledge the member for Mirrabooka for her longstanding commitment to, and work on, addressing family and domestic violence. I know there are so many fabulous, hardworking organisations in her electorate that support victim survivors every single day.

Members, it is widely recognised that this government has strongly invested in addressing family and domestic violence since we were elected in 2017. In fact, there has been some \$300 million of investment across government since 2017 in the important areas of crisis support; holding perpetrators to account; primary intervention; and primary education, which is critical if we are going to break the cycle of family and domestic violence.

Today the Premier announced \$72.6 million in support packages and targeted measures in response to the taskforce that was established some months ago. We are making sure that we are listening. I remember when the Premier was first elected he said that he would be a listening Premier. That is exactly what we have done, particularly in the area of family and domestic violence. The taskforce has worked diligently in providing advice to government, and we have responded with today's announcement.

I particularly want to take this opportunity to highlight a significant part of the \$72.6 million investment, which is around primary prevention. We know that crisis support is critical but we also know that we need to do more to stop violence from occurring in the first place. To do that, we need to invest in primary prevention measures. It is about targeting the drivers of violence to enable the social and structural change that, over time, will create lasting results that will end family and domestic violence.

The Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing's summit on 31 August made three key asks in the area of prevention. It asked for the rollout of effective prevention projects statewide, the continuation of funding for Preventing Violence Together and the expansion of the respectful relationships program. Today's announcement by the Premier goes above and beyond the centre's primary prevention asks. Today's investment represents a fivefold increase on the current level of investment in primary prevention. This is not insignificant, members. There is \$5 million for a public education campaign about family and domestic violence, which will be the first state-based media education campaign for two decades, and \$6 million in grants for primary prevention, and this of course builds upon our work through \$3 million worth of election commitments that fund some 17 different primary prevention initiatives about which we have had excellent feedback. We are extending funding to Preventing Violence Together to provide professional oversight to these primary prevention initiatives. Preventing Violence Together is developing a primary prevention framework and convening a community of practice to support its work.

Importantly, the announcements by the Premier also include \$6 million for Aboriginal family safety grants and \$1.5 million to enhance and expand the respectful relationships program in schools. We know how important that is. We know how important education is if we are going to break the cycle. Dealing with the root cause of family and domestic violence is about changing the culture, and that takes time, but it starts with supporting our young people and letting them know that disrespectful relationships are not okay. The investment today by the Premier will go a long way to doing that.

As the Premier said, it is now day four of the seventh year of the 16 Days in WA campaign. It is a very impactful campaign that is raising awareness of family and domestic violence. It is raising awareness at kitchen tables, in our sporting clubs and right around our community, because we know that government alone cannot end family and domestic violence. In fact, that is why our theme this year is "Play your part". I am very proud that the Cook Labor government is playing its part.

I want to particularly acknowledge this morning's business breakfast hosted by Seven West Media. It was wonderful to see so many young people in the room. There were young people representing the Youth Parliament, the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council and the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia and, of course, high school students from Sevenoaks Senior College in the member for Cannington's electorate.

The answer to ending family and domestic violence is stopping it before it begins and the announcements today focus very strongly on that preventive work of primary education.

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

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENDERS — GPS MONITORING

909. Ms L. METTAM to the Attorney General:

I refer to the Attorney General's decision to strengthen family and domestic violence GPS monitoring requirements after the evaluation of the two-year tracking trial revealed that an average of 10 FDV offenders have GPS monitoring imposed on them each month.

- (1) With the number of family-related offences now 40 per cent above the five-year average, is this not a reflection that he has failed to tackle the scourge of family and domestic violence in WA?

(2) Has the final report of the trial been completed; and, if so, when will he table this document?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

(1)–(2) Yes, there has been an escalation of FDV numbers throughout Australia. I think there are two factors occurring here. One is that there has been an uptick in aggression in our community generally and there has certainly been an uptick in reporting since we have introduced new procedures—this was introduced by the Labor government—requiring all police to file an offence report for every attendance on an FDV complaint. As the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence has already answered in Parliament today, the government has put \$300 million into this campaign. We have also set aside money to educate the community on coercive control.

The member is talking about the bracelets and monitoring. They have been around for a while, but it was a Labor government that picked them up to use in this space. With the new laws that will mandate their affixation to people who have committed a family violence offence in breach of a restraining order and with those who have it affixed mandatorily, we estimate that up to 700 people per annum will be wearing these bracelets. We reject completely the member's nonsense proposition that the Labor government has not turned its attention to stemming family and domestic violence. We were the first government to appoint a minister in that regard.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENDERS — GPS MONITORING

910. Ms L. METTAM to the Attorney General:

I have a supplementary question. Why has the Attorney General dragged his feet, taking an entire sitting year to introduce this important legislation and table the report?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Do none of you have any confidence in the Attorney General being able to answer the question and you need to answer in his place? Attorney General.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

It is question time, not debate time, and I would like to ask the member: what did the Liberal government do for eight years on family and domestic violence?

The SPEAKER: No. That is a rhetorical question.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I have already answered questions on this matter. I would like to but I am not allowed to, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: As long as it is a rhetorical question and you are just asking yourself. Members, that concludes question time.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 940 AND 942

Answer Advice

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.06 pm]: I rise under standing order 80(2) in relation to answers being provided to Legislative Assembly questions on notice. I ask the Premier why no answer has been received to question on notice 940 and I ask the Minister for Corrective Services why no answer has been received to question on notice 942.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Premier) [3.07 pm]: I am not familiar with the content of that question, but I am sure it is coming any moment now.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Corrective Services) [3.07 pm]: I echo the Premier. I am unclear of exactly what that one is, but I will follow it up for the Leader of the Opposition.

HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW APPLICATION BILL 2023

Minister for Health — Personal Explanation

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [3.07 pm]: I wish to make a correction.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Health.

Ms A. SANDERSON: In the Legislative Assembly on Thursday, 16 November 2023, during my reply to a question from the member for Vasse about prosecutions regarding restricted birthing practices, I stated that the protection arose as a result of a coronial inquest into the deaths of three babies in Western Australia. I would like to clarify that the inquest related to the care of four babies in total—three who died in South Australia and one who died in Western Australia.

MARINE PARKS — PLANNING AND CONSULTATION*Matter of Public Interest*

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) informed the Assembly that she was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.08 pm]: I certainly move —

That this house condemns the short-sighted and reckless approach to the formation of marine parks through poor planning and the lack of consultation, attacking our sustainable fishing industry.

We saw today what I would almost call the disdain for our regional communities and the disdain for the consultation process. The Minister for Environment just reeled off the names of all these overseas companies. Fancy bringing up the Australian Red Cross. Seriously! The people of Esperance, Bremer Bay and Hopetoun are worried because this consultation process for the south coast marine park has been a disgrace. We are trying to alert Parliament to it, and it is a total mess. The minister was here today. He is proud of Pew Charitable Trusts' involvement. I will be giving him a bit of a history lesson today about its involvement right from the start, from May 2020, when Pew Charitable Trusts was involved.

Every regional member of the Labor Party needs to have a good hard look at themselves because this government has launched a relentless attack on the people of regional WA, especially over the last four years. It is an absolute disgrace. I feel sorry for anyone representing regional WA, because they obviously have not had any cut-through with their cabinet because cabinet continues to roll out marine parks and attacks on fishing and forestry; we have seen the attack on the forestry industry and on families of the south west. There is no support for live export or the families and people in the sheep producers supply chain, with 3 500 people involved in the industry, and an attack on electoral reform, reducing regional representation. The Attorney General is very proud of his electoral reform and the cuts that he has made to regional representation. He stood up in this place and said that he could not write that legislation out fast enough. He started working on it on the night of the election. He is proud of that, and this government is proud of the way that it has cut regional representation and services to the regions. The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021 was another demonstration. Today, we had the minister saying that we are on the wrong side of history. We have heard it before from the Premier. He told us that we are on the wrong side of history. He also told us that we are dogs returning to our own vomit. It is not good enough. The people of regional WA stood up to be counted. They have no support from this government and, quite frankly, they should not have to rally every few months to try to overturn something that affects part of their life. Those families, whether they are fishing or forestry families, have been there running their own industries for tens of dozens of years, and this government has come in and attacked them relentlessly.

I go back to 2016, when Hon Mark McGowan in opposition said that his government would have rolled-gold transparency when it came in. I can assure members that nothing was further from the truth. Over two and a half years, the debacle of the consultation process of the south coast marine park has deteriorated.

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Thornlie!

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: The member for Roe is trying to make his contribution and explain the motion. He has half an hour, and this member can make a contribution in the government's half an hour. I ask that he cease to interject, please.

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Thornlie! There is it no point of order. Carry on.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Paul Murray in *The West Australian* on 18 November, 2023 said — Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: — "It's a fully-fledged scandal." I agree with him.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members of the government side, you will get the opportunity to respond. You may not like what he is saying, but he has the opportunity to put his point forward. I would like to remind the member that the predominant feature of this motion is the sustainable fishing industry and marine parks. I appreciate that the member is painting a picture of something, but please stick to the main thrust of the topic.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, I will focus.

Firstly, I want to thank Hon Colin de Grussa in the other place for his perseverance in holding this government to account on the issue of the south coast marine park. In May 2021, he asked his first question regarding the draft community engagement strategy. On nearly forty occasions in the Legislative Council he has asked questions, highlighted evidence of misgivings and tabled statements relating to the south coast marine park. Ministers opposite seem to think it is some sort of joke. The people of Esperance are worried. They come into my office, sit around the table and talk to me and Hon Colin de Grussa about what they are worried about. Ministers opposite do not seem to understand that. We get the odd fly-in visit, telling us about the diversity of sea life and so forth, but the community is worried about their occupations. They have every right to put the case, talk about their livelihoods and talk about the worries that they have. I want to give the minister a bit of a history lesson. Hon Colin de Grussa states —

Ultimately, when things are done in a way that is non-genuine, one of the first things that happens is it erodes transparency and openness. Rather than trying to provide a clear overview of the policy or decision, a selective approach will be taken and government will cherry-pick the things it talks about with a preferred narrative to try to gloss over essentially what is really happening. That leaves people in the dark. It creates uncertainty, and when questions cannot be answered, it obviously leads to further issues.

That sums it up perfectly. It was quite disturbing when I tried to raise that scenario today about Pew Charitable Trusts. I want to give the minister a history lesson, because on Friday, 15 May 2020, the initial meeting to discuss south coast marine park consultation was held at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions headquarters. Attendees included Recfishwest, Pew and the Australian Maritime Conservation Society, which is funded by Pew. The article states —

“At the meeting, DBCA was advised that the attendees supported ‘the creation of a larger, rather than smaller, marine park’. And that they have ‘aligned to prepare a series of principles for a new way of approaching marine park planning and management’, none of which is based on science.”

...

Minutes of the November 18 meeting, involving six of the most senior officers of DBCA and —

Funnily enough —

representatives of Pew and two of the environmental lobby groups it funds ...

This is what I am talking about. We have the public service, which the minister is representing, forming its policies with Pew Charitable Trusts and other organisations that it funds. As far as I am concerned, foreign-funded lobby groups were allowed inside the highly politicised process that affects families and community on the south coast. That is a warning sign if I have ever seen it. I am sorry; the minister may not like it, he might want to quote the Australian Red Cross and various other organisations, but that is the reality. As far as I am concerned, I agree with the comments of Paul Murray, who said —

Pew has become the tail wagging the Labor dog on environmental issues, —

I could not put it more appropriately —

particularly the establishment of marine parks replete with no-fishing sanctuary zones ...

I think there is a real concern here. The minister might like to deny it. I noticed that Pew Charitable Trusts put out another nice op-ed during the week talking about the white beaches and the sands of Esperance and so on and so forth, but there is a reality here. We are talking about families and their livelihoods.

The other issue I raised today with the Minister for Fisheries is internal documents and a freedom of information request from Hon Colin de Grussa. The article states —

Noting inadequate time was provided for DPIRD to properly analyse and provide well-considered feedback on a marine park of such size and complexity, this rushed approach poses serious risks to the planning and outcomes of the South Coast Marine Park.

...

Based on the draft zoning scheme it does not appear that DBCA have adopted a pragmatic approach to the zoning of the proposed South Coast Marine Park ...

...

The current draft zoning scheme will likely result in the loss of several South Coast fisheries and impact on the livelihood of numerous fishers.

That is the minister’s own department telling another minister’s own department that it is not doing a good job. It is not on.

I want to finish with a couple of other comments. From my perspective, as I said, Hon Colin de Grussa and I are at the coalface. The other week I was at the community of Bremer Bay. We talked to people in Hopetoun and

Esperance. They are worried. Quite concerning, of course, was the initial process whereby contact was made with fishers to see where they catch the majority of fish and then some of those areas were targeted as sanctuary zones. That has really upset some of the fishers. But as far as I am concerned, this is an example of a government that does not have the capacity to deal with an issue such as this. It outsources its difficult decisions. It hides its decisions by silencing departments and it makes policy on the run. The people of Esperance, Bremer Bay, Hopetoun and other places deserve more. It is not good enough.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [3.21 pm]: I rise to speak on this very important motion moved by the member for Roe. I thank him for bringing this important matter to the Assembly.

The preservation of our beautiful coastline and our waters around Western Australia is in the best interests of all Western Australians. It should be protected to ensure that the next generation of Western Australians is able to enjoy it as we do today. Not one person here would disagree with accepting the importance of the marine parks as a tool to conserve representative habitats and the biodiversity within. The same goes for the Marmion Marine Park extension plans. Although we agree in principle with the extension and its importance in protecting the waters in the northern suburbs, we absolutely have concerns regarding the government's approach in the planning and consultation process.

It is becoming all too commonplace to hear from peak bodies, industry representatives or Western Australians with lived experience that this government is ignoring expert concerns. We are now hearing alarm bells from peak fishing bodies such as the Western Rock Lobster Council, Reefishwest and the WA Fishing Industry Council about the government's plan for the extension of Marmion Marine Park. These bodies represent a significant number of stakeholders who access, utilise, derive value and enjoy Marmion Marine Park and the areas identified in the expanded borders. It is their responsibility and mission to understand the needs of Western Australians who access these waters daily and in many cases, just like the generations that preceded them. When seeking to make changes in the way these waters are utilised, the government's first port of call should be to properly consult with these bodies. But these bodies are very concerned and here is how they feel. I quote from a letter that all three bodies sent to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions —

It is therefore disappointing that we all feel misrepresented, disrespected and completely ignored in DBCA's Marmion Marine Park Expansion planning process to date.

These bodies are rightfully concerned that this government is not serious about the repercussions of these marine parks on recreational or commercial fishers if consultation is not conducted appropriately and stakeholders' stated interests are not respected. We share an interest in ensuring that a scientific approach is taken and proper consultation takes place. It cannot be a mere box-ticking exercise that works towards delivering a predetermined outcome, which is the fear for many of these stakeholders. It is not consultation if it is done after the fact. We saw that with the government's decision regarding shifting the women's and babies' hospital.

If DBCA were genuinely interested in a collaborative approach and planning an outcome through a community consultation process, it would have undertaken cultural heritage mapping, biodiversity mapping and appropriate habitat mapping. None of this due diligence that should have informed the planning process has been produced even to this day, with Marmion Marine Park's expanded boundaries and the locations of the sanctuary zones of significant concern. There is a real concern that this will have a serious impact on the activities of recreational and commercial fishers in the area. Despite DBCA stating there is no predetermined targets for total sanctuary zone areas within the marine park, stakeholder participants in both the south coast marine park and the Marmion park extension area have stated they have witnessed DBCA repeatedly refer to international conservation targets of 30 per cent. Such was the implied objective by DBCA throughout this process that it has proposed sanctuary zone areas of around 30 per cent. This is despite the fact that there has been no due diligence done through biodiversity mapping and habitat mapping, as I have stated, to inform the planning, and no evidence or justification given for where these zones would be located. I understand that the reason given for one particular zone of this park was that it was aligned with a Bush Forever site on land.

The world's first Marine Stewardship Council-certified sustainable commercial lobster fishers have fished the entire marine park extension area for generations and have harvested some of the lobsters that are in abundance in the area without impacting on the pristine environment. Sanctuary zones will unnecessarily and unfairly remove access to these commercial fishers, who will then be required to source their catch elsewhere. That usually concentrates operators, which leads to conflict and compounding issues of overfishing in other areas. There is also growing community concern that the extensive use of sanctuary zones could cover large swathes of prime crayfishing ground on or inside Three Mile Reef.

WA is home to 53 000 licensed recreational rock lobster licence holders, a significant portion of which operates outside the metropolitan region. Once the whites run is happening, we can go to any boat ramp in the north of the state at 5.00 am and see—it is certainly quite a sight—how many cars are bumper to bumper trying to get to the water to catch some crays before work. If sanctuary zones impede on these areas, the annual highlight for many Western Australians will be impacted and potentially wiped out. In a year when recreational fishers have already been hit hard by the government due to the six-month ban on demersal scalefish throughout the west coast bioregion, these sanctuary zones go above and beyond what is required and with an unfair and unnecessary cost.

As I stated, there are very real concerns about the lack of due diligence on this issue. The Western Rock Lobster Council, Recfishwest and the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council have repeatedly asked the government for science-based evidence and justification on how the government is determining these sanctuary zones. So far, they have just received obfuscations. Both the environment minister and the fisheries minister claimed that the planning process would be based on evidence-based justification. How is that possible when there has been no marine biodiversity mapping, no cultural heritage mapping, and inadequate habitat and commercial fishing effort mapping. It is fair to say that we will be paying close attention to the plans once they are released.

I also hope that the DBCA and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development are working closely together to ensure that the first round of plans achieve that important balance between minimal disruption for fishers and the public and the protection of our waters. After all, the draft plan will require concurrence from the Minister for Fisheries, as outlined by the Minister for Environment back in 2020, before being released for public comment. I hope that his department is supportive of the plan and the process undertaken to achieve it before the Minister for Fisheries signs off on it. I commend this motion to the house.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.31 pm]: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to add to the excellent motion moved by the member for Roe. As we know, marine parks can be supported by communities. I was the shire president of the Shire of Dandaragan. Jurien Bay Marine Park pretty well encompassed the entirety of the coastline of the Shire of Dandaragan, plus a little bit into the Shire of Coorow, and Green Head. That does not mean it is not fraught with some issues from time to time. I remember trying to consider some planning matters or decisions around the Jurien Bay marina, which were complicated by the fact that it sat within a marine park area. Overall, there are benefits to it. I know that tourists are attracted to areas such as Ningaloo, Shark Bay and other protected areas. We are virtually trying to protect the entire south coast in one park. When I say “protect”, I ask: protect from what? Are we protecting it from fisheries, which are sustainably managed, as we know; that is the job of the department for which the Minister for Fisheries is the minister—to ensure that they are sustainably managed. I do not see a herd of people attacking the area down there. I am a little bemused by the language being used, as if there is some sort of imminent threat to the south coast, the fish stocks, the species down there and the animals and diversity that the minister spoke about. I do not see a huge amount of pressure on that industry. Its only users are a few recreational fishers, sightseers, snorkellers and the like and professional fishers, who are responsibly managed by the Minister for Fisheries.

It is quite apparent in this whole process that there is not really a cooperative view between DPIRD and the minister responsible for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. The member for Roe referred to Hon Colin de Grussa, who has done a tremendous amount of work in this area. He has requested documents under freedom of information and, as the member mentioned, he has asked 40 questions on numerous occasions. He identified that DPIRD levelled extraordinary criticism at DBCA about its management of the planning processes for the marine park. He put out a news release on 15 November after receiving that information, which states —

... the comments made by DPIRD almost exactly mirror the concerns continually expressed by key stakeholder groups and members of the Community Reference Group, which have been so casually dismissed by the Environment Minister ...

The revelations also place the Fisheries Minister in an untenable position, as he has to sign off on the draft sanctuary zones for the marine park plan before it is released for public comment, in circumstances where his own department has explicitly stated such things as:

“Noting inadequate time was provided for DPIRD to properly analyse and provide well-considered feedback on a marine park of such size and complexity, this rushed approach poses serious risks to the planning and outcomes of the South Coast Marine Park”

“Based on the draft zoning scheme it does not appear that DBCA has adopted a pragmatic approach to the zoning of the proposed SCMP —

South coast marine park —

“The current draft zoning scheme will likely result in the loss of several South Coast fisheries and impact on the livelihoods of numerous fishers”

“It is DPIRD’s view that these impacts are not in the community’s best interests and that the impacts can be largely avoided or minimised if DBCA are genuinely serious about doing that in designing the zoning scheme for the SCMP”

“Despite overwhelming feedback and agreement on recommendations to specific areas across numerous stake holder groups their recommendations have not been taken on board and changes made to candidate areas.”

That really puts the Minister for Fisheries’ department at odds with the Minister for Environment. Who will win the struggle? We know that one side is supported by this foreign organisation. All sorts of people have been saying that the Salvation Army was started in a foreign place. Yes, Pew Charitable Trusts does have a long history of working

with members of this government. I note that the Minister for Housing worked for that organisation for nearly five years. We know that there is a strong relationship between this government and Pew Charitable Trusts. We do not know how strong the relationship is between the professional fishers and the communities of the south coast and the communities of the Perth metropolitan area with the Minister for Environment because we see that they are not being taken as seriously as this foreign organisation. That is seriously concerning.

We know that there is a push to increase the size of the marine park area. Yet we know that the department continually fails to meet targets to review the management of the areas that it already has under its control. I think there is a 10-year review for each park. I understand that none of those reviews have been completed on time. The minister can refute that if he wishes, and that is fine.

I also note that the industry that we are talking about that is most affected is of course the fishing industry. What does the fishing industry provide? In the main, it provides a food source for Western Australian families. We know that most fish in Western Australia are imported. We also know that communities and families rely on fishing for their livelihood. I understand that the Minister for Fisheries seems to have a different view from the department about the effect on the industry. I read out the department's news release that it thinks some fisheries will be brought to an end because of the changes that are happening. Yet the Minister for Fisheries says he does not really see any need for compensation for those industries as the sanctuary areas were designed in such a way that compensation will not be required. Is that true, minister? Does he really think no compensation will be required for fishers on the south coast as a result of those changes? I ask him to answer that when he has the opportunity to speak in a few minutes. I also understand that fishers in other areas—I think in Ngari Capes Marine Park that was developed in 2018—who have already been affected by the development of marine parks are still waiting for compensation. A number of fishers have not been compensated, even to this day.

We know that the compensation issue will loom large over those families that are facing the end of their livelihood as a result of the actions of the minister. He is the minister who is supposed to be speaking on their behalf. Apparently, his department has not been heard by the Minister for Environment's department. I am wondering who will win the contest. We know that we have this giant eco trust that runs around the world demanding that people in other countries do things, although it does not seem to have the same level of concern about what goes on in the United States, or at least the ambitions are not as broad as they are in compliant countries far away from the US where it can spread its influence amongst members of the government through a process that appears to put it in front of the local community and the local fishers in determining outcomes.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [3.39 pm]: I have been looking forward to this debate for some time, and, quite frankly, I am disappointed. It was a bit of a whimper coming from the three members opposite. I was waiting for the killer blow, and the best they could come up with was to quote one of their own members.

Mr R.S. Love: Who has been doing a ton of research.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I will get to Hon Colin de Grussa in a moment. Let us have a look at what is at stake here. There is a great southern reef that runs from Kalbarri all the way across the bottom of the continent up across the east coast to the New South Wales–Queensland border. It is one of the most significant reef systems in the world, and the jewel in the crown is the reef system along the south coast of Western Australia. It bears repeating that some of the rarest marine creatures can be found there. There are species still being discovered. It is a unique and valuable place. It is an important breeding ground for important species, with locations with some of the rarest and most unique biodiversity on the planet. It is worth preserving. The history of marine parks in Western Australia demonstrates overwhelmingly that people support the preservation of these unique biodiversity areas.

I will mention the values of the area. Earlier in question time, I mentioned the process. Again, I repeat that it is above and beyond what is statutorily required. I make the point that we are not through the completion of the process. There is opportunity for public comment and input. Members opposite have not seen the information that will go to the community. I have pointed out that we have already made changes based on input from commercial fishers about their concerns. This is an ongoing process that will have four months of public comment, going into next year. We will certainly consider all input.

We have heard this story before. The unfortunate thing about members opposite is that they like to, first of all, throw around information that is scarcely related to facts and evidence. They love fearmongering and stirring up concern. I know there is a political excuse for this. I know it is to the opposition's advantage to create crisis and uncertainty, but it comes at a cost to the local community and to the communities of members. We have heard this before. In 2004, when the government of the day under Premier Gallop was proposing to set up the Ningaloo Marine Park, it was going to be the end of the world for the community there according to some quarters. I am sure that we would have heard the same comments from the same types of members opposite about Ningaloo as the representations we have heard about the south coast marine park. Some of the fearmongering including comments such as, "This will be the end of the Coral Bay holiday", or "This will be the death of Exmouth." Indeed, some people said, "This is aquatic apartheid." The sky was going to fall. It was going to be the end of life as we know it in Exmouth. What happened? Deloitte did a study in 2018 and 2019 that found that tourism in Ningaloo was worth \$100 million. It found that the economic value of the area was in excess of \$1 billion. In 2020, there was a survey

of anglers from across Western Australia, and they were asked about the importance of sanctuary zones in marine parks. Remember, taking fish or engaging in commercial operations is not prohibited in all of a marine park. That is related to sanctuary zones. The results of the survey showed that 83 per cent of anglers said that sanctuary zones were a good idea. Anglers coming back from a day out were surveyed at the Ningaloo boat ramp about sanctuary zones, and the zoning was supported or strongly supported by a big majority of 93 per cent. A total of 93 per cent of anglers out for a day at Ningaloo Marine Park supported sanctuary zones. We see that the creation of marine parks does not spell the death of industry or putting a line in and having a fish.

Members opposite have quoted Hon Colin de Grussa at length, and I will quote him as well. He has made a number of comments, and every time they are barely related to evidence or the truth. He put out a press release on 13 October talking about the tourism component of the process not being heard. It was the scare campaign that only one organisation was being listened to. He said —

“It beggars belief that an industry so important to local regional economies on the south coast would have been effectively excluded from providing input into the marine park planning process ...

He was referring to the tourism sector, saying that it got no say whatsoever. Here I have a table of the south coast marine park sectoral advisory groups. There are 11 of them and the first on the list is tourism, which attended all but one of the six community reference committee meetings. It provided a written submission on the park boundaries to the CRC. It also had an additional meeting with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. Compared with many other SAGs, it had more involvement and engagement, so it is simply wrong, misleading information—just wrong. Colin de Grussa also calls into question this government’s handling of marine park processes.

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I point to the title of the member that the minister is referring to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is Hon Colin de Grussa.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: If I dropped “honourable” that time, I am sorry.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.R. WHITBY: In a media statement on 5 September this year Hon Colin de Grussa talked about how, with the gazettal of the marine park in the Buccaneer Archipelago in the Kimberley, we were, again, apparently, having an impact on the amount of commercial fishing and the ability for fishers to do their jobs. He attacked the government. He said it was taking too long to gazette the final boundaries. He said because we had not yet gazetted the boundaries of the new marine park, it was having a huge impact on fishers in the area. He said we had taken all of 12 months. He said it had been 12 months since announcing the gazettal of the boundaries of the marine park, but nothing had been done, so commercial fishers in the area were left disadvantaged. Gazettal is an important part of a zoning scheme. There are 600 000 hectares of state waters at Buccaneer Archipelago. It involves mapping in remote areas. There are difficult watermark boundaries to excise from certain lands. It is a lot of effort and work, and we are doing it as quickly as we can.

In the wake of that criticism that we have taken 12 months, I wondered whether the former government had introduced marine parks and how long it had taken to gazette them. I looked back at the former Liberal–National government, which announced the Kimberley’s Camden Sound Marine Park in 2013. I thought if Hon Colin de Grussa is criticising us for taking 12 months for gazettal, surely the Liberal–National government did it faster than we did, maybe in six months. Was the Kimberley’s Camden Sound Marine Park gazetted in six months? Was that the time period? No, it was not. Was it 12 months? No, it was not. Did take the former government two years to gazette that marine park? No, it did not. Did it take three years for the government, which was criticising us for taking 12 months, to gazette that marine park? No, it did not. Did it take four years for the former Liberal–National government to gazette that marine park? No, it did not take four years. Did the former government ever get around to it? No, it did not. By the time of the 2017 election, it had still not managed to gazette that marine park. Hon Colin de Grussa whacked out a press release criticising us for taking 12 months, when his former government could not do it at all. It took this government to gazette that marine park. Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park, created in 2014, is another great example. The former government did not create a lot of marine or national parks, but it did these. How long did it take to get the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park gazetted? We are being criticised for taking 12 months. Did the former government do it in 2015? Did it take a year? No. Did it do it in 2016? No. Did it do it in 2017? No. Again, it took the election of the Labor government to finish the job and get it done. The opposition can throw criticism around and attack us for the process, but we are undertaking one of the largest programs of terrestrial and marine park processes to create new marine and national parks in the history of this state. We are very proud of the process. We adopted a collaborative process with traditional owners, who have been forgotten in this process. Their contribution and insight into the creation of these marine parks is vital and very important. They come on the journey as well and they have input.

As I quoted earlier, the polling shows overwhelmingly that when marine parks are finally established, they are accepted and supported by the community. I was interested to hear the member for Vasse raise some criticisms about the process, given that I gather that in the south west—her very electorate—there are people who actually value and welcome marine parks. I think of Ngari Capes Marine Park. I also note that Western Australians are happy to go to

Rottneet to dive and catch fish. That area is part of a marine park, and parts of it have sanctuary zones. I also mentioned Shark Bay and, of course, the Kimberley coast. When marine parks are introduced, there is a level of concern in the initial stages. In this case, it is made far worse by bad faith actors who stir things up to score political points and who listen to one very small part of the community, seeking headlines and ignoring the rest of the community.

I mention businesses on the south coast that are interested in a marine park. This advertisement appeared in *The West Australian* a number of weeks ago. It was put together and jointly supported by the dive sector business community and the adventure and tourism business sector, which all support the establishment of a marine park with sanctuary zones on our south coast. These businesses understand the economic benefit and premium that comes from marine parks being recognised and becoming famous the world over. This is also about securing jobs and being able to dive, and looking at and seeing the amazing biodiversity existing off the south coast. It is not just one sector; there is a whole group of interests here.

This is the job of governments. It has a responsible and adult role. Our job is to strike the right balance. Our job is difficult, but within government, passionate agencies bring their expertise and experience. That is what good government looks like. Hon Colin de Grussa did an FOI and—shock, horror—agencies actually debate these issues by bringing in their expertise and knowledge and comparing that information to hammer out a good, effective outcome. News to Hon Colin de Grussa: that is how good government works.

I expect people in the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions to bring their passion and expertise to this issue. The Minister for Fisheries expects the same of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development; however, those offices do not make the final decision. I, as minister, in cooperation with the fisheries minister and eventually the cabinet, will make the decision. It is an executive government decision. We will take the input and advice and make the right decision that will result in the best outcome for everyone. It is about striking the right balance, not pandering to one single group. It is about considering the input of everyone, including traditional owners, commercial fishers, recreational fishers, business and tourism operators and members of the local community. Yes, we can listen to members who are passionate about the environment too. They make a valid contribution that is a part of all our considerations. When we get to the end of this process, the people of Western Australia can be assured that a very thorough deliberative process has extended beyond the bounds of statutory requirements, everyone has had a say and a decision will be made in the best interests of the entire community. That is the end point. It does not suit the opposition's purposes because it wants chaos and uncertainty, and for people to be anxious. I note the member for Roe commented earlier that this process is dragging out. He was critical of the time taken. He wants an early settlement of this.

Mr P.J. Rundle: I didn't say that.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: No; he was criticising the time it has taken and the delays. The point is that we will get this right. We will take the time to get it right, consider all points of view and get that right balance. It is something that we would never see come from the opposition.

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [3.56 pm]: I acknowledge and thank all the people who participated in the process to date, including community members, people with a conservation interest, recreational fishers and commercial fishers. They attended numerous meetings and participated in good faith. I thank the fishers I met in Esperance on multiple occasions and the fishers I met regarding Marmion. They all talked to me about the importance and values they ascribe to the fishery. They all provided valuable input into identifying the best way to find a balance between various interests in our marine environment. It is a fundamental question. This government does not back away from taking on these difficult challenges and acting on them. They do provoke anxiety and can lead to uncertainty while we work through the process. It is important that people have the opportunity to participate, and the Minister for Environment has clearly set out what that has been to date.

Much has been said about the FOIs released in the period from around February to March 2023. They show robust debate between agencies. I encourage that; it is good. We have robust debate in this place. It is how we can critique and generate new ways of thinking and new ideas. Remember, in the previous government, when there was debate and the Nationals WA did not like the debate, what did it do? It walked out of cabinet! It could not be bothered engaging in the debate to get better ideas. It threw the toys out of the pram and walked out. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development do not walk out; they have a robust conversation. What happened when the member for North West Central dumped the National Party? She sent the Leader of the Opposition a text. I do not think there was much conversation. In fact, I remember calls went unanswered. That is the level of debate and engagement that the National Party gets into. It criticises government agencies for having a debate and tries to use those differences of view to exploit uncertainty associated with change processes. That is what the National Party is doing. I will come to the reasons why I think it is doing that shortly.

I find it particularly galling that members of the opposition would preach to me about fishing sustainability when we know that back in 2010, they unwound the very principles that would have provided a lot more certainty around our west coast demersal scalefish resource. They do not like to make tough decisions; they like to go for a populist vote. I had to fix that mess up some years later. When I came in here to talk about the changes that I needed to

make to provide certainty for that fishery, all I got was a push for short-term profit against long-term sustainability. That is what the opposition did when it rolled in various players from the tackle industry et cetera who built an industry around a fish that is in recovery. The opposition had scant regard for sustainability.

I was very pleased when the Leader of the Opposition made a comment about the Minister for Fisheries. I will try to quote it. I look forward to receiving *Hansard*. He said that fisheries are “responsibly managed by the Minister for Fisheries”. I was glad to hear him say that because that is the decision-making behind the demersal scalefish resource.

On 31 August, back on my birthday, the Leader of the Opposition, in a preamble to a question, said that the Premier was attacking our primary industries and that restrictions on the fishing sectors were unwarranted. There you go. As the Minister for Environment has said, the Leader of the Opposition likes to run with the hares and the hounds and try to have five bob each way. Either the Leader of the Opposition stands for marine parks, sensible planning and management or he does not. He should come out and say which one he stands for. If he stood for sensible planning and management, he would work with us to find the pathway forward in what is a complex and difficult issue with multiple interests—the Minister for Environment mentioned traditional owners—in the marine environment. However, I have found from the Leader of the Opposition’s scaremongering and the misuse of information in putting two and two together to get five, six or seven and not critically thinking through what we are dealing with in the interest of the communities that we represent, particularly regional communities.

With the exception of the Marmion Marine Park, most of the marine parks are in regional Western Australia. We did something with the Buccaneer Archipelago marine parks that the Leader of the Opposition never did when looking at marine parks. Aside from the issue of gazetting them, we looked at an industry adjustment package in total and the impact of opportunities that arose from the marine parks and how we could reinforce them. It was not about simple compensation, which is where the Leader of the Opposition’s thinking is at. It was about looking at the opportunity that a marine park generates and finding a way to reinforce that through our commitment to regional development and the commitment from every one of our regional members to get good outcomes for regional Western Australia. The south coast marine park is about that.

The Leader of the Opposition should withhold his judgement about how terrible this process is until he sees the outcomes. He should then participate in the consultation process to provide sensible and constructive feedback. I somehow doubt that we will get that, as I think he will look for a missed comma or something that is not dotted to try to exploit that and say that the world will fall in.

I know that it is not just me talking about scaremongering. I recently read the *Esperance Weekender*, a very good paper. There we have it: Hon Colin de Grussa was fearmongering in the *Esperance Weekender* on 24 November. Do members know what is really interesting? The photo was supplied by Colin de Grussa. Hon Colin de Grussa has had plenty of opportunities to get a briefing. I have offered on multiple occasions in this place for him to come and get a briefing on fishery sustainability issues. Have I heard from him? All I get is questions in the upper house, which we answer diligently. We provide the information. Do I get anything from Hon Colin de Grussa? I do not. I have offered to speak with him. Mind you; I did meet him at a couple of events. He is very quick to find the sausage rolls, I might add! Does he want to have a conversation about fisheries to understand what they are about? No, he does not.

I know what the game is. I know why the Leader of the Opposition has come in here with this matter of public interest and these veiled comments about what could happen, what he thinks is happening and what the role of one organisation over another is. It is because he is scared of taking a reasonable set of policies to the next election. All he is trying to do is scare people and create fear and angst. The *Esperance Weekender* is onto it. It knows what is happening. All Hon Colin de Grussa is doing is trying to find ways to save his own skin. If he came out with a decent policy, talked to the community, reflected an opportunity for the future and had a positive vision, maybe he would save himself, but I do not think that is going to happen.

We need sensible discussion and leadership. Sensible leadership is found in the Cook government. I do not find it in the opposition. The Leader of the Liberal Party is here. I am glad the member for Vasse has come back to have a listen. We need sensible leadership because this is an area in which we have to take the community with us, which is what this consultation process has been about. I am very confident that there will be a variety of views when the final results come out. Some people will think that there could be more here or less there. That is something the Minister for Environment has alluded to. It is a difficult job being in government because you have to make decisions. You cannot just sit there and throw innuendo out. You have to be accountable for making decisions and getting the balance right. That is what all the work to date has been about.

Mr R.S. Love interjected

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Just listen for once, Leader of the Opposition! Talk about bottom feeders!

I am saying that leadership is needed to take people through a complex issue and come up with outcomes that reflect the best balance of community aspirations. We have unique coastlines and geography in Western Australia. The Minister for Environment is working hard to protect it for future generations. Protecting it does not mean that we do not use it, relate to it or participate in it. There can be a variety of uses, but with growing pressure, we need to plan for that into the future, and that is what this is about.

The member for Roe did talk more broadly, so I will digress a little about this government's incredibly strong commitment to regional Western Australia. We are building a foundation for the future by investing in infrastructure right around the state and by diversifying regional economies to ensure that they are not boom–bust economies. We are looking at how to increase livability right across regional Western Australia. Every one of our members from regional Western Australia live and work hard for their electorate. When I go into regional Western Australia, our members are known in their local communities. People come up to them and talk to them. I met with the Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia this morning, and it was a very positive and constructive meeting. It wants to talk strategy; it does not want to whinge and moan and create division like the opposition. For goodness sake, grab some leadership, become sensible and create a vision for the regions that embraces conservation, industry and community. Do not just look to the next election to try to grab a few populist votes to save skin.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr D.A.E. Scaife) casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (5)

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

Noes (44)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms M.J. Hammat	Mrs M.R. Marshall	Ms R. Saffioti
Mr G. Baker	Ms J.L. Hanns	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms A. Sanderson
Ms L.L. Baker	Mr T.J. Healy	Mr D.R. Michael	Mr D.A.E. Scaife
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr M. Hughes	Mr S.A. Millman	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Dr K. Stratton
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr H.T. Jones	Ms L.A. Munday	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Ms C.M. Collins	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms E.J. Kelsbie	Mr P. Papalia	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Ms D.G. D'Anna	Ms A.E. Kent	Mr S.J. Price	Mr R.R. Whitby
Mr M.J. Folkard	Dr J. Krishnan	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms E.L. Hamilton	Mr P. Lilburne	Mr J.R. Quigley	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)

Pair

Dr D.J. Honey

Ms H.M. Beazley

Question thus negatived.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (FINANCE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2023

Council's Amendments — Consideration in Detail

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Debate was interrupted after amendment 3 made by the Council had been partly considered.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: As I was explaining before lunch, it was always envisaged that a person could utilise a state campaign account, as mentioned in the earlier debate. Indeed, I think I alluded to the fact that the Labor Party already has a general account and ledgers for each of the electoral districts in the Legislative Assembly into which people can deposit their campaign funds and from which campaign expenses are met. This amendment will make it absolutely, abundantly clear to anyone reading the act that that is a legislated scheme, that there will be a state campaign account and that a person can make a payment only from their state campaign account. The legislation currently provides an option. A political entity—a candidate is a political entity—can run a state campaign account solo or they can nominate the party of which they are a member to have a state campaign account that will then be controlled by the party. That will enable the party to have an overview of the total expenditure—that being expenditure caps, as the member would appreciate, and not donation caps.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I want to be really clear because I left this chamber thinking that there would be just one state campaign account and that that was going to cause some challenges for our organisation because we have a very decentralised process. Traditionally, we have run our own campaign accounts and there has also been a central account. I thought that that was going to change and the legislation would provide for just one account. I am trying to understand the nature of the amendment. Will it still be the case that both an individual candidate and the party cannot have a state campaign account, or can they? I am trying to understand this. Can a candidate have a state campaign account if they are part of a party organisation, and if a candidate does not want to have their own state campaign account, will they have to nominate their party's state campaign account as the clearing house for the expenditure?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is right, member. I think that is quite well put so I will just agree to it, not for the sake of agreeing but because what the member stated is correct. A candidate for the Nationals WA will have an option, as will all members of all parties. A person will be able to run—I appreciate that the member is not intending at this stage to run —

Ms M.J. Davies: No. It's on the record again.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: A candidate for Central Wheatbelt could have their own campaign account or they could nominate the Nationals WA for the campaign account.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Within this clause, from my recollection of the briefing, there needs to be an acceptance by the entity that it accepts the candidate's nomination. I presume we cannot have candidates nominating political party campaign accounts willy-nilly. If I, as Mia Davies, candidate for Central Wheatbelt, nominate the Nationals WA's state campaign account as my campaign account, how do I prove that that has been agreed to between the two entities to meet the requirements of the Electoral Commission?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: If someone is a member of a political party that has rules, that will be easily provable.

Ms M.J. Davies: The constitution of the National Party is an interesting beast.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: One would have to be an ass to put all their fundraising into a party's state campaign account without that. A candidate cannot spend anything on their own election that is not coming out of their state campaign account, whether it is theirs or their nominated party's. As I said, one would have to be a complete ass to be putting it into a state campaign account if there was not an agreement that their expenditure, up to the capped amount, would not be met. There has to be consent because people will need to demonstrate that they have spent less than the cap.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I will ask it a different way. Is it implied consent? I understand; it is common sense, but then there are all sorts of things that are common sense that, when it comes to the nitty-gritty, do not appear to play out that way. Will there be a form to fill out? What will the Electoral Commission require candidates to do to say, "This is who I am nominating"? How will that be done?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: From April, the Electoral Commission will be engaging with the parties and showing the system live. There will have to be a form so that the commission knows, in respect of that electorate, where it looks to to see the expenditure. The political entity will have to nominate a campaign account into which it will go. There will need to be a signature by both parties to agree that that is the campaign account. That is what the commission will introduce once the bill has been passed. It will be on the form.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you, minister. This applies to candidates, members of Parliament and associated entities, but not to third-party campaigners; is that correct?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It is not correct for third-party campaigners. We did not want a situation in which a third-party campaigner could nominate another entity and have it all hidden. If there is going to be a third-party campaigner entering the field in an election, they will need to be accountable for what they raise and what they spend.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I move —

That amendment 4 made by the Council be agreed to.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have the notes, but for the purposes of this house, could the minister explain why this new amendment was required to be moved in the Legislative Council and brought back to the Legislative Assembly?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It was to make sure that it was clear to elected members of Parliament that they will have a participation date from after the commencement of the legislation. It makes it abundantly clear that all members will be included in the state campaign accounts; after the proclamation of the act, there will be a participation date that will apply to people sitting in Parliament already who are political entities as well as candidates.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Who identified this? Did this come about through discussions in the Legislative Council, or was it something that the Electoral Commission or Parliamentary Counsel raised? The number of amendments to this legislation is quite unusual. I appreciate we are trying to get it right, but it is relatively unusual to see this many amendments come back. There were a number made on the floor in the other place and here as well. I am trying to understand where it has come from.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The Parliamentary Counsel's Office, which drew the bill, brought this to us during the process of the bill being before Parliament. The bill had been looked at, and looked at even after it had gone through cabinet. Everyone is anxious that this works properly. Parliamentary Counsel brought this to our attention and suggested the amendment.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have one last question. In that sense, perhaps it may have been useful for the bill to go to the Standing Committee on Legislation. All the amendments could have been picked up in one go. I wonder why the minister was reluctant to allow it to go for a review by the legislation committee so we did not have this iterative process that we are dealing with now.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It spent a considerable amount of time in Committee of the Whole House in the other place. It was not the legislation committee, but it was the Committee of the Whole House. It is critical for the government that we get these amendments passed in this calendar year. There is an election due in March 2025. Everything has to be up and going by 1 July. If we take out Christmas, the holiday period and most of January—everyone gets a little bit disengaged—the commission is still working. Its target is to have a substantial amount ready by the end of March so the Electoral Commission, not the government, can start engaging with all parties. All the parties will be registered so it will know whom it is engaging with, and it can help parties get up to speed. I spoke to the commission and saw that we should, as a matter of priority, get this legislation through Parliament this year.

As I said, talking about the Standing Committee on Legislation, it went to the Committee of the Whole and was interrogated very thoroughly in the Committee of the Whole. We knew at the end of the day, as today—though I was a bit taken aback—that the opposition will vote against it. It has made that clear. That was not made clear until the member’s third reading speech.

Ms M.J. Davies: No; that is not right.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I did not get a hint of that.

Ms M.J. Davies: Yes, in the second reading. The minister needs to review *Hansard*.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The member said she would interrogate it; she did not say she was going to vote against the bill. Anyway, be that as it may, we had to get this through this year to make sure that there is no stumble going into an election and that the commission has a clear run next year. I want to get to the parties by April.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I said that was the last one, but I will have another go.

Mr J.R. Quigley: When I say “get to the parties”, I mean engage with the parties. That would be better language.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I appreciate that, minister.

I draw the minister’s attention to the fact that I know from experience that when amendments were made in the chamber when we were in government, as they were in the Legislative Council, without the opportunity for the opposition at the time to consider or caucus on them, they were met with great consternation. That was done on a number of occasions. In those cases, members in the Legislative Council who are not the shadow ministers needed to make decisions without having been afforded time to consider what was being put forward. Most of these amendments seem relatively sensible so the opposition is happy—within the confines that this is going to go through no matter what—to see them supported, but it would be remiss of me not to make the point that when such things happened when we were in government, they were met with fairly serious outcry from members of the then opposition if they had not had the chance to discuss the changes being proposed by the government of the day. That is all I have to say on the amendments. I thank the minister for the answers.

Question put and passed; the Council’s amendment agreed to.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY — by leave: I move —

That amendments 5 to 10 by the Council be agreed to.

The remaining amendments that relate to clause 128 have been put as separate amendments down to amendment 8. They have all been dealt with already.

Question put and passed; the Council’s amendments agreed to.

The Council acquainted accordingly.

HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW APPLICATION BILL 2023

Third Reading

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [4.36 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.36 pm]: I rise to make a very brief contribution as part of the third reading debate. From the outset, I would like to thank the minister’s advisers for providing background information that has assisted the opposition in our deliberations on the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Bill 2023. We understand that this legislation is important in ensuring there is some consistency with other states. It will provide benefits for health practitioners who work between states or interstate. It still recognises the unique differences in the Western Australian jurisdiction, as supported by the health community in WA—that is, when health practitioners seek medical or mental health support. I thank the minister and the advisers for their responses during the consideration in detail process, and I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MARINE AMENDMENT BILL 2023*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AMENDMENT BILL 2023*Second Reading*

Resumed from 30 August.

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [4.38 pm]: I rise to add my comments to the amendments to the Vocational Education and Training Act 1996. We know that the act and its associated regulations provide the framework for the administration and regulation of the state's training system. I worked in the education and training sector for over a decade. I understand the system and how it works. I value the vital role of vocational education and training in Western Australia and know how it empowers individuals, contributes to economic growth and strengthens our community in a rapidly evolving world. Vocational education and training is not an option; it is a necessity. Importantly, I understand what happens to this sector when strategic planning for the future is not done and how this government, since coming into office in 2017, set about repairing the damage done to the training sector and has invested in training.

VET equips individuals with the skills and knowledge required to enter or progress within the workforce. This form of education is distinct from traditional academic pathways as it focuses on practical skills and hands-on learning. Western Australia's VET system has made significant strides in recent years, and it is important to recognise its importance in our society. A skilled workforce is the backbone of a prosperous economy. For the mining and resources sector specifically, vocational training ensures that we have a diversified workforce ready to adapt to new opportunities. The VET sector has been instrumental in supplying the mining industry with a steady stream of skilled workers.

It is not just about training miners; it is about fostering a culture of adaptability and innovation that extends across industries. The skills acquired in vocational education and training programs are transferrable and enable individuals to navigate a range of employment opportunities. VET empowers individuals by providing them with practical, industry-specific skills. It gives young people an alternative path to success allowing them to pursue careers that align with their interests and aptitudes. This is especially important in a society that values diversity and inclusivity. Furthermore, VET in Western Australia is closely aligned with industry needs. By collaborating with employers, our VET institutions can tailor their programs to meet the demands of the job market. This ensures that graduates are not only job ready but also equipped to excel in their chosen fields.

Last year, the Albanese and McGowan Labor governments signed a landmark 12-month skills agreement to deliver fee-free training in over 130 courses and skills sets in 2023. They have also agreed to a variation of this agreement that will see fee-free continue into 2024. Western Australians have seized the opportunity to take advantage of fee-free training so they can build better lives through a rewarding career. We are supporting employers to take on more apprentices and trainees through a range of incentive schemes, such as the jobs and skills employer incentive program, wage subsidy programs to boost apprentices and trainees in construction, and an adult apprentice employer incentive program that is providing support for businesses that take on a mature age apprentice.

Let me bring members back to what has been done in the goldfields. Central Regional TAFE's Kalgoorlie campus is the largest training facility in the goldfields region, delivering training to the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder region and local communities, and supporting the mining industry. The TAFE offers a range of training courses from certificate I to advanced diploma levels in a wide range of industries. It also offers a range of customised fee-for-service training courses. Courses delivered from the Kalgoorlie campus cover a wide range of industry areas applicable to the needs of industry and the community. These range from nursing, early childhood care, hospitality and general education to a specific program of delivery to apprentices in the heavy plant, metal fabrication, electrical, and fitting and machining trades that all service the resources sector.

Central Regional TAFE's partnerships with industry ensure that courses are practical, job focused and driven by employment outcomes. In 2022, the TAFE enrolled about 9 000 students in over 225 qualifications, including skill sets, across all regions serviced. In 2022, enrolments in lower fees and local skills courses drove enrolments up 38 per cent. Some of the most popular free and low-fee qualifications in 2023 include certificate III in engineering—mechanical trade, certificate III in resource processing, certificate III in early childhood education and care, certificate IV in mental health and certificate III in individual support.

Of course, we need to make sure that the infrastructure is there to provide the facilities for this demand. That is why this government is delivering a record \$268.3 million to upgrade TAFE infrastructure and equipment across WA. As part of our multimillion-dollar upgrades, which is the biggest capital works program in WA's history, there are 15 major upgrades, of which over half are in regional WA and one of those is in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The \$10 million Kalgoorlie campus heavy plant workshop is magnificent. It will include new specialist training facilities to provide heavy plant machinery training to skill up apprentices for the mining trades and is now in the final stages of

construction. The works include a new state-of-the-art training workshop, classrooms and student amenities. It also includes \$355 000 to upgrade the existing adjacent trade workshop. It is anticipated training will commence in the new workshops in semester 1 in 2024. The new workshop will deliver priority training in mobile plant mechanic, heavy commercial vehicle and auto-electrical apprenticeship training, all to locals so they can skill up for local jobs. But there's more! As part of our \$25 million upgrade of equipment at TAFE campuses across WA, Kalgoorlie has acquired a variety of equipment to ensure that its students can learn on modern tools so that they can be ready for modern jobs. Some of this equipment includes a hybrid vehicle, an excavator, wheel loader and tractor, and Nursing Anne Simulators.

I will just keep going. One of the ingenious initiatives of this Cook state government was to help the skills shortage in the goldfields through the \$2.9 million regional incentive. This has helped regional TAFE colleges attract and retain staff so that they can continue to improve their skills and employability. Eligible new and existing regional TAFE lecturers in Kalgoorlie–Boulder received a one-off temporary regional incentive of \$10 000 this year. This is how the Cook Labor government is providing a steady pipeline of skilled workers whom places like Kalgoorlie–Boulder needs. In today's fast-paced world, technology is at the forefront of almost every industry. Vocational education and training in Western Australia does not just prepare individuals for the jobs of today; it equips them with the skills needed for the jobs of the future.

These proposed amendments are intended to ensure that persons affected by the council's decisions have access to an effective appeal mechanism and allow proper delegation of the chief executive's functions under part 7 of the VET act and the regulations made for the purposes of this part. This state's commitment to VET is incredible and I commend the bill to the house.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.47 pm]: Sorry; I thought that the opposition member was going before me. I rise to make a very disorganised contribution now to the legislation. I would like to begin by saying that I wholeheartedly support the Vocational Education and Training Amendment Bill 2023. I just want to outline at the beginning that the bill as it stands will make some very minor but very worthwhile amendments to the Vocational Education and Training Act 1996. It is very important to understand that the VET act has a number of very significant functions, one of which is basically the constitution of the State Training Board and the Training Accreditation Council, which are two very, very important bodies for vocational education and training. I also want to mention the regulation of registered training organisations by the council and the regulation of training contracts. All those are very important aspects of vocational education and training from a regulatory framework perspective.

As both the vocational education and training coordinator and vocational education and training deputy principal, my role was to make sure that all the students involved in vocational education and training achieved the outcomes of each of the units that they were enrolled in to be awarded the qualification. The qualifications are incredibly important because under the VET sector, they are nationally recognised qualifications. It means that people have the ability to transport a vocational education and training qualification from Western Australia to Tasmania or anywhere else in Australia. That is why the regulations around VET are so important.

Employers can appreciate that when someone walks through the door with a certificate II in engineering, they have the same skills as somebody who has been awarded that certificate II in engineering elsewhere in Australia. It builds confidence in employers that the person they are employing has the skills and qualifications to do the job they are required to do. In a nutshell, that is why the vocational education and training sector is so important, along with the Training Accreditation Council, as is consistency across registered training organisations.

I cannot think of the date, so I apologise for not having that information in advance, but I remember back in the early 2000s, there were problems in the VET sector in Victoria. People who attended courses over a weekend were awarded quite high-level qualifications at the end of the weekend that would normally have taken six to 12 months to complete. It is incredibly important to understand why it is so important to have that regulatory framework working incredibly well in Western Australia.

In framing the context of my contribution, I want to say at the outset that the VET sector plays an incredibly important role in the Western Australian economy, whether that is in the training that people undertake through registered training organisations or through registered traineeships. I will talk a little more about those later in my contribution. That particularly includes Aboriginal school-based traineeships and school-based traineeships in VETiS—the VET in schools program—which are two very important aspects of vocational education and training in schools. Obviously, another important role that the VET sector plays in delivering training is ensuring that apprenticeship students can complete the studies that they commence and gain the necessary skills and experience to undertake apprenticeship pathways into fully qualified employment in the areas for which they were trained.

The other really important aspect around VET for people in Western Australia is the ability to progress from the vocational education and training sector to university. Outstanding opportunities are available for people in Western Australia to complete, for example, cert III or cert IV pathways and potentially study at university on completion. A really good example of that is when students can undertake a cert IV in preparation for enrolled nursing, move into a diploma of nursing and then undertake a Bachelor of Nursing. A lot of those opportunities

are available in regional Western Australia. Geraldton is a really great example of where that model works very well. Albany is another example. I have travelled to Albany and looked at the progression for students at the TAFE in Albany. We cannot underestimate the importance of vocational education and training in regional Western Australia, because there are some challenges and barriers for regional people gaining university qualifications. I will also touch on that later.

The vast number of people who live and work in regional Western Australia engage in education and training pathways when they undertake further study after completing years 11 and 12 at high school. We need to note the nature of the communities. For instance, the skills needed to be employed in the very important mining or agricultural industries often require only vocational education and training. For example, the qualifications needed to become a boilermaker, welder, fitter or turner in the mining sector can all be gained in the VET sector. They are very important high-paying occupations because they are highly skilled occupations. We do see a skewing of vocational education and training within regional Western Australia. I remember being a newly graduated teacher at Tom Price Senior High School. I was certainly one of the poorer people in the community. It was not particularly attractive to be employed in a government role compared with the salaries offered in the mining industry. Sadly, not much has changed in 30 years. There are still pressures and challenges around the attraction of the mining industry versus university study. That is why it is incredibly important to have a robust vocational education and training sector and certainly one that can deliver for regional Western Australia.

I want to touch on the fact that when the Liberal–National Party was in government, I was heavily involved in the vocational education and training sector. It would be fair to say that the vocational education and training sector was decimated under the former Liberal–National government; therefore, training and employment opportunities were decimated. I have just spent some time outlining how important it is in regional WA. Therefore, the training and employment opportunities for regional Western Australians were also decimated under the former Liberal–National government.

I remember being a teacher and, as I said, a vocational education and training coordinator, and literally explaining to parents why students were not able to enrol in courses that students enrolled in over previous years because funding had been cut. It was incredibly difficult to explain to young people that their future opportunities would be severely, significantly and devastatingly impacted by a government decision to slash vocational education and training. They were certainly some of the most challenging times I spent as a vocational education and training coordinator.

It is fair to say that since coming to office in 2017, this government has been very focused on repairing the damage done to the training sector by the former Liberal–National government. We are investing in training so that we can provide a pipeline of skilled workers in Western Australia. Under the Barnett Liberal–National government, TAFE course fees soared by 500 per cent in some cases, placing training out of reach for the average Western Australian. Enrolments fell significantly under the Liberal–National government in each metric—that is, the number of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements; apprentices and trainees in training; apprenticeships and trainee completions, being those people who finish that qualification; and publicly funded VET total course enrolments and TAFE courses. We also saw funding cuts, skyrocketing fees and annual student enrolments tellingly down by 25 000. When former Premier Mark McGowan came to power in 2017, the first thing his government did was immediately freeze TAFE fees to provide students with cost certainty around those qualifications. We slashed fees by up to 72 per cent for 210 courses in key industries, which has made training so much more affordable for young people and those people who are looking to return to training. This includes 17 construction-related apprenticeships and traineeships and 13 pre-apprenticeships. Our Free in '23 initiative is providing fee-free training in over 130 courses and skill sets across high-priority areas such as the care sector, information technology and cybersecurity, agriculture, construction, hospitality and tourism. Under this government, apprenticeship and traineeship commencements are now at their highest level in 10 years, with nearly 4 500 contracts registered in July 2022, the highest monthly total on record, and apprenticeship commencements are 50 per cent higher than they were two years ago.

I want to highlight a really important statistic that I am particularly passionate about. Commencements by female apprentices and trainees have increased by more than 90 per cent on pre-pandemic levels, with almost 12 300 commencements by females in 2022. Commencements by Aboriginal apprentices and trainees are also up by almost 40 per cent compared with pre-pandemic levels. Placing that information on record highlights very important differences and some stark contrasts between the approach of a Labor government that invests in education and training for Western Australians and the alternative, which is a Liberal–National government that slashes and burns training and education in Western Australia. That is an appalling record to have and not one I would be particularly proud of if I were an opposition member.

I would like to highlight a factor around fee-free courses. For young people, women who might want to return to work after they have had children, adults who want to retrain or, in the case of Collie, potentially transitioning workers, fee-free courses offer an amazing opportunity and are a cost-of living initiative of this government. I will talk about what some of them are in a minute. Whereas a person might have been paying thousands of dollars for a qualification under the former Liberal–National government, all these courses I am about to mention are free. I do not think there is a more important initiative for working families in Western Australia than to have affordable training.

Training and education is the key to outstanding pathways and opportunities for young people. I reflect on that in a personal sense as I am now 51 years old. I know, be shocked, please! Of course, some people would say that is incredibly young, and I appreciate that! I want to reflect on working families like mine. My mum was a cleaner and my dad was a timber mill worker at the Bunnings mill in Yarloop. By creating opportunities for education and training, the trajectory of a young person's life can be changed in one generation. I was the first person in my family to go to university. My dad said something to me, which I can say now because he has passed away so he will not be able to tell me off when I finish my speech. When I expressed an interest in being a teacher, I recall my dad saying, "What would you want to do that for? You're just going to get married and have babies, and all of that money will be for nothing." Dad was a pretty old-fashioned fella and that was his opinion, but it reinforces the whole point of view that it is really important for women to have opportunities. Whether they choose to have a family and leave the workforce, it is up to them. The opportunity to retrain and rejoin the workforce is incredibly important, and the vocational education and training sector plays an outstanding part in making sure that people have those options in the future.

I want to touch on a number of important things about the fee-free courses. I believe, Minister for Training, we have called the program "Be More in '24". I thought we should say, "Be a hell of a lot more in '24", but we will keep it short and sweet. I understand that the partnership between the Albanese federal government and the state government has meant that the people of Western Australia will benefit even more than they have done under Free in '23. These are some of the courses that were available fee free in 2023. There was a certificate IV in preparation for health and nursing studies, which I have previously mentioned, and the diploma of nursing. There is a huge range of building and construction qualifications, including a certificate IV in residential building drafting. A house cannot be built unless there is a draftsman to design the house. It is an incredibly important paraprofessional role in the building and construction industry.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.L. HANNS: There are a number of priority industry qualifications for Western Australia, such as a certificate IV in work health and safety; certificate III in maritime operations, marine engine driver grade 2 near coastal; and certificate III in maritime operations, master up to 24 metres near coastal. Those qualifications are desperately needed in the shipping and maritime operations industry. There is a diploma of engineering. Again, once someone has done a diploma of engineering, it is an opportunity to step into the university space to gain other engineering qualifications. We desperately need engineers, whether in the mining field or areas with skill shortages at the moment. There is a certificate II in resources and infrastructure work preparation and a certificate IV in supply chain operations. Again, the ability or inability to fulfil supply chain requirements was an issue highlighted during COVID. Training and streamlining these requirements to maximise the operations of a business are incredibly important.

I would like to discuss another range of initiatives today. I would like to start with an amazing initiative developed towards the end of 2021 by the then Minister for Education and Training, Hon Sue Ellery, and that is career practitioners in schools. Career practitioners in schools are teachers recruited to drive career information and exposure to young people in schools. There were 70 career practitioners allocated across public secondary schools in Western Australia, and those practitioners play an integral role in schools providing students with opportunities to explore a range of work and study options that they would not necessarily be exposed to. In my electorate of Collie–Preston, I was very fortunate to have two amazing women chosen to be career practitioners. They were Emily Fraser at Eaton Community College and Rebecca Stewart at Collie Senior High School. When I was re-reading the relevant media statement, I noted the range of regional schools selected to be allocated a career practitioner for their schools.

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

Ms J.L. HANNS: The member for Mount Lawley is right: it really demonstrates the commitment of this government to regional Western Australia. There was a range of regional schools: Albany Senior High School; Broome Senior High School; Bunbury Senior High School; Busselton Senior High School; Cape Naturaliste College; Collie Senior High School; Dalzellup College; East Kimberley College; Eaton Community College; Esperance Senior High School—there is one for the member for Roe; Geraldton Senior High School; Hedland Senior High School; Kalgoorlie–Boulder Community High School; Karratha Senior High School; Katanning Senior High School—another one for the member for Roe; Manjimup Senior High School; Newton Moore Senior High School; North Albany Senior High School; Northam Senior High School; Pinjarra Senior High School; and the School of Isolated and Distance Education. Those very remote farming families who have students looking to transition after school have the career expertise that they can work with at their schools. The career practitioners have done an outstanding job. I believe the Minister for Education graduated them, for want of a better word, earlier this year. They were studying a graduate certificate in career development, so they were not only helping young people upskill, but also upskilling their own ability to help those people going forward.

Another outstanding initiative was the year 9 career taster program. A lot of schools right across Western Australia have access to that. I will talk about it in a minute, but now I want to talk about the work that the career practitioners are doing and what the year 9 career taster program looks like in schools. Today I had a look back at the initiatives

that have been set up at Collie Senior High School by Rebecca Stewart, who is doing outstanding work as the career practitioner for the school. As a snapshot of the work that is going on there, Rebecca organised a Roy Hill mine site tour in July 2022. The year 9 students went off to Roy Hill to see what mining looks like in a different context, as, obviously, coal and iron ore are very different. Students visited South Regional TAFE to look at opportunities that exist for training in the region more broadly. Students visited Edith Cowan University's Bunbury campus to look at the opportunities there. The Career Conversations 2023 parent and student event had experts from the Department of Education come down to talk about how parents can engage in career conversations with their children. It is incredibly difficult. I have a son in year 11 at the moment who has no idea what he wants to do. Even as a skilled career practitioner myself, I feel a bit lost when I am trying to help and be useful to my own child. Opportunities for parents to upskill are incredibly important. Mrs Stewart organised for the year 10 students at Collie to look at careers in medicine. The Rural Clinical School of WA has a clinic in Collie, and its doctors came into Collie Senior High School to explain all the different sorts of careers available in medicine in rural WA.

As part of the career taster program, year 9 students also did the MindFlight 7 virtual reality experience. MindFlight 7 came down to Collie with VR headsets and led the students in activities, and I have three examples: students were able to see what open-heart surgery looks like in virtual reality, dissect a frog—interesting!—and operate a forklift. Those are three very different concepts. I cannot imagine a world in which young people would be exposed to those three pretty amazing examples. There was an absolute investment in making sure that young people understand what careers are available, and it comes off the back of the very, very important work and incredible support that this Labor government is giving students, teachers and communities in regional Western Australia.

Year 10 students also went to the South West Careers Expo. A number of students came up to the SkillsWest careers expo at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. At the year 9 career taster program, students were given an overview of what tourism looks like in Collie. Collie is very well known for its mining operations, but tourism has had outstanding growth. Obviously, we are like a lot of other communities around Western Australia, as the huge increase in the number of visitors to Collie has meant that we are looking for people to work in the tourism and hospitality sector. Students went to look at some local motels and hotels such as the Collie Ridge Resort. They saw the Collie Museum and the visitor centre. There was a guided mural walk around town to see the murals that many people come to Collie to look at. There was a guided mountain bike tour. They went out and used the Collie adventure trails, in which there has been a \$10 million investment to attract tourists to Western Australia. We were able to expose those young people to opportunities for local employment because this government invests in vocational education and training and invests in people in the school sector as well.

It would be very remiss of me not to mention a number of other initiatives that this government has brought to Collie. One of those initiatives is the Collie Jobs and Skills Centre to support Collie workers as we go through the transition process. It opened earlier this year. I was just checking; this year has gone so quickly, and I was not sure whether it opened this year or last year. That incredibly important Collie Jobs and Skills Centre means that anyone in Collie, from school leavers right through to adults looking to retrain, can go into the centre and look at opportunities for training and further education. It offers a training needs plan, a skills gap analysis to identify opportunities around upskilling local workers, and an assessment of new worker skills and experience to identify training solutions. The jobs and skills centre is headed up by an amazing team, starting with Nat Cook, who was a former teacher in Collie and has now moved over to the jobs and skills centre to offer outstanding service to the people within the Collie community.

Finally, a new training centre was announced in June this year. Premier Cook and the Minister for Training came down to open the shell of the facility in Collie and to look at the opportunities at that training centre. Again, that is part of the state government's Collie Just Transition package. The \$6.3 million training centre will undergo a huge refurbishment and fit-out to be ready for enrolments in 2024–25. Those facilities will mean that we can deliver the training and skills needed for current and emerging industries, including forklift operations, crane ticketing, tourism, laboratory skills and renewable energy. We will be able to offer those very important training opportunities to people through the Collie Just Transition process.

It is fair to say that this government invests record amounts of money in a number of areas, from health to education and, in this case under this bill, training. I am incredibly proud to be part of a government that understands how important training is. If we do not train people and if we decimate the training system, we cannot be surprised that 10 years down the track we have a skills shortage and a lack of workers in key industries. I will leave my contribution there and commend the bill to the house.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.17 pm]: I will make a relatively brief contribution to the Vocational Education and Training Amendment Bill 2023. On behalf of the opposition, we are supportive of this bill's almost administrative arrangements, I suppose we could say. I think it is important that we go through the amendments. From our briefing, the bill's amendments intend to ensure that persons affected by the Training Accreditation Council's decisions have access to an effective appeal mechanism. The bill will allow for the proper delegation of the chief executive's function under part 7 of the Vocational Education and Training Act and the regulations that will be made for the purposes of this part.

My understanding is that a review of the VET act was carried out in March 2019, and 11 recommendations were made, and the two in this bill are part of those recommendations. Obviously, the purpose of the bill is to amend the appeal mechanism, which would most likely apply to only registered training organisations that may have adverse findings on them through their registration from the Training Accreditation Council. However, on a rare occasion, an individual may want to appeal a decision and this amendment will allow for that to happen. A case in the WA Supreme Court of Appeal in 2021 ruled that “standards” is not in the scope of existing section 58G(2). This meant that the vast majority of the council’s decisions were not or are not appealable.

The second amendment will apply to the delegation of duties from the chief executive, who, under the current act, is responsible for signing off on the training contracts that can amount to over \$40 000 a year. Obviously, this will allow for the chief executive to delegate functions to their officers. That is pretty straightforward. I do not think we can expect the chief executive to sign-off on that many contracts.

Somewhat similar to what the member for Collie–Preston said, I point out that our TAFEs and so forth are heading in the right direction. There is a positive environment out there at the moment. It is good that our young people have access to courses and that they can access them through a variety of arrangements. Certain courses offer flexible learning. South Regional TAFE provides many different courses and flexible learning arrangements, which is good for young people who are looking to improve their skills but have other work, study or family commitments. This will allow for a range of options.

One of the challenges—I am sure the minister is well aware of this; she has certainly made comments about it—is that the next generation of workers need to deliver on the energy transition, which is being hampered by a shortage of skilled lecturers and limited apprenticeship spots at companies that are willing to take apprentices on. The key point I want to make today is the challenges that people in the metropolitan and regional areas are finding with a lack of skilled trained lecturers. A recent Jobs and Skills Australia report found that electricians are tipped to be a critical occupation during Australia’s net zero journey. They will be in high demand, with almost 32 000 electricians needed in the next seven years. I understand that this government is keen on the transition to clean energy. The minister may have been in the chamber when I recently spoke about the challenges that I see with the move towards wind energy and so on and so forth and the challenges with neighbourhood issues, especially in relation to wind farms in regional areas, but also issues with transmission lines that will inevitably pop up as time goes by. Victoria is looking at 28 000 kilometres of transmission lines, which is causing a massive amount of grief with protests at Parliament House and the like. All this, of course, leads back to needing skilled workers for large wind farms. When the minister was, I think, at the energy forum, she said —

“We have got some pinch points, one of our challenges is skilled lecturers . . . and also employers that will take on those apprentices,” . . .

“Unless we have the skilled people to train those new apprentices and trainees, we’ll be really stuck.”

I have spoken with some senior figures in group training. One said that the key issue for the VET sector at the moment is the bottleneck caused by a lack of trainers. They said that we can start as many apprentices as we like but if we cannot get them through their certificate III at a private registered training organisation or TAFE, they will be delayed in finishing, causing a longer skills shortage. Another senior figure said that the silver bullet for apprenticeships in all industries is to provide financial support to employ adult apprentices over the age of 21. They said that construction is always touted as the sector with skill shortages, but there are huge skills shortages in other industries not associated with housing—hospitality, defence and infrastructure, for instance. Of course, as we know, the resources industry has a tendency to employ workers from other industries. The point I want to make is that the challenge—we have seen in it all industries, and the minister has recognised it—is getting skilled people nearing retirement, for argument’s sake, such as an electrician or whatever, into the mode of helping train the new wave of apprentices and people who go through TAFE and the like. It is a real challenge. I have had feedback that some paperwork requirements, if you like, are quite challenging for those who have been out in the trades working in a more practical sense who then come into the mix with the TAFE system, in which a large amount of paperwork needs to be done and followed through.

I emphasise that the TAFE and vocational education and training systems have been well adapted; it is a promising way ahead. With Western Australian industries as they are, we obviously need to improve our skilled sector. There will be demand for skilled workers, whether it comes from the government’s renewable focus coming onstream or the resources industry and the like.

We have already heard a couple of comments about the former Liberal–National government; I will not dwell on that. I am sure that some members will bring that up during their contribution, but I want to be positive, quite frankly. There certainly is a good outlook for our industries going ahead. The year before I was elected to Parliament in 2016, I remember former member for Warren–Blackwood Terry Redman and former member for Scarborough Hon Liza Harvey announcing \$25 million for the Esperance TAFE campus. I am glad that this government saw fit to see that through. When Hon Alannah MacTiernan came onstream, she said that the government would reassess some of our projects, including the \$5.8 million early childhood hub in Katanning, which we had spent seven or eight years working on. We had just about finished the groundwork for it and so forth. Here we are now, with the site

opposite Katanning Primary School still having only a couple of piles of dirt on it. Seven years later, Hon Alannah MacTiernan has gone and the project remains on the backburner. Things like that are quite upsetting, so I was glad that this government pressed on with it. It was a commitment by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development and the Minister for Regional Development through royalties for regions. I remember when former Premier McGowan lodged his budget in 2017 and said, “Look at this Esperance TAFE project”, as though it was a brand new project. Of course, it had been announced by the previous government, with the funding to follow. Nonetheless, it is a positive for the Esperance community, but as always it is a challenge to get qualified lecturers for all those courses that one would like to have delivered in a regional location. That is an ongoing challenge for this government and the way that it structures it. As I said, I am not here to make political capital or anything like that, I just want to present a positive approach to this particular sector that is important and that we all need to support in the years ahead. Obviously, it is important to recognise that this government has made some financial contributions to the sector. The opposition is very happy to support the Vocational Education and Training Amendment Bill 2023. I will leave my contribution at that.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.30 pm]: I also rise to make a contribution to this very good debate on a very important topic and one that I know many members on our side of politics feel strongly about, the Vocational Education and Training Amendment Bill 2023. There have been a number of good contributions and I am sure there will be many more. We do dwell on the performance of the Labor government on TAFE and training compared with what happened under the previous Barnett Liberal–National government because our record is so outstanding. I appreciate that the member for Roe does not want to traverse that ground, but we are incredibly proud of our record not just because we have done so many great things, but because we understand how important TAFE and training is for the individuals who access that training and go on to have skilled, quality jobs. We understand how important it is for the strength of our economy and the transitions that our economy will go through, and we understand how important it is for anyone who has been out of the workforce for a period of time or anyone who is perhaps looking for a late career change. It is TAFE that has been the heart and soul of being able to ensure that people have access to that training. We love to talk about it. I particularly love to talk about it and I am going to do that again tonight.

As others have outlined, the bill before the house today is somewhat administrative in nature. As a former member of the State Training Board and someone who in a previous career ran a registered training organisation, I know that having a framework for how we deal with vocational education and training and having an act that is up to date and attentive to the various functions that it provides for is really important for the smooth running of all the elements of the vocational education and training system in Western Australia. I am not going to talk about the system more broadly as it touches on a lot of things. I want to specifically talk about TAFE and our record on it because it is incredibly important.

As I said at the outset, our side of politics is incredibly passionate about it because we understand how important vocational education and training is to building a skilled economy. TAFE is not just for young people leaving school, and I really want to underline this point. Often when we talk about TAFE training and VET, people tend to think about it in the context of school leavers, but it is not just about that. VET is an essential part of the way in which people retrain for new careers. In my electorate of Mirrabooka, it is an essential way for people to get language skills. Refugees and migrants in particular use the Balga TAFE campus to undertake English language courses, which allows them to not only enter the workforce, but also do a range of things in our community that are very difficult unless a person has some English language skills. Politics aside, we believe in a fair go for everyone. We really do recognise that having an agenda that is about jobs, skills, training and careers is the way to ensure that everyday people get good jobs and can lead good lives. TAFE is an integral part of achieving that, as has always been the case.

I will talk about the disastrous consequences of having a Liberal–National government that gutted our TAFE system. I remember the decisions that were made at that time. I remember when the government was jacking up course fees, and I will provide more detail on that later in my contribution. I remember that families were in tears when they learnt of those fee increases for some of the essential TAFE courses and realised they could not afford to send two of their children to TAFE. Parents had to contemplate which child they could afford to send to TAFE to get an education. Those families were having to make heartbreaking decisions. It is important to remember that TAFE has been one of the key institutions that has allowed people to access skilled jobs, often moving them forward in not just their careers, but also their socio-economic status. It is a way in which people can get skilled careers, move themselves out of insecure work and potentially out of poverty, and provide a better life for their children than perhaps they had. To put parents into a situation in which they had to choose which child might access TAFE was absolutely disgraceful. We should never forget that.

I will start by talking about the TAFE in Balga. As the member for Mirrabooka, I am very fortunate to have this excellent institution in my electorate. For decades, it has provided to people in my community essential skills and training across a wide range of areas. It is an important training hub for many of the skills and trades that we rely on in the construction industry in particular. I have the statistics for the beginning of 2022. These will have increased since, but back then, 4 500 students studied at the Balga campus of North Metropolitan TAFE and nearly 75 per cent of those students were male, which reflects the construction trades that really dominate at that particular campus.

I want to underline the point that I made earlier. The fact that in 2022, 61 per cent of the students at Balga TAFE were over the age of 20 years goes to the point I made earlier that TAFE is not just about training school leavers. Indeed, eight per cent of the students were over 50 years of age, so that TAFE is training a significant cohort of older workers. As I said, it is primarily for students involved in the construction trade. The biggest cohort of 700 students were studying plumbing, 600 were studying the electrical trade, some 380 were in carpentry and about 160-odd were in cabinet-making. Those are the significant courses run at Balga TAFE. It also provides training in hairdressing, and, as I said, it provides significant support to recently arrived migrants and refugees in learning English language skills. It provides a range of essential support to not only our immediate community in terms of migrants and refugees, but also the broader community in Western Australia and our economy. I think we all understand how important it is that we have skilled people coming through for those construction trades.

I am incredibly excited to reflect that Balga TAFE, which is already great, will soon be even better because we are delivering a \$47.9 million redevelopment of that campus. That work has already begun. I was really delighted to attend the sod turning last December with the former Premier, and more recently I was very excited to have the opportunity to visit that TAFE campus to see that work is now well underway. It was incredibly exciting to see the project taking shape and we will start to see what it will look like before too long. This is a significant project for not just that campus, the people who study there and the trades that are so important to our economy, but the whole Mirrabooka community. It will provide an uplift in the suburbs of Balga and Mirrabooka and an opportunity for some confidence and pride in that area. I am very excited to see this project develop. It is a major redevelopment of the campus. It includes a new three-storey building that will replace 22 quite rundown transportable classrooms. A specialist teaching block will be used to deliver a range of training across different areas, including building and construction, electrical, English and adult migrant education. It will have a mix of modern learning spaces with technology-enabled classrooms and computer laboratories, and a large furniture trades training workshop is being built that will accommodate smart building and emerging construction technology. The ground floor will have a modern library hub, a reception, student services and a brand new jobs and skills centre that will connect the community with free professional advice on training and employment.

As I said, I recently had the opportunity to visit with the minister to see Balga TAFE taking shape. It is incredibly exciting. I want to thank Michelle Hoad, the managing director of North Metropolitan TAFE, Keith Campbell and Kath Wallace for taking us around. At this point in the construction, I could imagine how fantastic the new facility will be. It was great to stand in the areas that will soon have a new library and a new flexible learning space, see its new trades area taking shape and the 22 demountables that will soon be replaced with the new classrooms. It will be super exciting for the students. It will be great for the staff but, as I already said, it is a great project for the people in my electorate, regardless of whether they study there. It is incredibly good news for employers, who we know are desperate for well-qualified workers in construction trades.

The redevelopment of Balga TAFE is just part of the government's record investment in capital upgrades. Significant work is going on all around the state to deliver improved facilities for our TAFEs. The government has invested a record \$243 million in capital works to upgrade 14 of the TAFE colleges right around the state. It includes a number of regional campuses as well, with nine regional projects, including Kununurra and Broome, south to Albany and east to Kalgoorlie. It is a fantastic investment in modernising some of the most important training institutions in our state, ensuring that they are fit for purpose for the future. To see firsthand the transformation at Balga TAFE is very impactful. I toured it when I was first elected. It is a good facility but it was ageing, and to imagine what that will look like when that work is done is incredible.

The other thing we were able to do that I thought was incredibly exciting while visiting Balga TAFE was see the government's \$25 million investment in new TAFE equipment starting to take shape. We got to see some new equipment that Balga TAFE was able to purchase, such as electrical equipment. I am no electrician; I wish I could describe better what we saw. A room that had several different circuitry boards that do a range of different things now has one smaller board that does all those functions for training. I saw very dated equipment. For those people who watched *Chernobyl*, imagine the control room in it. I am not saying that it was Russian equipment, but it is probably from about the same era! To replace that kind of equipment with new electrical circuitry is a great initiative of this government. We also saw a new cabinetry cutting machine, which is now digitised. To see the cutting edge of cabinetry—pun intended—was really exciting. As managing director Michelle Hoad said, they aim to get their students riding the crest of the wave of technology, neither too far ahead nor too far behind, at the cutting edge of the skills and knowledge that they will need as they go into workplaces in the future using modern equipment. This is a great initiative, with \$25 million to upgrade the equipment in our TAFEs to make sure that our students are learning not on the equipment of yesterday, but on the equipment of tomorrow and that we are producing graduates who are able to have all the industry standard equipment to train on, creating that pipeline of job-ready graduates who will be able to walk into jobs and have the right skills to get the job done.

There is a lot to talk about when we talk about TAFE, member for Roe. There are so many good stories to tell that I have to pick and choose a bit. I am incredibly excited to see Balga TAFE take shape. It is a great initiative. I think when people see it, they will see that it underlines the government's great initiatives. The other one that is important to talk about is fee-free TAFE, because our commitment when we came to government was to freeze TAFE fees

and then reduce them for 210 priority courses. Since then, we have gone even further in a collaboration with the Albanese government to make sure that we can now have free training for over 130 courses and skill sets across high-priority areas such as the care sector, information technology, cybersecurity, agriculture, construction, hospitality and tourism. These are key occupations and key areas of training that we need in our economy. People are now able to access that training free of charge. It is an incredibly important initiative to make sure that people are able to get the training that they need to then go on to jobs in those important parts of the economy. Of course it is no surprise that Western Australians have embraced fee-free training, with 36 000 people enrolled in courses so far this year. That is an incredible result, and one that demonstrates the commitment that Labor governments have to making sure that training is available and accessible to people no matter who they are or where they are from. On the back of the success of Free in '23, we will be extending that into 2024. That is really exciting news. It is a great initiative that will ensure that we continue to see climbing enrolments in the key courses that we need.

As an example, care sector enrolments climbed by 19 600—up 31 per cent from the same time in the previous year. It is basic economics, members. I feel like we often have to explain this to the opposition, but if we put up fees on courses, we will see a decline in the number of people doing it. Of course, in reverse, if we make it free, it is not surprising to find that more people will access that training. That is good for them and also good for the economy. One of the things that is really great about the fee-free initiative is that overwhelmingly it is being embraced by women and young people. Women make up 65 per cent of the enrolments of the fee-free courses. That is a fantastic result that is ensuring that women get skills that will set them up for good jobs. Young people aged between 15 and 24 years make up about 35 per cent of those enrolments. It is not just happening in the metropolitan area; demand in the region for these courses is also incredibly strong, with 29 per cent of enrolments being undertaken by people living in regional areas. It is an incredibly important program that is seeing more people get into training and then get the jobs that come from that.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: As I said, we have made significant investments in TAFE and training since this government was elected in 2017. The initial task of this government was repairing the significant damage that had been done to the training sector by the Barnett Liberal government. I made reference to that in my opening remarks, but I come back to it because the TAFE course fee increases under the Barnett Liberal government were really shocking. Course fees soared by 500 per cent. That is a shocking figure and an incredible indictment of the opposition parties for thinking that that would ever be acceptable to everyday working people. It gutted the TAFE system by increasing those fees so significantly. As others have said before me, not surprisingly, the number of enrolments fell by 25 000 people. As I said earlier, that is basic economics. The government did that in several key course areas in which we now have shortages, and at the time we knew they were skills that we needed in the economy. It was never a decision based on what was good for individuals and it was never about what was good for the economy.

It could have been only an ideological view that those institutions should be semi-privatised and there should be a transfer of costs from the state to the individual. It had devastating impacts, not surprisingly. That is part of the problem with Liberal–National governments. They are driven by ideology, not by evidence about the impact that those decisions will have on individuals or on the economy. It was clearly an ideological attack on an important institution in Western Australia. Basically, that is what we saw—a fall overall and a fall in every single number. There were declines in commencements, declines in the number of students in training and declines in the number of completions. When we were elected in 2017, we immediately froze TAFE fees. This was to provide cost certainty. We then set about slashing course fees by up to 72 per cent for 210 courses in key industries. Of those courses, 17 were construction-related apprenticeships and traineeships. As I said, the construction industry positions, in particular, are important in the context of Balga TAFE and in the context of our economy. We reduced course fees in key areas across the board.

We did a range of other things to encourage employers to take on apprentices and trainees, particularly in the building and construction industry. We provided generous employer grants through the Construction Training Fund. We set about rebuilding TAFEs through an investment in infrastructure worth nearly \$250 million. We committed \$25 million to improve equipment in TAFEs. We supported employers to take on apprentices through other targeted programs, including the jobs and skills WA employer incentive and the adult apprenticeship employer incentive. Not surprisingly, apprenticeship and traineeship commencements are now at their highest level in 10 years. I congratulate the minister, the former minister and the cabinet for this incredibly important work, which is delivering important results. Apprenticeship commencements now, with fee assistance, are almost 50 per cent higher than they were two years ago.

That is an excellent result. We can compare that with the term of the Barnett Liberal government between 2013 and 2017. Its record was a fall of over 10 000 in the number of commencements, a fall of 10 232 in the number of apprentices and trainees and a fall of 5 737 in the number of completions. Every indicator shows a fall in numbers. The different measures are important because getting someone to start an apprenticeship or traineeship is important, but we also have to get them to stay until they complete it. It is important that they complete it so they can enter the workforce. We need to keep the numbers up at commencement, but then support people through the programs so they can graduate and start working.

We are proud of our record and that is why we like to talk about it. It is getting results; it is doing great things. It is delivering real benefits to people in Western Australia. I have made the point a couple of times in this contribution that it is not only about delivering opportunities to the individuals who may choose to go to TAFE, but also sound economic policy. We need people who have skills in those areas. They are critical to our economy, especially to our care economy, which is fundamental to making sure people are well cared for, whether that is in child care, aged care or any time in between.

Our commitment to TAFE underlines an understanding about the key role that skills and training play in our community and economy. Member for Roe, we are incredibly proud of our TAFE record, and we will continue to talk about it. I think it is important to remember that we cannot trust the Liberals and the Nationals with the TAFE system. They will not do the right thing by it.

Mr P.J. Rundle: You're a hard woman.

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: I thought I was in an obliging mood this evening, member!

I want to talk about someone I heard from recently. He is a young person called Lueth Dengdit, and he was the winner of the youth category in the 2023 Western Australian Multicultural Awards. He is a young person who was involved in the leadership program at the Edmund Rice Centre in Mirrabooka. It recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. It has a long track record of supporting migrants and refugees when they first arrive, but it also has a long track record of providing ongoing support, particularly working with young people so that they are able to step up to leadership roles both in their communities and in society more broadly. The centre held a fundraising breakfast yesterday; it was also to celebrate its 25 years. Lueth was one of the guest speakers at that breakfast. He spoke because not only had he been involved in the youth programs at Edmund Rice as a young teenager growing up in and around the Mirrabooka area, but also he now works with the centre. He is a staff member. He told his story. His story is that he is the son of South Sudanese refugees. He arrived here as a refugee. He said that he felt the pressure as a young South Sudanese person in school. There was pressure from his family to study hard, get good grades and then pursue a professional career in the health sector—as either a doctor or a nurse. That was the pathway that had been mapped out and expected for him. He explained that he found that incredibly stressful. He struggled with the study. He was not enjoying that level of schoolwork. He described how he had an epiphany—he did not use that word; that is the word I am using. He decided he wanted to pursue a career in which he would be able to help other people—a career in social work or a career in youth work. That was his passion. He said that the day he went to school and withdrew from the ATAR courses was the best day of his life because he felt the weight of that lift from him. He was passionate about the career path he was choosing. That was a career path that he could access through TAFE—vocational education and training. VET was the pathway for him to go on and qualify as a social worker or a youth worker and now pursue his passion. Again, he did not use that word, but it is clear he is driven by a passion to help people and to provide support to people who are like him. He now works at Edmund Rice but plays a really important leadership role in that organisation, as well as in the broader community. The leadership role he is playing was recognised at the WA Multicultural Awards, at which he won the youth category. I want to say how incredibly proud I am of him. I know our whole community is proud of him and the work that he is doing. He is still young and I am excited to see how his career and his leadership in the community develops.

That underlines the important role that VET plays for young people. It is a key part of providing training pathways into meaningful careers. It is not a training institution of last resort. I think anyone who is engaged with the TAFE or VET sector understands that. They get incredibly frustrated with the idea that ATAR is great, but if they cannot do ATAR, they should do VET. It is not true. VET is incredibly important. It provides all sorts of applicable skills that are highly valued by industry. It provides training pathways into careers that universities do not easily accommodate. The member for Collie–Preston talked about vocational training providing pathways to tertiary education. Again, it is an important way for people to get qualifications that they may need as their career progresses. Combining work and study provides valuable people for industry, and I know it is highly valued.

Members, I am almost out of time. As I said, I could probably talk on this topic for some time, but I will bring my contribution to an end. I want to commend the minister for the great work that she is doing. I also want to recognise the work that the former minister did. For us, on our side of politics, it is very important to recognise how training can transform people's lives and that it underlines a strong economy. For those reasons we will continue to be incredibly proud of our achievements in this area. There is so much that we can celebrate and there is so much work that we can still do. I look forward to being a part of the government that continues to deliver on such an important part of the Western Australian economy and provide opportunities for young people. With that, I commend the bill to the house.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.00 pm]: I also rise to make a contribution on the Vocational Education and Training Amendment Bill 2023. I thank the member for Mirrabooka for her contribution. I could never understand why the former Liberal–National government took a chainsaw to our vocational education and training sector and to our TAFE sector. I wrestled with it and I thought maybe it increased fees for some fiscal responsibility; maybe it thought it was a way of managing the books. That never made sense to me because the former government blew the budget the whole time that it was in power and left to us the largest budget debt and deficit we had ever seen in the history of Western Australia. I was wrestling with why it saw fit

to increase fees so significantly. It was only during the member's contribution that I had this moment of epiphany. I realised that it was entirely ideological. The former government had a philosophical antipathy towards the vocational education and training sector. It could not possibly have been on the basis of financial prudence, because it demonstrated no financial prudence over the eight and a half years it was in government. The only real explanation for taking a chainsaw to our vocational education and training sector and eviscerating our vocational education and training sector must have been philosophical.

When I think about the contributions that people on our side of politics have made just to this legislation this afternoon, I note that the member for Mirrabooka and the minister were former members of the State Training Board. The members who spoke were former union officials and expert in understanding the economic role of a pipeline of skilled workers coming through our vocational education and training system. The member for Collie–Preston beside me made a brilliant contribution and talked about the importance of the vocational education and training sector in regional WA, particularly in her electorate of Collie–Preston, as that community moves through the energy transition. She talked about the vital role of a well-qualified workforce with skills and abilities in these fields that we are now prioritising as a government. That is incredibly important. As a former teacher and advocate for her community, the member was perfectly articulate. You, Acting Speaker (Ms A.E. Kent), spoke about the contribution of the vocational education and training sector to the people of Kalgoorlie. On our side of the chamber, we are passionate about making sure that our VET sector works because we see how important the role of education is in allowing people in our society to access opportunity.

All members will be participating in their school graduations at the moment. It is graduation season at local primary schools and high schools. I love going to those high school graduations, where we get a sense of what endeavours the graduating class will pursue. I congratulate all the local schools in the electorate of Mount Lawley, including Mount Lawley Senior High School, John Forrest Secondary College and Dianella Secondary College. I want to give a quick shout-out to two incredible educators in the Mount Lawley electorate who are both calling time on their careers at the end of this academic year—in the next couple of weeks. In one instance, it is a very moving set of circumstances.

Shortly after I was elected in 2017, we got a new principal at Coolbinia Primary School, Paul Westcott. Paul has given more than 40 years of service to public education. At Coolbinia Primary School he is beloved by the staff, the parents and the students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Paul was exemplary. He went above and beyond to make everyone feel safe and welcome at the school. If we go down to Coolbinia Primary School, we will see him out and about every day, warmly greeting families down at the Kiss 'n' Drive before and after school. He wanders around the primary school, mixes with the kids and makes sure that everyone is safe and comfortable and engaging in their learning experience. His door is always open to those in need. He does all this with incredible humility. He is a very quiet, humble and unassuming school principal, but he has great integrity and a good sense of humour and cares deeply for all his staff.

After 40 years in education, Paul is retiring this year. He has, unfortunately, been diagnosed with cancer, so it is really a terribly sad story. He is on leave at the moment, but the school will be having a dedicated graduation assembly for Paul on 8 December, which I am looking forward to going to so that I can express gratitude on behalf of the people of Mount Lawley and, in particular, the families in Coolbinia who have had the benefit of Paul's expertise and passion at Coolbinia Primary School. He came to the primary school at a time of great change and great challenges and he really coalesced and unified the school community and got them heading in the same direction. Paul Westcott, thank you for everything. You will be greatly missed by the people of Coolbinia.

More happily, the principal at Mount Lawley Primary School, Sandra Martin, is also retiring, but not because of any health concerns. Sandra has earned her time in retirement. She has been at Mount Lawley Primary School for 21 years and has seen incredible changes. She was at the school in 2012 when it was, unfortunately, burnt as a result of arson. She was there when the school transitioned to become an independent public school. She has been a great deputy to a number of principals. Recently, when there was some uncertainty about the leadership at the school, Sandra really stepped up and took over that leadership role as the principal over the last couple of years. Sandra was at Parliament House a couple of weeks ago. We were able to host the year 6 leadership team. When I saw her at the school gates for the school pick-up a couple of days ago, I asked her whether it was true that she was retiring and she said it was and that part of the reason she was so keen to come up to Parliament House for the last time was that she got to enjoy the recognition of being in Parliament and being acknowledged during question time.

Again, on behalf of the P&C at Mount Lawley Primary School and the school board, I want to say thank you to Sandra for the incredible work she has done again during a time of leadership uncertainty at the school. She navigated COVID extraordinarily well, making sure that the community was advised and informed and aware of all the constraints and concerns, and she did it with great passion and commitment. Sandra, thank you for everything. I hope you get to enjoy greater success for your beloved West Coast Eagles in retirement. Thank you for the incredible contribution to public education in Western Australia generally, but more particularly for the long service that you have provided to the people of Mt Lawley. This evening we are talking about vocational education, but I wanted to place on the record my great gratitude to two educational leaders in the Mount Lawley electorate and thank them for the contribution they have made to our local community.

I turn next to the substantive bill. I want to start just by mentioning a terrific institution that we have in Mt Lawley, which is the North Metro TAFE Mt Lawley campus. The member for Mirrabooka already mentioned the managing director of North Metro TAFE, Michelle Hoad. I want to echo the member for Mirrabooka. Michelle is an incredibly passionate and dedicated managing director for North Metro TAFE. She mucks in. She rolls up her sleeves. She gets in and she makes sure that the service is provided, which is incredible.

Most of the other speakers have already talked about this, so I do not need to go into it in too much detail, but the role that TAFE plays in graduating students into critical areas of our economy cannot be understated. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, I look at some of the courses that are on offer at the Mt Lawley campus of North Metropolitan TAFE, such as a certificate III in hospital or health services pharmacy support. The certificate III in individual support (ageing) is free, the certificate III in individual support (disability) is free, the integrating mental health practice skill set is free, the certificate IV in mental health that is offered at the Mt Lawley campus is free, the diploma of mental health is half price, a diploma of nursing is free, a certificate III in pathology collection is half price, and the certificate IV in preparation for health and nursing studies is free. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, I know that the Minister for Health has a laser-like focus on the workforce challenges that we confront. These workforce challenges will only be ameliorated by our vocational education and training and university systems graduating enough students into these important roles to pick up the slack.

One thing that I know the opposition parties will say throughout next year is that the McGowan and Cook Labor governments have had seven years in office to fix every problem that is on the horizon. However, this argument fundamentally misunderstands the effort needed to repair the legacy of destruction that we inherited when we were elected in 2017. When we look at the state of the finances, we see that we inherited an unprecedented debt and deficit disaster. When we look at the quality of our hospital system, we see that we had a children's hospital that had asbestos in the ceiling and lead in the water. When we look at the workforce challenges we face, we see that we had a TAFE system that had been eviscerated and decimated, making it incredibly difficult for people to not only enrol in TAFE, but also progress through the TAFE courses and graduate. As the members for Collie–Preston and Mirrabooka have both said, on every metreage we were going backwards under the Liberal–National government. Now we have seen a complete turnaround. We have more people enrolling in TAFE, graduating from courses and doing apprenticeships. We want to build the economy and the state and tackle the skills shortages in health and education, and we cannot do it unless we have the training infrastructure in place. That is the difference between this Labor government and our predecessors. We inherited such a difficult set of circumstances that we are not even halfway through fixing the challenges that were left to us by the previous government. We have so much more work to do because of the state in which the previous government left the state of Western Australia. We are now in the process of adopting a whole-of-government approach that focuses on all those things.

The Minister for Housing; Homelessness is tackling the housing shortage that we are currently experiencing. He cannot address that without the tradies, plumbers, electricians, plasterers and carpenters that need to undertake their apprenticeships and TAFE and training courses. The Minister for Transport is building the transformational Metronet project. There is no way that project can be delivered without the civil construction workers, crane drivers, riggers and scaffolders who can deliver that set of infrastructure objectives, as they have with the projects that have already been completed. When we look at the health sector, we could never have addressed the challenges we are facing in health if we had allowed TAFE fees for nursing, enrolled nursing and all those other courses to stay at the elevated levels that the Liberal–National government had put them at. We needed to firstly fix the budget to create the capacity to invest in TAFE so that we can train the workers we need to put into the economy to generate that economic activity. This government recognises that issues like these cannot be siloed. Issues like these need to be the subject of a comprehensive approach. We need to invest in the creation of positions. We need to invest in infrastructure and training, and we need a dedicated and cohesive cabinet driving that agenda all the way through.

We can look at the record of the Cook and McGowan Labor governments on training. The Labor government froze TAFE fees immediately on coming into government to provide students with price certainty; slashed fees for 210 high-priority courses; partnered with the Albanese government to deliver the Free in '23 initiative, then extended this partnership over the next three years—that is, fee-free training for over 130 full qualifications and short courses; supported job ready programs to provide Western Australians with entry-level skills to take up jobs in high demand, including, as I have said, in construction, bricklaying, aged care, childcare, truck driving and drilling; and conducted a rapid review of skills and training workforce development to ensure that TAFE colleges can continue to quickly adapt and address the needs of industry as part of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The government has done all that, but, in addition, it has made the largest ever infrastructure investment—\$243 million in a capital works program to significantly upgrade 14 TAFE campuses and create world-class learning facilities for students across the state. I was talking about Mt Lawley before and the emphasis that the Mt Lawley TAFE campus puts on the health sector. It has an incredible hospital simulation set-up. The students study in a virtual hospital environment. It is an amazing arrangement. We are graduating job-ready students out of this facility because of the investment that the then McGowan and now Cook Labor governments have made.

The government has invested \$25 million for modern TAFE equipment, reduced fees for existing worker traineeships and introduced the WA jobs and skills employer incentive. Here is a good one. I spoke earlier about the fact

that we have two former secretaries of UnionsWA, two former members of the WA State Training Board—the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Training—but this is not just about the union’s role in the market or the economy; this is also about the employer’s role in the economy.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: The jobs and skills employer incentive provides assistance for small businesses to employ new entrant apprentices and trainees, replacing a tired scheme with loopholes that meant that big businesses avoided paying their share of payroll tax. We are supporting those elements of the economy. We are supporting small businesses to put on the trainees and apprentices that they need to grow their business and at the same time deliver a benefit back to the community of Western Australia. We have extended the construction and training fund levy to cover construction work in the mining sector, significantly increasing the support for apprentices, trainees and their employers. This workforce planning and whole-of-government approach means that we are taking the necessary steps to insulate ourselves from the skills shortages that are now flowing through as a legacy of the years of neglect under the former Liberal–National government.

Members opposite will say next year that we have had enough time to resolve every issue, but the trouble is that the problems they created for us through their negligence are manifesting now, and we are still resolving those issues. But the Liberal lies will be flying thick and fast. They will not let the facts get in the way of their narrative. They will say that we should have previously fixed all these problems. They will forget about COVID and the massive impact that had on the economy and say that everything should have been done. It will be a lazy campaign strategy, but mark my words—that is what they will say.

We introduced the enterprise training program, providing up to \$200 000 for each employer to upskill workers in social assistance and the allied health sector, supporting growing demand in the aged care and disability sector. One thing we have noticed when we have been doing the workforce round tables that the Minister for Health has instituted to address the challenges we are facing in the health workforce is that the transferable nature of skills between the aged–care, disability and health sectors means that particularly in remote and regional communities, we often have people moving between those sectors. Anything that we do to assist growing demand in the aged-care and disability sectors naturally has a corollary benefit for our health workforce. We have invested \$5.1 million to support the introduction of a new apprenticeship pathway in the civil construction sector. As I said before, that is entirely appropriate and necessary for our massive Metronet build. We have delivered a one-off \$2 000 apprentice completion grant. This is a really important initiative. Like all of us, apprentices have a lot going on in their lives. I have spoken to constituents in Mount Lawley who were not able to complete their apprenticeships because they had a lot going on. By providing this incentive, when the going gets tough and when people are in the last six or 12 months of their apprenticeship and they need to know there is light at the end of the tunnel, this \$2 000 apprentice completion grant or the \$500 tool allowance might seem like small things but they make a material difference. They motivate people to get to the finish line, graduate from their courses and become contributing members of the community.

Is there any wonder that employment participation is so high in Western Australia and unemployment is so low? We have the \$1.3 million driver’s licence training program, the women in non-traditional trades scholarship, the apprenticeship and traineeship re-engagement incentive to support apprentices and trainees whose training contract was terminated or cancelled during the COVID pandemic, and the Metronet Trade Training Centre. Here is a really important one: there is \$20 million in defence workforce initiatives to build a pipeline of skilled workers to upcoming Defence Force projects and ensure a pipeline of skilled professional and paraprofessional workers for this priority sector.

When I am speaking to stakeholders in health, they say it would be great if they could start a particular program, project or pilot. I say that that sounds like a great thing to do, but if we start it, will we have the workers to deliver the service? It is all very well to say that something is a great thing to do, but will we have the workers to deliver the service? When we bid as a state or private industry in Western Australia, as we will, and when we build for defence contracting work, we need to know that we have the workers capable of fulfilling that requirement. There is no point bidding for the work and getting the contract if we do not have the workers to do the work. We have funded \$29 million in defence workforce incentives to build a pipeline of skilled workers to support upcoming defence projects. This will become a material part of the Western Australian economy in the months and years ahead as hundreds of workers from the United States and the United Kingdom come to Western Australia as part of the AUKUS arrangement. It will have a significant economic impact in the southern suburbs.

There are heaps of programs. The \$5.5 million job reconnect program will tap into underutilised workers, including older workers to get back into the workforce, easing skill shortages in industries such as construction, hospitality and health. There is no point talking about the new \$6.3 million training facility in Collie because the member for Collie–Preston covered that brilliantly. As the member said, we are the party for the regions. The government has invested \$2.5 million to increase the travel and training allowance for regional apprentices who are required to travel long distances for their training. The member for Central Wheatbelt likes to say that people in the regions do not expect everything that people in the metropolitan area get. But we are doing what we can to equalise that.

We are doing what we can to make sure that trainees and apprentices in the regions have the ability to access the travel and accommodation allowance so that they can travel the distances needed to get the skills and experience they need to complete their apprenticeships.

We have expanded the early childhood education and care job-ready program. When we look at the Albanese government's commitment to child care and increasing access to child care, we know that if we are going to be able to discharge our obligation to the people of Western Australia and say, "We have the provision of child care", we will need these workers trained. Where are we training them? We are training them in Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Karratha, Kununurra, Mandurah, Northam, Perth and Broome—right across Western Australia—to make sure that we have the trained early childhood education and childcare workforce in place to match a federal government investment in this growing sector.

While I am speaking about the federal government, under the historic five-year national skills agreement, the Albanese government unlocked \$1.3 billion in funding to build the skills and prosperity of Western Australia and grow the skilled workforce in Western Australia, including in defence industries, the care sector, clean energy transition, as the member for Collie–Preston spoke about, and digital and technology. When we look at the challenges that we are confronting in that arena, we can see that building a readymade workforce with skills and experience in digital and technology will also be imperative, particularly as we try to maintain Western Australia as a leading economy within the Australian context and also within the global context.

In the time that I have, I want to finish by saying that this government is committed to all the pieces that make up the puzzle. That means not only fixing the state budget, fixing the finances, driving job creation and job growth and participation in the employment market, but also diversifying the economy so that people have opportunities to move into different endeavours. We do not know what the jobs of tomorrow will look like. The workforce is changing dramatically. People who are training as nurses or teachers today might last five or 10 years in health or education before they transition to other fields. By having a well-resourced, well-funded and well-endowed vocational education training system, we can create flexibility in the market so that our workforce is responsive to changing demands and requirements. If we undermine that, all we do is undermine the economic wellbeing of the state of Western Australia. TAFE cannot be eviscerated in the way that it was by the former Liberal–National government without there being a significant consequence for the economy of Western Australia.

If people want to know which party is the party that supports health, it is the Labor Party. The party that supports education is the Labor Party. If people want to know which party supports the regions, it is also the Labor Party because of the investment that we put into the regions. If people want to know which party supports small business, it is also the Labor Party. If they want to know which party supports sound financial management, it is the Labor Party. If people want to know which party supports diversifying the economy and making sure the economy delivers for all Western Australians, it is the Labor Party. People should not be distracted by the arguments that will be advanced next year by the Nationals WA. We have a plan. The plan is working. We need to continue to implement that plan to remedy the legacy of neglect that we were left by the Liberal–National government. We will continue to work assiduously for the benefit of the Western Australian community up until and hopefully beyond the 2025 election. I commend the minister and her advisers for this outstanding legislation and for all the work that she has done in the vocational education and training sector, which is a testament to a long career, all the way back to the WA State Training Board and her time as a union official. I commend the bill to the house.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [6.28 pm]: I feel like I should be throwing in a set of steak knives in my contribution as the member for Mount Lawley has treated us to a laundry list of the government's list of commitments and achievements in the area of TAFE and training. The sentiment of what the member for Mount Lawley has said is true: this government is just doing so much to resource TAFEs and ensure that people from all walks of life have access to good quality training that not only benefits them, but also benefits our whole state.

In speaking on the Vocational Education and Training Amendment Bill 2023, I want to reflect on some of the positive impacts that the government's reforms and commitments have had on my community in Cockburn. The many programs and funding initiatives that the member for Mount Lawley referred to have an impact across the whole state. Every member in this chamber would be able to tell a story about someone who made the decision to retrain or would know of a young person seeking to embark on that next stage in their life. They have been assisted in one way or another by either better access to TAFE courses because of our fee-free or reduced fee initiatives or through the availability of high-quality equipment at our TAFEs, so that they could learn on state-of-the-art equipment and technology. It might also be that they have taken advantage of our services, like the Jobs and Skills Centres, to help them find direction in life.

I want to reflect on the experience of Lakeland Senior High School, which is in the member for Willagee's electorate but its intake area covers much of my electorate. I acknowledge the work of Lakeland Senior High School in vocational education and training. Lakeland Senior High School recently won the 2023 Milwaukee and MPA Skills School Construction Industry Engagement Award. It stood out amongst the finalist schools due to its holistic approach to helping students find opportunities in the construction sector. The school integrates work experience, including in health and safety, into the curriculum and provides students with real-world experience. An example of that is

that students conduct safety audits at the school as part of their course, so they have to put that practical health and safety assessment process into practice. I think that is really fantastic. The school's approach to vocational training in the construction skills space has improved attendance rates amongst its students and increased apprenticeship and traineeship commitments. I really congratulate Lakeland Senior High School for that. It is a fantastic school in my electorate; it is really on the up. The message I want to give today is that Lakeland Senior High School is on the march. This school already does great things, and we can tell that because it has just won the School Construction Industry Engagement Award for 2023.

In acknowledging the efforts of Lakeland Senior High School, I want to acknowledge that its ability to win that award was assisted by the embedding of a career practitioner at the school. The member for Collie–Preston spoke about our initiative to place 70 career practitioners at schools across the state. Lakeland Senior High School is one of those schools. Mrs Suzanne White, the career practitioner at Lakeland Senior High School, has been a key person in driving engagement with vocational education and training and getting students involved in things like construction skills training. I acknowledge Suzanne White for her efforts as the career practitioner. I also acknowledge the efforts of this state government, which takes a holistic approach to training. It is not just about having new equipment for TAFE; it is also about having things like career practitioners in our high schools so that students have access to somebody who can guide them and give them information about the great opportunities out there in vocational education and training. I congratulate Lakeland Senior High School for winning that award and acknowledge the efforts of its principal, Cathy Baron; deputy principals Simon Dober and Natasha Tempest; and career practitioner, Suzanne White. Of course, I also congratulate all the students who contributed towards the school winning that award.

I will reflect on something that several members spoke about—that is, obviously, the Barnett government's terrible record on TAFE and training. Its training policy can only be described as an act of vandalism. The Barnett government basically took the approach of destroying access to our TAFE system. It wanted access to TAFE to be the domain only of people who were wealthy. It cut training places for critical skilled areas or made them so expensive that they were out of the reach of most people. I will reflect on that by going over some of the comments that ministers in the previous Barnett government made to justify their vandalism of the training sector. I was not here at that time, but after reading some of the articles from that period, I really feel for the current Minister for Training and other members of this place who were here and must have had to listen to complete nonsense from Barnett government ministers as they defended what I have called an act of vandalism in training. I will quote from an article published on 9 November 2013 by News Corp titled "Health, aged care, nursing trainees suffer funding blow in Perth TAFE fee hike". Hon Terry Redman, the then Minister for Training and Workforce Development, was quoted in the article. It states —

He said the Priority Industry Qualifications List would be reviewed annually and said nursing, aged care and trade apprenticeships were not on the 2014 list because the industry had "deemed there to be no shortage of workers in these areas this year".

That was a preposterous statement. As if one judges what courses one needs based on the demand in a particular year! Courses may take a number of years to complete. It was just nonsense. Governments have to look at economic forecasts of what the demand for a skill set will be in future years to decide what should be on the priority industry qualifications list. It was a completely ridiculous comment from the then minister. The reality is that we are paying the price for the short-sightedness of the minister and government of that time. Can members imagine if we had had a minister in 2013–14 who had not believed that nursing, aged-care and trade apprenticeships were not priorities? It is amazing to think that the previous government thought those industries would not be priority industries. Plainly, we had an ageing population and the National Disability Insurance Scheme was coming online at that time. We also know that we are in a boom and bust economy, particularly here in Western Australia; yet, Hon Terry Redman said that nursing, aged-care and trade apprenticeships were not priorities. That was completely mad, because we need a pipeline of skills for the future.

The second article that I want to quote from and dissect was published in *The West Australian* on 8 December 2014 and titled "High fees, cut funds 'attack' TAFE". There is a quote in the article from the then Premier, Colin Barnett, who said —

"The TAFE system is primarily funded by the State Government," ...

That is a statement of the obvious, one would have thought! Most people would know that the TAFE system is primarily funded by the state government. He went on to say —

"There has been a rise in fees and while the percentage increases look high, I think the rate of recovery in fees is less than 20 per cent of the cost of providing the course."

This exposes the ideological attack on training that the member for Mount Lawley referred to. The Barnett government thought that the mandate of the state government should be to recover the cost of people undertaking training. It did not understand that the role of the state government is to get an economic dividend for the state from having a better educated and better skilled workforce. That is the economic dividend that the state government needs to pursue through its training system. It should not be concerned about whether it is recovering the costs and

balancing the books when it comes to training, because we reap other dividends in the future. We would be reaping those dividends right now if the Barnett government had not fumbled things back in 2013–14 and so on. The other ridiculous thing about that statement was the Premier’s words “while the percentage increases look high”. Yes, they looked high; they were in excess of 500 per cent. That was high by anybody’s standards. I just think that that sort of glib remark from the former Premier exposed the ideological attack on training by the former government.

The last article I want to quote from is by Hayley Roman, published on 9 August 2015 and titled “Restore TAFE funding to stop soaring fees and falling enrolments, WA teacher’s union says”. This is really the strangest quote of all of them. It is a quote from the then Minister for Training and Workforce Development, Liza Harvey, who is reported to have said —

“What we did was have a look at the level of subsidisation that the Government was providing to the TAFE students,” ...

“We determined that our best effort and highest level of subsidisation should go into our priority skills area, so we’ve had a 6 per cent increase in enrolments in the priority skills areas.

Remember, of course, that the priority skills areas apparently did not include nursing, trades or the like, but put that aside. She went on to say —

“And those are areas of training that we know lead to employment.”

It continues —

Ms Harvey said the Government had simultaneously reduced funding to some of the more “recreational-style” TAFE courses.

“There were some courses in TAFE like bonsai and horticulture and those sort of things ... the State Government is not going to put a funding priority around programs that are not leading to employment,” she said.

Mr J.N. Carey: What is wrong with bonsai?

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I agree with the minister: what is wrong with bonsai? But let us be really plain about this: the Barnett government was not increasing fees or cutting funding for bonsai courses; it was cutting funding and increasing fees for things like the diploma of building and construction, the advanced diploma of engineering technology—electrical and, of course, famously, the diploma of nursing, which ended up costing around \$10 000, but under our government is now free. I cannot imagine having to sit through this kind of nonsense. I imagine the former government trotted out the same lines in the chamber as well. It is flimsy. Referring to horticulture and bonsai courses while simultaneously cutting nursing and construction skills qualifications almost trivialises the issue. It trivialises the issue of trade training and the economic future of the state. It is an absolute shame.

I am very lucky though to be part of a government fixing up the mess left by the Barnett government. This bill is a very small part of addressing some issues around the State Training Board’s jurisdiction. It sits within a broader suite of policies such as those for our jobs and skills centres. I took a friend of mine to the Rockingham centre recently because he had lost his job, and he had a great experience there getting lots of information about how to navigate trades training and get a job. There is our \$25 million investment in state-of-the-art equipment in TAFEs. For example, the Munster campus of South Metropolitan TAFE in my electorate does amazing work in oil and gas and remote operations, and it needs to have the latest equipment. That extra funding from the state government allows venues across the state to make sure that cutting-edge technology and equipment is available to our students, whether it is in nursing, automotive industries or oil and gas, as it is at the Munster campus of South Metropolitan TAFE in my electorate. We have done so much. We have such a commitment to this issue. I commend the minister for the energy she has brought to this portfolio as the new minister, and I commend this bill to the house.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Training) [6.43 pm] — in reply: I thank all members who have made a contribution to the Vocational Education and Training Amendment Bill 2023. I will wrap up by reiterating the objectives of these amendments and respond to some of the comments made.

These are largely technical amendments. If I caught all the contributions, it was probably that of the member for Roe that addressed some of those amendments. In essence, they will provide for an effective appeal mechanism for people affected by decisions of the Training Accreditation Council and the proper delegation of the functions of the chief executive of the Department of Training and Workforce Development under part 7 of the Vocational Education and Training Act and the associated regulations made for the purposes of that part of the act. These amendments were supported by recommendations from the last statutory review of the VET act, which was tabled in Parliament in March 2019.

The first proposed amendment relates to the scope of appeals against decisions of the council, as outlined in section 58G(2) of the VET act. The council, in making decisions about the registration of providers, takes consideration of the commonwealth Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015. These are the registered training organisation standards. The judgement made by the WA Supreme Court of Appeal in 2021 ruled that

the word “standards” is not in scope of existing section 58G(2) of the act. This means that the vast majority of the council’s decisions are not appealable, which essentially denies a person’s right to appeal and does not align with the principles of natural justice. Clause 4 of the bill will amend the wording of section 58G(2) to enable a person to appeal against a decision of the council if it made an error in applying or failed to apply guidelines or criteria issued by the minister under section 13, including standards and guidelines that the council is required to apply.

Clause 5 of the bill will make a consequential amendment to section 58C. This amendment is the result of new wording proposed for section 58G(2). Section 58C is currently limited to council decisions made as a result of processing an application made to the council. Amended section 58C will extend the application of this section to decisions made by the council of its own initiative. Amended section 58C will also provide for criteria to be prescribed in relation to what the council must apply when making a decision. This is in addition to the existing provision of prescribing criteria that the council may or must take into account.

Clause 7 of the bill outlines the transition provisions for appeals that have not yet been determined at the time of the commencement of the amendment act. Amended sections 58G(2) and 58C will apply to an appeal that commenced on or after the commencement day of the amendment act or an appeal that commenced before the commencement day but not determined before that day.

The second amendment relates to the proper delegation of functions of the chief executive of the department in relation to the registration of administration of training contracts under part 7 of the VET act. These functions are largely administrative in nature and performed in large volume. For this reason, it is not practical for the chief executive to personally carry out these administrative functions, and they are typically delegated to the Department of Training and Workforce Development or department officers.

Regulation 35 of the Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009 currently provides for the chief executive to delegate functions. However, there is currently no provision in the act to support such delegations. Clause 6 of the bill will insert new section 60J at the beginning of division 4 of part 7 of the VET act to provide for delegation of the chief executive’s functions under part 7 or regulations made for the purposes of this part. Section 60J will come into effect after regulation 35 is removed from the VET regulations through a regulatory amendment process after the passing of this amendment bill. These amendments are needed to enable a person’s right to appeal and provide for the effective administration of the apprenticeship system.

During briefings, it was asked why the state government was progressing only two of the 11 recommendations from the statutory review of the VET act tabled in Parliament in 2019, as I mentioned previously. There have been a number of significant national skills sector reforms and reviews over the last few years with potential implications for the VET act. We have only recently signed the new five-year National Skills Agreement, and it is more appropriate to re-examine previous recommendations in the context of this new agreement, noting that the next statutory review of the act is due to commence in 2024.

The two matters before the Parliament relate to the operational processes and not the broader intent of the act. Therefore, it is appropriate that we move to resolve these operational aspects now and consider any substantive changes following the next statutory review.

It has been queried who could make an appeal. It has also been queried who can make an appeal to the State Training Board under the amendments and whether this appeal process was available only to RTOs. It was clarified that although a person who wishes to make an appeal is not limited to registered training organisations, in practice, it is unlikely that anyone other than an RTO or call-signer will lodge an appeal in relation to decisions of the Training Accreditation Council.

I am glad to see such strong support for the amendment bill across the chamber. I know that it is getting late, but I want to mention a couple of things that were raised during the debate, and I thank those who contributed to it. We heard from a number of members, including Acting Speaker (Ms A.E. Kent), who talked about the strategic importance of vocational education in Kalgoorlie and in the goldfields and the associated industries in her electorate. These benefits are obvious for not only the mining-related skills and the associated industries that support the mining industry, but also the other occupations and businesses that our community needs to thrive, whether it is in the health sector, the care sector, the early education sector and the like.

Similarly, the member for Collie–Preston acknowledged the importance of the VET training system in her electorate. Who better in this place to do that, apart from the member for Scarborough who has a VET qualification and probably is the only person with a trade qualification in this chamber, although I think the member for Pilbara might have a trade qualification as well. As the former vocational training coordinator and deputy principal of her high school before entering Parliament, the member for Collie–Preston is well placed to understand how the VET system interacts with her local high school students, her local high school and her local community. The changes that we are seeing in Collie in particular is a textbook case of a community in transition from fossil fuel mining activities and the generation of fossil-fuelled electricity at Collie to a new, cleaner industry. The member has been very committed to making sure that there is a just transition for her community and she is focused on it, as the Labor government has been since coming to office in 2017. The VET system, including the jobs and skills

training centre in the middle of town, has been crucial in mapping the individuals who will be impacted by the closure of mines and the transition away from coal-fired energy in the state electricity generators in Collie. The government's attention has been bespoke and focused through the South Regional TAFE and the jobs and skills centres to make sure that each and every person has their own plan in place and that the necessary resources are applied to understand what their options are.

We heard from the member for Roe, who talked about the energy transition clause. He understood the complexity of that and I appreciate some of the comments that he made. Despite himself, he was quite generous by saying that TAFEs are heading in the right direction. He also acknowledged that it is good to see that the young people of Western Australia have access to options, including flexible learning opportunities. Later in his contribution, he had to concede that he did not want to dwell on the coalition's record on vocational training in government. He is a bit too honest despite himself. I appreciate the member for Roe's comments, because he is correct; the opposition would not want to focus on its record. It really got it wrong. A number of our members highlighted that point in their contributions.

The member for Roe talked about what he described as the paperwork requirements for people in trades who have undertaken a certificate IV in training and accreditation. That is the formal qualification needed to be a TAFE lecturer, apart from having technical skills in an area. These are quite important qualifications that we do not walk away from lightly. It is difficult for people who have technical skills in trade or other areas they teach to embark on their TAFE—their cert IV—but it is very important. When people come into our TAFE system, they are supported a lot so they can get on and do their training, but I do not back away from the need for people to have those formal qualifications in teaching, learning and assessment, because we need people who are not only technically skilled, but also have the skills to impart that knowledge to a level that means our students will be competent. We have such a good high-quality vocational training system because we will not back away from requiring both those elements.

The member for Mirrabooka said she was proud of Balga TAFE in the heart of her electorate. The investment we are making to that college is really remarkable. The investment in upgrades for that TAFE and its equipment has totalled more than \$45 million, which is great.

I thank the member for Mount Lawley for his contribution. His contributions are always very considered. He made the point that we had so much to do because of the legacy of the coalition government that we took over from in 2017. Like the training system, the effects are not always immediately apparent. It can sometimes take time for the effects to wash through the system. Training apprentices is a three or four-year exercise. We have to think about down the track as well as about our immediate needs. That is something the previous government was incapable of doing. The repair work that we are doing now continues. He acknowledged the work of his local high school, as did the member for Cockburn. They understand the importance of the career practitioners in high schools. The member for Cockburn was also able to pull out some figures of the Barnett government's record on TAFE and its inability to understand the investment this represents in our economy. Our best natural asset is our people.

I am very conscious of the time, so I will not dwell on this, but I want to acknowledge a couple of important demonstrations of what we are doing. A couple of weeks ago, the Australian Training Awards were held in Hobart. Two WA women took out the top awards at the ceremony. Amy Hunt from Kingsley was named apprentice of the year. She is the only woman and the youngest cable jointer at her worksite, which, of course, is Western Power. She did not really get the accolades she deserves, but everyone here should feel very proud of Amy. I know that the Minister for Energy was really chuffed to see that. Craigie's Holly Gudsell was named Australian VET teacher/trainer of the year. A teaching position in a remote Aboriginal community in Fitzroy Crossing was the catalyst for Holly's change of career. She discovered an interest in Aboriginal education. She has done some work overseas and is now delivering programs for the Department of Education to upskill Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander officers across the Perth metropolitan schools.

There is so much more that I could demonstrate, including the numbers of enrolments in vocational training and completions, which are all up. We are working on not only getting people in, but also tailoring specific programs, which we heard about from members in their contributions, to make sure that we are targeting the areas of need, such as the skilled career taster programs that a number of members talked about in their local high schools. We heard about the incredible opportunities that some of the students in Collie have had through the career taster program. The job-ready programs are short and sharp entry-level programs that are available, and I have met young people whose lives have been changed by them. We are putting in place regional incentives for lecturers or students to make sure that we really understand what is required in our regions. We are doing all that work in vocational education and training. TAFE is the cornerstone of that, although I absolutely acknowledge the work of private providers in the system. They all mean that we have a vocational training system in Western Australia at the moment that is in rude health. It is really going very well. There is more to do—no doubt about it—but we have a solid foundation in our TAFEs, our Department of Training and Workforce Development and our robust regulatory system. I must say that not all states and jurisdictions have that. I was in the United Kingdom a couple of months ago, and it is not in this position. It is very envious of the strong system that we are building here in Western Australia.

With those remarks, I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Ms S.F. McGurk (Minister for Training)**, and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 7.02 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

MINES AND PETROLEUM — AGRICULTURAL LIME MINING — LANCELIN

936. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to Question on Notice 902 from 13 September 2023 with regards to the mining of agricultural lime in Lancelin, and I ask:

- (a) Can the Minister please table all reports/studies relating to:
 - (i) environmental impacts;
 - (ii) impacts of wind currents from the removal of sand;
 - (iii) impact of water quality to the Lancelin township; and
 - (iv) any other relevant reports not mentioned above?

Mr W.J. Johnston replied:

- (a) (i) [See tabled paper no 2551] relating to assessments under the *Mining Act 1978*:

Westdeen Lancelin Limesand Revised Mining Proposal – Version 15, retained on Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety File No. EARS-MPMCP-87678 as Doc ID 7882400.

Westdeen Lancelin Limesand Mining Proposal – Appendix A Site Plan – November 2020, retained on Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety File No. EARS-MPMCP-87678 as Doc ID 7848432.

Westdeen Lancelin Limesand Mining Proposal – Appendix B Water Management Plan V5 – November 2020, retained on Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety File No. EARS-MPMCP-87678 as Doc ID 7850923.

Lancelin Limesand Mine Closure Plan – Version 8” retained on Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety File No. EARS-MPMCP-87678 as Doc ID 7848421.

I am advised that assessments were also completed by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) in 1987 and 1991 (EPA Reports 294 and 580). Further enquiries regarding assessments under the EP Act should be referred to the Minister for Environment.

- (ii) [See tabled paper no 2551.]:

“Migration of limesand dunes in Western Australia and their impacts: Implications of a geohazard along the Mid West coast of Western Australia, dated February 2017”
- (iii) Please refer to the reports tabled in (i). Further reports/studies on the impact of water quality to the Lancelin Township should be referred to the Minister for Water.
- (iv) Nil.

MAIN ROADS — HEAVY VEHICLE SERVICES

937. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Transport:

With reference to Question without Notice 908 asked in the Legislative Council on 29 August 2023, regarding Main Roads WA’s heavy vehicle services, will the Minister provide a breakdown of costs for the installation of in-vehicle telemetry and on-board mass management system, for Heavy Tow Trucks, including scales, camera, GPS tracking, cost to install to vehicles, calibration, maintenance and ability to store data for five years?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

The costs of these systems and services are a commercial arrangement between the operator and service providers, which may vary depending on existing commercial relationships.

Most heavy vehicle operators already have cameras and GPS telematics devices installed to manage their fleets efficiently.

MAIN ROADS — HEAVY VEHICLE SERVICES

938. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Transport:

With reference to Question without Notice 908 asked in the Legislative Council on 29 August 2023, regarding Main Road’s WA’s heavy vehicle service, please detail the other states in Australia considering introducing in-vehicle telemetry and on-board mass management systems for Heavy Tow Trucks and the time line associated with this introduction.?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

Main Roads has provided the independent engineering report and the new operating conditions to other jurisdictions. As a result, Main Roads was asked to present the new requirements at a recent Austroads meeting.

All jurisdictions indicated support of the requirements introduced by WA and expressed their desire to adopt similar requirements. Victoria and Tasmania advised they will be using the report to shape their future access and potentially harmonise the requirements.

POLICE — FIREARMS LICENCES

939. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the Firearms Act 1973 and the Firearms Regulations 1974, and I ask:

- (a) At the time of answering, what is the exact number of licensed firearms in this State:
- (i) How many of the licensed firearms are held with “dealers” as defined in the Act:
- (A) Please breakdown further by each Local Government Area;
- (ii) How many of the licensed firearms in the State are “paintball guns” as defined in the Act:
- (A) Please breakdown further by each Local Government Area; and
- (iii) How many of the licensed firearms are owned by:
- (A) Individuals holding a “Dealer’s Licence” as defined in the Act;
- (B) Individuals holding a “Repairer’s Licence” as defined in the Act; and
- (C) (c)Individuals holding a “Manufacturer’s Licence” as defined in the Act;
- (b) At the time of answering, what is the exact number of “Firearm Licence” holders as defined in the Act, in this State:
- (i) Please breakdown further by each Local Government;
- (c) At the time of answering, what is the exact number of “Firearm Collector’s Licence” holders as defined in the Act, in this State:
- (i) Please breakdown further by each Local Government; and
- (d) At the time of answering, what is the exact number of “Corporate Licence” holders as defined in the Act, in this State?

Mr P. Papalia replied:

The Western Australia Police Force advise:

- (a) 362701 – As at 31 October 2023
- (i) 45020 – As at 31 October 2023
- (A)

Local Government Area	Number of Firearms held with Dealers
Avon–Midland	1731
Central Country	1295
Central Metropolitan	713
East Metropolitan	7747
Gascoyne	754
Goldfields–Esperance	1457
Great Eastern	505
Great Southern	1674
Kimberley	1053
Murchison	4
Northern Metropolitan	5544
Northern Country	1583
Peel	2009
Pilbara	819

South East Metropolitan	8591
South Metropolitan	6563
South West	2978

(ii) 5487 – As at 31 October 2023

(A)

Local Government Area	Number of Paintball Guns
Avon–Midland	89
Central Country	25
Central Metropolitan	24
East Metropolitan	812
Gascoyne	5
Goldfields–Esperance	124
Great Eastern	18
Great Southern	112
Kimberley	4
Murchison	5
Northern Metropolitan	2170
Northern Country	15
Peel	498
Pilbara	12
South East Metropolitan	371
South Metropolitan	877
South West	326

(iii) (A) 2049 – As at 31 October 2023

(B) 0 – As at 31 October 2023

(C) 0 – As at 31 October 2023

(b) 87608 – As at 31 October 2023

(i) The Western Australia Police Force is unable to answer this question as there is no specific data reported for Local Government Areas of firearms licence holders on the Licensing and Registry System.

(c) 2548 – As at 31 October 2023

(i)

Local Government Area	Number of Firearms Collector's Licences
Avon–Midland	163
Central Country	81
Central Metropolitan	155
East Metropolitan	387
Gascoyne	25
Goldfields / Esperance	78
Great Eastern	49
Great Southern	156
Kimberley	26
Murchison	9

Northern Metropolitan	376
Northern Country	74
Peel	130
Pilbara	17
South East Metropolitan	255
South Metropolitan	282
South West	285

(d) 384 – As at 31 October 2023

MINES AND PETROLEUM — GOLD CORPORATION — RISK ANALYSIS

941. Mr R.S. Love to the Treasurer:

I refer to the independent analysis of options to reduce the State’s risk in relation to Gold Corporation, as outlined on page 135 of 2023/24 Budget Paper 2 Volume I, and I ask:

- (a) Has the independent advisor been appointed:
- (i) If yes, who is it;
 - (ii) If not appointed when will they be appointed;
 - (iii) When are they expected to report;
 - (iv) Will the report be released to the public;
 - (v) Will the report be tabled;
 - (vi) Will the Treasurer advise the Opposition when the report is received;
 - (vii) What is the total cost of the review; and
 - (viii) What are the cost breakdown of the review?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

- (a) Ad Astra has been appointed as the independent adviser. Finalisation of independent advice is subject to the consideration of the implications of the recently-released Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) Review.

TRANSPORT — TOW TRUCK INDUSTRY

943. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister assisting the Minister for Transport:

I refer to legislation being drafted to reform the towing industry, and I ask:

- (a) Can the Minister advise the timeline for the introduction of this legislation to parliament; and
- (b) Has the Minister met with relevant stakeholders? If yes, please advise when and the stakeholders involved?

Mr D.R. Michael replied:

- (a) The Road Traffic (Towing Services) Bill is currently being drafted as a priority and will be introduced once approved by cabinet.
- (b) Since being a sworn into Cabinet in June the Minister regularly meets with a range of transport stakeholders including The Motor Trades Association, the Insurance Council of Australia and the RAC and reform of the towing industry has been raised at these meetings.

GOVERNMENT REGIONAL OFFICERS’ HOUSING

944. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to Government Regional Officer’s Housing properties in Western Australia and I ask:

- (a) What is the total number of Government Regional Officer Housing properties in Western Australia by region, and of those:
- (i) how many are currently tenanted;
 - (ii) how many are unoccupied;
 - (iii) of those unoccupied, how many are currently undergoing major or large scale maintenance; and
 - (iv) of those unoccupied what is the longest period they have been unoccupied?

Mr J.N. Carey replied:

- (a) (i)–(iv) As at 30 September 2023, there was a total of 5,168 Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) properties throughout Western Australia. The utilisation of GROH properties allocated to client agencies is determined by the agency, including who will tenant the property and when they will start their tenancy. Communities facilitates this by undertaking incoming property inspections and working with tenants as required by the client agency.

As at 30 September 2023, 97% of GROH properties are currently occupied or allocated to a client agency for their use. The remaining three percent of properties may be undergoing maintenance or refurbishment or being considered for redevelopment potential based on factors such as age, location and land size.

Over an average 12-month period, up to one third of all GROH portfolio tenancies may turnover due to normal rotation of staff in regional locations, agencies rotating staff on fixed tenure arrangements and staff leave, for example maternity leave for regional teachers or police. When the properties are vacated they undergo varying degrees of maintenance or refurbishment works before the next tenant moves into the property.

Communities routinely assesses its housing stock, including vacant GROH properties. The number of unallocated properties i.e. those that are not allocated to a client agency does not necessarily equate to the number of vacant properties, as GROH properties may be privately leased to non-government organisations, not for profits or members of the public to ensure utilisation. Where appropriate, GROH properties that no longer have client agency demand are considered for use as public housing.

The table below provides a breakdown of occupied and vacant GROH properties by region. Allocated GROH properties may be vacant at a point in time for a number of operational reasons, including the recruitment and deployment of new employees and the need for availability for employees providing relief work. Unallocated vacant properties may be new to the portfolio, undergoing major works or being considered for future use.

Region	Occupied	Vacant as at 30 September 2023	
		Allocated to a client agency	Unallocated to a client agency
South Metro	19	5	1
East Metro	2	0	0
Great Southern	238	33	5
Southwest	197	28	5
Goldfields	714	75	15
Midwest/Gascoyne	508	69	10
Pilbara	1247	120	43
West Kimberley	744	71	12
Wheatbelt	494	76	17
East Kimberley	356	51	13

