THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland) took the chair at 9.00 am, and read prayers.

BAYSWATER WETLANDS

Petition

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [9.01 am]: I have a petition that complies with the standing orders of the house and has been signed by two people. The petition is against the destruction of sensitive wetlands in Bayswater. It reads —

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

We, the undersigned, say the State Government must do more to protect the fragile ecosystems of our sensitive wetlands, in this case the privately owned wetland adjacent to the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary. This land, known as Skipper’s Row and adjoining lot are known to provide refuge to unique and endangered species, such as long neck turtles and the rare moaning fox. These wetlands are greatly valued by visitors and the local community as part of a much loved and well-used park and sanctuary and must be protected.

We understand the WA Planning Commission has approved pre-development works to commence on Skipper’s Row, despite the City of Bayswater voting against this development. Moreover, under existing legislation, such subdivisions are not assessed to ensure they comply with the Environmental Protection Act. This is unacceptable.

Whilst pre-development work is already underway at Skipper’s Row, the community is very concerned this will damage the existing wetland contained in the buffer zone which separates the development from the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary.

We ask the Legislative Assembly to strengthen environmental conservation laws for the protection of WA’s unique wildlife and ecosystems and to ensure that any proposals to destroy native vegetation for urban development are appropriately assessed under the Environmental Protection Act.

[See petition 384.]

Nonconforming Petition

Ms L.L. BAKER: I should point out that I also have 3 336 signatures on a nonconforming petition.

The SPEAKER: The conforming petition has been tabled, but you can keep the nonconforming petition.

VISITORS — MURDOCH UNIVERSITY, PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY UNIT

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland): Before we proceed, I would just like to welcome the students from Murdoch University’s parliamentary democracy unit, who are in the public gallery to watch us for a short time.

PAPERS TABLED

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

BEACH ACCESS STAIRWAY — TWO ROCKS

Grievance

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler) [9.04 am]: I wish to grieve to the Minister for Transport. The title of the grievance is “Beach access stairs at Two Rocks”, but that is only an abbreviation of the problem. I am sure the minister already knows about this problem. When I listed this grievance I got a very brief reply back from the minister’s office saying that the stairs north of the Two Rocks marina are a local government problem and referring me to an article carried in the Community Newspaper Group’s North Coast Times concerning the community’s concerns as expressed to the City of Wanneroo. The Mayor of the City of Wanneroo, Tracey Roberts, and two councillors, Sabine Winton and Nat Sangalli, have asked me to raise this grievance. These stairs just north of the Two Rocks marina provide the only access to the beach for residents living north of the Two Rocks Shopping Centre and have been severely undermined by erosion. The minister’s office responded, saying that this is essentially a council problem. Well, yes and no. The stairway that gives residents access to the beach is indeed a local government asset, but the erosion is directly caused—this has been
conceded by the government in discussions with the city—by the design of the seawalls of the Two Rocks marina. There is ongoing erosion that will not stop. It has been going on for some years and it has now undermined the only access to the beach. In future years, it will get back to threatening the road, as the erosion did in Quinns Rocks.

There has been huge community concern about this. I wish to pay tribute to Elysia Regan, Ali Moore and Peter Turner of the Two Rocks community for their ongoing community efforts to get a resolution to this problem. They have gathered 672 signatories from around Two Rocks calling for this to be resolved. There were community meetings at the Phil Renkin Recreation Centre in Two Rocks and a recent public meeting was held down at the beach, attended by the mayor and councillors Sabine Winton and Nat Sangalli, to whom I have already referred. The city says that it will have to remove the stairway because it is unstable to the point of being dangerous. The residents appreciate that. But the city says that the stairway is unstable because it has been undermined by the erosion directly caused by the state government–owned asset, the Two Rocks marina, and by the shape of the state government asset’s seawalls.

There are two solutions, which both involve the state government. The City of Wanneroo has written to the state government on several occasions without receiving any positive response, the latest being in 2015, as I understand it from the briefing papers supplied to council. The two solutions include a permanent solution that will forever protect the state government’s asset and also the City of Wanneroo’s asset—the roadway—but also, in the immediate short term, any beach access. This solution involves the construction of two short groynes to interrupt the northerly drift that is so swiftly eroding the beach and causing this problem. That is the first solution. We appreciate that, in these straitened economic times, the government might not want to go to that solution immediately. It might not be in a position to go to that solution immediately because it has taken this economy to $36 billion in debt, but it is its problem—it has caused the problem with its state government asset. There is a shorter-term fix—that is, to build a more secure access by driving some concrete pylons into the rock bed beneath the sand dunes to stabilise the foundations and to then reconstruct the stairway down to the beach. The community has even gone to the expense of coming up with preliminary design drawings for how that might be achieved and are waiting for a response from the City of Wanneroo.

The Mayor of the City of Wanneroo asked me to take this matter into the state Parliament and to raise it with the Minister for Transport. Although the state government, the Department of Transport and the City of Wanneroo are at one on the cause of this erosion—that is, the state government asset, the Two Rocks marina—we cannot get a response from the state government of any commitment or any indication of commitment for either a long-term or short-term solution—that is, the construction of two very short rock headlands that will break the flow of the northerly drift, which is dictated by the marina seawalls, or, given that the government has caused the damage, to at least come to the party and give the community access to the beach by providing a really stable staircase. What I am seeking this morning is an answer for the City of Wanneroo and the community of Two Rocks. I want an indication from the minister that the community and council need not worry if the government does not adopt a long-term solution. Given that a state-owned asset is behind the damage and erosion of the stairway—I appreciate that it was not designed by the present minister and that it goes back in history—when the minister stands in Parliament this morning, I plead with him to say, “It’s all right; the state government will not abandon you. We will see this stairway properly reconstructed to give you safe access to the beach.”

MR D.C. NALDER (Alfred Cove — Minister for Transport) [9.10 am]: The state government has undertaken a fair amount of work to the amenity in Two Rocks, particularly considering that in recent times it took back the lease of the Two Rocks marina. It has done some fantastic work to establish a new boat ramp, new parking bays and new amenities at the marina for the benefit of all those in the community. The state itself has played a major role in supporting the community of Two Rocks. It is also important to understand that infrastructure above the high water mark is the responsibility of local government. The stairwell falls under the responsibility of the City of Wanneroo.

In July this year, the City of Wanneroo wrote to my department seeking support for the demolition and removal of the stairwell that has eroded as a result of a major storm in May. As I said, that responsibility sits squarely with the City of Wanneroo. That said, there are a number of coastal issues up and down the whole coast of Western Australia and the government is continually looking at ways to support local shires and assist them with erosion issues. The government has adopted a clear and comprehensive state coastal planning policy to avoid future development in erosion or inundation risk areas. The policy requires coastal managers to undertake a risk management approach, which includes local governments, with economically sustainable management actions that are suitable for the organisations that implement them. At the end of the day, the implementation is the responsibility of the City of Wanneroo. The construction of new coastal protection structures must be considered only as a last resort. To assist local coastal managers, three relevant state government annual grants programs are available to them—namely, the Western Australian Planning Commission’s Coastal Management Plan Assistance program and its Coastwest funding program, and the Department of Transport’s Coastal Adaptation
and Protection grants program. The department has replied to the city, outlining the fact that coastal adaptation and protection funding has already been fully allocated to coastal management projects this financial year. The largest 2016-17 funding allocation of $300 000 was provided to the City of Wanneroo to construct coastal management structures and undertake sand replacement at Quinns Beach as part of the first stage of a long-term coastal management strategy for that area.

The department will monitor the spending of the 2016-17 project and work with the city to consider the Two Rocks staircase removal project for funding if there are any savings from other funded projects. Although funding is no longer available this year, I encourage the city to continue to work with the department and apply for coastal adaptation and protection funding in 2017-18. Applications open in February 2017.

I reiterate that if we are going to look at further works in the sea to assist with coastal erosion, they must be taken as a last resort. The requirement is on the city to ensure that it does the proper analysis and works to make sure that whatever program is put in place can be sustained in the long term. The request in July 2016 sought funding for the abolition and removal of the staircase, which is the responsibility of the local government.

JOONDALUP HEALTH CAMPUS — EXPANSION

Grievance

MR J. NORBERGER (Joondalup — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.15 am]: My grievance this morning to the Minister for Health relates to the future expansion of the Joondalup Health Campus. As the minister knows, the Joondalup Health Campus has been providing outstanding health services to the residents of the northern suburbs for many decades now. It has also had a very successful public–private partnership with Ramsay Health Care for the last 20 years.

The hospital has come a long way from its 84-bed Wanneroo hospital days. Our state government has plenty to be proud of in supporting that growth. Over the past eight years, the state government has partnered with Ramsay Health to fund a number of upgrades to accommodate the growing needs of a growing community. For example, 2014 saw the completion of the $360 million upgrade that took the hospital from a 380-bed general hospital to a state-of-the-art 664-bed sub- tertiary facility, with an expanded emergency department, a special care nursery, 12 new operating theatres, a catheterisation lab, a clinical school and upgraded pathology and radiological facilities. More recently, we have seen the opening of the new 37-bed Telethon Children’s Ward, which provides an additional 13 paediatric beds and an amazing new ward for the children of the northern suburbs. Construction will also commence shortly on a new 10-bed mental health observation area. Each of these expansions has been welcomed and, indeed, timely, but our community is growing, and rapidly so. I believe now is the time for the state to seriously consider the future needs of the health campus and commence the next stage in development required to keep up with demand.

The population growth for the Cities of Joondalup and Wanneroo has been and will continue to be very strong. The population of the northern suburbs is expected to exceed 500,000 by 2020. The impact of this growth is already showing in the hospital’s statistics. In 2015–16, the Joondalup Health Campus had 95,485 attendances at its emergency department, representing a growth of 34 per cent over a five-year period. This statistic alone merits further consideration. To put this in context, the Joondalup Health Campus ED is one of the busiest emergency departments in the country. It is only slightly less busy than the emergency department at Fiona Stanley Hospital, which, incidentally, has 16 more treatment bays than Joondalup Health Campus.

Over the past five years, medical procedures have risen by 75 per cent to more than 30,000 a year and births are up 80 per cent in the same period to 4,279 per annum, which is staggering growth. Amazingly, and to the full credit of the staff and management at the hospital, the health campus has handled this growth without compromising the fantastic standards of clinical care that residents of the northern suburbs have benefited from over the years.

The Australian Medical Association recently surveyed 500 doctors-in-training about the morale and culture of the hospital at which they worked. Joondalup Health Campus received the highest rating for morale, at 97 per cent. All these statistics tell me that the residents of the northern suburbs have a wonderful hospital with outstanding staff and that the public is voting with their feet and using the hospital as intended. However, if we are to maintain this outstanding level of service and high level of morale, we have to keep up with the growing health needs of a growing population. A growing community needs a growing hospital. As such, I ask that the minister and his department expedite discussions with the hospital about the next phase of development required to keep up with demand. It is not my place to be prescriptive of the exact needs, but I know that parking is an issue at the hospital and certainly the emergency department requires additional growth. Any growth in the emergency department will no doubt also require more theatres and more ward beds. The details, however, are best left to the Department of Health and Ramsay Health Care.
To be clear, as the local member for Joondalup, I could not be more proud of the efforts of staff and management at Joondalup Health Campus. I am proud of the investment the state and Ramsay Health Care have put into this hospital over the years. I simply ask that we continue this proud tradition and continue to invest in our hospital for the ongoing benefit of the northern suburbs.

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Minister for Health) [9.20 am]: I thank the member for Joondalup for raising the issue of the needs of Joondalup Health Campus and the population in the northern suburbs. As the member for Joondalup he obviously has a strong interest in the future of Joondalup Health Campus and has made that clear to me in the few months that I have been back in the role of Minister for Health. He made similar representations to my predecessor—who is in the chamber at the moment—and last week he indicated to me that he wanted to raise a grievance to make a case for the further growth of Joondalup Health Campus.

There has been quite substantial growth in recent times. The health campus is the biggest hospital in Perth’s northern corridor, now having 664 beds, including 519 public beds and 145 private beds. As was indicated, the major redevelopment was completed in 2013 or 2014. I cannot remember the exact year. It was about a $393 million redevelopment that provided a new and expanded emergency department, 12 new operating theatres, which doubled the previous number; a nine-bed intensive care unit; a six-bed high dependency unit; a 10-bed coronary care unit; a new specialist medical centre; a new antenatal clinic and an after-hours general practitioner clinic. That reflects the substantial growth in demand in the area in the last financial year. At 30 June this year, there had been 98 432 presentations to the emergency department and just over 74 000 admissions to the hospital. A 3.3 per cent increase in funding was provided for the amount of treatment being provided at the hospital in 2016–17 compared with 2015–16. That funding increase is certainly higher than the rate of inflation and reflects population growth in the Perth metropolitan area and the northern suburbs in particular.

The redevelopment is a very good example of how the private and public sectors can work together to deliver services for the benefit of the public. It was funded by the state government to the extent of $230 million and Ramsay Health Care provided $163 million of capital. I am advised the federal government contributed a small amount in this case—$1.4 million under the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services. The public–private partnership between Ramsay Health Care and the Liberal–National government goes back 20 years to 1996 and continues to go from strength to strength. I was pleased to attend a Ramsay Health Care event a couple of months ago that celebrated 20 years of the successful partnership that has been in place.

In addition to the major redevelopment I just referred to, there was the Joondalup Private Hospital redevelopment of 145 beds, which freed up additional beds for public patients. In June this year I was very pleased to be involved in the opening of the Telethon Children’s Ward, as the member for Joondalup indicated. There was $12.1 million provided for that, with $3.1 million from the state government, $6 million from Telethon and $3 million from Ramsay Health Care, which has resulted in a 37-bed world-class facility, meaning there is an extra 13 paediatric beds at Joondalup Health Campus. The mental health observation area has also been funded and construction of that project will get underway soon. The 10-bed facility was announced in May this year and $7.1 million has been provided, with $5.1 million from the state government and $2 million from Ramsay. The completion of that project is expected to occur in November next year.

It is significant that of the almost 100 000 people who I mentioned attending the emergency department in 2014–15, about three per cent were treated for psychiatric disorders and about 30 per cent of those required admission to a mental health unit. The purpose-built facility will enable patients with a mental illness to be placed in an appropriate environment in which they can be accurately assessed and the correct treatment pathway determined without the time pressures that exist in the emergency department. It is desirable from the point of view of both the patients who present at the hospital with a significant mental health problem and the other patients in the emergency department that they be segregated, if possible.

As far as the future is concerned, I have had some discussions with the Department of Health about the need for Joondalup Health Campus to grow to cater for the growing population in the northern suburbs. Further work will be done on that over the next few months and, indeed, over the next couple of years or so. That needs to be done on a coordinated basis in relation to growth needs across the Perth metropolitan area, but we very much recognise that there has been and will continue to be major population growth in the northern corridor. People living in that corridor need to be provided with appropriate health services of the standard being provided at Joondalup Health Campus, as the member acknowledged, and in a greater quantity in the future. Further discussions and planning work will be undertaken to ensure that those needs are adequately addressed, and I once again thank the member for his interest in Joondalup Health Campus.

JOONDALUP HEALTH CAMPUS — DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STRATEGIC ASSET PLAN

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.27 am]: I too rise to grieve on the issue of Joondalup Health Campus. I have a slightly different approach from the member for Joondalup. I begin by acknowledging the work by the former Minister for Health on the Joondalup hospital and its expansion. The current Minister for Health is not a patch on the old one. It is funny how we appreciate these people in hindsight.
Mr J.H.D. Day: That is different to what you said four months ago.

The SPEAKER: Okay!

Mr R.H. COOK: And it has changed in the last 24 hours, Minister for Health, because clearly the previous Minister for Health had buckets more integrity than you have.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

The SPEAKER: Right, thank you. That is enough!

Mr R.H. COOK: That has been demonstrated to me in buckets and spades over the last 24 hours and that has been an informative and educative process.

Mr Speaker, you would be aware that last week the Auditor General brought down a report, the first of its kind, about the government’s refusal to make documents available to Parliament, which would be considered unacceptable to withhold from Parliament. Those documents would provide Parliament with a good demonstration of the government’s thinking on the development of strategic assets. The report went across three departments and one of those was the Department of Health. We sought to access the strategic asset plan for the Department of Health, which the previous Minister for Health withheld, unreasonably so, according to the Auditor General. It was withheld from Parliament.

This government that is supposed to be open and transparent has demonstrated once again that it is a government of secrecy and the very opposite of transparency. An important part of the democratic process is understanding how our public hospitals are being developed to meet the demands of a growing community. In the “WA Health Clinical Services Framework 2010–2020”, Joondalup Health Campus was pegged to be developed into a 600-bed facility. In the last clinical services framework those bed numbers were revised down to around the current level of 484. Since the publication of the clinical services framework the paediatric beds have come on, so let us say the number is in the low 500s.

The member for Joondalup is right in bringing to this place a grievance about the capacity of Joondalup hospital. The member for Joondalup would have been in a better position to judge the situation if the government had done what the Auditor General said it should have done and provided the strategic asset plan for the Department of Health. We could then see what the minister’s plans for this hospital are and how it will meet the needs of the growing population in Wanneroo and Joondalup. As the member for Joondalup pointed out, Joondalup hospital is coming under intense demand by people wanting to access its services. Last week, Joondalup hospital had the second busiest emergency department; it was second only to Fiona Stanley Hospital. Although it had only 20 more ambulance attendances than St John of God hospital in Midland, it had nearly three times the level of ramping of that hospital. In 2013, Joondalup hospital represented just over 23 per cent of ambulance ramping that occurs throughout the state. As the Minister for Health would be aware, it is concerning to see that so far in 2016, Joondalup hospital represents almost one-third of the ramping that takes place in this state. The previous Minister for Health banned ramping under a decree in the midst of a hissy fit in the budget estimates, yet we see ambulance ramping continue to paralyse our emergency department services.

Tellingly, Joondalup hospital has the lowest off-stretcher time proportion of any hospital in Western Australia. Even blind Freddy can see that Joondalup hospital is coming under intense demand. Would it not be appropriate for the government of the day to put forward its plans for that public hospital? So far we have the clinical services framework, which demonstrates that the government has no plans to expand the number of beds in that hospital, so we look to other documents to provide us with some indication that the Minister for Health is doing more than what he just said in this chamber, which is having a discussion with the Department of Health. We want to see concrete plans that demonstrate the government’s vision and expansion program for Joondalup hospital. The key document that would demonstrate that is the strategic asset plan. I ask the Minister for Health to ignore the stubbornness of his predecessor, create a new start in the area of health policy and commit to transparency and openness, which the Premier said was going to be a hallmark of his government. The strategic asset plan will allow us to see exactly what the government has planned for this hospital. Until the minister makes the strategic asset plan available we have only the clinical services framework to rely upon, which demonstrates no plans to expand the hospital, and the government will be relegating it to having an ongoing restriction on bed numbers and continued queuing and ambulance ramping. I call upon the minister to make the strategic asset plan available.

Mr J.H.D. Day (Kalamunda — Minister for Health) [9.34 am]: I thank the member for Kwinana for raising the issue of Joondalup Health Campus and the health needs of the population in the northern corridor. He followed on from the member for Joondalup’s grievance and was very flexible in his approach to the role of my predecessor in this portfolio. He started out congratulating him but then changed his tune to be very critical —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members.
Mr J.H.D. DAY: The member cannot seem to make up his mind but we will assume he is taking a more positive view today.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: We have had enough, member for Kwinana. Let us get going.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, member. As soon as we mention Jim McGinty in this house things degenerate. Let us get back on topic here.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: In relation to the strategic asset plans of the Department of Health and, indeed, other portfolios, the government’s view on advice from the Department of Treasury is that they are part of the state’s annual budget process and therefore are considered cabinet-in-confidence. That has been the approach taken across government. The Auditor General has a different view but the former Minister for Health was acting on the advice to which I just referred. I am sure that the Labor Party when it was in government would have had exactly the same approach. As I indicated in the previous grievance, there has been a substantial commitment to expanding health services at Joondalup Health Campus, including hospital beds in particular, the emergency department and other aspects. Since we have been in government we have made a substantial commitment that has been demonstrated by an increase in the number of public beds provided at Joondalup Health Campus to 519. As I said before, there will no doubt need to be further growth for the northern suburbs, and exactly how that is likely to be done has not been finalised at this stage.

Reference was made by the member for Kwinana to the prevalence of ramping, which certainly has been a problem in recent times. It reflects the ever growing and virtually insatiable demand on our public hospital system. In Australia we have a health system in which every Australian citizen can get “free” treatment at our public hospitals. We provide a very good public hospital system of world standard and people want to use it and they do so in ever increasing numbers. All state governments around Australia are finding it very hard to keep up with the level of demand and the costs that that entails. Since we came into government in 2008 there has been a virtual doubling of expenditure on providing health services in the state from $4.8 billion to $8.6 billion—an increase of about 80 per cent, which is not far off from double. It is a huge increase that is much greater than the rate of inflation and is putting substantial pressure on the overall state budget that the Treasurer deals with. I held this role a bit over 15 years ago, and since that time the amount of state budget expenditure in this area has almost quadrupled from $2.2 billion to the current $8.6 billion. This is having an enormous consequence on the state’s finances and is putting pressure on the state budget. The main problem is that debt levels and the current deficit are not caused by capital works expenditure but by the fact that we do not have the income to pay salaries and wages at the level established, and that takes up about three-quarters of the state’s budget. What is coming from the health system is a major aspect, but it is certainly not the only aspect of the pressure on the state’s finances. As I said, further planning will be undertaken but exactly how and where further growth should occur has not been finalised.

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Mr R.H. Cook: So you have no long-term plan?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There are long-term plans. They are always under review. Now that a number of other issues are being settled, I will have further discussions with the Department of Health, no doubt in some detail. This planning does need to occur over the next couple of years or so. However, there has been major growth at Joondalup Health Campus—largely funded by the state government and partly funded by Ramsay Health Care—in the last three years or so, to deal with the population growth. As I said, we will address these issues further, and the plan is continually under review.

I am somewhat fascinated that the opposition has a strong interest in Joondalup Health Campus. In my comments on the previous grievance, I reflected on the very strong partnership that has been established over the last 20 years between the public and the private sectors in providing very good health services through Joondalup Health Campus—through the involvement of the private sector. The Labor Party does not support this approach. I note from the state WA Labor platform that, amongst other things, it will not extend any contracts for privatised hospitals or services. It also states that WA Labor will negotiate early termination of these contracts and return these hospitals and services to public ownership as soon as possible.

Residents of the northern suburbs and much more widely in Western Australia would be very interested to know from opposition members—the shadow Minister for Health and maybe the Leader of the Opposition—exactly what their plans will be should they be elected to government at the next election in March next year. Under a Labor government, should we be faced with that situation, what will it do, when will it commence negotiations and when will it expect the management and operation of Joondalup Health Campus to be brought back into government? I expect a bit more explanation from the opposition in that respect.
MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [9.42 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Racing and Gaming. It concerns the approval for a Con’s Liquor store to be built in Utakarra. I will just say welcome back, minister. This grievance concerns the approval for Con’s Liquor to build a large, destination-type, 1,200 square metre liquor store at lot 86 Utakarra Road, Geraldton. The submission states that Geraldton lacks proper competition, has a limited range—despite there being 20 existing stores—and existing services and facilities were described as poor. It states that in 2011, Geraldton had the seventh highest recorded population growth out of Australia’s seventy largest growth areas. It states that the City of Greater Geraldton expects demand for large format retailing to double in the next 20 years and the population to grow to between 50,000 and 100,000 people. Most of the projections made under the city’s former chief executive officer are now pretty much totally discredited and ignored. The submission relied on 18 consumer questionnaires and a phone survey of some 401 people. It found that 63 per cent of people within three kilometres supported the application. I point out that 18 is hardly a valid sample group and that the phone survey results are meaningless unless the questions are stated.

Objections to the submission were received from the Commissioner of Police; the Executive Director of Public Health; myself as the member for Geraldton; three local liquor shop proprietors; Mr Richard de Trafford, who was then a councillor of the City of Greater Geraldton; Ms Corryn Bull, chair of the Rangeway Utakarra Karloo Progress Association; the Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation; and the Geraldton Streetwork Aboriginal Corporation. The police submission points out the change in the local economy since the downturn in iron ore prices and that the surrounding suburbs have a high level of socioeconomic disadvantage, high numbers of Aboriginal people and high levels of unemployment. Let us remember that it is the police who get called out to try to sort out the results of excessive alcohol consumption. The Geraldton Streetwork Aboriginal Corporation’s concerns included an increase in binge drinking amongst youth due to cheaper alcohol, which will be followed by increased crime rates. The Executive Director of Public Health made the following points. He stated that the size of the facility is the equivalent of five more stores in addition to the 10 that are already within three kilometres. The availability of alcohol directly relates to the frequency of a range of health and social problems. EDPH surveys also show that 41 per cent of people would buy more alcohol if it were cheaper. EDPH also submitted figures that show alcohol consumption is already higher in the statistical division of Geraldton at 24.89 litres of pure alcohol per person compared with Greenough at 11.95 litres per person and the state at 13.24 litres per person. Hospitalisation rates for all alcoholic conditions for Geraldton East SA2 and Geraldton SA2 were 1.19 and 1.42 times higher than the state rate.

In the suburbs of Utakarra, Wonthella, Rangeway and Karloo, alcohol-affected domestic assault offence rates are between five and 14 times the state average. Likewise, the unemployment rate in Geraldton is 7.2 per cent, but it is 11.4 per cent in Utakarra, 12.2 per cent in Rangeway and 18.9 per cent in Karloo. These areas are classified as highly disadvantaged in socioeconomic indexing. Aboriginal people make up 6.6 per cent of the Geraldton population, 23.7 per cent of Utakarra, 24.3 per cent of Rangeway and 32.7 per cent of Karloo. The median individual income and median household income in these areas are much lower than the state average. The applicant submitted that it has built similar facilities to the one proposed in Utakarra in Carey Park and Balga. The applicant suggests that this has not negatively impacted on the local communities in these places. However, the figures from these areas do not appear to support this.

The application was initially refused and the decision was accepted that the store would be in an area that would suffer from an increase in alcohol-related harm if it was approved, and this would mean an unacceptable risk to an already vulnerable community. The decision weighed the welfare of the local community over the benefits of a greater range of cheaper alcohol. The final line in the decision finds that the grant of the application was not in the public interest and the application was refused. This decision was overturned in June 2016 after an appeal. I think the description of the proposed site at the time as at the “geographical centre of Geraldton” is meaningless. The decision accepts the figures in the objections that relate to levels of harm and ill health caused by alcohol in Geraldton, which are higher than the state average, and, once again, much higher in the suburbs of Rangeway, Karloo and Utakarra. Reference is made to the harm minimisation measures to be practised by the proponent. In other places, reference is made to the increase in availability of cheaper alcohol via specials in this store. The decision seems to accept, at face value, that undertakings from the proponent that the degree of harm increasing is low and the applicant has demonstrated operational capabilities. However, if the business is onsold, as were the similar establishments, I understand in Balga and Bunbury, will any of these undertakings apply to the new owners?

I know this area quite well because I did six years of my schooling there. I currently serve on the board of Rangeway Primary School and, from talking to teachers, I understand the problems that children bring to schools from their homes. I will quote directly from the submission —

According to Ms Bull —
The chair of the Rangeway Karloo and Utakarra Progress Association —
on a daily basis residents are witness to, or victims of, drug use, crime, domestic violence, poverty and
truancy. Children are neglected and wayward, with primary school children being subjected to violence
and domestic abuse regularly due to alcohol abuse within the home. Litter, in the form of broken bottles
and cans is also a constant problem.

I understand that there is another proposal to establish yet another large format liquor store at Bluff Point, and
another liquor store as a part of the redevelopment of the land that was formerly the council’s works depot on the
corner of North West Coastal Highway and Eastward Road. Personally, I find this whole situation to be absolute
madness. It is extremely unfair that the only recourse from this point was an appeal to the Supreme Court on an
error in law. I think a system that produces such an outcome is frankly broken and needs reform. The voices of
locals, the police and Health seem to have been ignored, and they should carry a lot more weight. Frankly,
I think that this approval is a disgrace. Thank you.

MR B.J. GRYLLS (Pilbara — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [9.49 am]: I thank the member for
Geraldton for the grievance. I thank him for his focus on the local community and for the in-depth work that he
has done on this issue. He has dug deeply into this issue; he worked hard to understand the community and
I think that he is speaking on behalf of his community, including the schools, that he is a part of. He also reflects
a position that is held much wider afield in Geraldton. Hon Paul Brown has already raised this issue with me.
This matter has been debated in the community of Geraldton and, after looking at the media on this issue, it
warrants a grievance today and the focus of the Parliament. I thank the member for Geraldton for his grievance
on an application for a liquor store licence for premises to be known as Con’s Liquor in Geraldton.

The Liquor Commission is independent of government, so it is not my role as Minister for Racing and Gaming
to comment on its findings. However, I will explain the background to this application and the legislative
provisions that apply to liquor licence applications. It is my role to accept the concerns of the local member of
Parliament and for this Parliament to be aware and cognisant of the structures we have put in place to approve
liquor licences and how they work in the future. On 18 July 2014, PDJ Geraldton Pty Ltd lodged an application
with the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor for the conditional grant of a liquor store licence for
premises to be known as Con’s Liquor Geraldton to be located at lot 86 Utakarra Road within the City of Greater
Geraldton. The applicant complied with the statutory requirements prescribed by the Liquor Control Act and
lodged the documentation in support of the application for the grant of a liquor store licence, which included
a public interest assessment. One of the statutory requirements is the provision from the local government
authority and a number of objections to the application were lodged, as well as a notice of intervention by the
Executive Director of Public Health.

The member for Geraldton has spoken about some of the objections that were put forward. Both he and
Hon Paul Brown, another member of Parliament in the area, expressed their concerns. Because of those
concerns, on 24 November 2015 the director of Liquor Licensing refused the application for a liquor store
licence on the basis that the grant of the application was not in the public interest. Pursuant to section 25 of the
Liquor Control Act, on 25 November the applicant lodged an application for a review by the Liquor Commission
of the decision of the director of Liquor Licensing. The applicant, some of the objectors and the intervener
lodged extensive written submissions to the Liquor Commission and made oral submissions at the
Liquor Commission hearing, conducted on 8 March 2016. The Liquor Commission states in its decision that the
application presented with a tension between two of the primary objects of the act. The first was to minimise
harm or ill health caused to people, or any group of people, due to the use of liquor and the second was to cater
for the requirements of consumers for liquor and related services with regard to the proper development of the
liquor industry, tourism industry and other hospitality industries in the state. In that regard the commission had to
take into account all issues put before it and to make a decision. In its determination, the Liquor Commission
quashed the decision of the director of Liquor Licensing in refusing the application, and the application for
a liquor store licence was granted subject to a condition prohibiting the licensee from selling low-cost items such
as sherry, port, fortified wine, four-litre casks et cetera.

As the member for Geraldton has said, the only step that can be taken is for an application to be made to the
Supreme Court on a question of law. It is difficult for the community to now go down that path. As I said,
decision of the director of Liquor Licensing can be appealed by anyone dissatisfied with the outcome of
a determination, but the decision of the Liquor Commission can only be appealed to the Supreme Court on
a question of law and an issue regarding the application or an interpretation of law.

The member for Geraldton asked whether the condition relating to the sale of low-cost products such as sherry,
port, fortified wine and cask wine would apply if the current licensee were to sell the business. The answer
I have been provided with is yes. This will be imposed as a condition of the licence and as such will continue to apply unless the licensee seeks to vary the trading conditions. In that case, an application would be made to the licensing authority and determined subject to public interest provisions. In regard to the local liquor accord, I would encourage the licensee to abide by the conditions of the local licence accord. Membership and participation in the accord is voluntary, but given the amount of community concern expressed by the member for Geraldton and other members of Parliament from the region and the wider community, I would encourage the licensee to agree to sign up to the liquor accord and to comply with its provisions.

This process does not allow me to intervene. The member knows that and I know that. After my investigation of this issue in Geraldton, there is the large Con’s Liquor, which now has approval and will be built, and there are other applications for expansion in the provision of liquor in the wider community. The community of Geraldton, through its local member for Parliament, has expressed its concern about what a major increase in the provision of alcohol will mean to the community. Although an independent process has been set up for decisions on this matter, we hope that independent process will take very clear account of the views of the local member of Parliament and the local community, and I encourage them to do so.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AUDIT


DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville) [9.57 pm]: I present for tabling the sixth report of the Joint Standing Committee on Audit entitled “Review of the Minister’s Report on the Financial Management Act 2006”.

[See paper 4442.]

Dr K.D. HAMES: An identical version of this report is currently being presented by the chairman of the committee, Hon Ken Travers, in the other place. The report contains 18 findings and 10 recommendations.

The report I table advises the house of the Joint Standing Committee on Audit’s findings and recommendations following its consideration of the Department of Treasury’s report, “Review of the Management Financial Act 2006”. This report is a statutory requirement under the Financial Management Act 2006. In general the committee supports the recommendations contained in the Treasury report; however, the committee does not support recommendations 14 or 25. In relation to recommendation 14, the committee recommends that the Treasurer be required to introduce, within three months of the actual amount of spending in the previous financial year being known, the bills to appropriate funds out of the consolidated account. The committee does not support recommendation 25 of the Treasury report, which seeks to restrict a minister’s obligation to notify the Parliament and the Auditor General in circumstances whereby the minister decides not to provide information to the Parliament on the basis of commercial confidentiality. The committee has made a number of recommendations to increase the level of information provided to Parliament, which the committee considers will improve the Parliament’s capacity to scrutinise the government.

I was not a member of this committee for very long and was really involved in its meetings only towards the end of this report. The committee is a collection of members from both upper and lower houses, including the member for Belmont who sits in front of me. Each of us was involved in the presentation of the report, the decisions of which were unanimously agreed to by all members of the committee. I am happy to table it for consideration.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Eighty-fifth Report — “Albany Cemetery Board By-Laws Amendment” — Tabling

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [9.59 am]: I table the eighty-fifth report of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation entitled “Albany Cemetery Board By-laws Amendment”.

[See paper 4443.]

Mr P. ABETZ: The report advises the house of the committee’s findings and recommendations following its scrutiny of the Albany Cemetery Board By-laws Amendment under paragraph 10.5 of schedule 1 to the Legislative Council standing orders. The committee recommends that the instrument tabled in this house on 17 February 2016 be disallowed. By virtue of section 54(2) of the Cemeteries Act 1986, by-laws made by the Cemetery Board must be made in accordance with subdivision 2 of division 2 of part 3 of the Local Government Act 1995. Those are the provisions for making local laws by local governments and they require a cemetery by-law or an amendment to a cemetery by-law to be given statewide public notice and local notice with public submissions invited. A copy of the by-law and the notice publishing it must also be sent to the Minister for Local Government. In the case of the Albany Cemetery Board, none of these compulsory and sequential steps were taken. In that event, the committee found that the Albany Cemetery Board had acted outside the powers granted to it under the Cemeteries Act 1986 and that the instruments should therefore be disallowed. I commend the report to the house.
There are 445 independent public schools. There are excellent principals. There are principals of varying experience. There are isolated. In a lot of cases, there was line management, if you like, by the director general. To date there are the support officers, the district officers and the superintendents are abandoned in this system and do not exist in the new system, which allows the potential for principals, particularly in independent public schools, to feel isolated. In a lot of cases, there was line management, if you like, by the director general. To date there are 445 independent public schools. There are excellent principals. There are principals of varying experience. There are excellent principals. There are principals of varying experience.
are principals who perhaps in the process of being late responders in coming online to the IPS system may not know what they do not know, so it really is important that support for principals is proactive, not reactive from the bottom, and that there is someone for a principal to go to, to bring issues and matters in the management of a school. One of the other issues brought to us was that principals of an IPS become, basically, like a CEO; they run and administrate their school not only in the education space but also as a business and there is potential for that to become a huge administrative burden.

The report has a chapter titled “A two-tiered system”. Again, there is a potential lesson to be drawn and to be careful of, learn from and monitor; that is, there is the potential to increase the inequalities within the public education system in the quality of teachers and staff. The capable schools become advantaged and the less capable schools have the potential to become disadvantaged. With regard to independent public schools, it is an admirable aim to be able to employ staff and use the appropriate criteria to fill the positions that are needed for that particular school and community; however, there is a lesson and something to flag in looking at the potential for increasing the inequalities within the public education system in situations in which independent public schools are not obliged to employ redeployed teachers. As I said, there is the potential for capable schools to be advantaged and for less capable schools to be disadvantaged.

It has been brought to my attention that there are hard-to-staff schools and remote and isolated schools; indeed, I have some of them in my area, the goldfields–Esperance region, in which we have smaller mallee schools and outlying schools. What is the effect of an IPS initiative on staffing in those situations? Will, indeed, their ability to attract quality teachers be disadvantaged?

With regard to staff support, I think there are some lessons to be learnt and some things to be watchful of. We have reflected on some of the standardised assessments. I think it is really important that IP schools have autonomy, but it is also really important to have a standardised bar, if you like, with regard to assessments. We must guard against schools assessing themselves. That is good up to a point, but there must be some central standardised assessment, and I think schools would like that as well. We can assess ourselves, but often we need really to look outwards and have some sort of standardised bar and standardised, central assessment to show us how we are going. It does not matter if we are talking about education or our everyday lives; I think it is important to measure ourselves to see how we are going, not just internally, but also from outer parameters that we must take note of.

There is also the question of student outcomes and the reasons for education reform. On the Department of Education’s own admission, the IPS system is not really about improved student outcomes; the most important parameter is the quality of the teacher. We reflected on the question: does IPS improve the quality of the teacher? It creates an environment in which the teacher can teach better, if you like, in some situations, but, again, we have to be careful of the potential for a two-tiered system. It really behoves us as policymakers to reflect on the reasons for IPS. Yes, there is a worldwide trend towards this sort of autonomy and devolvement, but not at the price of abandonment. Schools should still be supported, still have standardised assessment and still have staff support. Time will tell whether it produces better quality teachers and therefore better outcomes for students.

There has been much discussion around assessment, how we measure that and, again, the question of improved student outcomes and whether that should be central to any education reform. The Department of Education provides a summary within the report of overall performance. We talk about attendance data as well as the academic achievements around National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy results. Box 1 of the report, “Department of Education summary”, reads —

2015 attendance data showed:

- No substantial difference in the overall attendance data for schools which become IPS.
- No major change in the attendance rate for the 2011 to 2014 intakes of schools since they became IPS.
- A very marginal decline in attendance rate and regular attenders for schools that have never been IPS.

2015 NAPLAN Reading data showed:

- NAPLAN reading results in years 3, 5 and 9 have improved for both IPS and non-IPS.
- Where NAPLAN reading results decline in year 7, it is more evident in non-IPS.

2015 NAPLAN numeracy data showed:

- NAPLAN numeracy results indicate marginal improvement for IPS.
- In year 5 there is some improvement in the last two years evident for both IPS and non-IPS.
- In year 7 there is no evident difference between IPS and non-IPS.
- In year 9 the strong improvement trend is somewhat more evident in IPS.
So there are swings and roundabouts, and if we look at the results for years 3, 5, 7 and 9, some are up and some are down, but our conclusion was that there is no consistent trend in the outcomes of students at schools that have transitioned to become independent public schools or between independent public schools and non-independent public schools. It has been put to me that time will tell; maybe this is too early. Thirty-four schools came into the IPS program in 2010, so that is six years ago. I would have thought that there would have been some trends by now if they were going to happen. Again, it may be too early to look for these trends.

I must touch on the 2016 NAPLAN results. There have been some media reports that there have been improvements in the 2016 results. Of course, it was a little late for those, because we got the information around 12 August, and our report had already been printed by then. I will reflect on some of those, because there has been some press around the improvements in NAPLAN results for 2016 in Western Australia. The data is particularly focused around year 9 and showed some improvements in the cohort for 2016. It was interesting to hear the minister reflect on those improvements and talk about the improvements attributable to online education and reforms in the Western Australian Certificate of Education. For him, that was not necessarily directly related to IPS, but to some of the reforms that have occurred in education.

It really is very important to look at this as a lesson. There are many good things, and the admirable aims of the independent public school system are recognised. One of the other challenges and criticisms may be that the committee report is a little light-on when it comes to submissions from primary schools and reflects high schools more than primary schools. However, if members care to look at the report, there was a submission from the Western Australian Primary Principals’ Association. Appendix 4 of the report lists the 32 submissions that we received and the many hearings that we conducted.

I submit this report to the house. I hope it is a lesson for us. The committee believed it was important that we look at some of the detail in the independent public schools initiative. The report provides some lessons for us as policymakers in education, because there is no more important asset than our children and their education. Thank you.

**MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka)** [10.21 am]: I, too, rise to speak on the report of the Education and Health Standing Committee, “IPS Report Card: The Report of the Inquiry into the Independent Public Schools initiative”. I thank the chair of the committee, who has done a sterling job in terms of this report. This inquiry was conducted at a time when the committee was also doing another inquiry. However, we have given good and proper consideration to this report; therefore, the quality of this report should not be put in question by the Minister for Education. I thank the staff of the committee. They have done an outstanding job in bringing this report together, and also in ensuring that we had good hearings and that there was ample time for submissions to be provided—in particular, ample time for submissions from the Department of Education. The education department actually required additional time to get submissions to us, yet it could not get to us the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy data on which it is now relying to try to discredit this report. Frankly, it seems a little odd that if it had that data, it would be able to do that. I note that the education department was able to ensure that favourable articles were posted on its website in the lead-up to the launch of this report; however, it was not able to manage to get information to the committee that may have alleviated some of its concerns. The report has taken into consideration all the views that have been put, and also the views of the education community, including, may I say, parents in that community. I thank the members of the committee. As always, they have done an outstanding job, and we worked together in a very collegiate manner.

Let us be clear. When this report came out, the Minister for Education actually admitted that the independent public schools program in the education department is not aimed at improving student outcomes. If the IPS program is not aimed at improving student outcomes—which is what we are supposed to do in the education system—what is it for? There is some idea that it is about autonomy. The report goes through the idea of autonomy. It states—

There are four broad areas in which schools may have autonomy:

1. organisation of instruction (how students are taught including textbooks and learning software choice, teaching methods, assessment etc.)
2. personnel management (staffing)
3. planning and structures (school location, programme design, course content)
4. resource management (allocation and use of resources—budgetary)

The committee found, as stated in the report, that the IPS initiative in Western Australia has a particular emphasis on personnel management and resource management. The big problem is the personnel management aspect. The fact is that IP schools market themselves as being able to choose the best quality teachers. Therefore, of course parents will want to put their children into a school that has the best quality teachers versus a school down the road that is non-IPS and obviously does not have the best quality teachers. The marketing of that is such a tool. That means that we create the perception of a two-tiered system, even if in reality we have an outstanding and good-quality education system.
I put to the house very clearly that all the schools in the electorate that I represent are good-quality schools with outstanding teachers, and they are delivering the best education that they can to the kids in the area, whether they are IPS or non-IPS. I sit on an IPS board and also on a non-IPS council, and I have done the whole time since IPS was introduced, because I wanted to get a flavour of the difference. Frankly, my personal experience is that there is not much difference in flavour, other than that the principal seems to have a feeling that they can almost tell the board how things should work, versus the situation on the council, where the principal is a bit more collegiate in those things. That is an interesting idea of autonomy, because it comes down to principals liking IPS. That is also what the minister said.

The minister said that the committee has not done its homework. That is despite the 32 submissions and the many people who came before the committee. The minister said that his comment that the committee has not done its homework is justified, because parents want their children to be in an IPS and principals want to be in an IPS. However, as policymakers, we all know that marketing can definitely have an impact on public opinion. For example, let us talk about the Bigger Picture campaign. That marketing campaign is very much aimed at increasing the view in the community that the infrastructure spend is a good spend. That may be good or bad. It depends on what side of the house we sit on. The point is that when we market and promote something in a system in which we have both IPS and non-IPS, and if the government is marketing IPS as being better, of course principals and parents are going to want that system. I note that the education department is still using the Bigger Picture logo on its website. I looked at it just this morning. That is despite the fact that there has been a direction that that is no longer required.

I note also that Ros Thomas is all through the website of the education department. Ros Thomas is a fantastic journalist. I loved reading her opinion pieces in The Sunday Times. Her services, now that she is no longer with The Sunday Times, are clearly being procured by the education department, or most probably contracted. I cannot say whether that is the case or not; I am not sure whether she is doing it as a volunteer—but she is all through the website. She is promoting the child and parent centres, which is a great initiative; she is promoting that children thrive at school; and she is promoting the adjustment of year 7 students into high school. She is also promoting IPS from her personal perspective at West Leederville Primary School. I want to counter that. I was a parent at West Leederville Primary School up until 2007. It is a great school, with great teachers, a great cohort of students and a great cohort of parents. In fact, I am still good friends with some of those parents, and we are going away this weekend. However, we did not need IPS to be a school community. We were an excellent school community that came together on the parents and citizens association and on the school council. We were involved in the school as a school community. We raised funds through football parking and through the biennial fair. We bought computers for the school. When there was an issue around air conditioning—way before air conditioning became an issue throughout the state—air conditioning was put into West Leederville Primary School. The principal would come to the parent body and get things done. IPS had nothing to do with that. That is a great school, and it now has IPS status on top of that. It will still be a great school. It will be an excellent school. When I was a parent at that school, two of the students went from year 6—this was before year 7s went to high school—straight into Perth Modern School. We are talking about high-level students. That school has become an independent public school. I have had that experience, so members cannot tell me that IPS status will make any difference to that school. It was already a high-level school. It has to have the one-line budget, which is the autonomy aspect of it. Our report refers to that critical aspect of autonomy at page 13. Pat Byrne of the State School Teachers’ Union of Western Australia said—

My understanding is, from the OECD, the critical aspect of autonomy is professional autonomy. It is autonomy in how you implement the curriculum in your classroom and how you assess that curriculum in your classroom. Systems that have high levels of that professional autonomy such as Finland …

Autonomy is something that we should absolutely applaud, but we cannot have that when someone’s job is under threat because they can be made redundant or reorganised out of a school. This should not be a mechanism about staffing. If the Department of Education cannot manage its poor performers, that is an issue that the Department of Education and the director should take in hand. They should not create a system whereby someone does not have to worry about poor performers; they can send them out because the school is an IPS and everyone else has to deal with it. We should not have a system whereby someone who is in the redeployment pool through no fault of their own—not because they are a poor performer—is suddenly stigmatised and not taken on by an IPS. That should not happen, but that is the system that we are creating. It is a two-tier system that is about the quality of teaching staff. It should never be about that. Every school should have quality teaching staff.

MS R. Saffioti (West Swan) [10.32 am]: I rise to speak to the Education and Health Standing Committee’s report, “IPS Report Card: The Report of the Inquiry into the Independent Public Schools initiative”. I thank my colleagues, particularly the chair, and what is a very effective and hardworking committee. I know there has been some speculation about it, but, basically, we deal with the issues on hand and we undertake a very independent analysis of the information that is put before us. I also thank the staff and in particular
Alison Sharpe, Alice Jones and Catherine Parsons, who have worked very, very hard to help produce this report and the other reports that we have undertaken. It is a very good committee and we work extremely hard to produce analysis and reports.

I do not want to speculate too much on some of the commentary that has been put out since we have released the report because I think if members go through the report, they will understand that we basically stepped back. We tried to step back from some of the hype and some of the speculation out there and look at independent public schools. The IPS system is well supported and we understand that and WA Labor supports IPS. There is no issue about abandoning IPS, but we are looking at how we can make the system stronger. What is the end result? Where are we heading? Ultimately, we have to look at the endgame. I was very keen to look at where the Department of Education is heading. Will all schools be IPS or will it leave some schools as non-IPS? The feedback was that not all schools will be IPS, and I think that is an issue. We cannot create a system that under the department’s processes would rely on only a handful of schools dealing with some of the issues that other schools refuse to deal with.

I want to go through a key paragraph on page 8 of the report, which reads —

> It is also unclear to the Committee what the end point of the IPS initiative is. The DoE has provided evidence that not all schools will become IPS. It is difficult to see how this is sustainable in the longer term, particularly in the metropolitan area. For example, it is unfathomable that a small proportion of schools may remain non-IP Schools and be expected to accommodate all redeployees.

The real issue for me is: what is the endgame? If it is to have a system whereby all schools become IPS, fair enough—create that system. But to create a two-tier system and exacerbate that over time will become an issue and a very significant problem. Our whole role was to step back and see where we should be making improvements and the key issues that need to be addressed. I want to go through them in a little bit of detail.

School outcomes are very important to me. Ultimately, if our schools are not all about improving outcomes for our students, then I am not sure what we are doing. My view and the view of the committee is that the driving force of reform in our education system really should be school outcomes. How do we teach our children better? Are we getting better outcomes? They may not all be things that can be tested by NAPLAN; they may be broader things, such as absenteeism and community involvement. We really need improved school outcomes as our goal. That has to be the overriding objective.

I take issue with what the minister said about this. He has called the IPS system the greatest reform in the state’s education history. He then went on to say that IPS was never intended to improve student outcomes. I cannot understand how a Minister for Education would say this is the best reform ever, but it was never intended to improve school outcomes. Seriously, that is what we are meant to be all about. It is all about improving student outcomes. I want to use the word “pedagogy”. It is a very difficult word! My focus has always been on how we teach and how students learn and how we can improve that. I think when schools are doing well, the IPS system allows schools to keep doing well and sometimes gives them more flexibility to quicken improvement, but it does not automatically mean that we are teaching our kids in a better way. That is a fundamental issue. I believe that student outcomes are very important and if we undertake reform in our school system, we have to ask what the impact on student outcomes will be, because surely that is where we should all be striving. Of course, in particular in regional and remote schools around the state, there are particular challenges that IPS cannot address and which the Department of Education said it would not be able to address over a period.

I will reinforce some of the comments from my colleagues on the committee. Student outcomes need to be an overriding objective and we need to be better monitoring what is happening. Again, as I said, this is all about improving the system. This is not about completely tearing it apart. It is about recommending ways we can improve and monitor what is happening there.

My colleague the member for Mirrabooka went through the issue of the two-tier system. Ultimately, that is what is being created and, as I said, we need to address that over time because ultimately we cannot have 10 schools that remain as non-IPS in the metropolitan area when the rest are IPS. That would create significant issues. That needs to be addressed to ensure that the system suits everybody. Remember that attendance at government schools is dependent on where a student lives. Students do not have a choice. As a government we have to ensure that we do our best for every school in the state and not only the IP schools.

Some of the feedback from principals was that IPS creates a greater workload and broadens their role in how they run the schools. Of course, different principals handle it differently. As I said, I have some very good schools. All the schools in my electorate do very, very well. Some IPS principals have created a structure that allows them to continue to pursue the teaching aspect and allow the business operations to be handled from the business side. Some have done that well while others are still trying to get the structure right to try to make sure that the principal can teach and be focused on student outcomes and let the business side be handled by the new budget manager or budget controller. I think that is a very, very important thing.
Again, there are areas that need to be improved in the levels and roles of the budget managers and the business managers at those schools. We need to make sure that we equip schools with the ability to manage their finances. A few parents commented, particularly those who are involved in the parents and citizens associations, that we are really making our schools look like businesses rather than schools. We need to ensure we are aware of that.

The role of boards and P&Cs is to ensure that the “community” is involved in the running of the school. We need to ensure that we do not completely disconnect the P&Cs from other members of the community who are involved, as the member for Mirrabooka said, in their own way through the school community.

The committee’s report is very interesting. The committee is very keen to see improvements and that we do not create a permanent two-tier system. Student outcomes need to be fed into the reform. Principals need to be equipped to manage our schools. Feedback I have received from a number of sources—which was disputed by the director general of Education—is that fewer people want to become principals basically because of the significant increase in accountability, responsibility and workload. We do not want a situation in which no-one wants to take the job on because of the changing levels of responsibility and workload for similar pay. This report is ultimately about improving the system.

I again thank my colleagues. I ask the government to take some of these issues seriously. If it does not take these issues seriously, there will be issues both in IP and non-IP schools into the future.

MR M.J. COWPER (Murray–Wellington) [10.41 am]: I will not take up too much of the house’s time, but I will make a few comments about the Education and Health Standing Committee’s eighth report. Firstly, I thank the wonderful staff who have done a lot of work running a number of inquiries simultaneously. It has been a fairly hefty workload, particularly when the committee had to meet during the winter recess to get on top of a whole lot of work. A body of work has been done. I thank the committee staff for their diligence and of course the capacity of staff to complete the inquiry in the time frame allocated.

The whole idea of a report card for anybody is to see how things are travelling. We all would have had a ruler put over us at school at some time or another. We all have our own experiences. Mine was probably along the lines of, “Has potential; needs to try a bit harder”! I am sure the member who previously lived in Pemberton probably had a very similar report card. We all have stories. It is about improving what we currently have. This government has been bold in taking on an independent public school revolution. It is trying to deal with a number of issues. I have often heard constituents say they want to have a greater say in what happens in their school community. They are of the opinion that they are getting less and less of a say in how a school should be run. The key plank of an IPS system is that authority is devolved from “Silver City” headquarters down to a local level where it can be better adapted and adopted for local conditions. Not one school is the same as the next. They all have challenging conditions in a changing environment. Each year there is a new influx of students with different needs. I draw upon my experience as a board member of a particularly good school in Kingston Primary School. I am very pleased that the principal and students from Kingston Primary School will visit Parliament a bit later this morning. I will host them in the dining room and they will no doubt ask me a whole lot of intriguing questions.

The whole idea of an IPS report card is to look at where we are at and what improvements can be made. With the exception perhaps of the good doctor here, none of us probably applied ourselves as best we could at school and we could always do better. That is what this is about. The committee made 23 recommendations and a number of findings. I know that some schools have already implemented some of these recommendations. For instance, Kingston Primary School already has a P&C representative on its board. One committee recommendation is that every school should have a nominated person from the P&C on its board. I was a bit surprised that that was not the case. It is the case with the boards that I sit on. That is integral to the whole idea of keeping connectivity between the school and the school community. These are the sorts of recommendations that have been made in this report. It is an evolving system. It is one that can be improved. I believe that Western Australia is a leader in the field of Australian education. We will continue to be so if we continue to improve, and adapt and adopt to the changing environment.

When the IPS system was brought in six or seven years ago, it was bold. The change that occurred was significant. Evolving any change in any environment requires change management. Change management is an intriguing thing. Arguably, the Department of Education is the second biggest organisation out of all state government organisations; second only to the health department. Trying to implement change on such a big organisation requires careful management and bringing people along. In any organisation that has so many people involved there will be different views. It is important that those views are heard and assessed and that the right decisions are made as a result.

Simply, this IPS report card has examined what has occurred. It has looked at ways things can be improved. I believe if the minister and the Department of Education examine the report for what it is, it is not apportioning blame to anyone; it is saying, “Here are the areas that require additional attention.” From time to time we all should have a ruler put over us. A fresh pair of eyes should be cast over our perceptions of organisations.
Members in this place will be engaging in that in March next year, because that is when we all come under scrutiny. Our work will be examined. It is no different from any other organisation in government or business.

With that, I ask members, if they are so interested, to look at the committee’s recommendations and findings and see how that adapts and adopts to the schools in their environment. If we work together on some of these recommendations, I am sure the system will improve.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

Thirteenth Report — “Cultivating promise: Building Resilience and Engagement for At-Risk Youth through Sport and Culture”

Tabled on 15 August.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [10.47 am]: This is a somewhat unusual procedure. The thirteenth report of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, “Cultivating promise: Building Resilience and Engagement for At-Risk Youth through Sport and Culture”, has already been tabled but I want to speak briefly on it. Although the report was tabled on Monday, it has gone under the radar, unlike that of my colleagues from the Education and Health Standing Committee. The thirteenth report can be said to be a less controversial subject but it is part of a continuum as another committee, the Education and Health Standing Committee, is looking at youth suicide. There are ongoing discussions in the community about preventing youth from engaging in extreme misconduct. This inquiry was about seeing how we can better engage people defined as “at-risk youth”. As stated in the report, it means those at risk of —

- engaging in negative or dangerous behaviours, such as truancy, self-harm, antisocial behaviour, drug/alcohol abuse, juvenile offending, and disengaging from education, training or employment;
- displaying poor social and communication skills, low self-esteem, emotional instability, suicidal intent;
- being impacted by homelessness, social and/or economic disadvantage, social isolation, family and domestic violence, substance abuse in the home-peer group/community, family transience, unemployment.

All members in the chamber know that many young individuals could be defined “at risk”. Our inquiry found that the age at which someone can be called a youth cannot be prescribed. Some of the programs that we looked at engage with people up to the age of 25. Again, we were relatively flexible about that. We were more concerned about the outcomes than we were about setting a rigid framework for the definition of “youth”.

Underlying all this is the thought that it costs about $300 000 a year to keep a young person in detention. There are clear positive externalities to the bottom line of the budget. Even a portion of that money could be better diverted to youth programs so that youth can be engaged in either cultural or sporting activities. At the outset I must say that those activities are not about finding diamonds in the rough, elite sportspeople or potential artists who can make a living professionally. Rather, it is more about setting those kids on a path that allows them to become less marginalised in the community, more engaged and able to forge a more positive path in their adult future.

The timing of the report was quite tight, the reason being that the committee was anxious to table the report this week so that the government can reply to its recommendations prior to Parliament being prorogued. I thank committee staff Dr Sarah Palmer and Ms Franchesca Walker for their considerable efforts in pulling together in a short time frame what I think is an excellent report and for arranging the itinerary for our very flying visit to New Zealand and the hearings program here, during which we sought to get a snapshot of the sorts of activities undertaken rather than do an extensive audit of every program that is delivered.

They say that the definition of “madness” is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome. As I said, we were very keen to finish the report so that our recommendations could be responded to before Parliament is prorogued. I say that the definition of “madness” is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome. This is certainly the case with the response to our recommendations. I will read a little portion from the foreword of the report, which, I think, sums up why I am somewhat sceptical about the sort of government response we will get. It reads —

… this will be the last report of this Committee for the 39th Parliament. Accordingly, I take this opportunity to make observations about the committee process.

It has become increasingly evident that the commitment and diligence of the Committee in highlighting the need for reform, changes to public policy or the law is frequently met by a tepid, dismissive and dilatory response by government.
Despite the composition of the Committee, more often than not there was unanimous agreement on recommendations and the contents of reports. For that reason our work should not be so readily discounted.

The development of public policy and in-depth research through parliamentary committees is an important counterbalance to the politically expedient and hurried decision-making which the executive is often required to make.

I have made these observations in the present context because I regard the modest but considered findings and recommendations of this report as deserving of close examination and implementation.

I thank committee members deputy chair, Dr Tony Buti, and the members for Vasse, Balcatta and Collie–Preston for their efforts and for soldiering on despite having had less than satisfactory responses from the government on our previous reports. This might be a somewhat academic comment and it might sound as though our egos have been somewhat damaged because more notice was not taken of our reports, but I refer in particular to our report “In Safe Custody” in which we made a number of recommendations about police lockups. I have to say that if some of those recommendations had been responded to in a timely fashion, possibly the death of Ms Dhu in the Port Hedland lockup could have been averted. We expect these recommendations to be taken seriously. Frankly, there will be serious outcomes if they are ignored.

During the inquiry we found that access to programs is patchy throughout the state. In some cases, regional Western Australia is better serviced than metropolitan Perth, whereas in other cases the Perth metropolitan area does better than regional Western Australia. Access to programs is by no means guaranteed. For example, programs for culturally and linguistically diverse youth are not readily available in regional areas; on the other hand, there are numerous programs for Aboriginal youth, particularly in the Kimberley and Pilbara. In this regard, I take issue with the comments made by the Leader of the National Party in recent days about imposing a mining tax on Rio Tinto and BHP. I acknowledge the philanthropic work of both companies in the arts and sporting programs, particularly in the Kimberley and Pilbara. During the inquiry we certainly saw evidence of their contribution to a range of youth programs. Frankly, if those companies are taxed in the way that the Leader of the National Party suggested, unfairly in my view, it might have the unintended consequence of those companies deciding that they no longer need to contribute as much money to community programs as they do currently. Ironically, many of the programs that Rio and BHP sponsor are co-sponsored with royalties for regions. The Leader of the National Party should be mindful that these programs contribute to community cohesion and stop many young people from transitioning into crime.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the many volunteers involved in many youth programs throughout Western Australia. Volunteers are often the unsung heroes. We frequently commend bushfire volunteers, but we forget about the range of volunteers who work across the state in all kinds of activities to support our young people and make sure that their futures are much brighter than would otherwise be the case.

I particularly want to single out two series of programs that are standouts in this state. They are programs run by the Edmund Rice Centre mainly in the northern suburbs. Its leadership in the community has been substantial and the work it does is tremendous. We hope that it continues for a long time. Likewise, the Clontarf Foundation has been a great export to other states. The significant thing about those programs is that they are able to demonstrate to funders tangible results and outcomes, which, of course, has meant a much more sustainable stream of funding. We found that these youth programs need to be sustained and cannot operate over just a short period. They need to enable kids to develop trust with whoever delivers the program. In most cases they really looked for greater engagement across the board, and the most successful programs had capacity for parents to be involved if they wanted to. All those things were very important. Role models within those programs were also essential. We saw a program in Melbourne run by the Jesuit Social Services that brings in professional artists to work with young people. That created a level of respect and allowed the kids to engage with and respect what people and make sure that their futures are much brighter than would otherwise be the case.

Less edifying was the evidence that we had from the police and community youth centres. It seems to me that PCYC in Western Australia has really lost its vision. Once police were formally removed from the centres and came in to run programs on a drop-in basis, the PCYC may as well put up the white flag. The closure of clubs, or even their lack of presence, in areas of high need is something that I know the member for Armadale will speak more on. For example, there is no PCYC in the northern suburbs, unless you count the Subiaco centre. It seems to me that PCYC centres are not where they need to be, PCYC’s vision is unclear, and the lack of engagement with police means that role models are not provided to develop those trusting relationships. I compare that with a program run in the notorious Mount Druitt in New South Wales. An article on the ABC website earlier this month entitled “Breaking Barriers program inspires Aboriginal youths in Mount Druitt to live a life without crime” states —

When 15-year-old Carly Bates attended her first session at Breaking Barriers, an Aboriginal youth program in western Sydney, she had low confidence and feared the police.
Two years later, her attitude towards authorities has turned around.

“At first it was really scary when they said the police were involved and we didn’t know what to do,” Carly said.

“But the police say they’re here to help us, and if we’re scared to go to them. We also have all our aunts and uncles here that we can go to whenever we want.”

Breaking Barriers is a fitness and mentorship program overseen by Indigenous elders and Mount Druitt police who hope to inspire young Aboriginal people to avoid a life of crime.

Breaking Barriers not only creates a social space for the local community through weekly fitness sessions, but it aims to make the young attendees comfortable with talking to authorities.

Local police have developed a close relationship with the Mount Druitt Indigenous community and will often alert elders like Mr Hamilton if they notice local youths “going down the wrong track”.

The article goes on. Police in this state are vacating this area, while other jurisdictions know that it works particularly well and have police more involved. As I said, that has an economic cost to it, and that is the price of juvenile detention of $300 000 a year for one individual.

In conclusion I want to raise two other two issues. The first is that we heard evidence from the Department of Sport and Recreation that the halving of commonwealth government funding to Indigenous sports programs means fewer liaison officers will be employed in Indigenous communities in the Pilbara and Kimberley. This is an absolute shame. We have made a finding that the state government should make representations for this funding to be reinstated. The director general of the Department of Sport and Recreation also said this has a huge impact in regional Western Australia and needs to be reinstated as a matter of course.

The last issue relates to our overall finding that the delivery of these programs and their location is somewhat ad hoc; that is, there does not seem to be much communication between agencies or a responsibility or understanding of what impact these programs can have. Finding 11 in the report states —

The role of sport and the arts in assisting vulnerable young people is not acknowledged in the Department for Child Protection and Family Support’s At-Risk Youth Strategy 2015–2018.

Finding 12 also states —

The across-government Youth Strategic Framework “Our Youth — Our Future” contains admirable strategies for the engagement of at-risk youth in sport and culture, but the extent to which this has guided and continues to guide practice is unclear. In addition, no specific resources have been allocated to implementing the strategy.

If we value our young people and we want to assure them a bright, productive and engaged future, now is the time to invest. The good programs that we saw both in Australia and overseas should be more readily available across the state. That availability would be evidence that we really think our future generations can be future community leaders and that they need to be given the opportunities and chance to assume those roles.

MR C.D. HATTON (Balcatta) [11.07 am]: As the Chair of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee indicated, this is the committee’s final report for the thirty-ninth Parliament. The chair has presented some valid observations about the committee process and the composition of the committee. I will leave it to the chair to make observations on the committee process. With regard to the composition of the committee, it has worked robustly with commitment—albeit with some disagreements here and there. One could say that those disagreements were, at times, problematic, but one could also say that those disagreements paved the way for a more constructive approach to forming the necessary outcomes that committees must reach. I can say with confidence that this committee has reported to the thirty-ninth Parliament with diligence to establish findings and recommendations that will promote and build stronger Western Australian communities.

The thirteenth report is aptly titled “Cultivating promise: Building Resilience and Engagement for At-Risk Youth through Sport and Culture”. The committee formed its terms of reference to inquire into youth engagement and resilience building in Western Australia with regard to what works, gaps in service delivery, differences in metropolitan and regional access to programs, and challenges related to being Indigenous, female or from a culturally and linguistically diverse community. A total of 21 findings and four recommendations were established. Recommendation 1 supports the need for federal funding for Aboriginal sport development officers and the exploration of alternative sources of funding in this area. This recommendation in part evolved from finding that Aboriginal development officers in Western Australia play a vital role in sports delivery, and that commonwealth funding has ceased.
Recommendation 2 relates to the need for the Department of Culture and the Arts to review its strategies and policy documents to ensure that they address the needs of at-risk youth. This recommendation in part evolved from the committee finding that the Department of Culture and the Arts does not have any dedicated programs to address youth or youth at risk and the two groups are largely absent from those policy documents, or from any documents.

Recommendation 3 relates to recommendation 2 and recommends that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs act to include the Department of Culture and the Arts as a member of the Aboriginal Affairs Cabinet Sub-Committee. At this point I would like to note that the committee wishes to emphasise that a serious review, or a cross-departmental or interagency review or involvement, is dependent upon more than just meetings among bureaucrats. Evaluation needs to be robust and action needs to result from that evaluation.

Recommendation 4 is that appropriate resources be made available to government departments to conduct rigorous evaluations of the programs that they fund and that evaluation should include a qualitative component. Recommendation 4 encapsulates a host of findings, such as the fact that the measurement of outcomes of arts and sports programs for at-risk youth is either absent or lacking in clarity due to its complexity, short-term funding of arts and sports programs does not generally lead to long-term benefits, and economic analysis shows that investment in programs for at-risk youth delivers a very high social return.

I draw attention now to parts of the report that state that there is no system for collating information about who has participated in or benefited from sports and arts programs and that the delivery and provision of programs in WA could be perceived as ad hoc. However, I believe that it is not necessarily the case of being ad hoc. I think the committee would agree that there is much collective good being done here in Western Australia but that there is also a need for a broader base of program delivery with a targeted capture of young people. “Targeted” is the key word here. Engaging young people is often a challenge and those challenges need to be continually addressed through tiers of government, organisations, clubs and volunteers. In this inquiry the committee canvassed a wide range of organisations in Western Australia, Melbourne and New Zealand. The scope of delivery across the jurisdictions is broad ranging and very encouraging. It is also encouraging that there is a lot of good delivery and provision for youth in Western Australia at club and organisation level, including the well-established and successful state government KidSport program. This committee has presented recommendations that it believes will better engage and support our young people who sometimes and possibly often fall through the gaps.

In closing I would like to acknowledge the committee chair, Ms Margaret Quirk, MLA; principal research officer, Dr Sarah Palmer; and research officer, Ms Franchesca Walker. I thank the research officers for their dedicated work. I would also like to acknowledge the individual and collective contributions of fellow committee members deputy chair, Dr Tony Buti, MLA; Mr Mick Murray, MLA; and Ms Libby Mettam, MLA. I endorse and support the report being presented to the chamber today.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [11.14 am]: I too wish to speak to the thirteenth report of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. I would like to thank the staff who worked very hard to make sure that this report was put out on time. I also thank my parliamentary colleagues. As has been said, we had robust discussion, to say the least, many times, all with a view to presenting a report that will stand the test of time. I hope it is picked up by many.

The report addresses some of the disconnect that occurs among young people as they transition from being children to the middle range of youth to young adults. Some of the problems in different areas arise from the transition of migrants, who often come from extremely different backgrounds, into our society. Evidence was presented to the committee that those people are often frightened of the police and that they do not want to engage because where they come from the police are seen as people who may shoot or beat up people. We also heard about a young lady who wished to be a police officer but who was discouraged by her parents because they had come from a violent society in which the police were not respected. They believed the same would occur here, that their daughter would be treated with disdain if she joined the police and it would cause disruption within their small family unit. It seems that we have a lot of problems integrating different groups into our society.

The committee was able to achieve some outstanding things through its travel. I know we are often criticised for spending money on government travel, but the committee learned a lot from the places it visited—I will not name them all—especially about how well people can work together to engage different groups and that through mixing them in one pot, to use those words, they, one and all, can become Australians as such. That is something that young people take pride in. Through hard work and after being offered help they are able to understand each other’s backgrounds and are able to stop before making comments or making decisions about others.

The committee’s brief trip to New Zealand was certainly a highlight in that travel. Different groups over there experience the same problems that our Indigenous youth experience here. It was highlighted how they work differently from how we do here. In a sense they work on mind and body before they work on integrating the
physical health as a significant issue in our community with the creation of the position of Mental Health Commissioner, which was the first such appointment in not only the state but also the country, as well as through increased funding since it came to government. At-risk youth can be defined as those youth who engage in negative or dangerous behaviour, who display poor mental health and are not adequately cared for, because some parents are not taking that responsibility. As a government, it is important that we do all we can to ensure that children and youth receive the best opportunities in life. This report recognises the importance of arts, sport and culture in building resilience, which may otherwise not come from a home environment.

Another thing that struck a chord with me occurred during our visit to Wellington. We met a group of very attractive and engaging young ladies of Muslim origin. They told us how they had found it difficult—their parents more so—being migrants trying to fit into the society in that area. They told us how their parents felt when they first saw young girls playing sport. They did not approve of it. Then it was pointed out that they could wear long-sleeved shirts, and the team adjusted its rules and allowed them to wear long-sleeved shirts and pants so that they could enjoy sport and become more integrated into a society that probably revolves too much around sport, unfortunately. I also mention the drop-in centres, which focused on many different activities in the arts. There was painting, crafts and that sort of thing, as well as music, which we know is prominent in the Indigenous society in New Zealand, with many famous bands coming out of there. We visited a recording studio set up in a drop-in centre. Approximately 25 to 30 kids of various ages were there on the day that we visited. They had mentors and leaders within the groups. I was talking to someone, not realising that he was a leader in those groups, and he was well versed, although he was very young. He was probably only 15 or 16 years of age and was already taking a leadership role in a community that had many problems. While we were there, we watched a short video they had produced about their health and wellbeing and where they fit into society. That sort of engagement but not everyone wants to play sport and we should not be looking only to the sporting arena for these young people. We are failing miserably to provide arts programs for these young people.

In one session, we learned about an arts program, which is one of the most elitist programs that anyone has put before any committee on which I have been a member. That was very disappointing, because it was not about mainstream society. Members can look at a famous artist like Brett Whiteley. Was he a regular person in the arts or in society? No, he was not; in some sections of society he was considered a weirdo. We are pushing those people away in the sense that we give prizes and scholarships only to the top end of town. That is something we must address to encourage people from another part of our society to succeed. They may end up becoming a top guitarist. They have assets that have not been encouraged or utilised along the way. The focus on sport has been very good, but it has been to the detriment of many youth and women’s programs in the arts.

Police and community youth centres should have a good look at that so they can re-engage with the community as a whole and not just with disaffected youth. I can tell members from experience that some people will not take their children to PCYCs because they see them as places where all the ratbags are dropped off. That is terrible and it has damaged the pride and structure of PCYCs, and we need to deal with that.

In finishing, I commend the report to the house. I could talk about many other things that the report goes into, but I now thank staff and my parliamentary colleagues for the robust, honest and frank discussion that has produced a report that should not be left on the shelf to gather dust over time.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse) [11.24 am]: I am pleased to comment on this report, “Cultivating promise: Building Resilience and Engagement for At-Risk Youth through Sport and Culture”. I also acknowledge the work of committee staff with principal research officer, Dr Sarah Palmer and research officer Franchesca Walker, as well as my colleagues the member for Girrawheen, who is also the chair, and the members for Armadale, Balcatta and Collie–Preston for their contributions in working together on this important inquiry into youth at risk.

At-risk youth can be defined as those youth who engage in negative or dangerous behaviour, who display poor social skills and low self-esteem, and who can have suicidal intentions, and who can be impacted by homelessness. We know that youth who display those sorts of behaviours often face significant mental health issues in the early stages of life or later in life. The Barnett government has supported the value of treating mental health as a significant issue in our community with the creation of the position of Mental Health Commissioner, which was the first such appointment in not only the state but also the country, as well as through an 84 per cent increase in funding since it came to government.

It is a sad reflection on parts of our community that the number of children who have gone into foster care has increased by over 40 per cent since 2008 and that children are growing up in home environments where they are not adequately cared for, because some parents are not taking that responsibility. As a government, it is important that we do all we can to ensure that children and youth receive the best opportunities in life. This report recognises that over the past two decades, the role of arts, sport and culture ensures that children and youth are given a foundation that builds resilience, which may otherwise not come from a home environment.
This has resulted in a situation in which sports and arts are identified for not only encouraging physical and creative roles for children and youth, which was certainly highlighted during the many meetings we had throughout this inquiry, but also for building resilience in our youth. Michael Ungar, one of the foremost experts in resilience in children and director of the Resilience Research Centre, has identified nine factors that build a strong and resilient child, including structure, consequences, parent-child connections, lots of strong relationships, a powerful identity, a sense of control, a sense of belonging, culture and spirituality, rights and responsibilities, and safety and support. These are qualities that are highlighted in some of the best sports and arts programs in the country.

Due to commitments in my electorate, I was unfortunately unable to pursue the overseas and other travel that was part of this inquiry, but I understand from the reports and writings of this committee that some fantastic programs were identified in New Zealand and in Melbourne. Some great projects are also happening in our community. We have seen in recent times a shift from funding programs delivered directly through the Department of Sport and Recreation into investments in community groups and community-led organisations. I tip my hat to all volunteers who have supported this effort, because we recognise the great many hours that volunteers contribute to making our community a stronger and safer place. A good example is the Clontarf Foundation, which is a product of this funding. It was valuable to catch up with Gerard Neesham and the team at the Clontarf Foundation, which operates football academies for Indigenous boys in schools across Australia. From the comments made by the Clontarf committee at this facility the program is purpose driven and supports what kids require. The program is working and is providing some tough love and structure and the keys to resilience, which Michael Ungar had also identified. The rate of year 12 completion for these students is 60 to 70 per cent. Non-Clontarf boys, by contrast, are six times more likely to offend than the Indigenous youth involved in this program. This is an important message for at-risk youth and was focused on as part of this inquiry: every dollar invested in the Clontarf Academy returns $8.13 to the community, which is a benefit of $2.17 when we account for time and money invested. That goes to show the value of a community-driven program that is effective and has a great sense of purpose and structure.

According to the statistics, almost two-thirds or 64 per cent of Indigenous youths have engaged in sport and recreation in the last 12 months, which is slightly higher than the figures for the general population. This highlights a clear opportunity for purposeful engagement and what we can do in this space to ensure that those youths do not become mental health statistics. It also highlights the value that the Clontarf investment has delivered. According to Mission Australia, participation in sport is the same for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, which backs up those comments.

I am aware that I do not have much more time, but another barrier to engagement in sport is the cost, so the state government has invested in KidSport. In my electorate, some 2 647 vouchers were distributed last year to kids who would otherwise be unable to afford to participate. There are a lot of grassroots programs being delivered, and there has been a shift. A general finding in this report that points to some of the recommendations is that there is a challenge in encouraging grassroots groups to deliver arts and sports programs outside government departments. There are costs and overlaps, a need for greater overall direction and a heavy requirement and obligation on community organisations to illustrate how they are best delivering state government funding. It is identified that such programs provide unique and special opportunities for positive engagement and that there is significant value in state government investments, but there is more work we can do as a state government to ensure that this funding and these programs are going into the areas of greatest need.

We have come a long way in addressing the needs of at-risk youth, and this report highlights some of the ways in which we may be able to improve delivery to support the investment by the state in this area.

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [11.33 am]**: I also rise to speak on the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee’s thirteenth report, “Cultivating promise: Building Resilience and Engagement for At-Risk Youth through Sport and Culture”. I would like to commence by thanking my colleagues, including the committee chair, the member for Girrawheen, and the members for Balcatta, Vasse and Collie–Preston. In respect of the member for Collie–Preston, I was very privileged and fortunate to have been in the house last night when he made a very powerful and personal speech, which I consider to be one of the best speeches I have heard in my nearly six years in this chamber. Well done to the member for Collie–Preston; I am sure it would have taken a lot of courage to make that speech. I hope members who were not in the house at the time refer to the speech in Hansard because I am sure they will gain an insight into the problems that we are dealing with, particularly for family members who are addicted to drugs.

I also note the committee chair who, throughout the term of this Parliament, has been the recipient of very unfair criticism from the government, particularly with regard to a report on the activities of the former member for Vasse. I think subsequent reports have proven that what we reported in that report was correct, and the personal attacks that were directed at the chair, the member for Girrawheen, have been shown to have been unwarranted and baseless.
I would also like to thank our very hardworking committee staff—principal research officer, Dr Sarah Palmer, research officer, Ms Franchesca Walker and, before Franchesca, Niamh Corbett. Committee work is very, very important. It is a very important educational experience for members of Parliament to be a committee member, because they work in a very different environment from that of the chamber, which is often adversarial. Although committees can be adversarial as well, there is an aim and purpose of trying to reach some form of consensus and agreement and to produce a report that will seek to assist government in making policy decisions that hopefully will benefit the whole community, as was outlined by the member for Balcatta in his speech not so long ago. Committee work is very important and committee reports are very important and, as the chair has mentioned, we have been disappointed in the government’s responses to all our reports. It is important that government takes these reports seriously and responds accordingly to the recommendations and findings contained within them.

Each of the speakers before me has gone through various aspects of the report; I do not necessarily intend to traverse or repeat what has already been said by members before me. I think they have articulated various aspects of this report very, very well. I would like to concentrate on aspects regarding police and community youth centres and make some comments on Clontarf, but I will commence by referring to the comment printed at the beginning of the concluding chapter, chapter 5, on page 113 of the report. It is a comment made by Ron Alexander, the director general of the Department of Sport and Recreation; I quote —

With someone who has participated in community events, it is well documented that they are less likely to get involved in antisocial behaviour. So investing in arts, culture, sports and recreation, which governments do, is exactly that; it is an investment.

It is certainly an investment that can reap rewards down the track. As the chair mentioned, it costs roughly $300 000 per year to incarcerate a juvenile in prison, and we can engage in more positive and properly structured sporting and cultural programs to hopefully reduce the probability and possibility of juveniles ending up behind bars. As was mentioned by the member for Vasse, some great results have come out of the Clontarf program—and I want to talk a bit about the Clontarf program. This is a program that was commenced by Gerard Neesham, a former elite sports person of considerable note. He began the program from humble beginnings, and I remember that his ideal vision for the program was on its last legs when the Carpenter government threw it a lifeline by injecting considerable funding. The federal Rudd government also injected considerable funding to allow the Clontarf vision and programs to be expanded. What is great about the Clontarf program is that it has bipartisan support, and may that forever last, because the results coming from the Clontarf vision are outstanding. I have personal experience of that through Cecil Andrews Senior High School, which is one of the schools in my electorate. The Clontarf program at that school has reaped very good rewards. The attendance rate of juveniles who are involved in the Clontarf program at that school is incredibly positive. As we know, one of the main issues that we need to address is to encourage children to attend school and thereby reduce the risk of them going off the rails and not engaging in a positive manner with society. Therefore, I commend the work of Clontarf, and may it continue to receive government support, which so far has been the situation.

I turn now to police and community youth centres. As we know, a few years ago, this government made the decision to basically gut PCYCs by removing the police element. I did not support that at the time, and I do not think any member of the opposition supported that at the time. There were also many government members who did not support that at the time. If I recall correctly, the member for Geraldton was very vocal in his opposition to the police being basically removed from PCYCs. In the hearing that the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee had with Mr Gillespie, the chief executive officer of WA PCYC, I put a question about the connection between police and PCYCs. The police now have no formal legal jurisdiction over PCYCs. The police have engaged in a memorandum of understanding with WA PCYC, but for all intents and purposes the strong police component that has historically been connected with PCYCs is no more.

The member for Girrawheen has mentioned where the PCYCs are situated. Mr Gillespie mentioned during the hearing that there should be a PCYC presence in the City of Wanneroo. However, there is none. There is also now no PCYC in Armadale. Armadale has the highest, or near highest, crime rate in the metropolitan area outside the CBD. However, we do not have a PCYC in Armadale. I do not blame Mr Gillespie for this per se, because he has a finite budget. It is appalling that the government has decided that the police should not be involved with PCYCs. It is also appalling that Armadale does not have a PCYC. During the committee’s hearing with Mr Gillespie, the member for Vasse put to him the following question —

Just picking up on some comments made earlier about finding a place or infrastructure for PCYCs—do you always need that? Do you need a permanent building?

Mr Gillespie replied that, no, they do not always need a permanent building. He went on to say —

But more importantly, we are working at the moment with Nathan Morton, the member for Forrestfield. Midland has been closed because of refurbishment.

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He went on to say that Nathan Morton has a problem with young people in his area, and they help him out. Mr Gillespie was then asked how that had come about, and he said they had received a call from the minister’s office.

Therefore, the Minister for Police does get involved in situations when her own members of government ring her up. I am sure that if I had contact with the minister to see whether I could get the presence of a PCYC in my electorate, she would say that PCYCs are completely independent and make their own decisions. It may have been the minister or her office—maybe it was not the minister personally, but there was a call from the minister’s office asking the PCYC to get involved in assisting the member for Forrestfield. There is nothing wrong with assisting the member for Forrestfield. He is doing his job as the local member. However, it would be nice if I could also get that sort of assistance. If I rang the minister’s office tomorrow, would she also ring the PCYC to see whether it would assist down in Armadale?

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** It would depend on the issue. I do that for a number of members all the time as part of my work.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** I give the call to the member for Murray–Wellington.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** I do that all the time. That is an offensive comment.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister for Police! Members, the member for Murray-Wellington has the call.

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**TAKING OF PROPERTY ON JUST TERMS BILL 2014**

**Restoration to Notice Paper — Motion**

**MR M.J. COWPER (Murray–Wellington) [11.41 am]:** I move —

That the Taking of Property on Just Terms Bill 2014 be restored to the point it reached prior to its removal from the notice paper on Tuesday, 16 August 2016.

This bill, which was tabled in this place over 12 months ago, deals with the issue of taking property on just terms. This is a serious concern to people particularly in my electorate, but not just in my electorate—this issue occurs across the length and breadth of Western Australia. I want to speak not to the substantive bill but to the reason that this bill should remain on the notice paper. There are over 200 pieces of legislation that affect either directly or indirectly the rights of landowners in Western Australia. In recent times, almost on a daily basis, there have been further examples of imposts on landowners in Western Australia. Members might know that a number of letters have gone out from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to constituents who own land along the Murray River. That, in conjunction with the history of a number of other imposts on landowners, has made them very, very nervous. That is notwithstanding the large amount of rhetoric that has come from the government.

Over 10 years ago, back in 2004, a report was handed down from an upper house committee chaired by Hon Barry House that looked at the issue of property rights, and a number of undertakings were given by the then leader of the Liberal Party that the government would address this issue. However, 12 years later, still little has been done on this matter. In fact, we are seeing a continuation and a compilation of imposts on landowners.

As recently as two days ago, an impost was placed on landowners along the Murray River. A similar application has been made for landowners along the Collie River, which runs from the mouth of Leschenault estuary all the way up to Collie and into the hinterland towards Wagin. Therefore, all those landowners will have an issue with some applications that have been made. That is only one of the imposts.

That is why this bill should remain on the table. This bill is a reminder to the government that this issue is outstanding, it is a very serious matter and it is impacting severely on people’s lives. We have a bureaucracy that is applying its interpretation of certain laws and is neglecting rights that go back to the time of Magna Carta, over 800 years ago. It is ignoring the implied and specific rights in the United States’ Constitution and the Australian Constitution. It all comes back, members, to a flaw in the Western Australian Constitution that does not provide for the taking of land on just terms. It is concerning that the language that is now being used by the bureaucracy and government departments is “acquisition” of land. I want to make sure that people understand the difference between acquisition and taking. If I come to buy a car from you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr P. Abetz), you and I will negotiate a price, and, if we agree on the price, I will acquire that car from you. If I say to you, Mr Acting Speaker, that I will buy the car for $5 000, and you say you want $7 000, and we agree on $6 000, that is an acquisition. However, if I say to you, Mr Acting Speaker, that I am going to take your car and I will pay you $3 000, and you say that is nowhere near enough, you will have to apply to the courts, and spend a lot of money, to try to get a just amount of money for your car.

That type of behaviour is manifested in a range of pieces of legislation. The purpose of this bill, and the reason that it should remain on the notice paper, is that it slips across all those other pieces of legislation and makes sure that the acquisition of land from private landowners is done on just terms. Although that is a fundamental right in our justice system, it is a flaw that has existed in the Western Australian Constitution for many years. I will stand in this place for as long as is possible until such time as this matter is addressed. That is why I seek to have this bill remain on the notice paper.
The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz): The question is that the motion be agreed to. Does the member for Cannington wish to speak to the motion?

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [11.49 am]: Mr Acting Speaker, I was expecting that the government would let us know its position on this motion. The opposition wants to make a comment on the motion, but I was expecting the government to make a brief comment.

Mr J.H.D. Day: By way of interjection, we are happy to support the motion moved by the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: On behalf of the opposition—the manager of opposition business is not present at the moment because she is ill—I state that we do not oppose the motion moved by the member for Murray–Wellington. We look forward to the government letting us know where it stands on the issue of the legislation itself.

The Liberal Party and the National Party have never said that they support the private member’s bill brought in by the member for Murray–Wellington, and they have not told anybody in Western Australia their view on the issues raised by the member for Murray–Wellington. The Labor Party looks forward to the government putting on the record its position regarding the issues raised by the member for Murray–Wellington, the Labor Party looks forward to responding to the government’s public position. At the moment, the government has given no indication privately or publicly about where it stands on the issues raised by the member for Murray–Wellington.

Question put and passed.

ROAD TRAFFIC LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2) 2015

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 August.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [11.51 am]: I think I have 17 minutes on the clock. I had the joy of getting up three minutes before four o’clock yesterday to start my contribution on the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015, which I understand was introduced in November last year. I note that there are pages of amendments in the notice paper proposed by the government. Starting on page 9 of the notice paper, the minister has indicated the government’s amendments to clauses 27, 37 and 66. Clause 66 has six amendments. Clause 67 has eight amendments. The eighth amendment goes for six and a half pages. The amendment to clause 68 goes over a full page. They are very extensive amendments. I was interested in that because yesterday, of course, Parliament debated the bill introduced by the member for Hillarys, the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment (Disqualification for Life) Bill 2016. I was interested that the government’s position on that bill was that it did not support it. One of the reasons it explained that it did not support it was that it was badly drafted and required amendments. The minister asserted that the member for Hillarys had not been in a position to consider all the issues raised by that bill and, therefore, it was not adequately drafted. I note that the government is extensively amending its own legislation to deal with a number of issues. When we get to clauses at the consideration in detail stage, I imagine that the government will give detailed explanations about the need for each of these very extensive changes to the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015, yet it did not take the same opportunity to deal with the questions raised by the member for Hillarys. If the government’s criticism of the member for Hillarys is valid, this was the opportunity—these pages and pages and pages of amendments to the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015—to deal with the issues raised by my friend the member for Hillarys.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I would be more than happy for that to be incorporated into the present bill. I was not worried about having my name on it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It so easily could have been done. As the minister made the point in her contribution yesterday, no-one is accusing the member for Hillarys of being driven by ego on the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment (Disqualification for Life) Bill 2016. The minister specifically noted the member’s well-understood and genuine interest in road safety. When I bring amendments to the chamber on behalf of the Labor Party in my areas of responsibility, I always make the point that these are drafted to the best of the capacities of opposition. If the government agrees with the sentiment but thinks that the words in the amendment are not the best way to present it, please just take that issue that we are raising and bring the amendments to us.

Mr R.F. Johnson: What really got me was the minister’s explanation when she said that anybody who loses their licence could end up being a burden on taxpayers of Western Australia and Australia because they couldn’t get a job because they would go on social welfare. How can you equate that to someone losing their life—to the families of someone who’s lost their life? There is no equation there.
Mr W.J. Johnston: Interestingly, in my first term as member for Cannington, I wrote and raised the issue of a constituent of mine who had had a truck seized because the driver was unlicensed. Even though it was a commercial vehicle and the only tilt tray truck in his transport business and even though the business owner had checked the driver’s licence, the vehicle was seized because the driver was unlicensed. The owner could not know— to say, “Look, it is unfair; I’m doing 150 000 kilometres a year and someone else is only doing 15 000 kilometres a year. I am 10 times more likely to be caught for doing something wrong than the person who is doing only 15 000 kilometres a year, yet we get the same number of demerit points and we have the same period, three years, to lose those demerit points.” Of course, there is an impact on people’s capacity to earn a living through the actions of the road traffic laws.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I would ban that opportunity for those who kill someone on our roads because they are drunk or drugged. That is the difference.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The Labor Party supported the member for Hillarys. We are happy to do that. I am making the point that the argument rings shallow. The government raised arguments yesterday—the first being that the draft that the member for Hillarys prepared was not comprehensive because it did not take into account all the issues involved that would have needed to be dealt with. That may or may not be true, but if it were true, look at the pages and pages of amendments that the Minister for Police is asking us to support. Some of these amendments deal with point-to-point cameras, which is not currently in the draft. There was plenty of opportunity for the minister to take in the underlying principles in the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment (Disqualification for Life) Bill 2016, but the reality is that the government fundamentally does not support imposing a greater penalty on people who kill others because of drugs and/or alcohol. I find it extraordinary that the police minister argued against mandatory sentences for people who kill others in traffic accidents because of drugs and/or alcohol. It was bizarre for the minister to argue, as she did yesterday, and of course I cannot quote —

Mrs L.M. Harvey: It is untrue.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I have the transcript here, but of course I cannot —

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I did not argue against a mandatory sentence.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, you did.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I argued against a lifetime disqualification. Tell the truth! I hope you’re not quoting from uncorrected Hansard.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I am holding the proof Hansard from yesterday, which I am unable to quote in Parliament because of our standing orders. Having noted that, I ask people who are looking at this uncorrected Hansard to look at pages 38 to 45 of Wednesday, 17 August 2016. I cannot quote it, but I will read it out: “As well as this, the bill removes the discretion of a court to deal with exceptional circumstances, as under proposed section 59(4C). A permanent disqualification must be imposed if the requirements of proposed section 59(4C)(a) are met. This again could have unnecessarily harsh consequences, particularly for the families of people who receive a permanent disqualification. The bill also removes the ability of a court to grant an extraordinary driver’s licence under section 27 of the Road Traffic (Authorisation to Drive) Act.” As I say, that will not be indented in the text because under the standing orders I cannot quote from the uncorrected Hansard, but I make it clear that the minister’s argument was that the member for Hillarys was removing the discretion of a court to deal with exceptional circumstances. That is an interesting position because that is the exact position that the Labor Party argued in respect of other matters in this chamber, but the Minister for Police called us weak another, but I suppose that word is probably unparliamentary.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Integrity.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Indeed, it is integrity. It is interesting that the Liberal Party has said sending someone to jail is not something that the court should have discretion about, but giving people a driver’s licence is something that the court should have discretion about. It is strange. Then the minister argued that another provision of a different act, which the member for Hillarys did not seek to amend, meant that a lifetime disqualification could be reviewed after a period of 10 years.
Mr R.F. Johnson: I was aware of that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Regardless, it was not fatal to the member’s bill. It is simply a provision in another arrangement whereby something else could happen.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Absolutely.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If the minister says that discretion should not be available, the minister could remove that discretion. Fortunately, I am not inside the mind of the member for Hillarys—it is not a place I would love to be, I can tell him that now!—but the point is that I do not know what was in the mind of the member for Hillarys when he wrote the words in his legislation. But if that was the problem the minister had, the minister had an opportunity to deal with that along with all these other amendments. I think I counted 37 amendments in total that the minister is asking us to support in her legislation. Remember her legislation has been sitting on the notice paper for eight months. It is not as though this Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015 —

Mr R.F. Johnson: It is 10 months, actually.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Ten months—whatever. It is not as though this has been a priority of the government. Many other pieces of legislation were given priority way before this one, including the Marketing of Potatoes Amendment and Repeal Bill that was dealt with on Tuesday night.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I wanted to debunk the nonsense that we heard from the minister last night in debating the legislation introduced by the Independent Liberal, the member for Hillarys. I note that he put out a media release today informing the community that following 76 per cent of respondents to a survey he conducted indicating they want him to run again, he has chosen to do so. I am sure the Labor Party would be desperately interested in the outcome of that election. We have always run a hard campaign in that seat. As the minister explained, the member for Hillarys has an undoubted commitment to road safety. I am sure if he is returned to this chamber at the 2017 election—none of us know whether any of us will get back in—he would continue to pursue his clear and personal agenda to improve road safety in Western Australia.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Absolutely, because I do not want other families to go through what my family and the Roberts family went through when they lost their father, husband and brother. I want to try to save the people of Western Australia going through that terrible trauma. That is genuine.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Indeed; and I also note that the member for Hillarys’ media release mentioned the finances of the state; that is, if the government had paid more attention to him and less attention to others, the state’s finances would be in a much better position. We would have had more money to spend on road traffic and road safety.

Mr R.F. Johnson: About three years ago a commentator said, “If only Colin had listened to Robbie J, we’d be in a different position.” Everything I said has come true after three years, including the disgraceful unemployment statistics of today.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, it is very tragic that over 90 000 Western Australians are now unemployed.

I want to go on to a few things about road safety in my electorate. The insurance company AAMI states that the section of Albany Highway past Carousel shopping centre is the most accident-prone road in Western Australia. I have grieved to the Minister for Transport about this and a number of other issues, and I have written to him. He basically said, “It’s all because of driver behaviour. Driver behaviour is the problem past Carousel.” That is absolutely unfair. There are major traffic problems through Carousel. The road simply does not function. Even on a Saturday, it does not function. There are many road safety problems there that need to be dealt with.

The RAC publishes a report about dangerous traffic intersections. There is a list of 103 or 107, something like that, most accident-prone, dangerous intersections in the metropolitan area. There are 34 metropolitan Assembly seats. If members divide that number, there are about three for every state electorate. The electorate of Cannington has seven of those 103 dangerous intersections. Seven are in the electorate that I represent. Again, I have grieved to the Minister for Transport about this. He basically said, “Tough!” Fortunately, the City of Gosnells has not been as derelict in its duty as the minister. I am very pleased that following the lobbying that I have done with the local residents in the suburb of Langford, the council is installing traffic lights at the corner of Langford Avenue and Spencer Road. That is a really good decision, and the lights are currently being installed. I was there the other day and they are very close to finishing the road infrastructure changes. One resident lives just on the northern side of that intersection and her house is maybe a metre and a half lower than the road level. She has literally had cars go through the intersection and her garden wall and nearly hit her house. They have not quite reached the house, but given that she has young kids, it has always been a big worry to her. It is good that through the work of the local residents and my support that that intersection is nearly finished. Those traffic lights will make a big difference to the number of accidents at that intersection, which local residents tell me are a regular occurrence.
At the other end of Langford Avenue, the City of Gosnells will put in traffic lights at the Nicholson Road intersection. It is a terrible intersection and putting lights there will make a big difference. The City of Canning responded to my request on behalf of local residents and is doing some minor works at the Lynwood Avenue–Nicholson Road intersection. It has widened the road to create a turn pocket for people wanting to turn left. In the past, if a driver wanted to turn right from Lynwood Avenue across Nicholson Road, because there was no space for two cars, there would be a queue of cars wanting to turn left and the intersection would simply cease to function. The problem is that Nicholson Road has traffic lights at Roe Highway and then Spencer Road, but the cars spread out as they travel down that part of the road. Although it is only a 60 kilometre-an-hour zone, people do various speeds and the cars all string out so there are no gaps in the traffic for people to turn right onto Nicholson Road. It means that if just one car wants to turn right, suddenly the Lynwood Avenue intersection ceases to function because nobody can turn left. The council has now widened that road and put in a turn pocket to allow three cars to queue to turn left. Unless four cars want to turn right, which is uncommon, that intersection starts to clear. Of course, when the Langford Avenue–Nicholson Road lights go in, that will break up the traffic.

Lynwood Avenue is further north than Langford Avenue, which means that the drivers on Lynwood Road will get a bigger break in the traffic and get out. That will also probably help at Metcalfe Road and Nicholson Road, which is again another very difficult intersection. I have raised that matter with the City of Canning and it has explained the problems with it being quite close to the traffic lights at the Spencer Road–Nicholson Road intersection. At least the changes further down at Lynwood Avenue and Langford Avenue on Nicholson Road will probably make some of problems at Metcalfe Road a little better. It might even give some people who are turning right out of Metcalfe Road a little bit of space as well. One way or another, the Cities of Canning and Gosnells are to be commended on their actions to improve those roads. I make the point that Main Roads Western Australia is responsible for those roads. They are not council roads but the councils are spending their money to do what the Minister for Transport refused to do; that is, to improve road safety at those intersections. They are to be commended, and I am very happy to work with local residents.

Another one of those bad intersections known by the RAC is where Station Street and Albany Highway meet. I understand that Main Roads Western Australia will put traffic lights in there, effectively funded by the Canning Agricultural, Horticultural and Recreational Society that owns the showground. It is running a commercial development there with a commercial tenant building a Bunnings Warehouse. The society has done a deal with the Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association for the dog track, which has given it a bit of money. It conceded a bit of land for planning approvals so that a bus lane can go past Westfield Carousel and the showground, and then traffic lights will allow buses to change from the left-hand lane to the right-hand lane. At the moment there is a bus stop in front of the showground but the buses have to turn right to go down Nicholson Road. In the past the buses have had to get across three lanes of traffic to turn right at Nicholson Road. At least with the traffic lights and a dedicated bus lane, the buses will be filtered out in front of the traffic rather than having to barge their way through the traffic in the afternoons when Albany Highway is at its worst.

The next thing that I need to talk about on road safety and road traffic in my area is the constant complaint about hoon drivers. Recently, the residents of Beckenham raised this issue with me. Beckenham is an older suburb with lots of long, straight streets. Although lots of traffic goes into that suburb from the City of Gosnells, the residents continue to tell me that many people use the straight streets as rat runs rather than William Street, which is causing lots of trouble. I raised it with local police who said that they will give it some priority to try to crack down on hoon driving, but it has always been a struggle to deal with ever since the member for Midland introduced Western Australia’s first anti-hoon laws in the early 2000s. State governments have incrementally tried to address the question of hoon driving but it is a complicated issue. I will continue to work with local residents to reduce the impact of hoon driving whenever I can.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** More cops on our roads: that is what everybody says and it can be done just like that.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Yes. The police told me that if they know that hoon drivers are in one location, they will send extra patrols to that area. But what happens in the area without the patrol? There is only one solution to hoon driving. If the police are not there to enforce the law, it is very hard to achieve any other outcome. These are all important issues to the community that I represent. I will continue to advocate on its behalf, to listen to its needs and to improve the situation. Of course, that includes dealing with the three level crossings that I understand the Liberal Party is saying will all still be there in 30 years even though it wants to further increase the number of trains using the train line through to Kenwick that runs from my electorate. That is another major safety problem. There are queues of cars like you would not believe coming from the north on Wharf Street in the mornings. It is just amazing. We had some journalists out there a while ago and they literally could not believe that 40 cars were lined up on a suburban street waiting for a level crossing. It is a major problem because people end up using these streets as rat runs to avoid Wharf Street.

**MR C.J. TALLEN TIRE (Gosnells) [12.18 pm]:** I rise to speak on the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. There is no doubt that road safety impacts on all our lives. Every member here and every member of the Western Australian community is an active road user in one way or another. We all use the road...
might give a reading that suggests they are under the influence of methamphetamine or some other drug. That they are culpable to a whole other degree. A case in which a person did not get away with it is the case of more serious and that they are not going to get away with it. On that front I am somewhat reassured that people are not getting away with hit-and-run accidents, but we have to make it really clear that if a person does that, people who have been killed on the roads and the immediate reaction of some perpetrators—the culprits—in I, of course, have a particular interest in road safety matters that affect cyclists. I can see it in the dreadful spate get into that condition makes their act, if anything, even worse. That is an issue we have to face. That attitude is not check the condition of the person, not offer assistance and not report the accident. There have been too many of those cases lately. I suspect that in some hit-and-run cases people would give very high alcohol readings; they of cyclists who have been knocked off his bike while taking a gentle ride along The Esplanade in Mt Pleasant. The driver of a white four-wheel drive ute failed to stop, drove on and did not check the condition of Tom Lyons. He did not report the accident and only came through, only fessed up, and went to a police station when it was apparent that CCTV footage from houses along that part of The Esplanade in Mt Pleasant had clearly identified the vehicle. There was a general community alert and search for the vehicle. These events occurred in September 2015. Reports at the time stated —

The man alleged to have been responsible for the crash, from Parkwood, has been charged with dangerous driving occasioning grievous bodily harm, failing to stop and render assistance, and failing to report a crash.

Police found the car that was involved in the incident yesterday and seized it for forensic examination.

An ABC news report on 23 May 2015 stated —

“We got a lot of assistance from the public in this matter but what was particularly helpful was CCTV footage that was seized from around the location,” Detective Senior Sergeant Brian Hunter from the Major Crash Investigation Section said.
One of the advantages of our highly technology influenced society is the many CCTV cameras around the place. In this case it was one that was part of a security set-up for a private dwelling on The Esplanade in Mt Pleasant. That enabled the community to identify the kind of vehicle that was involved in that accident. I think the culprit realised that he had no hope of going to ground and escaping eventual detection so he eventually came forward. The report stated —

The man handed himself into police yesterday after an appeal by officers for information relating to the crash.

“Handed himself in” is perhaps being a bit kind. It suggests that there was a degree of nobleness about his coming forward. It is likely he committed the offence, perhaps phoned somebody in the legal profession, was told to lie low until the alcohol or drugs were out of his system, and he then came forward. That is a problem we have. In fact, this legislation, which is all about making it compulsory for people to provide blood samples and to participate in blood testing at the request of police officers may in some ways make people think, “Oh well, I had better do a hit and run and move on until I am eventually caught and then have to provide the test.” I am concerned about that. But, as I say, it is not a solution; it is in response to the number of cameras that are around and people need to realise that they will not get away with these things.

I highlighted a case of someone who was not killed by the dreadful event of being hit from behind, but we have had other cases in which cyclists have been knocked off their bikes and killed. One of the most notable events in recent times, or one that got into the media at any rate—because we need to realise that this happens with dreadful tragic frequency—is the case in 2014 of Brynt McSwain, who was training for a ride. He was a triathlete I believe. He had given his fiancée a meeting point in the Perth hills and had arranged to meet her on a Saturday morning. He was riding along Kewdale Road in Welshpool at 7.40 am. I would have thought the roads would be pretty quiet then; indeed, it is one reason that those of us in the cycling community do a lot of riding in the early morning—we have the impression that roads are quieter and safer then. But poor Brynt McSwain was riding along Kewdale Road at 7.40 am and was hit from behind. The driver of the ute that was involved did not stop, but police arrested the driver a short time later when his vehicle crashed just off the Roe Highway near Nicholson Road. Tragic events like that are all too common.

I will highlight one more case—that of Tim Anderson. Many members here will be aware of Tim Anderson, the rider who was killed just near Leighton Beach while riding, again training for a fund-raising event. Tim was riding home. It happened in the evening, and I will read from the report. It states —

The Perth cycling community is in shock over the hit and run death of a male cyclist at about 8pm last night. A 28 year old Watermans Bay man has been charged with a string of offences including aggravated dangerous driving causing death, failing to stop after an accident, failing to render assistance and driving under the influence of alcohol.

I have participated in Tim’s Ride to commemorate the life of Tim Anderson and to increase awareness around road safety, particularly for cyclists. The article I just quoted noted —

The cyclist, who was wearing high-visibility clothing and a helmet, hit the windscreen of the car before being dragged with his bicycle along the road and died a short time later in hospital.

It is believed the driver of the white Toyota Camry may have been drinking at a pub in Fremantle with a work colleague a short time before they were allegedly involved in the crash. The driver fled the scene with his colleague and police were later called by a neighbour who noticed the two men arguing.

These are tragic, tragic incidents and we can only hope that if there is greater awareness of the consequences to innocent road users, to the victims and their families, and, indeed, the devastating consequences on the lives of those who act with such irresponsibility, that people will realise there is tragedy all round and perhaps will take more careful note of what needs to be done. It is really quite simple: do not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, which puts people into a condition such that they will not be able to drive responsibly.

I know that road safety is very much in the minds of all people in my electorate of Gosnells. The government has made various forays into this area with the hoon laws, and we have had long debates on that over the last two terms and before my time here. There has always been a need for a concentration of effort on this issue. I want to bring to the attention of the house something that is of concern to me that I do not think has been picked up by the current legislation.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: We look a lot at people exceeding speed limits and at various dangerous behaviour—I might come back to the issue of people doing burnouts and other dangerous driving patterns—but something we do not seem to pick up on is the danger caused by rapid acceleration, which I see quite often in my area. A vehicle will start at zero and get to 60 kilometres an hour in incredibly rapid time. It does not exceed the speed limit, but that rate of acceleration makes for some dangerous events.
Mr P. Abetz: And there is the noise that goes with it, too.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Yes, thank you, member for Southern River. I do not think it is possible for people to properly control their vehicle as they rapidly accelerate. Indeed, it is done in such a way, along with the noise of the vehicle, to suggest the person is focused on the attention-seeking aspect of what they are doing. We need to look at that. I notice the legislation contains some fairly complex formulas for determining speeds and what have you. Acceleration should be looked at as a part of those formulas. That will raise the question: how can an unwitting motorist know whether they are contravening laws around acceleration? It is pretty fair to say that would be a category of vehicle that has a power that exceeds what anyone would ever need in vehicle for normal commuting around the metropolitan area and driving around the state of Western Australia. The issue then becomes that someone has a vehicle that can do this rapid acceleration and if someone observes them making that extremely rapid acceleration, the chances are that they are committing an offence. We should be redesigning our laws to ensure that we are picking up people who exceed not only the speed limit but also the rate of acceleration that is beyond what is necessary. Let us say that someone is second at the traffic lights and they take off at a normal speed, but someone either alongside them or just behind them is intent on rapid acceleration, placing other road users at risk. I am not sure what statistics the government might have on the potential for rapid acceleration to cause accidents or whether they have done any analysis at all; I would love to know. I touched on this issue some years ago and I do not think I got a particularly strong hearing. It was seen as being a little beyond the bounds of whatever bill we were looking at at the time. Nonetheless, it is important, and as the member for Southern River indicated, it relates to other matters to do with hooning and people’s general frustration with the standard of behaviour that we see on public roads. After all, public roads are there for people to get to work, to see their family and to get to all kinds of events, such as recreational events. Our public roads are not places for people to indulge in some dream of driving fast vehicles. That is not their purpose at all. In the City of Gosnells a great effort has been put into this issue.

People are doing their very best on the City of Gosnells’ various committees, especially the RoadWise Advisory Group, which the member for Cannington touched on. The city has a whole range of initiatives, but the one that really stands out in my mind is the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, which the City of Gosnells hosts every year. The city also makes a point of taking that event into our schools, because it is the year 10 or year 11 students who are about to get their driver’s licence who need to be educated and told about the risks. They need to be told about the benefits that come with having a driver’s licence, but they also need to be told about the responsibilities as well. I note that the Minister for Police was at Thornlie Senior High School only a couple of years ago when we had a fantastic presentation by year 10 or 11 students about the dangers of texting while driving. The theatrical performance that was put on to get that message across was absolutely first-rate—really good. I think all of the student community at that school would have appreciated and got the message about what is at stake and what is being risked if people text while driving. It takes only a brief moment of inattention, the temptation to see who that text message is from while driving, for a tragedy to arise. That message was well delivered.

Since that event at Thornlie Senior High School a few years ago, I have attended other World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims events. I believe the General Assembly of the United Nations brought this program into effect in 2005, so it is part of an international recognition of the risks, the losses and the tragedies that occur when road safety rules are not adhered to. I have also been to other events—such as one last year at the Australian Islamic College, and one the year before that at Southern River College—and on both of those occasions speakers were brought forward who had been victims of road tragedy. Indeed, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.M. Britza), I know you were at the Southern River College event. The quality of presentation and the sincerity with which it was given, but also the harsh reality of it, all stay in one’s mind and, I am sure, have stayed in the minds of the young students in attendance. I put it to the house that we really need to ensure that all Western Australian students are able to access these kinds of programs and are able to see and hear these stories for themselves firsthand. I recall the gentleman who came to speak at Southern River College. He made a point of just letting the story unfold in such a way that we heard about the fact that he had been drinking one night and that there had been this tragedy, and at the very end of the story he told us that he was the person who was actually driving the vehicle. We could see how devastating that was for him, personally, to have that on his conscience for the rest of his life—that he was responsible for the deaths of close friends. Those tragedies stay with people.

Legislation that comes to this place has to be designed to tackle these sorts of problems, but at the same time it has to be backed up by strong educational programs, and they require funding. These people who have given outstanding presentations to schools need some level of support just to help them cope with the injuries that they have sustained. The gentlemen who spoke at Southern River College and at the Australian Islamic College were both wheelchair-bound. I am sure they need additional assistance to be able to get around and tell their stories, and that on his conscience for the rest of his life—that he was responsible for the deaths of close friends. Those tragedies stay with people.

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Finally, I want to talk about what I believe is called the road traffic branch. I can recall the Road Traffic Authority back in the 1970s that was almost a separate police force before we decided to merge it back in with the main police service. I do not want to question the wisdom of that decision, but I note that today, if one feels one has an issue as a member of this Parliament and wants to tell the police force about it, it is very hard to get onto the road traffic branch. My office has been trying to contact the road traffic branch about some problems on Helm Street, Maddington, and the need to have some cameras there. We have tried various phone numbers that we have acquired, but we are not getting any answers. It seems that we are required to go through the local policing system—perhaps the officer in charge of the local police station. That is all fine, but it would be much better if we were able to speak directly to the police road traffic branch about road safety matters so that we can have direct assistance and let them know that we need their efforts to be targeted on speed cameras, in this case at Helm Street in Maddington. If we were to contact the local police station, we would be causing the deployment of police officers who otherwise might be involved in investigating burglaries and other things; it would mean that they would not be able to do that work because they would be out on Helm Street holding a speed camera. It would be good if we could have a better use of the police service in that respect so that we as members and the community in general can contact the road traffic branch. We could have much better targeting of police resources.

I look forward to getting into the detail of the legislation before us and the amendments that are on the notice paper. As other members have noted, the amendments seem to be quite extensive, suggesting perhaps that when the bill was brought into the house, due consideration had not been given to various aspects of it. I also note the issue around the rules for alcohol levels for driving instructors. I will also quickly mention the issue of supervisor drivers with young people and the idea that there can be young passengers in a car when someone is under some level of instruction—perhaps on red or green P-plates. I am concerned that it is a little too easy for people to be under instruction with other young passengers in the car, when perhaps the driving skills of the person under instruction would really require them to pay full attention to the road. Any additional contact or communication in the car should be with only the person who is supervising the learner driver, and there should not be any other young people in the car. That is an issue that is perhaps slightly separate to the point of this legislation, but it is an issue that I wanted to raise. This is a very important bill and I look forward to going into it in detail.

**MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [12.48 pm]**: In the extensive time that I have left to address the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015, I want to make a couple of very brief statements about speeding drivers. I see some really positive things in this bill and I congratulate the government on a number of the changes it will bring in and the significant amendments that our police force will be able to put into action. When reading the bill, I found it quite surprising that police are not able to compulsorily require blood tests of drivers who are suspected of being involved in traffic accidents resulting in death or serious bodily harm. I find that quite amazing. My brother and his wife are both police officers, and I cannot imagine how they can do their jobs effectively, given those gaps in the existing legislation.

I can, of course, refer to many instances in which it is essential that the police are given greater capacity to manage speeding drivers and to intervene when they can. I know that the Minister for Police is aware of the I can, of course, refer to many instances in which it is essential that the police are given greater capacity to manage speeding drivers and to intervene when they can. I know that the Minister for Police is aware of the

**MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [12.50 pm]**: After more than one year, and at immense cost to Western Australian taxpayers, one of the world’s most respected charities is still under attack from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party WA. I want to clarify information presented in the Legislative Council last night concerning the rationale for other inquiries to be conducted into the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia. In 2010, a New South Wales parliamentary committee inquired into the RSPCA’s removal of koalas from private premises and found they were motivated by valid concerns about the animals’ welfare and noted problems at the park dating back to 2007. A Tasmanian inquiry into the RSPCA was initiated due to money having been lost in the operations of a veterinary hospital and resulted in improvements to governance. In the United Kingdom, the RSPCA’s role in enforcing the highly political Hunting Act has caused some issues. They have said recently that the charity was saving government £50 million a year by taking away some issues. They have said recently that the charity was saving government £50 million a year by taking away from the state the responsibility to prosecute. The chief executive officer of the UK RSPCA has said that it is committed to speaking out for vulnerable animals and makes no apologies for its campaigning work, which has benefited animals. In contrast, the inquiries initiated by the Victorian and Western Australian Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party have been devised clearly to attack and undermine the RSPCA, with accusations that the RSPCA is “lurching to activism”. In May 2016, Paul Murray wrote in relation to the Western Australian inquiry...
that, “I have never seen a committee minority report that so categorically collapses the foundation of the majority report.” The majority report failed to provide any justification for a takeover of the RSPCA by government, or for watering down the prosecution powers of the RSPCA. I concur with the committee conclusion that the RSPCA represents value for money and should have its funding increased.

**GUILDFORD ASSOCIATION**

*Statement by Member for Swan Hills*

MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [12.51 pm]: Several years ago, I visited Swan Hills resident Ms Dorrie Cowcher on the occasion of her 104th birthday at Yallambee Hostel in Mundaring. As a child, Dorrie was a resident of Guildford. In a quiet, clear voice, as though it was just yesterday, she recounted her memory of standing on the top veranda of Padbury’s store in Guildford, with her parents and family, in 1915. The occasion she described was the departure of Australian Imperial Force troops as they marched from their training camp at Blackboy Hill and down Terrace Road through Guildford to Guildford station, boarding a train bound for Fremantle, with cheering crowds to farewell them—soldiers such as the Harper brothers and the Lukin boys marching towards their destiny at the Nek in Gallipoli. Just as Dorrie’s memory is real, so were the people and places of Guildford’s past. Such are the memories that are part of historic Guildford, these memories of history and subsequent sacrifice have been the driving inspiration for the Guildford Association’s unique ANZAC poppy memorial plaques in both physical and electronic form on the homes of our past soldiers. The faces and places of our fallen sons will now be remembered in perpetuity. We thank Guildford Association Inc for its efforts in providing a modern interpretation and memory through the website and walk trail. Its commitment has made this a reality. As well, we thank the federal government for its grant of $29,495 through the advocacy of Hon Ken Wyatt, MP. In this place of history, Guildford, we can say we continue to remember them.

**ANNA STEWART TRAINING PROGRAM**

*Statement by Member for Fremantle*

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle) [12.53 pm]: Today I take this opportunity to acknowledge the 30-year anniversary of the running in Western Australia of the Anna Stewart training program for women union delegates. Anna Stewart was a Victorian official in the 1970s and was involved in the early years of the Australian Council of Trade Unions’ women’s committee. Her life ended far too early, but her work continues on in the form of this training program, which is run in many states, including Western Australia. Over the 30 years that the program has been run in this state, scores of women union members have had their eyes opened and their skills honed, including some who are now heading up unions and some who are in federal Parliament. Despite the burley stereotype of union members, half of this country’s unionists are women, and they usually work in the care and service sectors. The Anna Stewart program has provided an important focus on ensuring that women union members, and all women in their workplaces, have effective representation to tackle the important issues of job security, recognition of skills and workplace safety. Many of the gains that have been made to benefit women in the workforce have been as a result of women being organised and demanding—rightly—fair and equal treatment. The principles of equal pay, maternity leave and anti-discrimination laws have all come about because women have been organised and made demands at their workplaces, in their community and in their Parliament. The hard reality is that although many gains have been made, there is still a long way to go. The complex contributors to the pay gap mean that in this state, women still earn on average 25 per cent less than their male counterparts.

**BLETCHLEY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL — CRIS PARTINGTON**

*Statement by Member for Southern River*

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [12.54 pm]: I well remember the official opening of Bletchley Park Primary School, where I met the founding principal, Mr Cris Partington. Starting with fewer than 200 students and fewer than 10 year 7 students graduating that first year, the school has flourished under Cris’s competent and inspiring leadership, aided by very competent and committed staff. Now with over 1,000 students, it is still the school of choice in my area. Yes; it has staggered lunch and play times to prevent congestion on the playground. These things are just part of the can-do attitude of Cris and his team. Cris provided the leadership for the school to be part of the first group of independent public schools, and I have served on the board from almost the very beginning. I have therefore seen firsthand how a competent principal, aided by a committed board and staff, can use the flexibility afforded by IP schools to the educational advantage of the students. Cris’s very competent leadership has not gone unnoticed. The director of the school innovation and reform unit offered him a position on the principal professional support team for the remainder of this year with a possible extension into next year. This team works with beginning and newly appointed principals in both permanent and acting positions. The Bletchley Park Primary School community will lose our wonderful principal today for at least the rest of the year, but possibly forever, and deputy Bec Burns will take over for the rest of the year. Cris is leaving the school in good hands with a great leadership team, wonderful curriculum leaders and an amazing staff.

We hope you come back, Cris, but if not, I am sure that as you provide to other principals, their schools will benefit from your input.
BAYSWATER CITY SOCCER CLUB
Statement by Member for Albany

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [12.56 pm]: Bayswater City Soccer Club has been an important club in Perth and maintains a strong record and history of recent wins under its belt. Bayswater City pulls its weight not only on the field and for the scoreboard but also as a well-deserved member of the regional semi-professional National Premier Leagues Western Australia, which is a vital part of the community. The club is based at Frank Drago Reserve in Bayswater, and over the winter break I had the pleasure of visiting and meeting Gerry Maio, the club’s current president, Greg D’Orazio and other representatives, thanks to their local member of the Legislative Assembly, Ms Lisa Baker. The club is passionate about its sport, and one gets a sense that it has fought hard for its achievements along the way. Founded in 1961, the club has transformed itself in that time through multiple mergers with other clubs and a number of name changes, from Bayswater United in the 1960s to Rosemount Meazza in the 1970s, Bayswater Inter in the 1980s and others until finally, in 2003, it acquired its current name of Bayswater City Soccer Club. Bayswater City Soccer Club deserves recognition for its considerable achievements and wins over recent years. This includes making Australian history by being the only club ever to have won four trophies in a calendar year. Throughout the past few seasons, it has also won three premiership titles, two championships and countless other trophies. It is clear that the passion and effort of the players and supporters have finally paid off. We look forward to seeing where the club takes us in years to come.

KEN PERKS — BOWLS WA CLUB COACH OF THE YEAR
Statement by Member for Morley

MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley) [12.58 pm]: I would like to share with members an award recently received by a dedicated Morley Bowling Club member who resides in my electorate. Ken Perks was deservedly awarded the title of 2015–16 Bowls WA Club Coach of the Year for 30 years of commitment and innovation in coaching and lecturing juniors through to seniors throughout the state. This is the second time he has won this prestigious award. Ken is an integral member of the Bayswater sports advisory council and the Bowls WA coaching committee. In particular, a successful initiative of Ken’s undertaken last year gave reason for Bowls Australia representative Clive Adams to nominate Ken for the award. Last year, Bowls Australia released a training kit for juniors called Junior Jack Attack. Ken has had a vision about running a program within schools and he could not get his hands on these kits quick enough. This initiative has enabled him to introduce primary school children at two schools to bowls, as a part of their sports lesson during school hours. With the help of two sponsors, Ken purchased two kits. He was instrumental in introducing bowls to two schools and established a 10-week pilot program. Ken has a goal to have as many bowling clubs as possible implement the Junior Jack Attack program, thus enabling a junior bowling section within each club being the norm. This would, of course, be not only beneficial for the children but also a way of ensuring a steady intake of members into the senior section. Once again, congratulations, Ken; you are a valued member of the community and your efforts are appreciated.

VIETNAM VETERANS’ DAY
BATTLE OF LONG TAN — FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland): Today is Vietnam Veterans’ Day. The day also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, one of the most well-known conflicts of the Vietnam War involving the Anzacs. On 18 August 1966, 108 young men—105 from D Company of the 6th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment and three from a New Zealand artillery team—resisted an attack by up to 2 500 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops. The battle was fought in the late afternoon in a rubber plantation called Long Tan, where the men withstood intense mortar and machine gun fire and a torrential monsoonal downpour. After three to four hours of intense fighting, troop reinforcements arrived from other Australian, New Zealand and American supporting units, and the battle ended in the early evening. Eighteen Australian soldiers were killed, including Corporal Peter Clements and Private Richard Aldersea from Western Australia, with a further 24 men wounded. There were 245 confirmed Viet Cong and North Vietnamese fatalities, with more than 1 000 wounded. To commemorate this historic day and the valiant and selfless efforts of those who served their country, the President and I have arranged for Parliament House to be illuminated in red tonight.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS — MR SHINSUKE OKUNO AND MR NAOKAZU TAKEMOTO
Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland): I wish to welcome Mr Shinsuke Okuno and Mr Naokazu Takemoto from the Japanese Diet. They are visiting us today to foster friendship between Western Australia and Japan. Welcome to our proceedings today.

[Applause.]
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
STATE ECONOMY — UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

523. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Premier:
I refer to today’s jobless figures, which show that unemployment is now at 6.3 per cent. There are 61,600 more unemployed people now than when the Premier came to office. The number of full-time jobs has fallen for the nineteenth consecutive month, and there are 8,200 more unemployed people in Western Australia since last month.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: All right, that’s enough, thank you—quickly.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Would you like me to repeat it, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: No, we have heard it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is the Leader of the National Party not correct that the government, of which he is a part, has no economic plan?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is a bad start! A very long question and a lot of noise.

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:
In this year’s state budget, Treasury forecast that our unemployment rate would rise above six per cent. That was expected. Everyone was very conscious of the very large fall in commodity prices and a dislocation of employment from the mining and mining services industries. I think anyone who follows the economy at all would understand that the labour market is fragile and that there is a great deal of uncertainty about job security. This is a highly cyclical economy. The average growth rate here is higher than is the case in the rest of Australia, but it is highly cyclical because we are the export state of Australia and we are heavily dependent on international events and international commodity prices. The month-to-month figures bounce around. Last month, unemployment fell; this month, it has risen. Does the Leader of the Opposition think that both of those circumstances are correct? One of them is wrong. The labour market is weak and people are concerned, as I am, about job security, particularly for fly in, fly out workers and the like. That is a reality.

As for the question, to ask me, as the Premier, what I think about something the Leader of the National Party said is not about a portfolio. It is not relevant.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Repeatedly —

Mr M. McGowan: He said you have no economic plan. Is he right?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No. The point of the member’s question is wrong. Does he not understand that in Parliament, members ask ministers or Premiers questions about their responsibilities and portfolios? Members do not ask me or anyone else to give an opinion about what someone else has said. If the Leader of the Opposition is interested in the view of the Leader of the National Party, he should ask him.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Mr Speaker, this is childish stuff. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to ask me a question about our economic plan or unemployment, he should do so, but I will not be answering questions about what some other minister might think. Ask him!

STATE ECONOMY — UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

524. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Premier:
I have a supplementary question. Is it not the case that the Premier blew debt and blew deficits and failed to diversify the economy during the economic good times, therefore making it much worse now?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:
Mr Speaker —

Mr R.H. Cook: Nowhere to run; nowhere to hide.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Nowhere to hide, Mr Speaker!

The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Mr M. McGowan: You have no economic plan.
Mr C.J. BARNETT: I heard your question. Failure to diversify the economy: Ord stage 2, saleyards, genetically modified crops—decisions made by this government in our first year. The agriculture sector is growing. We have been developing tourism in Western Australia. Elizabeth Quay—opposed by Labor. The new Perth Stadium—opposed by Labor. It is the case with project after project and our science policy. Our international expansion throughout South-East Asia and the Indian Ocean—you ridicule; you laugh at it; you oppose it. You oppose diversification in mining. You oppose uranium mining. That will be one of the growth sectors. The world is going to use more nuclear energy. You oppose it. Trading hours is another example.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This government has made decisions across every single portfolio, and we have taken major decisions on improving Perth as a destination and we have taken major decisions in health and in education. That is all part of diversifying our economy. We are now seeing an increase in growth in some of those sectors outside mining and particularly in agriculture. Please, Leader of the Opposition, if you are going to be a serious Leader of the Opposition, because I think you are going to be in that job for quite a while, ask questions directly of responsible ministers.

VIETNAM VETERANS’ DAY

BATTLE OF LONG TAN — FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

525. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Minister for Veterans:

The minister attended a Vietnam War commemorative service this morning at Charles Riley Memorial Reserve in North Beach. Can the minister please remind members of the importance of today’s anniversary?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I start by acknowledging the year 11 politics and law students from Peter Moyes Anglican Community School in the member for Ocean Reef’s electorate. Good afternoon.

Mr Speaker, as you pointed out, today marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. Earlier today, the North Beach RSL held a very sombre memorial service. I acknowledge the attendance of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Albany at that service, and of the Premier at another service on Sunday in Kings Park. Since 1987, 18 August has also been designated as Vietnam Veterans Day, so we can commemorate and remember all those Australians who served not just at Long Tan but also during the entire conflict from 1962 to 1973 in all of the services. More than 63 000 Australians fought in Vietnam, of whom 521 paid the ultimate sacrifice; 61 Western Australians lost their lives during that conflict. More than 3 000 were physically wounded, not to mention those who came back with very deep emotional and mental scars that many still suffer from today.

Of course, Long Tan Day and Vietnam Veterans Day are not just about the Battle of Long Tan; it is about all those veterans. In particular, I acknowledge the families of the 61 Western Australians who lost their lives during that conflict. Up on the Vietnam Veterans memorial in Kings Park, permanently etched on the black granite walls, are those 61 names. To honour them, my office this afternoon is publishing on the veterans minister’s webpage a short biography of the 61 men who lost their lives during the Vietnam conflict. The very first name in Kings Park by order of seniority of service and rank is Chief Petty Officer Raymond Hunt. I am fairly familiar with his story, because my father was there when he passed away. He was 27 years old and from Geraldton. The first man to pass away during the Battle of Long Tan was Private Richard Alfred Aldersea, about whom you spoke, Mr Speaker, upon resumption of sitting at two o’clock. The stories of the suffering, the tragedy and the way these 61 great Western Australians lost their lives is worth remembering. I encourage all schoolkids to familiarise themselves with the story and those 61 Western Australians on occasions such as today. As I said, a short biography of the 61 men will be on the veterans minister’s website this afternoon.

HOUSING — PILBARA — MACRO REALTY DEVELOPMENTS

526. Mr F.M. LOGAN to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to mounting concerns about property developer Macro Realty Developments and the association of its director, Veronica Macpherson, with housing and development deals in the Pilbara.

(1) What steps has the minister taken to have removed a promotional video featuring the minister and Ms Macpherson filmed in the Aboriginal People’s Room that might ay have led institutional and mum-and-dad investors to think that the group’s claims had the endorsement of the minister and his government?

(2) Will the minister guarantee that neither the Housing Authority nor any other government agency facilitated or promoted the activities of Macro apart from the minister’s own promotional activities?
Mr B.J. GRYLLS replied:

(1)-(2) I thank the shadow spokesman for housing for the question. He is correct. When I was the member for Pilbara, Macro Property Developments, which has developments right across the Pilbara in Port Hedland, Karratha and Newman, came to see me to ask me to participate in a video around the Pilbara Cities project and to provide my vision, as the member for Pilbara, for the Pilbara. That is on its website. Subsequently, the market has disintegrated almost entirely in Newman. We have real structural challenges in the property market in Newman. That is why I as the member for Pilbara and the Nationals took such a strong stand on the Kurra workers’ camp, because to renew the lease on a workers camp for 25 years when the property market is essentially in freefall would have been a damaging decision. I welcome the decision by BHP Billiton to do that. Since that time, Macro Realty has continued to bring potential investors through the Pilbara. It does investment tours that allow people to look at opportunities in Hedland, Newman and Karratha. I have met with them on maybe two or three occasions over the course of the last 24 months to give my impressions as the local member of Parliament on market conditions and what is happening. At all times, I have been very clear on what we see. The member can see the published figures to see what has happened to the median property price, what has happened to the median property rentals and how many vacant properties are for rent in Newman and the like. This has been damaging; it has been damaging for Newman. Members of Parliament may recall the member for Victoria Park and I spoke about the Grandtown development. The original Grandtown development was sold to Macro. The piece of land that was the subject of those disappointing set of circumstances back when I was still a minister in 2012, or something like that, was sold to Macro. Macro tried to get that subdivision up and running, and that is now the subject of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission investigation. It is my understanding that the video is still up. I have advised my staff of that today. My take of the video is that I was explaining —

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I had nothing to do with the Department of Housing except for my being the member for Pilbara until this week when I was sworn into cabinet. I do not think the Department of Housing has promoted it at all. Again, it is a private property developer in Newman looking to resurrect the development of which Grandtown was the first proponent. I as the local member have continued to talk to all developers interested in the Pilbara about market conditions and how to deal with not only the property boom, which saw average rents go to $3 000 and average property go over $1 million, but also the downside of that, which is property prices that are below what many people paid for them, and many vacant blocks. The continuing problem is that the banks now want 30 per cent deposit for those properties. The banks have essentially shut the door. A young first home buyer who wants to purchase one of the older three-by-one properties in the Pilbara that is selling for $300 000 needs a $100 000 deposit to make it happen. We still have fundamental structural problems in the Pilbara property market off the back of it.

I am aware of the video. I have instructed my staff to investigate it today to see whether it can be removed. But, as I said, my sense of it is that I, as the local member, was explaining the Pilbara Cities program and the property market and issues in the Pilbara. I have done that for many people who have been looking to invest in the Pilbara.

HOUSING — PILBARA — MACRO REALTY DEVELOPMENTS

527. Mr F.M. LOGAN to the Minister for Housing:
I have a supplementary. Did the minister seek approval for the filming of a corporate promotional video in the Aboriginal People’s Room from the Presiding Officers of Parliament; and, if not, why not?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS replied:
I am going back two years when I was a member of Parliament. I think it was filmed with an iPhone. I do not know whether or not I sought approval. I can seek to find out.

INNOVATION SUMMIT

528. Mr M.H. TAYLOR to the Minister for Innovation:
Can the minister please update the house on the success of the recent Western Australian Innovation Summit?

Mr W.R. MARMION replied:
I acknowledge the question from the member for Bateman. Before I answer the question, I acknowledge the year 11 students from Shenton College, which is in my electorate, who are sitting in the public gallery.

As members in the house know, in May this year the government announced a $20 million innovation package. As part of the development of a state innovation strategy, I announced that a summit would be held at the end of July. There were 350 applications to attend the summit. We had hoped only 200 would attend, but 250 people
attended. It was well attended. I had to cut the number back to 250. The summit went all day. I also congratulate
the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Innovation, who helped in planning the summit, and my
department.

About 800 ideas emanated from the participants of the summit. There were participants from academia, the
innovation culture, angel investors and venture capitalists. There were people from all over the regions—
Broome, Geraldton, Dunsborough and Bunbury. Those 100 people who could not get into the room could
participate in the summit via online access. We also had westlink connections so people could watch it on video
the whole day. If we count all the people who went online, 900 people engaged in the summit. What was the aim
of the summit? It was to make sure that when we develop our innovation strategy, it is informed by the
stakeholders themselves. The innovation strategy, which I will announce in a few months, will be generated from
industry itself. Why are we investing in innovation? That was the very first question asked by the Leader of the
Opposition. We are doing so to diversify the economy. We already have a wonderful innovation culture in
Western Australia. One of the things that came out of the conference from all those involved was that the state
government does not have to pick winners. There is already a great investment culture in innovation in
Western Australia, but there is a gap between those people who have the ideas and those who have the money. It
is the valley of death. Most of the nearly 800 ideas suggest that the government should invest the $20 million
over the next four years in that valley of death area. We need a lot of collaboration to link the people with the
ideas with the people with the money. I hope to report back to Parliament in two months with the very first state
innovation strategy to support the diversified Western Australian economy, which already has great ideas, but we
can build on those.

EVIL 8 — DAVID VOLMER

529. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Police:

I refer to today’s revelation in the national media that yet another Evil 8 gang member, David Volmer, was also
bailed and allowed to live across the road from a school.

(1) Did the Barnett government oppose bail for any members of the Evil 8 gang?

(2) Did the Barnett government bother to even check whether any of their bail residences were near
schools?

(3) How many other members of the Evil 8 paedophile ring were allowed out on bail?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

(1)–(3) I thank the member for the question. Police opposed bail for every one of the Evil 8 people who were
charged with those offences against that young woman.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Right; thank you. Carry on.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Police opposed bail. The opportunity that the police had to oppose bail was taken
advantage of. The magistrate —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As I explained yesterday, defence counsel for these offenders—alleged offenders—
opposed bail and the judge made a decision in each of those cases. To my knowledge, all but one of them was
released on bail into the community with conditions around their management. The person I am aware of who
was near a school is the offender we were talking about—I have forgotten his name—Clegg. As soon as police
became aware of the fact that that offender had been bailed to a residence that was contrary to the bail conditions
that also required him not to be within 100 metres of a school or a childcare facility and not to have unsupervised
access to a child under the age of 16 years et cetera, they took steps to have the bail conditions reviewed. We all
know that Mr Clegg is now back in custody. Another two of those offenders are currently on bail in the
community at two separate addresses. Because of the sensitivity of this issue, the sex offender management
squad now manages those two people. I believe that one is awaiting a plea hearing and the other is awaiting
sentencing. Their bail conditions have been set. They have both been complying with those bail conditions.
Police have been checking on them and they are now being managed by the sex offender management squad,
which has expertise in dealing with these sorts of offenders. I do not believe that the community is at risk. Police
are doing their utmost to ensure that those two individuals are complying with their bail conditions.

With respect to Volmer, I will have to go back to check the records. I do not have the information to hand about
whether he was bailed into the community or what those circumstances are. When I get that information, I will
be happy to provide it to the member.
Mr P. Papalia to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister rule out that the two members of Evil 8 who are still out on bail are near schools?

Mrs L.M. Harvey replied:

I do not know the specific addresses of the individuals. I do know that one of those individuals is definitely not within 100 metres of a school, and I believe he has a bail condition that specifies that. We have to remember that the court imposes the bail conditions.

Several members interjected.

The Speaker: Members!

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I know that both of those individuals are not allowed to have any unsupervised access to children under the age of 16 years.

Several members interjected.

The Speaker: Members!

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Police have satisfied themselves that those two offenders are complying with their bail conditions. They have the support structures —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The Speaker: Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: The support systems —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The Speaker: Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the second time. Just let the minister answer the question.

Mr P. Papalia: You don’t know, do you?

Mrs L.M. Harvey: What I do know, and the information that I have from police and from the sex offender management squad, is that the two individuals who are currently in the community on bail, awaiting either a sentencing hearing or a plea hearing, are both being managed appropriately within the bail conditions that have been set by the court.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The Speaker: Member for Warnbro, I have called you to order twice. If you want me to call you three times, four times and out you go, it is up to you. I am just giving you a warning. A short answer, minister.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: The member for Warnbro does not understand the process. It is the responsibility —

Several members interjected.

The Speaker: Members!

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I think this is a really important issue, Mr Speaker, and I think if members opposite actually care —

Several members interjected.

The Speaker: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the first time. Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the first time. We have had a reasonably good run but we are bogging again.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: The member for West Swan said that we did nothing on Friday, which is 100 per cent incorrect. As soon as we became aware of the situation, we immediately chased it up with police and police —

Several members interjected.

The Speaker: The supplementary question is not from the member for West Swan; it is from the member for Warnbro. He asked a question about whether these two people were near schools. Can you just address that and let us move on.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Mr Speaker, police assure me that they are being managed within the bail conditions that have been set by the court. They are now being managed by the sex offender management squad, which is well equipped to deal with these sorts of offenders.
MINING SECTOR — UPDATE

531. Dr G.G. JACOBS to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:
Before I ask my question, I recognise Anne and David Dwyer from Esperance, who are in the public gallery representing the Save the Jetty group; welcome.

Can the minister please update the house on the positive signs that are emerging from the mining sector?

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE replied:
I thank the member for Eyre for the question. The member for Eyre understands that this government is about generating jobs.

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: It is about positive messaging for the community. It is about creating opportunities for Western Australians that will benefit all Western Australians. I think that the Leader of the Opposition would do well to sit down and have a conversation with the member for Eyre because he might learn a little bit about positive economic theory and how we can project this state’s future and its future development. I have had a fantastic time getting out amongst the mining regions, and meeting and having conversations with the miners. I recently attended the Diggers and Dealers Mining Forum in Kalgoorlie.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: I was buoyed by the positive nature that all these miners have at the moment. There are smiles on the faces of the mining community’s members. I will tell members why the miners are happy; the miners are happy because —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: The miners are happy because, as with many of our commodity prices, the downswing seems to have turned around. Things are bouncing back. Whilst the naysayers and the doomsday advocates on the other side of this chamber will try to tell the people of Western Australia that it is all doom and gloom, that the economy is down, and that things are going bad —

Several members interjected.

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

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition! Thank you.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Speaker —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I was going to give you a chance but you do not want a chance; I call you to order for the first time.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me explain to members that the June quarter of 2015 compared with the June quarter of 2016 gives us a clear indication of the turnaround that we are experiencing. Exploration licence applications increased by 34 per cent, members.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: They cover things such as the Doray Minerals deflector gold project, the Neometals Mt Marion lithium mine, the MZI Resources Keysbrook heavy mineral sands project and Galaxy Resources’ Mt Cattlin lithium project in Ravensthorpe, to name just four. Three other mines —two gold and one nickel— are planned to produce in the coming year. That is seven projects coming underway, whilst we have great prospects for the future in the gold, lithium and zinc industries. We know that gold accounted for 45 per cent of Western Australia’s total exploration expenditure for the March quarter in 2016. We also know that lithium
prices almost quadrupled between the end of 2014 through to April 2016. That growth is off the back of huge global demand, with manufacturers building long-life rechargeable batteries and products like that. The nickel industry, which has been doing it tough in recent years, has also had a 20 per cent increase since February this year. BHP’s decision to extend the life of its Nickel West mine operations from 2019 out to 2032 will mean more jobs and opportunities for people in WA.

Those are just some examples of this great sector. Underlying that and still sitting in the background is the solid backbone of the iron ore industry with its record 740 million tonnes of production, plus the future LNG projects that are still to come into production.

The SPEAKER: Wind it up, please.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: We have the Prelude floating LNG project and Chevron’s Wheatstone LNG project. Ladies and gentlemen, this Liberal–National government is committed to ensuring that Western Australia’s mining sector remains strong and remains the number one destination for mining investment in the world. The reason we are focused on that is that it will create more jobs and more opportunities for the people of this great state.

MINING TAX — NATIONAL PARTY PROPOSAL

532. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Minister for Regional Development:
(1) Will the discriminatory $5-a-tonne mining tax be good for regional WA?
(2) Does the minister support it?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:
I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

(1)–(2) I know that a good budget platform for Western Australia will support regional development and will support a good outcome for people who live in regional Western Australia. As far as the National Party is concerned, I absolutely support the position that the National Party leader is taking to the people of Western Australia, because we believe we need to take a position that supports a good budget outcome because that will support what is an outstanding program for regional Western Australia; that is, the royalties for regions program, which is making a difference to regional Western Australia.

MINING TAX — NATIONAL PARTY PROPOSAL

533. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Minister for Regional Development:
I have a supplementary question. To be entirely clear, the minister’s leader has announced a policy position, whilst the Premier claims to have a different policy position.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: I do not know who shouted out.

Mr P.C. Tinley: The member for North West Central.

The SPEAKER: Member for Willagee! I want to hear these questions in silence.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Which position does the Minister for Regional Development support: the position of the Leader of the National Party or the Premier?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:
The Leader of the Opposition has no credibility in regional Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: He is trying to make whatever challenge he can to try to put a crack in the game so that he can go out to regional Western Australia with some sort of credibility. He has no hope of doing that. He has no credibility there.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sit down.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The National Party is absolutely entitled to make its position clear about policies it takes to the election. I thought that position was clearly articulated last week by the Leader of the National Party and it is the position that I support.
**BEEF EXPORTS**

534.  **Mr I.C. BLAYNEY to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

Given the importance of the beef industry to Western Australia and to farmers in my electorate, can the minister please update the house on recent increases in WA’s beef exports?

**Mr D.C. NALDER replied:**

I thank the member for his question and his continued advocacy for farmers in his electorate. I am pleased to report that Western Australia’s beef exports have rebounded over the past three years to reach record levels. According to the latest industry snapshot from the Department of Agriculture and Food, between 2012 and 2015 the value of WA beef exports grew 170 per cent, from $68 million in 2012 to $184 million in 2015. This resurgence from a low in 2012 has been underpinned by a strengthening demand from various countries, from Asian markets to the United States and others. There is no question that it has been assisted with the easing of the Australian dollar. The Western Australian herd now stands at 2.24 million head. Export of live cattle has also increased. We have seen a 64 per cent increase in value from $154 million in 2015 to $253 million—the highest value reached in the past decade. It is important that we do not forget the events that occurred in this state and the impact of the then federal Labor government on communities particularly in the north and on pastoralists. What is really interesting is whilst it went on and decimated the cattle and beef industry in Western Australia at that time—I just heard a little earlier the Leader of the Opposition talking about the importance of economic activity and jobs—it actually decimated jobs and economic activity in rural and regional areas of Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** They will sit there and argue that it was federal Labor, but let me remind them —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the third time. Member for Maylands, I call you for the first time. Member for Warnbro, I suggest you calm down.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I remind those opposite, who sit there and say federal Labor brought in that ban, what its state Labor colleagues did. They did absolutely nothing.

**Ms L.L. Baker:** Excuse me! It was me.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Actually, it was worse. I hear the member for Maylands chirping away. She actually put a motion in this house to ban live exports forever, which would have decimated the families up there who run pastoral leases. It would absolutely have decimated them. She put in this house a motion to ban it.

**Ms L.L. Baker** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Maylands, I call you to order for the second time. I want the minister to speak through the Chair with a quick answer. We are running out of time.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** This important industry in Western Australian communities creates jobs and supports many local regional communities. It has a very bright future. We are seeing an increasing demand for beef right across the globe, particularly in South East Asia and China. The Minister for State Development and I recently saw firsthand that China wants to import more beef from Western Australia. There is a great opportunity. We look forward to supporting it and supporting jobs in Western Australia.

**Ms L.L. Baker** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Maylands, I call you for the third time.

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**535.  Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to the Minister for Energy’s $50 million convertible loan to Premier Coal.

(1) Does the minister support Premier Coal’s proposed new enterprise agreement that will remove workers’ conditions and reduce wages by approximately $50 000 per year?

(2) What actions will he take to assist workers impacted by this massive pay cut?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question.

(1)–(2) First, let me start with the renegotiated contract between Synergy and Premier Coal. That contract was struck during your period in government. They—Synergy—went out on the direction of government. Before that they were buying coal from two pits—two firms—and they decided to buy it from one.
Premier Coal won the contract at a very low price. The member knows that. That price has really put a squeeze on the owners of that asset. They then sold it to Yancoal, which is owned by a Chinese business overseas. They came to Synergy and said we cannot make a quid under the current prices and they were going to shut down. What the member is implying is that we should have said shut it down. We did not. We entered into —

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We renegotiated the contract and improved it, as I have said in this place many times. We had an option in there to convert some of the uplift in price to convertible notes so that in the case of bankruptcy we would have some say in the redundancy and the insolvency. Otherwise, Synergy would be stuck. If it did go insolvent, we, the state, through Synergy, would be stuck with potentially hundreds of millions of dollars of liabilities in operating that deficient pit into the future. We secured the jobs and we safeguarded the state’s interests and all we get from the Labor Party is whingeing. As to the enterprise bargaining agreement being negotiated, I do not know the origins of that, but I know that the Fair Work Commission is the arbitrator. That was set up under law by the Gillard government and to my knowledge has been unaltered by any subsequent Liberal government. It is between two parties—the unions, whichever they are, and a private business—in front of the neutral arbitrator adjudicating on information at hand. Is the Labor Party suggesting that we, a non-party to that, interfere in that? Is that what is being suggested? If it is, we will not do it. Premier Coal and the unions need to negotiate to get a fair, arbitrated outcome under the Fair Work Commission.

536. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Energy:
I have a supplementary question. Will the minister be doing anything to prevent a $50 000 pay cut and job losses to the Premier Coal workforce considering the very strong leverage of $50 million?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:
If the member wants us to take the $50 million away, we will take it away and more jobs will be lost. Does the member want us to do that?

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That is what the member is advocating.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I call you to order for the first time. Premier, I call you to order for the first time. I want this answered through the Chair very quickly; we are running out of time.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I respect you, member —

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr M.P. Murray: You’re sooking there like a mongrel dog.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I ask you to withdraw that.

Mr M.P. Murray: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. I call you to order now for the third time.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Member for Collie–Preston, you represent the major coalfield in this state—start doing it.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I have called you to order three times. Minister, I want the answer through the Chair. I do not want you to talk to the member for Collie–Preston. If you shout out again, member for Collie–Preston, you are going out.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: You are the member for Collie–Preston —

The SPEAKER: I call you to order now, minister. I gave you a direction and you are now flouting my direction. Speak through the Chair—a quick answer.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The member for Collie–Preston claims to represent the interests of coal miners and the coalfield. He is sitting in a party that wants to close it down and he is asking us to save it. We are. He has provided no leadership to his union members—no leadership at all. That coalfield is under stress like nothing before.

The SPEAKER: Sit down, please. That is the end of it.
Mr T.K. WALDRON to the Minister for Regional Development:

Mr Speaker —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

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

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Treasurer, I call you to order for the second time and the member for Mandurah for the first time. We are really running out of time.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the second time. Let us move on.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Can the minister please provide some details of how the Liberal–National government is supporting our extremely important Royal Flying Doctor Service and ambulance service in regional Western Australia?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

That is a fantastic question from the member for Wagin in terms of his advocacy for health in regional Western Australia.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the second time. Let us move on.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Can the minister please provide some details of how the Liberal–National government is supporting our extremely important Royal Flying Doctor Service and ambulance service in regional Western Australia?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

That is a fantastic question from the member for Wagin in terms of his advocacy for health in regional Western Australia.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, do you want to go home early? You are going about it the right way.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: There were a couple of very interesting comments made a number of years ago. One was by the outgoing CEO of the WA Country Health Service, Christine O’Farrell, who said in 2008 that health in regional Western Australia was “blatantly bloody unsafe”. That was the outgoing CEO of WA Country Health Service. There was also another comment made by a member of Parliament at the time describing the Royal Flying Doctor Service as just an interest group. Since those comments were made, this government has made an unprecedented investment in regional health in Western Australia.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Suspension of Member

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, leave the chamber please.

[The member for Collie–Preston left the chamber.]

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Since 2008 —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is clearly going to be quiet now!

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

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Since 2008, under the royalties for regions program, around about a quarter has gone either directly or indirectly to health in regional Western Australia. That includes in the current budget, with about a third of that. Recently, with the Minister for Health at the RFDS centre at Jandakot airport, we announced $67 million in royalties for regions funding for the ongoing support of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the patient assisted travel scheme and St John Ambulance in regional Western Australia.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: To be a bit more specific about that, we supported the RFDS with $23.61 million along with $11 million from the RFDS for the purchase of two additional aircraft and also two replacement aircraft for its fleet. On average the RFDS transports around 25 people a day, flies millions of kilometres a year, assists over 70 000 people a year and transports over 9 000 people a year. I do not think that the impact it has on regional Western Australia and the access to services can be underestimated. Of that money, $2.2 million went towards a new base for the RFDS in Broome and $4 million from royalties for regions went towards the operational costs of its flight and medical crews for planes that the royalties for regions program has already invested in.
As far as St John Ambulance is concerned, $8 million of royalties for regions money went to supporting the ambulance services via about 22 community paramedics who support staff right across regional WA. For the benefit of the member for Kimberley, there are also WA Country Health Service–run ambulance services in Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek. That is a very, very critical service in a very isolated part of the state. That is, again, supporting additional services that were not there before. There was also $32 million for the WA Country Health Service PATS. The total program there, including funding from WA Country Health Service of $79 million, makes a significant difference for those in the isolated parts of the state who need to access the health services that they need. We do not see these groups that provide these services as interest groups; we see them as committed people in the community making a difference in regional Western Australia and they will always get our support.

**The SPEAKER:** That concludes question time.

**EVIL 8 — DAVID VOLMER**

*Question without Notice 530 — Supplementary Information*

**MRS L.M. HARVEY** (Scarborough — Minister for Police) [2.48 pm]: I rise under standing order 82A to clarify my answer to the member for Warnbro’s question earlier. I am advised that the remaining two individuals of the so-called Evil 8 are not residing in the vicinity or near any school or childcare centre.

**DEPARTMENT OF SPORT AND RECREATION — MOTOR SPORTS WA**

*Question on Notice 5473 — Correction of Answer*

**MS M.J. DAVIES** (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [2.49 pm]: I wish to provide some further information in relation to Assembly question on notice 5473 asked on Thursday, 19 May 2016. The question related to funding received by Motor Sport WA from government sources. The response provided by the department stated that MSWA received $80 000. The department has since notified me that the correct amount is $121 994.

**ROAD TRAFFIC LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2) 2015**

*Second Reading*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN** (Mandurah) [2.50 pm]: I would like to make a contribution to debate on the bill before the house. In doing so, I want to highlight to the house an example of this government’s failure in road traffic policing, particularly in the Peel region. Some 12 months ago, in a disastrous and ridiculous decision made by, or through, the Minister for Police, the traffic unit that had been based in Mandurah for a considerable number of years was relocated to Forestdale. I was the only member of Parliament to not only protest this action, but also highlight the ridiculous nature of relocating a police traffic unit away from a highly populated and growing area of Western Australia—the Peel region—with very important road infrastructure, including the Forrest Highway. The decision to relocate the road traffic unit to Forestdale was not only a wrong decision, and a dumb decision—as I was quoted in the paper as saying—but once again demonstrated a lack of planning on police issues in the Peel region. The government has already taken away the autonomy of the Peel police district, which was an entity in its own right under the previous Labor government, and allowed it to be absorbed into the southern metropolitan area, which is a diverse policing district, to the detriment of policing right throughout the southern corridor.

Last week, appropriately during the Olympic Games, we saw a triple backflip by the Minister for Police in her sudden announcement that the road traffic unit will be returned to Mandurah. I spoke privately to a number of the police in the district, many of whom had been there for quite some time, and the feedback was that the minister and the commissioner realised that they had made a blue. It was a silly decision to take the road traffic unit away from Peel and relocate it in Forestdale. I am pleased that will be returning to the district, but this is an example of the inadequacy and poor stewardship by the minister of policing in the Peel region. It is very disappointing that the minister was not listening to the local community, including me, on that decision.

The men and women who are part of the police service in the Peel region are magnificent; I have said that on numerous occasions. We know that road traffic issues will continue to be of great concern to the growing communities right across the Peel region, from the City of Mandurah to the Shires of Murray, Boddington, and out to Serpentine–Jarrahdale and Waroona. An ongoing presence of not only general police officers but also traffic units on the road is crucial. The Forrest Highway is now carrying a large volume of traffic through the Peel region to the south west. It is important that a designated road traffic policing unit be located in the Peel region. The minister took it away a year ago and now, finally, she has realised how dumb that decision was. It was bewildering to me.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** It is unforgivable.
Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is unforgivable. It was bewildering to me, the local governments and others, because it indicated that the minister did not understand the implications of the unique demographic and the geography of a policing area such as Peel. I congratulate the minister on the upgrade of the Mundijong Police Station. A tremendous expansion of the Mundijong Police Station was opened earlier this year. As we know, Serpentine-Jarrahdale is a rapidly growing part of the Peel region. We only need to drive down the South Western Highway through those burgeoning suburbs, including Byford, to see the number of houses that are appearing almost overnight. The growth is consistent. The police issues relating to that part of the Peel region are critical. Some key areas of the Shire of Murray are important. Dwellingup is a great part of the world; I still believe it is one of the most underrated places in its potential.

Mr M.J. Cowper interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I have a bike. Do I have to bring my bike—my unicycle?

Mr M.J. Cowper interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not know whether I want to ride with him. I want to ride with popular people, not unpopular people. I do not think that the member for Murray–Wellington should be riding with him either. That would not be a very sensible thing to do. Is he going to get out his big microbus? I digress.

I am sure that the member for Murray–Wellington would agree with me that there have always been hints and rumours about the future of the police station at Dwellingup. The reality is that the activity that takes place in Dwellingup throughout the year, not just in peak summer periods, is remarkable. Thousands of people travel on the Pinjarra–Williams Road to Dwellingup and on to Boddington. It is a very busy road. Any government that believes that the Dwellingup Police Station, for example, should be downgraded or taken away would have rocks in its head, and I am sure the member for Murray–Wellington would agree with me that that would be something we would protest very strongly against.

Mr M.J. Cowper: There are all the mining trucks and the log trucks.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Absolutely, and the mix of traffic will always be a concern through that area. The need for police traffic patrol cars on those sorts of roads, be they the highways such as the Forrest Highway or the connecting road through to Boddington, is crucial. I listened to the earlier contributions of the member for Hillarys and one of the opposition members about the lack of the visual presence of patrol cars on the roads. It is absolutely important that people understand that one of the ways to improve road safety is to have patrol cars seen regularly on those important roads and connector roads. On the Forrest Highway, there is a bad black spot at the Greenlands Road intersection. That is still a very dangerous intersection, and it needs attention from whomever wins government in March next year. The need for a strong police presence is crucial. In the Peel, the changes proposed in this Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015 seeking conviction and disqualification of drivers under the influence of alcohol or other drugs cannot be policed without the appropriate police numbers on the roads. It is all very well to bring in these sorts of bills and to beat our chest and say are we not wonderful doing this. At the end of the day, if we do not have adequate resources, particularly in the growing parts of the state, we will be setting ourselves up for failure. We know of the tragedy in Western Australia that is our road toll. In the last 48 to 72 hours we have tragically lost, I think, eight people from road deaths.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Yes. We lost eight in two days.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We have lost 10 in four days. That is horrific. Whenever I see that sort of information on the news, I automatically think of the families who suffer from the time they have been told their loved one has lost their life. That is happening far too regularly on our roads, particularly in regional parts of the state. When large populations move around the state, as they do—Western Australians are used to moving on the roads in large numbers over relatively long distances—road safety is very crucial. There should be no deaths on our roads. It is sobering when we hear about a death on our roads, no matter who, no matter their age or no matter the circumstances.

This bill that the minister has introduced and we are debating, seeks to amend a number of acts including the Road Traffic Act 1974, the Road Traffic (Administration) Act 2008, the Road Traffic (Authorisation to Drive) Act 2008 and the Young Offenders Act 1994. As highlighted during the second reading debate and as detailed in the amendment to the road traffic legislation, a number of issues are very worthy of further scrutiny in the consideration in detail stage. When we get to consideration in detail, which I assume we will do when we resume next week, this bill will be given good scrutiny by this Parliament. We support some elements in the bill that are soundly based, but we have some questions that we will ask the minister to respond to. I understand that this bill includes provisions for mandatory blood tests of people driving who have been detained by police. I will be interested in some of those aspects.

The other aspects of this bill that I think are important and clarification of which I will be listening to with great interest, are the disclosure issues. One aspect, in clause 16, is the amendment to section 15, which refers to the capacity for disclosure by the Commissioner of Police. I am interested in some clarification on that. This bill also seeks to redefine some of the existing aspects of our road traffic legislation or to clarify some of the definitions. The bill is so important that we need to very seriously consider it.
I note in her second reading speech on the blood sample aspect that the minister quotes the State Coroner’s finding on section 66 of the Road Traffic Act, which states, and I quote —

… section 66 of the Road Traffic Act 1974 provides for very limited circumstances in which a member of the Police Service may require a driver to provide a sample of blood for analysis with a view to determining whether that driver has consumed medications or illegal drugs.

I know the minister does not always like to address hypotheticals during consideration in detail but on this aspect, some hypothetical examples may be given. Clarification of the amendment to section 66 of the Road Traffic Act is important. The minister noted that the State Coroner, in commenting on a fatal vehicle crash in which intoxication may have been a factor, said, and I quote —

In a case where there has been a fatal traffic crash, it is my view that police should be permitted to obtain a sample of blood for testing from each driver involved in the crash irrespective of whether or not the police officers present are in a position to make any determination as to intoxication or otherwise.

I am assuming that this bill accommodates the State Coroner’s concerns. Leader of the House, can we confirm that we will not go into consideration in detail today, as, unfortunately, our shadow spokesperson is unwell?

Mr J.H.D. Day: No; not on this bill.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will not take any more time on this, but with those comments, minister, I think we all understand the importance of putting a much greater effort into road safety in Western Australia. Unfortunately, too many Western Australians and visitors to Western Australia have died on our roads over the last decade or more. In the last six months, the rate of road deaths has been horrific. They have not occurred only in regional WA, although the statistics of people losing their lives on country roads are higher. It is a great tragedy that we have lost so many people, particularly in the last six months, when that should not happen. If we had targeted the moneys from the road trauma trust fund, which was set up specifically for road safety, and spent them in their entirety, we might not be seeing some of the statistics we are now seeing, just over halfway through 2016.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [3.08 pm]: I rise to speak on the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015 and echo many of the sentiments made by the member for Mandurah about the impact of road trauma and road deaths on the community and on families. Every time we see a report of someone dying on our roads or injured in a serious crash, our hearts automatically leap and we feel the significant heartache and pain experienced by all the people connected to that individual. It is tragic that we continue to lose so many people on our roads given the impact that has on the entire community and their families. The issue of road safety is of paramount importance to WA Labor and we will do all we can to try to ensure that our roads are safe and that we prevent the heartache and absolute misery that road trauma and road deaths cause for Western Australians.

The transport portfolio is intrinsically linked to road safety. One of the interesting things that I had the experience of doing this year was listening to a German road engineer talk about how road design is a key part of road safety. It stuck with me when I listened to this internationally renowned engineer talk about how road design has a significant impact on the safety of our roads. Wearing both my transport and planning hat, I think it is one thing we can do better when we start to plan our suburbs and redevelop the road system in burgeoning suburbs. It really is about ensuring that the design of the road matches the use of the road.

We all have examples in our electorates of long straight roads that have lots of driveways and are used as suburban roads. They have become, in a sense, drag strips and places for hooning. When there is interaction between people exiting and entering their driveways and cars travelling at speed along these roads, very unsafe environments are created. This engineer basically said that the road has to be engineered for the speed at which the cars will be travelling. Yes, road signs can be installed to tell people that it is a suburban road, but if it does not look like a suburban road, people will not travel at the right speed. Germany has a clear delineation between the type of road that is planned and the speed at which cars will travel on that road. The point that was made to me was that the further people can see along a road, the faster they can travel. That is why a lot of councils are installing chicanes or vegetation. There are moves to paint markings on roads in the City of Vincent. Those types of small measures alert drivers that they have to keep to the speed limit. When people drive fast along a straight road, their mind starts to wander and if they do not have a trigger to make sure that they are doing a particular speed, they forget the speed that they are meant to be doing. The whole concept of road engineering, road design, road speeds and road safety is fundamentally important. I very much appreciated being there to take that in, should we win the election next year, and knowing that road design has to be appropriate to the speed we want people to travel at so that we do not have to retrofit roads with chicanes, vegetation or line markings. Road safety is paramount in how we plan and develop our suburbs.

This issue is even more relevant for footpaths and cycleways. I remember when a young child who was being put in a pram on the side of a road was hit and killed by a car that lost control. We want to make our roads,
footpaths and cycleways safe for the people who use them. When I think about the scary things about hooning, I think about not only the driver, but also pedestrians and cyclists. If a driver who is travelling at speed in our suburbs loses control of their vehicle, it can have a massive impact on the pedestrians who are on the footpath and the cyclists who are also on their families. Road design is of paramount importance.

We know that hooning continues to be a major problem in many of the suburbs we represent. I do not think we have done enough. More needs to be done with mobile cameras and other activities to try to address the issue. We have all seen reckless drivers while we are driving at the proper speed, and I am talking about seriously reckless drivers who have limited control of their car and are hitting kerbs. We need to do better and stamp that out. Again, we need to protect innocent lives from the people who blatantly disregard the road rules. Not enough focus is put on those who time and again completely ignore the road rules, drive recklessly and put other people’s lives in danger.

Road traffic issues and road design issues are linked. In the planning and transport portfolio areas, I am very interested in making sure that when the roads in our suburbs are designed, they are fit for purpose and that the road design matches the road use and the road speed. That is fundamentally important.

I want to mention something more generally about road safety in my electorate. I talk quite a bit about bus infrastructure, and how we plan our bus stops. Again, this links into the issue of road safety. Where we put bus stops on the side of the road and the level of protection they offer is pretty poor. Along Lord Street and Marshall Road in my electorate, there are basically sticks on the side of the road, which offer absolutely no protection from drivers. These roads are heavily congested and many drivers are travelling at speed. Unfortunately, two pedestrians have been killed by motorists in my electorate alone in the past month and a cyclist was also killed on Marshall Road in the past few months. There is growing congestion in these developing suburbs. Cycleways have not been built or finished and there is a lack of connectivity with footpaths. A footpath might just end in the dirt, but there is a bus stop that people need to get to, so there is basically very little connectivity. As a result, people have to walk either on the road or just off the road, which does not offer them significant protection from passing motorists. When schools are built in new suburbs, there is an awful battle between the developers and the council about building footpaths to the schools. As a demonstration, a school has been built in a new estate in my electorate, but there is no safe way to walk to that school. We encourage children to walk or ride to school, but we are not giving them a safe path to connect to school through either walking or cycling. There is always people’s behaviour, but it is also about infrastructure and how we can better design infrastructure to promote road safety.

On the side of the road where the young person died recently in my electorate, there are basically zero paths and absolutely zero protection from motorists. That is simply not good enough. It is simply not safe to have paths that end halfway to or do not connect with key facilities such as schools or bus stops. Again, it is a basic level of infrastructure. Different councils are approaching the issues of hooning and road infrastructure in different ways. There are always disputes by local residents about speed mitigation devices. Many do not like speed humps because of the impact that headlights sometimes have through the windows of people’s homes. There are chicanes as well. A number of concerns are raised. But I think that where we can, we need to make sure that we fix our roads to try to reduce speeding.

Another point I want to make about road behaviour and speeding relates to something that has happened recently—that is, the new merging lanes on our freeways and some of our highways. Some members may have noticed them and some may not have done. There is a new approach to merging on our roads, which follows the Victorian approach. Between Canning Highway and the freeway, it has moved back to the original zipper merging lane, but primarily across the road and freeway network we have the Victorian style of merging, which is a changing lane—merging style rather than a zipper style. I raise that issue because of the road safety issues it is creating as a result of the lack of information that has gone out to the public. I asked many of my colleagues whether they were aware of the new merging process and they said, “Absolutely not!” They just think that different lines have been painted on our freeways and merging lanes. The reality is that the rules for merging have changed in many instances, but no one is really aware of that. I went to Victoria recently and I can see that it does work when people know the rules, but Western Australians have not been informed of the rules yet. That is an important thing that needs to be done.

Mr R.F. Johnson: It works very well in the UK as well. I was over there recently and it is a great example, as in Victoria, of how to merge. I hate to say it, but a lot of Western Australians didn’t have a clue on how to properly merge until the new system was put in place. I know how it works because I have studied it, but a lot of people don’t.

Ms R. SAFFIOTTI: I must say that I was quite sceptical about it because I am used to zipper merging, so whoever is in front gets right of way. That is pretty much the zipper style of merging.

Mr P.B. Watson: Supposedly.
Ms R. Saffioti: Yes.

Ms L.L. Baker: No; who’s got the bigger car.

Ms R. Saffioti: The bigger car! If one is in the middle lane, one really needs to change lanes to the inner lane to allow the merging to happen. I do not totally doubt that this new style can work, but I do not think that Western Australians have been informed about it. As I said, I told my colleagues that there is a new merging system in Western Australia and they did not know that it was happening. More information needs to be given to the public on this new merging system in Western Australia.

I want to quickly touch on black spots and congested roads. One of the reasons WA Labor opposes the Perth Freight Link is that when the government spends $2 billion on that project, it cannot then fix many of the congestion and black spots in our community. I look primarily at the growing suburbs around the peri-urban and inner suburbs where there is significant population growth. We have seen roads change from a rural nature to basically a suburban nature. There are significant volumes of traffic and we have not improved the roads to match that, which creates enormous safety issues. Lord Street in my electorate is a classic example. It is a single-lane road that carries thousands of vehicles per day. The congestion on that road now probably outstrips that on any other road across the metropolitan area—the delays are massive for those who travel on that road every day. It also creates road safety issues, because when congestion gets to that sort of point, people use rat runs. Small suburban streets are used by people who are trying to avoid the 20-minute delays on Lord Street. An enormous number of rat runs have been created throughout rural parts of Henley Brook but also even through Whiteman Park as people try to avoid the Lord Street congestion. Again, we need a properly thought-out road expenditure program and not just one that pours $2 billion into one project; some of that money needs to be spent on key congestion spots across the community.

The last thing I want to talk about is the road trauma trust account and the Road Safety Council and its operations. I was working in government when a third of the money raised from red-light and speed cameras was allocated to the Road Safety Council for distribution. This government has changed it to 100 per cent of funds from those sources, but it is now spending that money on things on which money was being spent anyway. The government says that it is spending 100 per cent of those funds on these measures when those measures received money in the past anyway. I think some of the claims that have been made in this space are absolutely false and misleading. Road expenditure is now being accounted for under the road trauma trust account when it never used to be. I had a quick look at the expenditure.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms R. Saffioti: Tens of millions of dollars are being spent on roads and that is now being accounted for under that 100 per cent. Expenditure on road safety occurred before, but it was simply not part of the road safety spend at that time. This idea that we spent only 30 per cent of funds on road safety initiatives and that we now spend 100 per cent is absolutely false, because what is now being included in the 100 per cent was being funded before but outside that 30 per cent. The claims are false and misleading. I hate to use the term, but it is comparing apples with oranges. Expenditure is now included under the 100 per cent that occurred before. It is now funding things such as booze buses and Western Australia Police activities when they used to be funded under normal operations and not by the road safety trust account. My reading of it is that there has actually not been any extra spending; it has just been accounted for in a different way. Both the member for Hillarys and the member for Midland have made that point a number of times. There has been no real extra spending; the government has just brought in more money under the same banner and is saying that it is spending more.

I recall the independence of the Road Safety Council under the former government. It was a lot more independent in how it operated and reported. It was a continuing issue because there were some strict independents on that council. The chair of the Road Safety Council would go out and criticise the government. I am not saying that we were doing worse things than this government is doing; it is just that the council was able to criticise us because it was independent. That whole role of the independent umpire and the independent spokesperson has completely gone. Like across so many areas of this government, there is no independent assessment of things and they are purely spokespersons of the government.

Road safety is of paramount importance to the WA Labor Party. We will strive to do all we can to reduce road trauma and deaths on our roads, not only across our suburbs, but also throughout regional WA. The RAC has been running its Elephant in the Wheatbelt campaign. The number of road deaths in the wheatbelt is of continual concern.

Mr P.B. Watson: And the great southern. We are only one per cent below the wheatbelt.

Ms R. Saffioti: And in the great southern, too. Of course, we are also monitoring some of the real road needs throughout regional WA. I know that the member for Albany has been pressing some of the road demands that we need to be investing in down in Albany and in the greater Albany region. In relation to the wheatbelt, we are monitoring the impact of the closure of the tier 3 rail lines on road safety throughout that network.
Mine has been just a small contribution on this bill. I think my colleague the member for Bassendean will be standing and talking soon. We need to be continually strong on reckless and hoon behaviour. I do believe that that type of behaviour is a big cause of many accidents. It also causes the loss of a feeling of safety. Driving with three young children in the back of my car has given me a heightened sense of awareness of people who are speeding close to my car or who try to intimidate me on the road because they do not think that I am going fast enough. We do not tackle enough the issue of intimidatory behaviour on our roads, particularly when that intimidatory behaviour, which is designed to encourage a person to break the rules or go faster, occurs when there are children in the car. I am very concerned about that.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [3.30 pm]: I rise to speak about the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. We on this side of the house support the bill, but there are a few issues I want to raise that go to the issue of road safety. As the member for West Swan just pointed out, one of the key issues about road safety is that roads should be designed to encourage safe driving and should not create circumstances that are likely to cause accidents. In that context, I want to raise the issue of NorthLink, the $1 billion project that the government is undertaking that will involve Tonkin Highway as it runs through parts of my electorate—Tonkin Highway being the boundary of Bassendean.

The NorthLink project will see a number of new interchanges at intersections, such as Tonkin Highway and Morley Drive. As a result of the upgrade or the new interchange at Tonkin Highway and Morley Drive, Abbey Street, which was a small side street that gave residents access to Morley Drive to turn left or right, has been closed off and has become a cul-de-sac. Residents who previously accessed Morley Drive via Abbey Street now have to use Hamersley Avenue. To get onto Morley Drive, they have to exit the suburb at a street such as Hamersley Avenue and try to turn right onto Beechboro Road North and turn right again onto Morley Drive. Anyone who knows that area—Mr Acting Speaker, (Mr I.M. Britza), you may know it well—knows that attempting to turn right from Hamersley Avenue onto Beechboro Road North during peak hours is well-nigh impossible. The $1 billion NorthLink project is an example of the government not giving proper consideration to the impact that a road upgrade will have on surrounding suburbs. It is patently ridiculous to create a situation in which one street is closed—in this case, Abbey Street—forcing traffic that would otherwise access a main road, such as Morley Drive, to turn right, but to do that cars now have to turn right onto Beechboro Road North. There will certainly be more accidents on the corner of Hamersley Avenue and Beechboro Road North. The government is spending $1 billion on the NorthLink project, but in doing so it has inevitably made the intersection of Hamersley Road and Beechboro Road North a death trap. It is as simple as that; that is what the government has done. I am disappointed that the government has gone ahead and closed off Abbey Street, despite the concerns raised by local residents. The government almost had deaf ears to the concerns residents raised about the local impact of the upgrade of Tonkin Highway through that area.

In addition to making representations to the Minister for Transport about the closure of Abbey Street, I have had to make representations to him about the removal of an underpass and a car park that allows my constituents to cross under Tonkin Highway so that they can drop their kids off at Hampton Park Primary School, which is on the other side of Tonkin Highway. At the moment, residents drive down Hamersley Avenue, drop their kids off in the 80-bay car parking area and use the underpass under Tonkin Highway to reach the primary school on the other side of Tonkin Highway. Without consultation with the school or local residents, under the NorthLink project the underpass was set to disappear. The plan, if I can call it that, was that all those residents would drive their kids to the other side of Tonkin Highway along Morley Drive. The proposal was completely ridiculous. After residents—I am sorry if this is a bit tedious, minister—and local members of Parliament raised the issue with the Minister for Transport, he belatedly agreed that the underpass would remain. The car park is still an issue and despite having written to the Minister for Transport about this matter twice, I have yet to get a response. There is no point having a pedestrian underpass under the NorthLink project if the 80-bay car park will be replaced with a 20-bay car park. What is the point of spending millions of dollars on a pedestrian underpass under the NorthLink project if the car park that people normally use to drop off their kids will shrink from 80 bays to 20 bays? I have been to that car park at school pick up and drop off and every one of those 80 bays is needed. What will happen next year when, despite still having the pedestrian underpass, the 80-bay car park is bulldozed? I was there a couple of days ago. The car park is still there, but every tree and blade of grass around the car park has been removed. What will happen when the car park goes? Reducing an 80-bay car park to a 20-bay car park just cannot happen. The residents who live in Abbey Street and Hamersley Avenue are being hit with a double whammy as a result of the NorthLink project. It is a triple whammy, really. The car park is being reduced from 80 bays to 20 bays, which will mean massive congestion on Hamersley Avenue and Abbey Street every school pick up and drop off. That is the first hit. The second hit is that Abbey Street has been made into a cul-de-sac so residents who want to access Morley Drive have to turn right onto Beechboro Road North, which is an absolute disaster and an accident waiting to happen. That is the second whammy. The third whammy is that their taxes are contributing to a billion-dollar project and they are going to have a hell of a time accessing NorthLink because their access is being cut off.
As the member for West Swan made clear, a lot of changes can be made to road safety laws, but if we continue to design roads in such a way that it creates circumstances in which accidents are bound to increase, we are not really saving any lives at all. The NorthLink project around Hamersley Avenue, Abbey Street and the streets that run off it is basically an accident waiting to happen. Residents in those areas have made their views known at various community forums on that project, but no solution has been found. I am staggered that whoever designed the associated interchanges for the NorthLink project did not notice that. The problems that are being created are blindingly obvious. I do not understand how clever people in the government allowed initial plans to come forward with road designs that will clearly result in more accidents. I am staggered it happened in the first place, but I am equally staggered that the relevant minister, the Minister for Transport, and the Minister for Police with her road safety hat on have not listened to the very legitimate concerns raised.

It is great for government to say that it is going to build a big road that will get traffic from Muchea not quite to the port in rapid time. It looks good. The YouTube clips look good. The minister is photographed cutting the ribbon with big scissors and all that stuff, but when we look at the detail, we see the real problems that will be created for the locals. Even the flyover video for the NorthLink project shows Hampton Park Primary School as a bit of vacant land and it completely ignores the fact that there is a primary school there. If the minister takes her role in road safety seriously, I ask on behalf of the residents of the streets around Abbey Street and Hamersley Avenue that she ask the Minister for Transport what is going to happen at the intersection of Hamersley Avenue and Beechboro Road North in the NorthLink project. It is completely ridiculous that a whole bunch of residents will be forced at peak hour to turn right onto Beechboro North Road to access Morley Drive and the NorthLink project.

I want to raise one more issue about the congestion that will be created as a result of the decisions of this government, and that is the Ellenbrook bus rapid transit project.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: That has nothing to do with this bill.

Mr D.J. Kelly: It has everything to do with road safety. We are supporting this bill.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I am glad the minister has woken up.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Excuse me! I’ve been listening the whole time.

Mr D.J. Kelly: If she would not interject —

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I’ve been trying to stay awake during your speech.

Mr D.J. Kelly: So the minister has had trouble staying awake! I have been trying to explain to her the dangerous intersection that she is creating on the corner of Hamersley Avenue and Beechboro Road North.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: That’s right—and Abbey Road and Hampton Park Primary School.

Mr D.J. Kelly: If the minister was actually doing her job, she would not be trying to interject on this speech.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I have not had a go at the minister over this issue. I have raised this legitimately because her cabinet colleague, the Minister for Transport, will not answer the letters we have written. I would ask that she let me deal with this second issue and I will tell her why it relates to road safety. It is not difficult. When we create roads that are more congested, we are more likely to have people killed on those roads.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I’m not saying that it is not relevant to road safety; I’m saying that it is not relevant to the bill before the house.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Minister, I am going to deal with this issue. If the minister wants to take a point of order, do it. But if you are interested in road safety, you just sit there and listen for five minutes and stop trying to interject. The issue that you have created in respect of the Ellenbrook bus rapid transport system —

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I will do as I am told, then! Thank you for telling me what to do.

**Point of Order**

Ms M.M. Quirk: The member for Bassendean has clearly said that he is not inviting interjections.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey: He is the one throwing insults.

The Speaker: Member for Belmont, stop interjecting on the point of order. Does the member for Girrawheen want to finish her point of order?

Ms M.M. Quirk: I had made the point of order. I just wanted to indicate that the Minister for Police was still interjecting after the member for Bassendean made it clear he was not accepting interjections.
Mr D.J. Kelly: No; certainly not from her.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am not saying that; I am just saying that it was going backwards and forwards; therefore, I was not ruling. However, if you are saying that you do not want any interjections, that is it.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I do not want interjections.

The ACTING SPEAKER: That is fine. Member for Mirrabooka.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Maybe it would assist if I noted the state of the house so that there were members in the house to listen.

Debate Resumed

[Quorum formed.]

Mr D.J. Kelly: As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, I note that the Minister for Transport is in the house now so I will touch back on the issue about Hamersley Avenue.

Mr D.C. Nalder: I heard it all.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I am serious, minister. I will not go through it again if he heard.

Mr D.C. Nalder: I did hear it.

Mr D.J. Kelly: There is a serious issue on the corner of Hamersley Avenue and Beechboro Road North, where Abbey Street has been cut off. At the end of Hamersley Avenue where that car park is —

Mr D.C. Nalder: On the other side of Tonkin.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Abbey Street has been cut off as well. Abbey Street has become a cul-de-sac so people cannot access Morley Drive. To get out onto Morley Drive people have to —

Point of Order

Ms M.M. Quirk: I am having trouble hearing the member because there are other conversations going on.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.J. Kelly: Abbey Street has become a cul-de-sac. The minister could probably google it on his phone while I am talking. In order for people to access Morley Drive and the new intersection to get onto the NorthLink project, they now have to go down Hamersley Avenue and turn right onto Beechboro Road North and then right again onto Morley Drive and then get onto the NorthLink project.

Mr D.C. Nalder: I have not seen your letter, but I have asked my office to follow it up, and we will come back to it.

Mr D.J. Kelly: It is a very serious issue and I hope the minister will address it.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.J. Kelly: The other issue I wanted to discuss is the Ellenbrook bus rapid transit project. It will cost $49 million and, according to the minister, it will cut 10 minutes off the travel time from Ellenbrook to Bassendean station. We asked a question in the other place about whether the government had done any work on the number of passengers who will use that and how it will impact on Bassendean station. The answer we got was that passenger numbers at Bassendean train station had not been done. I am concerned about the congestion that will be created at Bassendean train station. Presumably, there will be more people and more buses, if the Ellenbrook BRT ever gets built, coming down through Bassendean and hitting the Bassendean train station.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Some are going to Midland.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Some might go to Midland, but the signature route that the minister has been promoting is a 10-minute reduction in time between Ellenbrook and Bassendean station.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I will just make it clear; the minister can ask me question in a minute if he wants. I cannot see the government spending any money—the minister can tell me if I am wrong—south of Marshall Road to Bassendean train station. Through Altone Road and Ivanhoe Street there will be more buses and more traffic, but no money will be spent on those roads and no accommodation has been made for the increased traffic and patronage around Bassendean station. There will be more buses, more people and more potentially dangerous circumstances. I would like to hear from the minister and he can tell me whether there is something I have missed. Of that $49 million, is any of it being spent on the route from Marshall Road to Bassendean station?
It seems to me that some of this bill is like a script for how overregulated we are, instead of looking at some of the issues like the removal of an anomaly in the offence of driving without authorisation whilst standing and referrals to different things, as the Minister for Police knows. I think here we have to spell in such really important about road safety and the proper design of roads for road safety or even the design of cars?

It is quite interesting that in this place we have to take that anomaly away. If we as a community demand of legislators and this Parliament to put in quite strong and stringent requirements for quite a considerable time for learner drivers and P-plate drivers about drugs and alcohol in their system when they are learning, the person instructing them should understand that they need to demonstrate that as well. Unfortunately, human nature being what it is, people will find a loophole and they may go around that. This is obviously a welcome addition to the legislation.

It reminds me of the time I was out with a bunch of my mates and one of the husbands came to pick us up. There were not enough seatbelts for the number of people who wanted to drive this car, so I said that I would catch public transport. They told me to get in and that I would be fine, but I said that there could not be more people than seatbelts. It was not until a year later in this house that we changed the anomaly in legislation that allowed persons providing driving instruction to learner drivers, which I think is frankly a bit of a no-brainer. It seems to me of some interest, but I understand that many parents have used that loophole over the years so that they can drink and tell their children that they are learning to drive to drive them home. Frankly, having gone through a process with my son in the last couple of years, I really think that is a bit like what we keep trying to say to the community as a whole. Often many of our children take notice of what we do and not necessarily what we say. I think it is really important that it is made clear to families, friends and other people that if drinking limitations are imposed on people driving, specifically young people and learner drivers, the people they are getting up their learner hours with would also not be allowed to drink. I think that is quite important for a person accompanying a learner driver who is getting their learner hours up. It is quite interesting that in this place we have to take that anomaly away. If we as a community demand of legislators and this Parliament to put in quite strong and stringent requirements for quite a considerable time for learner drivers and P-plate drivers about drugs and alcohol in their system while they are driving, one would think that the people who are instructing them would understand that they need to demonstrate that as well. Unfortunately, human nature being what it is, people will find a loophole and they may go around that. This is obviously a welcome addition to the legislation.

We talk to our communities and they tell us that they are overburdened with rules and regulations and that they are over-governed. We should use this case as a perfect example for community members that they might be over-governed, but that they should think about it. They might think that we keep making rules and regulations for them, but so many in the community stop using their commonsense, and commonsense would dictate that if that learner driver cannot have alcohol in their system when they are learning, the person instructing them should not have it in their system either. In the past people have said to me that there are too many laws. I believe in regulation around workplace safety, but I also believe that often we are overburdened by too many regulations, standards and referrals to different things, as the Minister for Police knows. I think here we have to spell in such small detail these things like the removal of an anomaly in the offence of driving without authorisation whilst under driver’s licence suspension and disqualification. I gather that that means that a person suspended or disqualified from driving can almost keep driving, and it does not have a negative effect until their licence is taken away.

It seems to me that some of this bill is like a script for how overregulated we are, instead of looking at some of the big issues in road traffic, such as the Towards Zero strategy. How do we get back to the focus on what is really important about road safety and the proper design of roads for road safety or even the design of cars?
Years ago, lots of cars were being broken into, so the government introduced legislation requiring people to install immobilisers. The registration of the vehicle could not be transferred unless it was fitted with an immobiliser. That changed the way in which cars were coming onto the market. We could not buy a car now without the proper security system. I do not think a car can be imported without a security system; I think the minister is having a think about that.

That is an example of the big policy issues that I thought we were going to debate when I was first elected to this house. Let us talk about what Towards Zero is going to be. Let us talk about how we can change the impact of alcohol on our community. Let us talk about all the issues around road safety, traffic and safety in our workplaces. Let us talk about the impact of drugs as a public health issue, and what sort of campaigns we could have, a bit like we did with smoking. But, no, we are going to remove an anomaly in the offence of driving without authorisation while under suspension or disqualification. Clearly, there is now the option to report a traffic crash online through the internet. We really should do better drafting, so that we can futureproof how we are going to do that, because soon we will be able to tweet something like that, perhaps, given that the police are on Twitter.

Part of the greater strategy around road traffic legislation and road crashes is about changing our mode of transport, and having the big discussion about how we deliver the public transport we need in the community. The Minister for Transport says he has delivered a visionary strategy, and everyone says that they have a visionary strategy, but nobody says where it sits in our total priorities, and how we continue to fund it into the future, so that everyone will know that. Because we do that, people get on with their lives and keep driving their cars despite the fact that in 2013 the government went to an election telling people that I represent that it would deliver an effective transport system through the Metro Area Express light rail system. Now that that has not been delivered, people will just stay in their cars, Wanneroo Road will continue to be one of the most congested roads in the area, and we will continue to police small traffic accidents through the internet—or by doing the small aspects that we are here to discuss today.

We continue, like mice in a cage, running around in a wheel, instead of dealing with the big issues. The RAC says that someone driving on a road in the country is something like 10 times more likely to have a major accident or a fatal accident. I am just quoting that off the top of my head. I remember speaking to the RAC. They cannot work out the cause of that difference. There are clearly cultural factors, road design and a whole bunch of issues around that, but just looking at that statistic must say that there should be really strong strategic points of view to deliver road safety into those areas. It is extremely important.

One issue that I want to raise is the impact of our road traffic legislation on newly arrived Australians—migrants. I have talked about that in this house before. At the moment, it is very unfortunate for people who come here as refugees from Syria. They have suffered something that none of us will ever know. Those people had our lives. Let us not mistake that. Sometimes we can turn a blind eye to African refugees because we think they live in less developed nations than ours, and therefore by bringing them here, we get some sort of saviour complex, which I think is wrong, but we say that they are lucky to be here and that sort of thing. Syrian refugees come from a war-torn country, and they are lucky to no longer be in a war-torn country seeing civilians bombed and killed and hospitals attacked, but those people are us. They are middle-class people who have had accounting practices, businesses and roads that are operating. Somalia got excited when it got its first traffic signals. That was mentioned in various publications that the member for Girrawheen and I get, and a few other members might get.

Syria probably had traffic legislation just like ours that looks at all of the issues around this. They have been operating in communities there, and then they come to Australia and suddenly it is really hard to get a licence. It is very difficult to deal with all the issues around obtaining learner plates and supervised training. I recognise that the state government funds a number of agencies in this area, and I will mention them shortly, but I thought it would be interesting to reflect on a paper that was done by the Transport Accident Commission, RAC Victoria, Kerryn Alexander Research and Comspec Services entitled “Newly arrived migrants — new Victorian drivers”, presented to the Australasian College of Road Safety conference, “‘A Safe System: Making it Happen!” in Melbourne on 2 September 2011. The authors of the paper were attempting to ascertain whether people’s anecdotal views about newly arrived migrants’ driving habits were valid. The general public thinks that they have more crashes and more difficulty with road rules. There is an implicit—“racism” is probably too much of a strong word—discrimination against newly arrived migrants driving on our roads, which leads to people having less tolerance. This report, I am glad to say, shows that there is no evidence that newly arrived migrants have more driving infringements, more crashes or more difficulty on our roads. That is primarily because they do not collect that sort of data and because they surveyed two groups, which showed that the behaviour on the roads of newly arrived Australians is just as poor as that of any other Western Australians. Among the findings of the impacts on Victorian drivers—I am sure they would impact also on Western Australians—is that some of the issues for newly arrived Australians driving in Victoria are limited public transport options. The need to obtain and keep employment mean that new arrivals often wish to obtain a driver’s licence. That would certainly be the case in Western Australia, I suggest, especially for people who live in the Mirrabooka area. The 2011 census, compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, shows Mirrabooka is the thirteenth most diverse suburb in Australia. I do not know what the 2016 census will show.

[Member’s time extended.]
Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I know, Leader of the House, this does not go to this bill but I promoted the census to all the migrant communities in the area I represent, especially because the Somalis constantly tell me lots of Somalis are in my community. I keep pointing out to them that that does not seem to show in the census. My discussions with them indicate that they have not done the census, despite a number of them living here for a good 20-odd years. They are not particularly trustful of the census. I assured them vigorously that they could trust the census.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: For God’s sake!

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I digress. I will get back to the point; namely, that new arrivals who come here under refugee and humanitarian programs find it very difficult to get a driver’s licence. Communities such as the Burmese communities and some of the African communities, although not perhaps Syrian communities, face challenges including lack of experience in a motorised society; not having held a licence in their country of origin; limited experience with licensing systems and bureaucracies; language barriers in dealing with licensing authorities; sitting the test; comprehending written material; costs associated with driver’s licences, especially in relation to obtaining driving lessons; access to cars and licensed supervising drivers to assist in preparation of their test; and solo driving.

The report refers also to new arrivals from less motorised countries. The evidence in Sweden and the United Kingdom show they have a higher incidence of crashes but in our communities we do not gather any of those details. However, the surveys showed that most of the newly arrived communities would prefer to use public transport but they feel the public transport options are not as great outside Melbourne and certainly are probably not as great in the areas I represent. I think that information is worthwhile knowing. When we consider updating terminology, the use of speed and distance measuring equipment et cetera, we should make sure regulations do not make it more difficult for newly arrived Australians to operate in the car-driven community of Western Australia, which we live in. In saying that, I commend the Edmund Rice Centre WA, which runs a driver education program and driver instruction training program. One of the biggest things for new arrivals is getting the very extensive supervised hours and the impact it has on many families in ensuring they can live the day-to-day lives that we enjoy because their mobility is limited.

When we started talking about immobilisers, there was a point that I did not make well enough. There are ways now to limit the speed we travel in our cars. Immobilising-type technology can be installed in cars to limit the speed of repeat traffic offenders. If Google Earth can help people find a Pokémon, I cannot see why satellite technology cannot help to limit the speed of repeat traffic offenders. I know people should take personal responsibility, but that is the same as saying people should take personal responsibility to install security systems in their cars. However, we took away that responsibility and decided it was for the sake of the broader good by making sure people could not transfer their vehicles unless they contained immobilisers. The fact is, we should be investigating some technology that goes to the issue around safety and speed, especially on country roads, given the high rate of fatalities on those roads. Bearing in mind the recent events of tourists from overseas driving hire cars, how is there not some technology in those hire cars that sounds all sorts of alarms—Warning! Warning! Get on to the correct side of the road—for people who are not used to driving on the left-hand side of the road to get on the correct side of the road? We should be looking at those sorts of things to see how we can make our roads safer. Part of the issue of technology is to have discussions with our community about the vehicles young people can drive to make sure they are not the cheapest or most dangerous on the roads. Frankly, young people are at greatest risk. The longer people are away from obtaining a licence, the lesser the probability of having a serious accident causing injury. The closer people are to obtaining a licence, the greater the probability of injury, so we need to address a series of issues around the sorts of cars young people drive. In other states, young drivers are limited to certain types of cars. They cannot drive high-speed cars and have to adhere to all sorts of other regulations.

I started this conversation saying that people should be using commonsense. We should be seeking to achieve commonsense mixed with regulations providing for good policy parameters that deliver safety outcomes. I think we can do that. We just need to be a little more imaginative than removing anomalies or introducing legislation around commonsense. We need to introduce some road traffic amendments that are a bit more meaningful than that which is before us today.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Road Safety) [4.19 pm] — in reply: I rise to close the second reading debate on the Road Traffic Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. I thank members for their contributions to the debate. Members have raised a number of issues over the course of the debate. I will not go into all those issues, because a number of those issues will need to be interrogated further through the consideration in detail stage of the bill, which will now occur next week.

A number of matters were canvassed by members. There are a few matters that I think it is worthwhile to address. There was a lot of conjecture about the expenditure from the road trauma trust account. I would like to remind members that this year, we have allocated $148 million from the road trauma trust account to road safety initiatives. Of that amount, $64 million will go into regional road crashes and a range of initiatives to address the
recommendations of the wheatbelt highway safety review and the motorcycle safety review, as well as addressing the Towards Zero strategy to drive down the road toll in Western Australia by 40 per cent by 2020. We are on track with achieving the objectives of the Towards Zero strategy, and the road toll in Western Australia has come down by 34 per cent over the last 10 years, but particularly since the focus on road safety has been so intense with the election of the Liberal–National government.

The member for Gosnells addressed cycling safety. That is an area of high concern for the government. We recognise cyclists as part of our vulnerable road user group. That is why the government has invested a record amount of money in cycling infrastructure to try to grade-separate cyclists from motorists wherever possible. However, in those areas in which they share the road, the member for Gosnells is quite right to highlight a couple of tragic hit-and-run incidences where motorists have unfortunately not obeyed the law by allowing a safe passing distance from cyclists and that has had a catastrophic result for the cyclist. The law in Western Australia is very clear that motorists need to pass cyclists at a safe passing distance. The penalty for failure to do so is significant. In addition, this bill increases the penalty for careless driving from $600 to a fine of up to $36 000, or potential imprisonment for three years, to assist in ensuring there are consequences for people who do not obey the law and as a result of their actions cause death or serious injury to a cyclist or pedestrian.

The member for Gosnells also talked about some of the great initiatives that have arisen out of the Road Safety Council and formerly the Office of Road Safety, particularly the World Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims. I acknowledge the member for Gosnells’ attendance each year at that event at Thornlie Senior High School and other high schools in and around his area. That ties into the school drug education and road aware program, which is funded through the road trauma trust account, to ensure that our teenagers and young people are receiving the road safety and drug and alcohol education message. I also acknowledge the fantastic efforts of the students at Thornlie Senior High School, and also the victims of road trauma who come to speak and engage with youth each year, and the impact on young people when they receive a message from a person whose life has been badly impacted as a result of a road trauma incident.

The member for Mandurah addressed some of the traffic issues in the south metropolitan area. The member is right. While we were upgrading Mandurah Police Station, we did shift our traffic officers to Harrisdale. Traffic officers are still deployed from Harrisdale. However, with the expansion and upgrade of Mandurah Police Station, we have extra space for additional officers, and officers on traffic duties will now be deployed from Mandurah station.

A number of members have spoken in support of the ability to take a blood sample from people who have been involved in a traffic crash and may not necessarily be able to give consent to provide a blood sample. If an unconscious person looks or smells as though they may be over the limit, it is important that we can ascertain whether alcohol or drugs were a factor in the crash, regardless of whether the person is able to give consent.

The member for Bassendean talked about a range of issues. I acknowledge that road design is an important part of road safety. That is why we have our metropolitan intersections program and our regional run-off roads program. Those programs are designed around improving the design and layout of our roads and intersections, and putting in place passing lanes and wire barriers, to try to ensure we get the best outcomes and the safest designs for our roads so that should a driver make one of those catastrophic mistakes, they are in the best position to survive that crash.

Member for Mirrabooka, I acknowledge the issue that has been raised with me, and no doubt also the Minister for Transport, by the Edmund Rice Centre with respect to new migrants, and also people in remote Aboriginal communities, of trying to find qualified people to perform the supervision component of achieving a driver’s licence. It is a requirement that before learner drivers are able to achieve their driver’s licence, they must document that they have performed a certain number of supervised driving hours. That is a big issue for people who are new to Australia or live in a remote Aboriginal community and do not have a network of family and friends in possession of a driver’s licence to ensure they are given a range of driving opportunities and can get the number of supervised hours up to the required level. The Edmund Rice Centre does a very good job in trying to get volunteers on board to provide that level of supervision. However, that is a problem that we have not solved as yet. Given that the road safety advice is that there needs to be a level of supervised driving hours to bring our learner drivers up to a safe level before they achieve their licence, reducing the number of hours of supervision is not the answer either. However, we are working on trying to find a solution to that issue.

I thank members for their contributions to the debate. Members have flagged a range of areas on which they would like further interrogation, and we will, no doubt, interrogate the bill in detail during the consideration in detail stage next week.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.
RESUMED FROM 6 APRIL.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [4.28 pm]: This bill comprises a mere six clauses, so I will not take my full 60 minutes. Before I start, I welcome the Minister for Emergency Services back to the chamber. He has been suffering from—I do not know the exact medical or clinical term for it—whooping cough. The minister is an example of the fact that many adults do not know that even if they have had a whooping cough vaccination, they need to have boosters. Therefore, in order that we do not endanger the young children in our community, this is a message that I like to get out whenever I can, even if it is only tangentially-related to the legislation before the house.

The intention of this bill is to implement recommendation 38 of the Keelty Perth hills report, “A Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 review”. Recommendation 38 provides as follows —

Local governments institute a comprehensive program to assess fuel loads and bushfire preparedness on private properties. The program should give reference to the creation and maintenance of a Building Protection Zone, in line with FESA guidelines.

This program should be implemented and managed under the Bush Fires Act 1954 in a manner similar to the fire break inspection program.

The intention of the bill is to permit property owners, local governments or government agencies to engage in bushfire risk mitigation treatments in accordance with guidelines issued by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and gazetted. The bill will exempt those engaging in these risk-reduction practices from sanctions under other laws, but I make the point that those other laws are not listed in the bill. Those who have heard me talk in this chamber about issues of legislative drafting will know that I have said that people should be able to pick up a piece of legislation and determine from that legislation what their rights, responsibilities and obligations are. I do not find that the case with this bill. Much has been unwritten, the guidelines are not there yet, and the legislation that this bill is intended to impact upon is not listed. I find that somewhat unsatisfactory, so the debate on this bill will be somewhat longer than it needs to be, mainly because we will need to tease out for the purposes of Hansard, and for the purposes of statutory interpretation down the track, what was actually intended by this bill. If the legislative drafting had been somewhat more comprehensive and it was accessible, that probably could have been obviated.

The bill makes it clear that the guidelines that will be issued by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and approved by the minister will not be compulsory and what is set out in the guidelines will certainly not be mandated. Of course, the elephant in the corner of the room in all of this is that the major problem still is that the Crown in many cases has neglected its obligations on mitigation. Later I will refer to the commissioner’s guidelines, as the reference was made in the second reading speech. We have a complementary scheme now that this will be in. It will be, if you like, a direction to property owners that they can take certain mitigation measures, but it will also complement the existing legislation through what is called the firebreak enforcement scheme conducted by local government. In those cases, that can be enforced and local government can order people to undertake mitigation on private property. It has come up in a number of reports and local governments have expressed to me on occasion that, given the nature of our fuel load problem, they do not have the resources they need to adequately enforce the clearing of firebreaks where they need to be done. I just observe that in passing.

I was also advised at a briefing that was kindly provided by the minister that local governments had not been consulted on this bill, and that seems unfortunate given that it purports to complement the existing scheme and also because it may well have some implications for local government. What I think this bill is really about is not necessarily complying with the recommendation of Keelty; I think it is more about countering the suggestion made on many occasions by people who refuse to engage in mitigation that there is too much red tape and that they are hampered by legislation from undertaking mitigation practices on their property. Of course, we all remember the example of Paul Omodei, a previous Leader of the Opposition, who took it upon himself to do some clearing. I am not sure whether he was prosecuted or threatened with prosecution for his efforts. I think the current member for Murray–Wellington also had to face the wrath of the Department of Environment Regulation.

Mr P.B. Watson: Hon Monty House did, too.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: There is another one; there is a list of them. As I have said, this is about saying to these people that they can do the mitigation that they, frankly, are morally obliged to do and they cannot use environmental legislation as an excuse for not so acting. In fact, a number of so-called red tape issues came up
and were discussed publicly following the Esperance fires. I refer to an article by Andrew Burrell in *The Australian* of 21 November 2015 that states —

Local farmer and volunteer firefighter Dave Vandenbergh, whose friend Kym “Freddy” Curnow died in the fire, said “red tape” and environmental laws had prevented him and others from doing anything to stop or contain the blaze before it grew out of control.

... “Esperance is surrounded by millions of hectares of mallee scrub; it’s crown land that hadn’t been burnt out for 20-odd years.

“You’re not allowed to go there in case you run over an ant’s nest. The Department of Environment is worried about parrots’ nests; well I can tell you there are no parrots left there anymore.

“When the fire hit we were left to the mercy of Mother Nature without a single government department here to help us.”

Certainly, that is the sentiment of many people who have an obligation to clear their own land but also make some comments about crown land. To the extent that this bill will obviate those objections to clearing their own land, I certainly think that is a step in the right direction.

I have been advised that the guidelines of the commissioner will be a disallowable instrument. Again, that is not stated specifically in the legislation. One has to go to the Interpretation Act to find that that is the case. For the purposes of laypeople, that means that the guidelines of the commissioner can be inspected by the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, which can move that the regulations be disallowed if they do not meet certain criteria. We are told that the standards that will be in the commissioner’s guidelines are intended to override all written laws, including local laws and by-laws. In particular, I think it is contemplated that the relevant legislation will be the Environmental Protection Act 1986, the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947, the Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945 and the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984. Again, that is the advice I have been given. It is not listed anywhere in the bill. From recollection, I do not even think it is in the second reading speech. Under clause 4, there is the ability to prescribe written laws that will not be overridden by the standards published by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. I understand that agencies are still consulting on that issue, and there may be some provisions that it is not appropriate to override. Again, as I understand it, that consultation is still going on, so there is a level of uncertainty there as well. I am advised that this will provide the ability to balance the need to protect buildings and other assets from bushfires with a need to ensure that, where appropriate, other matters such as ecological protection of particular areas of the state are maintained. I also should add that these guidelines can apply to either the whole of the state or a specified area. The Department of Water, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Department of Environment Regulation and Department of Agriculture and Food are still engaged in discussions about which provisions that they are responsible for may be excluded from the operation of this bill.

As I said earlier, I am still disappointed that the Crown does not have a higher obligation in terms of mitigation on its own land. We know that the Crown has been derelict in reducing fuel loads on much of its own land. In many cases of major incidents, fires have originated on crown land where fuel loads are high. In the minister’s second reading speech he made reference to a policy promulgated by the Premier on the duties of the public sector to clear bushfire risk around infrastructure. This direction provides —

> In an effort to improve the State’s preparedness for bushfire, all public sector bodies and entities listed in Schedule 1 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* are encouraged to implement or improve existing Building Protection Zones … around their critical assets in high bushfire risk areas.

According to the minister’s speech —

> Although the policy is focused on the public sector, it indicates the state’s commitment to the utilisation of a fuel reduction strategy for bushfire risk mitigation.

Certainly in my electorate I am usually contacted by constituents in November or December about school or other sites owned by the Crown where there is considerable overgrowth and there is a need for some clearance around buildings or other infrastructure. I make the point that the existing direction is not adequately complied with. I am also disappointed that the elephant in the corner of the room about reducing fuel load on crown land has still not been addressed. Having said that, the opposition will support the bill. If some of the issues that I have raised and which the member for Gosnells will raise are not clarified within the minister’s response, it might be necessary to take the matter to consideration in detail, but I hope that will not be necessary.

There are just a couple of things that I want to mention in the last minute or so relating to some questions I posed to the minister in a motion a few weeks ago and to which he did not get an opportunity to respond. These arose out of the Ferguson inquiry. A number of recommendations and concerns were expressed by Euan Ferguson. The first of those was that he found in the Yarloop–Waroona incident that there were major problems with traffic...
management and also with the rollout throughout the volunteer sector of ID badges. I raised that issue previously and want to know where that is at. Secondly, he raised the issue of mitigation. I am curious as to which communities will be able to address mitigation programs around regional towns in the coming season. As I said, there are other initiatives in train in relation to a wholesale mitigation of fuel load on crown land.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells)** [4.43 pm]: I rise to make a brief contribution and to seek the minister’s clarification on the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2016. It strikes me that people are often inclined to say that we have fire management problems because of our dreadful environmental laws, but I wonder if in fact there is a problem with the understanding and interpretation of those environmental laws. That is where I want to put some issues to the minister and I will then seek his clarification. I will first look at the Environmental Protection Act, which sets out under section 51C, “Unauthorised clearing of native vegetation”, that —

A person who causes or allows clearing commits an offence unless the clearing —

(a) is done in accordance with a clearing permit;

There are two parts of this section that are really relevant to us and I will go through each one. It continues —

(b) is of a kind set out in Schedule 6;

Schedule 6 is headed “Clearing for which a clearing permit is not required” and states —

1. Clearing that is done in order to give effect to a requirement to clear under a written law.

I think there may be powers in the Bush Fires Act that relate to that. Clause 12 is the one that I really wanted to highlight because it relates to the Esperance fires, where there was that suggestion that we had fire occurring on crown land. It states —

Clearing that is done for fire prevention or control purposes or other fire management works on Crown land, within the meaning of the Land Administration Act 1997, by the FES Commissioner as defined in the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998 section 3.

My understanding of that is that if there is a desire or need for some form of fire prevention work to be done on crown land, it is covered by that schedule 6 provision. That is for crown land. I will look at some of the things that section 51C provides. It sets out in paragraph (c) that there is an exemption if the clearing —

is of a kind prescribed for the purposes of this section and is not done in an environmentally sensitive area.

We then have to look at the regulations. On the one hand the act sends us to schedule 6. Then for private land we have to go to the regulations. The Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 has some detail about prescribed clearing, which is the term that it goes back to. What do we find when we look through the regulations? One of the prescribed clearing acts for which a permit is not required is covered by regulation 5, item 3, “Clearing for fire hazard reduction”, which states —

Clearing that is fire hazard reduction burning if the clearing is —

(a) to occur outside the prohibited or restricted burning times declared under the Bush Fires Act —

Fair enough; they do not want people to use this as an excuse to go burning during a time when there is a ban on fires. That is paragraph (a). Paragraph (b) is the really significant one. It states —

done in such a way as to minimise long term damage to the environmental values of the vegetation.

People are allowed to have a fire hazard reduction burn so long as they do it in a way that is not going to lead to long-lasting environmental damage. There is no restriction there in terms of fire control. That is the key thing. We are left, though, with one category. We have gone through crown land and private land. The private land provision does not apply if someone is in an environmentally sensitive area; that is true. What do they do then? That could apply to an area that perhaps has declared rare flora or is a precious wetland. That does not mean that they cannot have a fire reduction burn; it is just saying that they must get a permit to do it. They would have to get advice from government on how best to do it and then go and do it. I think that is reasonable given the environmental sensitivities and given that if someone is a responsible fire manager, they would want to get external advice from all sorts of parties and they would want to have community engagement. They probably would want to let their neighbours know. It is not something where someone would get up one Friday morning and say, “Right, I’m going to go and burn that wetland area because I think it’s a fire risk.” They would want to communicate with other people such as the local bushfire brigade and the local shire. They would want to have all those discussions. This is something that would have to be planned. Unless I have something badly wrong, the various categories are covered under the existing legislative arrangements. I am keen to hear from the minister what this new piece of legislation actually achieves. I admit that there is a degree of opaqueness in the arrangements. People can look in the first instance at schedule 6 of the Environmental Protection Act and the regulations. The department does a reasonable job providing fact sheets and answering frequently asked questions and people are able to get general information, so I question when people say that it is because of green tape that they are not allowed to engage in fire controls and to anticipate fire seasons.
I will leave that aside for now and raise an issue in fire mitigation in Western Australia that is seriously underrated and forgotten—that is, the need to control weed species. The flammability of weeds is an enormous problem when compared with native vegetation. As we get into frequent burning cycles—we are now almost down to six-year burning cycles in some areas—to a one, two or three-year cycle, we are simply opening up the ground to massive weed incursion, which is much more flammable than native vegetation. If we were to go out anywhere to areas that have been disturbed after the rain we have recently had, we would see massive weed infestation. It is not native vegetation there; invariably it is weeds, which may look great—they are lush and green right now—but in time, come October and November, that will senesce, dry off and be highly flammable. To choose an extreme example of the sorts of weeds that could be allowed into this state, I choose gamba grass. Some in the pastoral industry would love to see gamba grass introduced into Western Australia, and I gather that in the Kimberley there are pockets of it already growing. It is useful grazing fodder, but if gamba grass gets out of control, we will have a massive fire hazard. I am now looking at some material from Queensland, where enormous amounts of gamba grass grow. A report from Biosecurity Queensland, which is part of the Queensland government’s Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, states —

- Gamba grass-infested landscapes carry up to eight times higher fuel loads than native forest and pastures
- Bushfires are extensive with increased intensity and heat, which affects the tree canopy, transforming woodlands to grasslands. This also poses a serious threat to people and property
- The changing demands for nutrients and water over a large area can alter catchment hydrology and downstream wetlands and watercourses.

Weeds cannot be underestimated in fire control. Gamba grass is perhaps one example of the sort of weeds we have to either keep out of Western Australia or crack down on as soon as we hear about an incursion. If we do not, we will be left with a massive fire problem, and it will be one that will cost us very dearly. Indeed, the Northern Territory began spending about $70 000 a year on fire control for gamba grass but now spends well over—I did hear the exact budget figure—$1.5 million a year to have all the fast-attack equipment and the right procedures in place to control gamba grass.

We have plenty of other weeds in the south west of Western Australia. Weeds are a massive fire problem anywhere we care to look. They are out of control. It is at this time of year that we should be looking to control weeds and to rehabilitate areas so that native vegetation can grow back to prevent very serious fire risks. However, we often go in the other direction. As we travel through many country shires in the south west of the state we see that native vegetation has been cleared from the roadsides. Then there is the annual take-off in growth of highly flammable weeds that have to be burned every year because that is the only way to control them. However, had we done the smart thing of retaining good healthy native vegetation, there would not be that degree of flammability and the costs associated with fire control on road verges.

That matter was raised in private members’ business not long ago. I raised a number of issues at the time. The Minister for Environment was deemed to be the minister responsible and we did not receive satisfactory answers to the many issues we raised. Fire science evolves all time. I hear that some of the fire science experts in the Department of Parks and Wildlife are contemplating early retirement because they are demoralised with what is going on in the agency. I think back to 2004 or 2005 when Judy Edwards was minister and a fire summit was held. It was very well attended and all kinds of findings came out of it. Some really useful discussions were held and it resulted in a positive feeling and an appreciation of the learning we had to go through and the need to understand how traditional owners, the first inhabitants of this country, managed fire. There was a real appreciation there. After talking to staff in the Department of Parks and Wildlife I gather that we are losing that appreciation all too rapidly. The issue here is biodiversity, but it is also about protecting people’s lives and properties.

Last time I rose to speak on this issue I talked about the various zonings that contribute to the achievement of the 200 000 hectare per year burn target. I said at that time that I thought it was a very good first step. I pointed out that the idea came about because in the budget estimates in 2014 the member for Girrawheen raised the issue of the questionable value of a broad 200 000 hectares burn target and that we needed to focus on particular areas to make sure that the bulk of the effort went into fuel load reduction burns in areas close to people’s homes and to make people safe. That will need to be fine-tuned in the future because I am not sure the proportions are right. Potentially the 200 000 hectare a year burn target can be reached simply by burning areas miles away from anyone, but it has to make people and property safe. The principles that are applied in the south west of the state in the jarrah, marri, karri forest area will not be the same principles that are applied on unallocated crown land or the rangelands. There will be a totally different approach, just as a totally different approach is needed in the Kimberley. We must not be seduced by any one-size-fits-all approach. Controlling fire in this state has been and remains a huge challenge. I am as afraid as anyone as we go into a fire season. When I look across at the scarp on a summer’s day and I see a plume of smoke I worry and think, “Gosh, what are we in for?” Those events seem to happen every summer. It is frightening. We must do better.
I will conclude on this point. Many people say that there is merit in a fast response system and the capacity to respond quickly. When I lived in Gidgegannup, on a number of occasions—three if I can recall—people lit fires in close proximity to my house and the fast-attack vehicle would come. In that area it would simply be a LandCruiser with a 500-litre tank on the back. The magic that it could perform was amazing. We simply had to identify the fire, put through a call to 000 and through the pager system that we had in the 1990s the fast-attack vehicle would arrive and perhaps within 20 minutes of notification, the fire would be put out. However, if it was much longer, we would have been in for a very dangerous time. The need for fast-response equipment is essential. That is probably the best solution for our fire problem. Fast-response equipment varies from region to region. When people live close to areas of habitation, the LandCruiser system works quite well. But in other areas water bombers, either fixed wing or helicopter, are needed, so long as they are available. I gather that might have been one of the problems with the Esperance fire; that is, there was not the fast response equipment available. This is something that we have much more work to do on, but I look forward to hearing the minister’s comments on those various areas about the usefulness of the current legislation, the need for fast attack equipment to be available and to having the minister’s recognition of this issue of weed control being an essential part of how we manage fire in our Western Australian landscape. I conclude my remarks there.

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Emergency Services) [5.00 pm] — in reply: From the outset I thank the opposition for its support for this fairly simple Bushfires Amendment Bill 2016. I thank the member for Girrawheen and the member for Gosnells for their contributions. I want to touch on a couple of things in my reply to their comments. I want to make something crystal clear; in other words I am not going to mince my words. Much of what this bill is trying to achieve is due simply to wives’ tales, urban myths and political agendas that have got out of control. I do not need to go too far back in recent history to give examples of public commentary, even since the last fire season, in which people who should know better have made statements on talkback radio. I am talking about elected members of Parliament in Western Australia, not from the state Parliament, but from the federal Parliament, and I am talking about people who represent, for example, the Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades who have made statements about the ability for individuals, whether they be members of the brigades or landowners or whatever to either take action to mitigate bushfire risk or to combat a fire. Quite frankly, when these people make these false claims in the media all it does is perpetuate the myth that if a firefighter goes onto crown land to put out a fire, they will be prosecuted and therefore they cannot do it. It is quite frankly false and it is quite frankly dangerous that people continue to say these things. It is absolutely false to say that a farmer cannot go onto crown land and put out a fire. It is absolutely false to say that a farmer neighbouring crown land cannot take action to reduce the risk of fire by, say, clearing the firebreak on crown land, and I will spell out the exact legislative provisions right now.

I was out at Bullsbrook about three months ago for personal reasons visiting someone to buy something off eBay. It was a rural property and the guy there said, “You’re the emergency services minister. Why can’t I clear the land around my house? Why can’t I do that?” He had been told this perpetuated myth that if he chops down a tree overhanging his house, with the leaves all falling into his gutters, that he is going to have someone from some government agency coming to give him a whopping fine and lock him up in jail. The perpetuated myth is just so dangerous in our society, so I just want to touch on some of these things first.

Firstly, the issue. Can landholders prepare and maintain permanent firebreaks on crown land bordering farming properties? Yes; landowners are currently permitted to prepare and maintain permanent firebreaks on crown land bordering the property, other than road reserves, state forests and timber reserves. Subject to those exceptions, section 34(1) of the Bush Fires Act 1954 allows the owner or occupier—so even people renting—of land bordering on crown land to enter upon the crown land to clear firebreaks, provided the firebreaks are no more than three metres wide and are within 200 metres of the landowner’s boundary. Fair enough. Section 34 also allows the owner and/or occupier to burn the bush between those firebreaks at the boundary of their land as long as they obtain a permit from the bush fire control officer under 34(1a) and (1b) and they do not contravene the prohibited and restricted burning periods.

Can land management agencies, fire authorities and bush fire volunteers enter crown land for the purpose of extinguishing a fire? I heard a representative from the AVBFB on 6PR saying a person is not allowed to put out a fire unless they have permission from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. What a load of rubbish. This is where it becomes dangerous, and quite frankly I am infuriated by it. If so many volunteers start listening to and believing that, when the day comes—mark my words it has come before and it will come again—that a volunteer bush fire fighter thinks he is not allowed to attack that fire until it crosses a certain line on a map and a whole town burns down, the person who perpetuated the myth should be held responsible. I know the member for Girrawheen agrees with me on this. I do not want to mince my words here. It is absolutely dangerous for people to continue to believe this. Can one of those volunteers or a fire agency enter crown land for the purpose of diminishing fires? Yes. Under section 39A of the Bush Fires Act 1954, when there is an outbreak of bushfire that has been lit or maintained unlawfully, occurred accidentally, ceased to be under control or not adequately controlled, or been declared in the regulations as a bushfire to which the section applies, bush fire control officers, bush fire brigade officers or a bush fire brigade member may, subject to the Bush Fires Act 1954, take
I have had a number of conversations with Commissioner Gregson about volunteer identification cards in the present six weeks. It is rather a difficult solution, and one of the problems is that volunteer bush fire brigades, with a few exceptions in the far north of the state, are the property of local government. Unfortunately, not all of those brigades can produce an accurate or any form of membership list, let alone allow us to use that information to issue volunteer ID cards. For the volunteer fire and rescue service managed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, it is somewhat easier to do, and it is also easy to do with the State Emergency Service, but when it comes to volunteer bush fire brigades, which are not, so to speak, the property of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, it is much harder. As an example, when the government sent out the application forms for the volunteer fuel cards, I decided to write to every brigade captain, group and unit that qualified, including the SES, sea rescue and bush fire brigades. It was very difficult to get a list of volunteer bush fire brigade captains from regional Western Australia, because many local governments could not even provide basic information such as who was in charge of each particular brigade. There are some challenges in that area, and I am not quite sold on whether it will make a material difference to the capacity of a volunteer to access a fire area. Firefighters tend to turn up in their uniforms in a fire truck and trees still burning. I have seen trucks crushed by trees almost every fire season for three years now. But there has to be a balance and I do appreciate that that provision can be fine-tuned and it can be fairer than what it is now. We are working on that one.

I have had a number of conversations with Commissioner Gregson about volunteer identification cards in the present six weeks. It is not quite an easy solution. It is not a cost issue, but one of the problems is that volunteer bush fire brigades, with a few exceptions in the far north of the state, are the property of local government. Unfortunately, not all of those brigades can produce an accurate or any form of membership list, let alone allow us to use that information to issue volunteer ID cards. For the volunteer fire and rescue service managed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, it is a bit easier to do, and it is also easy to do with the State Emergency Service, but when it comes to volunteer bush fire brigades, which are not, so to speak, the property of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, it is much harder. As an example, when the government sent out the application forms for the volunteer fuel cards, I decided to write to every brigade captain, group and unit that qualified, including the SES, sea rescue and bush fire brigades. It was very difficult to get a list of volunteer bush fire brigade captains from regional Western Australia, because many local governments could not even provide basic information such as who was in charge of each particular brigade. There are some challenges in that area, and I am not quite sold on whether it will make a material difference to the capacity of a volunteer to access a fire area. Firefighters tend to turn up in their uniforms in a fire truck and trees still burning. I have seen trucks crushed by trees almost every fire season for three years now. But there has to be a balance and I do appreciate that that provision can be fine-tuned and it can be fairer than what it is now. We are working on that one.

Ms M.M. Quirk: It didn’t happen at Yarloop, as I understand it. They had their gear on, but they were in a private vehicle.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I do not know the details of that one. It is probably not a major issue, but we are still working on options for ID cards. Without going into technical specifications, my view, which I made clear to the commissioner, is that if we are going to go down this path, which obviously we will get to somehow—I think the member for Girrawheen has asked me about this in question time before—we need to ensure that it is future compatible with the automatic vehicle location system. If we had near-field communication, like everyone’s mobile phone and Visa card now has, with radiofrequency identification chips, that would make life a lot easier,
rather than just printing a plastic card with a photo on it for the sake of having it. The other point is: What happens if someone resigns as a member of a volunteer bush fire brigade, or falls out after not having turned up for a couple of years, and they still have a card? How do I get the card back? What if they do not know where the card is when they have been asked to return it? If it had some kind of electronic on–off switch on a database, we could maintain the integrity of the database system. It is not quite as easy as printing out a plastic card, as the member can understand.

I absolutely agree with the member for Gosnells on the issue of fast response. He talked about his experience in Gidgegannup. It is all about horses for courses, if you will pardon the pun. The fire that ultimately all but destroyed the town of Yarloop started in Lane Poole Reserve, in very high country. It came down very steep slopes. In the introduction to his report, Ferguson outlines how he was generally satisfied with the initial response, which was a significant amount of aerial assets from the metropolitan area deployed at sunrise. We are talking about mountain slopes so steep that bulldozers and light tankers could not get anywhere near. The only thing that could be done to combat that fire initially was to fight it from the air. Likewise, other fires start for which a fleet of light tankers can be the best way to fight them. There is also the tyranny of distance, and this applied, to a large degree, to what happened in Esperance, where the fire started some way away but, when the wind and weather conditions changed, travelled a long distance fairly quickly. It is not one size fits all when it comes to initial attack, but the member is absolutely right.

To be honest, I googled it, and had a look at the pictures, but I had not heard of the weed species mentioned by the member for Gosnells. I know what it is now that I have seen the photo of it. It looks like sugarcane, but is even taller, and I can imagine what kind of fuel load it would present in the dry summer period. It would be a significant challenge, but I will familiarise myself with that. What we are trying to do here and, as the member for Girrawheen mentioned, it is something that can be disallowable, is essentially clear up any ambiguity between any local government by-laws and other state acts that will prohibit people who want to do so from taking action to reduce the fuel load around their house.

A number of different issues arose through consultation in my party room, the National Party room and through the Labor Party. I do not know whether I need to go into them, but they include what constitutes a dwelling, where it starts from and where a boundary starts from. Obviously, it will be anything authorised on the plans of the building or extensions, awnings or any overhangs. What is the definition of a “tree”, and what distance may a tree be from the house to be able to be removed? All those things have been considered in detail in coming up with a submission. I know when the commissioner puts through his regulations, they will be spelt out very clearly, so I do not necessarily have to go into all that now.

The key to all of this, though, is to take away the ambiguity and the misconception that people are not allowed to chop down trees or reduce vegetation that presents a fire danger to their houses. I will not pretend to be an expert on 136 local government by-laws about what can and cannot be done, and I am not going to pretend to be an expert on environmental regulations as well. However, I will say that this is triggered partly by a need to override certain other regulations and laws but, in particular, mainly by a need to set the record straight, because quite frankly I am fed up with people perpetuating myths that endanger the lives of other people in Western Australia, whether it be about access to land or the ability to reduce fuel load, either on our own land or neighbouring land.

I again thank the opposition for its support for the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2016. It is important, and it is one of the things we can do that will make a material difference to the ability of Western Australians to reduce fuel loads in the coming fire season.

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 Mr J.M. Francis (Minister for Emergency Services), and transmitted to the Council.

SCHOOL BOARDING FACILITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT AND REPEAL BILL 2015

Receipt

Bill received from the Council.

House adjourned at 5.18 pm
TAXIS — FARE EVASIONS — ALBANY

5562. Mr P.B. Watson to the Minister for Transport:
Can the Minister please provide the number of reported taxi fare evasions from taxis operating in Albany for the following financial years; 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 2014/15, 2015/16:
(a) how many of these fare evasions had successful fines or prosecutions against the fare evader?

Mr D.C. Nalder replied:
The WA Police administer fare evasion offences in regional areas.

MINISTER FOR HOUSING — PORTFOLIOS — 2014–15 ANNUAL REPORT ON STATE FINANCES — LEASES

5593. Mr W.J. Johnston to the Minister for Housing; Racing and Gaming:
I refer to Note 3: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies, and specifically to sub-note (r) Leases on page 81 of the Annual Report of State Finances 2014–15, and I ask:
(a) for each agency in the Minister’s portfolio, please detail each finance lease that has been entered into since 8 September 2008 and currently in force for each agency;
(b) for each such lease, please specify the specific infrastructure or property, plant or equipment that has been financed by such a lease, what value was assigned to that infrastructure or property, plant or equipment at the time the lease was created, and what is the current value of that infrastructure or property, plant or equipment;
(c) for each such lease, who is the counter party for each lease, and on what date did each lease come into force, and when is it expected that the lease will expire;
(d) what was the original value of each such lease, and what is the current value of each lease;
(e) for the specific infrastructure or property, plant or equipment financed by each such lease, what is the expected value of the item at the expiration of the lease;
(f) for each such lease, is there an obligation to make a “balloon” or similar payment at the expiration of the lease, and if so, what is the value of any such payment, and when is it due to be made; and
(g) what is the “interest rate implicit in the lease” for each such lease?

Mr B.J. Grylls replied:
The Housing Authority
None.
The Housing Authority does not have any finance leases, all leases are operating expenses rather than finance leases.

Department Of Racing, Gaming And Liquor
(a)–(g) Not applicable.

ATTORNEY GENERAL — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF GRIEVANCES

5617. Mr M. McGowan to the minister representing the Attorney General; Minister for Commerce:
For each department, agency and Government Trading Enterprise within the Minister’s portfolio of responsibilities, I ask:
(a) how many staff grievances have been lodged for financial years 2013–14; 2014–15 and 2015–16;
(b) how many of those grievances are outstanding as at 30 June 2016;
(c) how many of those grievances are resolved as at 30 June 2016; and
(d) for those grievances resolved:
(i) how many were dismissed;
(ii) how many were upheld; and
(iii) how many were partly upheld?
Mrs L.M. Harvey replied:

The following answers relate to grievances formally lodged by employees and investigated pursuant to the Public Sector Standard on Grievance Resolution issued by the Public Sector Commissioner.

Corruption and Crime Commission
(a)–(d) [See tabled paper no 4445.]

Commissioner for Children and Young People
(a)–(d) [See tabled paper no 4445.]

Department of Commerce
(a)–(d) [See tabled paper no.]

Department of the Attorney General
(a)–(d) [See tabled paper no 4445.]

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
(a) Nil.
(b) Not applicable.

Equal Opportunity Commission
(a)–(d) [See tabled paper no 4445.]

Office of the Information Commissioner
(a) Nil.
(b) Not applicable.

Legal Aid
(a)–(d) [See tabled paper no 4445.]

Legal Practice Board of Western Australia and Legal Profession Complaints Committee
(a)–(d) [See tabled paper no 4445.]

Solicitor General’s Office
(a) Nil.
(b) Not applicable.

The Department of the Registrar, WA Industrial Relations Commission
(a) Nil.
(b) Not applicable.

WorkCover
(a)–(d) [See tabled paper no 4445.]

5634. Mr W.J. Johnston to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the proposed privatisation of the Fremantle Port, and I ask:

(a) how much debt is currently held by the Fremantle Port Authority in relation to the Inner Harbour Deepening Project;

(b) how much longer is required for the current Port Improvement Rate to fully pay down this debt at the currently collection rate;

(c) is it the intention of the Government to bring this debt back onto the General Government sector balance sheet at the time of the proposed sale, as advised to the Opposition during the Treasury briefing;

(d) is it the intention of the Government to cancel this Port Improvement Rate on port users at the time of the proposed sale, as advised to the Opposition during the Treasury briefing;
(e) is it the intention of the Government to introduce a new Port Improvement Rate, at the same level of the existing Port Improvement Rate, to be held in trust by the State (through the residual Fremantle Port Authority) for the exclusive use of developing the Outer Harbour Container Terminal as the natural capacity for the Inner Harbour is reached, as advised to the Opposition during the Treasury briefing; and

(f) is it the policy of the Government that users of the Fremantle Inner Harbour should be making a financial contribution to the construction of the future Outer Harbour Container Terminal:

(i) if yes, has this regulatory mechanism been discussed with the Economic Regulation Authority?

Mr D.C. Nalder replied:

Please refer this question to the Treasurer.