



# Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT  
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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, 4 May 2021



# Legislative Council

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

## **HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH**

### *Condolence Motion*

**HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House)** [2.03 pm] — without notice: I move —

That the house records its sincere regret at the death of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and tenders its sympathy to Her Majesty the Queen and his family.

Madam President, for almost 70 years, His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, has been a respected household name across the Commonwealth. Popular with Australians, his natural personality often resonated with us. He certainly led a remarkable life. Born on the Greek island of Corfu in 1921, he was the youngest of five and the only son of Princess Alice of Battenberg and Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark. He had a tumultuous childhood: his family was exiled from Greece and escaped on a British warship, and he attended boarding schools across Europe. He joined the Royal Navy in 1929 and served with distinction throughout the Second World War. On the accession of his wife, Princess Elizabeth, to the throne in 1952, his active naval career ended.

Passing away just two months short of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, Prince Philip was a constant for my entire life and, indeed, the lives of everyone in this chamber. As Britain's longest-serving royal consort, he was known for his unwavering devotion to and support of the Queen, his dedication to duty and his decorated service in the military. For many, he represented stability, strength and service—to his country, to the Commonwealth and to the Queen and the Royal Family. He was also a husband, father and great-grandfather.

The prince was a patron of over 750 organisations, particularly focused on sport, education, the environment and industry. He is well known for the establishment of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which has now been in operation for over 65 years, with more than 775 000 young Australians having taken part. This leadership program was established when leadership programs were not the flavour of the month that they are now. It is an extraordinary organisation that makes a massive contribution in assisting, in particular, young people from, but not limited to, disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Duke of Edinburgh visited Australia 21 times over the years and his final visit included Perth, where he accompanied the Queen to a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

I am a republican, but that does not prevent me from recognising and admiring the longevity and breadth of public service the Duke of Edinburgh provided not only as Her Majesty's "strength and stay", as she described him, but also in the organisations and causes he championed. On behalf of the government and the Parliamentary Labor Party, I offer our sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family.

**HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition)** [2.06 pm]: On behalf of the opposition alliance, I join the government in offering our condolences to the Queen and her family on the passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

The late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, was a man of conspicuous character—a memorable description first applied to Sir Charles Court. A true representative of the wartime generation, he gave up his chosen career to dedicate seven decades of his life in the support of his beloved wife, Queen Elizabeth II, the monarchy and the Commonwealth. His public life is therefore part of our own Australian story.

Prince Philip was born into the Greek royal family, but his early life would be seen today as emotionally deprived. He lost meaningful contact with both his parents from the age of nine, when they separated. When at the age of 16 he learned that one of his sisters and her young family had been killed in an air crash, his headmaster said, "His sorrow was that of a man." Yet he would never criticise his parents or concede that his childhood was difficult. His terse saying, "I had to get on with it", sums up his determined approach to life.

As an 18-year-old midshipman on a Royal Navy battleship, Prince Philip made the first of 22 visits to Australia in early 1940. He saw action alongside Australian warships in 1941 at the Battle of Cape Matapan and served as first lieutenant on a destroyer in the 1943 invasion of Sicily, when his initiative in launching a smoking decoy raft saved his ship from a potentially fatal aerial attack. When he was forced to take indefinite leave from the Royal Navy in July 1951, he was a lieutenant commander captaining a frigate. Prince Philip had the skill and application of his uncle Earl Mountbatten, but perhaps without his self-promotion and recklessness. Irrespective of his royal connections, this talent could well have taken him to supreme naval command. However, the ill health and premature death of his father-in-law, King George VI, in February 1952 put an end to his naval career.

He married Princess Elizabeth in 1947. Throughout their marriage Prince Philip dedicated his life to not only her, but also the institution of the monarchy, of which he was to say 30 years later —

People still respond more easily to symbolism than to reason. The idea of chieftainship in its representative rather than its governing function is still just as clearly and even instinctively understood. From the point of view of national identity, this function is perhaps more important than ever.

Regarded at first with suspicion by ultraconservative royal servants, Prince Philip was a thoughtful moderniser. He ensured that the 1953 coronation was televised and that the Queen was soon mixing with a wider range of people. His constant support gave an initially shy and conservative young monarch the confidence to proceed with evolutionary change.

Prince Philip had two notable initiatives of his own. He launched the World Wildlife Fund in 1961, when the importance of conservation was less well appreciated. His second initiative was the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the challenges of which have enriched many lives. He founded this program in 1956 with input from pioneer educationist Kurt Hahn, and, through its affiliates, the award now extends to 144 nations. The award commenced in Australia in 1959 and was established throughout the country by 1962. The program has been completed by 775 000 young Australians, with an estimated 45 000 competing for the award each year.

According to historian Simon Heffer —

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme was highly appropriate to him: not just because he was a man of action, but because of its psychological effect on those who took part in it. It bred character, and character had been central to his own success and the respect in which he was held. Character—a moral strength, absence of self-pity, values founded in decency, a wish to serve others and the country—was, again, central to his generation.

It was about setting an example, and not searching continually for what could benefit oneself.

Altogether, over 71 years, Prince Philip made 22 visits to Australia, either with the Queen or separately. Notably, he opened the Commonwealth Games in Perth in 1962, a visit during which he preferred to drive his own official car. Prince Philip was impatient with excessive deference and appreciated the relative informality of Australia. He made it clear that his affection for us would have continued had we chosen to become a republic in 1999. His very last long-haul overseas visit with Her Majesty in 2011 concluded here in Perth, four months after his ninetieth birthday.

The Prince's alleged gaffes were, in fact, generally icebreakers that were designed to put nervous people at their ease. On one typical occasion, at Government House in Perth, when Prince Philip was being introduced to the catering manager from the RAAF Base Pearce, he looked towards two rather large RAAF reserve officers and asked whether they were the manager's best customers, much to their great amusement.

At a time when there is much discussion about the behaviour of men towards women, Prince Philip gave us the example of a natural born leader who accepted and embraced the role of consort, dedicating himself to the job of assisting his wife to fulfil her destined role, and without ever seeking to exert political influence. When he retired from royal duties in 2017, it is estimated that he had attended over 22 000 solo events, which were often less than exciting but nonetheless important to those involved.

I will conclude with the words of historian Robert Tombs —

He was of that generation, now almost gone, that surmounted the dangers of a war for survival. We admire their virtues, even as we fail to practise them. We know deep down that they merit the respect of all of us who have since lived safe and prosperous lives.

Madam President, we obviously stand in support of Her Majesty the Queen, and long may she stay in that position.

**HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [2.12 pm]: I rise on behalf of our colleagues in the opposition alliance and the Nationals WA in expressing our sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family on the passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Since his passing, much has been written about Prince Philip's life. It can be characterised as one of service to both his Queen and public life. He demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the United Kingdom and to the Commonwealth. I think the fact that he stood down from official duties only three years ago, at 96 years of age, is a clear testament of his enduring loyalty and support for the work of the Royal Family.

Over 57 years, Prince Philip visited Australia many, many times, with and without the Queen by his side. His first visit to Australia with the young Queen was in 1954. The trip was eight weeks long and encompassed 70 cities and towns, and about 77 per cent of the population turned out to see the young Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Prince Philip was passionate about many causes, such as preserving the world's forests and fish stocks, and the welfare of young people. In 1956, he developed the highly successful Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a youth achievement program designed to promote teamwork, resourcefulness and a respect for nature. This award has stood the test of time and is still a highly regarded program that is pursued by the youth of today.

In addition to his long and enduring loyalty to the Queen, Prince Philip was a father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He has been a mainstay in the Royal Family for nearly 100 years. His loss will no doubt be keenly felt for some time by those who were nearest to him.

On behalf of the Nationals WA and the opposition alliance, I pay tribute to Prince Philip and once again extend our sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family. May he rest in peace.

**HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural)** [2.14 pm]: I rise to add some personal remarks and support to the motion of the Leader of the House on the passing of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. In doing so, I pass on my sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and her family.

Prince Philip's service to Her Majesty the Queen, the monarchy and the Commonwealth was simply remarkable. Her Majesty the Queen's reign commenced before my birth—in fact, before the birth of my parents—so I have known no other queen or their consort.

In 1977, speaking at an event to celebrate her golden wedding anniversary, the Queen said —

All too often, I fear, Prince Philip has had to listen to me speaking. Frequently we have discussed my intended speech beforehand and, as you will imagine, his views have been expressed in a forthright manner ... he has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years, and I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know.

In response to Her Majesty the Queen, Prince Philip said —

I think the main lesson we have learnt is that tolerance is the one essential ingredient in any happy marriage ... You can take it from me, the Queen has the quality of tolerance in abundance.

Madam President, the prince was renowned for his quick wit and good humour, which got him into trouble on occasion. In 1960, in remarks to the General Dental Council reported in *Time* magazine, Prince Philip said —

Dontopedalogy is the science of opening your mouth and putting your foot in it, a science which I have practised for a good many years.

Prince Philip had what can only be described as an extraordinary life. He was born with Greek heritage, the son of Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark and Princess Alice of Battenberg. His family was exiled before he was two years of age. They were evacuated by the British Royal Family's ship HMS *Calypso* following the forced abdication of Prince Philip's grandfather, a military coup and a court order that banished his father from Greece for life.

Prince Philip held a genuine career in the military and gave service during wartime, when he achieved the rank of commander. He was a patron to more than 750 organisations and, of course, the founder of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. He was clearly committed to our young people and future generations. Since its introduction in 1959, in Australia alone, the award has touched more than 775 000 Australians.

I was not fortunate to have met Prince Philip. However, I was touched by a tribute penned by President Barack Obama on 10 April this year, the day after Prince Philip's passing, in which he said —

When we first met His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, he and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had already been on the world stage for more than half a century—welcoming leaders like Churchill and Kennedy; Mandela and Gorbachev. As two Americans unaccustomed to palaces and pomp, we didn't know what to expect.

We shouldn't have worried. The Queen and Prince Philip immediately put us at ease with their grace and generosity, turning a ceremonial occasion into something far more natural, even comfortable. Prince Philip in particular was kind and warm, with a sharp wit and unfailing good humor. It was our first introduction to the man behind the title, and in the years since, our admiration for him has only grown. We will miss him dearly.

Like the Queen, Prince Philip saw world wars and economic crises come and go. The radio gave way to the television, and the television to the internet. And through it all, he helped provide steady leadership and guiding wisdom. It has long been said that the United States and Great Britain have a special relationship—one that has been maintained and strengthened not just by presidents and prime ministers but by the Royal Family that has outlasted them all.

At the Queen's side or trailing the customary two steps behind, Prince Philip showed the world what it meant to be a supportive husband to a powerful woman. Yet he also found a way to lead without demanding the spotlight—serving in combat in World War II, commanding a frigate in the Royal Navy, and tirelessly touring the world to champion British industry and excellence. Through his extraordinary example, he proved that true partnership has room for both ambition and selflessness—all in service of something greater.

As the world mourns his loss, we send our warmest wishes and deepest sympathies to the Queen, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; and everyone who knew and loved this remarkable man.

It is difficult to imagine that on Prince Philip's last visit to Perth in 2011 for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the farewell event before Her Majesty and the prince departed Perth for London was to attend Her Majesty's largest ever barbecue. Attended by tens of thousands of Western Australians, 120 000 sausages were cooked on more than 100 barbecues to farewell our sovereign and the prince. Contrast that with today, 10 years on, COVID-19 has separated many of us from our families, especially at times of grieving and mourning.

Prince Philip was, above all, a father to four children, a grandfather to eight grandchildren and a great-grandfather to 10 great-grandchildren. I can only express my sympathies to them at this time of mourning and in celebrating the very full life of Philip Mountbatten. I am certain that their family and our commonwealth is a better place for him being in it. May he rest in peace.

**THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust)** [2.20 pm]: I also rise to add my support for the motion moved by the Leader of the House expressing regret at the death of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Many members have made comments about what a remarkable individual Prince Philip was. He lived a life of dedicated service to his country; to his wife, Queen Elizabeth II; to the Commonwealth; and to his family. It has already been referenced the significant number of times that he visited Australia, but I think we also need to note that out of those 22 occasions, 11 of them were specifically visits to Western Australia. The last visit was during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Perth in October 2011. I note that for a man of his age at that time, it would have been a significant activity to venture forth across the seas to visit us here in Western Australia. His first visit to Western Australia was during the Commonwealth Games in 1962—a significant year for many of us in this chamber.

Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, passed away at the age of 99 on 9 April 2021. Throughout his life, he repeatedly demonstrated his unfailing support and loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, his wife of 73 years—a remarkable period of marriage in anyone's situation. He was a superb role model for men in our community. He was a man who put aside his own desires for a career, for a life of his own choosing, to stand in support of his wife in the work that she did on behalf of her country. In that regard, he was a man to be admired.

We have already heard about the extensive array of interests and activities that he engaged in to keep himself occupied, including the establishment of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. For many of us, as we went through high school in the 1970s, this was a fairly standard feature during our school time. I would say that a number of members in this chamber and in the other would have actively participated in that particular program.

His Royal Highness was obviously engaged in a variety of activities in the charity area. He demonstrated a long-term and ongoing passion for conservation. I understand that he was quite actively engaged in various parts of the world expressing his opinion about a number of things that should happen to preserve various parts of countries. Historically, there was some correspondence between himself and Gough Whitlam about what should happen in the Kakadu area, in the north of Australia, at that point in time. He continued his activities in that area until the late 1990s. He also had a strong and ongoing interest in the area of industry and set about establishing the Industrial Society, which is now known as the Work Foundation. There were a variety of other organisations that he was active in and remained active in until his retirement three years ago.

As well as those charity and work organisations, he was obviously a very passionate sportsman. Members in this chamber have already alluded to the no-nonsense approach that he took to life, and I suppose on some occasions his bluntness and suffering no fools. I was thinking that perhaps in the current age of wokeness he would never be accused of being PC and would probably stand out in the crowd in that regard!

Since his passing, having listened to the many stories since his birth and the family background of his life's journey, it is a fascinating story of challenge after challenge. In fact, one could only wonder how he survived and got to the point in his life that he did. It is a remarkable life story. Putting aside all of his formal responsibilities, at the end of the day he was a family man. I imagine that the greatest hole to be filled is the loss to his family. We extend our best wishes and our condolences to his family in dealing with that loss. He leaves a remarkable legacy. May his memory be a blessing.

I ask members to now rise and stand in their places to indicate their support for the motion and to observe one minute's silence in memory of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Question passed; members and officers standing as a mark of respect.

**The PRESIDENT:** Members, I advise that in accordance with our custom and practice, a copy of today's *Hansard* on this occasion will be sent to His Excellency the Governor via a message.

### CHAMBER TIMER CLOCKS

#### *Statement by President*

**THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust)** [2.27 pm]: Before I move on, I want to let you know that as of yesterday, the chamber timer clocks ceased working. Before we begin any debates today, I advise that the clocks used for displaying the remaining time left are not working. We will be manually keeping time of members' contributions. A three-minute warning will be provided if we do not get the clocks fixed in the meantime. I remind members that it is customary that valedictory speeches not be timed.

**DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEES***Resignation — Statement by President*

**THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust)** [2.28 pm]: Today, I received correspondence via email from Hon Matthew Swinbourn, which states —

Dear Madam President

I hereby give notice of my resignation as a Deputy Chair of Committees effective immediately.

Yours faithfully

**Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC**

**NATIONAL OAT BREEDING PROGRAM***Statement by Minister for Agriculture and Food*

**HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Agriculture and Food)** [2.28 pm]: Over the past four years our government has worked hard to rebuild agricultural scientific capability and capacity in WA. Those efforts are paying off, with the national oat breeding program moving to WA after almost 20 years based out of South Australia. WA-based oat breeder InterGrain, which is majority owned by the state government, was successful in its bid for the national program. InterGrain is a true local success story. It has gone from strength to strength since 2017, when the McGowan government put an end to the process initiated under the previous government to sell off the state government's share of the business to eastern states' interests. The national oat breeding program is an \$11.5 million, five-year research program, with investment from the Grains Research and Development Corporation, AgriFutures Australia, InterGrain and the McGowan government. It aims to provide new varieties for milling and hay oats allowing local growers to respond to changing market conditions and to expand production. Oats are Australia's fourth biggest grain crop after wheat, barley and canola, and WA produces more than 50 per cent of the nation's total. WA has the resources to support InterGrain, including genetics and pre-breeding research by the Western Crop Genetics Alliance, crop production systems research led by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and marketing and innovation via the Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre—AEGIC. At the 2021 election, the government made a \$10 million commitment to progress a WA processed oat industry growth partnership to expand milling oats production from 150 000 to 250 000 tonnes per annum to increase the volume and capture growing markets in Asia and India.

These factors combined will see WA become the centre of excellence for oats in Australia delivering real benefits to farmers across the state.

**PAPERS TABLED**

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

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION***Message to Legislative Assembly — Made Order of the Day — Motion*

On motion without notice by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That motion 2, Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation—Establishment, be made an order of the day for the next sitting of the house.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AUDIT***Message to Legislative Assembly — Made Order of the Day — Motion*

On motion without notice by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That motion 3, Joint Standing Committee on Audit—Establishment, be made an order of the day for the next sitting of the house.

**NON-GOVERNMENT BUSINESS — SCHEDULE***Motion*

On motion without notice by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That, pursuant to standing order 111(4), the schedule for non-government business tabled by the President be adopted.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS — SCHEDULE***Motion*

On motion without notice by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That, pursuant to standing order 112(4), the schedule for private members' business tabled by the President be adopted.

**DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEES***Appointment — Motion*

**HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House)** [2.49 pm] — without notice: I move —

That Hon Dr Sally Talbot be appointed as Deputy Chair of Committees.

**HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan)** [2.50 pm]: Just briefly, may I take the opportunity to thank Hon Matthew Swinbourn for his service to the house in this capacity, together with Hon Dr Steve Thomas, both of whom are taking on new responsibilities, and we wish them all the best in their respective roles; I am sure, in both cases, they are going to need it! Might I also thank the other deputy chairs for their forbearance over these two weeks, which are going to require some flexibility. I thank Hon Robin Chapple, Hon Adele Farina and Hon Martin Aldridge in anticipation of their continuing good service to the house. Thank you.

Question put and passed.

**SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF GOVERNMENT***Establishment — Motion*

**HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan)** [2.51 pm] — without notice: I move —

That pursuant to standing order 17(5), notice of motion 4, "Select Committee into the Transparency and Accountability of Government — Establishment", be made motion on notice 1 for the next sitting of the house and to remain as motion 1 until resolved.

**The PRESIDENT:** Members, Hon Nick Goiran has moved that motion. Before we deal with the question, I remind members that under standing order 17(5) —

A Member may move without notice that an order of the day or a notice of motion listed on the Notice Paper in the Member's name be made order of the day No. 1 or motion No. 1 on the Business Program for the next sitting of the Council. Any such motion shall be put without amendment or debate.

*Division*

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (20)

Hon Martin Aldridge  
Hon Ken Baston  
Hon Jacqui Boydell  
Hon Robin Chapple  
Hon Jim Chown

Hon Tim Clifford  
Hon Peter Collier  
Hon Diane Evers  
Hon Donna Faragher  
Hon Nick Goiran

Hon Rick Mazza  
Hon Michael Mischin  
Hon Simon O'Brien  
Hon Robin Scott  
Hon Tjorn Sibma

Hon Aaron Stonehouse  
Hon Dr Steve Thomas  
Hon Colin Tincknell  
Hon Alison Xamon  
Hon Colin de Grussa (*Teller*)

Noes (13)

Hon Alanna Clohesy  
Hon Stephen Dawson  
Hon Sue Ellery  
Hon Adele Farina

Hon Alannah MacTiernan  
Hon Kyle McGinn  
Hon Martin Pritchard  
Hon Samantha Rowe

Hon Charles Smith  
Hon Matthew Swinbourn  
Hon Dr Sally Talbot  
Hon Darren West

Hon Pierre Yang (*Teller*)

Question thus passed.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY***Motion*

Resumed from 29 April on the following motion moved by Hon Pierre Yang —

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

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

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral)** [3.00 pm]: Madam President, thank you for the time you have put into this chamber over the last four years. It is well appreciated.

Listening to the Governor's speech the other day, touching on everything, one thing that made me prick up my ears related to Wittenoom Gorge. The management of Wittenoom Gorge has been going on for years. Debate on the Wittenoom Closure Bill 2019 had just about finished. I went back and found the explanatory memorandum for the bill. We had gone right through the bill, dealing with the valuation of the buildings et cetera. Now we have to



start all over again. The cost of the closure to the Shire of Ashburton is huge. The insurance policy ran out years ago. The shire now relies on contributions from mining companies. It would not survive otherwise. That was one issue mentioned in the Governor's speech.

I then heard a better one—that the government would increase support to \$100 a night for the patient assisted travel scheme, which will be very much welcomed. Virtually all of Western Australia comes under the PAT scheme. It is a marvellous scheme that brings down the cost of medicine and health services.

It has been a great honour to serve in the Mining and Pastoral Region. For the last 16 years, the time really flew. I did not realise that I had been here for 16 years until recently. Everyone asked, "Why are you leaving?" I said that I thought it was my time to leave. Others followed as well, and I did not plan on that. The area of the Mining and Pastoral Region that most members know covers some 80 per cent of the state of Western Australia. It also produces some 40 per cent of the nation's income. When John Howard used to visit WA, and we used to say we produced 40 per cent of the nation's income, he would say, "I don't want to hear about it", and off he went. The commonwealth drew on it pretty heavily because that was before the introduction of the goods and services tax, which resulted in a fairer system.

Not a lot has changed in the Mining and Pastoral Region but the communities have. A lot of work still needs to be done, and I will touch on that in my speech shortly. Opportunities exist across that part of Western Australia. We can harvest them in a way that drives investment in infrastructure, training and building capacity in our regions. We can go a long way towards addressing the high level of unemployment and overreliance on government services. Creating more vibrant and sustainable economies in communities throughout the Mining and Pastoral Region is still very much a work in progress.

A major piece of infrastructure that I have discussed in this place many times is the Tanami Road. I will touch on that a bit more later. I cannot stress how important it is for sustainable development in northern Western Australia. Its sealing will significantly reduce the distance to the eastern states by about 1 000 kilometres. The problem with that road is that millions of dollars get dished out towards its upkeep and the road is built up to a certain standard so it can be sealed but then along comes the wet season and only one or two trucks need to drive on it and that is the end of that beautiful piece of dirt road. Sealing is the only way to go for the future. Along with reducing the distance to the eastern states, sealing will significantly reduce the cost of servicing many of the very remote Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley.

A number of other important road projects require completion. Doing so will greatly improve access to health services and general freight and encourage economic growth in Western Australia. The Wiluna to Meekatharra road pops its head up every year. Money is spent on it and then we have a change of government and the money goes elsewhere and it comes back again with the next government. When we get to the next government, the money should be coming back again. The Cape Leveque Road is another example. It is a 160-kilometre stretch of road linking communities along the Dampier Peninsula, with Broome as its regional centre. It is already driving investment and economic development in remote Aboriginal communities. Importantly, it is delivering a new sense of home and ambition to harness opportunities that exist in tourism and the resources sector.

Another issue that has been brewing in the north for a while relates to the Broome boating facility. On a positive note, I wanted to discuss the Broome boating facility proposal, which is yet to receive full funding. I sincerely hope it becomes a reality. I think it was a case of "We'll put up half if you put up half." I want to take a moment to emphasise the incredible community collaboration that has taken place in order for this proposal to reach such an advanced stage. I will provide a bit of background. Broome has one of the highest levels of boat ownership in Western Australia, with approximately 60 per cent of households owning a boat. One boat ramp alone experiences 25 per cent of the boat launching traffic seen at Hillarys Boat Harbour, which is pretty significant for a town with a permanent population of around 16 000. The issue of a safe boat launching ramp has been a fraught issue for at least two decades. Over 20 different locations and concepts have been explored and abandoned for numerous reasons, including costs, the inability to build broad consensus, ongoing maintenance, such as dredging, and environmental and heritage issues. Finally, after three years of hard work, overseen by the Shire of Broome and the Department of Transport, a plan was released. The concept and location has been endorsed by Nyamba Buru Yawuru, the Broome Fishing Club and the Kimberley Ports Authority and has received qualified support from the Dinosaur Coast Management Group. The plan was released in March 2020 and put out for public comment. It received the most responses ever to a Shire of Broome survey: 1 221 responses, with 74 per cent of responses either supportive or highly supportive. Feedback on the proposal was received and, as a result, changes have been made to ensure that rock cliffs remain untouched. The known dinosaur footprints will remain in place and accessible, thanks to the very dedicated people involved in the Dinosaur Coast Management Group.

I now want to touch on antisocial behaviour, liquor licensing and police. I would like to acknowledge Hon Robin Scott's impassioned speech at the end of last year and confirm that there is growing anger and frustration in successive governments' inability to deal with some very serious issues in northern WA. Liquor licensing in the Kimberley is a patchwork of restrictions that vary from location to location, encouraging hardcore drinkers to move to wherever access to alcohol is easiest. A major centre such as Broome struggles to cope with the people who do not have homes in Broome and do not want to use the alcohol-free short-stay accommodation facility. This was built

to support Aboriginal people who need to travel to regional centres for various reasons. This results in overcrowded housing and public areas close to liquor outlets, becoming temporary camps where rubbish, hygiene and violent incidents are major concerns.

The Shire of Broome spent some \$70 000 building a fence around the visitors' centre to protect staff and visitors from antisocial behaviour and property damage. Cutting the supply of grog has had some benefits, but the people who desperately require support and rehabilitation move away from their homes and that support in order to keep drinking. A lot has to change. These problems are not easy to overcome, but there is an overwhelming feeling in the community that those in authority with the power to make changes are doing too little to curb this behaviour.

A whole-of-government approach still has not been achieved in dealing with these issues. The patchwork of liquor restrictions moves problems from one regional centre to another and restricts the vast majority of the community who drink responsibly. I would be interested to see just how many metropolitan areas in Perth would react if we were to tell people that they could buy only three bottles of wine or one carton of beer in one transaction.

The absurdity of these regulations was highlighted in questions without notice. The government has acknowledged that residents in the Kimberley are not allowed to buy alcohol in bulk for a special occasion from local retailers, who are willing and able to work with local police. But they can jump on the internet, order as much as they like from a Perth retailer and have it delivered within days to the local post office for \$18.

My office received a phone call from a person based in a Kimberley town who was unable to purchase anything other than lite beer within 300 kilometres of where they live. However, at the house next door, they saw carton after carton of beer being carried out the door on a daily basis. Alcohol is very likely to be brought across the Northern Territory border or via online.

The government's response to a question asked on 4 November 2020 also confirmed that the government has no idea how much packaged alcohol is sent from metro retailers to the Kimberley or Pilbara. It is an incredible double standard. Retailers in the Kimberley regularly have to hand over months of transactions and closed-circuit television footage, and face penalties for allowing couples to purchase their daily amount of alcohol and process that sale as one transaction. It is completely ridiculous that at the end of the day these problems are still there.

The announcement that a banned drinkers register will be trialled in the Pilbara and Kimberley has been cautiously welcomed. However, I cannot emphasise enough that the register needs to be highly dynamic with open lines of communication between police and liquor outlets. A banned drinkers register with no names on it is very costly and an ultimately futile exercise. This situation has emerged in Kununurra, which is very frustrating for all involved, police and retailers alike. Having 800 new police for Western Australia will come as welcome news to many in WA; however, we have to remember that those 800 new police will be spread over the next four years.

Now I move to the very challenging issue of juvenile crime. Over a year ago I spoke at length about this issue in this place, and I am concerned that most people would say that little has changed. It is clear that the police in regional centres such as Broome are under incredible pressure. Regarding the juvenile justice strategy, this year we have seen teenagers and sometimes younger children being involved in violent attacks on other people in their community, both in and out of school. The north has a strong need for more appropriate juvenile detention options to be made available. Juveniles who reach the sentencing stage are flying to Perth for a short period—about three weeks, I am told—and then returning to the community. We need a far better way of dealing with this matter. The regions need facilities closer to home. These facilities need to be places where serious juvenile offenders can go to receive intensive supervision and an assessment of their needs, such as health, learning abilities and behavioural problems, while still being on country and accessible to family, rather than thousands of kilometres away in Perth.

The answer to this problem requires far more than extra policing and it requires options other than short custodial sentences at Banksia Hill Detention Centre or a slap on the wrist. Banksia Hill Detention Centre, by the way, handles 10 to 17-year-olds. If children exhibit seriously violent behaviour in school, options need to be available to remove those students from the mainstream school community. Victims of these incidents deserve to feel safe when going back to school. The perpetrators need to get the support required to address their problems by continuing their education but with the understanding that, for a time, they have lost the privilege of attending school.

One of the first committees that I sat on in this Parliament in 2006 was the Standing Committee on Legislation. The committee looked into the Parental Support and Responsibility Bill 2005. One of the witnesses was a person with impeccable insight into many of the problems facing young Aboriginal people who had researched evidence-based strategies to address the very complex issues that exist in many communities today. Dr Tracy Westerman was the name of that witness and she has grown in renown ever since, including being named WA person of the year in 2018. Professor Tracy Westerman, as she is now known, has developed evidence-based best practice programs and services that aim to provide culturally competent mental health services for Aboriginal people. Significant resources are directed towards closing the gap and improving outcomes for Aboriginal people. But I believe many of us agree that those resources are not always directed in a very effective way. Dr Tracy Westerman, I have to say, had 85 per cent of her work in the eastern states and she should never have been allowed out of this state. In fact, she could be put on a banner, and I think the changes in this state would be impeccable.

Regarding transport, the road network throughout Western Australia requires improvement. I know that most of the routing network comes from the bigger funding from the feds, but it is still important for the state to have its foot in the door. Commencing work on the Tanami Road to finally seal the WA section would be a huge boost to the East Kimberley when it has suffered tremendously from the economic slowdown attributed to COVID-19. An influx of workers required to complete this would be a huge boost and would create transport infrastructure that would provide ongoing benefits to the whole region.

A sealed Tanami Road would support a number of resources projects that would further diversify the East Kimberley economy. One project in particular is Agrimin's Mackay potash project, located in the East Pilbara. This project is forecasted to be the world's lowest cost producer of sulphate of potash, or SOP, which is an important mineral used widely in agriculture to improve crop yields. The plan is for the finished product, which will be processed on site at Lake Mackay, to be shipped directly from Wyndham port. Production capacity is designed to be 450 000 tonnes of SOP per annum over an initial 40-year mine life. Approximately 250 kilometres of the Tanami Road will be used by Agrimin in the journey from Lake Mackay to Wyndham. Wyndham, of course, always needs a bit of work because it is dredged one day and then they have to come back and dredge it again in a couple of days' time when there is a storm as it gets such big high tides.

Regarding our national parks, the plan for our parks is to continue with the funding allocation of \$26 million over four years. However, there appears to be an issue with the level of consultation occurring at the community level. The towns and communities most affected by changes or expansions to national parks in the region deserve a seat at the table when we are deciding on these parks. Shark Bay residents, in particular, are feeling that they may lose access to areas that they hold very dear and feel they may have their town surrounded by a national park, which will inhibit further growth of the town. Consultation is of paramount importance to ensure that the right balance is struck when creating these parks, and I know that there are problems in the Kimberley as well.

I will now talk a little bit about electorate office work. I am sure that all of us would agree that some of the most satisfying moments in our parliamentary careers sometimes come from being able to directly improve a constituent's situation. It is not always possible to sort out a problem that a constituent has come to your office with, but it is great when you can help restore at least one person's faith in politicians. One such constituent who springs to mind is a lady from Derby who was not afraid to get on the phone when she thought something was not quite right. This lady, Mrs Ah Chee, is in her early 80s but still drives her four-wheel drive 2 600 kilometres to Perth once a year to do her Christmas shopping. Of course, she required a medical assessment to renew her licence. Derby Hospital wanted to charge Mrs Ah Chee \$280 for a medical and she was not having a bar of it. Her instincts were proven correct. After a few questions without notice, the WA Country Health Service realised this service should be free for pensioners. An audit revealed that up to 206 pensioners across the Kimberley had been incorrectly charged for this service and up to \$57 680 was likely to be refunded. What can seem like small wins in the scheme of things can make a big difference to people's lives and that is one of the best parts of being a member of Parliament.

I would now like to touch on my time as a minister. When I became a minister, I was advised that most ministers fail to leave their mark on a portfolio and at best can expect to have one major achievement a year. Although only a portion of my time in politics has been as a minister and much of the good work I feel I did was in supporting my electorate or sitting on a committee, I can say with confidence that my time as a minister was a highlight and I have no doubt that I left my mark on the portfolio, driving more than three big issues in three years. The most notable issue would have to be the rolling out of the comprehensive wild dog strategy, including my bounty trial, which, I would add, was a success, contrary to what anyone else might tell you. Then, of course, there was the shark cull trial. That did not go down very well with the western suburbs. And then there was the deregulation, with compensation, of the Potato Marketing Corporation. Nobody was going to touch the Potato Marketing Act 1946. Eventually, we got people onside and some funding was put forward as an incentive for it to happen.

I also travelled all over the world, especially to check the live export of cattle and sheep. Of course, one probably would not do that today. As game leaders, we were able to do it then. It was a very important part of gaining confidence in the export market and continuing that market.

The biggest issue of them all, of course, was the repeal of the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003. That took nearly three years to do. I thought it could be done really simply, but it took a long time.

As a minister in the Barnett government, I am very proud of my achievements in the departments of both agriculture and fisheries. I still believe having separate departments is the way to go for the future when the minister builds that new building. One of my first jobs as a minister was dealing with the water issues in Carnarvon. At the time, the river had not run for two long summers and things were looking grim for irrigators in the Gascoyne. I will diverge to tell a little story about former member for Gascoyne Ian Laurance, who was Minister for Lands years ago. Once again, the area was in drought. The honourable member at the time decided it was desperate and they needed to have a church meeting to pray to get the river to flow. That did happen. It was positive. The river flowed; the town flooded. He was not so popular when they saw the first street flood. It was a two-pronged result—you need to always watch out!

As a former resident and shire councillor, I have a passion for the unique town of Carnarvon, which offers so much. Addressing the water issues was always going to be one of my priorities. We appointed a Carnarvon ministerial advisory committee. The work that we did ultimately led to a large investment in water. The drilling of 30 new bores and putting power alongside the river has gone a long way to improving water security in the Gascoyne horticultural precinct.

We also instigated an independent review of investment and the administration of animal welfare. This started a long overdue process of improving the delivery of animal welfare in the state.

Although royalties for regions was a big-ticket funder of projects in agriculture during my time, I focused on driving practical outcomes that would bring more dollars through the farm gate for farmers. Irrigated agriculture is not only in Carnarvon, but also in the Pilbara. I was around the table when the decision was made to invest some \$12.5 million into the Pilbara Hinterland Agricultural Development Initiative, which trialled mine dewatering projects at Woodie Woodie. It was an important way to address both mine dewatering and droughtproofing the north. We also did a lot of work proving up the water resources in the West Kimberley, putting down 12 bores at Roebuck Plains, with the former Department of Agriculture and Food doing all the soil and farm planning. The only problem was that as fast as we proved we could develop new irrigation districts, other groups had mobilised to stop us, which means very little has happened in the Kimberley to utilise our massive water assets in the north. If I had my time again, I would like to have the role of Minister for Environment at the same time as Minister for Regional Development, but I am not gonna get there. Of course, what I am talking about is the hyper risk-sensitive departmental approach to things like Rhodes grass, which was endemic in the Kimberley. Sometimes departments and governments cannot see the wealth from the weeds.

The Bravo apple hit the news this morning. The Bravo apple has finally arrived after 20 years of development. One thing I did was to make sure that the department did not stuff up the royalty rights, as happened when we lost part of the royalties for the Pink Lady. It was a challenging journey, but I am pleased to see that industry leaders like Dr Ben Darbyshire have stayed the course and ensured that the end structure will generate good income for Fruit West and the industry development fund that oversees the apple. I thought the apple should have been called the wicked apple, and we probably would have sold a lot more. It took years to get it on the market.

Although some work on wild dogs had happened under Terry Redman, it was probably my number one priority, and I pushed for the \$75 000 trial bounty at \$100 a scalp, which I mentioned earlier. I think \$20 000 was consumed by bureaucracy and the rest went out to pay for scalps. The number of scalps rose and a department fellow said it had failed. I asked, "Why has it failed when we've got more dogs? Why was it rejected when we're getting more dogs?" We did not fail because we did not get more dogs. The people getting them were the doggers. We put a dollar sign on wild dogs, and they went out and got them. That is not a bad contract. I recall the briefings from Viv Reid from the department. He could not believe what had happened. We went for total exclusion via big ring fences around stations, like Rawlinna on the Nullarbor and in Kalgoorlie and the Gascoyne. Ultimately, we spent millions on doggers, fences and culls, including \$10 million for 820 kilometres of fencing through the Shire of Yilgarn. This work led to the extension of the Esperance fence, which is a big deal for the sheep industry in that part of the world.

The new Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act was rolled out under my watch. The act replaced 16 older acts. A lot of work on this was done in opposition and I was pleased to be there when the new act came to fruition. When I first came to Parliament, Kim Chance was pushing along that legislation. I followed it through. It went to Committee of the Whole. We waited for the regulations. It came out of committee and we were still waiting for the regulations. It was not until I became minister that we ended up with the regulations catching up with us. It was quite amazing and a good lesson in politics. Under the act, recognised biosecurity groups were formed, with matching funds from the state government. These groups are an important instrument to help control feral animals, like wild dogs.

I undertook trips to China and other countries. As I said, I would not go back there for a while now. I was also keen to support our live export trade, something that is incredibly important to sheep and cattle producers in this state. I battled cabinet to get some \$23 million of royalties for regions funds for the Newdegate, South Doodlakine and Marchagee Doppler radar stations, which have been a game changer for short-term forecasting in the south west of the state. I believe this program paid a dividend recently, tracking the cyclone that hit the northern and north-eastern wheatbelt. It gave farmers detailed knowledge of what was coming. Ultimately, I put a farmer's view on the portfolio, as I believe that only a farmer can really understand how to get the best out of the department and not get sidetracked into issues that are not relevant to the portfolio or a priority for farmers.

In summary, they were good years, and I am proud of the fact that fishers continue to fish and farmers continue to farm. I was not there closing down fisheries or banning live exports; rather, I was pushing to open up more agriculture and support more rural jobs.

I would like to pay my respects to my wife, Robin, who had to put up with many late nights. She had to kick the cat off the bed and make room for me at about four o'clock in the morning, but I was still welcome at home! My sons, Derek, Richard and Thomas, were also very patient and good supporters. I would come to this place, we would battle away at a bill all day, and then I would go to one of my sons and say, "What do you reckon?" and they would sum it up in about five minutes. I would go back the next day feeling relaxed that we were doing the right thing, whatever bill it was.

I will miss this place. Getting up in the morning and not putting on a suit will be quite a change. I see the only farmer in here making comments! But I will drop in here from time to time. I see the old farmers et cetera who come back here and actually participate, having an office, using the gym and other facilities, and enjoying the meals on the right days. Thank you. I really appreciate the support that I have had over the years. I have enjoyed every minute of it. Thank you.

Members: Hear, hear!

[Applause.]

**The PRESIDENT:** Hon Ken Baston, I would also like to offer my thanks for your service to this chamber. It has been a pleasure to work with you. I wish you well for your new chapter, as you return to your family. Hon Kyle McGinn.

**HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary)** [3.31 pm]: Thank you, and well done, Ken, on what was a very long career. You have definitely left your mark across the Mining and Pastoral electorate. I think that the racetracks will heavily miss you, particularly the regional racetracks. Having seen you down at the Carnarvon races last year and up in Broome, I know that you did not mind heading down to the racetrack, and you were always sponsoring the regional races as well, for which I give full credit to you.

I rise today to add my remarks to the Address-in-Reply and go through what has been, for everybody in this chamber and more broadly, a very busy, bizarre and hectic four or five months. It was an interesting feeling to leave the chamber at the end of last year and head out to the first election since we were elected. I thought that after all the hard work in Parliament, maybe it was time for a little bit of a relax, but that did not happen. We were out on the ground very early, very quickly, right across the Mining and Pastoral electorate in election mode, talking about the great things that the McGowan government had done over the past four years and the great, positive things that the McGowan government would do if it were re-elected. I have to say that, at the end of it, it was really enjoyable. The community was amazing to engage with, and we came away with a plan for the next four years that I think will progress regional WA and the Mining and Pastoral electorate even further and create all the things that we have been looking for, such as liveability, job security and community values.

Something that really came back to me during the election was that people were sick of the negative imaging, conversation and talking down of regions that was just constant over the last four years from certain individuals. It was outrageous to see that ploy being used, particularly in the goldfields campaign, running down our region, the successes that the goldfields has achieved and projects that have got off the ground, just because a Labor government achieved them. That really got on my goat, as one would say. I think the results particularly in the goldfields reflect what a negative campaign can do to a party. I think that the results of being positive and working closely with community groups—not stringing them along and running down the opposition in a negative, lying fashion—will show into the future, and hopefully the opposition will run a better campaign out in the goldfields. I am not holding my breath, but I will raise in this speech things that happened throughout the campaign that were really disappointing and I think reflect very badly on the National Party in particular.

When we got out and about, one of the main things was meeting with community groups and finding out what was a real need within small community groups out in the goldfields. We had a fantastic candidate in the goldfields. Ali Kent hit the ground running very early on in the piece. She was already very well respected and held up very highly within the community for the work that she had done at the Women's Health Care Centre, which has been one of my favourite organisations to work with in the goldfields since getting out there in 2017. The women's health care clinic punches well above its weight and constantly runs off the smell of an oily rag, but it provides absolutely amazing services to women who are in need. It constantly goes above and beyond. When I first met Gloria Moyle, besides the fact that she is very bubbly and has a great persona, one of my key takeaways was her passion to ensure that all women are given the opportunity to access healthcare in the goldfields. The centre is a safe place to go, particularly for those who do not want to go to a hospital. It is a nice big pink house that is tucked away and it offers services discreetly. What happens most of the time is that when people are offered GP services, sexually transmissible infection checks and those types of things, they start talking about domestic violence, asking how they can get help or who they can go and see, or asking about financial assistance or food stamps. That sort of stuff comes out of a conversation about health. The women's health care clinic is a valuable resource in the goldfields that now, under an election commitment from the McGowan government, will have a GP working all year round to provide women's health. To me, that is an amazing outcome for that community group, because it will value that resource and will ensure that it is utilised to the best of its ability and that all women will have access to it. That organisation is very commendable.

Ali was the president of the women's health care clinic. As well as working in government for many years in the Department of Education, she also worked very closely consulting with and writing grant applications for community groups, often doing it off her own back to ensure that there was an improvement in playgrounds and needs within the community, that grants were accessible and that people understood the process, because we all know that applying for grants and trying to get funding can be quite onerous. There is actually an advantage in the goldfields. I think that within the gold industry, some do it right and some do not, but there are a few companies that offer access to community funds. They offer grants of up to \$5 000 or \$10 000, but there is an application process for those grants

that, surprisingly, can be just as bureaucratic as a government grant and can at times be very restrictive and see organisations fall through the cracks. Ali had a real knack of being able to walk organisations through that process to ensure that they were given the best opportunity to access that grant funding.

When Ali was running as a candidate, it was amazing to see that organisations such as KCGM, BHP and Evolution Mining had already engaged with Ali in trying to bring community groups into the fold and had been successful in doing that. I think that really set a platform for what Ali Kent stood for in the goldfields—a fair go and getting our fair share out there in the goldfields, from not only the state government, but also local governments and the federal government. I think that, at the moment, the opportunity to collaborate within the goldfields is at an all-time high. It is amazing to see organisations come together to see what they can do to assist with liveability and arts and culture projects that are important to the community. This is going on while Western Australia is still in the grip of the pandemic and when learnings are still coming out of that. One of the key things Ali Kent pointed out to me was that if it had not been for all the complications of COVID last year, school groups, camps, football clubs and hockey clubs would have been fundraising. Normally, they run sausage sizzles down at the local park or rattle tins at the fair—they have a go all year round. I think it is Boulder Primary School that normally raises \$14 000 for its year 6 students to come to Perth for school camp. That fundraising offsets the cost of the camp for the kids. Instead of paying \$1 000, it would cost the kids \$200 each; therefore, the COVID situation has left a real financial hole for community and school groups. Some of the organisations got on board and definitely put in some work. Community trusts were started; there were collaborations with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia for small business grants.

We found ourselves going around and talking one-on-one to the community groups that were left behind to find out some of their key outcomes. From working very closely with the Eastern Goldfields BMX Club, one good election commitment that we identified early on was that the BMX track was not in good shape. For someone who clearly does not ride BMX bikes, I thought it looked pretty grouse, to be fair, but once we got down there, we talked to the boys and girls from the organisation. The state title competition had been recently held there; BMX riders from around the state went to Kalgoorlie. This event brings tourists; it is a really good event. The club pointed out that the BMX track was not in very good shape at all, and \$70 000 was required to resurface it. Working very closely with the club, Ali managed to secure an election commitment for the BMX track, which will see \$70 000 worth of resurfacing done. When we went there to make the announcement, hundreds of people showed up to see what would happen; they had been waiting for the track for a very long time. We also found out that, putting aside the pandemic for now, the club is in contention to hold the national titles. That event would bring to the goldfields BMX riders from around Australia. The \$70 000 commitment to resurface the track will potentially bring a great reputational event to that BMX club and give it an opportunity to build and grow. It was a very proud moment for me to be there with Ali Kent, the new member for Kalgoorlie, to hear that this project will be delivered, hopefully very soon, after our success in the election.

Many things have happened across the Mining and Pastoral Region that I could talk about, but it is very hard to pick which ones. However, I ran across two true characters during the campaign whom I have to mention—Henry and Cathy in Laverton. Henry is the Labor man of Laverton, and he is also the salami man of Laverton; he is famous for making his own salami and prosciutto. He is a self-confessed hermit who never leaves Laverton. If he does, he spends an hour or two in Kalgoorlie and that is enough for him. Cathy is one of the best muffin makers in the business, I have to say. Her mulberry muffins and mulberry jam were phenomenal and kept us going during the election campaign. I must mention the passion that Henry and Cathy showed when they ran Ali's part of the election campaign, along with a couple of other people, in Laverton and Leonora. They were really passionate about their small town and their view about what is needed and what should come.

From talking with them and working with organisations, little projects popped up in conversation and we could see the positive effects that they would have. Negative spin came from the opposition around these commitments. However, if we take a hard look at it, funding of \$80 000 for the Laverton dirt go-karting facility is not about people in Laverton just going around a go-kart track. It is similar to what happened at the BMX club. Laverton was looking at bringing out people for a weekend go-kart racing tournament. That is in line, I think, with the thinking of particularly the Shire of Laverton. When the CEO, Peter Naylor, and I were having a chat, he mentioned that one of his visions—this has not come to fruition, by the way—is to run an iron man-type event there, using one of the old mine pits that is full of water as the swimming leg. My first view was, "Have you tested the water?" To that he said, "Not yet; she'll be right." He was looking at something that would attract triathlon runners and people in that space from Perth, South Australia and elsewhere across the east coast. The idea of running, riding and then swimming in an old mine pit is an attraction. The Laverton dirt go-kart facility is another one. Particularly through the Agriculture Region, I think—Hon Darren West might know—go-karting is quite a big deal. I can see what this funding is going to do for Laverton; it will build up the visitors' centre and accommodation. It is an all-round good project in my view.

We spent a lot of time talking with the men and women at the Laverton Men's Shed. That is another men's shed that is open to both men and women, which I am finding is common particularly in regional WA. A lot of the men's sheds are open to women, which I think is of great value. These sheds can be socially galvanising for people

who may have lost loved ones or who find themselves at home, late in life, without much to do and without really having a social life. They often use platforms such as men's sheds to reintroduce themselves to a social life, which in turn provides many great benefits, particularly around mental health. Being around people and doing something potentially new can brighten people's lives in times of need. The Laverton Men's Shed was struggling a bit. For many years, its users had many plans that they wanted to build on. Ali was able to secure an election commitment for \$7 000 to build a new kitchenette and buy \$2 000 worth of tools and a marquee and tables to use at markets. They see this commitment as an opportunity to grow the men's shed and provide greater opportunities to attract people. They will be given \$2 000 for tools and funding for a kitchenette, which will provide an opportunity for it to be used also by community groups. The men's shed will potentially be able to sell at the markets not only members' woodwork, but also, I assume, muffins that have been made in the kitchenette, which will help with its fundraising.

I think Pat Hill is a great shire president of the Laverton shire. The shire does a lot of hard work and has a lot of innovative ideas to get itself where it wants to be with funding, particularly for roads. For 35 years, Pat has been pushing the Outback Way. I am sure members of the Mining and Pastoral Region will be well aware of Pat's vision of the world's biggest shortcut across to Queensland.

**Hon Darren West** interjected.

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** I think part of it will have a road called "Pat Hill Road" coming off it. Pat is very passionate about that road. The change that has occurred out there since 2017 has been amazing. When I first went out there with Hon Alannah MacTiernan, we talked about funding, roads, where we were heading and engagement with mining companies. At the time, honestly, the level of engagement with mining companies was very low. Hon Alannah MacTiernan spoke to them of her vision for engagement and working collaboratively—I will not try to say that word again—on outcomes that are great for not only Laverton but also the mining companies. One of the key differences since 2017 has to be the way that mining companies now engage with roads, including sealing roads and trying to get benefits for a town whilst getting infrastructure done. Mining companies are working with towns to close down aerodromes to ensure that people use the airport in Laverton, which is now pumping. Mining companies are applying for extensions on the apron to get a terminal at the airport. These long-term visions are now about utilising mining company resources to invest in local infrastructure. There are always conversations around how mining camps "Shouldn't be built within this far of communities" and how "We shouldn't do this; we should be building houses". I have seen one intriguing model, which I believe Laverton is looking at now. It has been done in Coolgardie. A mining camp was allowed to be built, but there were no services within the camp. All services such as food and drink are accessible in Coolgardie. As an example, sales at the IGA went up 20 per cent in the first month. That allowed the IGA to internally expand with more products, longer opening hours and more staff. The gym at the council is now used by all the people in the camp because there is no gym at the camp. The camp now funds the gym and gym equipment through membership for the shire. This type of operation, which is agreed to through a lot of hard work and consultation with the mining companies, is integrated into a town. I think that has some value. When we see services and shops, including businesses that are needed for regional towns, remain in business because of investment from mining companies, that is a positive win for regional Western Australia. I think I have said in this place before that, back in the 1970s and 1980s, mining companies had their shoulder to the wheel on building towns because fly-in fly-out workers were pretty much non-existent. That has really changed now. The new type of model—FIFO—has had negative effects in regional Western Australia.

Leonora is just down the road from Laverton. Leonora has also had many things going on. Working with the shire there meant some great opportunities to talk about projects that are beneficial, particularly to do with antisocial behaviour and social issues within the Mining and Pastoral electorate, as Hon Ken Baston touched on. Hon Robin Scott has also touched on these issues many times. There is no one-glove-fits-all approach. Every town is trying the best that it can to find ways to resolve the problems. "Youth" is definitely a keyword that comes up when we are talking about antisocial behaviour, particularly in Leonora. Working closely with the youth centre, we managed to secure new furniture for it and talk about how it will move forward. Right across the electorate, we find that no organisations are available for youth come 6.00 pm. The police and community youth centres do a fabulous job right across Western Australia. They carry themselves very well but one of the key problems is that the police is the only organisation left on the beat after six o'clock. That then becomes an interesting conversation about how youth are engaging. Between 6.00 pm and 6.00 am, youth can engage only with police, rather than youth services. I know there are pockets that run youth services until midnight—for example, a basketball court thing happens until midnight—and they run really well. When programs such as these are running, there is a reduction in a lot of crime. It is about working with these organisations to ensure their internal capacity grows and to ensure they can benefit from the grants available to run these programs. Working with these organisations over the last couple of months has been really good. It also ties in with arts and culture because the architectural history is another thing that I love about my electorate. I do not think the architecture is rivalled anywhere else. Burt Street in Boulder and the theatre out in Leonora are examples. The theatre has seen better days but it is a beautiful architectural experience to see it and imagine what it would have been like back in the day when the theatre was pumping. Working closely with the shire, Ali Kent committed to \$100 000 for a project to look at refurbishing that amazing piece of history, restoring the glory it once had.

I said earlier that roads are one of the key areas in which I have a big interest. It is not just about getting roads sealed, but also thinking in particular about roads on which the state and federal governments spend a lot of money. There are ongoing costs. When I went out to Waroona in 2017 with Minister Rita Saffioti, we asked at a council meeting how many Aboriginal people who lived locally were engaged in the mining companies. The answer was one person. Plenty of people from the community were there but only one person was engaged in the mining companies. We had much discussion about a project that has been looked at for 35 to 40 years—the sealing of the Meekatharra–Wiluna Road. There was an issue with the \$60 million that was chucked at that road in the last days of the previous government. That funding was then taken away. Instead of sitting there and whingeing about it, we thought we should look at the economic and tourism benefits. For some reason, it has not got off the ground for 35 years. It is 120 kilometres that needs to be sealed. Why could we not make this a project about Aboriginal employment? Why could we not make this about outcomes for Waroona? Why could we not make this a project about training and development? As I said earlier, Pat Hills’ road—the Outback Way heading up to Queensland—will see well over half a billion dollars’ worth of investment in the years to come. That road work is on Aboriginal land. There are many Aboriginal groups within that space who could be engaged and trained to work, not just for the jobs but also to create their own roadbuilding businesses. The other add-ons they would get would include all the local government funding for roads and funding for flood damage and maintenance every year. How can we engage with Aboriginal contractors and get them to a point at which they are fighting for and tendering for these works right across their country? In 2017 and 2018 we heavily focused on that, including the project to seal part of the Meekatharra–Wiluna Road—five to 10 kilometres. The mindset around the project was about outcomes, jobs and future jobs.

It takes a special type of person to be able to get into that space, operate at a high level and see the outcomes we have had out of that project. Mac Jensen from the Wiluna Remote Community School trade training centre should be commended for his efforts. He has worked in regional Western Australia for most of his life. He engages so well with traditional owners. He gets in there and understands some of the nitty-gritty issues. For example, when a group gets together, instead of everyone staying in town for the training, he moves them 10 kilometres out to do the training in another area. It is done as a unit, creating a team that supports each other. He first started this approach, not based on road building but the first time he got to the TAFE building. It was full of woodworking equipment. What woodworking jobs are there in Wiluna? There might be a handful, if you are lucky, but probably more contractors come in from Perth anyway. He thought: what is something else we can do? He contacted the TAFE and worked out a way to clear out the woodwork stuff and bring in car repairing equipment. A lot of people travel in regional and remote Western Australia; there is a lot of migration. What is the one thing people are interested in? It is getting in the car rather than walking. What happened was the community bought into the program, the support provided and the TAFE. People who had not ever done a course before came through to learn how to repair cars. There were so many cars in the community that were able to be worked on, it became a great project. From that, we got together and started talking about road building and how to get it on the agenda. Main Roads had to have a bit of an attitude change and think: “Okay, this road is focused on outcomes for the Mardu people.” Having that mindset going in has resulted in this project being very successful. The project has now been completed, and it was done within a time span that was culturally appropriate. Certain times of the year were set aside for law business and a few bits of sorry business. There was a lot of fluid stuff happening throughout that project and it ended up being a huge segment on national ABC around outcomes for 15 Mardu people, men and women. The elders were there when we opened up that section and they were just so happy with the minister for investing in them. But the first thing they said was, “Where’s the next bucket? Let’s get going again!”

The minister then made this road a priority for the state; \$20 million from the federal government via Infrastructure Australia will now be put towards the Meekatharra–Wiluna road. The \$20 million will not be spent in the first 12 months so that the road is sealed up to a certain point; that funding will be provided to those groups working around the times of year they can work and through a model for getting people in to be trained on those road works. The road will eventually link up with the Outback Way.

Carey Mining is also dabbling in that space; it has a huge reputation. Daniel Tucker started out in Laverton and worked his way up, and he is focused on those types of projects. As I said earlier, it is not just about state government roads; it is about all road infrastructure. If local governments are asking, “Why is there no employment?”, we want to see road building done by locals on those roads, if they can be trained to do so. We also want to see mining companies engaging Aboriginal road contractors in their respective areas, right across the goldfields and beyond.

There is a real opportunity moving forward for road building to become the next ranger program. The ranger program is a great outcome for Aboriginal people in regional Western Australia because it provides jobs on the land, and rangers are seen by the young people as role models. Road building also has that potential, and why not? When we seal these roads we change the numbers of tourists and other people coming into these areas. The lives of local people are changed as a result of sealing these roads, so why not make it collaborative? We need to focus on ensuring that people like the Mardu have opportunities not only to be employed for a couple of months but also to build businesses that can get out there and tender for projects. I think that is what our state dollars should be spent on—local projects, local jobs in that respect.



I am very, very proud to see where that project has gone and that there is \$20 million for a good three to four years of work on that road. There is also maintenance sealing happening at the Meekatharra end; I was speaking to the Shire of Meekatharra the other day. It is exciting to think that we are starting to make our way down that road. I know there are people who are saying that it is not happening quickly enough and that it needs to happen now, but I am focused on ensuring that we get the outcomes we want for that project. That is something that will benefit the town, the people, the shire and everyone else. Again, I think that is important if we are going to spend money.

Like most other members and members-elect, I spent a lot of time on the road during the last election campaign. I am not sure how many kays I covered, but one trip took more than a week and covered 4 500 kilometres; that was a nice drive! I got to see the beautiful electorate of North West Central and I met with some amazing organisations.

I also got to see some bad politics being played out against the Labor Party, including scare campaigns and fake advertising. There were things being authorised by CEOs in small shires saying in effect that things that were not done under the previous government were still not being done under the present government, so Labor was the problem. That was disappointing. When I sat down with shire presidents to have conversations with them, they started to realise that there were influences from certain members of Parliament in the North West Central electorate. It is easy to go out there and promise more than \$200 million in election commitments when you know you cannot deliver them, but it is harder to tell the truth about what projects are going to be funded. It is harder to tell the truth and be positive about where we are heading than it is to be negative, to try to drive down the regions and to constantly tell mistruths—my God! The number of things I had to deal with because a particular member had been there and said things that were just false, all in the hope of clinging onto a seat. If you are getting to that point, you have to ask yourself: what have I done for eight years? That was disappointing.

Cherie Sibosado was the Labor candidate for North West Central, and she was an amazing candidate. She is a very proud Aboriginal woman who took on the campaign for a seat that is geographically the biggest in Western Australia, if not the world. She took it on, head-on, and went out there and met with organisations. She told the hard truths, made some great election commitments, held some great forums and managed to bring Thomas Mayor up there to talk about the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which came to Parliament in the previous term. It provides an amazing opportunity for people to engage in that conversation.

Cherie worked so hard, and in first-past-the-post terms she won, but preferences got her in the end. She worked really hard for the people of North West Central and some amazing projects have been committed to as a result of her advocacy. One of the major ones that I am really looking forward to working on is a new basketball court in the Mangala community.

I have a couple of funny stories from the election campaign. Cherie's partner Ginger is a big man, with broad shoulders, and we went doorknocking in Mangala. There were a lot of dogs around and I said to him, "You're my security guard—make sure the dogs don't get me." I walked up this driveway and he was behind me, and about five metres from the door a pit bull came running out the door, straight at me. I turned around and Ginger was already over the fence and had gone about 20 metres! I stood there and said, "Cheers, Ginger. You grew up here, and you ran away from the first pit bull to come running out of a door!"

**Hon Dr Steve Thomas:** He only had to beat you!

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** Well, let us be honest—he did not have to run 20 metres past the fence! I had not even got five metres, I was stuck! But luckily the pit bull veered off and kept going, so that was good.

One of the key issues in Mangala was a basketball court that had not been touched for about 10 years; it was all cracked and the fences were ripped down. It was in a bad state. Cherie managed to get an election commitment of \$150 000 to get that basketball court rebuilt, and when we went out there to talk about it, the local kids were ecstatic. There are little things that will be implemented in this project that make a lot of sense: solar power for the lights so that they stay on until 10 or 11 o'clock and fencing. I do not know if other members have seen this, but there is a new trend with basketball that involves trampolines and it is a little more exciting than normal basketball.

I will take a punt and say it is called bounce ball or something, but it is interesting and it draws people in and brings people to these small towns for something different. I am looking forward to that project getting underway and, again, that will be focused on Aboriginal contractors and Aboriginal employment in that area, and I think that is exciting.

I will now return to one of the things I touched on at the start, and that is positive campaigning and positivity on the ground from people saying that the leadership of the McGowan government has given them confidence. They wanted to give the McGowan government another term because of what had been achieved in its first four years. When I was up in Karratha in 2017 the feeling about politics almost translated into protest votes, and I think that is why we saw such a high vote for a One Nation. There was a view of, "It's just Labor and Liberal", but there was a real change this time. It really felt to me like strong leadership was something that they wanted to see from their leaders, and they wanted to put faith in a party that would deliver what it said it would, and we did. We delivered on our plans for the Mining and Pastoral Region. We delivered on what we said we would do, and that is something that people respected.

I saw on a certain Facebook page one of the most bizarre campaign techniques that I have ever seen. I am sure that members of the Nationals WA know exactly what I am talking about. Out of nowhere, the Facebook page “Say NO to Labor’s Gold Tax” went up. It said that Labor was going to introduce a gold tax. It was interesting to see that it was authorised by A. Clark. I could not understand who A. Clark was. It looked like a bit of money had been spent on it; it had some nice pictures. When I pulled up the page, it invited people to “like” other related pages, and mentioned Rowena Olsen and “Big Nick” Fardell as candidates for the National Party. Nick had made a comment on the page earlier, saying that he supported the gold tax. He took it off once he realised that it was probably not the right thing to do.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** Is that the same Nick Fardell who wants to abolish the Legislative Council?

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** I am getting to that, honourable member; you just ruined my big kicker! Basically, the page went up and no-one could understand what was going on. Then the Liberal Party came out, with Kyran O’Donnell, the then MLA, saying, “There’s a gold tax coming, according to this page”, and Zak Kirkup came running out to the goldfields. I could not understand what was going on, because I was sitting next to Hon Ben Wyatt when he ruled out that tax. It was a real scare campaign. The page said that it had come from mining companies. I had been talking to mining companies.

I was at a pre-poll booth one day and I saw the Nationals candidate go running off. I thought it was a bit bizarre to leave the pre-poll because everyone had been there every day. I got a call from a journalist who asked me what I thought of A. Clark. I said that I had been trying to work out who that was for a couple of months. I was told it was Rowena Olsen’s dad. The dad of a candidate for the National Party had put up that Facebook page and was running this campaign of scare, fear and negativity in the regions, which I have become quite used to from the National Party in the goldfields. I have stood in this place before and spoken about some very unsatisfactory behaviour that was directed at me and other people in the government. It reared its head again on election day, but I will not go there now. It was really disappointing to see a fake campaign put up. What is more interesting is that the authorisation on the Facebook page changed to the campaign manager of Rowena Olsen. A. Clark, Rowena’s dad, was taken off, and the campaign manager was put on the site. The journalists asked Rowena Olsen whether she was running this campaign. She said she knew nothing about it. The journalists said, “You don’t know that your dad’s run a scare campaign on the gold tax and then your campaign manager has taken over?” She said, “No, I know nothing about that. I can’t control that.” But her dad and the campaign manager were handing out information on election day. It was just a purely negative attempt to grab hold of something and throw mud until it sticks—the type of campaign that cost the National Party in that electorate. I think it was close to 14 per cent. When Big Nick ran in the Senate, he halved the vote for the National Party, and I believe he pretty much halved the vote in the upper house, because the Nationals did not end up getting a Mining and Pastoral Region seat. Surely he finally understands that he cannot use fear, loathing and scaremongering in a campaign every single time and expect to get elected. Candidates need to be positive and work with community groups. It was embarrassing to see the lies and fear that the Nationals had spread everywhere they had gone. I was debunking things that had been said, particularly by the upper house candidate. I know that Hon Jacqui Boydell, who is moving on, did not operate like that. It was very disappointing to see the person who was chosen by the party to replace Hon Jacqui Boydell out there running that type of campaign.

I will turn to what Hon Sue Ellery picked up before. Candidate-elect Nick Fardell was on radio yesterday talking about —

**Hon Dr Steve Thomas:** He didn’t win a seat.

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** Sorry. I thank Hon Dr Steve Thomas for that. The preselected candidate who did not get elected to the Mining and Pastoral Region, Nick Fardell, was speaking on ABC radio. This is astonishing. First, he threw shots over the bow that were directed at me; that seems to be his favourite thing to do. Then he was asked for his view on upper house reform. He said, “My view is simple. Abolish the upper house.” This is someone who was running for the National Party in the upper house.

**Hon Matthew Swinbourn:** Number one on the ticket.

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** Yes, he was number one on the ticket. He replaced Hon Jacqui Boydell on the ticket. He came out and said, “I really think we should just abolish the upper house because that will save the taxpayer \$50 million.” What I have heard from opposition members in this chamber, and particularly from National Party members, is about the value of the house of review. This candidate, who was unsuccessful, obviously had these views prior to losing, unless it is spilt milk and a case of, “No matter how many times I try, I just cannot get elected, so let us abolish it”. That may be the attitude. He must have held that view prior to yesterday’s radio interview. Why was he running in a system that he did not believe in? I found it absolutely astonishing that he came out with that.

I turn to another thing we saw from that campaign. We were talking about royalties for regions projects and money. The candidate for the National Party came out with an \$88 million saving on stamp duty, which was quite interesting. After the sale of the super pit, stamp duty would be returned to the state. The National Party decided it would be

a good idea to hypothecate some more. I am sure that Hon Dr Steve Thomas would have a few things to say about that. The Nationals basically said that they would direct \$88 million of that stamp duty back to the state; it would go into a future fund for Kalgoorlie, which would earn interest et cetera. The candidate, Rowena Olsen, said that she would create a list of what the other \$88 million should be spent on. I think the campaign was called “Add it to the list”. Basically, it was about spending \$88 million of stamp duty. It was bizarre that when the Nationals were asked how they would improve RforR so that we do not see financial mismanagement, they just answered by saying “Checks and balances”. But they were going to hypothecate \$88 million here and another \$88 million there because they were going to give everyone the opportunity to ask for everything they wanted. It was a really bizarre piece of campaigning. The results probably reflect where that campaign was at.

I managed to get out to a fair few remote polling booths. Something that I think is quite interesting, which I will be raising with the minister, is that the timing of the election did not go down very well in remote communities. I am sure that Hon Robin Scott would agree with me when I say that law business was taking place in many areas. I have not had a close look, but judging by the figures that I originally saw, the remote polling was down. I believe that close to 100 people in Warburton voted, down from about 500 in the previous election.

**Hon Robin Scott:** It was 60.

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** There we go. I went out to Mt Margaret and we got a handful of voters. Normally, there are 50 to 60 voters. Again, I had another blooper, which I am not afraid to say in this place. I was heading to the pre-poll in Cosmo Newbery as I had a meeting. I put the name into Google Maps. I was in a remote area. I took a certain road and I was 200 kilometres away from Cosmo Newbery. I turned the phone off. Knowing that I had travelled 200 kilometres, I wondered where Cosmo Newbery was. Then I saw a sign indicating the direction of Coober Pedy. It turns out that I turned off one turn short, and I ended up heading towards Coober Pedy. I found out from the remote pollers that 10 people had showed up there, which was disappointing because they were expecting closer to 50 or 100. But I am not afraid to let members know that I do make mistakes. I did actually have a moment where I got out of the car and did the whole, “No!” I tried to find a bush track to take across but it did not quite do it. However, going out to those communities gave me an understanding that we need to do better in the space of giving people the opportunity to vote. In this three-week pre-polling conversation, tied in with remote polling, I think there is a lot of opportunity to grow and change.

I rang the Western Australian Electoral Commission before the cut-off of renewals and said, “Look, can you give us a thousand renewal forms? I’m going to go out to the remote communities as a lot of people aren’t enrolled.” The WAEC said, “Oh, it’s all online now.” I said, “I just told you I’m going out to remote communities. There’s no internet in half the places I’m going to.” The WAEC said, “Oh, well. No, we can’t print them for you.” Surely we should be giving people every opportunity to vote that we possibly can. If somebody is going to go out to the remote communities, the WAEC should be saying, “Yes, okay. Here’s some resources. Off you go!” At the end of the day, it is not about who they vote for; it is about democracy and the opportunity to vote. I really feel that there were missed opportunities. I heard from the remote pollers out in Warburton that nobody could land on the airstrip on one day because the airstrip was not kept up properly. On another day there was sorry business, so nobody was at the polls—that means: come back next week! I know that is hard to do, with planning and everything else, but we have to get better at it because that was a missed opportunity for people to engage in the democratic process, which was disappointing.

Regional affairs have been heavily on the agenda for many years. We saw an inquiry into regional airfares during the last term of government. Because of a commitment by the McGowan government, we will now see a capped airfares program that is going to work in two zones. This was very well received. I think it will be by no means a silver bullet for regional airfares, but it is a start. People are seeing this as a great opportunity. We will be capping airfares at \$199 or \$299, rather than people sometimes paying \$600 or \$700 one way. People will know what the price of airfares will be during that program. By working with other airlines, we should be able to see a lot more come on in that space.

It always interests me when we talk about airfares and fly-in fly-out. I do not feel as though some of the leadership, particularly in local government, understands how, as the inquiry showed us, some of the FIFO fares actually offset some of the cost of the other airfares, and that airfares could be even more expensive and there could be even fewer flights without FIFO. Therefore, when people out there say, “No more FIFO from Perth to the regions”, they really need to understand how that is going to affect the cost of other airfares as well and the other flow-on effects. Hopefully, we will be able to investigate that a bit further.

Another great commitment made by the McGowan government and Ali Kent out in the goldfields was \$2.1 million for a youth hub. Something that the goldfields has been looking for for a while now is a central area where the youth of Kalgoorlie can gather and where organisations can set up and put their resources to work. The Lord Forrest Olympic Pool, which does not even have a pool, is in a great location in Kingsbury Park. The government will work with the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder to create a hub for goldfields youth, at which all organisations, from health to education, will come together to assist the city to run programs and events. It will bring our youth together and galvanise them.

I have spoken here a few times about my intern, Amy Astill, whom I have had since 2017. She has done it again! Late last year she went out and held a youth forum, and it was phenomenal to see the youth come in and speak about their issues and put them in front of Minister Dave Kelly, who listened. It was amazing to see that when we give a young person an opportunity, the outcome is endless. We do not know where they will go with it. The youth of the goldfields will flourish a bit more if they are given more of that type of engagement, particularly with their own hub and their own place.

I am excited about Carey Mining's Aboriginal mining employment program, which will be run through the WA School of Mines. Daniel Tucker had the great vision of putting in place a training and education program for Aboriginal mineworkers. Instead of companies saying that it is too hard to engage with Aboriginal people and having just a tick-and-flick operation, there will be somewhere for Aboriginal people to go. To add to that—this is how exciting it is in the goldfields and everywhere else at the moment—Rowena, an Aboriginal lady out in the goldfields, has created the Goldfields Aboriginal Business Chamber. It is such an amazing opportunity to have that tied in with a new training opportunity and Aboriginal small businesses in the goldfields right now. We have full economic growth. We have projects steaming ahead. We have had a constant history of people saying that it is too hard and they do not know where to find workers, or they wonder which businesses are Aboriginal businesses, but now we have a collaboration and a base from which to start. The government is working closely with Daniel Tucker on bringing that program to fruition and—I will say it again—it ties into that road project idea just beautifully.

Lynas Rare Earths is about to undertake huge construction in the goldfields, with about a half-billion dollars' worth of investment into a leaching and cracking plant. There will be great opportunities for Aboriginal businesses to get engaged early in some of the long-term projects out there. Carey Mining started —

**Hon Peter Collier** interjected.

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** Sorry, mate?

**Hon Peter Collier:** Why did you close the Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre?

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** Look, I cannot hear you; you have a mask on.

Lynas Rare Earths has projects coming on, and we are working closely with it to engage and put on workers. When Carey Mining first started, it got one contract, and from that contract it worked its way up. It had one start-up, but now it is almost at the point at which it is going to have its own mining venture. That is really exciting to see. Carey Mining is not just sitting back and focusing on its business; Helen and Daniel are focused on trying to get Aboriginal people engaged throughout the mining industry, which I think is a real benefit to the goldfields region. This, in turn, will see better outcomes throughout the goldfields, and I think Daniel Tucker and his team should be commended for that. I look forward to working with them across this term of government to see that program grow even bigger.

Lastly, I make mention of all the volunteers and people who assisted me throughout the campaign, particularly in the North West Central electorate and the goldfields. It was a tough campaign. There was lots of travel to do. But everyone was there because they wanted to see a better outcome for the goldfields and they believed that a McGowan government could deliver that. We now have plans in place that will be delivered over the next four years, and I believe that Ali Kent, the member for Kalgoorlie, will do an amazing job delivering her plans for the goldfields and working with the community on building a bigger and better goldfields region. It will be an interesting four years for North West Central. We are lucky enough to have had four Labor Party members elected in the Mining and Pastoral Region, including the soon to be Hon Peter Foster out in Tom Price. The results that came in from Tom Price were pretty amazing. The vote was really good. A project was announced out there for Tom Price Hospital, which was very well received by the community.

**The PRESIDENT:** Member, I am just going to do you the courtesy of letting you know that you have three minutes left on your time, in lieu of us not having a clock.

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** Thank you very much, Madam President.

Also, \$13 million in funding was announced for Meekatharra Hospital, which we all know is getting on and is quite dilapidated—I am not going to try these words anymore! It is rundown—dilapidated. Planning needs to happen now, but having \$13 million there to work through it provides a great opportunity.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** The whole hospital system is going down the tubes.

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** Let's just get negative again! Let's not talk about some of the good projects out there and some of the good things that are happening, which is what I am trying to achieve. I am trying to talk about some of the good stuff. But, anyway.

The organisations that we work with in the North West Central electorate have some great programs. A particularly good one that we have been working with is Yulella Incorporated —

**Hon Simon O'Brien** interjected.

**Hon KYLE McGINN:** It is just a constant drone. It is just brrrr!

Yulella is a great organisation in Meekatharra. It is looking forward to doing some good projects. The Yulella community garden project, working through the community development program and engaging locally, is a great project to watch over the next year or so as it rolls out. Yulella works very closely with the CDP, which has had some great outcomes in Meekatharra. I look forward to working with it in the future.

It was an interesting election. I think the result reflects the campaigns more than anything else out there. People were engaging at a level that I have not seen before in politics. I know that I am young and have been in only a couple of elections, but the engagement with and interest in politics I witnessed was very, very surprising. Thank you, Madam President.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 58.]

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### CORONAVIRUS — ELECTIVE AND NON-URGENT SURGERY

**7. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the deferral of elective and non-urgent surgery in hospitals in Western Australia attributed to the COVID crisis.

- (1) What is the total number of surgeries that have been deferred or postponed in Western Australia in both the public and private health systems in the 2020–21 financial year to date as a result of COVID?
- (2) Has the Department of Health calculated the total amount of expenditure saved by the government as a result of those deferrals and postponements in 2020–21?
- (3) If yes to (2), what is the amount saved?
- (4) How many deferred or postponed surgeries scheduled for 2020–21 to date have not been completed and when does the government expect to catch up on them?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Leader of the Opposition, for some notice of the question. Congratulations to him on his ascension to the role.

- (1) There were 819 surgeries deferred in the Western Australian public health system as of 2 May 2021.
- (2)–(3) It is not possible to accurately calculate the value of the surgeries deferred as weightings and associated costs are variable and attributed to the cases performed. However, COVID-19 has resulted in additional significant costs incurred across the entire WA health system.
- (4) An elective surgery blitz was implemented from July 2020, with 91 144 patients admitted as part of the blitz. By the end of December 2020, the proportion of overdue elective procedures in WA was back to below the pre-COVID level. Elective surgeries are rebooked according to waitlist management practices to ensure all patients are treated within clinically appropriate time frames.

#### CORONAVIRUS — TESTING — WASTEWATER

**8. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Minister for Health:**

I refer to weekly COVID-19 wastewater testing that has been ongoing since November at Western Australian wastewater treatment plants.

- (1) Have fragments of COVID-19 been detected in wastewater at any metropolitan wastewater treatment plant over the past three weeks; and, if yes, which sites and on what date?
- (2) Have fragments of COVID-19 been detected in wastewater at any of the regional wastewater treatment plants over the past three weeks; and, if yes, which sites and on what date?
- (3) Why has the McGowan government not released weekly results of COVID-19 wastewater testing since its last media statement dated 22 January 2021?
- (4) Will the government commit to releasing weekly updates of COVID-19 wastewater testing; and, if not, why not?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

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

- (1) Yes; fragments were detected at the Subiaco wastewater treatment plant on 13, 20 and 27 April 2021.
- (2) No.
- (3)–(4) The Department of Health is developing an online results dashboard to enable the release of weekly results of COVID-19 wastewater testing. The Department of Health is committed to transparent reporting.

## CORONAVIRUS — SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION — POWER REBATE

**9. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the minister representing the Minister for Finance:**

I think this question has been redirected from the Minister for Small Business. I refer to the \$500 power rebate administered by the Small Business Development Corporation that was offered to small businesses affected by the five-day snap lockdown in February.

- (1) What was the total amount set aside for this rebate and when was the program established?
- (2) Can the minister please table the criteria for potential applicants?
- (3) How many applications have been received to date and what is the total dollar value of applications received from small business owners to date?
- (4) How many grant payments have been made to date and what is the total value of payments to successful applicants to date?
- (5) What additional resourcing within SBDC is set aside for this program?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank Hon Colin de Grussa for some notice of the question. I do not have an answer in my file at this stage, honourable member. If it arrives in the next few minutes, I will give it to the member at the end of question time.

## LOTTERYWEST GRANTS — VICTORY LIFE CENTRE

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

I refer to the response to question without notice 1158 asked on Thursday, 22 October 2020.

- (1) Will the Premier confirm that a proposal for a Lotterywest grant lodged by Margaret Court Community Outreach was rejected because of “public statements by the organisation’s founder on gay and lesbian issues and on marriage equality”?
- (2) Were there any other reasons that the grant proposal was rejected?
- (3) If yes to (2), what were these reasons and why were they not included in the response?
- (4) If yes to (2), were these reasons provided to the Margaret Court Community Outreach; and, if not, why not?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

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

- (1) The proposal was rejected by the board for a number of reasons, including concerns about Lotterywest being associated with these public statements.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The proposal assessed low against the criteria for the fund.
- (4) Yes.

## MOUNT LAWLEY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL — WORKING GROUP

**11. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Planning:**

I refer to the joint press statement of 20 September 2020 titled “Opportunities abound for Mount Lawley Senior High School”, which states that a working group is to be established to develop a master plan for the Edith Cowan University Mt Lawley campus site and surrounding area.

- (1) Will the minister list the members of the working group?
- (2) What are the terms of reference for the working group?
- (3) Has the working group met; and, if so, will the minister list the meeting dates?
- (4) What is the time frame for the working group to provide a report and recommendations to the minister on a proposed master plan?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

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

- (1)–(4) I am advised the working group is in the process of being established, but it will be chaired by Simon Millman, MLA. Its terms of reference, meeting dates and time frames will be determined once establishment of the group has been completed.

## SCHOOLS — CHILD PROTECTION

**12. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the Minister for Education and Training:**

I refer to the minister's answer to question without notice 727 in the fortieth Parliament in which she advised that as of 11 August 2020, seven alleged or convicted offenders were attending the same public school as their victims.

- (1) As at the start of the 2021 school year, how many of the seven alleged or convicted offenders were still at the same school as their victims?
- (2) Further to (1), how many of the victims of the seven perpetrators had moved to a different school?
- (3) What is the current total number of alleged or convicted offenders attending the same public school as their victims?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. In 2017, the McGowan government put in place protocols to manage safety arrangements for school students when a young person at a school is charged with harmful sexual behaviours. Upon receipt of a notification from the Western Australia Police Force that a student enrolled in a public school has been charged with harmful sexual behaviours, the Department of Education develops a school-level risk assessment and management plan—RAMP.

- (1) There are two.
- (2) Nil.
- (3) There are six as at 28 April 2021. There is a RAMP in place for each of these six students.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT — REVIEW

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

Will the McGowan government commit to introducing legislation this term to amend equal opportunity laws to protect all workers, including staff of members; and, if not, why not?

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:**

That was my first question. I thank the member for some notice of the question.

The Law Reform Commission of Western Australia is currently reviewing the Equal Opportunity Act 1984. The McGowan government is committed to respond to and, where appropriate, action the recommendations from this review during the current term of Parliament.

## ROAD SAFETY — SOUTH WEST REGION

**14. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport:**

WA's south west region has experienced more deaths in the past five years than any other region in Western Australia or any other region in Australia, for that matter. According to the Road Safety Commission, there were 93 deaths on regional WA roads last year. As at the end of April, there have been 39 deaths on south west roads this year.

- (1) Why is the government spending hundreds of millions of dollars on unnecessary smart freeways to improve commute times for Perth residents, while literally dozens of people are dying every year due to unsafe road conditions in the regional areas?
- (2) Does this government have any plans to improve regional rail networks in order to alleviate congestion and traffic on roads throughout the south west?
- (3) What specifically is the government doing to improve the safety of roads in the south west?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

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

- (1) The state government is delivering the biggest ever investment in regional road infrastructure. Currently, nearly \$4.5 billion is allocated towards regional roads projects over the next four years. The McGowan government developed and successfully negotiated a regional road safety program with the commonwealth government. This unprecedented program of works will see lifesaving treatments rolled out across more than 7 000 kilometres of regional roads, including nearly 500 kilometres of roads in the south west region.
- (2) Yes. The McGowan government committed \$22 million at the state election towards key agricultural freight rail projects and today was successful in negotiating an additional \$160 million towards agricultural supply chain improvements. This investment will move more regional freight onto rail, improving road safety and efficiency.
- (3) Refer to (1) and (2).

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Hon Rick Mazza has the call.

FIREARMS — MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP

**15. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the Law Reform Commission's "Project 105—Review of the Firearms Act 1973 (WA)" and specifically the firearms reform ministerial working group tasked with implementing the commission's recommendations. I was advised in answers to previous questions that implementation of the first tranche of agreed recommendations was imminent.

- (1) Is the minister aware that —
  - (a) the first tranche of proposed amendments was agreed to by WA Police Force Police Licensing Services, the former minister's office and key stakeholders, including the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia Western Australia and the Western Australian Firearm Traders Association; and
  - (b) the proposed amendments will assist WA Police licensing with an improved structure for the licensing and management of firearms and a safer storage system, enhancing public safety?
- (2) Is it the minister's intention to progress the first tranche of recommendations agreed to by the firearms reform ministerial working group?
- (3) If no to (2), why not?
- (4) Is it the minister's intention for the firearms reform ministerial working group to continue to work through the Law Reform Commission's recommendations?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

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

The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Police.

- (1)–(4) The McGowan Labor government is committed to progressing firearms reform in Western Australia and will continue to consult with key stakeholders during the reform process. The initial reforms will focus on strengthening our firearms laws in relation to the activities of organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs.

DERBY FERTILIZER AND PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX PTY LTD

**16. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the minister representing the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:**

I refer to numerous media articles and the website for the Derby Fertilizer and Petrochemical Complex Pty Ltd regarding the development of a \$4.1 billion fertiliser and petrochemical project near Bungarun, 30 kilometres from Derby.

- (1) Has the state, the minister or his department had any communication or meetings with this company?
- (2) If yes to (1), on what date or dates?
- (3) If yes to (1), what was the purpose of those meetings?
- (4) Is State Development providing assistance or support for this project?
- (5) Does the minister support the project?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question. The following information has been provided to me.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation received an email from a lobbyist acting on behalf of the company then called Darwin Fertilizer and Petrochemical Complex Pty Ltd on 5 January 2021. The department responded to this email on 13 January 2021.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) In the 13 January 2021 email, the department requested the company complete a project definition document template to understand what level of support, if any, should be provided to the project. To date, the department has not received the completed PDD from the company.
- (5) The government supports projects that seek to create new opportunities and help diversify the state economy.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL — PROROGATION

**17. Hon SIMON O'BRIEN to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:**

I refer to the prorogation of the Legislative Council on 7 December 2020.

- (1) At what time and date was the instrument of prorogation—the proclamation—laid before the Governor for his signature and which ministers, if any, were in attendance?



- (2) At what time and date was the instrument prepared for transmission to Government House?
- (3) Was the advice to the Governor based on a cabinet decision; and, if so, at what time and date did cabinet make that decision?
- (4) If no to (3), who made the decision and at what time and date was the decision made?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

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

- (1) The instrument was laid before the Governor on Monday, 7 December 2020 at 9.00 am and the Premier and Deputy Premier were in attendance.
- (2) The instrument was received by executive government services, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, which provides secretariat support to the Executive Council, on Thursday, 3 December 2020 at 9.27 am.
- (3)–(4) The decisions of the cabinet are cabinet-in-confidence.

## CORONAVIRUS — APRIL 2021 LOCKDOWN

**18. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:**

I refer to advice provided to the Premier and the State Emergency Coordinator from the Chief Health Officer and any person subordinate to or acting in that position.

- (1) Please table all and any advice provided to the Premier and the State Emergency Coordinator from 22 April 2021 to date in relation to the management of COVID-19.
- (2) Why has the advice provided by acting Chief Health Officer Dr Paul Armstrong on 23 April 2021 not been published on the “COVID-19 coronavirus: Health” Chief Health Officer’s advice webpage?
- (3) At what point and from whom did the government receive advice that recommended those who have been in the Perth and Peel region from 17 April 2021 and travelled to another region to observe the lockdown as if they were in the Perth and Peel region?
- (4) Will the minister please table the advice received in relation to (3) that altered the government’s initial advice that those persons were only required to wear a face covering?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

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

- (1)–(2) This was a rapidly evolving situation occurring on the eve of the Anzac Day long weekend. As such, the advice referred to by the member was provided by the acting Chief Health Officer, directly by email, to the State Emergency Coordinator. I am happy to table this advice now, and I so table.

[See paper [150](#).]

- (3) The Chief Health Officer advised the State Emergency Coordinator on Saturday, 24 April, resulting in the publication of directions to provide clarity to the public.
- (4) Advice was provided verbally to the State Emergency Coordinator.

## ABORIGINAL CORPORATIONS — GOVERNANCE

**19. Hon ROBIN SCOTT to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:**

I refer to leaked documents showing that one of Australia’s oldest and best-resourced Indigenous corporations, the Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation in Fitzroy Crossing, has not had a valid board of directors since 2017 and is unable to account for more than \$28 million worth of transactions.

- (1) What is the government’s response to assertions that there is a lack of accountability in Aboriginal corporations?
- (2) Does the state government have any plans to increase accountability and transparency in Aboriginal corporations or other groups that receive state taxpayer funding?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

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

- (1) Given that the leaked documentation is not publicly available, it is not appropriate to comment on those allegations pending a formal investigation. However, addressing governance issues for Indigenous corporations is a federal responsibility regulated by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, which can investigate and intervene if required.

- (2) I understand that a review of the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006—CATSI—is underway, and that a report with 72 recommendations has been presented to the federal Minister for Indigenous Australians to consider. We look forward to actively participating in the implementation of the recommendations where appropriate.

#### WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT — LEGISLATION

##### **20. Hon DIANE EVERS to the minister representing the Minister for Water:**

I refer to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation website regarding the consolidation of six different water resources acts into the proposed water resources management act.

- (1) What is the time frame for completion?
- (2) Will the community and stakeholders actively participate in a process for the development of the new act; and, if yes, in what manner?
- (3) What consultation with stakeholders and community has been done so far and in relation to which parts?

##### **Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question. The following information has been provided by the Minister for Water.

- (1) The water resources management bill is currently being drafted and will be introduced to Parliament once drafting has been completed.
- (2)–(3) The water resources reform reference group, which includes key community stakeholders, has been consulted on the water resources management bill over a number of years and this will continue.

#### NUMBAT HABITATS — PRESCRIBED BURNING PROGRAM

##### **21. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:**

I refer to a prescribed burn undertaken by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in Perup on 25 March, and subsequent reports of that burn's impact on one of two endangered numbat habitats.

- (1) What specific planning and actions were undertaken by DBCA, and on what dates, prior to the prescribed burn, to protect the endangered numbat population?
- (2) Will the minister table that information; and, if not, why not?
- (3) What specific post-burn review was undertaken; how was that review undertaken, and when; and did that review estimate the impact on the numbat population?
- (4) Will the minister table that information; and, if not, why not?

##### **Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank Hon Tjorn Sibma for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Environment.

- (1)–(2) The DON 100 Weinup prescribed burn was a strategic burn that aimed to reduce fuel loads and protect nearby properties and biodiversity values from the impacts of bushfire. A comprehensive prescribed fire plan was prepared that met the requirements of the ISO 31000 international standard for risk management. The prescribed fire plan identifies a number of pre-burn, burn implementation and post-burn actions related to numbat habitat. DBCA has advised me that it recognises the high environmental values of the Weinup prescribed burn area, including the area providing important habitat for numbats. Managing the numbat habitat was a key consideration during the planning and implementation of the prescribed burn.

In July 2019, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions staff met with adjacent property owners who had reported numbat sightings and physically marked the location of any known dens within and adjacent to the burn. In August 2019, known locations of dens were mapped. The burn was undertaken outside the period when numbats have young in their dens—typically from winter through to November. This approach was taken so the younger animals were mature enough to access refuge areas during the burn and post-burn periods. Marked dens were raked around by DBCA staff and protected by wetting down adjacent areas with fire hoses.

The burn was staged over an 18-month period commencing in spring 2019, and was carried out by burning a number of different cells at different times to achieve a mosaic of differing burn intensities across the area to maintain biodiversity, including fauna habitat. This was also achieved within the final cell where prescribed burning commenced on 25 March 2021. There are also identified actions regarding post-burn monitoring that are still programmed to occur over the coming months.

DBCA has invested significant resources into protecting numbats and their habitat over the past 20 years, with dedicated feral animal control and a partnership approach to a numbat breeding and release program with Perth Zoo. Managing numbat habitat, including through fire management, is also a key component of this ongoing strategy to protect numbats in the wild.

- (3)–(4) DBCA is undertaking an operational in-field review of the DON 100 Weinup prescribed burn. I am advised that underlying soil dryness in portions of this burn area may have been a contributing factor to some areas having a higher fire intensity than was planned. Lessons learnt will be incorporated into future operations, which is consistent with DBCA's adaptive management approach. DBCA has advised that all known numbat dens that DBCA and adjacent property owners identified prior to the burn were protected. In addition, DBCA has confirmed that it observed numbats before, during and after the prescribed burn. DBCA does not consider that this prescribed burn has impacted overall population numbers of the numbat, but has provided longer term protection of the habitat from the occurrence of severe summer bushfires that would likely result in longer term impacts to numbat habitat.

#### RENEWABLE HYDROGEN STRATEGY — PASTORAL STATION LEASEHOLDERS

#### 22. Hon JIM CHOWN to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

Regarding the government proposal to push through changes to land tenure laws, particularly to pastoral stations, with the intention of allowing massive areas for solar and wind farm use, what remuneration will current leaseholders receive when these proposed land tenure changes are ratified to allow renewable energy generation for hydrogen manufacture?

#### Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member. I think it is the first time we have heard the opposition as opposed to the crossbench actually ask a question about hydrogen, so it is cause for celebration.

**Hon Jim Chown:** You are welcome, minister, but please answer the question.

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN:** I am entitled to give a little bit of a preamble to give context because I am hoping that in the process you will not become —

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Minister, please provide the response.

**Hon Jim Chown:** Thank you.

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN:** I am certainly pleased to see that the opposition is now greatly supportive of the renewable hydrogen industry and look forward to seeing that support.

It is certainly not our intention to impose upon any pastoralist a hydrogen precinct development. Although Minister Buti and I are at the early stages of discussion of what the excisions from pastoral lease process may look like, one thing we are extremely clear about is that this will occur only should a proponent get together with a pastoralist. Any pathway towards a hydrogen lease would have to be done at the instigation of the pastoralists with the underlying lease. I can tell the member that more than enough people are very interested in that. On Sunday in Kalbarri I met with Belinda and Calum Carruth from Murchison House station. They were very eager to see this new twenty-first century industry be developed in conjunction with their pastoral activities.

#### CORONAVIRUS — SMALL BUSINESS — GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

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

I refer to the Premier's announcement of \$2 000 grants for businesses impacted by the snap COVID lockdown from 23 April 2021.

- (1) Have the conditions and qualifying criteria been established for these grants?
- (2) If no to (1), when will they be finalised and announced?
- (3) What information and assumptions were used by the government to calculate the expected losses by business at \$70 million, as stated by the Premier?
- (4) Will the Premier please table that information and those assumptions?
- (5) Will regional businesses outside the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions qualify for the grants; and, if not, why not?

#### Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) As stated by the Premier last Thursday, 29 April, when he announced the small business lockdown assistance grants, details of the program will be released later this week.
- (2) See (1).
- (3) The \$70 million was a preliminary pro-rataed estimate based on Treasury's analysis of the impact of the five-day lockdown in early February.
- (4) Refer to pages 25–29 of the 2020–21 *Pre-election financial projections statement*.
- (5) No. The impact on the Perth and Peel regions is expected to be more significant, given that only these regions were required to enter the lockdown.

## ELECTORAL REFORM — ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

I refer to the minister's media statement of 30 April 2021 titled "Ministerial Expert Committee to advise government on electoral reform.

- (1) On what date did cabinet agree to establish such a review committee and appoint such members to the committee if those dates vary?
- (2) What is the total cost of performing the review, and will the minister please detail the individual payments for the services of the committee members?
- (3) How was the membership of the committee determined; was membership advertised publicly; and does the minister have concern that three of the four committee members have previously advocated strongly in favour of reforms contributing to the potential for bias in any report produced?
- (4) Given that this issue was not on the government's agenda immediately prior to the election, why has the review committee been given just eight weeks to consult and report on this important matter?

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Decisions of the cabinet are cabinet-in-confidence.
- (2) Total costs are yet to be finalised.
- (3) Three of the members were determined based on their constitutional and electoral law expertise. The chair was appointed based on his significant legal expertise and his understanding of the Western Australian constitutional system as the former Governor of the state. Given their unimpeached standing and collective academic record, the government has no concerns regarding any of the committee members.
- (4) The reporting time frame was arrived at in consultation with the ministerial expert committee.

## PRIVACY LEGISLATION

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

- (1) Will the Attorney General commit to introducing legislation this term to improve privacy protections in Western Australia?
- (2) If yes to (1), when?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

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

## LOTTERYWEST GRANTS — VICTORY LIFE CENTRE

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

I refer to the Lotterywest grants program.

**The PRESIDENT:** You can take off your mask.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Oh, I can; I apologise. Thank you, Madam President. That sounds much better and it feels better.

- (1) Other than the Margaret Court Community Outreach, have any organisations or churches had their Lotterywest grant application rejected because the values of that organisation or church did not align with those of Lotterywest?
- (2) If yes to (1), which organisation or organisations, church or churches, and what particular values did not align with those of Lotterywest?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

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

- (1) Yes. Lotterywest's policy is not to support churches for their faith-based endeavours.
- (2) Lotterywest does not publicly discuss grants outcomes, other than with the grant applicant.

## NURSING POSTS

**27. Hon ROBIN SCOTT to the minister representing the Minister for Health:**

I refer to comments made at a recent meeting of local governments in the Murchison region of Western Australia that poor facilities and a lack of adequate staff at regional nursing posts remains a problem, as it has been for many years.

- (1) Does the state government have any plans to increase the funding made available to the nursing posts?
- (2) Does the state government have any plans to increase staffing levels at the posts, including the prescribing of minimum staffing levels?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I do not have that answer in my folder and I did not see it lodged today. I have a copy of the questions that were lodged but that was not one of the ones I saw. We will check. If it was not lodged, the member might want to lodge it tomorrow. If it was lodged, I will get an answer for the member tomorrow.

## WASTE LEVY

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

I refer to suggestions of systemic waste levy avoidance in Western Australia as reported by Ben Harvey in *The West Australian* on 3 October 2020 and Emma Young in *WAtoday* on 12 January 2021. How much revenue has the state government potentially lost through waste levy avoidance?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank Hon Tjorn Sibma for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Environment.

Data on levy avoidance can be calculated only in arrears once a payment liability has arisen. The department pursues recovery actions for unpaid waste levy.

## ALCOA — BAUXITE

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

I refer to question without notice 279 regarding Alcoa of Australia Ltd's export of raw bauxite from the state.

- (1) Has Alcoa requested an increase in the amount of raw bauxite per annum it is allowed to export?
- (2) If yes to (1), has it been considered and what was the result?
- (3) If no to (1), has Alcoa provided any indication that it will request this within the next two years, and will the minister consult with the community prior to making any decisions?
- (4) Has Alcoa requested an extension beyond the five-year period approved at the time of asking the question?
- (5) If yes to (3), has it been considered and what was the result?
- (6) If no to (1), has Alcoa provided any indication that it will request this within the next two years, and will the minister consult with the community prior to making any decisions?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question. I can provide the following information.

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) and (6) Alcoa has not formally requested an extension. The company is currently undergoing a formal assessment at a public environmental review level under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 for its possible bauxite export. Community consultation is a formal part of the PER process.
- (4) No.
- (5) Not applicable.

**CORONAVIRUS — SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION — POWER REBATE***Question without Notice 9 — Answer Advice*

**HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Mental Health)** [5.04 pm]: Earlier in question time, Hon Colin de Grussa asked me a question as the minister representing the Minister for Finance. The answer was not in my file at that stage but I will give the answer now.

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

- (1) In February, the Premier announced a \$500 electricity credit for all small businesses and charities, with a process to be put in place for businesses not billed directly by Synergy or Horizon Power. Once the caretaker

period had concluded, cabinet considered and approved the Department of Finance—Revenue WA—to administer payments to eligible small businesses and charities. An additional \$2.5 million has been approved to be added to the Department of Finance’s administered budget.

- (2) Eligible small businesses and charities are those that are not directly billed by Synergy or Horizon Power, which operate from commercial premises and use no more than 50 megawatt hours of electricity a year or incur less than \$15 001 in electricity costs a year. Eligible small businesses that are billed directly by Synergy or Horizon Power were credited directly from 15 February 2021.
- (3) No applications have been received to date. The Department of Finance is currently preparing to open for applications, including establishing an online application portal, and supporting material to assist customers in lodging applications. Applications will open online mid-June 2021 and will remain open until September 2021.
- (4) No payments have been made.
- (5) An additional 42 FTE resources have been allocated to the Department of Finance to administer the scheme until 31 December 2021.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

#### *Motion*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary)** [5.06 pm]: Apologies to the Leader of the Opposition; I was unaware he was seeking the call.

Isn’t it great to be back? It is great to be back in the people’s house that is the Western Australian Parliament doing what we do best—making the lives of Western Australians better. It is really good to be here. Before I begin my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate, I acknowledge the contribution of Hon Ken Baston and his fine speech earlier. He has been a very sound member of the Legislative Council for 16 years. I have had the great pleasure of serving on committees with Hon Ken Baston for the last two terms. We have worked very well together. We see the world very, very differently politically but we have a lot in common. I think both of us are happy to get the suit off and get back into some real working clothes. I wish the honourable member and his family all the best in the future. Thank you very much for your service to the Western Australian Parliament and Western Australian people.

The opening of Parliament the other day was fantastic. It was not lost on me that, for the first time in history, at the opening of the Western Australian Parliament on this beautiful piece of land that has been inhabited for thousands of years by our First Australians, we had an official welcome to country in the Parliament. Dr Richard Walley, one of our most highly respected Noongar men, was here to welcome us all to Parliament. It was very touching to sit here only metres from Dr Walley. I found it quite a spine-tingling experience to hear the sounds of the didgeridoo in the chamber and the Whadjuk language spoken by Dr Walley, just as it would have been on this site for thousands of years. I think that was a great initiative by the Parliament and I presume Madam President, and I am sure it will continue. We have an amazing cultural story and an amazing local Noongar history here in Western Australia. Sometimes I do not think we realise the value of that. Later in my contribution today, I will talk about this a little bit more.

It was great to see some funding for cultural tourism announced yesterday. I am really looking forward to how we can better send out the message of our Whadjuk people and Noongar people more broadly. I encourage anybody who travels to Northam to look at the Bilya Koort Boodja Centre for Nyoongar Culture and Environmental Knowledge. People should allow several hours because it is a truly remarkable place that beautifully captures our local Ballardong history.

We had an election, and what a great day that was for those in the community who need a Labor government. We were resoundingly re-elected and gained a further 13 seats in the Legislative Assembly in an unprecedented election result. I am very, very proud to be a part of that. The result in the regions was extraordinary also, and I will talk a little more about that in a while as well.

We now have a situation in which WA Labor has 53 of the 59 Legislative Assembly seats and in a couple of weeks will have 22 of the 36 Legislative Council seats. That is a total of 75 out of a possible 95 seats—extraordinary support from the people of Western Australia and an extraordinary endorsement of the hard work the McGowan government has done, not only in keeping Western Australians safe from COVID-19, which has been an extraordinarily successful mission, but also in repairing the state’s finances. I am sure members will remember the debt, deficit and chaos we inherited when we came to government. Under the previous government there was mounting debt and a \$4 billion deficit that popped up each year for someone else to pay in the future. We have turned that around and we are now running surplus budgets again. I think that is to the great credit of the Premier and Hon Ben Wyatt, the former Treasurer. I think the people of Western Australia judged us equally on that.

There is now employment, infrastructure being built and services being provided in places where they were not before. We are getting on with things that had been talked about and talked about, but not acted on. They are now

becoming a reality under the McGowan Labor government. I think that is what people saw as our greatest achievement. Yes, they were also happy with the way we managed the COVID-19 pandemic and how the Premier stood up to Clive Palmer, who was supported by the Liberal Party. The Premier stood up to him—he took him on and won—and Western Australians quite rightly then endorsed the McGowan Labor government after the four very successful years we have had since 2017.

The people of regional Western Australia have also spoken and endorsed our government. The Labor Party had the largest number of regional members in the last Parliament, but we will have most of the regional MPs in the forty-first Parliament. I would like to run members through the tally board of regional MPs. There are 34 regional MPs across both houses—18 in this place and 16 in the Legislative Assembly. Of those 34, there is one from the Daylight Saving Party—I am sure there will be a lot more said about that over the coming months and years—and one from Legalise Cannabis WA. The Liberal Party holds four regional seats and the Nationals WA hold seven, but in first place, with the gold medal for regional seats and the biggest endorsement from the regions, is WA Labor, with 21 of the 34 regional seats. That is an astounding endorsement from regional Western Australia.

WA Labor is now the party of the bush again, and I think that is fantastic. We can have a progressive government with a progressive agenda that is driving forward regional Western Australia—the powerhouse of our economy. We are once again the party of the bush. The Labor Party was formed in rural Queensland and we are now back out of town, so to speak. I am very proud of that.

There are also a record 43 women among the 95 members in this Parliament. That is an outstanding achievement, especially for those in the Labor Party who, 25 or 30 years ago, fought for and won affirmative action rules, which have completely changed the face of our party for the better. Now that we have this strong cohort of women in both houses of our Parliament, we wonder why we did not get on and do it years ago! Some of the female members in the early days—Cheryl Davenport and others—fought for and won affirmative action to have equal numbers of women and men in Parliament, and that has now come to reality. What a great day for our Parliament and for Western Australia.

Thirteen of our 22 Labor members in the Legislative Council are women—more than half. That is going to completely change the make-up of this place for the better. We have great diversity in our Parliament. There are members of Indian descent and Chinese descent. Now, for the first time, we will have a member of African descent, when Ayor Makur Chuot comes into this house in the coming weeks. She had some even bigger news than that in her life recently, with the arrival of her baby! We look forward to Ayor taking her seat here—the first MP of African descent to be elected to the Western Australian Parliament and, indeed, I believe, any Australian Parliament.

We are all looking forward to working with the new MLCs as they enter Parliament, and we are all looking forward to listening to the contributions from those who are leaving. To all those who are leaving the Parliament, whether by their own choice or by the choice of voters, I wish them well in their future endeavours. It is an interesting job that we do, members. Sometimes we have to go back out into unfamiliar situations for employment when we leave here, and I feel for those who wanted to stay but were unable to get the support they needed. I wish them well and also those who are retiring of their own accord, and I look forward to hearing their contributions, as we heard from Hon Ken Baston today.

The Labor Party had a remarkable result in the Agricultural Region. Our primary vote was 45.8 per cent. If someone had told me eight years ago that that was possible for a Labor government in the most conservative region in Western Australia, I would not have believed them, but it has happened. The voters of the Agricultural Region have turned to us in a way that they never have before. I thank every single one of them, whether they have voted Labor all their lives and are true believers who have stuck with us through thick and thin, whether they are voters who have voted Labor in the past and have come back to Labor, or whether they are one of those voters—and there are many—who have trusted us with their valuable vote for the first time. I thank you all equally and say to you that we will not let you down. We will work closely with you all to deliver what you hope we will deliver. We will deliver everything we promised you and we will live up to your expectations, because if we do not, there will be an opportunity in four years for you to change your vote. We want you to stay with us.

Hon Laurie Graham is retiring on our side and will be replaced by two new incoming Labor members, Shelley Payne from Esperance and Sandra Carr from Geraldton. I really look forward to having those women in this place representing the Agricultural Region; it is going to be a great forty-first Parliament with them here.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank our candidates. I took charge of the three more rural electorates for this campaign. I helped campaign with candidates in Moore, Central Wheatbelt and Roe. I thank Barni Norton for once again running in Moore. She got to within about eight per cent for Labor in that seat, so I think we can have another run at that one in the next election. I thank Michelle Nelson, a Njaki Njaki woman originally from Merredin, who did an outstanding job in difficult circumstances in the large electorate of Central Wheatbelt, running against the Leader of the Nationals WA in that party's heartland. She won about a 12 per cent swing to Labor also, and is a prospect for the future. I also thank Brad Willis, who once again ran for Labor in Roe and was also extremely successful in gaining a 12 per cent swing to Labor, including winning the primary vote in all Esperance booths. That was an outstanding result for Brad, who also won the booths in Narrogin.

The voters liked what they saw with our candidates, and I thank them all very much, because running for a particularly challenging seat in the Agricultural Region can be a very difficult job. They all campaigned with aplomb and we could not have asked any more of any of them. They were all outstanding candidates, which led to the support we got in both houses, and especially in the upper house, with a third MLC elected in that region. I thank them.

I also want to thank everyone who stood at a polling booth, letterboxed leaflets, came to a branch meeting or helped us in any way; there were hundreds of them across the Agricultural Region. People came out to help and support what we were about. People liked what they saw and wanted to be involved. I thank every one of them. I will catch up with them all over the coming months.

I am very humbled by the result in the Agricultural Region and by the result statewide. As we all know when we face the people, we are never quite sure what they are thinking and whether they will support us. I know one thing for sure: they never get it wrong. When voters cast their valuable vote, they cast it for a reason. I am very pleased that so many of them cast their vote our way.

We have been out to the electorate over the last four years. A lot of our communities had not received the support that they had hoped for from former governments. They had been very loyal supporters of conservative governments. We continued to find a backlog of projects. Over the past four years, we worked with the communities and identified areas of need. We probably have around 200 communities in the Agricultural Region. We have 61 local governments. We have an extraordinary array of communities. Larger ones have up to 40 000 people, such as Geraldton. Smaller communities have only a handful of inhabitants. They all have areas of need and things that they want to achieve. I was really proud to work with hundreds of groups and individuals across the Agricultural Region to find out what they needed and to make a commitment to them, come election time, about how we might be able to help them. Often in our small communities, the same six people are on the footy club committee, the tennis club committee and the school board. Sometimes it is just good to get around to those people, show them some support and show them that the government does appreciate and care about what they are doing and wants to help in a small way. It takes an awful lot of fundraising to build a new facility in a small community. Ultimately, the community has to pay. We were delighted to be able to support many of our regional communities with the projects that were most important to them. When I went to a community, I would ask, “What’s the most important area of need? What’s the thing that you really want in your community that would help make it better for you?” They were very open about what it was. Often it was something that had been talked about for 20 years and had not happened.

I will run through a few of those community groups today because I want to acknowledge all their work in the community. We were unable to fund some projects. We will work with them over the next four years and look at how we can help them. Today I want to take the opportunity to talk about some of these amazing individuals in our regional communities. These community groups do so much work. So many volunteer hours go into all these organisations.

I will start with the seat of Roe. We want to fund a lighting upgrade of the hockey grounds. As many members would know, Narrogin is a hockey centre. International games between the Australian hockey team and the Dutch hockey team have been played down there. Bevan George and some other very impressive hockey players come from Narrogin. The hockey grounds have had turf down for a while. Some lighting was installed around the grounds. With the upgrade and changes that have occurred in lighting technology, we were delighted to be able to pledge \$165 000, which is about 50 per cent of the funding, to make that new lighting project a reality, and hopefully attract some more international games to Narrogin. The Upper Great Southern Hockey Association has a tremendous committee and it does some great work. There is a great participation rate in the upper great southern area. I was really happy to be able to help it.

As members would know, there is a lot of volunteer labour in our speedway clubs—they make it work. The Katanning Speedway Club has been running a generator for its lighting. We were able to fund the \$35 000 upgrade to its electrical systems so it can now hook on to mains power and save a lot of the hassle that goes with running a generator. We will also fund the upgrade of some of its amenities. It was delighted that someone came along and asked what it wanted and delivered on that commitment.

The Pink Lake Country Club in Esperance uses quite a lot of electricity. We are going to provide some solar panels for the roof, which will save a lot of money, and be good for the environment as well.

The iconic Esperance community train has fallen into disrepair. We are going to help the community refurbish that train mechanically and get it back running again, so that the next generation of kids in Esperance can ride on the train at local events.

The Karinya aged-care hostel in Narrogin is an outstanding facility that services the upper great southern well. It has a bit of a problem when the wind blows the front door open. We will arrange for an airlock to be installed so that it is more secure in windy weather. Also, in the current environment in which we find ourselves, we thought it was a good idea to keep the air inside.

We are also going to fund a lighting project at the Ports Football Club in Esperance. Its lighting is pretty 1980s looking, so it is time that we upgraded it. The main ground in Esperance is run by the shire. Night football games



will be able to be played there. The upgrade will be done in such a way that some more lights can be added in the future, and even night cricket will be able to be played down in Esperance. It is a very sports-oriented community. Well done to the Ports Footy Club for working with us.

Hope Community Services needs some office upgrades after a flood that it experienced. We can help out with that. We are going to help Esperance Speedway with its safety fence so it can upgrade to the next tier of track. Esperance Bowling Club has turned one of its rinks into a beach volleyball rink. That works really well. It is a lot more sheltered than playing beach volleyball on the beach. The rink is no longer used for bowls. We will fund the lighting so that beach volleyball can be played in the evenings during the summer, which is a great initiative.

We are also going to help the Esperance Kart Club with its lighting and the Esperance Mountain Bike Association with signage through the mountain bike track that runs through some bush just out of town. It probably has the best view of Esperance. Esperance Bay Yacht Club has a program that enables young sailors, usually of late primary school and early high school age, whose parents do not have a yacht to come down and use the local club's sailing boats. Some very successful sailors have come out of that program over the years. The boats need upgrading as they are getting a bit old. We will help out with that, and provide everyone in Esperance with the opportunity to learn to sail. That will be great. The Esperance Table Tennis Club needs new tables. We are going to help that club. The Esperance Motor Cycle Club needs to upgrade its facilities. We are going to help with those upgrades. We are also going to work with the Narrogin RSL to upgrade the memorial park by installing an all-weather honour board. Stainless steel boards will be installed outside, alongside the statues, which will help to give visitors a more poignant experience as they remember those who fell in their service to our country.

We are going to help the Shire of Narrogin. We have a very good relationship with Leigh Ballard, the shire president, and Dale Stewart, the CEO. A lot of projects in Narrogin need funding. We are going to help build a very important patient transfer station out at the airstrip so that patients can get to the Royal Flying Doctor Service more quickly. I am really looking forward to that. We also built the helipad at the hospital for when the emergency helicopter is needed. That is a great improvement in safety for those who need assistance.

We will also help fund a major upgrade of the facilities at the Katanning Country Club. The place is a little tired and rundown, so we will provide some funding to that club. We will help refurbish a room at Waratah Lodge and do some general maintenance around the lodge. It is a great facility in Wagin that provides really good service for the elderly in the community. As members would know, 30 per cent of people in a lot of our regional towns are 70 years and older. We have an aged population. We want them to be able to stay in their communities during their senior years. Upgraded facilities such as Waratah Lodge and Karinya certainly help us do that.

The Friends of Piesse Park want to build an eco-cafe in the park, so when people go to Katanning, they can sit around the new Piesse Park and enjoy a coffee and the amenity down there. I am looking forward to seeing the work of that very active group in Katanning.

I would like to mention Graham Cooper and his team at the Esperance and Districts Agricultural Society. We are going down to the Esperance show this year. I have become a sponsor of the show. Last year's show was cancelled due to COVID-19. I am really looking forward to the show returning. The society needs a new forklift, so we will help fund that. The society needs it pretty soon; it is keen to get that new forklift to get ready for this year's show.

Tourists have to pull into a very small, poky and quite unsafe visitors parking area when they come to look at the attractions in Ravensthorpe. We are going to fix that and make it a better experience for them.

Anyone who has been to Wagin will know that the Wagin Historical Village is an amazing little village, and I encourage members to go have a look for themselves. The government is going to help Max Bell and his team at the Wagin Historical Village upgrade some security and put in some cameras and display areas because the museum is outgrowing its building, so we are going to have to help with that.

We are going to help with new much needed audiovisual equipment at the Kojonup sports complex for the Kojonup Sports Alliance. Kojonup is a growing town. It is a really strong community with a very strong sports focus, and we all know that the great Stephen Michael is from Kojonup as is Peter Bell, so some terrific footballers have come from that part of the world.

Hope FM community radio needs some upgrades to its broadcasting equipment.

The Esperance Ocean Safety and Support Group wants to do some high-resolution satellite mapping of the seabed off Esperance to help us try to understand why some areas of that coast are more dangerous than others when it comes to attacks from great white sharks. We will work with it to help facilitate that and to see whether we can find some patterns in the tragic attacks in Esperance.

The Wheatbelt Cycling Collective encourages cycling in the upper great southern area, and we are going to work with it to put in some trails and signage to help people enjoy that beautiful part of the world down throughout the Dryandra area. That is what we are able to deliver in the electorate of Roe. There are a significant number of projects there. A lot of community groups have benefited from what we have been able to deliver in the electorate of Roe

and I thank all of them for their cooperation over the last four years. Some community groups were getting a little bit tired of waiting for us, but we came through in the end, and we will deliver for them. I am sure the communities will be better for it.

We also worked with a lot of groups and the Central Wheatbelt electorate and were able to help fund a lot of projects and community groups and organisations there. Hyden has had an off-road racing culture down there since the 1980s, and we want to capture that in a museum and look at some of the older cars and the way that they were built over the years. Anyone who goes to Hyden can go to Wave Rock, and they will also be able to go to the lace museum and the toy soldier museum, and they will also be able to see an off-road HQ at the Hyden off-road racing vehicle display facility.

The Merredin Men's Shed was after a forklift, and we helped it with that. We were also looking at an arts centre in York and how we can support the community to help make that a reality. We have a tremendous arts population in York. A lot of people have moved from the city to that beautiful town to have a quieter lifestyle and to, I presume, find the inspiration to take their creativity to the next level. I thank Jenny Garroun and everyone involved in the arts community in York.

The boards in the Link Theatre Northam have been tread by none other than Hon David Templeman, the singing politician, who has performed there. We were able to help the Link theatre with some refurbishments out the back of its kitchen and bar area, upgrades to other facilities and increased disability access to the theatre, which we think is very important. Everyone should be able to enjoy the wonderful shows that are being put on at the Link Theatre Northam. There is an upcoming show called *Princess Whatshername*, so I encourage everyone to get along and book some tickets for that and see the great work that Wendy Byfield and those do at the Link theatre.

The Labor Party has a very strong railway history and railway culture, so we are going to put some money towards the preservation of the old Northam railway station. There is an old wood shed there that was built before the station. Anyone who has seen the old railway station in Northam will know that it is a magnificent building. It captures the architecture of that era, the importance of rail to the wheatbelt and the Northam community and the jobs that came with that, and now the industrial history we have in Northam.

For the Bilya Koort Boodja Centre for Nyoongar Culture and Environmental Knowledge, we are going to up the ante with some 3D displays that will be more interactive and will increase the Nyoongar Ballardong experience. We are looking forward to that one.

At Wyalkatchem, the Wyalkatchem CBH Agricultural Museum needs a bigger shed because so many people are donating some of their old farm equipment. It is great to have that equipment restored by the museum and be put on display for people of my son's generation and beyond to be able to see just how tough it was sitting out there in the middle of the night on an old tractor with no cab. The museum actually has a John Deere Waterloo Boy, which is very rare and one of John Deere's early tractors. It is housed at Wyalkatchem, and I encourage everyone to go have a look at that. Robert Holdsworth and the crew have done a great job there, and I am really happy to be able to work with their shire to expand their museum.

Also in York, we have the York environmental discovery centre. This came out of a conversation on Australia Day last year. There is a disused tennis club on the banks of the Avon River, and the York environmental discovery centre was born from a discussion with the River Conservation Society in York. It is going to move into that old clubroom, which is right on the riverbank, and run an awful lot of river restoration projects. We could look at running a range of programs out of there. It is a really good outcome for a disused building that was looking pretty awful, with a magnificent grapevine out the front that we can trim and get back into shape. Therefore, I really look forward to working with the River Conservation Society and making the York environmental discovery centre an interpretive centre for the Avon River, and hearing the great stories that come along the Avon River with our Ballardong past. I look forward to that becoming a reality.

Similarly, regarding the Wundowie labour heritage project, I have been wanting to progress it for many years. Neil Byrne was a magnificent labour person who had tried to capture the Wundowie history, and it is a remarkable history. Wundowie is the birthplace of the Western Australian iron ore industry, which had low-grade coal and iron ore. It was decided that after the war we had to produce our own steel and iron ore, and that foundry operated up till the late 1980s. In the end, the iron ore came in from Koolyanobbing on the railway line. But it has a terrific labour history of the people, mainly migrants, who came out to work at that foundry after the Second World War. The design of Wundowie is unique and the great community is working there to help preserve that labour history. We certainly want to get around that project.

Beverly Offroad Motorsports Association wanted to upgrade its facilities.

The Northam Returned and Services League of Australia is doing a Vietnam Memorial, and we were able to help contribute to that. We always like to get around the RSL. It is a great organisation and the Northam sub-branches do some fantastic work in the Northam community, and we are really happy to be able to help with that.

The Goomalling Football Club's oval is dead, because the dam is dry. We were able to help the footy club put in some tanks so that we can fill those with scheme water when we have to. I am very pleased to say that some of the

recent rains have replenished some of the dams, but we need a plan B for when the dams run out and with climate change they are running out more regularly. Our oval was once the envy of the Mortlock Football League, and it now needs a plan to keep it watered and green all year round for all the sports that are played on it.

The Wundowie Men's Shed is going to get solar panels, so we are going to help them with that to save a bit of money on electricity bills.

We are working with the Shire of Pingelly in repairing the flooring in the town hall to create an art space in the middle of town. Pingelly is a very proactive community. I have worked quite closely with one of the leaders in that community over the last couple of years and that is none other than Hon Helen Morton, a former member of this place. She has done a very clever thing and retired up to the Agricultural Region, to Pingelly. I am looking forward to working with the Shire of Pingelly and making that project a reality.

The Brookton railway station project—we are looking at how we can get that one back to its former glory. It is a beautiful old building in the middle of Brookton that needs some attention.

One of the projects that I am particularly proud of is the Merredin water tank. Anyone who has driven to Kalgoorlie will have seen the big old water tank on the side of the road at Merredin. It was going to be pulled down as the Public Transport Authority decided that it did not need it anymore and the tank was in pretty rough shape. But it is going to be restored and refurbished as a tourism icon in Merredin, so on your way out to Kalgoorlie, check that out. Spend some time in Merredin.

The good community of Popanyinning is going to get a shelter at its community ground. There is a very small, common community space. Popanyinning is very small community but very proactive. It just loves a get-together and a barbecue and a few drinks from time to time, so we are going to make a nice little shelter there so they do not have to sit out in the rain.

The second edition of *humans of the wheatbelt* is out. Anyone sitting in the chamber who has a spare minute might like to google “humans of the wheatbelt”. It is a take-off of the Humans of New York website and has the most amazing stories of people who live in our part of the world. I encourage everyone to get online and look at the website or to get a copy of the book.

Stryka Fight Team in Northam is run by the very committed Guy Mead, who, for no benefit to himself, teaches boxing, mixed martial arts and other forms of fighting to a lot of our young community members, especially those who might be challenged to make the right choices all the time. They have to work their way onto the team by doing community service, such as chopping wood. They have to be part of what the Stryka Fight Team is doing in order to make it onto the team. There are 11 members of the team, who are representing the town particularly well in competitions. The team needs a portable octagonal cage so they can fight the MMA style of fighting rather than fighting, unsafely, in a boxing ring. We are going to help fund a cage and a trailer to transport it to all the bouts and events the team goes to. It will make a tremendous difference because I think that more kids will want to get involved in the Stryka Fight Team if they can pick up the MMA style of fighting. It will help kids make better choices. I have already seen some positive benefits, such as kids attending school, because that is a criterion for being on the team, less youth crime in Northam and fewer kids hanging around. That is all because they have a goal to aim for. I am delighted to be able to help guide the team to make that a reality.

I will move on to the electorate of Moore, which runs all the way from Northampton to Bindoon, across to Dowerin and up to Dalwallinu. The Chapman Valley Historical Society Heritage Centre is in Nanson. As a young boy, I spent some time in Nanson. We used to play tennis there. I would walk across the old railway bridge, which seemed a lot bigger when I was a little fella than it does now. Pam Batten and her team do a tremendous job keeping the Nanson heritage centre up to scratch. Again, if members are in Geraldton or the midwest, they should go and check it out. Some of the machinery and equipment in the centre is quite remarkable. It has been restored so that it all runs.

The Jurien Bay Sport and Recreation Centre wants a portable stage. Its space could be better utilised if the stage could be packed up and taken away. The Denison Bowling Club was successful in obtaining a community sporting and recreation facilities fund grant to change its grass bowling greens to synthetic turf. The government has also been able to help out the club with funding for lighting; some new shades and shelters, because the old ones will look a bit daggy when the flash new turf is laid; and some seating around the bowling club. The club was particularly happy with that funding.

Moora Speedway is looking to upgrade its track. The club needs to increase the height of the concrete safety barrier. It is quite an extensive job. It requires taking out sections of the old barrier one by one and repouring new concrete. I am particularly pleased the government is able to help the Moora Speedway with a significant funding allocation to undertake that work. Once that is done, the club will be able to host national and international events. Moora is somewhat the speedway capital of regional WA. I think it is Moora and Collie. I apologise to all the other towns that could probably make that claim as well! The Moora community speedway club is very driven—pardon the expression. We have been able to help the club, and I am delighted about that.

The Goomalling Farmers Club premises needs a new roof, and the government is going to put some money towards that. The Bindoon Hall will get some lighting and sound upgrades, because quite a lot of musical and theatrical

events are held there. The Toodyay community has established a group called Home of Culture and the Arts and is looking to set up an arts centre in the old St Aloysius Catholic precinct buildings, which are no longer used for that purpose, so that it can bring together creative people to pursue the arts. If we can get that project off the ground, I think it will be great. I am delighted the government was able to provide some money and work with the Toodyay community. The Toodyay RSLWA has not had clubrooms for 100 years. It has a lease on the old shire depot, which is basically a shed, and the government is going to provide funds to help refurbish it to make it a more appropriate building. Peter Brennan, the outgoing president, has done a fantastic job turning the club around. I am really happy the government is able to provide funding to help the Toodyay RSL establish a home of its own after, I believe, 101 years.

The government is going to help the Chittering Junior Cricket Club by providing funding to build a new sports pavilion in Muchea. There are 500 kids who train there each week and it has two change rooms; it is not enough, especially with the advent of girls playing the sport. The government is going to fund the building of a new clubhouse facility at Muchea; a growing community at the end of the NorthLink. The community will only grow more, so I am happy it will be able to get on with that project.

The government is going to help fund some upgrades to the Bejoording Community Centre. The government is going to work with Morangup Progress Association. I am very pleased the government is going to support the Jurien Bay Country Golf Club with funding so that it can water the golf course. The club has done a lot of work to get the water, but the government contribution will help to make that project a reality. I think it will be a game changer for Jurien, because a lot of people who go up there in the summer want to play golf. I am a terrible golfer. I do not get what the fuss is when it comes to golf, but a lot of people like to play the game. The government funding is going to help the club so that it can water its fairways and have a playable golf course all year round. I think that level of amenity is warranted in a community that is growing like Jurien is. I look forward to the government funding helping to make that project a reality. The club has been fighting for and working towards this for years. People were delighted when we announced that the government would fund the project.

The government is going to help fund a hall for the Ocean Farms Community and Recreation Association. We have also helped out Pollinators Inc. The government has also helped fund equipment for a couple of other organisations. I know Hon Martin Aldridge would be particularly interested in the Granville Park weir upgrade in Gingin. That precinct is a bit tired and dated, and the government is going to provide a contribution to help upgrade it. It is being pulled together as a community project.

After the Wooroloo fires, a very small but important funding pledge was made to the Marsupial Mammals and Pappas Wildlife Care team, which needs more of the little nets that are fired out of a gun to catch injured wildlife. There was a great demand for more of those nets after the fires. The government will help the team fund more nets in the future, because it does an amazing job caring for injured wildlife after storms and fire events across the state. It is a deeply committed group of people whom I really look forward to working with into the future.

There you have it, members. It is an extensive list. Every one of those projects has a committee and a community working to make them happen. When the government has the opportunity to work with communities, I find that is one of the most fulfilling parts of my role as a member of state Parliament. The communities' "yes we can" attitude has been met with the government asking, "How do we make this happen? What do we need to do to help you make your project a reality?" Those projects were extraordinarily well received across the Agricultural Region and have perhaps reinstated people's faith in government and politicians, because in a challenging year, we have been able to get around to these communities and work with them to help them achieve their goals. Isn't that a great ambition? To help someone achieve their goals.

The Governor gave an amazing speech on the opening day of Parliament. I thought he gave a fantastic speech, and that should be expected. Our Governor is a class act. He is certainly an amazing human being and has made such a great contribution to Western Australia and to Australia. I want to touch on a few of the subjects he raised in his address to us all. He talked about the natural disasters that we have had this year. There was the bushfire at Wooroloo that caused devastation and damage. Homes were lost, but miraculously no lives were lost and there were no serious injuries. We also had cyclone Seroja in recent weeks. Again, there was total devastation in the communities of Kalbarri and Northampton, and there was a lot of damage to farming sheds, buildings and houses further inland in Morawa and places like that. The clean-up in the aftermath saw communities come together to work to help manage the situation and the recovery. That was mostly volunteer labour by people who put up their hand and were happy to help in the middle of the night by holding a hose and making sure that others were safe. These people did those often dangerous actions for the benefit of others. I have to say that I was particularly disappointed earlier today as we were going to discuss the great work of our volunteers and first responders. We have a motion on the notice paper to talk about the volunteers and first responders to these natural events. Those people put their lives on the line and did all that they could to help others, from fighting fires to fixing generators, and supplying fuel and driving trucks. Members of the Australian Defence Force and the WA Police Force, and everybody else who went into those situations, helped those communities, and now that motion has been fobbed off for a couple of weeks. We do not now have time to debate it in this configuration of the forty-first Parliament of Western Australia. It

has been fobbed off for a couple of weeks because of an opposition stunt. Members opposite should be ashamed of themselves for what they have just done, because I think that the people who stood up to help should have been recognised in this house tomorrow. We will have to wait at least three weeks, until the new membership of the forty-first Parliament is here, to debate this motion, unless there is another opposition stunt between now and when we can debate it. I am sorry, members, but I feel very passionately about this. Good people who have given up their time now have to wait to be given recognition by the Legislative Council just because Hon Nick Goiran wanted to pull some smart-alec stunt to do something—God knows what it is. I will be telling them what members opposite all voted for.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Member, I trust you will reacquaint yourself with standing order 41, which states —

A Member shall not reflect upon any vote of the Council except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded.

You can present actions of anybody or any party in whichever form you wish in general terms, but if a decision of the house has been made, that should not be reflected upon in general debate. I am sure you will skirt around that in phrasing your terms accordingly, Hon Darren West.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Thank you, Mr Deputy President; I take your advice. I thank you for that timely reminder. I intend to pursue that matter no further. I do appreciate your knowledge of the standing orders. It has been a little while, so mine is a little bit blurry. Thank you.

I want to again acknowledge everyone who was involved in the clean-up after the Wooroloo bushfire and tropical cyclone Seroja, which were massive events in roughly our part of the world. The Wooroloo fires were just in the metro area, just over the border, but certainly cyclone Seroja impacted a lot of areas in the Agricultural Region. Recovery from those events is a priority for us.

I am really pleased to be part of a government that has a jobs plan that will deliver a way forward for those who are seeking good paying jobs. When we came to government, there was a lot of unemployment and uncertainty. The TAFE system was in a shambles and we had to fix that. We had to get back the confidence of those who wanted to seek better training to make themselves more suited to their roles. We have been able to do that through the Minister for Education and Training and the great reforms that we have made to the TAFE system.

We knew that Western Australian workers could do anything. We knew that the Matagarup Bridge could be built here in Western Australia. Western Australian workers built the Matagarup Bridge and it is magnificent. Anyone who has not walked on it should go and do that soon. We knew that Western Australian workers would step up and do what was required. When the COVID-19 pandemic became a reality, our own workforce stepped up and went above and beyond during that time when we had limited access to workers from interstate or, indeed, from overseas. We knew that the harvest in the Agricultural Region could be challenging without the usual flow of backpackers that come through and are able to help out with that seasonal work, but I am very proud of our agricultural industry. One day during the harvest late last year, CBH Group, which is the grain growers' cooperative, had a record receipt tonnage. Despite not having those backpacker workers, our local Western Australian workers were able to deliver more grain than had ever been delivered before in one day. That was an amazing achievement. To all the workers in the agricultural sector who stepped up, thank you very much for your efforts. We needed that. We did not want grain to spoil because it was not harvested, delivered and exported in time. Your efforts made a big difference to our state and enabled us to export more grain, bringing more dollars and jobs into Western Australia.

We are going to build railcars here in Western Australia. That has been well received, even in areas that are not affected by it. It will probably not make a big difference to people in the eastern wheatbelt where the railcars are built, but they want us to do that. They think it is important that we should have faith in our manufacturing industries and those who work in them, and we will do that. We are going to have a WA jobs task force to continue this work in helping Western Australians to get the best jobs and be the best workers that they can be.

We will build a lot of strategic projects and a lot of roads. Today, we have announced some funding for rail projects in the regions, which I am very excited about. There is a record amount of roadworks. People are complaining to my office that it takes them an extra half an hour to get to where they want to go because of all the roadworks. I wear that as a bit of a badge of honour. I am sorry for the inconvenience that it causes people and I encourage everyone to be safe and slow down and respect our workers when they travel through the roadworks, but this is a good thing. We are getting better roads built right across regional Western Australia, because we had an enormous backlog left to us by the previous government.

I am absolutely delighted to be once again sworn in as parliamentary secretary to Minister MacTiernan. I think she has now just popped her nose in front as the best agricultural minister that Western Australia has ever had. I say that with no disrespect to Hon Kim Chance, who, in my view, held that title before. The minister has rebuilt the department and got on with things that have been talked about for years, like vermin-proof fences and working out ways to keep wild dogs away from our sheep. She has brought the oat breeding program to Western Australia and is talking about alternative and new ways of farming, rather than just the monoculture and one-size-fits-all approach, which

is not going to suit everybody. I think it is important that we have these discussions and work to get more carbon into our soils. That is a great win for us. Soils with higher levels of carbon hold more moisture, and that is paramount in a dry climate. I think that farmers who embrace regenerative technology and carbon farming are going to see benefits well into the future from not only the carbon credits from which we will eventually profit when we get a price on carbon in this country, but also the increased carbon capacity and water-holding capacity of our soils, which will increase productivity yet again.

As part of our plan, we are committed to the green jobs of the future policy, and last year we announced a climate policy. We will seize new job-creating opportunities in renewable energies and hydrogen. I am really looking forward to the great opportunities that are presenting themselves in that space, whereby we can use renewable energy to generate hydrogen, which, when converted into electricity, produces only water, so we can have a zero-emission industry that can power a lot of our mining equipment, trains and big trucks. All those things can eventually be powered by hydrogen. Western Australia is particularly well-placed. I read a tongue-in-cheek story about Geraldton and how hot and windy it is, but that is actually perfect for someone who wants to generate renewable energy and set up a hydrogen industry in their part of the world. There are tremendous opportunities ahead in the hydrogen sector for those of us in the midwest, the Oakajee industrial estate and further north, and I am really looking forward to getting my teeth into that portfolio with Minister MacTiernan. We made a good start during the last term of government, but we now have a dedicated portfolio of hydrogen industries, and that is going to be a tremendous opportunity for us moving forward.

I refer to Metronet. It is probably not something that people might think a regional member of Parliament would talk about, but all of us know or are related to someone who lives in the metro area. Perth is a world-class city and it needs a world-class transport system. We are going to build the railcars here, which makes it even better, so it is a very big investment in passenger rail services in the metro area. I was really pleased to see that those who cannot afford to live close to the city will now pay a much more moderate fare to catch the train. We are going from nine zones to two, and that will make a tremendous difference. This could not only save families who live in the outlying suburbs thousands of dollars a year, but also encourage people to get out of their cars and onto the train. Cars are expensive to run and park, and the cost of fuel is going up again, so I think this will encourage more and more passengers onto our public transport network. That is a win for the environment and for the future planning of our city, so well done to Minister Saffioti on that.

We are going to build a port down at Kwinana and we are going to end the Beeliam wetlands debate forever. We are going to build that port and the associated transport infrastructure that will bring our freight-handling capacities into the twenty-first century. I know it is contentious but I think it needs to be done, because at some point Fremantle is not going to be big enough for the job. There are perhaps other things that we can do with that amazing port that has served us well for so long and is the legacy of C.Y. O'Connor himself.

The state's finances are in good shape. We are still carrying a bit of debt, but we have managed the COVID crisis particularly well. I think the Premier and the former Treasurer's handling of the finances will be their greatest legacies to the people of Western Australia. I am really looking forward to chipping away at that debt over time. It needs to be addressed. I do not think it is fair and reasonable to expect subsequent generations to clean up our mess, and I think we need to chisel away at that. Let us see where the pandemic goes. If we can get that behind us in the near future, get everyone vaccinated and move forward, I think that we can get our finances into even better shape. I appreciate the great support that we have received from the federal government both in terms of the GST reform, which was way overdue and needed—we were able to get that agreement—and the massive investment that the federal government has been putting into the state, in partnership with the McGowan government, to build a lot of this regional infrastructure.

*Sitting suspended from 6.01 to 7.30 pm*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Robin Chapple):** Members, we are dealing with the Address-in-Reply, and I give the call to Hon Darren West for his continuing remarks. I remind Hon Darren West that he has about five minutes to go.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Thank you, Mr Acting President. I will start to wrap up my remarks today, because I know that other members want to speak.

There is a lot more I could talk about. There is such a good story to tell that WA Labor has across regional Western Australia and across the state more generally. The government has done some great stuff in health. We have increased funding for the patient assisted travel scheme. We have announced a lot of hospital projects, including the upgrades to Geraldton Regional Hospital, which has been talked about for a long time. We are doing some great work across the state in education, community safety and law reform. We can be rightly proud of what we have done during our time in government. We can talk more about those things over the next few years. Our job is to take the state forward. We will do that over the next four years. We have a mandate from the people of Western Australia. We will use that mandate in a responsible way to make Western Australia even better than it is now, if that is possible.

Before I close, I want to acknowledge some people who do not get enough acknowledgement. That is the families and people closest to us as members of Parliament. This job is difficult on family life. It is particularly difficult at election time. We call on our families to help us in this job. We can do this job only with the support of those closest to us. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all those people. We all know the people whom we are talking about. We all know the people who are there at every election and want to see us be the best that we can be as parliamentarians. I thank every single one of those people.

I want to finish by acknowledging my colleague and very good friend Hon Laurie Graham. He will love this. Laurie Graham stepped up just before the 2017 election to help us out, believing that he would not be elected to the fortieth Parliament. He was duly elected to the fortieth Parliament, and he has made an outstanding contribution in his time in this place.

We are going to miss you, mate. It has been great working with you. I am really proud to have you as a colleague and a friend. We have done some amazing stuff in the Agricultural Region, and we will continue to do that after you have gone. You have left a great legacy, Laurie. I am really proud of you, mate. I look forward to your contribution next week, because I know it will be insightful and good.

That is all I have to say. Bring on the forty-first Parliament. It will be a great four years. We will make Western Australia stronger than it is at the moment.

**HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition)** [7.34 pm]: It is a great pleasure to be back here after the election. The election was fairly tough, and not everyone had the opportunity to be re-elected. It is good tonight to follow the speeches of a couple of members. I have come to enjoy Hon Kyle McGinn's contributions a lot. He makes a great speech these days. When he came here four years ago, he started well, but a bit tentatively. He has really blossomed as a member of Parliament. I enjoy listening to his speeches. I have also listened to the speeches of Hon Darren West. Let me say that he is at least consistent.

Hon Kyle McGinn made a number of good points tonight. I thought that was a good speech. I was interested in a couple of things that he said. In particular, he was somewhat concerned about some conversations or statements by some of the opposing parties about whether a gold tax would be revisited by a Labor government. I take that on board. I did not make any of those comments myself. Hon Kyle McGinn said that he had been sitting next to the Treasurer of the time, Ben Wyatt, and was told that the government would not be reintroducing a gold tax. I am interested in the words that he used. Did he use the words, "A gold tax is not on the government's agenda at the moment"? Is that what he said? We can understand why some members of the opposition might have concerns. The Premier was asked a number of times in the lead-up to the election whether electoral reform would happen under a re-elected Labor government. The Premier said more times than I can remember that electoral reform of the upper house is not on the agenda of the government. I will be interested to hear how some of the members opposite will deal with the reform process in the upper house. I presume that Hon Kyle West will be keeping his office in Kalgoorlie.

**Hon Kyle McGinn:** It is Kyle McGinn.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Sorry, Hon Kyle McGinn. I have merged you both! That is a bit disturbing! I know that Hon Darren West is wearing a black mask, but he is not necessarily Hon Kyle McGinn's father. That is a whole other story. I presume that Hon Kyle McGinn will be keeping his office in Kalgoorlie.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan** interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I will come to you, Hon Alannah MacTiernan. Your time is coming. Do not worry. So will Hon Kyle McGinn still have his office in Kalgoorlie?

Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I am just trying to find out.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Members! Order, please. We have been doing fairly well with this so far. I think we should really calm it down a little.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Thank you, Mr Acting President.

The Premier has said on multiple occasions that electoral reform of the upper house is not on the agenda of the Labor Party. At the same time, Hon Kyle McGinn—for whom I have enormous respect and who has blossomed as a member of Parliament—is telling us that he will maintain a presence in Kalgoorlie, rather than that his office will remain in Kalgoorlie. I will be very interested to see the wording. We can already see from the performance of the Labor Party that the weasel words are slowly creeping in. I am sorry to hear that from Hon Kyle McGinn, because I have enormous respect for his prowess in this place.

Hon Darren West raised during his contribution a significant and I believe sincere concern about the debt levels in Western Australia. That was a very interesting place to go. I wonder whether he can tell us what the debt level was when the Labor Party came to government in 2017 and what it is now.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan** interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** It is absolutely my speech. I am just responding to some of the comments of the Labor Party. Is there an answer?

**Hon Darren West:** Would you like me to come and sit next to you?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** No. There are certain standards.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Members, I believe Hansard is having trouble sorting the chaff from the wheat.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Government members say “Reform of the upper house was not on our agenda”, “I will maintain a presence in Kalgoorlie” and “Debt is important, but not if I am asked about it”. Obviously, one of the problems that the opposition will have over the next four years is the accountability of the McGowan Labor government.

It was a difficult election and obviously the Labor Party enjoyed the response that most governments have had from the COVID crisis, and a little bit beyond that as well. Well done! The government has an absolute majority at the moment. The majority in the upper house will be interesting to watch over the next few days. This government has taken advantage and been the lucky recipient of a number of circumstances that have benefited it in a way that almost no other government in the world has benefited. I note the comments around the world that Western Australia may well be in the best financial position of any subnational jurisdiction in the world. I think that is absolutely the case. But I take members back to a question that I asked in February 2019. I asked the question through the very good deputy leader of the Labor Party to the Treasurer, which was, “Has the government considered what happens if the iron ore price stays above \$US90 a tonne?” I asked that question in early February 2019 because, in fact, it had hit \$US90 a tonne and most analysts were saying that it was going to stay at a relatively good level going forward. The answer I got back was that no modelling had been done because the prospect of the iron ore price staying above \$US90 was, and I quote, “highly unrealistic”. Last week, I asked the Leader of the House representing the Treasurer, “What is the iron ore price today?” I am sure that members are taking very close note of the iron ore price. The previous Treasurer used to receive it, as we know from the newspapers, in a daily email or phone call from Treasury. He knew exactly how much money the Labor Party would have to spend. But as of last Thursday, according to the government the price was \$US192 a tonne. Not only is the price above \$US90 a tonne, and it has not quite been universally above that price in the intervening two years, it is currently at \$US192 a tonne, which is the equivalent of the highest iron ore price the state has seen. At what point do government members sitting on the benches opposite call this a boom? At what point do they say, “Yes, we have had an incredible amount of revenue, more revenue than a state government has ever seen, and the fiscal economy is doing so well because of COVID-19 and the iron ore price”? It is interesting because when we look at this and break it down, why is the iron ore price so high? There are probably two significant factors. The first is major stimulus from countries around the world. Members might say China, but it is not just China. There is stimulus going on in construction across the world. Construction is going on in Western Australia, Australia and across Europe and the United States, but it is particularly going on in China. That is driving up the iron ore price. The COVID crisis is driving up the iron ore price.

Another thing that has happened is that our major competitors have suffered far more from the COVID crisis than we have. The COVID outbreaks in Brazil in particular have been far more significant than they have been in Australia and its lack of production has driven up the price of iron ore. On a twofold measure, COVID has driven up the price of iron ore to the point at which the additional revenue that this government receives above the budget each year, year in, year out, is now paying for its entire COVID response. Bear in mind, the state government initially put in a \$5.5 billion COVID response. In 2018–19 and 2019–20, revenue above expectation was \$4 billion, and that is before the iron ore price hit \$US192 a tonne. This government was the beneficiary of massive increases in revenue. I am pleased that Hon Darren West said, “We’re worried about debt and deficit. Debt and deficit is a problem. I’m worried about the deficit and I’m worried about the debt.” When this government came to power, debt was approximately \$33 billion. It is currently \$39 billion, approximately, and is heading towards approximately \$42 billion. Hon Darren West is concerned about debt at a time when his government had two years of very average iron ore prices, admittedly—which was very similar to the average iron ore price the previous government had to deal with between 2015 and 2017—and it also had the advantage of a massive boom in the iron ore price, which gave it enormous opportunity above and beyond the impact of COVID-19. This is the only jurisdiction that has had that absolute benefit. This is the only jurisdiction that is effectively making money because of the response to COVID-19 and at levels that we will probably never see again. In that circumstance, Hon Darren West is right to be concerned about debt and the fact that it has gone up \$6 billion under those circumstances and is heading towards increasing by another \$3 billion over the next four years. It is absolutely the case that he should be incredibly concerned.

According to the budget, the net debt expectation for 2020–21 was \$39.26 billion and it was heading towards \$41.72 billion in the next financial year and \$42.9 billion in the financial year after that and finally the expectation was a decrease of \$0.1 billion in 2023–24. The member’s concerns about debt are real, but debt is going up under the Labor government and it will continue to go up. I also note that as this government has generally done, it quite reasonably set a very low expectation of the iron ore price going forward. It managed to shift its expectation of the iron ore price. In the budget of October last year, the government set an iron ore price of \$US96.6 a tonne. The midyear review increased that and it went over \$US100 a tonne. The *Pre-election financial projections statement* took it back to \$US65 a tonne in the next financial year and \$US64 in the following two financial years. This



government has been extremely clever in that it has sets its price very low and anything that it receives on top of that it has to spend effectively as free money. That is good accounting up to the point that the government is in effect acknowledging that it has an enormous amount of money available to spend. The question is whether this government is spending that money in an appropriate manner and looking after the interests of Western Australia or whether it is focused on looking after the interests of the Labor Party in Western Australia. I will come back to that in more detail.

We already know from questions in Parliament that the government exceeded its 2018–19 budget expectation by \$1.72 billion and that it exceeded its 2019–20 budget expectation by \$2.2 billion. I notice that the expectation for this year was originally a \$1 billion surplus. By the time we got close to Christmas last year, it had jumped to a \$3 billion surplus and it is now looking like a \$4 billion surplus, and that is before the iron ore price stays at \$US192 a tonne, potentially, over the next two months. That shifts that \$3 billion surplus to between \$4 billion and \$5 billion. The Labor Party had a \$5.5 billion COVID spend but it is now saying that the entire cost of COVID is over \$7 billion. It loves to say that because it makes it look as though it is spending more money in the process, but it has that much money in unbudgeted funds. It made that money out of the iron ore industry, but it is still crying poor. The Labor Party does not want to acknowledge that the iron ore price is the thing that is currently driving it to the financial position that it is in. The government should be thankful. It should be standing up and saying, “Yes, thanks to iron ore, we’re in a fantastic financial position.” It was not actually a strategy of the government. It did not strategise a COVID response from China and its economic stimulus spending or the impact of COVID on Brazil so that our competitors could not pick up the market share and keep the price at a reasonable level. The government is determined to tell us this is some sort of Labor Party strategy, but it is not. The problem we have is that the strategy that the Labor Party has is not a financial strategy; it is one that is riding on the coat-tails of COVID luck. That is not a strategy to take the state of Western Australia forward.

I have heard some comments tonight about the fact that now the Labor Party is interested in diversifying the economy. The Labor Party is interested in looking at a jobs strategy to diversify the economy. I thought that was quite interesting in the speech from the Governor that we listened to. The Governor said, and I quote —

The Government took a new WA Jobs Plan to the election, based around reducing interstate FIFO, more training through TAFEs and schools, and diversifying the State’s economy.

The re-elected Government has identified several sectors that represent burgeoning opportunities for the state, namely; hydrogen, tourism, battery industries, Aboriginal employment, agriculture and aquaculture, renewable energy, a new film industry and of course local manufacturing.

A few things leap to mind, of course, because we have to remember that the state government has significant dollars in its kitty going forward. The questions are: why was the government not doing these things before the election; why is it suddenly election strategy; where was the diversification process before the election; and where was this focus before the election? I am particularly interested in the burgeoning opportunities in agriculture and aquaculture, but particularly agriculture. Let us talk about the job opportunities in agriculture, because this is a debate that we have had a few times in Parliament over the last year or so, well before the election. It was obviously the case that COVID changed the labour opportunities around agriculture. The backpackers stopped coming because of COVID. I remember quite distinctly in the middle of last year the Premier, and I suspect the Minister for Agriculture and Food based on the instruction of the Premier, telling us that we would have to find workers within the domestic market because there would be nobody coming from overseas. I am sure that everybody remembers those comments. How has that worked, Minister for Agriculture and Food? That was something of an own goal.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** It wasn’t an own goal. It was absolutely the case at the time. Since that time we have been able to, working with the commonwealth, identify the resumption of the seasonal worker program. The federal government had cancelled the seasonal worker program so there was no prospect at that time of bringing in workers from the South Pacific. As soon as it changed that, we changed our rules and we have been doing very, very well in bringing in seasonal workers.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Does the minister mean that at the time that the Northern Territory, for example, was negotiating deals to bring in workers, the federal government had stopped the program and nobody could bring in seasonal workers? Because the Northern Territory was already organizing those deals.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** At the time you’re talking about, yes.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** The federal government was out in the public saying, “We would like to work with the states to bring in labour from the Pacific Islands and from COVID-safe environments”, and this government was saying, “You will have to find domestic workers somehow.”

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** It was August last year.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I can tell you, minister, that this was absolutely the time frame it happened in.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** We had actually started getting the flights coming in in December. It takes months to organise that.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** The backflips have been fantastic. I have enjoyed the backflips.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Robin Chapple):** Members, this is not a cross-chamber debate; it is the contribution from Hon Dr Steve Thomas.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Thank you, Mr Acting President.

I have enjoyed the backflips from the government; this is one of many that have come along. I think that it has been immensely positive. We have actually seen a number of workers coming into the agricultural sector, but it was over this government's kicking and screaming that these people were brought into place. I actually think the Minister for Agriculture and Food was on our side for a fair bit of that. I want to give her some credit. I think she understood the need for it, but I think she was bogged down in the politics of the Labor Party's re-election strategy, which was all about focusing on local jobs. I am sure that Hon Kyle McGinn, with his union background, would like that, and we would all love to see Australian workers in there if we could—that is absolutely the case—but in the case of agriculture, it obviously proved impossible to deliver, and so it was a very welcome backflip.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** It was not a backflip.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** It was absolutely a backflip.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan** interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** It was a very welcome backflip. I thought it was great. I commend the minister for it. I thought it was good.

I will come back to some of the comments that members of the Labor Party made earlier. In particular, I want to come to the topic that was raised in the Governor's speech right towards the end, just before the conclusion, when he said —

In addition, the Government intends to address reform of the Western Australian electoral system, to ensure that Western Australian elections are conducted fairly, the results reflect the intent of the public, and are protected from outsize and overseas influence.

I presume, given the statements made by various members, and particularly by the new Minister for Electoral Affairs, that that means electoral reform of the upper house. I would be interested to know whether someone can tell me precisely what that means. There are two components to the reform of the upper house. There is the voting process where we might discuss whether we do six above the line, for example, as a valid vote, and whether we discuss how voting occurs in terms of microparties. That is one part of the process. But given the statements of the new Minister for Electoral Affairs, particularly in his opinion piece this week, we can assume only that the Labor Party is intent on another round of electoral reform and particularly proportional representation. I have had the joy of having been elected to the other place—the place that shall not be named—in 2005. I was the first-ever member elected for the seat that was created called Capel. The first piece of legislation that we debated was initiated by Hon Jim McGinty, who was the Minister for Electoral Affairs at the time, to instigate one vote, one value in the Legislative Assembly with, of course, the exception of the regions for which the Labor Party held the majority of seats, which was up in the Mining and Pastoral Region in particular, where the Mining and Pastoral Region would have ghost voters. There were only a certain number of voters, and because there was a very broad election, ghost voters would be put in place to bring the total number up to something that would be deemed to be reasonable. I always thought that was an odd process to put in ghost voters, but members have to remember that at that point, the majority of the Mining and Pastoral Region seats were held by the Labor Party. That was obviously an intent to make sure that the government maximised its electoral advantage. It is interesting that in 2008, at the next election, the Labor Party did not quite get across the line, but that was probably more related to then Premier Alan Carpenter calling an early election than it was due to any other part. We are once again faced with electoral reform proposed by the Labor Party. It is interesting that the current system that we have in the Legislative Assembly—six regions of six members—was the result of the bill put forward by Hon Jim McGinty back in 2005. It was through negotiations, particularly with the Greens in the upper house, that we ended up with this six-by-six roster. I remember that in the old days seven members in the upper house were from the south west and that the regions varied to some degree based on population. But that was removed. In 2005, to get its legislative agenda in place, the Labor Party reversed proportional representation by a small degree by taking that back and acquiescing to the Greens' six-by-six model. It is obvious from the comments of the Minister for Electoral Affairs that we are now going through the same process. I will be very interested to see how regional members of the Labor Party in particular respond to this. I would like to know what its agenda is.

I have come up with some figures on this, but they are slightly out of date because they are based on the September 2020 Western Australian Electoral Commission voting numbers. I worked out what a quota approximately would be and how many seats would exist in the various parts of the state. It looks a little like this. The South West Region would suffer a little and go from six to 5.2 seats. I assume that would be five.

**Hon Darren West:** Who is the 0.2? Are you the 0.2?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Currently, I am number 2, so if it is 5.2 seats, the member can work it out.

The Agricultural Region would have 2.2 seats and the Mining and Pastoral Region would have 1.5 seats. There would be somewhere between eight and nine seats for all regional areas. If those seats were shifted, the North Metropolitan Region would have nine seats, the East Metropolitan Region would have 9.2 seats and the South Metropolitan Region would have 9.6 seats. We can assume that there would be roughly eight to nine regional seats and somewhere between 27 and 28 metropolitan seats. I would be very interested to see how members of the Labor Party respond to that. If there are only two Agricultural Region seats, Hon Darren West will have to work pretty hard to maintain one of them and he will have to explain to the other two members who are coming in here why their seats are disappearing. What precisely is Hon Darren West's position on this? Does he support proportional representation in the upper house?

Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** We will not get an answer. Hon Kyle McGinn, I am interested in what the Minister for Agriculture and Food's position is on this given that she has gone from the North Metropolitan Region, which will have nine seats, to the south west, which will go from six to five seats.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** It's complete supposition.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Tell us what the agenda is.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Members!

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Robin Chapple):** Members, I am noting that Hansard is having trouble keeping up with the banter.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** Perhaps he could make a speech and not ask a series of questions.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I think that it is reasonable to ask what the Labor Party intends to do with this chamber.

Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Hang on a minute!

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** You're a member of the Liberal Party. Why don't you tell us what you stand for?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I am responding to the Governor's speech. The Governor's speech is about what the government intends to do in the next four years.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** What is your position on it?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** What is my position? My position is the status quo. I cannot believe I am about to say this, but my position supports the legislation put forward by Hon Jim McGinty. I am astounded that I support Hon Jim McGinty's position. My position is that we should retain the status quo. We are responding, Mr Acting President, to the Governor's speech.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Was that your position in 2005?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** My position in 2005 was to support the current position, not the removal of eight seats from the south west to go into the metropolitan region. Of course, it was. Why would I support the disenfranchisement of regional members, minister?

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** What I am saying is, in 2005 did you support the McGinty bill?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** No. We supported the position at the time, which was the existing position.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** The Alexander Pope of the Legislative Council!

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Nobody on the conservative side of politics —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Members, I do not mind a little bit of interaction, but this is getting into a shouting match.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Sorry, Mr Acting President.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** He is just asking questions.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** I know, but there is no need to be over exuberant.

Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I will, Mr Acting President.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** You do that by taking that on board and addressing your comments to me.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I will. As usual, we cannot get a straight answer from the government. As usual, the Labor Party is keeping its powder dry. It said one thing before the election and is doing something completely different after the election: “The electoral reform of the upper house is not on our agenda”.

Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** The government said that upper house reform was not on its agenda. Six weeks later, it is saying upper house reform is obviously a prime issue for this government.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Hon Dr Steve Thomas.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Thank you, Mr Acting President.

It will be very interesting to see whether the Labor Party moves away from its original position to a position that will advantage the Labor Party—it thinks—even more. It will be very interesting to see how the newly elected regional members of the Labor Party, including the Minister for Agriculture and Food, who is a newly minted regional upper house member, responds.

I had this great line going during the campaign. For the upper house, the Labor Party had Hon Dr Sally Talbot and Hon Alannah MacTiernan in the South West Region. The third candidate was going to be Hannah Beazley, who took over the seat Hon Ben Wyatt retired from—that is, Victoria Park. Obviously, the criteria for a Labor Party regional member was that they should have a holiday house somewhere in the south west. We were hoping that Hannah Beazley would buy one in our patch, but the Labor Party beat us on that one, because when Hannah Beazley received the nomination for Victoria Park, the Labor Party put in a local—Jackie Jarvis. I actually think Jackie Jarvis will do a good job in the south west. She is a solid local in the Cowaramup–Margaret River region. I was a bit disappointed that the Labor Party took away one of my attack points, because we had made some months of good publicity talking about the holiday home preselection requirement of the Labor Party. It is pleasing to see that it did finally go local with its nomination, but it was disappointing. I have a lot of respect for Jackie Jarvis. I think she will be a good member of the Legislative Council when she gets here and will make a good contribution.

If we could turn to the topic of the year—that is, COVID-19. It is absolutely the case that if we wanted to be anywhere in the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, we would want to be in Australia or New Zealand. It is a fair bet also that we would want to be in Western Australia before any other region. The response has been good. I am happy to give credit to the state government and say that its border protection and response to COVID-19 has been good. As the vaccination program rolls out, it will be interesting to see how effective that is and at what point we will start to open up our borders. I think that a vaccination rate of somewhere between 60 and 80 per cent will have a significant impact on the capacity of COVID-19 to spread. At some point I would love to hear somebody in the government outline the future plan for how we manage outbreaks of COVID-19 and how the vaccination program impacts that. That is something the public today would like to hear. It is something we need to get out into the public so we can start to make longer term plans. It is very difficult for business, particularly if they are in travel or tourism, to plan their futures if they do not know what the government’s plans are likely to be. That has been one of the issues around these sharp lockdowns. I think we all accept the need for sharp lockdowns on occasions, we need to be able to stamp on a small outbreak when it comes along, but the government has to get better about how it sells the message on this and it has to get that messaging in early. We had a lockdown on the Friday before Anzac Day, and the messaging changed within 24 hours. That made it extremely difficult for businesses to adapt. I had left Perth, I think, a couple of days before, but on Friday the message was that if someone had been in Perth from 23 April and they had moved from Perth to another region, they were expected to wear a mask, but otherwise they could participate in community activities. That seemed to change on the Saturday, so about 24 to 30 hours later. I understand that at about nine o’clock on Saturday night, the night before Anzac Day, the email went out. That is when the change of rules came into my inbox to say that if someone had been in Perth from 23 April and they were going out to a region, they needed to apply the lockdown rules to them; it was not sufficient to wear a mask out in public. Most of us who are out in the regions do not necessarily look at our inboxes at nine o’clock at night, particularly when we are going to be up for a dawn service at four o’clock the next morning. Confusion reigned in that messaging. That is not to say that every government gets it perfect, and every government deserves a bit of slack, but confusion reigned in that messaging. We did not know. I did not know until I got back to my inbox after two Anzac Day services. The good thing was that in both cases I wore a mask for the entirety of travel to and from services and during them, but in theory I should have been in isolation. We did not know that until we looked at the communications that said that is what we should be doing, and when that was different from the message we got 24 hours earlier, we had an issue we have to deal with, and regional areas had to deal with that.

The other thing in those regional areas was that as everybody got confused and businesses were impacted. I was intrigued this afternoon when I asked my question without notice to be told that regional businesses cannot apply for the \$2 000 compensation grants available to businesses in Perth and the metropolitan region. If the government changed those rules on Saturday, even if it was Saturday night, and people picked it up, did it not have an impact on businesses in regional areas? Did it not have an impact on all those people who jumped in their cars and drove

from Perth and Peel down to the south west or Albany? Anzac Day in Albany is generally a massive event. It was a long weekend, and a lot of people were streaming out of Perth to go down south. If they were suddenly told on Saturday evening, should they have read their emails, or Sunday if they picked them up then, that they were supposed to be isolating, it has to have had an impact, but it would appear that it has been written out. Regional businesses may not apply for the compensation package available for businesses in Peel and Perth. I think regional businesses will be very interested to know that they have been excluded. It may not matter, because there may be not many members of Parliament left in regional areas. Next time businesses go to complain, there might be five members to complain to somewhere, but if they are out in the region of Hon Colin de Grussa there might be only him and one other member.

**Hon Darren West:** Me!

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Probably not Hon Darren West! It might be Hon Colin de Grussa and one other member out there. Maybe the Labor Party thinks it does not matter that regional businesses cannot apply for this support fund, but I for one will be very interested in making sure that regional businesses know that this is one more level of contempt that the Labor Party is happy to inflict upon them.

I will go back to the comments of the Governor. An issue was raised by Hon Darren West in particular, and that is the Westport project. The Governor's speech states —

Government also continues to pursue the once-in -a-century WESTPORT project.

Now that a location for the new container port has been selected at Kwinana, detailed design work continues, along with assessing and mitigating environmental impacts ...

I suspect that we are very long way from the construction of a port in Kwinana, because I think the government has significantly underestimated the environmental impacts that it will have. If the government was going to construct a port in Kwinana, which I suggest would be a multibillion-dollar investment, I wonder why it would not allow the private sector, which showed great interest in doing precisely that some years ago, to go ahead and do so at its own risk. When BGC and Len Buckeridge suggested that it would construct a container terminal in Kwinana at entirely their own risk —

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Completely dodgy!

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Was it completely dodgy?

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Thirty-five per cent of the selection criteria was based on your preparedness to enter into direct employee-employer relationships. The whole project was designed, and at the end of the day they only had one tenderer, because it was only Len Buckeridge who was prepared to put his hand up and say, "We are going to deliver workplace agreements in the stevedoring sector", and as soon as he got the contract he abandoned it anyhow.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** That is not entirely true. He did not actually abandon it. It is interesting that the issue at hand —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT:** Members! This is a contribution of Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** It is interesting that the issue at the heart of whether a port could be constructed at Kwinana is industrial relations. That is what we have just been told. This was an industrial relations issue. This was an issue about whether there would be contracted labour or non-contracted labour.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Do you reckon that is right, that 35 per cent of the selection criteria would be based on that?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** The minister is telling us that it is an industrial relations question, and in her view it is not an issue of environment. It is industrial relations. The Labor government will come along and build an equivalent port.

If we look at how Metronet is going—I will accept that it is going; construction is occurring—I will be very interested to see precisely how the re-use of the Forrestfield-Airport Link soil is going and whether the PFAS issues have been dealt with or not, but that is a question for another day. I will wait to see. I will be asking that one of the transport minister at some point—that is, whether that is a waste product or a re-usable product. But we do know that the government is progressing on Metronet. It might not be on time, it might not be on budget, but it is progressing. I will give the government that. There is some history here about the Labor Party delivering projects, but we probably should not go into too much detail, because I know some of the ministers are a bit sensitive about that. We remember how some of these projects went.

It is absolutely the case that the proposed Westport project is going to be very difficult to deliver. I suspect that we will get some final costings and we will watch them blow out. I remember going to several meetings about Westport.

The Westport CEO came down and presented in the Bunbury region to the Bunbury CEO, because at that point there were still discussions about whether there might be some activity in the port of Bunbury—for example, it might take some of the overflow out. Every time some discussion or a slide came up on the port of Bunbury, it said “not economically viable”. Nothing in the port of Bunbury was economically viable. There are difficulties around the port of Bunbury, but this is obviously one of those things that the government is very good at, which is predetermining the outcome. This government went through the Westport process and effectively said to the people examining it, “You may not reinvest in the port of Fremantle and you may not recommend investment down in Bunbury to take overflow. The outcome that we expect from you is a new port in Kwinana in the sound.” Guess what happened? The recommendation said, “We require a port in the sound”, without any proper consideration to the environmental impacts that are going to go on there.

Mr Acting President (Hon Robin Chapple), you and I are crusty old environmentalists, if I could say that. I think this is going to be an incredibly interesting project to watch fall out. In 2019, I said, “What happens if the iron ore price stays up above \$US90 a tonne?” Guess what, guys? It has. Here is a prediction going forward. The government is going to have a very difficult time convincing everybody that it is going to construct a port in Kwinana. It has gone through the process now; it has done the initial consultation process and it will be in a holding pattern for the next four years. I suspect that at the 2025 election we will see this government having a conversation with the community saying, “We are still committed to a port in Kwinana; nothing has proceeded. We are still going through the environmental impact process, because it is an immensely complex process.” Mr Acting President, I think we did some very good work during the debate around the Environmental Protection Amendment Bill 2020. Your contribution was excellent, and I thought that the Minister for Environment conducted himself in an exemplary manner. That was a debate in which all members around the chamber were attempting to get the best outcome they could for the environment of Western Australia. One of the things we introduced was a cumulative impact study. I suggest that a cumulative impact study on Cockburn Sound is going to be one of the most interesting documents that you and I will probably read in the next few years, because it is no longer a pristine environment, and the impacts there are significant. This government is proposing major change and construction to an already damaged ecosystem. It is saying that it will do this because it is government policy. When it adds on a very difficult environmental process, which may well stymie the project itself, it will put on top the additional cost required to manage it.

Mr Acting President, I wonder whether you and I will live to see an additional port process in Cockburn Sound. With all the optimism in the world, this is going to be very difficult. I know that the government is focused on this because obviously it is a political outcome and it cannot afford for the debate to be too much around whether Roe 8 or 9 into the existing port of Fremantle is a better option than trying to completely rebuild the process in Kwinana. At some point I suspect that the worm will turn on this one and governments in the future will have to decide whether the political outcome is more important than the practical one of being able to get product into a port at a reasonable price with reasonable efficiency. This will be a backflip like imported farm labour. In my view, without doubt this is another backflip in the waiting. Time will tell.

In the Governor’s speech, the government said that it will reintroduce with its mandate—I love that word. If you win an election you have a mandate. Nobody generally refers to it when they lose an election. The speech states —

In addition, the Government will reintroduce, with its mandate, the Beeliar Wetlands Bill, to remove Roe 8 from the MRS, to ensure the sensitive wetland is protected into the future.

It is almost at that point anyway, because the government reclassified much of the Beeliar wetlands last year, so it would require control of both houses of Parliament to remedy that. I would suggest to the government that if we had control of both houses of Parliament, we could probably remove this ultimate level of protection if required as well. It will be interesting to see.

I do not intend to go on ad nauseam, but I will address some of the issues that were presented during the election campaign. I know that Hon Kyle McGinn mentioned some of the election commitments around Kalgoorlie. I thought that the Liberal Party came up with a couple of good ones out there. We committed \$6 million to the water bank investment. I think the expansion of the water bank project in Kalgoorlie is a fairly important project. I would recommend that Hon Kyle McGinn has another look at that project, whether or not his office is out there. That was probably the best of the projects the Liberal Party looked at out there.

**Hon Kyle McGinn:** You committed to all our projects in the last week as well.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** We committed to a couple of them, but the water bank project and the lighting project were two of mine. I think the water bank project is a worthy project. The other one that we put significant dollars into was lighting for safety—that is, I think, 25 per cent of the streetlights in Kalgoorlie are non-functional, and that is something the member might also take a look at. The best politics is when we take somebody else’s stuff and steal it—always has been, always will be. Those are a couple of projects that I think are worth looking at; they were quite reasonable ones.

Another project that I think the government should look at is the biosecurity levy, which is a problematic issue. Mr Acting President, I know that you and I are both passionate about biosecurity and that we would like to see

a stronger focus on keeping problematic weeds and invasive species, if not out, at least somewhat under control. That has not been the case. If honourable members do not know, prior to the mid-2000s there was a thing called the Agricultural Protection Board and its job was to enforce the biosecurity rules and act to engage in biosecurity control. During that period, somewhere around 2006 or 2007—I forget the exact year—it was replaced under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act. That act empowered local groups to be set up as recognised biosecurity groups, which would allow the government to then impose a regional levy. That levy would go towards biological control. There are a couple of key outcomes. Firstly, even though the levy is matched equally dollar for dollar by the state government, it is woefully inadequate for genuine biosecurity. Those recognised biosecurity groups try their very best to deliver biosecurity outcomes. They actually try to control invasive species, but there is no way that any of them can be successful given the level of funding that they have. At the same time that the government went through the BAM act change and instituted recognised biosecurity groups, it also abandoned ship on biosecurity itself.

When the legislation was debated in the lower house, where I was, government departments that had failed to do their job would be acknowledged in the annual report of the lead agency, which was the Department of Agriculture and Food. That was removed in the upper house and so there is no reflection of the government's performance in action in biosecurity. Instead, we simply transfer that action across to the scapegoats who are the recognised biosecurity groups. They try their absolute best. They really do. They attempt to control invasive species, but they are not resourced to do so. They cannot manage that process. Government's support and attempts to assist them are woefully inadequate. During the election campaign, the Liberal Party said that it would take one significant step. If someone has land in a regional area to which a biosecurity levy applies and they do the biosecurity that is required of them on their own land—it costs a significant amount of money or time, or both, to do so—they are then charged a fee so that a group of volunteers can go out and do that work on the land of people who cannot be bothered doing it for themselves. The worst perpetrators—the worst group who will not do that work themselves—are government departments, because the Agriculture Protection Board is no longer on their back requiring them to do that job. Therefore, people pay twice. They pay to do biosecurity on their land and they pay a fee for biosecurity to be done on the land of somebody else who does not do the job.

A couple of things need to happen. The Liberal Party said in the first instance we would pay both the levy of the landholder and the matching dollar-for-dollar fund from the state. It is only \$12 million across four years. It is \$3 million a year. That is how much the matching levy is in Western Australia put forward by the state government. Do members know what that means? It means that in a lot of areas the entire biosecurity approach by government, and through the BAM act sector, is allocated \$6 million a year. It is woefully inadequate. It is absolutely inadequate to do the job. We cannot get the job done.

I had a conversation with the Minister for Agriculture and Food about a couple of my pet topics, including arum lilies. I am pleased to see that the Minister for Agriculture and Food was keen to see how we might deal with arum lilies better, and I thought that was a really positive approach. We do not just niggle each other. On occasions we try to achieve a reasonable outcome. The system absolutely needs to be reviewed because we cannot simply handball all the responsibility to an inadequately funded group of volunteers, effectively, and say that it is their job. That is precisely what has happened under the biosecurity system in Western Australia. It is not adequate. It cannot be adequate. It will not work in the long term and it will, in the long term, simply alienate both landowners and the people trying to do the job. It either needs to be resourced properly so that those volunteer groups have adequate resources to do the job that needs to be done or an entirely new system needs to be put in place. We cannot go on simply abandoning ship on biosecurity, and that is exactly what has happened.

Another thing that we as an opposition did going into the election was talk about water security in regional areas. Other members have raised that matter tonight and I think it is a critical issue. There will need to be greater investment in water security in whatever form that takes.

I want to make a few comments about the functioning of Parliament and some of the members as we go forward. A number of members who will be leaving this place have made an enormous contribution to Parliament. I am concerned, as many people are concerned, that democracy is not well served by having the kind of electoral result that we had a couple of months ago. I sat on polling booths for three and a half weeks or whatever it was. It felt like three and a half months! When the Liberal Party was in the position it was in, it was not the most pleasant experience in the world, particularly for me when I spent most of that time in Collie. It was an interesting experience. I have to say that from sitting down with the people who were handing out how-to-vote cards for the Labor Party and the Greens and the Nationals WA, I learned that they were almost universally of the view that democracy is not well served by having the kind of landslide that occurred on 13 March. Labor Party people quite readily said that it is not good for accountability.

We have already seen that in what we have done today and the beginning of Parliament; the opposition's focus has been on accountability. It may not be well received, but accountability will be critical going forward. It will be very hard. The lower house has four Nationals and two Liberals. It is a very difficult process down there. But in the upper house, the official opposition has 10 members. We are yet to see what the new crossbench will be like. We appreciated working with the crossbench that we have had. The federal Liberal Party complains ad nauseam about the crossbench that it has to deal with in the Senate, but sometimes the outcomes are better than if it had its

own way all the time. The crossbench that we have had over the last four years has not always agreed with us. Heaven knows we have not always agreed with ourselves. The Liberal Party and the National Party have disagreed and we have not always voted the same way, but, in my view, everybody has done what they thought was the best for the state of Western Australia. It will come to a point at which doing our best for the state of Western Australia becomes meaningless if we are not careful. Although the government will have enormous power in a few weeks, we will continue to do our best to hold the government to account. I think that will occur in the upper house to an extent, but we will have to step up to the mark. Maybe the opposition will have to be more focused and better than it has ever been before, just because the numbers look like what they look like.

I personally will miss the President, assuming she is not put back into that same position. Hon Kate Doust has, in my view, been incredibly even-handed, respectful and polite. That is not to say that I always got my way, because I did not. I thought there were plenty of times when I should have received the call and I did not. But I commend to the house the work of Hon Kate Doust. I thought that she maintained a dignity and a presence that I will remember going forward. Her contribution has been, in my view, nothing short of magnificent. She has done a great job. She has earned the respect of all sides of Parliament and I will be sad if she is no longer sitting in that seat going forward, because I think that she has been as good a President or a Speaker as we could have—and I have seen both. I am happy to say that I thought Hon Peter Watson was a pretty reasonable Speaker. I know my colleagues in the lower house will probably take me out and beat me for that! Hon Kate Doust has been a cut above and her contribution needs to be recognised by everybody.

I will miss the interaction with the crossbench. Again, we did not necessarily agree on everything. We often had to negotiate fairly hard, but the members of Pauline Hanson's One Nation and Hon Rick Mazza and Hon Aaron Stonehouse have made a great contribution. I still think Hon Aaron Stonehouse should have tried to jump ship to the Liberal Party, but as it turns out, in South Metro, the second seat probably was not that good anyway, so it would not have helped him.

I commend the Greens for their work over the last four years. To be honest, I think people underestimate the contribution that the Greens make.

**Hon Darren West** interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** It is all right, Hon Darren West—nobody underestimates or overestimates the contribution that you make!

**Hon Sue Ellery:** So nasty!

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I am just responding.

The Greens have been fantastic. It is good that the Greens think about their vote. We sometimes make the assumption that the Greens are an offshoot of the Labor Party, but the Greens have demonstrated in the past four years that they are fiercely independent. This chamber will be the poorer for them departing.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** You know that they have a member coming in?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Yes, they have one member coming in. I am talking about the four members who currently sit in this place and will no longer be here. The Greens will go from four members to one. That is a shame. It is simply a reflection of the fact that the Greens generally get around half a quota and rely on Labor preferences to get them the rest of the way, and this time around Labor was a bit higher up. The result in the South West Region was interesting. I think Labor had 3.96 quotas. It got close to getting four members up. To be honest, it was astounding that there was not a fourth Labor member in the South West Region.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** Even Hannah would have got elected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** That is right; she would have been, but she is now in the seat of Victoria Park.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** Again.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Yes, again. It is a cycle.

Madam Acting President (Hon Adele Farina), I will miss your contribution, particularly in the south west. I know it is not politic to engage with the chair, so I will speak about you, not to you. I travel very much around the south west. With the possible exception of Hon Colin Tincknell, who seems to follow me all over the place, the person whom I have seen most often everywhere else has been Hon Adele Farina. Her politics are obviously quite different from mine, but I have to acknowledge the amount of work that she has put into the South West Region. I do not understand the politics of the Labor Party in removing her from that position. Her contribution to the South West Region has been formidable. This Parliament will be the poorer for her not being here in the future and making a contribution. I am sure she will be back in the south west to make herself known. I have spent as much time with Hon Adele Farina as I have with Hon Colin Tincknell. I do not know how many Australia Day events we have gone to together to welcome new Australian residents. In an era in which the Labor Party is keen to have effectively fly-in fly-out members in the South West Region—with the exception of Jackie Jarvis, who will be coming in—we will miss the contribution of Hon Adele Farina. I look forward to her contribution at some point. I hope she understands that she is highly respected by her opponents on this side of the house.



With those few words, it will be a very interesting four years. I am very thankful to the Liberal Party for giving me the opportunity to be here. I am very thankful to the people of the South West Region, who only dropped the Liberal Party in the upper house from 1.6 to 1.3 quotas, which means I get to stay.

I look forward to working with the National Party to hold the government to account. As has been demonstrated tonight by the behaviour of government members, the Labor Party is not all that keen on being held accountable. If we have no other focus for the next four years, it will be to hold the Premier to account. The Labor Party got the vote that it did on the popularity of the Premier. Some arrogance and hubris is already creeping in. We will be able to take advantage of those opportunities if we are smart enough and work hard enough. During the election campaign the Labor Party ignored regional areas and denied that it had an agenda on electoral reform in the upper house, yet six weeks later it is proclaiming it from the treetops, with trumpets. We are now seeing this government and this Premier in their true light for the first time. I look forward to the opportunity to put a spotlight on the Premier.

**HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [8.44 pm]: I will continue in the same vein as Hon Dr Steve Thomas. Towards the end of his address, he acknowledged those members who will be leaving us in a couple of weeks, in fact after 13 May. I look forward to welcoming the new members to this place. However, of course it is a great shame to lose so many members from both sides of the chamber. Those members have all made a fantastic contribution over the past four years. It has been very interesting from my perspective, as a new member in the last term, to learn how to work with all those members on various committees and in the other jobs that we do as members of Parliament. A number of members of this chamber from all sides, and also from the other place, participated in the parliamentary leadership program early in the piece. I found that program particularly interesting, because it demonstrated the goodwill, I guess, between members regardless of the politics that they bring to this place, and their willingness to work together and desire to serve their communities and the public of Western Australia.

We heard today from Hon Ken Baston in his address, and we will hear from other members over the coming sitting days. I look toward to their reflections on their achievements and to hearing some of the things that they have witnessed as members of this place, particularly considering that some of those members have spent considerably more time in this place than others. I look forward to hearing from them. I acknowledge the work they have done in serving this state, and thank them for that.

I would also like to acknowledge the comments of Hon Dr Steve Thomas. It was a very tough election for our side of the political landscape. It was certainly evident early on that a big change was coming; I do not think anyone can deny that. It was very clear from the early polling that the support for the McGowan government was very high. It was very difficult to give away how-to-vote cards of certain colours. That was interesting. It was a lesson for us for a number of different reasons. What we can take away from that is that, overwhelmingly, Western Australians feel that the McGowan government has done a good job with COVID. Of course other factors also played into the result. We put up a good fight—the best fight that we could. It was an extraordinary result that the National Party ended up with more members in the other place than our colleagues in the blue team did. That is certainly not something that we predicted or desired. That has led to us having to find a path forward as an alliance opposition. That is an eminently sensible decision.

As Hon Dr Steve Thomas said, the next four years will be absolutely about accountability and making sure that the unfettered power that the McGowan government now has is not misused at the expense of Western Australians across the state, regardless of whether they live in the metropolitan area or the regions. It is very important that, as the opposition, we do our utmost to hold the government to account. I look forward to working with the new members of the crossbench when they come in. It will be a very interesting mix. The fortieth Parliament was also a very interesting mix. I really enjoyed working with the members of the crossbench, regardless of whether their views necessarily aligned with my views or those of my colleagues in the National Party. It has been a very interesting and enjoyable process learning to work with all of you.

Obviously, the election result has meant that we have had to divide the portfolios among opposition members and take on shadow portfolio roles, which has not been usual or common for members of the National Party, certainly in this state, for many years because we have not been in a formal coalition. That will keep us very busy as we hold the government to account and keep an eye on the various things that are happening in our various portfolio areas as we go forward. Gold-standard accountability was the number one promise made by the Labor Party when it was campaigning during the 2017 election. We are yet to see that happen. I look forward to debating tomorrow the important motion to establish a select committee to look into that. It will certainly be very interesting.

I turn to the Governor's speech. Before I make some comments about it, I acknowledge that I hold the Governor in the highest esteem and have the greatest respect for him. I have respected him for many, many years as a very good Western Australian because he absolutely represents the interests of his state. He certainly did so when he was a federal member of Parliament and he has been doing the same in his role as Governor of Western Australia. I absolutely have the greatest of respect for him. The Governor's address outlined a number of different things that the government has prioritised in the coming term, particularly its legislative agenda. He referred to a number of pieces of legislation that the government wants to progress over the coming term. It is interesting that much of that

legislative agenda is not new; it is, in fact, legislation that was already before the fortieth Parliament. In fact, much of that legislation was read into this house but it never saw the light of day again for debate, so I find it interesting that the government is essentially rehashing its previous legislative agenda. The government did not progress much of the legislation. I am unsure why. Even though some of it was identified as priority legislation, it was never brought back on for debate. We never had an opportunity to progress the legislation that is now apparently of the utmost importance to the Western Australian government in the forty-first Parliament. It is very interesting that the Governor referred to so much legislation that was not debated. We did not have that opportunity in the former Parliament. Are we going to see a rehash of the same old agenda? Are we going to see an agenda full of bills that we will not debate, meaning that in four years we will end up having not achieved very much? We shall see.

I want to focus on one particular area of the Governor's address, which is health, particularly mental health. I will take members on a personal journey by referring to an experience that I have had over the past eight or nine months that has focused my attention on just how appallingly bad the mental health system is in this state. It is unacceptable. Even though my family's experience of mental health services in this state was bad, that is not at all a reflection on the people who work in those services. There are simply not enough of them. The people in the system with whom we dealt—as I go through, I will talk about that—were absolutely excellent and first-rate, but the system itself and the availability of staff is largely the problem.

In July last year, I was at an appointment in Esperance with my youngest daughter. My phone rang but, of course, because I was at an appointment I ignored it. It rang another two times and eventually I stepped out of the appointment and took the call. My fiancée, who is in Perth, had been called by my eldest daughter's school and asked to pick her up. During the call she did not say just how serious the issue was. When she went to the school to pick up my daughter, she found her in a wheelchair. She could not stand and for all intents and purposes the school thought she was having an epileptic fit—she was not—so they put her in a wheelchair. One of the teachers helped to get her in the car and she was taken straight to the emergency department at Fiona Stanley Hospital. The year coordinator followed my fiancée to the hospital. The staff at Fiona Stanley Hospital did not really do much. They could not really offer a solution. They gave my daughter some temporary medication and suggested that she get a referral to the child and adolescent mental health service, which we subsequently followed up. It took weeks and weeks to get a referral. In the meantime, we saw her GP but we were unable to get into any other services. Eventually, we got an appointment with the child and adolescent mental health service, which lasted about an hour or so. At the end of the appointment they said, "We think it's this. We'll give you this prescription but we don't want to see you because you're not serious enough. Your case is not serious enough for us." I asked what that meant and they said that they see the people who are at the very end—those who are at crisis point and want to take their own life. That is the message I got very clearly from those people. That is not a reflection on them; it is a reflection on the fact that that service simply cannot cope with the number of young people in our community who are suffering from serious mental problems. We left that appointment with no resolution and no ongoing follow-up. We had no-one to talk to about the issues that my daughter was going through. At the end of the day, we decided that the only choice we had was to seek private help. I guess I am lucky because I am in a position in which we have the wherewithal to afford a private psychiatrist or psychologist. We worked hard to find a private psychologist. That was not so difficult; it took us about four or five weeks.

My daughter had already been seeing the wonderful people at Youth Focus, which is an absolutely brilliant service. Unfortunately, the practitioner my daughter had been dealing with left to go to a new job and, of course, that meant my daughter had to go back on the waiting list, so it was another eight weeks before we could get in again, which is not ideal when the circumstances were as serious as they were. Private psychology was not such an issue. On the other hand, private psychiatry was absolutely impossible. The incident with my daughter happened in July, but it was not until late February that we had our first appointment with a private psychiatrist, but not for lack of trying. We rang every single psychiatrist in the city. Many of them would say, "She's too young. We don't see people under the age of 18." Many of the youth-focused psychiatrists said, "She's too old. We don't see anyone over the age of 16." The cohort of children between the ages of 16 and 18, is one of the most vulnerable cohorts because of the stressors they have in years 11 and 12 with ATAR and because they are young adults and that sort of thing. We know that, but it is also one of the cohorts that is least able to access services, and that has to fundamentally change. Eventually, as I said, we were lucky enough to find a psychiatrist, but it took us from July last year to February this year to find that service. We have a hell of a long way to go yet, but we are very lucky that we were able to find that service and pay for that service because it is not cheap—not at all—but I was not going to quibble about paying for whatever service was needed for my child's mental health. I do want to say, though: what happens to those people who cannot afford that and do not have the financial wherewithal to pay for those private services? How do they get the help they need? There is a crisis in our mental health system. Yes, extra beds sound good, but it is also about the people. Our child and adolescent mental health service needs significantly more resourcing than it has, including more people. All that will take time—I acknowledge that—but it seems to me that that is something that is not getting better; it is a problem that is getting far worse in our community. There is significantly more demand. My daughter is lucky because she got into a gifted and talented education program at John Curtin College of the Arts. I have to give a big shout-out to the wonderful teachers, staff, medical staff and student services at John Curtin College; I cannot speak highly enough of that school. The way that it has dealt with my daughter and others I know in that school who have gone through similar things is exemplary. I do want to acknowledge those

people who have done such a brilliant job to engage, to be helpful, to understand and to deal with the issues that we faced and continue to face. They are saying that they are seeing more and more of this. They have never before seen the numbers that they are seeing of people with the sorts of issues and experiences that my daughter and other people with similar experiences have had. Their demand for mental health services from school psychologists and other services around the school is much higher than it ever has been, and that is a real worry. It really does point to a need to spend significant money on mental health services to ensure that we adequately fund our government services in mental health and also ensure that there are places for training at university and so on to make sure that we have the psychologists and psychiatrists coming online and that we have the resources in our schools to keep a really big eye on the mental health problems that we seem to be having with our youth, which we obviously need to try to do all we can to avoid. It is critical.

I have to say that I am pleased to see Hon Stephen Dawson named the Minister for Mental Health. I have enjoyed working with Hon Stephen Dawson over the past four years. I think he certainly is someone who is prepared to listen and do what he can to understand those issues, and I am sure that he will. I think that this issue is one that we cannot wait around on. It is a critical problem and it is a fundamental problem with our mental health system. We know that there are problems with our health system. We are seeing record levels of ambulance ramping and other things as well. There are problems in our health system that we need to address, and our mental health services in this state are fundamentally important right across the state. Whether in metropolitan or regional areas, we all need to recognise that a great deal needs to be done to address the problems that we have there, including the lack of professional people, professional services and the availability of those services to all Western Australians. That needs to be addressed. Our hospital system also needs to be improved to enable those people who need that care to go into care in the hospital system.

I will not talk much more about my own experience. Certainly, I will not go into any great details; it is pretty challenging to talk about at the best of times. I will talk, again, about the whole experience of that age between 16 and 18. At Perth Children's Hospital, it does not matter if someone is over the age of 16 by two days—they are too old. At the adult hospitals such as Fiona Stanley Hospital, they say they cannot do much for people under the age of 18. There is really a critical gap there. There certainly is an issue that we need to address. I can only imagine what it must be like for those families out there who do not have the financial wherewithal to be able to pay for private services. It must be terribly, terribly difficult for them trying to help their loved ones through one of the most difficult times of their lives. I look forward to the government's commitment to mental health, given that the Governor has addressed that in his contribution as being one of the most important things on the McGowan government's agenda in the forty-first Parliament. I very much look forward to seeing how that progresses.

I will not continue for too much longer, members. I think there are plenty of other people who want to give their Address-in-Reply to the Governor's speech and also talk about what we can expect from the McGowan government in the forty-first Parliament and how we on this side of the chamber need to focus our attention on holding the government to account. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Nationals WA–Liberal alliance, as it is called, to hold the government to account as best we can. It certainly will be interesting. It is not a position that we expected to be in. Nonetheless, we will do our utmost. We take the job of holding this government to account very seriously. We take our job as representatives of our communities and the people of Western Australia very seriously and we will absolutely call out the government when we see things being done that are to the detriment of the people of Western Australia, be they regional, metropolitan or otherwise. I look forward to the contribution of other members in their Addresses-in-Reply. I thank those members who I have had the pleasure of working with over the past four years. It has been a great privilege to have met those who are leaving and those who are staying. I am sure that I will look forward to working with them over the coming four years.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Pierre Yang**.

## **INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS' DAY**

### *Statement*

**HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural)** [9.07 pm]: It is a rare occasion that I can beat Hon Alison Xamon to make a member's statement, and I welcome the call.

I rise this evening to recognise that today is International Firefighters' Day. The day observed on 4 May each year coincides with the feast of St Florian, the patron saint of firefighters. It is symbolised by the red and blue ribbon that I am wearing this evening, which represents two elements of firefighting, being fire and water, or, as firefighters refer to it more scientifically, putting the wet stuff on the red stuff. The day allows us to remember annually those volunteer and career firefighters who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. It also allows us to reflect on the courage, selflessness and commitment of our current and continuing firefighters in their lifesaving work.

On Sunday, I joined with the Minister for Emergency Services, His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, volunteer associations, unions, retired and serving firefighters, and the families and friends of those we have lost and those who continue to serve. As a former career firefighter and a volunteer firefighter, I have always made the effort on this day to pay my respects. This year it was my first

public commitment as the shadow Minister for Emergency Services representing the Leader of the Opposition and the National and Liberal opposition. The service was cancelled last year due to COVID-19, and this year it was on shaky ground as we dealt with recent community transmission and the related restrictions. It was fortunate that this year the service was able to proceed. I encourage members who are not familiar with the day or the service that takes place in Kings Park to consider it on a future occasion.

The Firefighters' Memorial Grove, located in Kings Park, is a solemn but beautiful place. Opened in 2000, the memorial has a granite arc representing the base of a burnt tree and a 10-tonne rock in the shape of a flame. In more recent years, a life-sized bronze statue of two firefighters was commissioned and has been placed at the memorial.

Most people would reasonably associate firefighting as a high-risk occasion and would expect that serious injury or death would ordinarily occur from traumatic events and physical injury. However, we are learning more as every year passes about the impact on firefighters of the consistent exposure to chemicals, smoke and other hazardous substances, as well as psychological injury and the impact that this has on mental health and wellbeing. Sadly, many of the names on the fallen firefighters' honour roll in recent years can be associated with these risks and challenges.

I want to quote now from the Fallen Firefighters' Honour Roll, which was recited at Sunday's service ahead of today's International Firefighters' Day. This is the honour roll of firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty in Western Australia. Firstly, from the Western Australian career fire and rescue service —

... (William) Lingard ...

Donald Hunter ...

Arthur du Borlay ...

William ... Murphy ...

Garry Miller ...

Colin Smith ...

Leo Leyland ...

Laurie Rose ...

Jake O'Callaghan ...

Gary Peat ...

Craig Brown ...

Ronald Wilson ...

Ian Oliver ...

Ian Ding ...

Lance Davey ...

Robert Reed ...

Todd Liddington ...

Shona McCulloch ...

Gregory Nicolay ...

Grant Cowper ...

Mark Claffey ...

Maurie Parker ...

Kevin Corbey ...

Kim Maldon ...

Steve McDonald ...

Steven Watson ...

David Parkin ...

From the Western Australian volunteer fire and rescue service —

Fredrick Maller ...

Charles White ...

Thomas Fry ...  
Graham Ennor ...  
John Wake ...  
Glenn Hoffman ...

From the Bush Fire Service of Western Australia —

Joseph Perks ...  
Leslie Eyden ...  
James Pound ...  
Ernest White ...  
Clifford Rogers ...  
Edna McLaren ...  
Colin McLean ...  
Raymond Smith ...  
Lionel Armstrong ...  
John Giacomelli ...  
Murray Pfennig ...  
James Marshall ...  
Luigi Scolari ...  
Mervyn Ronan ...  
Paul Robinson ...  
Jim Lees ...  
Colin Diprose ...  
John Sobczyk ...  
Richard Barrett-Lennard ...  
Robert Sprigg ...  
Craig Sandy ...  
Charles ... Baldock ...  
Ronald McBride ...  
Freddie Curnow ...  
Ross Fenwick ...

Lastly, from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions —

Johan Hilliger ...  
Robert Johnston ...  
George McCorkhill ...  
John Wiltshire-Butler ...  
Bill Bellianczuk ...  
Arthur Cleveland ...  
Fred Jaeske ...  
Louis Falcone ...  
John Rate ...  
Len Hughan ...  
Wendy Bearfoot ...

May we never forget their names.

If I could finish on this point in reciting, again, what was recited on Sunday at what was quite a moving and personal service—that is, the firefighter’s prayer.

When sirens sound, when I respond,  
When urgency is there,  
I ask, O God, that You would he would heed  
A firefighter’s prayer...

When I encounter any scene  
With smoke and flames in force,  
Help me to hear the faintest cry  
And then locate its source.

Help me to work effectively  
Extinguishing the flames,  
Protecting lives and property  
Regardless of their names.

Please keep me focussed on my task  
And help me to be brave,  
To give the very best in me  
To rescue and to save.

And should it be, through circumstance,  
My life You cannot spare,  
Surround my family with Your love  
And keep them in Your care.

Amen.

Madam President, sadly, many of the names on that honour roll are people who I have worked with, I have known and they, indeed, came from my own local government area. May their memories and their names never be forgotten and may they rest in peace.

## ALCOA

### *Statement*

**HON DIANE EVERS (South West)** [9.15 pm]: First thing before I get on to my full member’s statement, I want to say how pleased I was to hear that there is an advance in the use of freight on rail. I was delighted with the answer to one of the questions today, to know that that is being taken seriously and it is being worked on. Many people out in the regional areas will be very pleased to hear that that is going ahead, and I hope to see more of it.

Today I will first speak about Alcoa. I recognise that Alcoa presents a wicked problem for us. There is no answer because if we try to enforce the regulations and the rules that it is supposed to abide by, it will cry poor and at some point just say that it will leave. We cannot have that happen in the south west because Alcoa is a very significant employer there. But that does not lessen the fact that it is not acting as a responsible corporate citizen. The people who are gathering across the south west, for many different reasons, are going to raise this issue over and again until something is done. Currently, Alcoa is very price dependent and right now the price for aluminium is quite high, but just after COVID it dropped to about \$US1 500 a tonne.

Although the price has climbed back up and it is looking pretty good, which is making Alcoa ramp-up the speed at which it is trying to get bauxite out of its mines, the trajectory for that price was falling. As we start recycling more aluminium, the price will continue to fall because there is enough of it out there so that we can continue to re-use it. I recognise that Alcoa is going to cry poor. I recognise that the federal government just gave it \$150 million in Victoria to keep the smelter going there and that we are going to face the same issue, so what I would like to see eventually is more industry happening in the south west to make up for the fact that one day we may lose Alcoa. I have to say that it will not be a sorry day when that happens.

First off, just before the election, on 9 May, Alcoa had a spill of seven million litres of a toxic, caustic substance—a slurry. The maintenance on Alcoa’s equipment has not been kept up to the level that it should, and I have heard this from people who currently work there. One piece of equipment was being worked on and people were switching it on and off to try to get it restarted. Half an hour later—luckily no-one was still in the area—one of the rakes from within the container that was holding the seven million litres of caustic substance burst through the bottom of it and the slurry spilled out. They say that the slurry was contained within the bunds. I heard about this the next morning and I passed on the information so that poisons control, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and ABC news were informed about it, and all of a sudden Alcoa is trying to put everything in place. It is saying that there was no problem and the spill was contained within the area, except for some that spilled over and went into other areas. But it is all okay. It is cleaned it all up. There is no need to worry! There is nothing to see here!

I have not yet seen the report from DWER about what happened there, but what is most important is that maintenance is not up to scratch, people's lives are in danger and we are very lucky that no-one was injured or died in that accident. It was the worst accident in the last 30 or 40 years from what I have heard. I know that in 2005 there was a spill of 500 000 litres, and there were shockwaves around what was going to be done, whether there were going to be fines, whether it was cleaned up and what was happening. Here we are talking seven million litres and it could have even been more. At the time the liquid burst and spilt out, there was still more going into the top of that container. I would like to hear more.

That is in addition to the fact that there is a long history on this. I have been going through the papers at some of us here have been doing, and in my office I have papers on Alcoa going back to before 2000. The Greens have been supporting people there to try to hold Alcoa to account and it just has not got us very far, because every time we work out one issue and try to fix it, there are still several others that are still going wrong. There is very little incentive on either side of government to do anything about this, because we do not want to hurt the industry and the jobs. On the other hand, in addition to having employees' lives at risk there is also, as I have said many times here before, the trees—the area of jarrah that is being knocked down. The Forest Products Commission is given a couple of weeks' notice, and the FPC asks the people it deals with whether they want any firewood and to come and get some. The rest of the wood is bulldozed over, piled up and burnt. If we think our jarrah is worth something, why are we burning it in situ? It makes no sense whatsoever. Then Alcoa takes the bauxite from where the jarrah grows, because jarrah grows best in areas with high bauxite content. Alcoa takes it and then revegetates the area, but the jarrah is not going to grow as well. Alcoa always says it does best practice, but in the past it has been best practice with exotic species, then it was best practice by just throwing in as many seeds and seedlings as it possibly could. Now it is best practice by hilling the land, in a way, and creating bunds to try to keep the water near the trees that have been planted. We were just talking about firefighting. Imagine fighting a fire there when there is this completely corrugated landscape because it was what was built to try to keep the water there. It is changing everything. Alcoa is damaging our landscape; it is damaging our jarrah forest.

There are a lot of community groups. There is the Dwellingup Discovery Forest group and there is the Save Our Jarrah group. They are desperately trying to hold on to little pockets of beautiful jarrah forest near their towns that are good for tourism and the community. They are just trying to hold on to them. I really beg of this government to please listen to these people. Please try to work with the community groups to try to hold from making more and more damage that we just do not need.

On top of this there are noise issues. Alcoa consistently goes over the noise levels it is allowed. What does Alcoa tell people? It says, "Give us a call." Possibly, if a person gets through and tells someone that it is noisy and the noise is over the limit, Alcoa says it will do something about it. Maybe Alcoa will or will not shut down something for half an hour or an hour, but then it just starts it up again because that is what it does. Alcoa says it is just because the wind direction is going towards the people complaining. That is not working.

There is also dust. I have just been to Pinjarra visiting people who have dust. They have had samples done. The samples come out the same as they have at Alcoa's mudflats due to its processes. Pinjarra has been living with this dust coming in. We do not have very good health records, but some studies have been done to find rates of cancer. It appears that there is a link here, but it is very hard to get that information together. It would cost a considerable amount of money.

There are some dramas with Alcoa operating in the south west and it is not abiding by the conditions of its state agreement, because these issues just keep happening. We have a very difficult problem. We know Alcoa is a large employer and we know it provides royalties. Luckily, we have royalties coming from so many other things, so maybe this one is not so important. I think we need to prepare for the day when maybe we do not have Alcoa there. Even though there is a state agreement act, which I believe has got until around 2045 or so, we really need to keep an eye on this to make sure we hold Alcoa to account. As it stands, Alcoa is losing its social licence. It is putting profit ahead of safety, the communities it operates and the health of people and the environment. To make it even worse, it appears that the department, and I take this to be the government, cares little about holding Alcoa to account, to ensure it meets its responsibilities and that the environment is protected. Please listen to the people who would like to protect themselves, their environment and their homes, and recognise that Alcoa must be held accountable. The safety risk alone should cause something to occur to make sure that this does not get worse and that it is not allowed to continue in the state it is in.

## GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS — REGIONS

### *Statement*

**HON ROBIN SCOTT (Mining and Pastoral)** [9.24 pm]: I would like to use my member's statement to comment on the speeches made today by Hon Kyle McGinn and Hon Darren West. They were brilliant and really great speeches. I am sorry that I will not be around to see these promised projects take place in regional Western Australia. In fact, if I lived in Perth and heard these speeches, I would be quite jealous that all this time and money is going to be spent in regional WA. But make no mistake, they will make a huge difference to the constituents of regional WA.

There are promises for projects to upgrade sporting facilities in many regional towns. Some men's sheds will get upgrades. One of them is getting a kitchen, which I believe means that it will be able to compete with the local muffin companies. Laverton has been promised a go-kart track—again. It is a great idea. The government is going to spend \$80 000 to do that. It is fantastic. There will be funding for upgrades to historic buildings in Leonora. The government is going to spend \$100 000. I am not sure how much of an upgrade we will get for \$100 000, but anyway it is still good. The sealing of the Goldfields Highway between Meekatharra and Wiluna is going ahead very, very slowly, I have to say. But it is still progressing. Of the 184 kilometres of original road, we still have 119 kilometres to do.

All these wonderful things are happening during the forty-first Parliament, and I can only assume that the promised projects are a reward for giving the Premier McGowan and his government a vote of confidence and a second term. Many of the promises were requested three or four years, but fell on deaf ears. Nonetheless, they have been promised and I am sure the opposition will keep a close eye on the start and finish dates of these projects. My only concern is that there was no mention of the progress of the Laverton Hospital upgrade or the camping facilities for visitors who come in from the lands that the Shire of Laverton has asked for. Maybe they can camp overnight at the go-kart facilities, provided it will have running water and toilet facilities. I doubt \$80 000 will be enough to provide those facilities. The upgrade of the historic buildings in Leonora is great, but I would like to hear that the aged-care facility in Leonora will be upgraded to 16 units as originally planned, instead of the eight units that the town is now getting. The Wiluna road is progressing at a snail's pace. I am glad that local people are getting the opportunity to learn, to be trained and to get jobs; however, if they want to compete in a very competitive market, they will have to be prepared to go to work every day if they want to win contracts. Sadly, there was a fatality on the Meekatharra to Wiluna road yesterday, when a truck driver rolled his truck. Unfortunately, he died.

There was no mention of the nursing posts in the midwest towns of Yalgoo, Mt Magnet and Cue. The shires of those three towns have been begging for an upgrade to the facilities. Those facilities are very, very poor and undermanned. The towns want better facilities and hopefully two nurses to man the posts. There was no mention of the Meekatharra Hospital upgrade. The hospital is slowly falling apart and has been for many years. Going back to Kalgoorlie–Boulder, elective surgery is now cancelled due to the lack of nurses and doctors. Maybe with the sporting facilities being upgraded in the town it may entice them to the goldfields. I know I sound a bit cynical; it is because I am. But with a bit of luck, I hope, honourable members in the Labor Party who represent the Mining and Pastoral Region will prove me wrong in the very near future. Let us hope that the party of the bush comes good with its promises.

*House adjourned at 9.29 pm*

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