



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 14 March 2024

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 9.00 am, acknowledged country and read prayers.

SERPENTINE GROUNDWATER ALLOCATION LIMITS

Statement by Minister for Water

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Water) [9.01 am]: I rise to inform the house that on Thursday, 7 March this year I announced the release of an update to the Serpentine groundwater allocation limits. The Serpentine groundwater allocation limits have been revised by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation in response to ongoing declines in groundwater levels due to climate change. Climate change has caused a significant reduction in rainfall in the Serpentine groundwater area, which is located approximately 30 kilometres south of Perth. Annual rainfall in the area has declined by about 10 per cent since 1975. From 1945 to 1974, average rainfall in the region was 870 millimetres a year. From 1975 to 2022, average rainfall dropped to 780 millimetres per annum. As a result of climate change, rainfall recharge to groundwater in the Serpentine area is now significantly less. Future climate projections for the area show that average annual rainfall could fall to 680 millimetres a year beyond 2030. The updated allocation limits have been published in the *Waangaamaap–Serpentine groundwater allocation statement*, which will reduce available groundwater in most of the Superficial and Leederville aquifer resources. The revised allocation limits will assist the protection of our precious groundwater resources, resulting in improved water security for local water users. The updates will also help to sustain important wetlands and bushland in the region. The new allocation limits will not impact entitlements that are already held by existing water licence holders. The publication of the updated allocation limits supports the state government's *Kep Katijin–Gabi Kaadadjan (Waterwise Perth action plan 2)*, which aims to establish leading waterwise communities for Perth and Peel by 2030. I thank the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for its work on this important publication, and I look forward to further updates on its implementation into the future.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE GRANTS

Statement by Minister for Early Childhood Education

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Early Childhood Education) [9.04 am]: I rise to update the house on the supporting children in early childhood education and care Western Australia grants program that the Minister for Education, Hon Tony Buti, and I announced late last year. The grant funding amounts of between \$20 000 and \$100 000 have been provided to early childhood providers across the state. These grants are focused on improving kindergarten participation and driving better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and developmentally vulnerable children. This is the first time grants like these have been available for WA's early childhood education and care sector after a funding boost from the Albanese Labor government that was delivered through the preschool reform agreement. I also want to acknowledge Minister Anne Aly, the federal Minister for Early Childhood Education, who is leading implementation of the preschool reform agreement, along with other state and territory counterparts, who all share a passion for children's early learning. This funding of over \$1 million in grants will benefit over 5 700 children, giving them the opportunity to learn and thrive and the best start in life. We know that early learning can have transformational benefits and our government is proud to be investing in children. The grants were administered by Child Australia and all providers approved under the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 were eligible to apply. I had the pleasure of attending Child Australia's Early Learning Centre in Lockridge with my colleague in the other place Hon Lorna Harper to announce the successful recipients. The successful grant recipients were from all over Western Australia, including regional and remote areas. Organisations such as Ewin Early Learning Centre in Kununurra are using their grant to create a culturally secure outdoor play space with sensory and nature-based elements. The grant will also allow them to acquire teaching aids, resources and play equipment with a focus on First Nations themes. Importantly, the grant will allow the centre to provide professional development for staff, acknowledging the critical role of early childhood educators. This is a great example of the Albanese and Cook Labor governments working together in a shared vision to best support our early learners.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Statement by Minister for Volunteering

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Volunteering) [9.06 am]: I am very pleased to inform the house that I recently presented Volunteering WA with a \$425 000 Lotterywest grant for National Volunteer Week celebrations. National Volunteer Week is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering and will be held from Monday, 20 May until Sunday, 26 May 2024. This funding will assist Volunteering WA to administer a small grants scheme of up to \$1 500 for organisations to host an event or activity to celebrate National Volunteer Week.

Last year 175 volunteer organisations shared over \$200 000, with more than 213 events held across the state. This year more than 300 volunteering organisations will share in \$335 000 to celebrate and recognise their volunteers throughout the week. The grant will also support Volunteering WA's Volunteer of the Year Awards held on Thursday, 23 May 2024. The awards recognise the important contributions of volunteers and feature seven categories: Excellence in Volunteer Management; Inclusive Volunteering; Lifetime Contribution to Volunteering; Young Volunteer of the Year; Excellence in Corporate Volunteering; Community Volunteer Organisation of the Year; and RAC WA Volunteer of the Year. The Cook government is committed to supporting and strengthening volunteering in WA and is investing more than \$6 million to the volunteering development service program over five years. This includes the Cook Labor government's recent \$2.1 million boost to support the expansion of regional volunteering development services. As Minister for Volunteering I look forward to celebrating National Volunteer Week and recognising the magnificent work our 1.5 million volunteers do here in WA.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — BACKFILLING

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Minister for Local Government) [9.08 am]: I rise to update the house on the success of the backfilling provisions of our government's landmark local government reforms. The introduction of optional preferential voting for local government elections has enabled new reforms to backfill vacancies on councils that arise within one year of an election. Under the old system, local governments were forced to hold extraordinary elections if a vacancy arose within a year of a council member being elected, and in a wide range of other situations. With our reforms, the need for extraordinary elections has been greatly reduced, meaning significant savings for ratepayers and avoiding disruption for the administration of local government. As members would know, preferential voting systems provide clear results of the order of candidates favoured by the voting public. Under our reforms, the next two highest polling candidates are identified on the declaration of the election results at each ordinary election. Then, if a vacancy arises, the local government CEO contacts the next highest polling candidate to offer them that place on the council.

Last October, the next preferred candidates in line to backfill vacancies were identified on the results of ordinary elections held across WA. I am advised that, to date, five vacancies have been backfilled at four local governments—the City of Gosnells, the Shire of Ravensthorpe, the City of Busselton and the Shire of Cranbrook. The cost savings under these reforms are substantial. For example, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries estimated that the cost of holding an extraordinary election at the City of Gosnells would have been in the vicinity of \$250 000. Elections in more rural parts of the state can be even more costly. I am advised that the estimated costs for elections in other districts can be as high as \$18 per elector. It can also take months to conduct an extraordinary election. Our backfilling reforms are also complemented by reforms to allow vacancies to be filled at an upcoming ordinary election with the approval of the Electoral Commissioner. Other provisions of the Local Government Amendment Act 2023 have also streamlined how vacancies are filled on election night if a council member is directly elected as mayor without the need for an extraordinary election.

This real reform takes many people to deliver. I take this opportunity to recognise the dedication of people who worked on these reforms, including people within the department and, in particular Mr Richard Marlin, Deputy Parliamentary Counsel, for his substantial work drafting these landmark changes. Our backfilling reforms are one of the many important improvements introduced as part of the most significant reforms to local government in more than 25 years—with more to come.

COMMUNITY RIVERCARE PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [9.11 am]: I today would like to update the house on the dozens of projects the state government has funded as part of its Community Rivercare program. The Community Rivercare program was launched by this government in 2017 to help fund projects that enhance and conserve the natural, cultural and social aspects of rivers, tributaries and urban drains within the Swan–Canning catchment. It has proven remarkably successful with the community since inception. That is why we committed an additional \$4 million to the program in 2021, demonstrating our government's commitment to supporting the community to manage our state's natural resources.

Since it was launched, the Community Rivercare program has funded 46 community groups and facilitated 89 projects. These have included bank stabilisation, habitat creation for water-dependent species, invasive weed removal and the revegetation with local plants. As of July 2022, projects funded by the program have resulted in nearly 300 000 seedlings planted, 29 hectares of waterways revegetated, more than 41 hectares of highly invasive weeds removed and 77 bird, bat and mammal boxes installed. The community has volunteered tens of thousands of hours of their time to this work, and their effort has been significant and is greatly appreciated.

The program's funding also supports two dedicated officers to provide guidance on plant selection, weed control and community engagement. These officers are strategically located at the Chittering Landcare Centre and the

South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare to assist community groups across the Swan–Canning catchment. These officers also work closely with the community to deliver works along the Helena River at Helena Valley, Ellenbrook at Belhus, Wungong River at Champion Lakes and Bayswater Brook in Morley and Bayswater. These works are focused on removing significant weeds and replacing them with local species that will stabilise banks and provide a food source and habitat for local and native fauna.

In December 2023, I was pleased to announce the recipients of round 7 of the Community Rivercare program. More than a quarter of a million dollars was distributed across 14 groups to enable weed control, foreshore revegetation and wetland restoration work throughout key locations along the Swan–Canning catchment. In July, our government will open round 8 of the program, and I encourage community groups to apply and continue the program’s success into its eighth year. The Community Rivercare program’s success is demonstrated by the outcomes I have described today. It is proof that the community and government can work together to deliver good environmental, health and social outcomes for our state, and I look forward to its continued success in the years to come.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT — STATE-NOMINATED MIGRATION PROGRAM

Grievance

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.14 am]: My grievance today is addressed to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. I thank the minister for taking the grievance. I ask that the minister advocate for an increase in the number of WA applications limited under the state-nominated migration program and provide support and training to those migrants who have travelled to Western Australia under the mixed message from the state that they were needed to fill the skilled worker shortage.

International employees and travellers are being lured by the state government to fill WA labour shortages. Although programs and incentives to ease the skilled labour shortage in WA are welcome, many who have taken up the offer to travel to WA have been left high and dry by the state. Shortfalls in skilled migrant assessment and training programs as well as reduced limits to sponsored employee visas are forcing people to second-guess their decision to move to WA and to doubt the open invitation by the state to help with the widespread worker shortage.

Many skilled migrants came to WA with a trade, experience, qualifications and skills and took up the state’s offer to live and work in WA, helping with the critical labour shortage across many sectors. They had confidence in securing work and visas due to targeted messaging from the state through the Build a Life in WA website and the number of widespread job vacancies. Eligible skilled migrants were offered incentives of up to \$10 000 and were made promises of a strong resilient economy offering “secure, quality job opportunities”. The government website also lured workers with the promise of “warm weather, world-class surf and renowned craft beer”. Although the weather, surf and beer may be definitely worth the visit, these people are relocating their life and leaving their families and countries behind ready to take up work in WA. But they are now feeling let down by this state government as the cracks start to show in the facade of an expensive publicity campaign.

With the skills these people bring to the table when they come to WA, there is still a requirement to undergo skills assessment and training if their existing international licences and qualifications to work are not recognised. In one example, a fully qualified plumber invited to Western Australia from Ireland found it difficult to obtain work as a plumber with his current licence. The skills assessment cost was around \$6 000. Their situation was further compounded when they decided to pay the thousands for the skills assessment and were soon told the assessment was only offered in Queensland! Not only was this tradie misled in coming to WA for work he cannot access because his licence is not recognised, he was then told that he would have to pay to travel and stay in Queensland because WA could not assess the skilled workers encouraged to come here through this advertising. Sadly, nowhere on the Build a Life in WA website is there reference to the difficulty or the time and cost involved in skilled migrant tradesmen getting their qualifications recognised.

This state government is failing to address the labour shortages across WA by tying up access to these jobs for skilled migrants in red tape and bureaucracy, high costs, failure to support skilled workers who have moved to WA from overseas, and failure to provide adequate training and assessment programs. Another example is an educator from overseas who was attracted to Western Australia by the same government campaign and completed their skills assessment for the \$6 000 price tag. They were employed by the Department of Education, but were told that the state-nominated migration program had closed. Given no prior notice, and without the opportunity to submit an application to the program, the situation in WA is now forcing that employee to return home.

Primary school teachers are not on the 189 skilled visa list, and government departments cannot sponsor migrants unless they have the full two years needed to qualify for a 482 visa. Therefore, the state-nominated migration program is the only pathway, and its allocation is exhausted! To be granted certain skilled migration visas to live and work in Western Australia, you must be nominated through the state-nominated migration program. Migration WA, on behalf of the WA state government, provides WA state nomination to eligible applicants for two visa subclasses—the skilled nominated visa, subclass 190, and the skilled work regional (provisional) visa, subclass 491—which gives extra points on the Department of Home Affairs points test.

Announced in early February, the 2023–24 state-nominated migration program allocation has already been exhausted and those with expiring visas have been told to seek legal advice. The Department of Training and Workforce Development said —

The State Government continues to advocate for nomination allocation numbers that meet the needs of the State.

But is it? That is exactly what we are calling on the government to do—that is, advocate for numbers that meet the state’s needs. Clearly, the state government has failed to advocate for those numbers in the 2023–24 round. Under the state-nominated migration program, WA received 8 140 places for 2022–23, 4 950 more places than the previous year in 2023–24. WA places have been reduced by around 2 300. WA’s allocation has been slashed by 70 per cent under this government’s watch. If the state government does not advocate for our skilled workers, the end result will be doors closed to the program with no prior notice and no avenue to apply until after July 2024.

The value of skilled workers to a town or an economy is high, especially in regional communities. Their contribution is instant and the option for them to train others should be explored. Australia’s federal migration system is slow and complex, making it hard for even the most highly skilled migrants to come to our country. I am trying to encourage this government not to follow its federal counterparts. It should reduce the wait times, help people who want to live and work in WA, and help solve the labour shortage by minimising red tape within the state incentive and assessment programs. Skilled migrant workers are living within our communities now, but they will not be here for much longer unless this government stands up to its federal counterparts and advocates for more places for skilled migrant workers in WA while improving delivery and reducing the costs of assessments and training.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [9.21 am]: I am very pleased to respond to the member for Roe on the issue of skills shortages and what this government is doing to address the other side of the same coin when it comes to a healthy economy. We have low unemployment and a demand for skilled workers in our community and, as a government, we are very proud of our record in addressing those issues. I am pleased to address our record on this issue in this grievance. Most notable, particularly with attracting skilled migrants, is our \$195 million Reconnect WA initiative to attract skilled migrants. That package also includes attracting international students, working holiday makers and visitors to our state. We are doing a range of things, but it is important that we recognise first and foremost that although skilled migrants are an important part of the workforce mix, it will also always be the absolute priority of the Cook government to prioritise skilling local workers. We have invested significantly in fee-free and low-fee training so that more Western Australians can access quality training for the quality jobs that we have. This investment is working, with high enrolment numbers in TAFE and vocational training across priority areas such as construction, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, the care sector, hospitality and tourism. Of course, the new national skills agreement will inject \$1.3 billion into WA’s TAFE system, enabling us to continue to expand opportunities for Western Australians to upskill and reskill for jobs. This investment is paying off, with historically high enrolments and apprentice and trainee numbers.

The member raised a number of issues in relation to the challenges in our state because of our healthy economy and healthy jobs market. He referred in particular to a number of issues that are the responsibility of our federal government. I can only take from the focus of his grievance that he thinks the state government is doing a good job. For instance, he spoke about the state-nominated migration program. It is a key mechanism used to directly attract and retain skilled workers into key areas of demand not being met through other streams of the visa system. It is a crucial program to attract skilled workers into Western Australia, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses. The key barriers for those small and medium-sized employers is finding a migrant in the first place and the overall complexity of costs and obligations imposed by the commonwealth as an employer sponsor. We have made a number of changes to our state-based program to position WA as the destination of choice for skilled migrants, including expanding occupation lists to ensure that priority industries are captured. We have also waived the \$200 application fee to offset the cost for migrants, and removed some of the employer contract requirements. After all this effort, it was disappointing to receive only 2 350 places for the 2023–24 program, well short of our original ask of 10 000 places and, as the member pointed out, 70 per cent less than the 8 140 places allocated the previous year. As the member well knows, the Premier and I have continued to raise with the commonwealth at every opportunity that this is not sustainable, and we want to send a clear message to the overseas markets that we are open for business.

I took the opportunity recently to meet with the federal Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Giles when he was in Perth for the national cabinet. I am confident that the federal government is actually listening to our messages and better understands how we use that program to support Western Australian business. In fact, I am hopeful that the upcoming federal budget might provide another opportunity for the federal government to redress the number of SNMP places for WA for this program year. Although all our current year programs have now been exhausted, we are not passively waiting. I am actively exploring other migration options that we can leverage so that we can continue to meet the demand for skilled workers in Western Australia.

I want to outline some other things that we are doing as a state government. They include the skilled migrant employment register, the construction visa subsidy program and the skilled migrant job connect program, which

provides support for skilled migrants to settle quickly and find employment opportunities according to their skills and experience. These programs are made available because of the money for skilled migrants, up to \$7 500 to meet the cost of skills recognition and occupational licensing fees, so that they can get a job that aligns with their formal overseas qualifications. That specifically goes to the question that the member raised about the cost of getting their skills recognised, up to \$6 000. We have a program that subsidises those costs.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK: No; I did not interject on the member.

We have received more than 300 requests for support from skilled migrants. We have a specific program to address the issue that the member raised. We also have the construction visa subsidy program, with \$10 000 available for migrants to meet the costs that might be needed, and the skilled migrant employment register, one of the key tools used by the Construction Migration Office to support employers and prospective migrants. Over 7 000 registered migrants and almost 200 employers are registered for this free service. For instance, it is not our choice that migrants coming over here to work in plumbing need to go to Queensland. The commonwealth government decides who is eligible to provide that sort of skills recognition. As I said, I can only assume that the member thinks that the state government is doing a good job when he focused his grievance on a federal government issue.

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL — PARKING

Grievance

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.28 am]: I rise to make a grievance to the Minister for Health on behalf of Canning Vale, Gosnells, Huntingdale, Southern River and all of Western Australia because we need more parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Absolutely!

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member's interjection is interesting, because his party's policy says that it wishes to cancel the parking that I, all Labor members and families around Western Australia are seeking to fight for. But my grievance is not to the member for Roe; it is to the Minister for Health because she is delivering on a very, very important piece of infrastructure in my community, and that is what I seek to speak to today.

Fiona Stanley Hospital is amazing. My wife and I had one of our children at Fiona Stanley. We had our other child at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. They are both amazing hospitals with amazing staff and amazing people. Again, Fiona Stanley is an amazing hospital, but there is not enough parking. We have an amazing set of different services available, which people seek out. Half of my electorate, generally, for a majority of the services, will go to Fiona Stanley. Obviously, some will go to Armadale Health Service, and, of course, there is the specialist King Edward hospital in Subiaco and Perth Children's Hospital, but Fiona Stanley Hospital is a key piece of health infrastructure in my community. Families tell me when I am doorknocking and phoning, as do all the South Metropolitan members, that there is not enough parking. Again, this benefits every member in the chamber, whether regional or metropolitan, because all our families use Fiona Stanley. We know that there is not enough parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital, and my grievance to the minister today is: what can I tell my community about the parking plans that we have? Can the minister also tell me the risks that the opposition might present in trying to cancel plans for parking?

I will talk a bit about Fiona Stanley Hospital. Like I said, one of our greatest health ministers during the Gallop–Carpenter years was Jim McGinty. Not even he could have foreseen how popular and well respected our Fiona Stanley Hospital would become. Great planning was put into that complex, assisted by the train line and public infrastructure and things that we have done to get there. During the Carpenter years that was a key piece of planning. There was a change of government to the Barnett government, and it was in the Liberals' and Nationals WA's DNA to attack our health services. We saw a number of services privatised there, of which some were addressed by the McGowan and Cook governments and health minister Sanderson, and I say thank you. But the Liberals and the Nationals have always sought to attack Fiona Stanley Hospital and attack the very, very popular and important health services there.

Mr P.J. Rundle: You're forgetting who built it. Not Jim McGinty.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Is the member saying that the Liberals and Nationals built Fiona Stanley Hospital and planned it and funded it during the Gallop–Carpenter years? I do not think that is the case. They privatised the cleaning, catering, orderlies and domestic assistance. At every opportunity, when the member's side is in government it has attacked Fiona Stanley Hospital. I hope the minister can address the grievance about parking that I am placing.

We have announced that we are going to relocate the women's and babies' hospital to Fiona Stanley Hospital, and I think that is a fantastic move. It is move that is endorsed by Western Australian families, practitioners, health staff, nurses and families all across the state. That will happen in years to come. It is an important piece of infrastructure that will happen. It will not happen tomorrow, but the planning and significant investment led by the health minister is progressing to relocate that women's and babies' hospital to Fiona Stanley precinct when the time is right. My grievance to the minister is that we need the parking now. We need two multistorey car parks built at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

As I said, I have been doorknocking and phoning around my electorate for some time. I give a special shout-out to Hon Stephen Pratt in the upper house. I speak on behalf of all the members in this chamber whose families access Fiona Stanley Hospital services. I give a special shout-out to Yaz Mubarakai, Kim Giddens in Bateman, David Scaife in Cockburn, Lisa O'Malley in Bicton and Jags in Riverton. All our communities' families access Fiona Stanley Hospital. We have a number of petitions, and I will seek to table in this chamber the hardcopies that I have received that are in support of the petition that Hon Stephen Pratt, in the other place, is pushing for. The planning of the extra two car parks at Fiona Stanley Hospital is moving forward. I would love it if the minister could give further clarification on the Liberal Party policy, but as I understand it at the next election if it is elected one year from now—this is the risk that all my families need to know—the Liberal Party's policy is to cancel the car parks. That is what the Liberal Party seeks to do. We need the car parks to progress. We need this in the next 12 months. As a local dad, I worry, and I think everyone in Western Australia worries, about what health will look like under a state Liberal government. My families need to know that if the Liberal Party gets in, they will not see car parks at Fiona Stanley Hospital. They will not see important infrastructure built. They will only see further privatisation and degradation of our services.

I thank the minister for her service and I thank her team. She has an amazing Department of Health. I would like to give a special shout-out to what the minister is doing to provide for my families. But, minister, what can I tell my families about more parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital?

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [9.35 am]: Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the grievance from the member for Southern River. He touches on an issue that is incredibly important. People complain about parking, but parking is really access to health care, and so it is really important. People who are unwell or who have disability or are in some way impaired cannot always get public transport, so parking at public hospitals is incredibly important. I think that sometimes the portfolio should be called minister for health and parking because they are so intertwined. I am cognisant of how important it is because it equals access, essentially. The member is absolutely right. Fiona Stanley Hospital has been hugely embraced. Fifteen years ago when this was being discussed, clinicians would say that no-one was going to go and work at Fiona Stanley Hospital. I remember the debate and particularly clinicians would say that no-one would work there, but it is bustling and fantastic. It is one of the biggest tertiary hospitals in the country. It is on a fantastic campus, complemented by a range of research facilities and private hospital and outpatient services, as well as it will have a health precinct with the Aegis building next door, which will also expand its range of services. This is a really exciting health campus that has room to expand and does not have the constraints that we currently have at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site.

I give Fiona Stanley Hospital a bit of a shout-out. Last year alone, 5 000 babies were born at Fiona Stanley Hospital. It is doing the heavy lifting of maternity care in the system. Those 5 000 babies were far more than was ever anticipated. That exceeded predictions and expectations, including in one 24-hour period 22 babies were born! That is one baby born every hour at Fiona Stanley Hospital. That southern corridor is growing significantly, and that is why with the other services that it provides—the state rehabilitation service, the state heart, lung and bone marrow transplant service and the state burns unit—it is a world-class hospital that is servicing a growing community, which is why the vast majority of the community has supported the decision that we as a government made to relocate the acute maternity services down to that precinct.

The QEII site carried enormous risk to staff, visitors' safety, parking constraints, impact on clinical services and possible disruption for up to 20 years. When we compare that with the site at Fiona Stanley, it is essentially a greenfield site with a car park where we need to build the hospital. Interestingly, the National members are very quiet about the Liberals' plans to scrap the plan to build the Fiona Stanley Hospital extension because they know that it will be better for regional women. We have not heard a peep out of them about it. At the election, they are going to have to choose a side. The Leader of the Liberal Party has clearly said, without rigour or seeing the risk, that she would build it at the QEII site. She would cancel services and destroy buildings, with no plan to relocate any of the services, to build the hospital there. At some point, Nationals members will have to say where they would build it.

I could go on, but I will focus on parking, because that was the key issue raised by the member. Let us talk about parking for a minute. Before I outline the plan for parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital, let us talk about the QEII site. The former Liberal government privatised the parking at QEII, which means that our government is limited in what it can do with parking there. The contract that was signed was incredibly restrictive and handed to one private company the ability to control the number of parking bays in one of our biggest and busiest health precincts. It is a key constraint and the reason that we cannot build other hospitals there. It is also a key constraint for the research institutions there—the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research and the Perron Institute, which does really important stroke and neurological research. During the construction of Perth Children's Hospital, all staff were shuttle bussed to and from the Graylands Hospital site because they could not find alternative parking on site.

The Fiona Stanley Hospital precinct offers a unique opportunity. We own the land. We are not restricted by commercial arrangements or space. Because we own the site and it is not constricted, we will be able to build two additional multistorey car parks on that site. That will significantly increase the overall availability of parking for staff and patients. That work is happening alongside the planning for the hospital. That is happening now. The Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Delivery is working on that planning and is looking at what road upgrades

will be needed. We will not wait until the hospital is built; those multistorey car parks will be built and up and running well before the hospital is built. There will also be significant upgrades to transport and other road infrastructure, and the provision of better end-of-trip facilities.

I want to provide some comfort to the staff at Fiona Stanley Hospital: the building of the women's and babies' hospital will not reduce access to staff parking. The chief executive is working with the other parking providers around the campus to ensure that staff will still have access to parking during construction, because we will have to close those bays to build the hospital. We are cracking ahead with those extra car parking bays. This affects not only people who are accessing care but also local residents, who find that people park in their streets as well. As the member outlined, the very real risk is that a future Liberal–National government would scrap those plans for additional parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital and continue with the constrained QEII site.

TOM PRICE HOSPITAL

Grievance

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [9.42 am]: I grieve today to the Minister for Health, and I thank the minister for taking my grievance. I am seeking answers about the long-awaited rebuild of the dilapidated Tom Price Hospital, an issue that not only is negatively impacting and putting at risk patients and their families, but also has a flow-on effect on population retention and attraction and the broader economic development of our regions. In recent weeks, the Shire of Ashburton, along with the Western Mine Workers Alliance, has called on the Minister for Health to deliver on Labor's promise for a new fit-for-purpose hospital for Tom Price. The hospital services around 3 000 residents and thousands of workers from across the region. In addition, it is a minimum 45-minute trip under lights in an ambulance, as long as there are no lengthy waits for train crossings, to Paraburdoo Hospital, which is also very dilapidated. Should a person need to be transferred there or to be flown out by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, they need to make that trip. At a time of billion-dollar surpluses built on the back of regional WA, why are towns like Tom Price, which is part of the north west powerhouse of the Australian and state economies, continuing to be plagued by inadequate health services?

In 2021, the government promised \$32.8 million for the hospital, in partnership with a \$20 million contribution from Rio Tinto. The Shire of Ashburton has been left asking, "Where is the money?", as millions of dollars in funding for the Tom Price Hospital have seemingly disappeared from the books. In the 2023–24 budget, an allocation of \$25.5 million was to be spent in 2024–25. However, the 2023–24 *Government mid-year financial projections statement*, released in December, clearly showed that the government would not spend anything in 2024–25. Of the original \$25.5 million allocated in the May budget, \$4.9 million seems to have been designated for 2026–27, according to the December 2023–24 midyear review. According to this information, it would seem that the plan is to not spend anything over the next two years on the hospital redevelopment. In reality, it seems that any substantial progress has been postponed beyond the forward estimates for the foreseeable future. Despite the significant \$3.7 billion surplus in Western Australia's budget, the minister's office has cited increased construction costs as a barrier, which we understand. However, that claim seems to be unfounded, given the substantial overspend on metropolitan projects like Metronet. The office has also advised that the WA Country Health Service is working closely with the Department of Health and the Department of Finance to address the funding needs. It is disappointing that the government cannot find the money for a critical regional hospital that is in dire need of redevelopment but can find the money for blowouts on projects in the metro area.

In question time on 12 October, the minister advised that she was working through the land tenure issues with the Shire of Ashburton. I am pleased to advise that the CEO of the Ashburton shire has advised that they are ready to receive plans for the hospital redevelopment and have been in a position to do so for some time. The Shire of Ashburton produces 38 per cent of the state's gross domestic product, with significant contributions from mining, tourism and pastoral activities. That underscores the critical importance of ensuring that all residents in that region have access to quality health care. The outdated state of our current hospital facility is no longer acceptable; it is imperative that we have modern medical facilities capable of providing the standard of care that those communities deserve. Our miners, particularly those who work in high-risk areas, do not believe that they have appropriate health facilities should a serious or major incident occur that results in serious harm or injury. The Shire of Ashburton and the Western Mine Workers Alliance are deeply troubled by the prolonged delay of this commitment, which is vital to the health and wellbeing of our community. I join the shire president, Audra Smith, and the Western Mine Workers Alliance in urging the government to fulfil the promise without delay.

The time for action is now. The people of Tom Price cannot afford to wait. This has been a very long wait for the region, with the previous government committing \$38.24 million under the North West Health Initiative back in 2016–17. The Labor government seems to have made similar commitments to replace the ageing hospital since that time and repeated the commitment in the 2021 election campaign, yet the community is still waiting for tangible progress to address the dire state of the hospital. As I am sure the minister will appreciate, it is difficult for those in the regions to see those in the city being provided with nice-to-have facilities, such as illuminated light displays on footbridges, when their basic needs are being overlooked and they are without critical fit-for-purpose health infrastructure, placing people's lives at risk. I recognise the challenges—I absolutely do—but I urge the minister

to fulfil this commitment by visiting Tom Price Hospital and the community as soon as possible; meeting with the shire and the Western Mine Workers Alliance to provide some clear answers on comprehensive time frames, commencement dates and the scope of work; and providing a commitment that this will be funded in the next budget.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [9.47 am]: I thank the member for North West Central for her grievance. The Cook Labor government has a very clear commitment to building world-class health infrastructure in the regions. We have a strong record of building world-class infrastructure in regional Western Australia. We have the biggest health infrastructure program in the history of the state. It is an ambitious infrastructure program that includes upgrades to and redevelopment of a number of major hospitals in the regions, including Tom Price Hospital. We are in a constrained construction environment and we are still working through those challenges, but we continue to deliver excellent infrastructure. We have been innovative and agile where we can be—for example, by using modular wards at Bentley, Rockingham, Osborne Park and Bunbury—but those solutions do not work in every location, particularly in some of the harsher environments. I acknowledge the WA Country Health Service and its incredible staff for the work that they do. They provide health care in some of the most remote regional locations in the world.

Planning for the Tom Price Hospital continues. We have settled the land tenure issue and found the land. I want to thank our partner in this hospital, Rio Tinto, which has contributed \$20 million. We are working with Rio to progress the project. To say that the money is not in the budget is a complete falsehood; \$32 million has been allocated towards this project. Once a managing contractor is appointed, we can work with them to establish a program of works and time frames for construction. I acknowledge that it takes time to progress significant infrastructure projects and it can be frustrating for communities, and we share that frustration. We are working with the available construction market, which is there to actually build these things.

My office has extended an invitation to meet with the Shire of Ashburton's newly appointed president. I am happy to have an ongoing briefing of Australian Workers' Union representatives to ensure that their members and the community are kept up-to-date on this important project. The member is certainly whipping up a scare campaign by saying that money has not been committed to the project because that is not true. The money is there and it is dishonest to claim that it is not.

In addition to our investment in Tom Price Hospital, we have completed the \$61 million redevelopment of the Newman Health Service. The former Premier Mark McGowan and I opened that service last year. It is a purpose-built facility with a \$15 million contribution from BHP. There have also been some completely false claims that there has been a reduction of frontline services. There has been no reduction of frontline services at Tom Price or Paraburdoo hospitals. Tom Price is a small public facility. It has a 24-hour nurse-led emergency department, providing inpatient medical imaging, pathology and outpatient care, including child health, occupational therapy, speech pathology, physiotherapy, dietetics and audiology. It is not true to say that it provides a substandard service. It hosts a number of visiting specialties such as paediatrics, gynaecology and general surgery and it also has a population health unit providing immunisations, child health screenings, sexual health services and a range of other services. Claims were made that it was without power. It has not been without power at any point. Some cabling and electrical mains required ongoing maintenance. That has occurred, as it should. Rather than taking a productive and constructive approach to reaching out to the office to see whether she could get a briefing, the member seeks to raise her own profile and score political points. That is all that is.

More broadly, I am very proud of the government's record on regional infrastructure achievements. We have doubled access to cancer services in the regions. One of the biggest issues I have heard in regional Western Australia is that people have to travel for cancer services because treatment is ongoing. Since 2007, we have doubled access to those services. We have delivered the modern Newman Health Service with a \$61 million investment. We have also delivered a radiation oncology service in Albany. It is a fantastic service that is highly valued by the community. We have upgraded birthing suites at Broome Health Campus, including waterbirthing facilities for use during labour, and upgrades to outdoor spaces.

We have delivered upgrades at Dongara Health Centre and Collie Hospital. The upgrades at Collie Hospital are beautiful; its theatres are spectacular. We have delivered upgrades to emergency departments at Plantagenet Cranbrook Health Service and at Boddington, Dalwallinu and Wongan Hills. We added 30 beds to Bunbury Regional Hospital and we are delivering a major redevelopment. We are delivering a major redevelopment at Geraldton Health Campus. We have delivered a rural psychiatry pathway, increasing the number of trainee psychiatrists by 300 per cent. We are delivering more paid paramedics to the regions, in Geraldton, Bunbury, Busselton, Esperance, Margaret River, Harvey, Northam, Narrogin and Newman. We have bolstered the number of midwifery group practices operating in the regions in Carnarvon, Manjimup, Bridgetown, Northam, Collie, Margaret River, Bunbury, Narrogin and Broome. Unlike the member's government, we increased the patient assisted travel scheme accommodation subsidy by 66 per cent. We increased that.

Our record stands strong on regional health care and we continue to support the residents of Tom Price and the incredible work that they do to contribute to our community. We are absolutely dedicated to building that hospital and we will do so.

HERITAGE — STRAWBERRY HILL FARM*Grievance*

MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany) [9.54 am]: I rise today to raise a grievance to the Minister for Heritage regarding an iconic local Albany site, Strawberry Hill farm at Barmup. I thank the minister for taking my grievance and for the opportunity to bring to the attention of the house the much-needed restoration and repairs at this important cultural heritage site on Menang Noongar country. The site is significant as an important campsite for the Menang people and a place of close and ongoing contact between Menang people and European settlers. It is the site of the first colonial farm to be established in what was to later become Western Australia, in close proximity to the present-day Albany CBD. Established in 1827, Barmup Strawberry Hill Farm features historic buildings dating from the mid-1830s in a relatively intact cultural landscape setting. The site is included on both the State Register of Heritage Places and the Aboriginal Sites Register.

A new visitor hub completed in 2020 has increased visitor numbers and improved the visitor experience at Strawberry Hill. However, there remain some serious problems that need to be addressed at the property regarding the site infrastructure and the condition of the historical buildings. The two-storey stone house on the site is a rare example of old colonial Georgian architecture, while the nearby cottage is a rare example of an adobe farm worker's cottage. The grounds of Strawberry Hill contain examples of the earliest European planting in WA.

The National Trust of Western Australia has conserved the place. It was the first property acquired by the trust and has been accessible to the public since 1964. All of the northern portion of the land under National Trust management is an Aboriginal heritage site. The elevated position of the site and the existence of permanent water meant that the site was used as a meeting place and for ceremonies by Menang people. The campsite was on a travelling route used by Menang people that was widened for access to the newly established government farm and became known as Sleeman's track. It is also recorded that there is a track from Albany town centre to the rocks above the Strawberry Hill site—which are a known birthing place—from the Beauchamp Road side of the farm and out to Lake Seppings. A bank was constructed below the Beauchamp Road boundary of the farm to stop stormwater runoff and obstruction of the track. It is the first known obstruction of the track by settlers.

Strawberry Hill at Barmup holds a unique place in the history of Western Australia as it was the first property to be vested in the National Trust after its formation in 1959. Strawberry Hill was opened to the public in 1966 and has been managed by the National Trust as a publicly accessible heritage site. Currently, 38 volunteers keep Strawberry Hill at Barmup maintained and open to the public. It is a popular and important site, offering a welcoming, stimulating and attractive environment.

Since the new visitor hub was completed in 2020, additional serious risks have been identified that need to be addressed at the property such as the condition of the historic buildings, the collection of moveable objects within the building, health and safety for visitors and staff, and universal access. A recent review identified issues with the arrival experience and traffic management at the property, which include potential confusion over points of entry and exit from Middleton Road. The front fence is not in good condition and has been criticised on aesthetic grounds. There is no separate entry for pedestrians and cyclists from Middleton Road and paved surfaces in the car park off Middleton Road are in poor condition with many potholes. Timber kerbing in the car park off Middleton Road has rotted away, making it very unsafe for visitors. Additional problems identified within the site include inadequate paved surfaces and toilet facilities in the form of two toilets housed in a transportable at the rear of the site, which is at the end of its life. The grade of the ramp leading up to this facility is noncompliant in terms of universal access.

Moisture ingress in the 1836 main house is a significant risk to the house. Recent data shows high sub-surface water levels to the north and east of the main house and very high humidity levels and mould inside. The house is cracked in various places and some walls are starting to lean. The external render on the 1835 worker's cottage is failing in sections, posing a risk to its original adobe walls. There are problems with both of the historic buildings regarding stormwater disposal, including inadequate gutters and pipes.

A collection preservation needs assessment completed in 2023 found that the historic buildings at Strawberry Hill are in varying states of deterioration, which is causing risk to the collection through exposure to inappropriate and fluctuating climatic conditions, giving overall potential for physical damage through full or partial collapse.

The users of Strawberry Hill farm have provided to my office the following remarks as feedback: “The pathway up to the house is pretty dodgy”, “The carpark is a disgrace and full of puddles after it rains”, “How are we meant to show off this wonderful place when the house is falling apart”, “The pathway through to Beauchamp St is an accident waiting to happen” and “Having just one disabled parking bay is not good enough”.

Strawberry Hill has 38 volunteers, including 10 garden volunteers, who do an amazing job keeping the gardens and grounds looking beautiful. Judy started as a volunteer coordinator in 2017 and is now the caretaker of Strawberry Hill. Judy loves going to work each day with her dedicated team of volunteers, who take so much pride in their work. David is one of the garden volunteers and started at the farm two years ago. He has fond memories of family visits to the farm when he was a child. He was motivated to become a volunteer because of those experiences and the connections that he has with lots of locals.

As the minister knows, I am a born and bred Albany girl and have very fond memories of school excursions to the farm. We would walk from my school at Spencer Park to the farm for the experience and to learn the history and walk the tracks that the Menang Noongar people would have walked. I have fond memories of having Devonshire tea in the tearooms. When I visited the farm last year, a volunteer asked me to have a look with them, and it was disturbing to see the cracks and water buckets scattered throughout the historic building. My office has been advised that most cracks in the house have appeared over the last 10 years and are a serious problem that need to be fixed. Mould is also becoming a serious problem, which is not helped by the drainage problems caused by the run-off.

I can confirm that locals love this site, with many using the grounds as part of their early morning walking regime. The farm can now not host many events onsite due to the poor conditions of the path and car park. The car park also needs to be expanded to increase its capacity as it is too small. My constituents have made their position very clear that they want to see urgent repairs to Strawberry Hill. Can the minister please update the house on the status of Strawberry Hill farm in Albany?

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Heritage) [10.01 am]: I thank the member for Albany for a passionate plea. It was a very important example of how grievances should be used. The member for Albany has not only highlighted the significant importance of Strawberry Hill farm to the state's heritage, but also alluded to what I think is a very important element of Strawberry Hill farm, and that is the importance of the site to the Menang people prior to the farm being established. As the member for Albany highlighted, the Strawberry Hill farm site was a very important meeting place for the Menang people. Over 150 years ago, during colonial settlement, the site was established as a farm, the state's first, as the member highlighted correctly. There are a couple of reasons why this grievance is important. The first is that we are approaching two significant dates in the state's history, which we will acknowledge appropriately. One date is in 2026 to recognise when the town site of Albany was established from a colonial perspective. Of course, the second date is later in this decade, in 2029, when the state will acknowledge 200 years since colonial establishment.

The importance of significant heritage assets like Strawberry Hill farm is becoming more greatly enhanced. That is why I am pleased the member has raised this grievance. As the member knows, I have visited Strawberry Hill farm. The member and I were there in February this year and we looked at the site. The reality is that despite the tremendous efforts by both the National Trust of Western Australia, which of course is the custodian of the site, and the magnificent 30-plus volunteers the member mentioned, the need for urgent action is now before us. The buildings are very old. They are a remarkable example of colonial buildings, including the imposing two-storey dwelling that was the old farm homestead. I was able to inspect, with Julian Donaldson, the CEO of Strawberry Farm, the various challenges that the structures across the precinct are facing, including the cracking in the two-storey building, the impact of water egress on the foundations, the fact that the site slopes into the foundations of the building and issues around access, which are very concerning for me because we want more people to experience and learn from that place by visiting it. The pathway approaches, the car park and how the farm fronts onto the main road are also very important issues.

As a result of the member's extremely strong advocacy, the trust has done some work on assessing what needs to be done. It is extensive work. It includes addressing a number of structural matters and a range of conservation matters. The past practice for replacing mortar is not the modern approach taken for heritage buildings of this nature. There are also issues with roofing. We need to ensure that the buildings not only are safe, but also can welcome more visitors. I am impressed with the member's grievance, so I will have conversations directly with the National Trust of Western Australia about what works are required for remediation, and of course I will seek support for those works to be funded. It is important, as I said, that we ensure that this very significant heritage site not only is safe and welcoming for visitors, but also has great potential to deliver some tremendous outcomes for learning, cultural experiences and tourism. As we approach 2026, I am very keen for that important heritage asset to be able to welcome even more visitors than it has in the past. I thank the member for that.

I also want to briefly highlight that I was in Geraldton only last week, so this may give the member some hope. We announced \$7.6 million towards the conservation works at the old Victorian centre, which was the old hospital in Geraldton. Again, similar to Strawberry Hill farm, it is a significant heritage site. The materials used are similar and we need to fix those buildings. I thank the member for her grievance and assure her that I will turn my attention to it forthwith.

FIREARMS BILL 2024

Second Reading

Resumed from 13 March.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [10.09 am]: I was a couple of minutes into my contribution on this bill yesterday, so I might just reiterate what I started off saying before the debate was interrupted for private members' business. From the outset, I wish to say that I support the position of the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Nationals WA that we do not support this firearms legislation in its current form. We had a bit of a debate last

night during private members' business. I am not appreciative of the characterisation of people in our community who hold gun licences. There has been a very black and white representation of the intent of those who hold licences and those who do not and how we seek to resolve this vexed question of ensuring community safety. It is a reductive debate and binary debate and it discounts the thousands of law-abiding licence holders who do the right thing and share the same sentiment that the government has put forward.

The core of this reform is that every sensible person believes that community safety should be the priority and it must be at the centre of a regulatory and licensing regime for firearms. I have not sought to marginalise or demonise those in the community who have a different view from me. I tend not to do that on any issue. I always point out why I have a different opinion. When we tackle issues such as this in a reductive manner, we send people to their corners and we do not get the best outcome that the community deserves. I will not be demonising, conflating, exaggerating or making wild claims. We simply want a sensible outcome that is based on best practice, science and research. I hear many ministers in this government reflect on polling, which is not based on reasonable questions. Statistics can be made to say anything.

Unfortunately, the government is in the habit of ignoring commonsense in favour of picture opportunities and media stunts. The Minister for Police has been prone to bringing props into Parliament or standing behind desks with big guns and officers of the law. Real work needs to be done to this legislation to ensure that the community is kept safe, as it deserves, matched with what is practical and fair for those who require licences to own guns that are their tools of the trade, those who are legally engaged in the recreational use of guns or those who simply have other reasons for holding a gun licence.

First off, I want to tell people that I do not come to this debate as a licensed gun owner. I have never owned one. I do not foresee a reason for owning one.

A member interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: You never know! I have shot a gun. I have been involved in shooting. I come from a farm. It is something that I know how to do. I grew up around guns. Prior to the changes made during the Howard era, when arguably there was a laxness about the way guns were stored and managed, I could probably point to many incidents relating to the management and safety of guns in which we could have done better in our communities. That has changed significantly in my lifetime.

I also know people who participate in recreational and sporting pursuits. A number of gun clubs are in my electorate. I understand very clearly that people have legitimate reasons for owning guns. From an agricultural perspective, we use guns to manage pests and vermin. In many cases, local governments rely on engaging recreational shooters to manage that issue. I know people who have firearms that belonged to their fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers. The guns have sentimental value in their families. In fact, someone shared the fact with me that they have their great-granddad's air rifle and a .303 from the Boer War, which is beautifully engraved and worth about \$4 000. In order to keep these firearms in their family's possession, plus the guns that that person owns as his tools of trade—he is involved in pest control—he will have to ask his wife to apply for a gun licence because they do not want those weapons to be lost from their family. I understand that.

I have other examples from people who have contacted me. I want to share a couple. The member for Roe did the same thing. I was disappointed yesterday when the minister diminished the fact that there had been numerous form letters, as he described them.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, can I interrupt you for a second to welcome students from Safety Bay Primary School. I hope you enjoy your visit to Parliament House.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Welcome, students.

It was disappointing that the minister diminished the fact that numerous form letters were received during the consultation process. Those form letters are used to the government's advantage when it seeks to demonstrate community support for an issue, but they are diminished when they do not suit its purpose. I am reminded of the issues that we have been dealing with relating to the potential damming of the Fitzroy River and the national and international form letters that were received during that process. Every person who wrote to me, even though there may have been a similarity in the letters we received, submitted their own personal information, outlined how long they had held a gun licence and outlined the impact that this legislation would have on them if some of the proposed changes went through. I want to go through two of them. I will not name the people. I am happy to provide them to Hansard. The first letter is from someone whose initials are R.K. They stated —

I would like to present my situation and concerns about the new proposed gun limits.

I am a long standing member of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia and a member of two clubs ... which I shoot at on alternate fortnights. My granddaughter is also a member of the SSAA and SDRC, and shoots as a junior. Members of these clubs are well trained in all facets of the sport especially firearm safety. We shoot four different disciplines under the Western Action banner.

I currently have seventeen guns on my licence, all bar one are regularly used and cannot be discarded if I and my granddaughter are to continue our recreational hobby. Four of my guns are used solely by my granddaughter, she does not shoot in the disciplines requiring rifle calibre firearms due to her small stature and is too young to hold a firearms licence of her own.

All of our guns are pre 1900s.

We each compete in the single action discipline which requires eight firearms ... Four each. I compete in the Pat Garrot matches which requires an extra rifle calibre lever action rifle. (9) I also compete in the Long Range Rifle 25 to 200 yard competition, this requires two additional rifles ... Once a year I compete in the Wyalcatchem 100 to 1000 yard State Long Range Titles, this requires two additional rifles ... and attracts shooters from all over the state and is open to interstate shooters. This is my favourite shoot over a three-day period.

On top of this I like to shoot black powder fortnightly at PMLC range where I use three different fire arms ... A total of sixteen ... This is mine and my granddaughters only sporting activity which we have taken up since my retirement. With the added task of reloading this takes up much of my time, the rest is spent working for charity.

In our sport we endeavour to keep alive old west traditions and disciplines and history. Many of our members shoot at international and interstate events.

If I am reduced to —

A certain number of —

firearms I will have to quit all of these events to allow my granddaughter to continue. I do not take gun safety lightly and have a lockup system at least three times as secure as regulations require, I have spent tens of thousands on appropriate firearms, loading equipment and security, all of which becomes worthless under the new proposals.

I am only one in our club, while the others may not have a junior to support, many shoot multiple discipline's and many shoot much more often than I do.

I have been a licenced firearm owner in this state since 1975 and having been a law abiding citizen for 48 years with no transgressions or mishaps and I feel I am being unfairly punished under these proposed new laws.

The second letter I wanted to read is from somebody I know, not a constituent. Their initials are T.S. Again, I will provide the document to Hansard so it can verify that I am not making this up. It states —

Dear Ms Davies,

I hope this message finds you well. I am reaching out to you representing not only myself but also a considerable number of individuals who share my sentiments regarding the recent developments concerning firearm ownership.

Before I go any further I am not opposed to firearm legislation and I do not believe everyone should have them, nor do I ever want Australia to become like America, but firearms do have a place in our community.

The recent actions of some members of parliament, including supplying detailed firearm location information to the public, have only exacerbated the challenges we face. This reckless decision not only compromises our safety but also contributes to the illicit acquisition of firearms by criminals. It is disheartening to see our passion criminalised and exploited for political gain.

As someone who has cherished this pastime since childhood, I am profoundly disappointed by the dismissive attitude displayed by certain politicians toward licensed firearm owners. Suggestions to abandon our hobbies and find alternative hobbies demonstrate a fundamental lack of empathy and understanding of our community's values.

Furthermore, the absence of any meaningful consultation with firearm owners on proposed legislative changes is deeply concerning. Despite attempts to engage with Labour politicians, our voices seem to fall on deaf ears, leaving us feeling marginalised and ignored.

I implore you to consider your support for the proposed legislation ... The repercussions of such actions extend beyond mere inconvenience; they risk alienating a significant portion of your constituents and could have a tangible impact on future electoral outcomes.

That is something that we all have to contemplate as we make decisions in this house —

It is also crucial to recognise the positive contributions made by recreational hunters to our ecosystem and regional economies. Recreational hunters play a vital role in controlling introduced and feral animal populations, thereby protecting native species and biodiversity. Additionally, hunting activities provide an economic boost to rural communities through tourism and associated expenditures.

If you take the time to look into just Red card shoots alone, these events remove thousands of Cats, Foxes, Pigs, goats, and rabbits from the ecosystem every year, not to mention all the work completed by private citizens and associations such as WA Field and Game Association or Conservation Australia.

As an active member of WA Field and Game Association, I have personally attended organised culls for local shires, DPAW, and private property for no financial gain to remove feral and damaging species from the areas, including 1000 Corellas in the last month alone.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I hope it serves as a reminder of the importance of representing the interests of all constituents, including licensed firearm owners and conservationists.

Further to this, I have actually spoken to former law enforcement officers and constituents regarding this proposed legislation. The key themes of concern range across the matters that were raised by the Leader of the National Party; namely, the question of gun limits and the science and research underlying this, particularly given the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's recommendations; the changes to the health checks and how they will be practically put into place; the definition of a fit-and-proper person; and the requirement for a firearm safety training course. They are not questioning that there needs to be a course, but how it will operate practically, given the significant task to be undertaken. Concerns also include what constitutes a technical drawing and how people may find themselves potentially falling foul of the law, and the practicality of the safe specifications that will be required. Members heard in a previous letter that many licensed gun owners already have safes that exceed what is required now. The question I have had from a number of licensed holders is that under the proposed specifications, do those types of safes already exist in Western Australia and how will this be managed as part of the transition? They are reasonable questions. I hope the minister will be able to put some minds at ease in his response during consideration in detail.

The other issue is the resourcing and support for the Western Australia Police Force to manage the transition and licensing effectively. Before there is any implied criticism of me for potentially criticising WA police, I do not and I will not. In all my communities, police have a very good understanding of people who are licensed gun owners and any potential issues. They are ahead of the game in managing situations that might involve mental health issues or pressures at home. We come from close-knit communities. It is very hard to fly under the radar, albeit there are always exceptions to that rule.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Under the new legislation, those same risks will exist. It does not matter what the minister says, nothing is fail-safe, but we are not arguing about the ability or the desire of WA police to make our community safer. I am concerned about the resourcing of WA police to manage the transition and licensing effectively. A number of examples have been raised in recent times in which people have been trying to make sure that their licences are up to date and have found it difficult to actually get that feedback and contact through the police licensing service.

With gun limits, it is simplistic to say that people should need only 10 guns. I go back to the Law Reform Commission's recommendations. It is fine for the minister to say that we are going to be unique and have the strongest laws on gun limits in the nation, but when we make decisions like this, I do not like the flip side proposed by the minister that we are, therefore, proposing a United States gun law culture. We are not, and we do not have that in Western Australia now. That does not exist. It is ridiculous, frankly, that we have this debate and it seems to be a binary argument. Give us the rationale for the limits and help us to explain to our community why they are necessary, but if we do not do that, we are said to be out there promoting the yahoo gun culture, much like we see in America. We are not. We do not support that, and we do not have that in Western Australia. It is it a furphy. No-one has come to me personally and said that. Such people may exist; there are people in our community on the fringes of every argument. But not one person has engaged with me on this and said that they want what happens in America replicated. That is not the case. They say there should be a reason to purchase a firearm and a validation process, and, if that is a strong process, a person should be able to purchase said firearm and hold a licence.

I now talk about the different calibre guns. Various members have explained why some gun owners from sporting associations and vermin control require different calibre guns. Therefore, I spent a little time talking to those people who already own a number of guns. Again, questions arise about having a limit not being the best approach. If a gun owner participates in vermin control, as do members of the Western Australian Field and Game Association, Conservation Australia and farmers on their property, they must have the tools for the trade. Unpalatable as it may be for some people who do not necessarily need to understand how it happens, a person needs to manage it humanely—and one firearm will not do it. If a person is asked to assist with vermin control close to the suburbs in the Swan Valley, they need a .22-calibre gun. If they are managing rainbow lorikeets, for instance, they cannot make loud noises and things like that. This is a different calibre gun from the shotgun used to manage corellas. Again, if a person is a member of these organisations, they may well be invited to go to various parts around the state to manage goats, which require a .243 to a .308.

Mr P. Papalia: That is three, if you count the two you have mentioned so far.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Okay.

Mr P. Papalia: Keep going.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: For roos, the same calibre range is needed, and different calibres might be needed at different times of the year. As one farmer said to me —

Mr P. Papalia: Really?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes—absolutely.

Mr P. Papalia: Why?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: You want me to go back to the farmer —

Mr P. Papalia: Why use different calibres for different times of the year?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Because when shooting a roo standing in the middle of a paddock that is full of wheat or canola, it is basically like shooting through a tree trunk and the person is shooting from further away. If they are shooting at a different time of the season —

Mr P. Papalia: Why is a .308 not suitable?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This explanation has come directly to me from one of my constituents who is a licensed gun holder. He is a reasonable individual, minister. I am not conflating this.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Okay. The minister can respond during his reply.

Gun owners have different guns for different times of the year and different purposes. The minister can get into the details of it. I have said that I am not the gun licence holder. I have consulted with my community; it is my responsibility as a member of Parliament to raise those concerns. If the minister wants to spend his time during this debate to demolish that argument, by all means, go ahead. I am sure our constituents will be interested to hear his response.

We heard the member for North West Central talk about camels in the Gascoyne. I had someone talk to me about a job that they were invited to in Dalwallinu, inside a heritage-listed building, and that was using an air rifle to manage pigeons. No-one I have spoken to has said, “Let’s have a free-for-all”; all have said that they need a commonsense approach that provides assurances for the community to ensure that risk is minimised. That is important.

The minister yesterday touched briefly on a horrific and appalling incident that occurred in my electorate last year. I do not think it serves any purpose to go down a “what if” scenario, because that does no good to the victims, the families or the community. We also had a debate yesterday about domestic violence and the presence of firearms in a household. Although I acknowledge the argument that minimising the number of firearms may well, across the board, reduce the number of people who can potentially use them illegally, it will not remove the risk.

What happened last year in Kellerberrin could potentially still happen under future legislation. I dislike intensely when incidents like that are raised in debates like this. It does no service to the community that was impacted and I do not think it is where we need to be when we are having a sensible discussion about the new licensing regime, given that we all agree that community safety needs to be at the heart of that. We agree that reform is overdue. I reject the minister’s suggestion yesterday that I have a blind spot because I grew up in the country, and there is an assumption that I will automatically jump to protecting our rights as firearm owners.

Mr P. Papalia: It’s not a right; it’s a privilege.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, I think the member has made it clear that she is not inviting interjections. Thank you very much.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Minister, I was simply pointing out that I was accused of having a blind spot when it came to the issue of guns and firearms, potentially because I am from a regional area. That is not the case. In the time that we have been given as part of this debate, we have tried very hard to make sure we have spoken to a number of different constituents, groups, organisations and members of the community—people who are gun licence holders and people who are not—because it impacts everybody. As the minister rightly pointed out, the track record of the Nationals and Liberals on firearms reform—going back to the Howard–Fischer reforms—is one of making difficult decisions.

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I think that applies to you, too, member for Burns Beach.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I will not be characterised by others for the work that we have done to arrive at the position that we are taking, because I do not think the minister has done enough work to land on the right position on a number of clauses and policy decisions in the legislation.

Not one of us in the Nationals WA is advocating for a US-style gun culture here in WA. If someone wants to own a gun, they should have a valid reason for owning it. We agree that it is a privilege to own and be licensed to own a firearm and we should have a system that centres around community safety. We simply believe that there is a different mechanism for arriving at that and that will be the debate that we have during consideration in detail.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.33 am]: I, too, want to make a short contribution to debate on the Firearms Reform Bill 2024, which is before us today. I acknowledge the work of the minister and staff in bringing this legislation to the house and I thank them for their work on it. I wanted to make a brief contribution because I have been contacted, as indeed I think many members have, by people in my electorate who have wanted to talk to me about the details of this bill—some in person, many by email. Many of those are, of course, firearms owners.

My response is to listen and understand what people are saying to me. The first contact I had was some time ago by one of my constituents who wanted to talk about the proposed legislation at the time. Because there have been a number of contacts, and some time has elapsed, I have spent a lot of time thinking about firearms in the community and the role that they should play. I thank the people who have contacted me about it and will share some of the thoughts I have had and conclusions I have come to.

I am also a country girl, like the member for Central Wheatbelt, and, like others, grew up with guns in the family—guns that my father used. My brother also used them. I have never been particularly into them. I have fired one once or twice, but it was not something I was particularly into; however, they have been a part of my family.

My uncle Bob, who lives in South Australia, was a sporting shooter. Throughout his life he shot guns as part of a sport that he loved. He tells us he was quite accomplished at shooting. Family legend has it that when he was a young man he had to spend time living on the Nullarbor shooting rabbits for a period of six months. It was always described as, “Until the heat wore off”. It was never explained what that meant. He used guns all through his life and travelled extensively across his home state of South Australia attending shoots. I remember him visiting us in Western Australia, bringing guns with him and attending shoots around regional WA. He also reloaded bullets. I remember him doing that. I did not know that that was a thing until I saw him do it. He was a pretty accomplished shooter. He competed for many years—he really only gave up the sport when his health deteriorated with age; however, he was someone who, until this day, is a very fond shooter and very fond of his guns. He spent his whole life shooting.

My aunt also spent many years in her middle age working in agricultural protection in the north of Western Australia. Her job required her to control feral animals, mainly goats and camels, with a fairly high-powered gun out of a helicopter. Again, according to family legend—I am not saying this is a certifiable fact—she was a quite successful markswoman and one of the best they had in their team. Guns were an essential part of her work and, again, she used them for many years in the context of that work.

As I said, we grew up with firearms on our farm. My brother, like lots of country kids, used to shoot at pests around the farm. Indeed, my husband owned a gun as well, up until he was required to hand it in as part of the Howard government’s gun buyback scheme. At the time, he did not particularly want to part with it, but he confirmed that he does not miss it at all. It was not something that he was using.

I wanted to relay these stories because I do not consider myself to be someone who is anti-firearms. As I said, I grew up with them around me. They were used extensively in my family for sport, for work and as part of being on a family farm. I am not opposed to them and I accept that they play a role in certain contexts and settings. Despite the people from my electorate who have come to see me to talk about this, and my own reflections, I nonetheless support this legislation because I think it is incredibly important and necessary.

It is important that we find a fair and reasonable balance between firearm owners and the need to ensure community safety. I have not experienced the tragedy and trauma at a personal level that many people have as a result of firearms. Whether those incidents have been intentional or accidental, and whether they have resulted in injury or death, there is no doubt that there is extensive tragedy and trauma that occurs in our community as a result of firearms, whether they are held legally or illegally.

I thought the minister did a very good job yesterday in the amendment debate, outlining the various advocacy organisations that not only support this legislation but, in fact, urge tighter controls over firearms. They often, tragically, have personal stories that they relate in that context. I do not have personal story—I am very grateful for that—but I absolutely acknowledge the reality of the impact that guns have in our community and the impact that tragic events have not just on individuals but also families through generations. I do not intend to dwell on any of those stories. As I said, I think the minister did a very good job of that, and many of the stories were in the news. Those people are the human face of why we need stronger firearm regulations, and we should never forget them. They are essential to the overall consideration of this bill.

This legislation is important. There is no doubt that it is appropriate and necessary to have modern, relevant legislation to regulate the use of firearms in Western Australia. The current Firearms Act is legislation from 1973, and since that time there has been significant change. We are now a much less rural society, far more urban based, and it is hard to see the need for firearms for many people living in an urban setting unless they are using them for sport or, very occasionally, a work-related purpose. Also, firearms have changed. They are way more powerful than what I would have used in my couple of shots as a kid. They are more accurate.

This legislation is timely in capturing those changed circumstances and updating laws so they are fit for purpose in the modern age. Importantly, it captures an appropriate and relevant balance between the legitimate uses of

firearms, whether that is for sport, work or other purposes, while ensuring that community safety is paramount. That is really the key reason for my, and others', support for this bill. The balance is appropriate, and it is necessary that we regulate to achieve those community safety objectives. It is entirely appropriate that we have mechanisms to ensure licence holders remain fit to hold their licences and that we have a fit-and-proper person test. That is not unique to this legislation. As a union official I had to hold a fit-and-proper-person certificate just to exercise the right of entry into workplaces. That requirement is not difficult, and it is not unique to this setting—it is entirely appropriate. I congratulate the minister and those who have worked on this bill for setting it in place.

I also lend my support to the numerical limits on guns. As others have indicated, the limits set in the legislation are entirely reasonable for the pursuits they identify against. This is part of removing unused or unlicensed firearms from the community. Having the buyback scheme to support that, along with the various policy settings this bill will put in place, will set in place a modern framework for ensuring that we regulate firearms in an appropriate fashion. Unused and unlicensed firearms will be removed from the community. There will be mechanisms in place to ensure those who have a firearms licence remain fit to hold those weapons in the future.

I wanted to make only a few brief comments, so I will bring my speech to an end. It really sums up the view I have come to, having heard from members of my community, having reflected on my own personal experience and having thought quite a lot about this issue over a long time. I support the legislation because I think it sets a fair, appropriate, reasonable framework for the regulation of firearms in our community, giving access to people who need them for sport, work or other purposes, but ensuring community safety remains paramount for all those in the community, requiring that the government sets legislative limits so we can live safely in Western Australia.

MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach) [10.43 am]: I have been listening to the second reading debate on the Firearms Bill 2024 over the last 48 hours and the contributions of members opposite, and it has driven up a memory I had chosen to forget. I am probably the only person in this house who has held a mother whose son shot himself using a stolen firearm. My belief in change is driven by the realities of what is going on in the constituency, not the made-up nonsense coming from the opposite side.

It is a privilege to own a firearm, not a right—remember that. In recent times, it has been quite a topical issue in my electorate, but not the most contentious. I must say that I have either met in person or spoken over the phone to every constituent who took the time to contact me. So thank you Wayne, Terry, Vaughan, Kenneth, Dries, Shane, Ash, Tom and all constituents of mine. I put on the record that I listened to their views. I will summarise them. They stated that they were all law-abiding citizens—no argument. Most of them were worried about the number of firearms they could own and a couple were worried about the medical assessments or the system of letters of authority to shoot. After my listening to my constituents' views and them listening to my explanations, we all agreed on the need for change.

The national firearms organisations reached out to me and attempted to lobby me to stop this legislation. In examining their views, I formed the conclusion that they were just wrong. I felt that their views were corrupted by the National Rifle Association of America in their belief that they have a right to own a firearm and use it in any way they want.

Why is there a need for reform? I approach this matter as the only person in the house who has been shot at in a non-wartime situation. Members know I was a police officer. During my service I was shot on at least two occasions, and on several occasions I had loaded firearms pointed at me, so I do not need to be convinced of reform. These reforms are overdue. The current act was written in 1973 and is well past its use-by date. From as recently as a couple of years ago, there has been growth in firearms incidents. In July 2021, in my electorate the bikies had a gunfight at the Mindarie marina. The individuals were from the Comanchero outlaw motorcycle gang. The gunfight occurred within metres of residents in my electorate—metres. A child shot at a primary school in Two Rocks—the first time in this nation. There was the mass shooting at Osmington in the south west and the recent shootings in Kellerberrin in the wheatbelt. These do not include the statistics outlining trespassers' use of firearms on crown land or on properties without lawful permission. Gun-related crime is on the increase. That is a fact.

The main source of firearms for any unlawful activity is lawful firearm owners. Seven firearms are stolen in Western Australia a week, so reducing the number of firearms in our community will reduce gun-related crime. Fewer guns in the community means less gun-related crime. The drive for change in law reform has come from not only the Law Reform Commission's report, but also industry itself. About three years ago, I had an approach from two of the pistol clubs in Perth. In summary, their complaints were that members were using the clubs' licensing process to obtain pistols and handguns. Once through the process, they stopped active participation in the clubs and just kept renewing their memberships but were never seen again. This legislation stops those individuals and the abuse of the licensing process.

A number of primary producers working in regional WA are absolutely frustrated with uninvited shooters using their land with historical letters of authority, virtually forcing themselves on their land to use firearms. While stationed at Wagin, I was called to an unauthorised shooting incident east of the town site. I remember attending the farm and speaking to the owner. He advised me he had two shooters on his property who were shooting anything that moved. I conducted a patrol, following the blood trail. I recall having to destroy a couple of kangaroos that

had been shot and left there to die in absolute distress. I was angry. I caught up with these two individuals shortly after. One of them pointed his firearm at me. I can tell members that after some gentle persuasion he made a better choice going forward. After some inquiries, I executed a couple of firearms search warrants and uncovered numerous unlicensed firearms. All were seized. The bizarre thing is that under the current licensing system I could not get their licences cancelled. That is crazy. This legislation will fix that once and for all.

It is important to address the mental health issues associated with gun ownership. Research has shown that individuals with mental health issues are at a high risk of committing acts of violence using firearms. By implementing strict background checks and mental health screening for gun owners we can help prevent some of those tragedies. The best person to talk to about that is your doctor—no-one else. This bill will empower that.

The next issue relates to the number of firearms people could own. There is currently no limitation on that in this state, but the bill will limit that to five. That number came from the deliberations of numerous stakeholder groups. For a recreational user who shoots feral animals as a hobby, I think five guns is fair enough. Why the anguish, when most firearm holders have only three guns? It is a point to ponder. I think it is a bit generous that people can have up to 10 guns, but I will have to live with that.

The aim to remove guns from our community is supported by the implementation by the Cook Labor government of the fantastic \$64 million compensation buyback scheme. I could go into a lot of that, but I have had reflections from my constituents who have participated in the buyback scheme and they were astounded about the effectiveness and generosity of it. I will not speak any further to that.

This legislation will end all historical letters of authority and make it an offence to sell them. This means that if people own a firearm, they must have a place to use it and have the permission of the current owner to destroy animals that are a problem for that particular landowner. An example of this is the large calibre firearms required to kill camels. Previously, letters of authority were given to properties in the south west. Last time I checked, there were no camels down there. Here is a point to ponder: one property owner has had such a problem with feral animals that he has granted over 3 000 letters of authority for a 100-acre farm. What crap!

I make this observation: the firearms reforms that occurred following the Port Arthur massacre have saved thousands of lives. To modernise the Firearms Act will do nothing more than continue that process. However, more work still needs to be done. Although Australia has made great strides in reducing gun violence, loopholes still need to be addressed. One such loophole is the regulation of semiautomatic firearms, which are still legal in certain circumstances in this state. These weapons have the potential for mass casualties and should be subject to stricter controls. In Western Australia, this space is dominated by handguns. The more of those firearms that can be removed from the licensed community, the better and safer we will be. I have spoken about the generosity of the buyback scheme. I will say no more about that.

Prior to coming to this place, I worked at a local police station. During one of the amnesties, a Lewis machine gun was surrendered to the police station. That is a World War I machine gun. One of the old buggers had brought it back from the war and hid it in his back shed. It was found during a search of the deceased estate and was brought into the station. I have never seen so many people run to the back of a police station in my life! It took me a while. That firearm is now sitting in the Australian Army Infantry Museum in Singleton.

In conclusion, Western Australia has made significant progress in firearms reform since Port Arthur and is a leader in firearms reform in this country historically. Implementing measures such as a national firearms registry, improving mental health screenings, abolishing letters of authority, reducing the number of firearms allowed and modernising the act to focus on community safety is a no-brainer. With this, we can further reduce gun violence in our community. Let us continue to strive to have a safer, more secure future for all. I commend the bill to the house.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [10.54 am]—in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. Pretty much every matter that has been raised, particularly by those opposite in the Nationals WA who oppose this bill, will be addressed in consideration in detail. I hope that will provide some comfort around the concerns aired by members. I have advisers preparing specific responses to what has been raised by members, but I will respond to the issues from this morning because they are fresh in my mind.

I turn first to the members for Mirrabooka and Burns Beach, who both support the legislation. I appreciate the reflections by the member for Burns Beach on his service as a police officer and encounters with firearms and his views on the need for more robust legislation. Like the member for Central Wheatbelt, the member for Mirrabooka is a country girl. When I was reflecting on the member for Central Wheatbelt's potential blind spot, I was suggesting that I, too, shared that, having grown up in the country; it was not in the wheatbelt, but it was in the south west. I am so old that in those days it was fairly country. I grew up in a household with a .22 calibre rifle in the cupboard and there was a fairly liberal relationship with transporting and using firearms. I put on the record now that in no way was I trying to suggest that there was some sort of problem with country people and their relationship with firearms. In fact, we ensured throughout deliberations when preparing this bill that we were deeply engaged with the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board to ensure that people who use guns in the course of their work as primary producers were part of shaping the bill.

I say at the outset that I know there is a whole manner of conjecture about motivations for reform of the bill. Personally, I have no particular anxiety about firearms. I taught my sons to shoot when they were younger than this legislation will enable. Like many things in the regions, it is a part of life. By the way, I did that on a friend's property; he was with me with his licensed firearm—it was not my firearm! The point is that I do not come to this with a reluctance around the use of firearms. Obviously, I used them a lot in the military.

I will address some of the other points made by the member for Central Wheatbelt. It is reductive to say that the key concern of those who are advocating to the National Party to oppose this legislation—it is not the only thing—is about the limits. I know the member has not defended the letter system as a good system. She knows that it was primary producers who asked the government to reform that part of the legislation. The Law Reform Commission report did not say that health checks were not a valid thing, but that work needed to be done on the nature of that process. That has been done, and is being done. Ultimately, the key element of the Nationals WA's opposition to this legislation, and a lot of the opposition from people advocating against the legislation, resides with the imposition of a limit on the number of firearms an individual can own. The point is that the alternative to that is the argument that people should be able to have an unlimited number of guns. If that is not the alternative, ask those people advocating to the member for Central Wheatbelt what the limit should be. What is a reasonable limit? The member named four firearm types in her contribution and how more than one firearm might be needed to address certain types of challenges that confront pastoralists or primary producers. The original National Firearms Agreement established when John Howard was Prime Minister reflected on the likelihood that a farmer might need three firearms—a shotgun, a .22 and a high-powered rifle. The number of firearms that people out there generally have is two. As the member for Burns Beach indicated, the average number of firearms people have is between three and four.

The numbers arrived at were reached in consultation with stakeholders, interested parties and even those people who claim that they have not been consulted. The Western Australian Firearms Community Alliance has been meeting with police for the better half of a year and a half on this on an almost weekly or fortnightly basis and has contributed. Ultimately, the number of 10 firearms for a primary producer licence has been arrived at in collaboration with the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board. There will be opportunities for a business licence that will enable greater numbers. We will talk about that in deliberations in consideration in detail.

Competition shooters have been afforded the opportunity to have 10 firearms as well. That is mostly because at the moment, the vast majority of competition shooters have fewer than 10 firearms. There will be the opportunity for competitive shooters to apply for more firearms should they wish to compete in a greater number of categories. The member for Central Wheatbelt and the member for North West Central, having talked to clubs, raised the issue and their concerns that somehow this precludes people who are not Olympians or Commonwealth Games competitors or elite shooters from acquiring additional firearms. I can assure members that aspirant shooters are people who aspire to compete at that level, because, clearly, as the member for North West Central pointed out, people do not instantly become that level of shooter; they aspire to it, and they need to apply for additional firearms. People will be able to do so. That opportunity will be afforded to people under this legislation. The intent is that that opportunity be afforded aspirant shooters as well, not just those already at the pinnacle of their sport.

When we met representatives from the West Australian Pistol Association, the West Australian Rifle Association and the Australian Clay Target Association at the start of this process almost two years ago, they suggested that the greatest number of categories of competition shooting is in pistols. The number outlined at the time was something like 42. In the event that someone aspired to compete at that sort of level, not that anyone in Western Australia in competition shooting has 42 licences—at least not that I know of—they will have the capacity to seek out that authority. Opportunity will be afforded to people under this legislation. Hopefully, that puts to rest those concerns.

I must reflect on the member for Central Wheatbelt's referencing an advertisement that is being run suggesting I said, "Get another hobby."

Ms M.J. Davies: It wasn't me.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sorry. If it was not the member for Central Wheatbelt, it was someone else; it may have been the member for North West Central. The point is that a lot of misinformation is put about. I made the comment about getting another hobby three years ago in relation to making gel blasters unlawful. It was raised with me at the time. Advocates for gel blasters as a hobby were dressing up and shooting at the local park with something that looked like an M4 or an AK-47. They said that I was depriving people of their hobby and asked what I would say to them; I said they should get another hobby. I never said that about competitive shooters. They know that. Potentially, some club members do not know that because all they see is the ad and hear a suggestion from WAFCA that that is my view about competitive shooters. We will afford competitive shooters the opportunity to continue to compete. In fact, club numbers will probably grow as an outcome of this legislation.

This is the bottom line, and this is why some people who are so determined to reject the suggestion of a firearms limit and reform about the property letter, in particular, do not like this legislation. If a person's only genuine reason for having a firearm was afforded to them by a letter that they acquired from somebody who they may or may not have ever met for a property they may or may not have ever shot on, and do not ever intend to shoot on, it is probably likely they will not be able to get an authority. They may be able to do so. There may be an opportunity for

them to find somebody who has a property that meets the specifications and has enough capacity in their authority to give them one. That is still a category. That requires a genuine reason. Hunting for the purpose of controlling vermin is an absolutely genuine reason. All that will change is that a rationale will apply to who gets a licence to do that. It will be related to properties upon which we know people will actually go and shoot to control vermin. That is a good thing. Ultimately, it will reduce the overall number of firearms in the community because a lot of firearms in the community are not being used for the purposes for which they are claimed to be used, and their genuine reason was achieved only through a letter that was obtained as a gesture rather than a real justification and is not linked to use. I know a lot of people do that. This legislation will not prevent them from doing that. If they have a property that they shoot on, and it assists with vermin control, they will be able to do so. People will still be able to do red card shoots. A permit system will enable that.

The process will be far more efficient. The government is spending tens of millions of dollars on building a new system that will be more efficient than the current one. This will enable people, at very short notice, to approve shooting on their property for the purposes of vermin control. It will be much more flexible. It may be time limited, so the property owner controls who is shooting on their property. It will enable things like a group of farmers in one district to all collaboratively enable a shoot on a weekend or over a short period of time so that they eradicate vermin in their part of the world. It will enable all those things in a far more efficient manner than currently, but it will be more controlled in terms of who gets the licence because it will be linked to activity. For a person to get initial authority, if their initial genuine reason is solely based on vermin control, an authority from a property will be required. That is a good thing. As we heard from the member for Burns Beach, ridiculous situations have arisen as the letter system has been completely compromised and people have issued thousands of authorities for firearms on a 100-acre property. It is just crazy. That is going to be fixed.

The limit of five firearms for those undertaking vermin control was arrived at partly because the vast majority of Western Australians believe that people should have five or fewer firearms. The vast majority of Western Australians—88 per cent—believe that there should be a limit. It was not a manipulative question; it was a very specific question: should there be a limit on firearms in light of the fact that we are doing firearms reform? That was the question that was asked. It is not hard. The member said that it is reductive to say that it is this or that. Yes, it is, pretty much. Should there be a limit on the number of firearms that somebody is able to buy or should there not be? If someone says that there should not be, they are advocating for people to have an unlimited number of firearms. Honestly, that is the American gun culture. That is what I am referring to. I know that people do not like us saying that Australians do not want American gun culture because they do not want that in this debate. As much as it was a sensitive, horrible incident, reflecting on a murder–suicide by a licensed firearm owner is part of the debate. This happens in America. This is the American debate. They were not allowed to talk about the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting at the time because that would have been insensitive, apparently. Australians look at that and say, “That’s crazy!” Australians listen to gun debates in America and wonder why they cannot limit the number of firearms in their community. Limiting the number of firearms in the community starts with a limit on how many firearms an individual can have, and then we go to other parts.

For everyone who is watching, I say that we anticipate that that part of the law will not take a huge number of firearms out of the community. Someone criticised me—it was not the member for Vasse—for suggesting last year that only 15 000 firearms would be taken out, but that now that we have \$64 million in the fund, it is enough to take out 100 000. The question that was asked was: “What on earth is going on?” It was only an indicative number; it is not finite. The police modelled the different elements of the law and tried to assess the best-case number of firearms that would be removed by each of the measures. With limits, I think it was about only 15 000. I cannot remember exactly, but it was something like that. People have said, “You said that only 15 000 would be taken but now we have enough money in the fund to buy back 100 000.” I think that is a good thing. My view is that the more we can remove from the community, the better. As the member for Burns Beach suggested, the fewer firearms we have in the community, the safer it will be. That is not saying that any licensed firearm owner is evil or bad; it is just saying that if there are more firearms in the community, ultimately, regardless of what we do, there is a greater opportunity for them to find their way into the hands of someone who will do harm, either to themselves or somebody else. That is just a fact. This is not some great mystery. Most Australians would think that if America had fewer firearms in its community, it would be safer. That applies to us, too. We started this process by drawing to the attention of the Western Australian public that there is something like 360 000 firearms in WA and that we would like fewer, because the fewer there are, the safer it will be.

There is another side to the debate. There are people who say that it has nothing to do with how many firearms there are and that we should not limit them—they should have as many as they want. I disagree, the government disagrees and so do most Western Australians. Sixteen per cent of Western Australians think there should be none. I do not think that. Seventy-two per cent think there should be a limit of five or fewer. The way that number was arrived at is that the vast majority—95 per cent or something—of licensed firearm owners in Western Australia have five or fewer firearms. That was the last number I saw—95 per cent or so of licensed firearm owners have five or fewer firearms. Imposing a limit of five firearms on vermin shooters will not really impact the vast majority of them, in the same way that imposing a limit of 10 on primary producers will not really impact most of them

because most do not have anywhere near that number. As I indicated, imposing a limit of 10 on competition shooters to match primary producers will not really impact most of them either, because most of them do not have that number. I think the biggest number that we were able to determine for competition shooters—this guy is pretty elite—was about 19 pistols. Most competition shooters do not have that number. A lot of the concern and anger around this has been generated partly by misinformation. I get that. I get that Hon Louise Kingston would think that suggesting I hate camping, shooting and fishing would somehow get her more likes on her Facebook page. I understand that. However, that is not really helpful in terms of the debate. There is a justification for everything that is being done in the bill, but we are going to debate it and we are going to explain things.

I better get on and address some of the questions. I think I addressed the member for Central Wheatbelt's questions. We will go into it anyway; I know that she can ask more specific questions when we get to the consideration in detail stage. I think I have addressed what she said, and I appreciated her contribution, which was reasoned and reasonable. There was nothing wrong with what was said.

I will move on to the member for Collie–Preston, who raised an issue, as did the member for Vasse. I have to say that this issue was raised by the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board very late in the process; otherwise, we would probably have addressed it in the drafting. The member for Collie–Preston pointed out concerns around limiting primary producer licences to one per property, and both members gave a reasonable explanation, as did the primary producers. The Western Australian Farmers Federation and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association raised this issue with us but it was so late in the process that we could not address it then. The suggestion that there is justification for more than one primary producer licence on a property is reasonable. We will address that. At the risk of being criticised by the member for Central Wheatbelt for bringing in amendments, I intend to bring in an amendment. The issue was raised by the members for Collie–Preston and Vasse. I am not sure whether the member for Central Wheatbelt also raised it. The issue was raised with me very late in the process by the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board, which said that there was a good argument to have more than one primary producer licence per property. I think that issue would have been raised with the member for Central Wheatbelt. The Leader of the Opposition might also have mentioned it. It was raised by the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board so late in the process that we could not put it into the draft bill. At the risk of the member for Central Wheatbelt having a crack at me, I put on notice that we will amend that part of the bill to address that concern.

I better try to read the information that was prepared in response to the concerns that were raised. I will go to the concerns raised by the member for Vasse. The member asked why conditions that will strengthen the storage of firearms and around being a fit and proper person, having genuine reasons and having a genuine need will not be sufficient in limiting the number of firearms. I know that she does not oppose the bill, but I would prefer her to categorically support it. I might ask a bit more about that as we go through the debate, because I think that not opposing it does not really give full-throated support to strengthening firearms laws. Putting that aside, the member for Vasse raised that point because her constituents had raised it with her. In regard to that I would say that the report by the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia recommended against the introduction of numerical limits, although it acknowledged the increased risk of firearm theft with no upper limit. The Law Reform Commission report also made the observation that, at that point—remember, this was in 2014 to 2016—it did not have evidence of the stockpiling of weapons, which would have been of concern. In recent times, as part of this process the police have identified concerns about stockpiling, and that is because in the 14 years prior to the drafting of this bill, there has been a 65 per cent growth in the number of firearms in Western Australia, yet the number of licence holders has remained pretty static at about 89 000 or 90 000. Remember, I told the member that 95 per cent of people have five or fewer firearms. That means that some people are stockpiling firearms. It is concerning for police that there are large volumes in different locations, so that is motivation for not complying with that recommendation. Things have moved on and circumstances have changed, and we decided that we would impose limits, and I have already explained how those limits were arrived at.

A lot of people have raised the issue of the imposition of health assessments. They are an integral aspect of the proposed legislation and align with the licensing of other potentially dangerous or hazardous things, such as heavy haulage licences, pilot licences and dangerous goods licences. The 1973 act includes the ability to request health assessments. The commissioner has the power to and does request health assessments of licensed firearms owners. That happens under the current law. The bill will normalise this activity for all original applications, and it will be required every five years after that. It is ostensibly a good thing that licence holders will have to attend a health practitioner to identify any impacting factors that may endanger themselves or others should they be allowed to possess a firearm. It should be seen not as a punishment but, rather, as insurance that applicants will do their best to manage whatever conditions they have.

I have to address this issue specifically. It has been raised with me by veterans, whom I respect greatly. A number of veterans, particularly those from our wonderful Special Air Service Regiment in Western Australia, have acquired post-traumatic stress disorder as a consequence of trauma they have been exposed to. This law will not prevent those people from having a firearm licence. I know that for some of them, particularly those who have been physically wounded and damaged and are disabled as a consequence, shooting is the sport that they are able to participate in. Absolutely, this law will not prevent them from doing that. It is not intended that a mental health matter will preclude

someone from having a licence. I want to assure people that that will not be the case. However, it will, hopefully, provide an opportunity for people to avail themselves of a health assessment and potentially be supported in a way they might not otherwise have been.

It has been suggested in the debate that the imposition of a health check will somehow prevent people from getting a health check. I do not buy that. The member for Central Wheatbelt suggested—I am trying to remember the exact nuance of her point—that this will not prevent it. There is no measure. We could not write a law to prevent some of those tragedies to which I referred earlier. We need to refer to them. The reason I referred to them is that there has been some suggestion that only unlicensed firearms owners do crime. That is not true. People are law-abiding right up until they are not. Sadly, some of them go from zero to murderer in one day. That is why I talked about it. I am not suggesting that any of the measures we are taking will prevent any of those tragedies, but, hopefully, the bill will apply additional measures to mitigate the risk. You mitigate risk; you do not eliminate it. That is true of any practice. Ultimately, all these measures are mitigations. They will not eliminate risk, and I would not pretend that they will. We could not do that, and that is true of the health check. The intent is to try to provide another measure. It is a good thing. I talked to farmers about this in the early days of this process and, tragically, a lot of farmers are doing self-harm with firearms. That was part of the motivation for the bill. I understand that people felt that that was somehow focusing attention on them, but that is not the intent. The intent is to try to help people and also to mitigate risk.

The other thing I said to a group of blokes I met was that if I could write a law just for them, it would be easy. If we were tasked with writing a law for retired special forces soldiers, who are incredibly responsible, knowledgeable and reliable, it would be the most simple task in the world, but that is not what this law is. We have to write a law for the entire spectrum of humanity in Western Australia. Providing that they meet the criteria, any of those people will be able to apply for a firearm licence in Western Australia. We have to address every potential situation. For example, under the current law, which some people think is wonderful and should never be changed, some people have a firearm licence despite the fact that they have committed violent crimes and have been deemed not to be a fit and proper person by the police commissioner, but have challenged it and taken the commissioner to task in the State Administrative Tribunal and the Supreme Court and have received their firearms back. That is a fact under the current law. The intent of this law is to, as far as possible, mitigate the risk of the wrong people getting their hands on firearms.

The member for Moore asked why all the measures that have been referred to are not adequate. Ultimately, there has been massive growth in the number of firearms and no growth in the number of licences. There is an intent to reduce the number of firearms in the community. As I said at the outset, fewer firearms mean a safer community. That is what most Western Australians believe. Farmers, competitive shooters and genuine vermin shooters, as well as all the other category of shooters, will still be able to have access to firearms, but the intent is to reduce the number of firearms. That is why we are doing all the things that the member referred to, including strengthening storage requirements, improving the fit and proper test and establishing a better system for the genuine reason and need requirement. They are not sufficient and we are trying to do everything we can, and that includes imposing a limit. I know that some people will refuse to concede that there should be any limit, but most people believe that there should be a limit. That is the question, and that is what I was saying. I was not being in any way critical of the member making that decision, but he has to own it. He has to own the fact that he is advocating for an unlimited number of guns if he opposes a limit. That is just how English works. It is either a limit or no limit.

The Leader of the Opposition queried why a competition firearm cannot be used for hunting purposes. That is already the case. People cannot do that now under the current legislation, but we will enable a licensed firearm owner who has a firearm for the purpose of vermin control to take it to and use it at a range. That will be accommodated under the legislation.

The member also asked why the Commissioner of Police will make the ultimate determination about a person's fit and proper status, particularly with the health assessment, despite not being a health practitioner and having received evidence from a health practitioner. The Commissioner of Police will ultimately determine a person's fit and proper status based on numerous factors, including the health assessment, all of which lead to a determination about a person's suitability to hold a firearm authority and minimising the risk to public safety. Health practitioners cannot be held responsible for any determination made throughout the assessment. Their role is to provide evidence about a person's physical and mental health status, which will then be considered alongside all other evidence. A health practitioner is not expected to provide any private health details that the applicant does not wish to share; simply an assessment of whether a person meets the health standards.

The commissioner is using that bit of information, along with a lot of other information, to determine the fit and proper status of people. He does that now, but as I have indicated, the law does not currently elevate public safety to primacy. Determinations by the commissioner of fit and proper status can be challenged on the grounds of private property ownership, and those challenges are often successful. I think that is wrong. There are times when the commissioner determines someone to not be a fit and proper person, and the commissioner should be backed up on that. Ultimately, if we elevate public safety to primacy, that will be the outcome: public safety will trump any other consideration.

The member asked about the replacement of old firearms that are unsafe or unserviceable. Any unsafe or unserviceable firearm must be repaired if it is to be possessed and used by a person. That is the current requirement. Like-for-like replacement of firearms has been considered and the means are there to expedite the application process. There will be provision for like-for-like replacement in the legislation. The member also asked about storage requirements, as did a lot of members. We will talk about this under the appropriate clause, noting that a lot of this will fall under regulations. There has been a lot of consultation around storage requirements and that is continuing. The Sporting Shooters' Association, in particular, has made significant contributions to that discussion, as has the West Australian Firearms Traders Association because it will potentially be one of the suppliers of secure storage. It might be best to talk about this during consideration in detail, but the intention is to focus on a greater number of firearms in someone's position requiring a greater onus of responsibility in respect of storage. The member for Central Wheatbelt and others indicated that a lot of firearms owners have secure storage. It is not necessarily the intention to change their types of safes or whatever, but we will talk about those requirements. It is recognised that a lot of people with a small number of firearms have pretty low levels of safe storage obligation, but we do not necessarily want them all to be compelled to change their storage arrangements; there might be grandfathering around that. It will be about mitigating the higher risk associated with a greater number of firearms.

The Leader of the Opposition asked about minimum activity requirements for licence holders being a new facet of the legislation and the fact that that may be concerning for some licence holders who do not use their firearms often. My response to that is that minimum activity requirements are not, per se, new requirements being introduced by this bill; rather, the bill will provide a contemporary concept. The 1973 act and regulations already had minimum activity requirements for competition handgun owners that continue to be registered with clubs and ranges. The change contemplated is to introduce tailored requirements for all categories under competition licences, not just handguns. My observation on that is that it will be in the context of a completely new management system that will be digitised and far more readily and immediately accessible than is the current paper-based system. The intention is to enable ease of operation for clubs and shooters to comply.

There was a question about how police will determine the suitability of a property for a specific calibre of firearm. This issue has been raised with me by members of the veterans' community in respect of the current system. I have afforded those very knowledgeable men the opportunity to talk to police about how we might refine the system and create opportunities for a more appropriate determination on what types of firearms can be used on different sizes of property. There will be more consideration around approvals on surrounding properties, topography and the like. Those deliberations are ongoing; the intention is to make it a better system than it currently is. I note that that, of course, is not covered by the legislation; it is an interpretation of the regulations, and it is our intention to make that better. We will continue to work on that, and we will take advice from those, as I said, very competent people who have raised with me some of the strange interpretations that can be applied under the current law. This shift will not be a result of a change to the legislation; it is a recognition, as part of the consultation process, that we can do things better.

I realise members opposite are looking at me, wondering what on earth I am talking about! It was pointed out that under the current system a property owner can provide authority, via one of the letter systems, to a recreational hunting shooter to enable them to use whatever calibre firearm they want to on that person's property, yet there would be limitations on what types of rifle the property owner could use, based on the current assessment system. That is inconsistent and not really reasonable, so we will address it.

An amendment was moved on the question of referring the legislation to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Members opposite know that the Legislation Committee deliberates on policy; we are debating the policy and we have debated the policy, and I explained yesterday why the government would not agree to that amendment. The Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review will assess the measures that it is allowed to assess; we will debate the policy here. There has been discussion, consultation and deliberation around reform of the Firearms Act since 2014, and probably further back, to Port Arthur; we should have rewritten the legislation since then. We will have the policy debate. The opposition has already determined that it will oppose imposing limits on the number of firearms people can own. The government does not agree. We could send the legislation to a committee, the committee could say the same thing, and I would not agree with that committee, either. Ultimately, I have provided the argument. This is another measure to militate against the risk of firearms in the community. That is another measure, like all the measures in this legislation.

I will finish, before we go into consideration in detail, by reflecting on claims that have been made. I have never told firearms owners that they should take up another hobby. There was also a suggestion that I had some issue with law-abiding firearms owners and that this legislation was focused on punishing them. There is no punishment of anyone associated with rewriting this legislation. I think it is an accepted requirement. Having said that, some people believe we should not rewrite the legislation because they are happy with things as they are. Well, they are just going to be disappointed. We need to rewrite it; it needs to be modernised. The legislation needs to reflect the National Firearms Agreement. The primary principle of the National Firearms Agreement is that the possession and usage of firearms in Australia is a privilege—that privilege being conditional upon the primacy of public safety. That is the National Firearms Agreement; no-one is backing away from that. We in Western Australia have

not yet stepped up to it, because we have never put that principle into the legislation. Once we concede the requirement to elevate public safety to being the primary consideration, a lot of other things will fall out of that. It means that, at times, changes to the legislation will make some people unhappy because they will not be able to do some things they used to do. In other ways, some people will be able to do things that they have not been able to do in the past legitimately and lawfully, because we are addressing things like transport around the state. The ultimate intent is to elevate public safety.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Ms R.S. Stephens) casting her vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (43)

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

Noes (4)

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

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Can the minister provide me with some understanding of the resources that the Western Australia Police Force will likely require in terms of cost and personnel expected to be involved in the implementation of the act, the new framework that will change processes and some of the new requirements that will be brought in?

Mr P. PAPALIA: In terms of the information technology build, we are creating a new licensing system for firearms in Western Australia. In the order of \$25 million has been attributed to that task and I think 22 people have been assigned, but it will vary because it is about creating an IT system. Ten people will be in the program team and 20 people will be in the transition team that has an attributed cost of about \$15 million.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Are those personnel all sworn police officers? If not, what number of sworn officers will be involved in the matters the minister just outlined?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that about 10 per cent of them are sworn officers and about 90 per cent are not. Obviously, the IT specialists and a lot of the other personnel do not need to be sworn officers.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Given that some provisions in the act require officers of a certain rank to carry out the duties, will a senior officer be in that group and what level will that officer be?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes. It is a whole team. The licensing enforcement division's commander has the police rank of commander.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will the amount of money the minister has outlined for costs be provided in an additional budget or will it come out of the existing police budget?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is already in the budget.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What is the plan to educate the public, firearm owners, firearm dealers and other people affected by this legislation? Is there an advertising schedule? What is the process the government expects to go through so people are aware of all the provisions they will be subject to in the future?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is part of the transition task, and the transition team has a budget for a communications plan.

Mr R.S. LOVE: When we had briefings on this legislation, we were given the impression that we would be given a framework of the regulatory situation, but nothing that I am aware of has been provided. When will some sort of draft of the new regulations be available? Will it be available before the Legislative Council, for instance, debates this matter in several weeks?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think the member has a misunderstanding of what was stated. We have always indicated that for some controversial matters or matters of concern raised by members of the opposition our intent is to give an indication of what the regulations will contain and where they will go with respect to the application of the law. Obviously, the regulations do not exist yet and are being drafted, but we intend to give comfort to people who may be concerned about some elements of the legislation and how they will be applied. As we get to those clauses, I encourage the Leader of the Opposition to raise matters that stakeholders have raised with him and raise concerns about how they might be interpreted in regulations. For instance, if the Leader of the Opposition raises storage requirements, we will talk as fulsomely as we can—noting that the regulations do not yet exist, but there is an intent. We can give some comfort to people about a lot of the storage requirements, I think, through responding to the member's questions in consideration in detail.

Mr R.S. LOVE: A list of stakeholders consulted in the development of the bill was provided. The minister read out a list of people; it might have been during discussion on our motion on Wednesday afternoon. Can the minister provide a list of those stakeholders? Also, I am interested to know what happened to the thousands of suggestions, form letters et cetera that the minister received. How were they responded to and how much consideration was given to the suggestions made by those people? Did they, in fact, lead to any changes in the legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think we tabled the list of consultation and engagements before anyway. It is a comprehensive list and multiple pages long. The list I referred to during debate on the opposition's second reading amendment was not finite; that was about a different side of the argument, as I was suggesting the opposition might not have consulted those people. A lot of other consultation was undertaken with people who have a direct interest in the firearms industry. I will get that for the Leader of the Opposition. I am pretty certain that it has been tabled before, but we will give him an updated one. I undertake to get that to him.

Putting that aside, from memory, there were 6 081 negative responses, which the Leader of the Opposition is referring to. There were more than 6 600 responses overall, but I think 6 081 were against the legislation or elements of it. In all the submissions, some 45 concerns about individual elements of the legislation were raised. I can tell the member that 19 of those 45 elements or matters raised have been included in the final bill. There were lots of them. I was not being dismissive; they were all considered, but if all said the same three things, that is three points—right? That is not giving them less weight but saying that those are the points that need to be considered. Of the 45 individual elements that were raised across the spectrum of responses to the consultation paper, changes were made to incorporate 19 of them into the final bill.

Mr R.S. LOVE: May I have a list of those as well?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is my intention to get a list of the 19—potentially, the 45—specific points that resulted in changes and have been included in the final bill. I will get it. I do not have it right now.

Ms L. METTAM: I note that the bill will result in numerical limits on firearms that can be possessed under certain licences. Can the minister provide any information, for the last 10 or so years, on the number of offences of a person possessing more firearms than would be allowed under this legislation?

Mr P. Papalia: Sorry? Could the member repeat just the last bit?

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister provide any information on the number of offences that have occurred in the last 10 years in which someone has possessed more firearms than would be allowed under this legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not think we will be able to give that answer. We can give the Leader of the Liberal Party the number of offences involving firearm thefts annually for the last 10 years. It is not because I do not understand or I do not want to; it is that the current system cannot do that. That is why we are spending a lot of money on fixing it and making it a modern system. The system cannot, for instance, differentiate between when an offence occurs. There is not a database that says licensed or unlicensed or that this person was traced and ultimately found to have been a licensed firearm owner who had a certain number of firearms, or this person was traced and identified as having had a certain number stolen. It is not that contemporary a database or system. It is a legacy system, and we intend to spend tens of millions of dollars to update it. Ultimately, once we have done that, we will have a system whereby we will be able to ask those questions and get real detailed responses, which will also enable greater law enforcement efficiency because we will have a modern system, which we do not currently have.

Ms L. METTAM: Has a budget been allocated at this stage for the implementation of this legislation, and how is it going to be expended?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As I indicated earlier to the Leader of the Opposition, essentially, there is a project team that has been afforded a budget in the order of \$25 million for a new IT system really, and then there is what we call a transition team, and that has allocated to it in the order of \$15 million for people and resources.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As the minister knows, I have brought the digital licensing system up a couple of times. We are talking about resources and funding. In that particular scenario, can the minister clarify how many extra officers or the like will be put into the system, whether that is digital or paper based? How many extra resources will be put into that part of the package?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, we are spending tens of millions of dollars building a new system. Once that is operational, they will be able to determine what they need to operate the system, but we have to assume that a contemporary, modern IT system will be far more efficient than the one we currently have. Whatever is required will be afforded to the operations. The point is that we are creating a new, contemporary system.

I know that concerns were raised by some people about whether there will still be an opportunity for people to have a hard copy, non-digital licence. Yes, there will be. I note that, of course, the actual digital licence is something that was advocated for by the firearms community in the lead-up to the drafting of this legislation. Some 97 per cent of current firearms licence holders have a mobile phone, so it is not beyond expectation that most people will adopt the digital licence, but they will not be compelled to. They will be able to get a card if they want, but that card will not be like the current system whereby a holder has the card and something else and has to carry two things around; there will be one system.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I hear what the minister is saying about spending tens of millions of dollars on a new digital system. Can the minister predict how long the transition period will be from this paper-based scenario across to that digital system?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Elements of it will be delivered at different times. The first tranche, which will be visible to licence holders under which they will be able to see a practical difference and have a digital licence and all their information updated very simply in a much more friendly fashion than the current system, will be delivered in March next year, noting that the royal assent for this legislation should be achieved in December. Then, just by virtue of the legislation—we will talk about it as we go—elements of this legislation will be rolled out in such a way that we will not encounter the concerns that some people have around everyone wanting something at the same time. Renewals and health checks will be done at different stages. If people have inadequate storage for the number of firearms they have under the current system, it will not be done all at once so that everyone has to rush and there is no storage provision or availability. It will be done in a staged process over time, and that process could probably take a year. But the actual IT system that people think of when they are thinking about whether there will be a digital licence, whether it will look different and whether they will be able to enter their details online and have it automatically updated, will be delivered in March next year.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Finally, just so I can be clear in my mind, and because constituents have expressed to me their concerns about the digital scenario—the Optus data breach and all these other things that have happened—and that they are worried about their identity being released et cetera, will there be a concurrent scenario whereby if I want to be just a paper-based licence holder and not on the digital register, I could do that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, you do not get to be off the grid. If you have a driver's licence, you are on a database. The police hold a lot of sensitive information and are sensitive to the fact that we are under threat at all times from foreign and domestic players who try to penetrate our cybersecurity systems. That is just the modern world. With respect to whether someone can choose to not be on the registry, the answer is no, because that is the law, and the intent is that we know which people have firearms, where they are and that they are being held and used in accordance with the law. That is the intent of the legislation. No, people cannot opt out.

Also, I put on the table that we have committed, as has every government in Australia, to a national registry. That is not ceding our responsibility for maintaining our database, but it will ensure that this system that we will spend tens of millions of dollars to create will be compatible with whatever requirements the feds generate in that registry, and that is a good thing. It will mean that people can move their firearms between borders and we can support each other's jurisdictions in terms of management.

Ms M. BEARD: Just following on, I appreciate the question that the member for Vasse asked on the number of offences over a 10-year period and the limitations of the system. Does the system provide information on the number of gun offences committed by licensed and non-licensed persons?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a difficult question. Currently, I receive state awareness summary updates, and serious crimes are notified to a whole range of people. Sometimes we get notification of a firearms incident and it identifies the fact that that day, they have recognised that this person is a licensed firearm holder, but a lot of times it will be unknown. A lot of times they may not know at the time of the commission of the offence but they subsequently find out. I can tell the member that that is also part of the challenge with our current firearms IT system. All around the country, probably right around the world, as governments and different agencies in government upgrade their IT systems, they are becoming more compatible and breaking down silos, but we have silos from legacy systems in government that preclude sharing of information across databases, sometimes even inside the same agency. Our firearms IT system does not currently provide that information. The incident management system may, but, again, it depends on what data has been put in historically.

I cannot give the answer that some people want. I will say this—I know that some people will not like it: the truth is that the vast majority of unlicensed firearms in Western Australia start their life as a licensed firearm somewhere in Australia. It may be in Western Australia or it may be interstate, but that is where they start. Some black market illegal firearms are brought into the country, but that is not the vast majority of the firearms that are used in crime.

Most of them have been stolen or sold, or have found their way onto the market by whatever means. They are then categorised as unlicensed. They might have had the serial number removed and it is difficult to trace their provenance; however, they started their life as licensed firearms. The more we can do to mitigate the likelihood of those firearms ultimately finding their way to people who will use them in an unlawful or harmful way, the better. That is just one of the measures in this bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2: Commencement —

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister explain the reasons behind the different dates for the commencement of the legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The commencement clause in part 1 provides that preliminary provisions will come into effect on the day of royal assent and part 16, transitional provisions, will come into effect the day after royal assent. Part 17, division 3, subdivision 11 will come into operation when section 412 of the Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023 comes into operation. The rest of the bill will come into operation on a date fixed by proclamation to allow for implementation to support the administration of the new provisions.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 2(d) states that the rest of the bill will come into operation on a day fixed by proclamation and that different days may be fixed for different provisions. Parts 16 and 17 of the bill are the transitional and repeal elements. When will the 1973 act be repealed? Is there a time line for that? Does that have to occur at the end of the transition period or prior to the transition period?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The short answer is that proclamation will occur in March next year. There is a staggered transition period. As I explained earlier, we do not want to create unnecessary challenges for people to transition under some elements of the bill. I referred to storage and some health checks. There are different elements to renewals. We do not want people rushing the system and doing that at the same time. Basically, royal assent will happen in December and proclamation in March, but there is a staggered implementation thereafter for about a year. It will depend on how things are going, noting that we do not want to create an unintended consequence around the transition process. There are elements for which large numbers of people might try to seek the same outcome at the same time, and we want to stagger that.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am trying to get an understanding of when the old act will be repealed, and also the regulations. Some of the categories of firearms, for instance, do not identify anything. If the regulations are to be repealed and we do not have new regulations, how do we know how to interpret the rest of the legislation? I am trying to get an understanding of when the regulations will be repealed. Will that be when the new regulations are complete, or will the regulations be repealed at the same time as the 1973 act? How can there be a set of regulations that do not refer directly to the act?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The old act will be repealed in March next year. The new regulations will be published in December this year and it is intended that there will be further consultation and deliberation around those regulations from December. If people apply for a licence in March next year, everything in the new act will apply to them.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Principles and objects —

Ms L. METTAM: I do not think anyone would disagree with the principles and objects of the bill, but can the minister explain the reason behind their inclusion?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can. I go back to John Howard's National Firearms Agreement. That is what I refer to with respect to the objects of the legislation. Paragraph 1 of the opening statement of the 2017 *National Firearms Agreement* states —

The National Firearms Agreement constitutes a national approach to the regulation of firearms. The Agreement affirms that firearms possession and use is a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety, and that public safety is improved by the safe and responsible possession, carriage, use, registration, storage and transfer of firearms.

There is an absolute intent to replicate that principle in this legislation. That was subsequently reinforced by recommendation 3 of the Law Reform Commission report that the new rewrite should be subject to a statutory review. The second recommendation was that it should be written again entirely from the ground up. The third recommendation, which was the first that imposed an actual direction on what it recommended should happen, was to adopt the principles of the National Firearms Agreement, and that is what we have done.

Ms L. METTAM: Was any legal advice given indicating the importance of the inclusion of those principles?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. This is a National Firearms Agreement that John Howard courageously brought about in 1997 with the support of Tim Fischer and the opposition at the time, it has got to be said. The chief ministers

meeting in 2017, and the police ministers meeting at that time, reaffirmed that principle. As I said, it accords with the recommendation—the prime recommendation, if we consider that it begins at the very start of the Law Reform Commission report. It is not controversial. It is a principle upon which firearms management has been based since 1997 and post the Port Arthur massacre.

Ms L. METTAM: Would the legislation be diminished if the principles were not included, or will their inclusion enhance the protection of the community? If so, can the minister explain how?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Absolutely, it would be diminished. That would be a break from the National Firearms Agreement on a principal matter. The key matter of the National Firearms Agreement recognises that there is no right to gun ownership and no right to bear arms in Australia. Increasingly, as a consequence of the internet, some people almost live in other countries online and assume that what is legal or referred to as individual rights in those countries also applies to our nation. Our nation has its own culture and its own legal system. Since 1997 and the National Firearms Agreement, there has been an agreed position across the entire nation—across the Federation—that the possession and use of firearms is a privilege that is conditional on the primacy of public safety. We are never going to concede that. This bill will embed that principle in our legislation, noting that WA is the only jurisdiction in the country to not have fully rewritten its firearms act since the Port Arthur massacre.

Mr R.S. LOVE: We are having a very interesting discussion on clause 4, but I point out that there are not many members here listening to it.

Mr T.J. Healy: We have more people than you.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house. Well done!

[Quorum formed.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have forgotten what I was about to say, but I will think of it now. Clause 4 is headed “Principles and objects”. Subclause (2)(h) states that one object is —

to facilitate a nationally consistent approach to the control of firearms.

As I understand it, this is the only legislation that will introduce a limit on the number of firearms. Do any other jurisdictions do this? If they do not, how will this legislation accord with the facilitating of a nationally consistent approach to the control of firearms?

Mr P. PAPALIA: In answering this, I refer back to the question from the member for Vasse on the implications of the principles being adopted in the legislation. The member for Vasse asked whether there would be any implications or consequences if they were removed and what will be achieved by inserting them. Subclause (3) states —

Persons performing functions in or in connection with the administration of this Act (including when constituting, or as a member of, a court or tribunal) must have —

I note the words “must have” —

due regard to the principles and objects of this Act.

The principle that we are referring to is the primacy of public safety. Everyone who considers the application of this legislation must have due regard to that principle. That is the first point, in final response to the member for Vasse’s question. In response to the Leader of the Opposition’s question, I go back to the original agreement, but I think the same can be said of the 2017 agreement. The second point, which comes after the first one that I read earlier, states —

This Agreement sets out minimum requirements in relation to the regulation of firearms. Nothing in this Agreement prevents jurisdictions from adopting additional—including more restrictive—regulations.

We are complying entirely with the National Firearms Agreement. Again, there is a lot of misinformation out there. I get it; people, such as Hon Louise Kingston, are trying to build up their followers on social media. Misinformation around motivation and the like is being deliberately put into the public domain. Ultimately, it is not contradictory to the National Firearms Agreement for us to have tougher restrictions. All the agreement outlines is the minimum that we should adopt. In reference to people who are putting out misinformation, I refer specifically to a meeting that I had with the Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia, a Queensland group that represents the biggest firearms importers to the nation and is getting pretty cosy with you at the moment.

Mr R.S. Love: Hang on!

Mr P. PAPALIA: Okay, I withdraw that.

Representatives from that organisation met with me during the very early days of this process. They asked me about the National Firearms Agreement. I indicated to them that we might exceed the National Firearms Agreement, but that is in accordance with the National Firearms Agreement. The National Firearms Agreement is about a minimum standard, not a maximum. I know their concerns. They are concerned that if Western Australia adopts

measures that might embarrass other jurisdictions if they do not have them, those jurisdictions might contemplate doing that. Further, other populations in other jurisdictions might ask for or demand it. I understand their concerns, because they would prefer that nothing change and that there never be a limit on the number of firearms they can sell to an individual. I understand that. It does not mean that I agree with them. They will not agree with me. That, ultimately, is the point. We support the National Firearms Agreement, but it is a minimum standard.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister referred to the National Firearms Agreement as underpinning the principles of the legislation. Nonetheless, written here in black letters, clause 4 of the bill states —

(2) The objects of this Act are as follows —

...

(h) to facilitate a nationally consistent approach to the control of firearms.

Will the minister concede that the bill will fail to live up to that object because it will in fact not be consistent with other jurisdictions around Australia?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. The member has overlooked the very first paragraph in clause (4); we are adopting the principle that public safety is paramount. Every other jurisdiction recognised that as part of the National Firearms Agreement post Port Arthur, in terms of what motivates them to manage these laws. They may have not incorporated the National Firearms Agreement specifically in their act. I understand that South Australia embedded the same principle in its legislation. It was the last legislature before us to change its act post-Port Arthur. The member might suggest that our doing the same thing is recognising that this is the contemporary expectation. As I indicated to the member, much to the angst of some advocates who would not have it happen, other jurisdictions might contemplate that not having this particular principle embedded in their act means that they are not really complying with John Howard's National Firearms Agreement, and that has been a criticism by many public safety advocates around the country for decades. I am fine. If the member wants to go out there and say that we should not say that public safety is paramount, he can fill his boots. I think that the people of Moore would be disappointed by that. I think that the people of Central Wheatbelt would be disappointed by that. If anyone in Western Australia walked into a pub and asked the people there whether public safety should be the paramount consideration in firearms management, I reckon that 99 per cent of them would agree.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5: Terms used —

Ms L. METTAM: I note the various offences listed under the definition of “disqualifying offence”. It takes into consideration an offence under the law of another Australian jurisdiction that substantially corresponds to an offence referred to in section 128(1) of the Criminal Investigation Act 2006. What about any similar offences committed outside Australia?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No; it specifically states Australian jurisdictions, but remember that the Commissioner of Police will have the power to determine whether someone is a fit and proper person. Undoubtedly, in the event that someone had done a serious offence in another jurisdiction outside Australia and attempted to apply for a licence, that consideration would eliminate them.

It is not really what the member asked, but another initiative in this legislation is the provision to prevent foreign nationals from acquiring a Western Australian firearm licence. There will be opportunities for some people to get permits and authorities, but, as a matter of course at the moment, it is not a requirement that a person be an Australian citizen to get a licence, and that will be introduced.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister provide an assurance that the offence provision that precludes one from owning a firearm under this legislation will apply to anyone coming to Western Australia from overseas? I know that he is saying that the commissioner will have the discretion, but can he provide that assurance?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Absolutely. We were discussing what the commissioner will consider in the fit and proper person test. Everything of that nature would be considered. What we are doing in this law specifically with the fit and proper person test is to ensure that the commissioner will not be able to be challenged by people who are currently afforded the opportunity to challenge on the grounds of property ownership as opposed to the paramount principle being public safety. All the courts will now have to consider that that is the paramount consideration, and that will change the whole process. The whole process will be amended to consider that paramount principle.

It has also been brought to my attention that clause 151, “Mandatory criminal records check”, states —

- (1) For the purpose of forming an opinion as to whether a person is a fit and proper person, the Commissioner must inquire into relevant criminal records held by the Police Force of Western Australia and, if practicable, police forces elsewhere in Australia.
- (2) This section does not prevent the Commissioner from inquiring into relevant criminal records held by other law enforcement agencies, including law enforcement agencies outside Australia.

The commissioner will be compelled to look into their criminal records. Obviously, the commissioner will then apply their own consideration to whether someone is fit and proper.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister explain how the age of 12 years in the definition of “young person” was determined—that is, a person who is 12 years or older but younger than 18 years?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Firstly, we looked at other jurisdictions. Most of them have 12 years. I understand that the Northern Territory has 10 years, but the vast majority of them have 12. The other thing that motivated me and, I think, the police in the considerations was cadets who do shooting. I am talking about Air Force, Navy and Army Cadets. They start at that age, and we did not want to prevent people from doing that. Currently, there is no specified age, so we are affording something that has not previously been enabled. We are making the age of people clear. It will not prevent farmers from doing whatever they want on their property when starting firearms training for a family member, as long as they do not handle a firearm. I think the member for North West Central said that people who do shooting sports want to train their kids, and they do a good job of embedding safety awareness and skills training in people from a young age so that they can aspire to perform at a high level. That is true of pretty much anyone who uses it for a job in the farming community or for vermin control.

We have specified an age. We had been criticised by many people around the country for not specifying an age. An argument was put by some advocates for public safety that it should be 16 years, and that was based on the prevalence of shooting injuries amongst children younger than 16. We came to the conclusion that we would go with the majority of the other states. Also, it has been pointed out to me that, apart from the cadet element, children nowadays start high school at the age of 12 years, so it aligns with that.

Ms L. METTAM: Was consideration given to 10 years? Why was 10 years not chosen, particularly given we have seen reports in the media of children as young as those in grade 2 taking knives to school?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Ultimately, in most states the age is 12 years. It looks like the Northern Territory has gone it alone. I am trying to get my guys to rapidly identify what the Law Reform Commission report stated about ages that were imposed around the nation. In the end, enabling an age is a good thing. We have defined it. Prior to now, it was not defined. We have enabled people to have some guidance. The age of 12 aligns with organisations, like cadets, who train people, and it fits pretty neatly with what other jurisdictions are doing.

I will get back to the ages in other jurisdictions, but I am informed that most other jurisdictions have the age at 12 years.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I turn to the firearm authority health standards, which is on page 6 of the bill. Could the minister outline how a standard for mental and physical health will be set and prescribed in the regulations? Will there be some sort of requirement for people to be examined and passed as a fit person by a medical practitioner, or will there be some sort of health scoring that people need to retain their licence? What measures might be taken into account? Will age be considered? Could the minister give me some idea about how these regulations will be drawn up?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As the Leader of the Opposition has identified, essentially, there will be regulations, but this is one of the things we wanted to talk about. Every individual will have different capacities and individual matters that will need to be considered. A working group consisting of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Mental Health Commission, the Australian Medical Association, the Department of Health and the Western Australia Police Force is working on these regulations and the nature of the health check that will be arrived at.

As we have said pretty consistently for some time now, it will be aligned with other types of health checks for things like heavy haulage licences, dangerous goods drivers’ licences, pilot licences and things of that nature. The types of things under consideration, for example, for a dangerous goods driver’s licence, are temporary conditions, substance misuse and intoxication, chronic illness conditions, age-related changes, multiple medical conditions, and medications and other treatments. That is not a definitive list, but they are the types of things that would be considered. A doctor will then make their appreciation and pass that on to the Commissioner of Police, who will determine the fitness of a person. A doctor will not do that. There will be no yes or no decisions from a doctor. It will be a decision made by the Western Australia Police Force.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What capacity or understanding could the Commissioner of Police have to make a determination of whether a person is medically fit or unfit? Surely, that is a matter only for medical personnel and not a police officer. How will he or she make that determination?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is one of the elements that the commissioner will consider. When the commissioner determines whether someone is fit and proper, they consider a range of elements or sources of information, and that is one of them. The commissioner is not making a determination around the medical part of the fitness; they are saying, “Okay, I’ve got all these pieces of information about this individual and I’m drawing a conclusion about their suitability for a licence.” That is currently the case.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 919.]

PROFESSOR ANDREW REGINALD HOWARD “ANDY” COLE — TRIBUTE*Statement by Member for Cottesloe*

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [12.45 pm]: Today I would like to commemorate the life of Professor Andrew Reginald Howard “Andy” Cole, who passed away on 5 February this year. I wish to especially acknowledge family members in the gallery today. Professor Cole was a towering presence on the University of Western Australia campus—an internationally respected academic, a superb teacher, and a kind and supportive mentor to students. Professor Cole died just shy of his 100th birthday. He was very happily married to Ursula for 64 years, before her death in 2019. He was the son of Jim and Jean Cole and was raised with brothers Alf and Des in Midland Junction. Professor Cole was father of Judy, Cathy and Andrew; grandfather of Ben, Emily, Sarah, Christine, Grace, Rebecca, Madeleine, Olivia, Charlie and Isobel; and great-grandfather of Elena and Beatrix.

Professor Cole was a gifted student, receiving a scholarship to attend Perth Modern School, and then a government university exhibition scholarship to the University of Western Australia. He achieved a Bachelor of Science with first class honours and was awarded a Hackett research studentship, which allowed him to enrol for a Doctor of Philosophy at Oxford University. He worked with Dr Harold “Tommy” Thompson on infrared spectroscopy, being awarded his Doctor of Philosophy in 1949. He completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Research Council Canada in Ottawa for two years, and in 1952 used a Nuffield research grant to set up an infrared spectroscopy laboratory at UWA.

In 1955 he was appointed as a senior lecturer. He went on to be a professor and held numerous senior leadership roles in the school of chemistry and the faculty of science. Professor Cole was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science in 1974, eventually becoming a councillor and then vice-president of the academy. Professor Cole received numerous local and international awards.

Vale, Professor Cole—a wonderful Western Australian, who is very fondly remembered by family, friends and colleagues for his kindness and care, and considerable contribution to the advancement of science.

FALCON LIONS CLUB — GREG ROBERTSON AND MARGARET LANDWEHR*Statement by Member for Dawesville*

MRS L.A. MUNDAY (Dawesville) [12.47 pm]: Today I rise to honour two exceptional individuals whose tireless dedication and unwavering commitment to community service have left an indelible mark on the Falcon Lions Club and beyond. Greg Robertson and Margaret Landwehr epitomise the core values of Lions Clubs International, showcasing the power of compassion, leadership and selflessness in action.

Lion Greg’s journey as a club member spans over five decades—testament to his unwavering commitment to service. From his early days in the Norseman Lions Club to his current leadership role as president of the Falcon Lions, Greg’s passion for community involvement has remained steadfast. His extensive volunteer efforts, ranging from organising kids’ beach fishing events to supporting local initiatives such as OVIS, exemplify the values of compassion and dedication that define the Lions organisation. It is also a family affair with his wife, Christine, who is currently club secretary.

Lion Margaret is a founding member of the Falcon club and a driving force behind the establishment of the Falcon Leo Club. She has played a pivotal role in nurturing the next generation of community leaders. Through her guidance and mentorship, the Falcon Leo Club provides teenagers with invaluable opportunities to volunteer and engage with their local community. Margaret’s leadership underscores the importance of empowering youth to become active participants in shaping a brighter future for all.

Together, Greg and Margaret epitomise the essence of Lions Clubs International, the largest service organisation in the world. With over 1.4 million members, Lions like Greg and Margaret exemplify the transformative power of collective action and grassroots activism. In recognition of his exceptional contributions, Greg was recently honoured with the prestigious Melvin Jones Fellowship Award, the highest accolade bestowed upon a Lions Club member. This well-deserved recognition is testament to Greg’s lifelong commitment to serving others and making a positive difference in the world.

As we celebrate the remarkable achievements of Greg Robertson and Margaret Landwehr, let us also reaffirm our commitment to the principles of service, compassion, and community engagement that lie at the heart of Lions Clubs International. Together, may we continue to work tirelessly to create a world where kindness, generosity, and empathy prevail. Thank you.

ORDER OF THE RISING SUN, GOLD AND SILVER RAYS — PAULINE VUKELIC*Statement by Member for Moore*

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [12.49 pm]: I wish to acknowledge His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito of Japan, following the celebration of his birthday on Friday, 23 February. I joined a number of dignitaries including His Excellency the Governor Chris Dawson, AC, APM; the right honourable the Lord Mayor, Basil Zempilas; former Premier of Western Australia, Hon Richard Court; and former Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon Julie Bishop at the residence of the Consulate-General of Japan, Mr Yasushi Naito, in Perth. The state of

Western Australia and Japan maintain a strong relationship and have such a rich history of collaboration. In fact, 10 local governments have sister cities in Japan—Albany, Belmont, Broome, Bunbury, Busselton, Fremantle, Geraldton, Melville, Perth and Rockingham. We share our sister-state affiliation with Hyogo Prefecture, located in the Kansai region of Honshu. It would be remiss of me not to mention the wonderful contribution of the Japanese people to Western Australia. It is also important to highlight the strong economic partnership between our two countries, particularly in resources. Japan is Western Australia’s second largest trading partner with almost \$40 billion in goods traded in 2022, including a large contingent of trade in cereal, straw, wheat, barley and beef.

At the celebration, a conferment ceremony of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, was bestowed upon Ms Pauline Vukelic, who was originally from the midwest but now resides in Busselton, in recognition of her outstanding contributions in enhancing inter-regional exchange between Japan and Australia through the promotion of the sister-city exchange. Ms Vukelic was instrumental in the establishment of the Busselton and Sugito Sister Cities Association after returning from an exchange in Japan. I extend my personal congratulations to her on receiving her decoration and thank the Consulate-General and Mrs Naito for hosting the reception.

WOMEN — ELECTORATE OF BELMONT

Statement by Member for Belmont

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [12.51 pm]: Following the recent celebration of International Women’s Day, I would like to reflect on a number of inspirational women in the electorate of Belmont and take this opportunity to acknowledge some of the unsung heroes. To be clear, this is not an exhaustive list of wonderful women doing wonderful things in my electorate.

The first person I would like to acknowledge is the remarkable Dr Roma Winmar, or “Nan Roma” as she is affectionately known locally, who is a respected Noongar elder dedicated to promoting Noongar language and culture. Nan Roma also goes by the name “Yibiyung”—I am sorry if I have not pronounced that correctly. It is a gift from her mother and it refers to a highly accomplished artist. Nan Roma has recorded several Noongar children’s songs that she provides to online teaching resources. She is a beloved voice in our local community, often sharing her songs at local school assemblies.

Another outstanding woman in my community is Carol Hanlon. Carol is the founder and manager of the Belmont Business Enterprise Centre that has offered small business advisory support since 1994. Over the last two decades, she has also run the Belmont Small Business Awards. They are the only small business awards in the state and they acknowledge and celebrate the critical role small business plays in our state. Carol has strongly advocated for the advancement of women’s empowerment through economic independence and business leadership, and she is an absolute powerhouse of a woman.

Lindsay Fitzgerald is another Belmont hero. She is the CEO and founder of Jacaranda Community Centre. Jacaranda is a not-for-profit community centre that promotes, enhances and maintains the welfare, education and cultural needs of people on low incomes in the Belmont area. She has dedicated her life to helping those less fortunate.

Two other local women who deserve a shout-out are the wonderful Aunty Barbara Moore and the divine Ollie Smith. Aunty Barbara has advocated for Aboriginal women experiencing homelessness and bravely gave evidence as a major claimant in the recent stolen wages class action. Ollie is a respected author and tireless advocate for the stolen generation. She has presented to the Australian Human Rights Commission and dedicated much of her life’s work towards the advancement of First Nations people.

ORDER OF THE RISING SUN, GOLD AND SILVER RAYS — PAULINE VUKELIC

Statement by Member for Vasse

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.54 pm]: I congratulate Pauline Vukelic, who was formally presented with the prestigious Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, on behalf of His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito of Japan, at his birthday celebrations and conferment ceremony in Perth on Friday, 23 February 2024. The government of Japan first announced the conferment on 3 November 2023, with the Consulate-General of Japan offering its congratulations and sincere appreciation, stating that Ms Vukelic’s many contributions will continue to benefit the ties of both countries profoundly for many years to come. The Order of the Rising Sun Gold and Silver Rays is one of the highest conferred orders bestowed by His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan. Ms Vukelic’s significant contribution over more than 30 years has been dedicated to building relationships and cultural understanding between Australia and Japan. Ms Vukelic was recognised for her outstanding achievements in laying the foundation for the strong and active sister-city exchange that continues to benefit our community. Student exchange visits have resulted in cross-generational inter-regional exchanges between Japan and Australia.

The Order of the Rising Sun Gold and Silver Rays was first established in 1875 with several foreigners presented with the prestigious award before World War II. However, it was not until 1981 that the modern version of this honour was conferred on non-Japanese recipients. We are proud to live in a multicultural society and Pauline’s contribution has enabled the wider community to appreciate, understand and embrace diversity. Thank you for your outstanding contribution in the interests of the community.

WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME — CELIA WAUGH*Statement by Member for Albany*

MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany) [12.55 pm]: At Government House last week, my mum and my biggest supporter, Celia Waugh, was inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame in the sport category, along with 15 other incredible women. The WA Women's Hall of Fame was established in 2011 in recognition of the centenary of International Women's Day, which is held annually on 8 March. The purpose of the WA Women's Hall of Fame is to recognise and celebrate the achievements of Western Australian women past, present and future. To date, 247 inspiring Western Australian women have been inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame.

My mum has been involved in the surf lifesaving movement in WA at the highest level for over 30 years. She was awarded a life membership to her local Albany Surf Life Saving Club and to Surf Life Saving WA for her years of service and passion for education and training in surf lifesaving.

Having held numerous positions with the Albany club, including as its president, she has achieved multiple surf lifesaving qualifications and was awarded the surf lifesaving trainer and assessor of the year. Celia's current role at the Albany Surf Life Saving Club is mentoring the club's youth through surf lifesaving pathways. Mum became involved in the Albany Surf Life Saving Club when my sister and I decided to try the surf club. Like many parents, mum agreed to volunteer. She had no idea of the journey and the opportunities that surf lifesaving would provide.

Mum has held many roles in the club, but I think her greatest achievement was gaining her bronze medal, as she could not swim prior to that. She continues to encourage new members to gain their bronze medal. As a dedicated volunteer, mum's passion for training extends beyond Albany, with regular trips to assist other clubs both regionally and internationally. She is still heavily involved in the club. As a proud grandma, she loves nothing more than cheering on and inspiring the next generation. This month, she volunteered, alongside my son, as a carnival official at the Country State Championships at Sorrento while my daughter competed. Mum was beaming with pride. I acknowledge the Albany branch of Soroptimist International for the thoughtful nomination of my mum, Celia Waugh. I am one very proud daughter!

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA — 100TH ANNIVERSARY*Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt*

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.58 pm]: I rise with great pleasure to mark an auspicious occasion for one of our most important and influential organisations advocating and supporting women in our state. This year the Country Women's Association of Western Australia turns 100. As a proud member, along with a number of my family members going back generations, it gives me great pleasure to stand and congratulate all those who have been involved in this wonderful organisation. The very first regional branch of the CWA of WA was set up in Nungarin, in my electorate of Central Wheatbelt. The very first purpose-built CWA rest room was built in Bandee between the towns of Kellerberrin and Merredin, which is also in my electorate. CWA was formed to meet the needs of the time, which was to help women in isolated rural communities and to provide a voice to government to seek solutions to the difficulties facing families, particularly in those areas. It has stood the test of time, holding true to its values and enriching the lives of regional women and their families.

Their work is important because it empowers women. They campaign for issues they believe in using a mixture of soft and hard diplomacy to make their point, persuading the political echelon to change or introduce new policy, fundraising to support a cause and generating a network of friends and colleagues to rally around those who need assistance. They make friends and learn skills that have seen our families through the toughest of times, celebrations and everyday life. Confident, articulate women with a purpose are a force to be reckoned with. We need more, not less, of the values and ethos of the Country Women's Association in our world. In its own practical and pragmatic way, CWA has created a space for women to build their skills and confidence for 100 years, and it is truly a privilege to count myself as a member. I wish the CWA a very happy 100th birthday and congratulate the CWA on the launch of its book *Celebrating 100 special women* and I look forward to joining with various branches throughout the year to celebrate this remarkable milestone. Happy 100th birthday to the CWA.

OUTDOOR RECREATION — ELECTORATE OF HILLARYS*Statement by Member for Hillarys*

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [1.00 pm]: I would like to speak briefly on a flurry of new developments for outdoor recreation in the Hillarys electorate. The Urban Bike Trails project will improve existing tracks as well as create new and interconnected mountain bike trails and BMX facilities throughout our community. This amazing idea came about following strong campaigning by the Northern Beaches Cycling Club; passionate locals, Mark Harrison and Malcolm Smeal; as well as a group of young, enthusiastic teens. They were all inspired to work toward trying to improve facilities for kids and teenagers who want to get off the couch and engage in fun, physical outdoor activities. In 2021, I made an election commitment to provide \$300 000 for this project, so it is exciting to finally see it come to fruition. Four initial parks have been included in the Urban Bike Trails project, including Charonia Park in Mullaloo, Gibson Park in Padbury, Lysander Park in Heathridge and Whitfords West Park in Kallaroo. Right now, the City of Joondalup has opened community consultation on the very exciting proposal.

I want to talk specifically about the Padbury Pump Track at Gibson Park. I am very pleased to have secured \$600 000 for this project, thanks in part to the hundreds of Padbury residents who supported my online survey for a pump track back in 2021, which helped with my advocacy to the minister. This track will complement the development of the Padbury Community Garden and funding will also be used to install a toilet facility, and turn this ordinary park into a community hub that residents can be really proud of. I know it has taken some time, but we are all very excited about this new project getting the green light and construction starting soon. I am looking forward to the next phase of this project.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 to 2.00 pm

VISITORS — ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Members, on behalf of the member for Bunbury and Minister for Disability Services; Fisheries and assorted other things, I would like to welcome St Mary's Catholic Primary School from Bunbury to the public gallery today. Welcome to question time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

AGENT GENERAL — REMUNERATION

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

I refer to the Agent General in London, Mr John Langoulant, who is on a nice combined salary of more than \$840 000 a year. His highly paid perks include business class international flights and swanky inner-city London apartments. How can this enormous cost be justified when everyday Western Australians are struggling to pay their household bills?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. I thank him a lot. Madam Speaker, we are a trading economy. Western Australia is a trading economy, and that is why the role of our trade commissioners and the Agent General is an important one that we have to make sure of because they are essentially our ambassadors. They are out there day in, day out trying to find investment opportunities for businesses in their markets and, of course, trade opportunities for Western Australian companies in those markets. They do a great job around the world.

Of course, the Agent General is a specific role within that network. The Agent General has been part of Western Australia since before the 1900s. If people look at the enabling legislation, they will see it does not mention the words "Western Australia", because it technically did not exist at the time the position was created. It is a very important role. All the trade commissioners are paid rates commensurate with their status, experience and responsibilities, taking into account the conditions in the markets in which they are working, particularly exchange rates and the expenses they incur. From that point of view, that is essentially in the control of the department, as it should be.

I note that the salary of the Agent General in 2008 was about \$333 500. For the Agent General last year, the salary was \$376 000. These are big numbers, and we expect them to do their job, but it is essentially commensurate with when the last government appointed the Agent General in 2008.

I wonder what the motivation of the other side is in attacking John Langoulant on this matter. Obviously, it is important that make sure that we protect the state's finances and we derive value for money for Western Australians, but I wonder what the actual motivation is here. We know that it has nothing to do with the position itself. They do not like John Langoulant, because he has done a great job for Western Australia as a former Under Treasurer and someone who has done terrific work on behalf of the people of Western Australia. Why are those opposite so dead against him? We know why: because under the Langoulant report, which was created when Labor came to government in 2017, John Langoulant made some very scathing observations about the previous government, when the Leader of the Opposition was in government. In fact, in February 2018, he provided the report. An ABC News article states —

... provided a scathing assessment of the former Liberal–National government's management of the state in leading WA to a string of large deficits and a debt bill north of \$30 billion.

John Langoulant—this will be of interest to the Minister for Health—was particularly scathing of the \$4.8 billion contract that the Liberal–National government gave to Serco at Fiona Stanley Hospital without even having a business case. There was no business case at all. The article continues —

- a \$4.8 billion contract with Serco for management of the Fiona Stanley Hospital was signed without a business case being prepared, something described as "startling and astounding"

There were —

- repeated warnings from bureaucrats, particularly from Treasury, about where WA's finances were heading were ignored
- contracts were poorly managed, due in part to the reduced capability of the public service

That was because of the cuts the former government put in place. Quite frankly, John Langouant exposed the other side as the ruinous manager of the state's finances that it was. It continues —

Speaking on ABC Radio Perth, Mr Langouant said it was “startling” Serco's \$4.8 billion contract to manage Fiona Stanley Hospital was signed without a business case being prepared.

“The Government committed to it, there was no systematic analysis of options available, the risks that the state might be exposed to, and as a result we have a contract which has a number of difficulties ...

We understand why the other side is so upset about John Langouant's ongoing service to the community. It is because he was so scathing of the opposition in government. You are a disgrace. We find ourselves in a situation —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The opposition, including the Liberal Party members who have not asked this question, the interjections are incessant, as they have been from the person who asked the question. I have given some leeway to the person who asked the question. There is still the possibility of a supplementary, so I urge you to wait for the opportunity of the supplementary if you have some further question you would like to ask the Premier.

Mr R.H. COOK: Finally, I want to draw attention to another aspect of this report. The former Under Treasurer talked about the state being deep into the red through poor governance culture, a lack of financial discipline and unsustainable spending decisions. He said —

To avoid a repetition of this financial ‘perfect storm’ which has proved so damaging for the State's finances, the capacity and status of Treasury within the public sector must be restored. And future Premiers and Ministers would do the State a favour by paying greater heed to Treasury advice.

That is what we have done. We have restored the state finances. Our finances are now the strongest of any state in Australia, and the report from John Langouant exposed members on the other side for the frauds that they were in government and for the wreckage that they left of the state's finances. That is why they are attacking the Agent General.

AGENT GENERAL — REMUNERATION

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

I have a supplementary question. We pay \$840 000 for one officer, yet we cannot afford a representative in Indonesia. Will the Premier act to rein in this expense?

The SPEAKER: Can I just make it very clear that you cannot present an argument in a supplementary question. You can ask a direct, brief question as a supplementary.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Apart from the fact that it was not a supplementary question, it was also not accurate. We have a trade commissioner. We have an office in Jakarta, and it does a great job. The opposition is busy running down the Agent General. Is it now about to attack the people we have in Indonesia as well? There seems to be no depths to which that side will not stoop as part of its sorry state.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: The opposition is angry with the Agent General in London because he caught it out.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION — AVAILABILITY

142. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's efforts to boost housing supply and support renters across Western Australia.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on this government's innovative policy initiatives to help struggling renters and create more affordable housing options?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house whether he is aware of anyone who does not support these initiatives?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I noticed the interjection from the member for Cottesloe, who actually just accused the government of rewarding the former Under Treasurer.

Dr D.J. Honey: That's why you like him.

Mr R.H. COOK: Did you want to say that again, member?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: I think the Liberal Party has spoken on that member's status, Madam Speaker.

(1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. It is a very important one, because we all know that cost of living and housing are two of the most significant pressures on Western Australians to date. The pandemic followed by the war in Ukraine has created setbacks to supply chains and has had a significant impact on the cost and affordability of housing, and, of course, that is also impacted by the labour force constraints. That is why we continue to do everything we can to ensure that we create more housing stock to ease the pressures on the housing markets. Planning reforms are making it easier to build more homes or even granny flats in good locations, and incentives are attracting high-density developments and worker accommodation for strategic locations. Just yesterday, Minister Carey was in Coolbellup announcing the delivery of more social homes—16 of more than 1 900 since our \$2.6 billion investment. I have two young adult kids. One is in the early stages of house ownership; the other is deep in the housing rental market. I know how tough it is out there. We need to do everything we can to help people everywhere who are doing it tough. Every bit helps. That is why we partnered with the Western Australian Council of Social Service to assist private renters to keep a roof over their heads, and it is also why we have offered incentives for short-term accommodation owners to convert their property to the rental market.

I am very pleased to announce that I can confirm to the house that the WA rent relief program has now helped 255 households in Western Australia—that is 255 families, pensioners, single parents or individuals—to keep a roof over their heads. It has equated to more than \$1 million in assistance so far. I thank the community service organisations involved in helping to get this critical support for renters as quickly as possible.

Now, we also introduced our short-term rental accommodation incentive scheme around the same time. In fact, it was attacked by the opposition at the time. Indeed, the Nationals' Hon Louise Kingston said —

“A shrink in the supply of short-stay accommodation will adversely impact prices and send more people to Bali ...

Meanwhile, the Liberal's Hon Steve Martin claimed the opposite. He described it as —

... nothing more than a short-term shuffle that does not produce more houses ...

According to the opposition, it would do nothing and do too much all at the same time. This is on the same joint media release. They make these claims in a joint media release, and today I can report on the facts. Seventy-six new rental homes have been created as a result of the incentive scheme, of which 43 are in Perth and Mandurah and the remaining 33 are in the regions. That is 76 rentals that otherwise would not have been available. Meanwhile, further applications are being submitted and assessed. In addition to these innovative policies to help renters, we have also reformed the Residential Tenancies Act to help tenants in the community, and our reforms have been backed by the property industry. They offer renters more rights by banning rent bidding, limiting rent increases to no more than once a year and allowing minor modifications and a streamlined process for dispute resolution and bond releases. It is startling that even under these difficult conditions in the housing market, the opposition should take the opportunity to oppose them. It is a disgrace. They are hopelessly divided, but, on this, they almost appeared united.

Dr A.D. Buti: That's an exaggeration—come on!

Mr R.H. COOK: Almost.

We know that the member for Roe's heart was not in it, but we know that he did the bidding of the Liberal Party on this one. At a time when renters most needed these reforms in our rental market to make sure that we can support them and give them more rights, the Liberal–National members turned their back on renters. We will not. Through our rental assistance payment scheme, our short-term rental assistance incentive scheme and our tenancy reforms, we will stand by renters and people in the housing market and make sure that we continue to grow the amount of housing in our community and put downward pressure on the cost of housing.

METHAMPHETAMINE — USE

143. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the minister's consistent denial about the scale of Western Australia's resurgent methamphetamine problem and his comment that new stop-and-search powers have disrupted the ability for meth to be distributed in the state.

Given that only five grams of cannabis has been found after 70 searches at border search areas, will he admit that his hard meth border has failed?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

As I have repeatedly tried to explain to the member and other members opposite, in 2021, the then Commissioner of Police, who is now the Governor, and the current commissioner, who was then Deputy Commissioner of Police, came to a meeting with the Attorney General, then Premier McGowan and me and requested a range of powers to be able to attempt to replicate the effect of the border controls during COVID. A number of powers have been delivered since that meeting. One of them was the consorting legislation that the Attorney General passed; another was an amendment to the Firearms Act that, amongst other things, created firearms prohibition orders; and another was the amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act that created 22 search areas. That is not the finite list. There were requests for other powers, and police are working on proposals for additional laws to enhance the measures to disrupt organised crime—the people who bring illicit drugs into the state and distribute it around Western Australia.

Those powers that I referred to were delivered to police. Police then implemented those powers, so they are utilising the powers that they have been afforded for conducting operations. The member is referring to the fact that in the last five or so months since the law that the member is referring to, the Misuse of Drugs Act amendment, came into effect, there have been a number of operations. A member of the upper house requested outcomes of those operations. This is the answer I got from police. For starters, it is operational. The police do what the police do; government affords them power and resources, which we have done.

Firstly, it is early days with respect to what are quite expansive laws. They have created 22 permanent search areas that can be enacted at short notice by an inspector or above, which is quite extraordinary. They enable search without warrant of people in those search areas. That is, as the member suggests, a significant power. They are being considered in their use. They also need to, based on intelligence but as part of that process, roll it out in a measured way so that different districts become familiar with the powers and there is no overreach of use of powers or inappropriate application of the powers. That explains part of it. Finally, the other thing that I would observe is—again, it is operational—that the police use these powers for a number of reasons. They use them to achieve a number of effects. One of them is deterrence. Another is shaping the environment. It might be that, for instance, there is an operation in which the police identify someone through conduct of one of these searches, but they do not want to actually arrest them right then.

I can say to members that there have been some significant seizures of methamphetamine in the last period that the member is referring to. So far this financial year, a total of 314.59 kilograms of methylamphetamine and almost \$22 million has been seized from serious and organised crime groups operating in Western Australia. The same people who use those search areas seized those drugs and that cash as part of their operations. It may well have been that the operations were being conducted as part of a seizure and an arrest later. It is interesting that the member is raising this matter on I think the same week that the people involved in the biggest cocaine bust in history have pled guilty in Western Australian courts. Our state crime division is doing an incredible job. We have given them the powers they need; let them do the operations. I would suggest that leaving police operations to them is a better approach than trying to grandstand around an answer to a question in the upper house.

METHAMPHETAMINE — USE

144. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question. Given the staggering WA meth figures and regardless of the minister's spin, is this another example of a government failing to keep us safe?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I find it extraordinary that the member for Vasse thinks that a seizure of 314.59 kilograms of methylamphetamine and almost \$22 million of cash from serious crime organisations in a six-month period is somehow spin or a failure on behalf of the police.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr P. PAPALIA: They are doing their job. Leave police operations to people who know what they are talking about.

TOURISM — LIVE ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS

145. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's always-on event strategy, which is helping to drive WA tourism.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the government's success in hosting unique, exclusive events, such as the WWE Elimination Chamber and the upcoming Italian football blockbuster in May?
- (2) Can the minister outline what these events mean for visitors to Western Australia, local jobs and businesses?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. Of course, as part of our diversification of the economy by growing other sectors across the economy, tourism is a key area that we are focusing on, whether it be tourism infrastructure, direct flights or the event strategy. The event strategy is very much aimed at making sure we give people a reason to come to WA and exposing Western Australia to the rest of the world, and making sure that they come back and they tell their families and friends. Of course, we have had some incredible success over the past few years, whether it be Coldplay, the Matildas or the range —

Mr R.S. Love: Why don't you tell us how much it costs?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is in the budget, member.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Leader of the Opposition, you have not asked this question; please do not interject.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition is the angriest, saddest man in WA. This is the elimination chamber between the National Party and the Liberal Party, members.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Let's get ready to rumble!

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: An opposition rumble!

Look at the six of them. They cannot even agree on how to vote on a couple of pieces of legislation. We saw it today. There was complete division and chaos. They sit there, having a go at us, and they cannot even talk to each other. They cannot even sit together each day and develop a strategy; it is pathetic. They come in here and have a go at us fuelling the economy around the state. All the things we are doing and they—there are six of you, for goodness sake—cannot even sit together in a room and agree on a strategy.

Point of Order

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

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, points of order are held in silence.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I seek your ruling on the relevance of this answer, which was about tourism —

Ms S.E. Winton: You interjected!

Mr R.S. LOVE: — and has turned into, yet again, an attack on members of the opposition.

The SPEAKER: Minister! It is a rather interesting interjection to be complaining about someone else interjecting and saying they have interjected. You have just interjected, and I will ask you not to do it again for the rest of question time. I am not upholding the point of order on that, but I ask the minister to return to the substance of the question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you. We are talking about wrestling, and we know what these guys are doing everyday: wrestling on who should be asking the questions, what the questions should be and how to vote, and then half of them run away when there is a vote to be had or hide in the corridor behind the chamber. I have never seen that before. There are six of them, and they cannot even sit in a room and agree on a question time strategy.

Anyway. In the meantime, we are growing the economy, creating jobs and delivering services around the state. That is what we are doing in relation to the tourism industry, of course. It has been recognised. The only person who seems to be upset about these events is the Leader of the Opposition. We get feedback because of the range of events we have. Whether they are into the Ultimate Fighting Championship, the wrestling, Coldplay or the arts, with our new homegrown EverNow event as well, there is a whole range of homegrown events and also blockbuster events. It is with great pride that we are bringing two Serie A Italian teams to Perth. It will be the first time that Rome has been here since 1966, and the first time AC Milan has been here since 1980. We have not had Italian teams here since 1996.

This is about getting more visitors into WA. More recently, just on the weekend, the Tourism Council WA issued an analysis on the economic output of the WWE Elimination Chamber, estimating that \$35 million was injected into the WA economy, with more than 329 full-time jobs. This is about growing WA as a destination. The feedback I get is on not only the visitation that we have, but also the social media and the fact that Perth is then displayed around the world. We saw that in particular with WWE's incredible coverage and demonstration of WA as a place to visit. Members opposite, honestly, I have never seen anything like it. Six of them cannot agree on anything, even what party they should be a member of. They come in here being negative about the state, and they cannot even agree which side of that little aisle they should be sitting on or what their strategy should be.

DOLPHIN DISCOVERY CENTRE

146. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Regional Development:

Under the minister's watch, we have seen the Bunbury premier tourism attraction, the Dolphin Discovery Centre, which was funded by royalties for regions, enter voluntary administration. How long has the minister known that the Dolphin Discovery Centre was in financial trouble, and was he approached by the then CEO for financial assistance?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

The Dolphin Discovery Centre is a fabulous tourism attraction in Bunbury, frequently used by international visitors, local visitors and volunteers who flock to it, and it is still open and operating. It is, of course, managed by an independent Dolphin Discovery Centre incorporated body that is not accountable to government. It leases the building from government. My office is always open to the Dolphin Discovery Centre to discuss its needs with us, as it has done on occasions post-COVID when many tourism operators and tourism operations really struggled with the downturn of visitation during the COVID period. It, like many other organisations, is managing that process, and when it was ready, it made the decision to call in the voluntary receiver. When it has the recommendations from the voluntary receiver, I am sure that it will come to see me. It absolutely knows that we support the Dolphin Discovery Centre as a very valuable tourism operation in Bunbury. In fact, all around the region, we have a Minister for Tourism fighting for tourism in Western Australia, while members opposite fight over who should ask the question of the day. I wonder how long it took them to decide who should ask that question. I have been sitting here waiting for this question with bated breath. Has it come? It has taken until today. I think there have been quite a few debates about who should get that particular question, while our Minister for Tourism is out there getting events, looking at how to support tourism, building visitor numbers and making this state a great state.

DOLPHIN DISCOVERY CENTRE

147. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Regional Development:

I have a supplementary question. Will the minister intervene to guarantee that that centre stays open?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

As I just mentioned, I am very positive that when the Dolphin Discovery Centre incorporated body gets advice from the receiver, it will certainly make an appointment to see me or talk to me about the current state of play and what needs it may have. My door is always open to that tourism business, as it is to any other tourism business in my electorate.

HOMELESSNESS — INITIATIVES

148. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Cook government's record \$2.6 billion investment in housing and homelessness initiatives.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the Cook Labor government is boosting housing delivery across the state, including in the recent announcement to deliver 16 new houses in Coolbellup?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government is using innovative construction methods to boost local housing supply?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

- (1)–(2) I want to thank the member for her question and her commitment to social housing in her local community. As I am on the record as saying, and as the Premier has talked about, the COVID-19 pandemic radically reshaped our housing market. As a government, we are deeply cognisant of the range of pressures that every state faces in relation to rental markets, the pressures on renters and also the pressures on the construction market. As the member said, as a state, we are making a record investment—\$2.6 billion over four years to deliver 4 000 homes. In the toughest construction market to date, we have delivered more than 1 900 homes since the announcement of that record investment. As minister, I have made it very clear that we are ambitiously pursuing a range of different reforms and measures to accelerate the delivery of social housing. One that I have talked about and announced previously in this place is an open call for submissions process. In effect, what it says is that we are open to business and we are prepared to think outside the box. Whether it is the private sector, the not-for-profit sector or the community housing sector, they can come to us with their ideas and projects. Is it a development application that has land but has stalled due to a lack of private investment? Is it another project that could perhaps already be underway? That is what has occurred with the Coolbellup project, which is being done with the federal government with accelerated procurement. We are using social housing accelerator funds to get social housing out the door. This is an \$8.39 million investment from that accelerator fund and through our new procurement process for 16 two-bedroom, one-bathroom silver-rated liveable housing units, all with waterwise features and fittings and waterwise gardens, and close to public transport. It is a great social housing project and a key demonstration of how our procurement reforms are working.

We have to contrast that with the approach of the opposition. We know that Hon Steve Martin and the Leader of the Liberal Party have no housing policy. They have not one social housing policy, not one planning reform policy, not one housing infrastructure policy—zero; nothing. It is interesting, because the leader is going out and making other policy statements. Hon Steve Martin was tested by a journalist recently, when he became the deputy leader in that chain of different leaderships. When he was asked where the Liberal Party's policies were, I kid you not, he actually said —

... it was “not appropriate” for the Opposition to be announcing policy positions more than a year out from an election.

Basically, he was saying that they have no policy. Bizarrely, today we saw the Liberals make a commitment to overturn the ban on uranium mining. In October, after ignoring all the critical advice, the Liberal Party pushed ahead with a commitment to a women's and babies' hospital in Nedlands. It has committed to deregulated shopping hours, which would help to ruin small businesses, but when it comes to housing, apparently the Liberal leadership believes that it is not necessary to have any housing policy. On top of that, they oppose everything. They oppose granny flat reforms. They oppose spot-purchasing programs. They oppose short-term rental incentives. They oppose protection for renters. The question is: what do they stand for when it comes to social housing, when it comes to planning, when it comes to homelessness and when it comes to housing supply?

HEALTH — REGIONAL HOSPITALS — SECURITY HUB

149. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the \$484 000 announced to develop a security hub for seven hospitals across regional Western Australia.

- (1) Noting that Broome Hospital is not on the list of hospitals, despite the number of code black calls at that hospital almost doubling in recent years and, as I have seen myself, knives and other weapons being seized at the hospital almost every day, how were those seven hospitals determined?
- (2) How will a CCTV hub in the middle of the Perth CBD prevent nurses and healthcare workers from being threatened or harmed thousands of kilometres away?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I am delighted to answer the member's question because, again, all we hear is criticism and no ideas from members opposite. This is a fantastic development of the WA Country Health Service. Former defence and security experts have come in to help WACHS develop a system that will help make its staff on the ground safer. If the Leader of the Opposition had watched the announcement closely, he would have seen that those sites are only pilot sites and that this will be rolled out to every single regional healthcare facility. This is a learning process.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms A. SANDERSON: The Leader of the Opposition needed to have an attention span beyond three seconds and to follow it all the way through. This is a half a million dollar investment. I am very proud of this investment. I am very proud of the WA Country Health Service. This has been developed in conjunction with staff on the ground, who suggested this model. Essentially, we have rolled out about 18 000 CCTV cameras across those WACHS sites. It is a huge number of CCTV cameras. The quality of the footage is incredible. They can zoom in and see all areas of the hospitals, but we do protect patient privacy. We can see areas of those hospitals that the staff cannot see, particularly if there are only two staff on site overnight. The cameras are monitored 24/7. The seven sites are simply trial sites so that we can learn. We are in a learning phase over the next two months so that we know that it is right and can roll it out as well as possible. Every single site will be monitored by this system, including Broome Hospital.

I will give a great example of where this has already led to a successful de-escalation. Often, people need to intervene in incidents before they escalate. It is about catching people before they escalate into a state of aggression and violence towards staff. That is what the CCTV cameras do; they allow the monitors located centrally in Perth to notify staff on the ground if someone is kicking off or something is starting to escalate. The staff can then either intervene or call outside help if it is not safe for them to intervene, and the staff can make themselves safe. Recently, at a small south west hospital, someone was vandalising and acting very suspiciously outside the hospital while there were only two staff inside. They were acting very aggressively. The staff immediately called the police, who were immediately dispatched and intervened in that incident before that person could go inside and harm the staff. That was a fantastic outcome.

The Leader of the Opposition saved one of our own members from asking the Dorothy Dixier. Thank you very much! I congratulate WACHS and the staff. The Leader of the Opposition should talk to the staff and find out how they feel. They are so pleased to see this up and running and to have security experts watching their back every minute of every day.

HEALTH — REGIONAL HOSPITALS — SECURITY HUB

150. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. The minister has not explained why Broome has been omitted at this stage. When will that facility be protected in the same way?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Quiet, thank you.

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

Again, the Leader of the Opposition had to listen to the answer. Broome will absolutely be included. This is a pilot program, during which we will learn and get things right. It will be rolled out across the entire region.

HEALTH — AMBULANCE RAMPING

151. Dr J. KRISHNAN to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record investment to address the underlying causes of ambulance ramping.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this investment will see reductions in ambulance ramping at hospitals across the state?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house what these improvements will mean for patients across Western Australia?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Riverton for the question. As we know, COVID-19 has unleashed huge disruption across health systems around the world, and many jurisdictions are still grappling with record bed block and ramping numbers, particularly the eastern states. There is certainly no silver bullet. There is no one solution to managing congestion in our hospitals and emergency departments. We had a recent suggestion from the Tasmanian Liberals at their state election. They are just going to ban ramping. That is like saying that we are going to ban patients from coming to hospital or ban people from calling an ambulance! It is the most ridiculous proposition I have ever heard.

We know that congestion in our emergency department is not about the emergency department as such. It is actually a symptom of congestion in a range of areas, whether it is the inability to get access to pre-hospital care before people get really sick; processes inside the hospital or, of course, at the other end; having suitable accommodation to discharge people to; or aged-care, disability or appropriate mental health supports. Of course, beds are part of that. They are part of the mix, which is why we have put 570 beds in the system in the last two years. That is the size of a tertiary hospital across our whole system. That is one part of the mix.

In a number of those strategies, I have to give credit to the North Metropolitan Health Service, which has been a first mover on many of the reforms that we have been working through. Our approach has been to fund innovative solutions through the half-billion-dollar ramping fund and to work with clinicians and health services on how we can get solutions to these issues. North Metro has really led the way in a number of those reforms. One of those reforms is the seven-day hospital. For people who think hospitals work seven days a week, they do not. Anyone who goes on a weekend will see that the car parks are often empty. We are working to resolve that and get staff in on the weekends to continue episodes of care and make sure that people get tests and get discharged if required, so they are not sitting in hospital waiting for tests on the Monday, for example, and they can get these things moving through. This was so successful that we invested another \$19 million to extend radiology and allied health services across all three adult tertiary sites.

North Metro also expanded the residential care line, which is a nurse practitioner-led service that supports clinicians through the WA virtual emergency department by providing hands-on care in nursing homes. An emergency clinician receives a call from the nursing home, which does not necessarily want to put the elderly resident into an ambulance and send them to hospital. The nurse practitioner is called, and they diagnose, treat and do the care that is required if it is safe to do so. That is receiving huge support from aged-care facilities and from residents and their families, who really appreciate having that alternative.

Last week, we also launched what is called the emergency care navigation centre at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, which is \$7 million funded in the 2022 midyear review. This is an example of where technology can assist with helping patients through a faster and more seamless process. It will never replace people; we will always need more and more healthcare workers, but technology can absolutely support the journey. The emergency care navigation centre essentially addresses the issue of directing every single patient through one door, which is the emergency department door. Before they even present, patients can put in the details of why they are attending the emergency department. It is very simple. It is very easy. People do not have to download an app. There is an app, but people can do it online. All that information goes through to an emergency consultant, a St John Ambulance senior paramedic and a registered nurse, who can see the person even before they are in the waiting room or have been triaged from the nursing service

desk. They can start to order tests for the person. They can start to provide an alternative pathway for an older person or a neurological pathway. This is a genuine reform of how we manage that process of everyone coming to an emergency department. It is on top of the triage process with the nurse. It is not instead of; it is on top of. It is safe.

When I went there, the former head of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, who helped to develop this, said that he loves working in the shift as the consultant because he genuinely gets to do emergency medicine. He is not teaching or supervising; he genuinely gets to do emergency medicine. This is a really exciting trial. I want to thank the staff, particularly at Charlies, for their commitment. We are looking at rolling this out at Fiona Stanley Hospital, and we are working with other tertiaries on how we can scale it up throughout the whole system to provide people with a faster, more seamless trip to the emergency department.

GRIFFIN COAL — GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Liberal Party.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Almost, Madam Speaker!

The SPEAKER: Sorry—I went back in time!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I am not sure—it could be back; it could be forward!

152. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's announcement dated 1 December 2023 regarding the decision to provide \$220 million to Griffin Coal.

- (1) In the interest of public accountability, will the Premier agree to table documents showing the rationale for the government's financial assistance and a breakdown of how it has been applied; and, if not, why not?
- (2) Did the government include Griffin Coal's parent company's debt in its consideration of assistance; and, if so, why?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) As the member will be aware, I provide regular updates by way of brief ministerial statements in relation to the work that we are doing to ensure that Western Australia, including industry continues to have a supply of electricity for the foreseeable future. We provide as much information in those updates as possible. A lot of these conversations with the companies involve commercial-in-confidence matters, so it creates an awkward dynamic: we want to be accountable and transparent to the people of Western Australia while also respecting the rights of private partners to have a level of commercial confidentiality. From that perspective, I am not in a position to provide the member with all the details that he is looking for. Suffice to say that we are doing two things. First, we are making sure that the owners of the Griffin mine are receiving an appropriate price for their coal so that they can continue to operate; otherwise, they will simply walk away and that, of itself, would be a bad thing. The other thing we are doing is working with the owners of the Bluewaters power station on their relationship with Griffin to ensure that they can continue to provide power to not only Synergy, but also their private customers.

This is all part and parcel of the journey that we are on; that is, we need to make sure that we keep the lights on as we transition away from coal as part of our renewable energy future. It will not always be smooth. It will not always be linear, but it will be managed appropriately so that we do two things. The first is to maintain energy security in Western Australia, and the second is to make sure that electricity bills are affordable for Western Australian households.

GRIFFIN COAL — GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

153. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Surely the public has the right to know where that \$220 million is going beyond simply a single-line lump-sum payment?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I absolutely respect the right of the Western Australian taxpayer to have as much information as possible to ensure accountability, and that is a principle that I have stood by throughout my entire public life. The reality is that we need to continue to make sure that we keep the lights on. Energy security is an important element of what we do in government, so we make tough decisions. One of the decisions that we have made here is to ensure that we keep the Griffin Coal mine and the Bluewaters power station operational. We are doing that with as much disclosure and transparency as possible while respecting the rights of the private partners to maintain commercial confidentiality.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — CRISIS ACCOMMODATION — KARRATHA

154. Mr K.J.J. MICHEL to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's strong commitment to supporting victim-survivors escaping family and domestic violence.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the expansion of crisis accommodation for women and children in Karratha?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this important expansion will provide a safe and secure place for women and children fleeing violent relationships?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Pilbara for his question, his ongoing advocacy for his electorate and, in particular, his advocacy for vulnerable women and children. He is doing a fabulous job. The Cook Labor government's commitment to preventing family violence, in the seven years we have been in government, is unsurpassed and unequalled in the history of this state. We have invested some \$300 million that is making real differences every single day to the lives of women and their children. A key part of our investment is in supporting women who are trying to flee family and domestic violence. Women have the right to expect a safe place to go to when they are fleeing violent situations in their home. That is why a key plank of our \$300 million investment is investment in refuges and safe places. We have some 43 refuges and safe places right around the state, with half of them in regional areas.

The Karratha Women's Refuge, which I visited with the member for Pilbara, does an extraordinary job every single day. That is why I know the member is very happy with the Albanese Labor government's recent decision to provide \$5.8 million for that service to expand to provide 10 extra beds. That is a really, really important announcement. This funding from the Albanese government has other important partners, including Woodside, which contributed \$1 million, and Rio Tinto, which contributed \$250 000, so that we can now build 14 units in total in Karratha. I am very proud that our government has also been able to support this project via a \$500 000 Lotterywest grant for fit-out purposes to make sure that those units are comfortable as well as safe.

The Salvation Army will manage the new units, which will be located right next door to the existing refuge, so that people staying in the new units will get the support they need during the early days after the immediate crisis has passed, when they still need ongoing support to be able to begin to live independently.

Members, this is a great example of what we can achieve when the state and federal governments, the community sector and private industry work together in a constructive, positive way for really worthwhile outcomes for our community. We know that family and domestic violence is everyone's business and everyone needs to play their part. I congratulate the Salvation Army, our private sector partners and Lotterywest.

Last week I had an opportunity to visit the Fleetwood site with the federal Minister for Social Services, Hon Amanda Rishworth, and inspected some of the units that are currently under construction. They honestly look really terrific. It was also great to meet with Major Brad Potter, the state leader of the Salvation Army, and Ms Dawn Mills, state manager of family and domestic violence services at the Salvos, and hear more about their work. I also met with Aboriginal representatives who have been very, very focused on making sure to consult with Aboriginal people so that this project has cultural security at its heart.

We have received really positive feedback from the Salvation Army. Warren from the Salvation Army told my office that they acknowledge the state and federal governments in working together on this project not only in terms of the project build, but also in working together to identify and support the new operational requirements of this service once it opens.

The units are being built offsite, which means that we will avoid any delays resulting from cyclones because they can be transported straight up to the site at Karratha. We look forward to those facilities opening up later in the year. I cannot wait to get up there to be with the member's community in Karratha to celebrate a much-needed support for women and children there.

CRIME — GASCOYNE AND MIDWEST

155. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Police:

I refer to Western Australia Police Force crime data for the Gascoyne-midwest, which reflects that burglary is up by 36 per cent, serious assault by 50 per cent and shoplifting by 75 per cent compared with the data for 2022.

- (1) Considering the WA police minister's public admission that the government will fall short of its target by more than 500 new police officers, how can the people of the Gascoyne-midwest have any confidence that crises in crime will be combatted across our regions?
- (2) Will the WA police minister allocate any additional resources to the Gascoyne and midwest regions?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

(1)–(2) I will reflect on one thing, member, with regard to crime in the midwest. The member lives in Carnarvon and claimed not that long ago that there was a crime crisis there associated with juveniles committing extraordinary levels of crime, and some members of her party at the federal level claimed that it was akin to Alice Springs at the time. I understand that in that part of the world there has been a reduction in crime of 38 per cent as a consequence of the restrictions on takeaway liquor sales that were enforced on the member's pub and others by the director of Liquor Licensing. The restrictions are intentionally focused on Sundays and Mondays, although there is also now a restriction on opening hours every day of the week from 12.00 noon until 7.00 pm. There has also been destocking of glass, with the intention of reducing the amount of glass in the community. In the past, streets were littered with glass as a consequence of sales of takeaway alcohol in glass. The member will be aware that the sale of takeaway packaged liquor has been stopped on Sundays and Mondays.

There is a direct correlation with that initiative in the midwest. For that initiative to be effected and effective, it required a rollout of the banned drinkers register, which our government introduced to the state. It also afforded takeaway liquor outlets a takeaway alcohol management system—all at government expense—as part of the initiative. That is what enabled that response to crime in Carnarvon. The program is a pilot program that is being monitored by the director of Liquor Licensing. Such has been the efficacy of those initiatives in Carnarvon, in the midwest, that the director of Liquor Licensing, who is independent, was approached by the acting Commissioner of Police, requesting a similar process to be rolled out elsewhere. The director has given show-cause to takeaway liquor outlets in Derby and Broome for a range of measures similar to those taken in Carnarvon, especially in Derby.

That is a good thing. It is good to see that there has been that significant reduction in crime in Carnarvon, which is in the midwest, and the extraordinary success of those initiatives, which have seen reductions in presentations at hospitals, an increase in the numbers of kids going to school—which is why Sunday and Monday were chosen—and a reduction in the amount of crime that police have to contend with. All those things are good. It is a pilot program and it is already giving an indication to the director of Liquor Licensing about where else she might potentially go. I look forward to her considering that; she has already given indications to Derby and Broome.

At the end, I will remind the member that with regard to police operations, it is the Commissioner of Police who directs police where they go and how they operate. Apart from being unlawful, it would probably be wrong for me to try to tell the Commissioner of Police how to do policing. The Commissioner of Police takes the resources that are afforded to him by the government and employs them to best effect.

CRIME — GASCOYNE AND MIDWEST**156. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Police:**

I have a supplementary question. If the minister is unable to allocate further policing resources to the regions, will he commit to supporting further funding to help —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Sorry; you are all but inviting interjections by having a preamble to your question. I ask you to just ask a direct question to the minister, rather than putting a first part to it.

Ms M. BEARD: Will the minister support further funding to help support the police with the provision of additional wraparound services, such as safe spaces for women and children?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Things of the nature of what the member is referring to are not in my portfolio and not my responsibility. That aside, as the member knows, Operation Regional Shield provides the Commissioner of Police with resources and capacity to respond to acute crime in any part of the regions where it is in operation. It is in operation in the midwest. As required, the commissioner, via assistant commissioner for the regions, Assistant Commissioner Darryl Gaunt, and the commander for the northern regions, Commander Brad Sorrell, will respond as necessary. They know what they are doing when it comes to policing. They are the operators; they do operations. They are afforded all the resources necessary to do their job. Politicians should not try to tell police how to do policing because it never ends well.

ENDURING EXUBERANCE

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.59 pm]: Members, you may have seen in the corridor and in the Edith Cowan Gallery the magnificent new collection of artworks. It is the fiftieth anniversary of Murdoch University's art collection, and it has very kindly given us this exhibition for the next few months. It is called *Enduring Exuberance*.

It features some of the best artists and some representative works of the last five decades here in Western Australia and is provided to us by the university. I am really delighted that the Presiding Officers accepted this exhibition on your behalf. I note that all of you are invited to the exhibition launch tonight at six o'clock here in the Edith Cowan Gallery. Some of you have responded. If you missed the email or you have not yet responded, there is still the opportunity to do so if you would like to be part of the exhibition opening tonight. Please take the opportunity to examine these artworks. They are truly remarkable.

FIREARMS BILL 2024

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Clause 5: Terms used —

Debate was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Mr R.S. LOVE: When the business of this consideration in detail was interrupted by other events in Parliament, the issue we were talking about was the firearm authority health standards and how they would be prescribed in the regulations. The minister gave some explanation, but I was in the middle of seeking further clarity on that when we were interrupted. Perhaps the minister was providing it; I cannot really remember. The minister had just described that the commissioner would make a determination about whether somebody met the standard, but they would be advised by others to that effect. I am just trying to get an understanding. Do other pieces of legislation have a standard prescribed as is outlined in this matter? Just to be clear for everybody in the room about what we are talking about, the bill states —

firearm authority health standards means standards of mental or physical health that are prescribed by the regulations as health standards that a person must meet to be considered a fit and proper person to hold a firearm authority;

Will those standards be clear so that people understand the standards? Is there another example of a standard that the minister can point to?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I answered the member before on this matter by saying that every individual is different. Every case will be assessed, rightly, as an individual person. People's circumstances are likely to be different. I gave the member an indication of the types of things that are part of the dangerous goods driver's licence medical assessment. They include temporary conditions, substance misuse, intoxication, chronic illness and conditions, age-related changes, multiple medical conditions, and medications and other treatments. I said that a health professional will complete their assessment, but a yes or no question will not be put to them. They will provide information to the commissioner, who, rightly, will assess a range of other matters. We have talked about criminal records, and there is reference to other matters that the commissioner will consider in determining whether someone is a fit and proper person. Right now, the commissioner can request that someone get a health check. The commissioner does that. I am aware of a case right now in which the commissioner has requested that an individual go to a specialist and seek a health check. It does not mean they will get rejected. It will provide information to the commissioner to inform their decision-making. That is essentially what is happening here. It will be made a very clear part of the legislation and a requirement for all licence applicants.

Mr R.S. LOVE: With respect, minister, it is not clear at all. This piece of legislation says that health standards will be prescribed in regulations, yet the minister can give no indication of what those health standards will be or how they will be framed in any way whatsoever. I would like to know exactly what the minister can tell the Western Australian public about the expectation of how those standards will be developed and what the standards will contain.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will repeat how they will be developed. The working group, which has been meeting already—we have answered questions in Parliament about that working group's meetings and deliberations—is ongoing. In advance of commencing to draft regulations, it has already been meeting and considering the matter. That working group consists of representatives from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Mental Health Commission, the Department of Health, the Minister for Health's office, the Western Australia Police Force and the Australian Medical Association. It has been deliberating and working on the nature of what the regulations will require and will continue to do so. I have given an indication for the benefit of people out there. There are a lot of heavy haulage truck driver's licence holders amongst the light gun or firearm licence holding community who are familiar with this type of test. Many members of the Primary Producers Advisory Board from the north have pilot licences. The requirement will be similar to those for recreational pilot licence health checks. That is an indication of what it will be like.

Specifically, the types of matters that might be considered are the ones that I have read in twice now. Ultimately, they will not be the factor determining whether someone is a fit and proper person. They will inform the commissioner, who will seek out other information about all manner of considerations around someone who is applying for a licence.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister mentioned several times during his answer that the government would look at other health examinations, such as those for people with a dangerous goods licence or a recreational pilot's licence. They are matters relating to transport in which other lives are at risk due to the dangerous nature of the vehicles that might be driven. That is when someone is in control of a vehicle. Is the minister suggesting that the same health standard would be required for a person who wishes to possess a firearm as that required to drive a heavy vehicle or to have a recreational pilot's licence? I cannot see how the government can justify simply applying that standard to someone who wants a firearm to shoot rabbits on a farm.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer the member to the key principle that we are seeking to embed at the start of this legislation in accordance with the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission; that is, firearm possession and use is a privilege that is conditional on public safety being given primary consideration. That is the starting point.

A dangerous goods driver's licence enables people to drive around the state with explosives on the back of their truck. Explosives are pretty dangerous. In a similar fashion, having a firearms licence is a reason for a test of this nature, noting that it is also for the benefit of the individual, not just for the benefit of the public. It is quite reasonable.

I understand that the opposition wants to oppose this legislation on behalf of a small number of people in the state who feel that the laws should not be changed. We are driven by the intent of making public safety the primary consideration of rewriting the act. Given that, the public is at risk if the wrong people have access to firearms. That aside, the individuals themselves are potentially in a dangerous situation if they should not have a firearm. It is for the benefit of not just the public, but also individuals.

The dangerous goods driver's licence has been drawn to my attention. It is not just about driving a vehicle containing dangerous goods; it is about the possession and use of explosives. It is very much like someone thinking they are entitled to have, or empowered by having, a dangerous goods driver's licence. That is the reasoning. That is why we gave that example. Regardless of the fact that an aircraft is a form of transport, potentially it is also a pretty dangerous form of transport not only for the people inside the aircraft, but also for anyone else. It is a reasonable thing. I do not think anyone has ever questioned the need for a health check for a pilot. That is quite a reasonable thing. All we are trying to do by citing those examples is to give an indication of where the regulation will go. I have referred to the working group, which is made up of professionals; they are specialists who have knowledge and will provide advice on the regulations that will be written. We are seeking to indicate to people as much as we can what the regulations will contain before they are written.

I will add one thing because, again, there is a lot of misinformation out there. In a lot of ways, assumptions have been made by people that the system will be identical to the one that is currently in place. We have indicated that the health check could be done at five-year intervals, which is not as onerous as the current licensing regime that requires everyone to renew their licence every year. Yes, there will be more requirements, but there will be a longer span between the requirements that need to be met.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am trying to understand what the government is seeking to achieve. If a person had a chronic heart condition that ruled them out of being able to drive a vehicle containing dangerous goods, would that person necessarily also be ruled out from having a firearms licence? Is poor physical health really a reason to deny someone the ability to access a firearm if they still have a genuine reason to own a firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. I have never said that. It has never been suggested that that would be the case, in the same way that I was at pains to convey to the public that someone suffering a significant mental illness may not be a reason for them to not have a licence. I was referring to veterans who suffer from PTSD, but plenty of people have that. That will not preclude someone. I reiterate that every single person's case is individual, and they should be assessed in that manner. That is why the specialist working group will advise on the development of the regulation on the health check. A professional clinician will conduct that assessment.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think we counted the word "thing" 350 times in the legislation.

Mr P. Papalia: Every time you ask this.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am trying to understand —

Mr P. Papalia: You were in government when "thing" was a thing.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I remember the conversation about "thing" and the thumb locks very well.

Mr P. Papalia: When you were in government.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes, I remember that. I am trying to point to the fact that the thing exists. Then we have "thing relevant to an offence" on line 16 on page 9, and "related thing" on line 28 on page 8. I am trying to understand the difference between a thing relevant to an offence and a related thing.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member is being frivolous, and he knows that. He knows that "thing" is a standard reference that has been employed in legislation for years. I have been here for 17 years and "thing" is a word that has been employed in all that time, and well before I got here. With regard to the example given by the member, we must

look at the context. The member referred to “related thing” or “thing relevant to an offence”. They both should be considered and assessed in context. There might be some conspiracy theorist out there who thinks that this is somehow related to the Magna Carta, but it is just a thing. It is employed in legislation all the time. There is no trickery or some sort of flaw; it is just what governments have included in legislation for a long time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Let us look at the definition of “related thing”. It means a major firearm part, ammunition and a prohibited accessory. When will we know the definition of “prohibited accessory”? Will that also be reliant on regulation? There may be examples within the legislation. What else will be considered to be prohibited accessories?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I draw the member’s attention to clause 5, at line 28 on page 7, which states —

prohibited accessory means any of the following —

- (a) a sound suppressor;
- (b) a device commonly known as a bump stock, being a stock that is made or modified to allow a self-loading firearm to fire more rapidly than is possible with trigger-finger manipulation alone;

Does the member want me to read all these out?

Mr R.S. LOVE: No, I don’t.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is a pretty clear definition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: If the minister goes down to paragraph (f) and the regulations.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is to potentially encompass any other things that have not been foreseen at this stage. That is a pretty long list of things that are defined as prohibited accessories. If it becomes apparent that another accessory should be prohibited after the passage of the legislation, paragraph (f) will enable that to be addressed.

Mr R.S. LOVE: We do not expect that any other prohibited accessories will be in the regulations at this stage; otherwise, the government would already have put them in the legislation. Or can we expect a list of other things to come into the regulations as this is being developed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that some prohibited accessories in the current legislation’s regulations may be retained. They may not be listed in this bit of legislation’s prohibited accessories, but they may be retained when this legislation comes into effect; it will enable that. It will also potentially enable other accessories that may not yet be apparent but should be prohibited to be covered if they come to the attention of police subsequent to the passage of the legislation. Ultimately, I imagine that this legislation would be amended to specify them later, but this will enable them to be captured.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Why do we have five categories—paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e)—of specifically named prohibited accessories and then a whole bunch of other accessories that are already in the regulations and not named? Why have some been elevated to legislation when others are in subsidiary legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the intent of listing prohibited accessories is to give an indication of what will be prohibited. It does specify some. As I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition, some in current regulations may be retained, but the final paragraph (f) will enable the legislation to encompass others that may not have been foreseen. It will also give the flexibility to respond rapidly if something becomes evident. The Leader of the Opposition is talking about a drafting peculiarity; I do not think there is any great conspiracy behind it or anything of that nature. It is just listing some prohibited accessories and, if we have not thought of any others, the last paragraph is there.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have one other question about authorised accessories or those that are permitted and not excluded accessories. What guidance can be given or when will guidance be given about what is permissible for manufacturers and licensed firearm owners to hold as permitted accessories, rather than accessories that are not permitted?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that in response to discussions, questions and consultation about the legislation—the consultation paper and subsequently during the drafting of the legislation—the police took action to ensure the list of exclusions because excluding what people cannot have is most important. Lists of other authorised accessories are now on the Western Australia Police Force website. I assume those lists are not necessarily finite. This is a big industry and it is pumping things out at a great rate. It regularly changes and adopts technology, and new offerings become available all the time. That will be addressed by the list of prohibited accessories and potentially through paragraph (f). There is much more information about what is allowed than there was, and that is in response to this process, which resulted in questions from interested parties and the police trying to provide them with answers and additional information.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have one final question on the definitions. The prohibited accessory that starts the list is the sound suppressor. People who are hunting would like to not alert all the other animals in the area that they are active. At any stage, were any categories of firearm licensee or firearm use considered to be allowed to use a sound suppressor or was it something that was specifically ruled out without any consideration?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that government-entity licensees can use them, and that is essentially the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions type. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has them as well. They are professional shooters employed or engaged by those agencies to cull birds and animals, and they, but not others, have authority to use suppressors.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Was consideration ever given to allowing private contractors who perform similar pest-management services to the government officers access to sound suppressors?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that it was considered and determined not to include them. Essentially, the people we have referred to were deemed to need those accessories to perform their task. Ultimately, the public safety case came out on the side of not enabling other people to potentially access suppressors, and we will restrict access to those suppressors.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The government employees will be allowed to use sound suppressors even though they are undertaking the same task as private contractors. I am aware of many contractors who do the same work as DPIRD and others. What will be the restrictions to the government employees' access to that technology or accessory?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The reason those people will be authorised and other non-government entities or non-government engaged individuals will not be is the enhanced storage requirements and oversight through records that are currently required of those people, which will give more comfort with regard to public safety than if non-government individuals were to be enabled to use suppressors.

Ms L. METTAM: I have a further question on this clause. I tried to ask a question on the firearm authority health standards; I just did not get the call. I appreciate that this will come up further in the bill, but I want to take the opportunity to ask a question based on a genuine concern that has been expressed to me by a farmer.

He presented himself to emergency a couple of years ago with concerns for his own mental health. He pulled me aside to explain that and his genuine fear that that would have an impact on his firearms licence—not that he felt that he would be unfit to hold the licence, but that in doing the right thing, he felt that that would have an impact now. I know the subjective nature of this, which is why we have concerns, and I appreciate there will be other questions asked, but can the minister provide some assurance for those seeking mental health support on how this matter will be managed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have addressed it, but it is a matter worth readdressing. I will reassure people. Every case will be treated individually. The intent is not to prevent someone who is suffering from a mental illness from having access to a firearms licence. This is what the police currently do, so this is essentially the way it will be managed. If someone is being treated and it is well managed, there is no reason for them to be unable to get or retain a licence. I hope that people will view this as an opportunity to ensure that they do seek assistance, welcome that assistance and provide care for themselves. That is the intent; it is to ensure that people have the opportunity to be cared for and treated. It is not to exclude people.

I made that point about veterans; I cannot remember whether it was in question time or earlier in consideration in detail. As I said, I have had it personally raised with me by people who have served their nation and been wounded or injured physically or psychologically, and they held a concern that the intent of this legislation was to somehow prevent them from pursuing their hobby. For some of them, it may be the only physical recreational activity or sport that they can pursue as a consequence of their injury. It is not the intention of this part of the law to prevent people of that nature being able to get a firearms licence or to remove it from them. It is just another measure to ensure that we afford greater public safety, and, ideally, it will also be something that will encourage people to seek assistance if they are not currently doing that.

I have heard concerns in this regard, and I worry that there are people out there right now who are not seeking assistance. They may be concerned about themselves in the manner to which the member has referred, and they may not be seeking assistance at the moment. There is no compulsion or incentive for them to do that. This will hopefully provide an incentive and encourage people to seek help if they need it.

Ms L. METTAM: I appreciate that we will get to this more fulsomely, but I think there will need to be a lot of work done to get that message out, because we would not want to see unintended consequences of licensed firearm owners not seeking that support, which is a very genuine concern.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I thank the member and I appreciate that. I agree. There is a communications plan, and it will be resourced.

It has been brought to my attention that this element will be able to be reviewed by the State Administrative Tribunal. As opposed to some of the other mandatory disqualifications or things of that nature, this element will be subject to review by SAT. I am saying that it is absolutely our intent—I have told people and tried to reassure them—that they will not be excluded solely because they suffer a physical or mental illness. That is not the intent. But if they were to be found not fit and proper by the commissioner after this process, they will be able to appeal to SAT.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6: Firearms —

Ms L. METTAM: I note that under the definitions in clauses 6(2) and 6(3), a device can be a firearm whether the device is operable or inoperable, but a firearm that has been rendered permanently incapable of operation is not a firearm. Can the minister explain the difference between a firearm that is inoperable but still defined as a firearm compared with a firearm that is rendered permanently incapable of operation and is therefore not considered a firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The difference is an inoperable firearm might be one that is damaged and is temporarily potentially incapable of firing but can be repaired. A firearm that has been rendered permanently inoperable will have been rendered so by a licensed firearm repairer or manufacturer. It will be certified permanently inoperable by those who are qualified to do so. That is the difference. The other firearm the member is referring to would be akin to someone's vehicle breaking down. It does not mean it cannot be driven again; it just means they must get it fixed, whereas if they remove the engine, it cannot be driven. That is not the greatest analogy, because I am sure there are people out there who will say that they can put another engine in. But the bottom line is that someone certified to render it permanently inoperable will do so, and then it will not be considered a firearm under the act.

Mr R.S. LOVE: If we turn to the first part of clause 6, the definition, it states —

- (1) A *firearm* is a device that is made, modified or capable of being modified to fire or propel a projectile by means of —

It goes through the various things —

- (c) any other method of propulsion that is prescribed by the regulations.

Are there at present any other known methods of propulsion that we expect to see prescribed by regulations?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that it is anticipated the following methods of propulsion will be included in the regulations and will be taken to be firearms—hydraulically operated plunger technology devices, electronically operated plunger technology devices, magnetic rail gun technology and Gauss gun technology.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7 put and passed.

Clause 8: Firearm categories —

Ms L. METTAM: I note that under this clause the regulations must provide for six categories of firearms and specify the firearms that are in each category. Can the minister provide details of each category that the regulations will cover and the types of firearms that will be captured by each of these categories?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the list will predominantly be what is currently in the regulations, with the addition of air rifles and button-release firearms.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister confirm that the categories in the regulations will not be changing?

Mr P. PAPALIA: There will be some amendments to the current regulations with regard to those two categories I referred to, the air rifle and button-release firearm.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister explain subclauses (4) and (5) and whether subclause (5) is redundant given that subclause (4) provides —

If a firearm is not in any category, the firearm is taken to have been prescribed by the regulations as a prohibited firearm unless the regulations provide otherwise.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that subclause (4) does what the member anticipated. It states that a firearm is taken to be prohibited as prescribed if it is a new type. Subclause (5) is a legislative procedural matter. It essentially says that even though something is currently not prohibited, we can make it thus if we choose to do so. Further to that explanation, I am advised that it means, for instance, if a category C firearm met the definition for category C, we would still be empowered to make it a prohibited firearm. It will enable that further action, which may not have been encompassed by subclause (4).

Ms M. BEARD: I think I know the answer to this, but I will ask anyway. Gas projectiles are used in orchards and vineyards. I understand that they do not project anything other than noise, but they are attached to a bottle of compressed gas. Is that not included in this?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member is right; that is not captured. That is a noise maker, essentially, and it is not something that has to be licensed, so it is not captured.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9 put and passed.

Clause 10: Membership of disqualifying organisation —

Ms L. METTAM: This clause states that a —

member, of an organisation, means a person —

- (a) who has been accepted as a member of the organisation, whether informally or through a process set by the organisation; or
- (b) who identifies in any way as belonging to the organisation; or
- (c) whose conduct in relation to the organisation would reasonably lead another person to consider the person to be a member of the organisation.

Can the minister explain how a person will be considered to be a member of an organisation when they could be considered to be accepted informally?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, the wording replicates that of the Criminal Law (Unlawful Consorting and Prohibited Insignia) Act 2021. Nevertheless, the manner in which someone is determined to be a member is through intelligence, action, behaviours and information available to the Commissioner of Police. A range of sources can provide information to enable the commissioner to determine that the person is a member.

Ms L. METTAM: How will that informal acceptance of membership be considered and proven?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The organisations are listed under the Criminal Law (Unlawful Consorting and Prohibited Insignia) Act 2021. The commissioner will make a determination based on intelligence and other action to determine that a person is a member of the organisation. That determination by the commissioner can be challenged in the State Administrative Tribunal. What cannot be challenged in SAT is the make-up of the list of organisations that are identified; however, the claim or the determination by the commissioner that the person is in that organisation can be challenged.

Ms L. METTAM: On the same issue, how would one be considered a member of a disqualified organisation based on their conduct that would lead another person to consider that they are a member of such an organisation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is in reference to that legislation. I recall that membership was debated fulsomely at the time. I will not give the member a finite list, but an indication would be someone wearing the colours of that organisation, someone associating with the people within that organisation or someone attending the clubrooms of that organisation on a regular basis. They could be funded by them. There would have been significant discussion around this. It has been tested by the courts. The unlawful insignia legislation has been tested thoroughly, with 85 per cent of cases successful. I am informed that it would be any conduct in relation to the organisation that would reasonably lead another person to consider that person to be a member of the organisation. In essence, a range of things might lead the commissioner to make that determination. It is essentially the same process for the purposes of consorting notices, dispersal notices and prohibited insignia because they are the people we are talking about.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11: Finding of guilt —

Ms M. BEARD: What procedures will be in place for when a person is found guilty of an offence that would disqualify them from owning a firearm? Will a search be conducted each time an offender is found guilty of a relevant offence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We are talking about people who have committed a disqualifying offence, which is a serious offence subject to a penalty of five or more years' imprisonment. At the time they are charged, their firearms will be seized. That will happen. In the event that they are found guilty, they will not get those firearms back; they can be disposed of. Is that what the member was after?

Ms M. BEARD: Yes. A couple of people have asked me this question because they have been involved in traffic offences in which there was a fatality and they have done time. They were found guilty and spent a period of time in prison—less than five years—but it was not related to firearms. I am just trying to clarify whether they will be disqualified from hereon in.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am hoping that I have the answer for the member. The member for North West Central is concerned about someone. In that case, yes, if it was a serious offence subject to a penalty of five years or more, they will be subject to this part of the law. If they had served a lesser time in prison, their time of exclusion or disqualification will extend from the time that they have done. If the maximum sentence was five years and they served three years in prison, the disqualification period would be five more years. The disqualification period will be applied from when they exit the prison. Is that what the member was after?

Ms M. Beard: It was someone involved in a fatal car accident. It was an unfortunate set of circumstances.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sadly for that person, given that it was a serious offence subject to a penalty of five or more years of imprisonment, they will be subject to it.

Ms M. BEARD: My question is about whether a search will be conducted each time an offender is found guilty of a relevant offence. Will sufficient resources be provided for that to take place, and can the minister outline how the resourcing will be provided to oversee that process?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think I understand the nature of the member's question. In some ways, what will happen with the disqualification orders will be akin to what happens now with violence restraining orders, in that the police will go to the residence and request the firearm that they know to be there because of the licence, and they will confiscate it. That will essentially be the same role; it is not significantly different from what currently happens. Obviously, there will be one moment in time when a large number of people will be dealt with.

The police will be resourced to achieve that task. They will be able to manage it because they will be the ones determining when to confiscate the firearms. It is something that the police will manage, but they are resourced to do that. There is resourcing available to apply the legislation. With regard to the actual task itself, it will not be a lot different from a lot of other policing activity that happens.

Ms M. BEARD: If someone is found guilty, is there a scale? The minister said that if a person receives a penalty of five or more years' imprisonment, they will never get the gun back. I guess what I am asking is: Can they never reapply? Once that happens, will they be able to appeal or apply for a gun at any point in their lives?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, people will not be able to appeal this one. The disqualification period will be aligned with the maximum penalty that the offence is subject to. If a serious offence has a 10-year maximum penalty, that will be the disqualification period.

Mr R.S. LOVE: This follows on from the question asked before about convictions or offences outside Australia. Under clause 11, "Finding of guilt", subclause (1) states —

A reference to a *finding of guilt* in relation to an offence committed by a person is a reference to any of the following —

- (a) a court making a formal finding of guilt in relation to the offence;

Could that be a court in another jurisdiction? Could it be, for instance, a New Zealand court that finds a person guilty of such an offence? Would that lead to such a disqualification? I meant to ask this when the minister was talking before, but what measures will be in place to ensure that information such as that can be known to the police in WA?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We did kind of refer to this earlier. Essentially, there are matters in other jurisdictions that the commissioner must inquire into, and that is stated. It is stated in clause 151(2) —

This section does not prevent the Commissioner from inquiring into relevant criminal records held by other law enforcement agencies, including law enforcement agencies outside Australia.

Our Western Australia Police Force regularly collaborates with international law enforcement agencies via Interpol and other relationships, so it is not an unusual practice for police to seek out and acquire information about people they have concerns with.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12 put and passed.

Clause 13: Immediate possession —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Again, I go back to the word "thing". The clause states —

- (1) A person's possession of a thing is *immediate possession* of the thing if the person —
- (a) has actual physical possession of the thing; or
- (b) has custody or control of the thing in close proximity to the person.
- (2) A person does not have a firearm or other thing in the person's *immediate possession* when possession is possession in compliant storage.

Could the minister clarify the use of the word "thing" in this clause in reference to immediate possession? Is it referring to, for instance, a firearm part or a complete firearm, or both, or an accessory? What exactly is the thing we are talking about?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The answer is yes, it could be a range of things that may be relevant under this legislation. As opposed to just identifying the word "thing", it is generally used to specify a firearm or related things. It is not considered to be in a person's immediate possession when the firearm or other thing is in compliant storage. The word "thing" is used in context. It might be technology, ammunition or parts. That is not a finite list, so do not go getting excited out there! That is the reason for the use of the word "thing", and the member knows that; he has been in Parliament and witnessed legislation for long enough to understand that that is why this word is utilised.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Subclause (2), which is on page 16, states —

A person does not have a firearm or other thing in the person's *immediate possession* when possession is possession in compliant storage.

How will that apply in the case of someone who is transporting a firearm? What would be considered to be compliant storage in that circumstance? Would it be being locked up in a compliant storage case? Could the minister explain to us whether that would be considered being out of a person's immediate possession?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that this particular reference is about compliant storage being used to store a firearm when someone's licence has been suspended, so it is stored somewhere that is compliant. That is what it is specifically referring to. It is in that circumstance. A person has had their firearm removed and it is being stored somewhere that is compliant for the purposes of the legislation. That is what that reference is about. It is not about transport.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14: Major firearm parts —

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister will recall that there was quite a discussion in Parliament about firearm parts and manufacturing during debate on the previous amendment bill. There seem to have been some changes from the previous iteration of the Firearms Bill. Can the minister explain whether there were discussions that led to any changes that might have occurred?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have been informed that effectively there is no difference between that bill and this bill, other than the piece about the stock blank, which is a bit of wood that is shaped into a stock. That has been removed, but everything else essentially reflects that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15 put and passed.

Clause 16: Delegation of Commissioner's powers and duties —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause is broadly consistent with the provision in the existing legislation. I think the delegations are also referred to in clauses 148 and 149. We can discuss those at that point, or can we talk about those now?

Mr P. Papalia: How about you air your concern and we will think about whether we can answer it now or whether it would be more appropriate later?

Mr R.S. LOVE: In terms of gathering evidence from the health practitioners, which we talked about before, and the delegate's ability to access and require that sensitive information, what will happen to ensure that anyone who is delegated to perform those tasks keeps that information as confidential as possible? What will be the chain of information flow for some of those matters under the delegations? Is there a chart that shows the responsibility? How will that be laid out?

Mr P. PAPALIA: There are currently delegations for this type of practice. The Commissioner of Police will not necessarily seek out the information that will inform the decision-making process himself; he might delegate the authority to seek out that information to other subordinates. They are within the chain of command. I would not say that a specific person will be designated every time, or some sort of flowchart that we could provide the member with. That aside, police regularly encounter sensitive and classified information and, in the course of their duties, are required to comply with the law in respect of the security of that information. I am informed that at the moment, for example, there are two sergeants who seek out the type of information the member is talking about. They acquire that information for the commissioner to inform the decision-making process. But I do not know that it would necessarily change anything to say any more than that; they are delegated personnel, chosen by the commissioner to be granted that authority as part of their job, and they comply with the law whilst they are doing it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am just trying to get an understanding, as a member of Parliament, of the structure of the delegation system within police that can allow this to happen, and what that information sharing looks like in respect of who has unfettered access to certain information and who has access to necessary information et cetera.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can give comfort to people that a clear line of responsibility is retained at all times. The commissioner delegates to the superintendent, licensing enforcement, who has subordinates who then conduct that task. Responsibility flows up the chain; delegation does not devolve all responsibility. The person ultimately responsible is the commissioner. The superintendent is subordinate to the commissioner, and the individuals who carry out the task are subordinate to the superintendent. They all have responsibility for the retention of privacy and the security of information. Ultimately, though, that responsibility resides with the commissioner and it is not in any way removed as a consequence of the devolution of the task.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 17: Exemptions —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Again, I understand that this is fairly consistent with the current legislation. I wonder what the circumstances are if the person who is exempt is a police officer, an officer in the department, a member of the

Australian Federal Police, a member of another police force or defence personnel. Under those exemptions, are there any actions that would trigger a disqualification or suspension of that exemption? For instance, if the person was later found to be involved in criminal activity, even though that fact was not known at the time. Would they then be subject to charges for offences created under this legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that a very limited number of organisations are subject to the exemptions. They have their own internal processes and practices around those types of matters. In the event that someone has broken the law, police would be compelled to notify the person's organisation about that fact, which would result in consequences inside that organisation but also, having broken the law, the person would be subject to the law in the same way as anyone else.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Could their conduct at any stage lead to a finding that they had actually no right to that exemption at that point, because they had already involved themselves in criminal activity? I am thinking, for example, of someone who was knowingly involved in activities that might compromise public safety in some way. Would they fall foul of some of the provisions of this legislation if, for example, they had supplied ammunition or firearms? To what level would those exemptions apply to someone who has wilfully engaged in activity that is not in the public interest?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think I understand the intent of the member's question, but if I do not, let me know and we can chat about it. Ultimately, if someone has broken the law with regard to the provision of ammunition or things of that nature, that is a serious offence and there would be consequences within their organisation. Those organisations all have consequences for behaviour of that type as part of their own disciplinary processes, but having broken the law, the law would apply to these people regardless. The exemptions referred to fall under part 5, which requires the authority of a licence or permit for the possession and use of, and other activities involving, firearms and related things; and part 7, which relates to security and storage of firearms and related things. That is for the ADF guys; we are not going to tell them who they can authorise to use a Steyr, for instance. We are not going to tell them where they should store it, or anything of that nature; that falls within the structure of their organisation. However, if the person commits an offence that breaches the act, which is outside these exemptions, we would notify the ADF and they would suffer the consequences of having broken the law and charges would be proffered.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I had one other question I was going to ask on exemptions, but as I stood up, it fled from my mind, based on what the minister was saying!

Mr P. Papalia: You have all the sympathy in the world!

Mr R.S. LOVE: With regard to losing the exemption, what about a situation in which a member of one of those organisations was subject to a domestic violence order or similar; would that trigger a disqualification or suspension of the exemption?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Pretty much all the organisations to which we have referred have their own disciplinary processes and responses to breaches of that nature. With regard to our law, if the person is a licence holder in their own right, as a civilian, their outside firearm licence is not related to the fact that they might be in the ADF or a police officer or whatever. But if they break the law, they are subject to the same consequences as anyone else who breaks the law. That is what already happens. If a police officer commits a domestic violence offence, it is the same process and they are subject to investigation. There are internal processes. The commissioner would initiate an investigation and there would be a response. There are practices around what they are allowed to do and what they are not allowed to do, and often they are stood aside whilst the investigation is being completed. If they are found to have done something, I can tell the member that they will kick them out now. That aside, the Australian Defence Force has its own process, as does everyone else, but this law is all about our licensing process. We licence someone to have a firearm as an individual. In the event that they commit one of these disqualifying offences, they will be subject to the law.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 18: Antique firearms —

Ms M. BEARD: This provision defines an “antique firearm” as —

- (a) a muzzle loading firearm manufactured before 1900; or
- (b) any other firearm manufactured before 1900 that is not an excluded firearm;

What is the reason for choosing the year 1900?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That moment in time is reflected in the current legislation. I am informed that that is when there was a pivotal shift in technology. There was a move from some of other older technologies to the use of cartridges. It might not have specifically occurred in that year, but it happened around that time, and subsequent legislation has reflected that.

Ms M. BEARD: Has the minister received any representations from owners of firearms manufactured after 1900 that are considered to be antique; and, if so, can he outline who made those representations?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thank you for that question, member. I am informed by acting Inspector Walker that they have been in continuous conversation with the historical firearms society of Western Australia while preparing the legislation and that it has no concerns with what is being proposed.

Ms M. BEARD: This last question is for my benefit. If someone were to have what they consider to be an antique firearm, is there scope for them to apply for a licence, or is the 1900 date and the age of the firearm a definitive line in the sand?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that it is a line in the sand. If the firearm is dated post 1900, yes, they will be required to licence it. The owner can retain it but will be subject to other parts of the legislation.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 19 and 20 —

Clause 21: Requirement for genuine reason for licence for firearm —

Ms L. METTAM: Clause 21(1) states —

A licence to authorise the possession of a firearm must not be granted to a person unless the Commissioner is satisfied that the person has a genuine reason for the licence because the person genuinely intends that the firearm will be possessed for a purpose to be authorised by the licence.

Can the minister explain what would constitute a genuine reason under this clause and how an applicant for a licence will prove a genuine reason? For example, will it be by way of a statutory declaration prescribed by the regulations?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will read this out and if I do not cover it, the member can ask a further question. A genuine reason relates to the type of licence sought by a person. A genuine reason can be, for example, wanting to hunt on property or carry out a trade involving firearms. The genuine reason must be proven by providing evidence to the Commissioner of Police. An applicant for an individual licence for competition purposes, for instance, may be asked to provide evidence such as a membership to a club for competition shooting or an affiliation to a shooting discipline and/or any relevant competition endorsements. A trade licensee may be asked to provide a business plan, structure or ABN et cetera to prove that they have a genuine reason for a trade licence.

It will depend on what licence the member is talking about because they require different information. If we are talking about someone who hunts on another property, they will need to provide an authorisation from a property owner. The information will differ depending on who is applying for the licence.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 21 refers to the requirement for a genuine reason for a licence for a firearm. I want to talk about a subject that has been raised with me to do with the loss of an activity, if you like. I can see no recognition in the bill of a recreational licence. I cannot talk about it under a clause in the legislation because it is not mentioned, so perhaps I can raise it here. Why has a recreational licence been excluded as a type of licence? It has been put to me that people may simply wish to engage in recreational shooting, as opposed to being part of an organised clay target club or a fixed-target club of any sort. The minister may remember that late last year, I brought a grievance to this place about an individual who has such a facility in the Kalbarri area where individuals shoot recreationally. Why has the pursuit of recreational shooting not been considered by this legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will give the member a bit of an answer. If my advisers think that I have not covered it off enough, I will sit down and then talk again. There used to be a recreational/hunting licence, as I understand it. The terminology has shifted to refine the genuine reason. In the past, probably three types of shooting were allowed under one licence. They will now be under different licences. We will have a licence for primary producers, which will address those people, and they will be able to conduct hunting and all those practices on their land with a firearm. The sort of thing that the member is talking about can be done on their land with a primary producer licence. Then we will have what is termed a competition licence for people who join clubs; they may or may not participate in high-level competitions, but they will shoot on a range, which is recreational shooting. In the past we had one category of licence, but we will now have three categories, with the third category of licence being for hunting. In this instance, for a person to get a licence, we have focused on the genuine reason being to assist somebody to control vermin on their property. That will be the genuine reason that will enable a person to get a licence. For a person to conduct the type of activity that the member talked about, they will have to get a licence using the genuine reason of hunting, which means that they will be required to get authority from the owner of an appropriately sized property. They will then be able to do that type of shooting on that land. They will not be prevented from doing that, but target shooting outside a club is not a genuine reason for getting a licence.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I return to the fact that this legislation was supposed to conform with the third National Firearms Agreement. Is that approach—that recreational shooting will be ruled out as a genuine reason—consistent with other jurisdictions?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will refer to what I said earlier. Primary producers can be engaged in recreational shooting on their property. Target shooting at a club is essentially classified as a recreational activity. Hunters on an authorised property with the authorisation of the property owner will be able to do what the member was talking about, but that will not be a genuine reason for acquiring a licence. That is a considered intent of the change to the legislation. The

issue was not about the member's constituent inviting people to shoot on their property, it was about the fact that the constituent was selling letters that were used as a genuine reason for acquiring a significant number of licences. People may or may not have shot on his property. He is not alone in that regard. The member for Burns Beach referred to someone on a 100-acre property in Margaret River who had sold thousands of letters. It is ridiculous to suggest that there is any integrity around that practice. The genuine reason for having the firearm was supposedly to control vermin on that property and that was not the case.

Sixty-five per cent of firearms are held in the metropolitan area. Unashamedly, we wanted to effectively focus on the means by which people have been acquiring firearms for a stated genuine reason that is not genuine. They will not shoot on that property. They did not get their firearm for the sole purpose of controlling vermin. They got a firearm because they could under the current system. We are unashamedly focused on reducing the number of those types of licence holders because that will reduce the likelihood of firearms finding their way into the hands of people who cause harm with firearms.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Was it the case that when initial consultations were held with the Western Australian public and groups, recreational shooting was referred to as a genuine need? When did the government's policy change? Was it a government decision or a recommendation from the police? How did it come about?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Under the current legislation and the original National Firearms Agreement, there is reference to an activity called recreational shooters/hunters. To understand what the discussions were about and the nature of what was being referred to, that terminology was utilised. We have arrived at the point at which what I have just explained is the motivation. A lot of firearms are held by people who have acquired them for no other reason than that they can. These people are not using them to assist a primary producer to control vermin on their properties. They are not in a club and shooting on a range. They acquire a letter, by whatever means, because it is a corrupted system.

Mr R.S. Love: It is the system that is in place.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a corrupted system. Before 2009, people had to go into a police station to apply for a licence. As a consequence of having this letter system and everything being centralised and brought online, no-one is necessarily physically encountered in the process. We have seen an escalation in the number of firearms. A lot of them—65 per cent—are in the metropolitan area. A lot of those people will not necessarily shoot on a property to control vermin. They have a gun in their home in suburbia for no real reason. The whole premise of the rewrite of the act and the belief of the government for a long time is that possession and use of firearms is a privilege subject to the primacy of public safety. Allowing the proliferation of firearms that are not really delivered for a genuine reason does not accord with that principle, so we are responding to it.

I understand that at the moment some people have a gun because they wanted one and not because they are a primary producer, in a club or helping to control vermin on someone else's property. They may find it difficult to keep their gun. If they have a gun and anticipate that they will not be able to get a genuine authority from a property owner under the new law, because they will have to, I would encourage them to go to the police now and afford themselves the benefit of the buyback scheme. More than 5 000 firearms have been handed in over the last three weeks. This is an opportunity for people in that situation. They should not expect that at the end of all this, some loophole will enable them to keep the firearm if their only genuine reason to keep it is some letter that does not mean anything—they do not have a relationship with a property, they have never been there and they do not intend to go there. The farmer who issued the letter just sold thousands of them. They should assume that it might be really difficult for them to get an authority under the new system.

Mr R.S. LOVE: At this stage I need to put on the record that the person I was referring to had many people coming onto the property for recreational reasons. It was not as though the letters were sold and people never utilised the ability to come onto the land. A regular number of people—one group at a time—were coming onto the property. That is the situation. I do not want it to be on the public record that that constituent was undertaking that activity as the core of their business.

We are ruling out the recreational use of a firearm by someone who does not want to be formally involved in a club as opposed to someone who does want to be involved in a club. In reality, what is the difference? The difference is that people are doing something either informally or formally, but is it not the same activity? Therefore, how did the government come to the understanding that these people will have no right, as individuals, to enjoy shooting at targets, whereas people who want to come together as a group in some formal structure will be able to enjoy the same activity?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Ultimately, the key principle is public safety. It trumps everything else. It trumps someone's desire to have a gun just because they like shooting bottles or whatever. The idea that somehow people will be prevented from shooting for recreational purposes under the new law is not correct. People will have the opportunity to join a club and shoot. Recreation is associated with that. Having received a genuine authority from a farmer or a property owner, someone can conduct that activity, albeit it is not the genuine reason for getting a firearm. Provided that the property owner authorises them to do it, they will be able to shoot on that property. Similarly, a primary producer with a primary producer licence will be able to shoot on their property or on properties on which they are doing

primary producer licensed shooting. All those opportunities will be afforded to people. Consideration has been given to whether or not doing that alone is a genuine reason. We have a corrupted system in which there is no guarantee that people are even doing that. All that was needed was a letter acquired from a property owner suggesting that a person might shoot on their property, and then they could use that licence anywhere—or not. They could keep a firearm in their suburban home and not use it for that purpose at all. That practice will not be allowed anymore. This bill is unashamedly focused on reducing the number of firearms out there that were acquired under a distorted system that enabled people to acquire firearms for a stated purpose for which they were not going to use it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: We will talk about the transitional elements and how the government will examine the current purpose for which someone holds a licence as we transition from the previous system to the new system; however, will that transition be entirely retrospective or will it look at the use at the time that the transition commences? At what point will we assess the reason a person holds a licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We will assess it from the point of the new legislation taking effect. Any new applicant—someone who does not currently hold a licence—will be subject entirely to this law. The member is talking about those who hold a licence and need to renew. I am talking about people who will look for authorisation from a property owner. Again, I urge those people, if they are thinking about this, to look at the new law and consider whether or not they are likely to get an authorisation from a property owner. In the event that their current reason for having a firearm is a letter acquired at some point in history and they no longer have a relationship with that property and are unlikely to get an authorisation from anyone else, they should consider availing themselves of the buyback. Otherwise, if they do not have a genuine reason for renewing their licence when the law comes into effect, they will have to either sell the firearm before that time of renewal or surrender it. It will not be lawful from that moment onwards to have that firearm. That is why we are encouraging people to look at the laws and consider their impact.

The Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board has been working with us. Most farmers—I think we can say pretty much every farmer—will not be impacted in terms of the current firearms they possess. They may have to get a different category of licence, depending on the size of their property and the number of firearms they are holding, but most of them will not be impacted. The vast majority of competition shooters will not be impacted in terms of a reduction in the number of firearms they hold. In fact, subject to their reason for having firearms, they will be able to seek authority to have more than 10.

For those who have a genuine relationship with a property owner, and they shoot on that property, I imagine they will get an authorisation pretty simply from that person and retain their right to the proposed five-firearm limit. I encourage anyone who exceeds those limits to consider these changes. It will not be many people. As I indicated in Parliament earlier, the modelling is not an exact science and we cannot state categorically but we anticipate 15 000 firearms will be impacted by the imposition of limits. That is different from the property letters matter. That could be a much larger number. It may not be. I do not know how many people will be able to find a genuine relationship with a property owner and get authorisation, but not a massive number of firearms are specifically linked to the limits being imposed.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have one final question on this clause and then I think the member for Central Wheatbelt might want to ask one. The minister mentioned the buyback, which has opened up a question about the time line and why it was set. I think, from memory, it closes in mid-August —

Mr P. Papalia: The last day in August.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Given that this legislation is only now being debated in Parliament, and one can only conjecture about some of the regulations that might come in because they are unknown at this point, does the minister think it is appropriate to shut down the buyback on that date or should it be carried forward into the transitional period?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I make the observation at the outset that there is an outstanding amnesty for unlicensed firearms. That is extant and will continue. It is included in this legislation. There is an amnesty so that people who find themselves in possession of an unlicensed firearm can always surrender it without penalty. That is part of the law. The member's observation was that there are regulations to be worked on. The consideration of whether someone surrenders their firearm to take advantage of a buyback is not so germane to the regulations. If a person's sole genuine reason for having a firearm is a letter they bought off somebody or was acquired through somebody they do not have a relationship with, I can categorically say that someone in that situation does not have a relationship and is unlikely to have a genuine reason in the future under this law, so they should take advantage of the buyback. The intent of having a buyback over this time frame is so that we know the allocated potential cost. We can budget for it, and we can deliver it inside a time frame that is associated with the passage of the bill. It is a six-month period and a budget has been allocated. We have allocated sufficiently to accommodate the maximum number of firearms possible, to the extent that we can model what might be a consequence of every single measure being imposed. The biggest group is likely to be people who are currently in possession of a firearm for which the sole genuine reason is a letter that they acquired and they do not shoot on that property; that is probably the largest group, but there are others.

There are around 15 000 firearms associated with limits. Potentially, storage may have an impact. The vast majority of people have five or fewer firearms. We are looking at grandfathering. We will talk about that when we get to

the storage requirements, but we are looking at grandfathering storage for small numbers of firearms so that we do not impose that obligation on people. It is a balance of the risk and assessment of the threat—the larger the concentration of firearms in one location, the greater attractiveness to criminals and the potential vulnerability.

There is a range of measures, all of which have a potential impact. It is a bit hard to predict the extent of people's motivation to retain a licence, because a lot of people may decide not to. I know of people right now who have just decided to give up their firearm because they have not used it very much in many years and we are paying them money, so that is a good thing. That is reducing the number of firearms out there. If the member is asking why we did it, that is why we did it. It is a finite period, we are able to budget for it and it aligns with the passage of the bill. We will market and communicate the buyback to people to encourage them to take advantage of it. People are taking advantage of it. We have received 5 000 firearms in the course of the last three weeks. It is not really something that people have to wait too much to consider. A lot of people have only one or two firearms. They may not have used them very much. They may have acquired those firearms only through the genuine reason of getting a letter from somebody. It is probably reasonable for them to consider whether they want to go through the task of retaining a licence under the new regime.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I want to go back to the previous discussion on the recreation licence and the fact that the way this legislation has been crafted will really prevent someone from applying for a licence just for the purpose of going shooting on a property—unstructured recreation rather than joining a gun club. It is the same with many sports and recreational activities; there are people out there who do not want to participate in organised sports or clubs or are not able to because of their work commitments and things like that. The way I understood the minister to explain the system is that there will be a hunting licence and people will be allowed to take pot shots and shoot at targets on a property, with permission from the property owner, as a consequence of having legally obtained a licence for hunting. If under the new system someone can get a legitimate letter from a property owner who is comfortable for the licence holder to come and do only that, why set up something whereby potentially we will have people saying, “Yes, I’m going to go and hunt”, but they have no intention to hunt and are really going to shoot only recreationally? If the government has gone back to basics to rewrite the legislation, why not create a separate licence category so that we are not asking people to blur the lines? As I understood it, one of the minister’s concerns is that the system that we have now has become corrupted and people have been given flexibility within that system to obtain a licence but then use it for other purposes. That is not a good outcome. If a landowner is prepared to have someone on their land, I cannot see a reason that they would not be prepared to give them a letter to say, “I’m happy to have you”, and they do not have to go hunting. They can come and shoot bottles if they want to.

Mr P. PAPALIA: They can, but subject to the size of the property and the prevalence of vermin, there will be some degree of science around the number of authorisations allowed for each property. They will now be authorisations and it will not necessarily be a letter; technology will enable us to move on from a bit of paper. But subject to the application of that analysis, which will be informed by the likes of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions determining the prevalence of vermin of a certain type in a certain geographical location, topography, and things of that nature, there will be a determined number of authorisations for each property. It will not be 2 000 or 3 000 authorisations for a 100-acre property down in Margaret River. If a property owner understands in their own mind that a person is going to do only what the member said—go there and not shoot vermin—they might authorise them, but for all intents and purposes, for the police and for the licensing process, they are going to shoot vermin. As a consequence of them being on a property and that property owner being comfortable with that practice, they can go and shoot bottles, but that will not be the genuine reason for having the firearm; the genuine reason will be going to that property to shoot vermin. Now, there will be a limited number of authorisations, so if a property owner decides that they want to relinquish two of the five authorisations they have been allocated to their friends who they know are not going to go and shoot rabbits, that is really neither here nor there, but the overall process is that there will be a finite number of authorisations associated with that property, unless it is a very large property in the north or some other location and they have a business licence. Remember that the intent is to elevate public safety. We are not ashamed of saying that some people are sitting out there with guns right now whom we do not want to have guns. We would rather we took some guns off the street. A range of measures are being utilised to achieve that objective. One of them is to refine the authorisation process to link it directly to vermin prevalence and the size of the property and have a real process around that. Within that, if a property owner decides that they do not need their entire allocation for shooting vermin and they are comfortable with that person being authorised to come and shoot on their property, that is their decision, but it will mean using part of their allocation of authorisations.

At the moment, it is unlimited. People are literally selling the letters. People might go and visit someone’s property; property owners are selling letters for different calibres at different scales of cost. When I contemplate the fact that the same letter does the job for any calibre, I find it extraordinary that property owners would charge individual people a different amount for a different calibre based on some weird concept of providing value. It is weird. That aside, people are doing it. That will not be possible. It will not be lawful to sell authorisations, and there will be a constraint on the number of authorisations allocated to a property based on property size and prevalence of vermin. Ultimately, it will mean a restriction in the number of authorisations for that type of hunting licence. I do not know the actual extent of that restriction; we will not know that until it happens.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I guess my point is if, in the minister's view, that will be allowed, why not actually acknowledge that by having it as a category of licence? If the activity is going to be permitted, as the minister has explained, why not acknowledge that and be specific?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is because that would fundamentally undermine the intent of reducing the number of firearms attributed to a specific purpose—a genuine reason. Shooting bottles or cans is not a genuine reason. The genuine reasons will be hunting vermin, being a primary producer or being a club competition shooter.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 22: Requirement for firearm to be suitable and appropriate for authorised use —

Ms L. METTAM: Clause 22(2) states —

The regulations may provide for the matters of which the Commissioner must be satisfied in order to be satisfied that a firearm is suitable and appropriate for the use to be authorised by a licence.

My question is: does the minister have any detail of what those regulations will entail; and, if so, can the minister table that information?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, I am informed that this is about the genuine need for the type of firearm and the task for which it will be employed. For instance, if a person employs their firearm to shoot rabbits, does that person really need a .308 or something of that nature? If a person has a task that requires a shotgun, and they are already in possession of a shotgun, do they need another three? That is the sort of consideration that will be given in this particular case.

Ms L. METTAM: As I asked the minister, will that be prescribed in the regulations?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the intent is that it will be very similar to what is prescribed currently.

Ms L. METTAM: What consultation will the minister undertake in developing those regulations? I note that the minister said they will be similar to what currently exists, but for the purposes of this legislation, what are we likely to see?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that, firstly, the National Firearms Agreement already specifies, or dictates, a lot of these matters. That aside, consultation and discussions around regulations will continue. They have been ongoing for the better part of 18 months, or two years, with a range of parties, individuals, peak bodies and organisations like the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board, the Western Australian Firearms Community Alliance. Work and discussions on the regulations, and the meetings with people, are ongoing. These meetings are done by Acting Inspector Walker—not alone. They are working constantly with all of those people that they have been working with, and there is no intent to stop. It might be of value for specific interested parties to engage on their own now because, collectively, they have been generally talking about the legislation. If somebody cares about one part of the legislation that is really relevant only to them, going to group meetings might mean that they do not avail themselves of the opportunity to discuss their specific concerns. All of those meetings continue, and the Western Australia Police Force continues to consult and will do so right through this process.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Just for my clarity, minister, if someone is a current licence holder, will they just be rolled onto the new regulations?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member may have missed us discussing this transition process. Essentially, it will depend. I suggested that many licensed firearm owners will not be impacted greatly by limits or changes in category definitions. They will not necessarily be impacted. I spent some time explaining that there are a lot of people who may have, as their only genuine reason for having a firearm, a letter that they acquired from somebody that states that they will shoot on a property that they never intend to visit or have never visited, and they may have no relationship with that person. Obviously, those people might find it difficult. If they cannot identify a proper authorisation for hunting or shooting as a genuine reason—if they cannot build a relationship with a property owner who can give them that authorisation—and that is the only reason that they claim to have as a genuine reason for having their firearm, they may not be able to keep it, unless they join a club and become a competition club shooter. It is hard to say. Everyone is different. But the vast majority of current firearm licence holders who are primary producers, competition shooters or genuine vermin shooters who have a relationship with someone's property and will not have any difficulty getting an authorisation will not be impacted. They will largely be able to go about their business. They might be impacted by the limit on numbers, but not many people will be, because the vast majority of people have fewer than five firearms.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23: Authorised persons for licence —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I just wonder about the authorised persons for a licence in clause 23(1). It states —

close associate, of a licensee, means any of the following persons —

- (a) an employee or agent of, or contractor to, the licensee;

Will any limits be imposed on the number of people who could be attached as a close associate of a licensee? Will that be considered? I am not sure whether that is reflected in this clause. The clause does not actually mention anything. What is the intention? A large organisation might have hundreds of employees. What is the intention with the number of people that this might encompass?

Mr P. PAPALIA: There will be no limit.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 23(1)(b) and (c) states that the definition of a close associate of a licensee may include an officer of a body corporate that holds the licence. If the licensee is a club, for instance, or a business itself, why would the company secretary, for instance, require a firearm licence? Why would it be appropriate for an officer of the body to hold a licence rather than a participator in the activity?

Mr P. PAPALIA: They will not have to. It means that they will be eligible to be considered an associate. It will not be mandatory or compulsory. It will enable them to pursue that path in the event that it is appropriate. They will still be subject to all the other obligations around acquiring a licence. It will not really change much.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 23(4) states —

A person who is under 15 years of age is not eligible to be an authorised person for a licence.

We had a discussion earlier about young people. I think the minister indicated that he had allowed some interaction with firearms for even younger people. The age mentioned was 12. Why do we have this figure of 15, another figure of 18 and another figure of 12? What is the reason for 15 to be chosen, and how will that interact with the definition of “young person”? Why are we contemplating even younger people being involved in some circumstances but not others?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This reference is to people who undertake specific duties. It will enable young people who might be undertaking an apprenticeship, for instance, to conduct training within their trade. That is what it is referring to. That is why that age has been chosen; it relates to that sort of person and not just a child who is under supervision while learning about firearms.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Could the minister explain, in the context of this clause, how it will relate to farm workers or farm employees? Obviously, there are seasonal workers and the like who could be close associates. Is there any context in relation to the farming industry?

Mr P. PAPALIA: With seasonal workers, we expect that the property owner—the primary producer—will authorise that person to acquire a licence as an authorised person under that framework. It will be the normal course of acquiring a firearms licence, but their genuine reason will be authorisation from that property owner.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am not sure whether this is the appropriate place to ask this question or whether I should ask it under the primary producers clause. I refer to authorised persons being people who might have some relationship to the land but who are not the operator of the land—for example, they may own a portion of the land. I do not know whether the minister wants to talk about it here or under clause 54 and onwards.

Mr P. Papalia: We probably should wait.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Okay.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will respond anyway. As I indicated in my response to the second reading debate, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Vasse, the member for Collie–Preston and the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board, albeit a little late in the whole process, all raised with me the limit imposed by the bill of one primary producer licence per property. We will address that in the clause. We will move an amendment. I will put an amendment on the notice paper. I do not anticipate that we will get to it tonight.

Mr R.S. Love: No, I don't think we will.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If we do, we will have an amendment to move. We will address it. It is a reasonable point.

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is the last question that I might ask under this clause. We will deal later with the complex arrangements with primary producers that might exist in some areas. What about contractors who may be required to have a licence in pursuit of their part of the farming business? Is there an opportunity to discuss the situation of a person who has a sharefarming arrangement? It is not a lease but a right to come on land and undertake some activity. Will they also be able to claim to have an association with that primary producer?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, it will replicate the situation that the member for Roe raised, whereby the expectation will be that the property owner or manager—the person who meets the requirements of the legislation—will authorise that individual to acquire a licence with that property being the associated property, with the genuine reason being to shoot on that property.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I perhaps did not explain it properly. In that business, a person might have multiple properties that they need to access. What will be the situation with that? Will they have an automatic right? Will they need a letter? What will the situation be? They could be working over 13 or 14 pieces of land.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Once a person has a genuine reason and has been authorised and gets a licence, authorisations for multiple properties can be put on that licence. Members need to remember that we are rebuilding a system. It is going to be far less onerous in terms of administration than the current system and will be more modern, accessible, flexible and rapid. It will be possible for people to authorise a licence holder initially, but then, concurrently, to authorise them to shoot on multiple properties. It will essentially involve the same level of administrative process as it would for one property, because we are talking about a digital system.

Clause put and passed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Further clauses?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think we were looking to move to clause 28. I do have a question around firearms trainers but I think there is room to look at that further in clause 160 or something. We will move to clause 28.

Clauses 24 to 27 put and passed.

Clause 28: Purposes of Individual Licence —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Some of my paperwork seems to have disappeared; that often happens to me when I am doing these things! The question I had in my head was around the singular nature of the granting of the licence. I am not sure whether this is the right clause, but will a gun be used for only one purpose on one licence or will it be possible for it to be licensed twice or under two separate types of licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not sure whether this is the place, but it does not matter. This is a good opportunity to address that matter because I think there is some concern, hopefully unfounded mostly, about this assumed restriction. People will be able to have multiple uses for a firearm on a licence, with the exception of a competition licence, as is currently the case. Competition firearms are for competition purposes; they are not for hunting. The other licence categories will be able to have multiple uses. The example given was of a primary producer who uses their shotgun to shoot a feral bird or something, and they will also be able to use it for clay target shooting on their property.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That does not really answer the question.

Mr P. Papalia: So what's your concern?

Mr R.S. LOVE: The question was about people who want to shoot clay targets at the Moora gun club. If I take the same shotgun home, can I use it, as a primary producer, to shoot rabbits?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I understand what the member is saying. If the firearm is licensed specifically for competition as a gun for shooting clay targets, it can be utilised only for that purpose. I am told that that is currently the case. Maybe people do not understand that, but it is.

Mr R.S. Love: Just repeat that, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If it is licensed for the purpose of competition, it cannot be used for shooting rabbits. I do not think it could be used to shoot rabbits, but birds potentially.

Ms M.J. Davies: Corellas.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes—something feral and vermin-like. If it were licensed for the purpose of primary producing and the member wanted to shoot on his property, he could.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Just to be clear, if I am a member of the Moora gun club and I want to shoot clay targets there, I can take the same shotgun home and shoot rabbits on my farm.

Mr P. Papalia: No. I'm saying you can't. It's the other way around.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I cannot?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Originally, I may have misled the member. Essentially, if the firearm is licensed for competition, it can be used solely for competition. That is the problem. That is the limit. If a firearm is licensed for other genuine reasons, it can be used for a number of different activities. The member could go hunting with his primary producer firearm.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I will run another scenario by the minister. If I have a hunting licence and I have a shotgun that is licensed for hunting, can I go to the Moora gun club and shoot clay targets?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Hopefully, I will not complicate it too much, but a person with a shotgun that is licensed for primary producing or hunting can take it to a range and do target shooting. That is what I was referring to. People go to ranges to do recreational shooting. They do not have to participate in a competition; they can go to a range and shoot. It is a recreational practice. This will essentially enable that practice to continue. They can do that. But if the sole, genuine reason for the licence for the firearm is for competition, its use is isolated to that purpose.

Mr R.S. LOVE: If the government's intention is to reduce the number of firearms, why would we have a prohibition on using a competition gun for that other legitimate and genuine purpose?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The unintended consequence, or the potentially unforeseen consequence, of enabling that might be a proliferation of people acquiring competition firearms and then employing them to do things that are not in line with the genuine purpose or reason in the first instance. This is currently the case. Competition shooters acquire firearms for competitions. If they are a seriously competitive shooter or aspire to be, they have asked for legislation to enable them to acquire different categories of firearms. Those firearms are for the purpose of competition. It is focused on that. That is why that licence category exists. There are other licence categories for other purposes. If someone is going to shoot as a hunter or a primary producer, they can go and acquire one of those licences.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I recall that the primary producer licence can only apply to a firearm of category A or B. I will take instructions from the table on that. If those categories were also open for a competition user to hold, why would there be any sense in not allowing the competition firearm to be used for the other purpose? Surely that means someone will have to buy two firearms for the two different purposes, but that does not seem to fit with the idea of reducing the number of firearms in the community.

Mr P. PAPALIA: For the ones the member is talking about, it is effectively reversing the process. If the person's intent is to go hunting or be a primary producer, they would licence the firearm for that and then go in the other direction and do recreational-type shooting at their club. It does not follow that they will buy two firearms to do the same practice, essentially, that the member is suggesting. The person who is a primary producer and has access to the land that they want to shoot on can get a licence for that.

Ms M. BEARD: People can have two. Is the minister saying that people can have co-use of a firearm? For example, a pastoralist who shoots because they have to deal with vermin can also belong to a club and use the same firearm. I just wanted to clarify that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The thing they can do at the club is target shooting. It is like recreational shooting on a range. The original licence and the genuine reason is a primary producers licence. If that is the case, yes, they can go there and it is used then for that type of shooting on that range, but the genuine reason is not target shooting. The genuine reason is the primary producers licence.

Ms M. BEARD: Just so I understand, the removal of the genuine reason for recreational shooting still exists within the National Firearms Agreement. That is the difference at the moment. That is the change. It will no longer align with that. Can the minister outline the consultations that were undertaken in developing the definitions and the purposes of those individual licences?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, close to two years of work has now been undertaken in this process. There have been constant discussions with interested parties and stakeholders. At the outset there was a series of town hall-type meetings across the regions and in the metropolitan area. The whole process has been ongoing and is still ongoing and has led to this legislation, an element of it being the focus on the genuine reasons being the ones that we have defined for those licences. Essentially, it is not all of them, but a lot of the licences at the moment that would have been under this legislation come down to primary producers, hunting or competition. In the past that would be one type of licence, which was not very specific. It was a distorted system because of the property letter system, which enabled people to acquire a genuine reason just through getting a letter for a property they may or may not have ever gone to. This process has been refined. Undoubtedly there is an intention to make it very specifically linked to a genuine reason. The primary producer one is being developed in conjunction with the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board and other bodies. The hunting one is being done in conjunction with not just WAFGA but also all the independent elements of that body, individuals and other organisations and groups that have contacted the police in the course of the process. It means that we are focused on the genuine reason being linked to a real, genuine reason—those types of use of the firearm. A genuine reason associated with primary producers everyone concedes and acknowledges. Farmers use firearms as part of their job; competition shooters also, because everyone acknowledges that there are people who pursue that sport. This system enables them to pursue their sport in up to whatever number of categories they want. It does not really impact them, beyond defining that that is the purpose. Genuine vermin hunters who assist people with managing vermin on their properties can acquire a licence under that category. The intent is to separate out into genuine reasons the types of categories. Addressing the concern around recreational shooting, as I indicated earlier, people can still do recreational shooting if they are a primary producer. They can do it if they are a hunter on someone's property, where that property owner is comfortable with them doing that. They can do recreational shooting at a range, where they are just target shooting are not participating in a competition. They can do that on a range.

Ms M. BEARD: Given that this will create a new act, will all firearm owners need to apply for new licences for their firearms?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We have touched on this a few times at different points. Essentially there will be a transition process. It will be done in a structured fashion; the police will control it. If people have no problem identifying that they will be able to retain a genuine reason under the new act—primary producers, competition shooters and people who actually have a relationship with a property owner for vermin control—we would not anticipate any of them. There are all these other categories as well: business and others. They will transition; there will be a transition

period. It will be done in a structured manner so that we do not have everyone trying to access the system at the same time. It will likely be associated with renewal, but it might be driven by police to suggest to people that they renew it at a time where they de-conflict. The intention will be to manage it in a structured fashion so we do not have everyone rushing in on the day after royal assent in December to try and get the new licence under the new model. It will be done in a structured fashion.

Ms M. BEARD: If that is the case and that is what will happen, will the department engage with people in that category? Will it do a promotion or make them aware of that? Does the minister have a cost on what that might be, how many people that would impact and how many people it would need to communicate with to let them know?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thanks, member. There has already been engagement. I would be shocked if the licence holders the member has spoken to had not been contacted to notify them of this whole process. There was a data refinement process around licence holders and that is what the member for Roe encountered when he was contacted with a view to notifying police about the status of his contact details, the location of his firearm and those sorts of things. That was an effort rightly in advance of building the new system and the passage of the new bill. I think they use the terminology “sanitising”—no, data cleansing. They are trying to prepare for the transition. That process is already underway. I would be shocked if every single licence holder had not been communicated with already in some way, but maybe they were not. I know that a lot of licence holders have already been contacted about the opportunity of a buyback scheme and have been notified that there will be more direct contact about the transition. Yes, as I indicated, it will be a managed and controlled transition so that it is not just left to people to determine at what point they do it. We will drive the process so that everyone does not do it at the same time, to de-conflict the transition.

Ms M. BEARD: I think this will be my last one. The member mentioned firing ranges that people go to. How can people utilise those facilities now? What licence would apply to that? Under the National Firearms Agreement, I think it is still considered recreational to shoot on a range. I am not sure. I might be confused. I might have misinterpreted it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have been informed that, under the new regime, someone does not have to be a member of a club to shoot at the range. They just need to be a licensed firearm holder.

Ms M. Beard: You need some glasses there.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am in denial!

As long as someone is a licensed firearm holder, they can go to a range. There may be a fee or something, for instance. A club may charge for someone to visit, but as long as the person has the appropriate licence—for instance, a hunting licence—they would be authorised to do target shooting and firearms training at a licensed firearms range. Under clause 111, a hunting licence also authorises target shooting for the purposes of sighting in the firearm at a location in which the firearm is authorised to be used. That is a good point to throw in. It is not what the member asked, but it has been raised with us a lot by groups of people like veterans and others. There was not a specific reference to sighting in, which is a reasonable thing because it is a safe practice to sight firearms. Someone can do that at a range or on a property on which they are authorised to shoot. Does the member want to ask a question by way of interjection?

Ms M. Beard: Someone like a former veteran may want to go to a range and shoot. I have heard that they have to get a letter from a property owner, even though they do not want to shoot on that property, to be able to shoot on a range.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Or they can join a club and get a competition licence.

Ms M. Beard: Do they have to have a competition licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, if they are going to shoot at that club. That could be a genuine reason for acquiring the licence. That licence might include an obligation for the minimum use of the licence, but it does not mean that the person has to have aspirations to shoot at the Olympics or anything of that nature. They can do target shooting on a range. If the veteran wanted to go to a range every now and then and crack off some rounds, they would have to get a competition licence as their genuine reason. Their genuine reason for the licence would be for competition, but that would just mean they were a member of a club and met the minimum obligations for the club membership. The category for the licence would be for competition but they could go and do what we would think of as recreational shooting on a range.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 28(3) refers to an individual licence being for more than one purpose—a multipurpose licence. The minister has said that a person can use a hunting gun for shooting clay targets at a club, which is a competition, of sorts. We can see that both can be done. However, the minister has inferred that a person does not need a special licence to do so. Why is a multipurpose licence needed? Is it not a fact that if someone wanted to do both those things, they would need to be licensed to undertake that? For what other purpose would a person have a multipurpose licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The licence is an individual licence and there are purposes listed under that licence. That is the multipurpose licence. A person might have an individual licence for the purposes of hunting and another purpose under the same licence. The person might have an individual licence for hunting, for competition or for paintball. This is part of rebuilding the system that recognises very rapidly that one person has multiple licences. At the moment, the system is problematic. It is a legacy system and information of this nature cannot be rapidly extracted from it, so this will help. We will build a new system that will have this information embedded in it.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 29: Firearm to which Individual Licence applies —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This provision leads to the view that there is only the one purpose because clause 29(2) says —

If an Individual Licence is for more than 1 licence purpose, the licence must specify, for each firearm to which the licence applies, the licence purpose for which the firearm is authorised.

Will a person's licence for each firearm—they may have five—need to have the purpose for that firearm stated on the licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, yes. The licence must specify the purpose of that firearm. A person might have an individual licence for different firearms that are used for multiple purposes. They might have one for competition—one of those really specialised pistols or something of that nature—one for hunting, remembering that that can be utilised for target shooting, and one for paintball or whatever, but the licence must specify the use.

It is probably worth clarifying that this is a new system that will not operate like the current one. I know what is going on out there. People are thinking, “Are you kidding?” The current system that manages those firearm licences requires multiple things to be carried around and is not flexible or contemporary in terms of technology. That is changing. Having firearm licences that outline specific uses will not be as onerous as it might sound to someone trying to do it under the current system.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 29(3) states —

An Individual Licence that is for the licence purposes of competition shooting and hunting cannot have the same firearm authorised for both of those purposes.

That seems to contradict the statements made by the minister in this house. It illustrates why this legislation should have gone to the Standing Committee on Legislation. This is clearly contradictory to everything the minister has said over the last 10 or 15 minutes.

Mr P. Papalia: It is not.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Well, it is. The legislation says that the same firearm cannot be authorised for both purposes. That flies in the face of what the minister has been consistently saying, which is that the same firearm can be used. We have asked and interrogated this. If the licence will not allow a person to use the same firearm for two different purposes, that contradicts everything the minister has said. This legislation is flawed and it should have gone to the legislation committee. We might take other actions that will allow us to see some sense and get to the bottom of issues like this. But perhaps the minister can try to explain why he has been saying that the same gun can be used for two different purposes when, quite clearly, in black and white, the legislation says that cannot be done.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have been consistent. I have said that licensed firearms used for competitions cannot be used for hunting. Conversely, a firearm under a primary producer or hunting licence can be taken to a range for the purpose of target shooting, which is what we have said all along. The other way is not applicable. A person cannot take a specialised rifle or pistol that is used for competitions and go hunting with it. That reverse usage is not an option. The multipurpose use of a firearm that is enabled by the legislation is to take a hunting firearm to a range to do target shooting.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The previous clause outlined only three types of individual licences, one of which is a competition licence. If people want to participate at a venue against each other, is that not a competition? How is it acceptable that a person can use a hunting firearm for competition, but they cannot use a competition firearm for hunting? It makes no sense.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is currently the case that a competition firearm cannot be used for hunting. This is not a new initiative.

Mr R.S. Love: We are trying to clear up the anomalies.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am trying to answer the member's question. This is not a new initiative in that regard. This legislation will provide for the multipurpose use of a firearm.

The main thing to consider and remember is the genuine reason for requiring a licence at the outset. In the case of a competition shooter, it is for competition. In the case of a hunter, the genuine reason for acquiring a licence at the outset—the reason they are allowed to get a licence—is to hunt on someone else's property to control vermin.

We have said that they will be able to use that firearm at a range for the purposes of sighting or target shooting. This licensing system will enable them to have that multipurpose firearm. It is different from the current licensing system. I understand that it is different but it will also be supported by a different administrative system. I know people are thinking that it is complex and that it will be challenging to practically enact, but it will not be, because we will not be employing the current system for the management of this system. It will be a new contemporary IT system that is costing tens of millions of dollars to build.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I thank the minister for that answer, but he did not address the contradiction that exists between his statements and the subclause. I do not understand why he does not see that there is a conflict. I suggest that when the legislation gets to the other place, it will be interrogated fully because we will look at everything that has been said tonight and in the lead-up to this debate. We are still very unclear about the uses of a multipurpose firearm. One section of the legislation says that it cannot be used, yet elsewhere it says that it is allowed. I am trying to understand this.

Was the minister confused about what I was saying earlier? If someone is a member of a gun club, they are engaged in a competition shooting clay targets, even though they may be in Moora and not at some hifalutin range. If they are on a farm, they will use the firearm for that purpose. They might not be on a farm. They may be a person who is allowed to hunt on a farm, so they have a hunting licence. Then they can go to the Moora gun club and shoot clay targets. It seems to me that this will not be allowed under this legislation.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have been informed that it is probably best that we consider this matter when we get to clauses 110 and 111, because we have other matters to consider. For example, some types of firearms used in competition are not authorised for hunting. These types of firearms will not be authorised under categories C and H, in particular. Some pistols, pump action shotguns and guns that are employed for competition are not currently and will not in the future be authorised for hunting. That explains why the use of competition firearms for hunting purposes is not authorised, yet other categories of firearms that are okay for hunting and will be authorised for hunting can be used on a range for the purposes of sighting or target shooting. It is just one direction, not the other.

I do not know whether I am making myself clear enough for the member, but that is why it may have sounded like I was contradicting myself. I was saying that in one direction, someone can use a firearm for multiple purposes but they cannot take a competition firearm and use it in the other direction.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think the confusion here, if there is any, is that what the minister is saying does not align with what the bill says. The bill says that people can only have a firearm for one purpose. I do not understand how the minister can possibly say these things with that in the legislation. When people actually go to do those things, they could well find that they are not allowed to and are committing an offence. I am very concerned about what might happen to people caught up by this.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can I address that? This part of the bill is the wrong part to be talking about the types and uses of firearms; this is about the licence types. That is why it has been suggested to me that we address this matter when we get to clauses 110 and 111, because that is the appropriate part of the bill.

Quite often, as the Leader of the Opposition would know, as we move our way through a bill, we get to a bit that references something that sounds like the subject, but the subject itself is addressed later. Right now is one of those cases. I urge the member not to let people get too concerned about the matter he is referring to. It will be addressed in clauses 110 and 111, and we can have as fulsome a discussion about it as he wants at that time. Talking about it now is not really the appropriate time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Subclause (3) talks about “the same firearm”, so it is the individual gun, not just the licence, but while we are talking about licences, I want to raise another matter regarding the role of the licence within this legislation. Many people have put to me that when a person attains a licence under the current regime in Western Australia, that is triggered by them having a particular firearm in a particular category for a particular use. They go through the considerations about the suitability of that firearm, and it has a serviceability certificate. There is a whole range of things.

Mr P. Papalia: There is supposed to be a genuine reason at the start.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes—and the genuine reason. People go through all those things. Say it is a bolt-action .22 with a five-shot magazine or something. The gun is in a particular category, the person has a genuine need for it and is found to be fit and proper, and the gun is serviceable. If the person wants to change the gun at some point, they have to go through the whole process again, even though they have already been found to be fit and proper and have a genuine need, and the weapon category or calibre is suitable for what they are trying to do.

Why has there not been more of an emphasis in the legislation to enable the trade of guns backwards and forwards so people can buy a newer gun of the same calibre without having to go through all the rigmarole, if they are automatically handing in or selling the other gun at the same time? This is an opportunity that could have been addressed in this legislation, but I do not think it has been. Perhaps the minister could explain why.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, it does. The legislation allows for warranty replacement and like-for-like replacement. I have referred to this a few times: we are spending a lot of money on building an IT system that will make it much more streamlined than the current practice. There will be a lot of investment in improving the administration service delivery. That is the case; it will be addressed.

I think that I might stay on my feet because I want to get out of here, as does the Leader of the Opposition, because we both have to go to an event. Anyone watching should rest assured that we will come back to this next week and continue. I am happy to address those matters. I have been advised that this is part of the bill. The member has been discussing the concern about the multipurpose use or purpose of the firearm, and that is about the genuine reason for a firearm. Clauses 110 and 111 are about the subject the Leader of the Opposition is talking about, and we will address the concerns he harbours at that time.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.

House adjourned at 6.01 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

LEGAL AFFAIRS — ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE

970. Mr R.S. Love to the Premier:

I refer to the three people who were arrested outside Woodside Chief Executive Meg O’Neill’s home last August, and your comments at the time that, you were “pleased that people have been taken into custody, and that arrests have been made.” Given your Government is funding the Environmental Defenders Office, the same legal centre who represents the three accused in the WA Magistrates Court, I ask:

- (a) How can you justify the \$150,000 in taxpayer money this law firm received last financial year from your Government; and
- (b) Will your Government continue to provide taxpayer funds to this firm into the next financial year(s)?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

- (a)–(b) In 2023–24, the State Government distributed more than \$130 million to Western Australia’s legal assistance sector. This includes \$17 million for the Aboriginal Legal Service, \$31.5 million for Legal Aid WA and \$20 million for Community Legal Centres. Of all Community Legal Centres receiving funding from Government in 2023–24, the Environmental Defenders Office received the lowest amount, less than one per cent of the total. Funding provided to the Environmental Defenders Office is due to expire in 2024–25.

SHORT-TERM RENTAL ACCOMMODATION INCENTIVE SCHEME

972. Mr R.S. Love to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Commerce:

I refer to the Short-Term Rental Accommodation Incentive Scheme announced on 9 November 2023, and I ask:

- (a) What is the number of property owners that have taken up the scheme in Western Australia since the announcement; and
- (b) Please provide a breakdown of the number of property owners that have taken up the scheme in the:
 - (i) Greater Perth Region (including Mandurah);
 - (ii) Peel Region (excluding Mandurah);
 - (iii) Gascoyne Region;
 - (iv) Goldfields/Esperance Region;
 - (v) Great Southern Region;
 - (vi) Kimberley Region;
 - (vii) Mid West Region;
 - (viii) Pilbara Region;
 - (ix) South West Region; and
 - (x) Wheatbelt Region?

Dr J. Krishnan replied:

- (a) As at 12 March 2024, there are 168 applications. Of these 131 applications have been completed and submitted, with a further 37 in progress. Payments can be processed to eligible applicants once proof of a tenancy agreement has been provided. To date, 71 grants have been paid.
- (b)
 - (i) Greater Perth (inc Mandurah): 40
 - (ii) Peel (ex Mandurah): 3
 - (iii) Gascoyne: 1
 - (iv) Goldfields/Esperance: 9
 - (v) Great Southern: 3
 - (vi) Kimberley: 3
 - (vii) Mid West: 0
 - (viii) Pilbara: 0
 - (ix) South-West: 7
 - (x) Wheatbelt: 5

LIVE EXPORT — MV *BAHIJAH***976. Mr R.S. Love to the Premier:**

I refer to the livestock ship, ‘MV Bahijah’ containing about 16,000 sheep and cattle that left Australia on January 5 but was ordered to return to Fremantle by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, and I ask:

- (a) On what date were you first made aware of the decision by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture to order the vessel back to Fremantle;
- (b) Have you had any direct communication with the Prime Minister in relation to this issue:
 - (i) If so, on what date did you engage in direct communication with the Prime Minister in relation to this issue;
- (c) Were you made aware of the decision by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture to order the vessel back to Fremantle prior to the public; and
- (d) How many briefings have you received from your State Minister for Agriculture since the ship had been ordered back to Fremantle?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

- (a)–(d) The Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is responsible for the regulation of Australia’s live export industry. The matter referred to by the Member was managed by the Federal Department and the exporter.

LIVE EXPORT — MV *BAHIJAH***977. Mr R.S. Love to the minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

- (1) I refer to the livestock ship, ‘MV Bahijah’ containing about 16,000 sheep and cattle that left Australia on January 5 but was ordered to return to Fremantle by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, and I ask:
 - (a) On what date were you first made aware of the decision by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture to order the vessel back to Fremantle;
 - (b) Have you had any direct communication with the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture in relation to this issue:
 - (i) If so, on what date did you engage in direct communication with the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture in relation to this issue; and
 - (c) Were you made aware of the decision by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture to order the vessel back to Fremantle prior to the public?
- (2) I refer to the Commonwealth Government’s Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry statement on 12 February relating to the MV Bahijah livestock vessel which states “the department, Western Australian Government, exporter, transport companies and appropriate premises continue to work collaboratively to ensure the health and safety of the livestock and staff”, and I ask:
 - (a) Is it the view of the State Government that all parties have worked collaboratively?

Mr D.T. Punch replied:

- (1)–(2) I became aware of Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry’s (DAFF) decision to return the MV Bahijah subsequent to media reports on the issue.

On 29 January 2024, I attended an online meeting with my advisors convened by DAFF, which was also attended by Minister Watt and his advisors, upon the arrival of the vessel MV Bahijah off Fremantle Port.

DAFF is the responsible agency for issuing of export permits for livestock and at all times was responsible for the decisions concerning the vessel.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has been cooperating with and supporting DAFF in the facilitation of the onshore arrival of livestock for the exporter.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS — RIGHT TO DISCONNECT LAW

978. Mr R.S. Love to the Premier:

I refer to the Federal Labor Government’s new ‘Right to Disconnect’ legislation, and I ask:

- (a) Has there been any change in Department of Premier and Cabinet policy pertaining to ministerial staffers as a result of this new law:
 - (i) If so, please provide a brief overview of the changes to Department of Premier and Cabinet policy; and
- (b) Have you received a briefing from the Department of Premier and Cabinet about how the new law will affect employees of the Department of Premier and Cabinet?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

- (a)–(b) While it is well known that the Leader of the Opposition does not support the industrial rights of workers, it is disappointing that he does not have a basic understanding that there is both a national industrial relations system (Fair Work system) and a State industrial relations system.

The Federal Parliament's recent amendments to the *Fair Work Act 2009* apply to Australia's national system and therefore do not apply to Western Australian public sector employees (or ministerial officers), who are employed under the State's industrial relations system.

STATE AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT, JOBS AND TRADE — HYDROGEN INDUSTRY

979. Mr R.S. Love to the Premier:

I refer to the decision at the last Cook Labor Government cabinet reshuffle to place the standalone portfolio of 'Hydrogen Industry' into the 'State and Industry Development' portfolio, and I ask:

- (a) What was the rationale for merging the Hydrogen Industry, a portfolio previously in its own right, into the 'State and Industry Development' portfolio?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

- (a) The inclusion of hydrogen policy within the State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade portfolio is recognition of its importance in Western Australia's energy transition.

Western Australia has the potential to become a renewable energy powerhouse, with local opportunities ranging from battery assembly and manufacturing to hydrogen production and critical minerals processing.

The development of these opportunities and Western Australia's hydrogen industry, including delivery of the WA Renewable Hydrogen Strategy, is led by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, which reports to the Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade portfolio.
