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(HANSARD)

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 16 August 2023

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 12 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

VISITORS — SALLY, ANDREW AND JOHN HERZFELD AND WENDY HULL

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12 noon]: Members, I would like to acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery for the condolence motion Mrs Sally Herzfeld, Wendy Hull, Andrew Herzfeld and John Herzfeld. Welcome to the gallery today. Sally is the wife of the late Tom Herzfeld; Wendy, his daughter; and Andrew and John, both sons. Welcome.

TOM HERZFELD

Condolence Motion

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Deputy Premier) [12.01 pm] — without notice: On behalf of the Premier and the Parliament, I move —

That this house records its sincere regret at the death of Tom Herzfeld and tenders its deepest sympathy to his family.

This motion is to commemorate the commitment of Tom Herzfeld, who dedicated many years of his life to public service. His contributions left an enduring mark on his community in the Perth hills. Like so many Western Australian success stories, his life started abroad. He was born in Berlin in 1936, in the years leading up to World War II. His family, who were Jewish, left Germany in the tumultuous times of World War II. They found refuge in Thailand, where Tom was privately educated, before eventually settling in Perth in 1948. He embarked on his high school journey at Guildford Grammar School, later earning a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Western Australia. May I say, as the daughter of Italian migrants, I have a quiet respect for and appreciation of the challenges faced and overcome by the Herzfeld family.

From 1959 to 1966, Tom applied his engineering prowess within the WA Public Works Department, with projects spanning the Kimberley, Pilbara, and south west regions. Transitioning to private practice, he worked with notable firms including Mansell and Partners, Thiess Brothers, Bell Brothers and Lumeco. A significant achievement was his leadership in constructing the East Perth rail terminal, a landmark unveiled in 1976. I am sure he would have been interested to see the expansion of that great building taking place today.

Tom's commitment extended beyond engineering. He was also a dedicated community member. He was a founder and board member of the independent Helena School in 1973, highlighting his dedication to local education. His involvement continued as he was elected to the Shire of Mundaring in 1975, ascending to the role of shire president by 1976.

In the state political arena, Tom Herzfeld also emerged as the Liberal candidate for the Mundaring district in 1976. This district encompassed portions of Mundaring shire, Toodyay shire, and the Swan Valley, representing a non-metropolitan constituency with around 8 000 voters. In the 1977 election, he secured victory with a slim margin of 300 votes, capturing 52.2 per cent of the final tally. He served as the Liberal MLA for the Mundaring district until 1983, followed by roles as opposition research officer and state director of the Liberal Party until 1989.

Following politics, he lived an active retirement in Darlington, serving as a national board member of the Australian Shareholders' Association between 2007 and 2011. He was also described as a master stone wall builder and park runner.

On behalf of the government, we extend our condolences to Tom's wife, Sally, in the gallery, and to his three children and to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Our deepest sympathy and condolences to you, the family, and again we recognise his life in public service.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.05 pm]: On behalf of the opposition, I would like to add my comments to the condolence motion for Tom Herzfeld. I would also like to acknowledge in the gallery this afternoon Tom's wife, Sally; his daughter, Wendy Hull; and his two sons, Andrew and John Herzfeld.

Tom Herzfeld passed away at the sage of 87. He was the Liberal MLA for the district of Mundaring from 1977 to 1983 and the general secretary and state director of the WA Liberal Party from 1987 to 1989.

Tom was born in Berlin in 1936, the son of a banker and an accountant. The Herzfelds were a Jewish family who escaped Germany and saw out the war years in Thailand. In 1948, they migrated to Perth, where Tom attended Guildford Grammar School and graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Western Australia.

From 1959 to 1966 he worked as a civil engineer with the WA Public Works Department in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and the south west before transferring to private practice. He was a consulting engineer for the construction of the East Perth rail terminal. Within his local hills community, he was a founder and board member of the independent Helena School and was elected to the Shire of Mundaring in 1975. He was shire president from 1976 to 1977.

In 1976 Tom Herzfeld was selected as the Liberal candidate for the seat of Mundaring. Created for the 1974 election, after a further redistribution in 1976, it comprised most of Mundaring shire, Toodyay shire and the Swan Valley. Officially a country seat, with around 8 000 voters, it was held by two-term Labor MLA Jim Moiler. At the 1977 election, Tom won the seat by 300 votes, just over 50 per cent of the final vote. Sir Charles Court's re-elected government won four additional seats in 1977, but Tom Herzfeld was the only Liberal candidate to unseat an incumbent ALP member.

He was a diligent local member and an intelligent debater. He was re-elected in 1980 with an increased 53.5 per cent of the final vote despite an improved statewide ALP vote. In 1983, when the O'Connor government was defeated, Tom suffered a below-average swing of 3.6 per cent but lost Mundaring by 16 preference votes. The Liberal Party successfully challenged the result in the Court of Disputed Returns, but, predictably, the re-election held on 8 October 1983 reconfirmed the Labor win with a further 2.0 per cent swing.

From 1983 until April 1987, Tom Herzfeld was a research officer to opposition leaders Ray O'Connor and Bill Hassell. He was appointed as general secretary of the Liberal Party after the resignation of Chilla Porter and redesignated as state director in 1988. This was an unhappy time for the Liberal Party, with hotly disputed state conference elections and wrangling over a new constitution. The 1989 state election saw the Liberal Party fail to win key marginal seats, despite an overall swing, and Tom resigned later that year. Sadly, Tom after that looked to politics beyond the Liberal Party, standing as the Liberals for Forests candidate in 2001 in Swan Hills.

Tom lived an active retirement in Darlington, serving as a national board member of the Australian Shareholders' Association from 2007 to 2011. He enjoyed over 60 years of marriage with Sally and leaves three children, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. I had the privilege today of meeting Sally and his children, and I heard much about Tom's great respect for Parliament and what he spoke about with his family members. He had a great belief in the Westminster system, and later in life, particularly in the last few days, he reflected on the ability of members of Parliament to have an impact on the lives of many through legislation.

In acknowledging Tom's service to public life, we have much to be grateful for: the significant contributions he clearly made to public life and his strong commitment to the community, which is evident from this condolence motion and the comments we have heard and I personally heard from his family. I extend our deepest sympathies to Sally, Wendy, Andrew and John, and to Tom's grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Vale, Tom Herzfeld.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [12.11 pm]: As Leader of the House, I make a brief but important contribution to acknowledge that, of course, statistically it is a rare privilege to be elected to this place. It is important to acknowledge the passing of any members who have served this place because to reach here is a very significant achievement for many.

I acknowledge the wife of Mr Herzfeld, Sally, who is in the chamber today, and, of course, his children, Wendy, Andrew and John.

We acknowledge that the seat of Mundaring was constituted only from 1974 to 1989. Three members served that constituency as it was constituted: Mr James Moiler from 1974 to 1977, Mr Herzfeld from 1977 to 1983 and Mr Gavan Troy from 1983 to 1989. It is important for all of us to acknowledge the people who put themselves forward to be elected to this place and the contribution they make to our democracy and Parliament. On the sad passing of the family's husband and father, we acknowledge his contribution to Western Australia and to the communities he served in the hills of the Perth metropolitan area.

With that, I also pass on the condolences of the Labor Party of Western Australia to Sally, her family members and friends on the passing of Tom Herzfeld.

Rest in peace.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [12.13 pm]: I rise to add to the condolence motion for Tom Herzfeld, which has already been spoken to by the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Liberal Party, who have outlined some of Tom's life story.

I will not go over all that again, but I offer my condolences to Sally and to the family as a member who currently represents some of the electorate that Tom represented. The Shire of Toodyay is now within my electorate, but in those days, there was an electorate known as Mundaring that encompassed Toodyay. As we have heard, the electorate was there for only about 15 years, but Tom represented it for six of those 15 years as one of three people who represented it.

Reading the story of his life, I find it obvious that this was a person who was deeply connected to the community and the local school community. As many people who come to this place do, he served in his local community and in his local government. That commitment to public life was not limited to his commitment to the Parliament. His was a life that was well lived, and he obviously continued to contribute to the party that he then belonged to before progressing to other interests in public life. He continued to involve himself in a role with the Australian Shareholders' Association.

As Leader of the Nationals WA and inheritor of part of the seat of Mundaring, I offer my condolences to Sally and pay my respects to Tom Herzfeld.

Vale, Tom.

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Regional Development) [12.15 pm]: I will make a very brief contribution. As a very young man, I went to the Shire of Mundaring in 1976 and became an Australian citizen. Tom Herzfeld was the shire president who swore me in. It was a very nervous and anxious transition for me at that time, but he made me feel very comfortable. His signature is on my Australian citizenship certificate, and I have never forgotten that moment. I would like his family to know that he made a great difference to everyday people in the work that he did. Thank you.

Vale, Tom Herzfeld.

THE SPEAKER: Members, I request that all members rise for one minute's silence in order to carry the motion. Question passed; members and officers standing as a mark of respect.

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY WORKFORCE

Statement by Minister for Tourism

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Tourism) [12.17 pm]: I rise to inform the house about our government's efforts to boost the tourism and hospitality workforce in Western Australia. Tourism and hospitality workers come from all walks of life, from students starting their first job to mature age workers who may be looking for a career change or considering re-entering the workforce. It is incredibly important that we support workers in the tourism and hospitality sectors because they bring a wealth of life experience, local knowledge and understanding to our visitors and to our workplaces.

The tourism sector has always been a strong employer. In 2021–22, a total of 89 000 tourism-filled jobs made up 5.6 per cent of Western Australia's total jobs figure. The food and beverage sector accounted for almost half of those positions, and those working in accommodation services made up 16 per cent. However, we are still down on our pre-COVID employment levels by some 20 000 roles, which is why our government's efforts are so important. We are doing everything we can to address the labour shortage facing these industries.

Our tourism workforce development program includes funding for short-term programs to address the current shortage of workers and also builds a pipeline of talent for the future. We are offering free training and job placement assistance through our job reconnect program, as well as up to \$1 500 to cover work-related expenses.

One example of this is the chef apprenticeship program, whereby apprentices aged 45 years and over can access support to purchase equipment including chef knives, kitchen tools and uniforms, funded by the Department of Training and Workforce Development. We changed Western Australia's migration program settings to make it easier for skilled workers to migrate to the state and take up opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industries. We have partnered with the Australian Hotels Association WA to develop the westernaustralia.jobs portal, a one-stop shop for businesses looking to advertise vacancies and for prospective workers looking for more information about moving to WA. We have also invested in a major marketing boost to showcase the incredible career opportunities available in Western Australia's tourism and hospitality industries. Our workforce recruitment ads have been live across the east coast and in New Zealand, Ireland and the United Kingdom. We are doing everything we can to attract and retain workers in these sectors. Addressing the shortage of skilled and unskilled workers in WA's hospitality and tourism industries will take time but our local tourism industry is the best in the country. We have world-class tourism and hotels. Recently, we conducted a forum at which I was represented by the member for Mirrabooka, my parliamentary secretary. It was targeted at mature age workers wanting to enter the tourism industry. We are very keen to see everyone participate in the tourism industry—both younger people starting off in their careers and older people who want to get back into the workforce. We are very keen to progress that.

POLICE — NALOXONE

Statement by Minister for Police

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [12.21 pm]: It is a pleasure to inform the house that following a yearlong trial that began on 1 July 2021, Western Australian police officers have become the first police in the southern hemisphere to carry naloxone. Naloxone is a quick, easy to administer medication that temporarily reverses the effects of drugs such as heroin, OxyContin and fentanyl. During the trial, the nasal spray was successfully used to treat 20 drug-affected people in the Perth and Bunbury regions. As a result of this successful trial, WA police

officers are adding this lifesaving tool to their kit, with more than 500 WA police officers now trained in how to administer the fast-acting medication. Naloxone also provides additional safety for officers should they encounter highly toxic opioids during the search for, or processing of, illicit drugs. Some opioid forms, such as fentanyl-derivatives, can be unintentionally inhaled or absorbed through the skin, posing a significant risk of accidental exposure.

This statewide rollout is nation leading and other jurisdictions, including New South Wales and South Australia, are already approaching the Western Australia Police Force as they consider equipping their officers with this lifesaving treatment. This is an important and vital tool for our police officers as they are often the first responders and can take lifesaving action to an opioid overdose.

I would like to read into the house the words of an experienced WA police officer, Assistant Commissioner Metropolitan Region Brad Royce, in relation to this announcement. I quote, according to my notes —

The WA Police Force went into this trial knowing from experience that our officers can be first on scene to medical emergencies, and this trial has proven that providing police officers with Naloxone to administer in certain circumstances contributes to improved health outcomes and in some instances helped to save lives.

The primary role of every police officer is to protect life, and this trial has shown this is another way we can achieve this in situations we are likely to come across as police officers.

The State-wide rollout will also provide an extra layer of protection for officers who may be inadvertently exposed to dangerous opioids in the course of their duty, with this training making it possible for them to receive enhanced immediate first aid from their fellow officers.

Once again, the Western Australia Police Force is being resourced to lead the nation in delivering world-class policing.

MINISTERIAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Statement by Minister for Youth

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Youth) [12.23 pm]: I rise today to inform the house about the new cohort of members on my Ministerial Youth Advisory Council, otherwise known as MYAC. MYAC was established in 2017 and demonstrates the commitment of the WA Labor government to listening to young people in our state. Since that time, the government has worked to support and amplify the voices of young Western Australians by providing them with a platform to talk about the issues that matter most to them. I look forward to sitting down with the new members of MYAC at our next meeting. The six new MYAC members joining us are Naomi Blitz, Sara Al Hussein, Lilijana Nicholls, Zac Cawdron, Ben Caulfield and Mia Westera. I have also appointed two new co-chairs, Amy Astill and CJ Daudu, who have both been members of MYAC since August 2021.

The make-up of the MYAC is diverse and reflects a wide range of lived experiences of young people in our state. I find one of the most enduring qualities of the MYAC is the tenacity its members bring to conversations on social issues. They are not afraid to speak up and use their voices. It is very important that young people have the opportunity to have their say on the development of government policies that affects them, both now and into the future.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to notify the house that I recently announced the expressions of interest for MYAC members. Successful applicants will join a merit pool and be selected as positions become available. If you know someone, I invite you to visit the Department of Communities' website for more information.

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS — GERALDTON

Statement by Minister for Lands

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Lands) [12.25 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the Cook government has initiated exclusive negotiations with a prominent South Korean renewable energy consortium for an innovative green ammonia plant near Geraldton, marking a significant milestone. Progressive Green Solutions, in partnership with Samsung C&T and Korean Midland Power Company, proposes to establish the plant at DevelopmentWA's Narngulu industrial estate. The facility aims to produce up to one million tonnes of green ammonia annually, utilising renewable hydrogen.

This project is expected to play a vital role in supporting the decarbonisation of power generation assets in South Korea, with the first shipments projected for 2027. The Cook government, through DevelopmentWA, has successfully facilitated a land use solution to accommodate this venture, paving the way for the establishment of a new renewable energy cluster in Geraldton. The development will complement the planned hydrogen hub at Oakajee, showcasing Western Australia's commitment to sustainable and forward-looking energy solutions. The industrial estate's strategic location, situated 12 kilometres southeast of Geraldton, has attracted both local and foreign investors, drawn to its proximity to key industrial areas and transport links, including the port of Geraldton. By strategically planning and making industrial land available for the businesses of the future, our government aims to drive job creation, diversify the economy and foster sustainable growth in the renewable energy sector.

The midwest region's exceptional renewable energy resources have captured significant global interest and investments from markets like South Korea, Japan and Europe. These projects are not only crucial for supporting global decarbonisation efforts, but are also expected to unlock significant local manufacturing and job opportunities within the midwest. The growing interest from international proponents in renewable energy projects in Geraldton highlights the region's renewable potential and Western Australia's vital role in contributing to a greener and more sustainable future.

The Cook government and I, as the Minister for Lands, are committed to fostering the growth of the renewables sector, propelling Western Australia toward a cleaner and more decarbonised future.

PLANNING — CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Statement by Minister for Planning

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Planning) [12.28 pm]: I rise today to formally recognise the approval of Western Australia's much-awaited first hospice and respite care facility for children and their families. This significant development was granted approval by the Western Australian Planning Commission through the state government's streamlined development pathway. The children's hospice will be a purpose-built facility that will provide essential care for children with life-limiting conditions, offering around-the-clock clinical support, end-of-life care, bereavement care and respite accommodation for families from across Western Australia.

A partnership between the Child and Adolescent Health Service and the Perth Children's Hospital Foundation, this hospice is a vital initiative to ensure that families going through the most challenging of journeys receive the care and support they deserve. The facility, which will be situated in Swanbourne, will offer a home away from home setting for children and their families. The hospice will feature well-designed guest bedrooms, family suites, a bereavement suite, a hydrotherapy pool, a fenced playground, a memorial garden, indoor play areas, communal living and dining spaces, therapy and clinical areas, and meeting rooms. The approval process, which was managed by the significant development unit within the Department of Planning, Lands, and Heritage, was executed with due diligence and deep respect. Over the course of 18 months, the applicant's consultants worked closely with the unit to address land use issues and bushfire risks to ensure a safe and well-planned environment for families. The State Design Review Panel—this is important for the public record—lauded the high level of design quality, the focus on seamless connections between indoor and outdoor spaces and appreciation of the site's broader views and Aboriginal cultural engagement, all of which are integral to this project's success.

As we move forward, I am heartened by the positive impact that this hospice will have on our communities. The children's hospice will be a beacon of hope, providing comfort, support and holistic care for children and their families, creating a central hub for statewide paediatric palliative care services. On behalf of the government, I express my heartfelt gratitude to all those involved in making this project a reality. I look forward to witnessing the completion of this important facility in which children and their loved ones will find solace and support during their most challenging times.

STATE DISABILITY STRATEGY — INNOVATION FUND GRANT

Statement by Minister for Disability Services

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Disability Services) [12.30 pm]: I am very happy to provide the house with an update on the Cook Labor government's implementation of tranche 2 of innovation fund grants as part of the state government's *A Western Australia for everyone: State disability strategy for 2020–2030*.

On 3 December 2021, the state government announced a \$5 million innovation fund to support the outcomes of the state disability strategy. The innovation fund is designed to stimulate innovation and develop projects that creatively apply new knowledge, technologies and processes that improve inclusion, participation and independence to enable Western Australians with disability to live their best life. The innovation fund's tranche 1 grants funded seven organisations to the total of \$2.5 million to support projects that improve the economic and social wellbeing of people with disability. The projects are already proving successful in stimulating creative thinking and building the capacity of people with disability, their families and their community. Nine projects recently received grant funding totalling \$2.5 million under tranche 2 of the innovation fund with the aim to empower people with disability. The Western Australian organisations include disability in the arts provider Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts Australia, My Place Western Australia, Huntington's Western Australia, Curtin University, Inclusion WA, Ruah Community Services, Microboards Western Australia, Kiind—formerly trading as Kalparrin—and Developmental Disability Western Australia.

Examples of successful grant recipients include Huntington's WA outreach neuro-clinics project, the first of its kind in Australia. This project aims to deliver innovative neurological health outreach clinics in remote areas and remote Aboriginal communities in Kununurra, supporting people impacted by Huntington's disease. DADAA's citizen journalism project will invest in the digital capability and build the digital capacity of artists with disability in Western Australia. It will produce new multiplatform digital content that is grounded in disability culture and grow an audience around disability content. The project will grow and build digital partnerships, ensuring the

digital inclusion of people with intellectual disability. Kiind’s “What’s on” guide will help to connect children and young people with disability and their parents and/or carers with recreational, cultural, sporting and community organisations to identify and promote inclusive community activities through a weekly “What’s on” guide.

Improving the lives of Western Australians with disability remains firmly in the spotlight under the Cook government. I look forward to seeing the impact these nine innovative projects have in assisting people with disability to be engaged and empowered and to live as they choose.

RETURN TO 1616: DIRK HARTOG ISLAND NATIONAL PARK ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROJECT

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Environment) [12.33 pm]: Today I would like to update the house on progress of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions’ Return to 1616: Dirk Hartog Island National Park ecological restoration project. On 24 June, I had the privilege of assisting with the release of 100 brush-tailed mulgara as part of this ambitious project. I would like to acknowledge the Malgana people, who are the traditional owners of Wirruwana in Gathaagudu, Dirk Hartog Island, in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area. Malgana elders attended the mulgara release, providing an example of the strengthening relationship between the Malgana people and DBCA. This relationship is now seeing the Malgana Aboriginal Corporation and DBCA working together to develop an Indigenous land use agreement as a step towards joint management of the national park. The mulgara were sourced from another part of Western Australia’s conservation estate that is jointly managed by DBCA with the Martu people, the Matuwa Kurrara National Park north east of Wiluna. Five Martu rangers from the Tarlka Matuwa Piarku Aboriginal Corporation accompanied the mulgara on their 800-kilometre journey to Dirk Hartog Island National Park.

The Return to 1616 project aims to restore WA’s largest island to a similar ecological condition as it was found by Dutch sea captain Dirk Hartog when he became the first European to visit Western Australia on 25 October 1616. The first stage of ecological restoration was completed in 2018 with the eradication of feral cats, sheep and goats. This eradication makes Dirk Hartog the largest island in the world on which this remarkable feat has been achieved, something Western Australians can be very proud of. In the absence of sheep and goats and with targeted weed control, there has been significant improvement in vegetation and habitat condition, allowing for native fauna reintroduction. Eight native animal species have been reintroduced so far, including 112 rufous hare-wallabies, 102 banded hare-wallabies, 99 Shark Bay bandicoots, 135 dibblers, 130 Shark Bay mice, 122 greater stick-nest rats and during the last year, 85 western grasswrens and the 100 brush-tailed mulgara that were released in June. Early results from innovative scientific monitoring show that all these translocated species are doing well on their new island home. At least five of these species are now breeding on the island and Shark Bay bandicoots now roam across the whole island following their reintroduction just a few short years ago. I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the DBCA staff involved in this remarkable conservation process. Thank you very much.

ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (ALTERNATIVE ELECTRICITY SERVICES) BILL 2023

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr W.J. Johnston (Minister for Energy)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [12.37 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Electricity Industry Amendment (Alternative Electricity Services) Bill 2023 will create a framework that can extend enforceable protections and access to independent dispute resolution, to customers receiving electricity supplies and services through emerging or atypical electricity business models. Most electricity customers purchase their electricity from a licensed electricity retailer. However, an increasing number of customers buy electricity or electricity services from suppliers that do not hold an electricity retail licence. These suppliers either fall within an exemption from the requirement to be licensed or are entirely out of scope of the licensing and exemption framework.

The electricity licensing and exemption framework has been in effect since 2004. Licences with comprehensive customer protection obligations and stringent compliance requirements were applied to large operators while licence exemptions were utilised in some instances recognising that it was not practical for all energy supply arrangements to be licensed. However, a growing range of innovative electricity services and new or atypical business models and activities are emerging for which neither licences nor exemptions are fit for purpose. These services may incorporate retailing, storage, aggregation, generation and/or distribution of electricity. They may involve electricity management products or the collection or manipulation of electricity data. They may also involve different kinds of financing arrangements, such as a leasing or membership-based ownership arrangement for electricity assets.

Specific examples include but are not limited to the onselling of electricity within embedded networks such as apartment buildings, shopping centres, retirement villages and long-stay residential parks, and the sale of electricity to customers through solar power purchase agreements. In the case of the former, it usually is the customer's sole supply of electricity—electricity as an essential service. In the latter, the supply is usually supplementary to electricity supplied by a licensed retailer. The primary challenge is that these new and emerging types of business models and arrangements can pose risks for electricity customers of those services, in particular, to small use customers who may assume they enjoy the same protections as customers of licensed retailers. For these kinds of electricity services, applying the existing licensing framework would impose onerous costs and regulatory burden, and some licensing compliance requirements would not be practicable or relevant to some services. However, continuing to rely on licence exemptions leaves customers without recourse to enforceable customer protections relevant to the activity or access to the Energy and Water Ombudsman to resolve complaints and disputes. Some types of electricity-related activities also fall outside the ambit of the licensing and exemption framework, such as services related to the use of energy data.

The purpose of this amendment bill is to create a flexible registration framework that allows activities to be prescribed as an alternative electricity service, or AES. The framework will then require providers of a prescribed service to register, to become a member of the Energy Ombudsman scheme, and to comply with conditions of registration. This registration framework will deliver enforceable protections for electricity customers of those AES providers. The primary legislation does not itself impose new regulatory obligations on any person or activity. To allow flexibility for the framework to be applied to new and innovative services, the activities regulated under the AES registration framework will be prescribed in regulation.

The bill will create the heads of power for an AES code of practice, which will set out customer protection requirements to be complied with by registration holders. The requirements for providers of each prescribed service can be tailored to the particular characteristics of that service. Consistent with the Better Regulation Program, before any activity is regulated under the AES framework, a regulatory impact assessment will be undertaken, including stakeholder consultation, to examine whether regulation is warranted, whether the AES registration framework is the appropriate form of regulation for the activity, and, if so, the regulatory settings that should be applied to that activity.

The bill will establish that the Economic Regulation Authority be responsible for monitoring compliance with, and enforcement of, the registration framework, as well as for maintaining the register of AES providers. As far as practicable, the structure of the AES registration framework in the new part 3A inserted into the Electricity Industry Act reflects part 2 of the act, which establishes the licensing framework, but with alterations to provide for a lighter handed, lower cost and flexible regulatory framework. The aim is that the AES registration framework is flexible enough to be able to cover a broad range of electricity-related activities into the future, if and when a need for regulation of those activities arises. It is designed to provide a fit-for-purpose regulatory regime to extend protections to customers of innovative and emerging electricity services. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

ABORTION LEGISLATION REFORM BILL 2023

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from 15 August.

Clause 8: Part 12C Divisions 1 to 5 inserted —

Debate was adjourned after the clause had been partly considered.

Ms L. METTAM: We are continuing to look at clause 8, which deals with a number of matters, particularly those surrounding mature minors. For our benefit, can the minister explain the difference between a mature minor and a child who is not a mature minor?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Member for Vasse, for the sake of Hansard, can you clarify which page or item we are on?

Ms L. METTAM: Sorry. It is clause 8, page 17, proposed section 202MM, "Consent to performance of abortion on children who are not mature minors".

Ms A. SANDERSON: A mature minor is a minor who is Gillick competent. "Gillick competence" is a term that relates to children's ability to consent to medical procedures and treatments. A Gillick competent child has sufficient understanding and intelligence to consent to their own medical treatment. They are sometimes also called a mature minor. Gillick competence comes from a landmark English case in which it was first recognised by the court that a minor might be competent to make decisions without parental consent. The case held that the parental right yields to the child's right to make their own decisions when they reach the sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up their own mind. The idea is to ensure children are protected from wrong decisions made by parents in which there might be irreversible wrong outcomes for the child by giving the child decision-making power.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister clarify who determines Gillick competence and how? Is it the medical practitioner or health practitioner? Can it be a nurse practitioner?

Ms A. SANDERSON: It will be determined by the health practitioner looking after the child. Medical practitioners, endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners are all equally trained in assessing the Gillick competence of their patients.

Ms L. METTAM: Can a minor who is not considered to be a mature minor—does not have Gillick competence—successfully refuse an abortion if the parent or guardian believes that it is in the best interest of the child to have one?

Ms A. SANDERSON: When there is a difference of view between a minor and a parent, the medical practitioner or health practitioner would then refer it to the jurisdiction of the court. There is no medical or health practitioner who would forcibly impose a decision on an unwilling patient, whether they are mature or not. In that instance, they would not have competency in decision-making, but when there is a conflict between the minor and their parent, it would be appropriate to refer it to the court.

Ms L. METTAM: I understand what the minister says about this issue moving into particularly challenging territory. Would the medical or health practitioner use their discretion to refer such a matter to the Children's Court? Is that the court that this would be referred to?

Ms A. SANDERSON: These are probably incredibly rare circumstances, but challenging to navigate. There are legal requirements around informed consent and Gillick competency that a minor has to demonstrate. If there is genuine uncertainty about that, there is likely to be more than one practitioner, as they would bring in a social worker and a counsellor and work in a more multidisciplinary approach. It is not a matter of discretion; it is the clinical judgement and experience exercised around the policy and guidelines for seeking informed consent from the patient. It would be extremely unusual for an abortion to be performed on an unwilling patient, and a number of questions would be raised about that. Practitioners have to operate under strict guidelines and policies, not just for their registration, but in their employment. Discretion is not the right word; it would be clinical judgement.

Ms L. METTAM: We touched on this before, but what are the obligations of practitioners for minors who are under the age of 13 years seeking an abortion?

Ms A. SANDERSON: It is a legal requirement in Western Australia for doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers, police officers, boarding supervisors and ministers of religion to report all reasonable beliefs of child sexual abuse to the Department of Communities. There is no age limit. In all circumstances when abuse or coercion is suspected, it must be reported, regardless of the age. Section 124C of the Children and Community Services Act sets out the content requirements for a mandatory report. After receiving the report, the reporting service must send a copy to the Western Australian police. The reporting service then conducts an initial assessment, including what action might be required, which may involve referring the matter to the child protection district office for further investigation, and they may be contacted by the police.

The Children and Community Services Act 2004 defines a child as under 18 years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence of age, it means a person who appears to be under 18 years of age. There is an age limit when that kicks in. It is anyone up to the age of 18 years who the reporter reasonably suspects is being abused. A mature minor, for example, would not be exempt from mandatory reporting if a clinician reasonably suspected that there was coercion or child sexual abuse. However, there is an exclusion. It is not the intention of mandatory reporting legislation to capture instances of informed consensual sexual activity, as long as the activity is age and developmentally appropriate. Again, that is determined by the best clinical judgement of those practitioners. The individual circumstances of each case has to be considered, and if the reporter forms a reasonable belief that sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring, a report must be made.

Ms L. METTAM: In cases when the minor is under 13 years of age, in addition to the mandatory reporting, do health or medical practitioners involved in that procedure have further obligations?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Mandatory reporting in and of itself is an obligation that all health practitioners take very seriously. There is also non-mandatory reporting for a range of concerns that can be reported to, and welcomed by, the Department of Communities, such as concerns about the wellbeing of a child due to physical or emotional abuse or neglect, including exposure to family and domestic violence. These do not necessarily enliven mandatory reporting, but the Department of Communities encourages notification to enable authorities to assess the circumstances and take action to protect a child or other children when necessary.

Medical practitioners and health practitioners are duty bound by their own codes of conduct and codes of ethics to report suspicions and ensure that their patients receive the best possible care. A practitioner who is not satisfied that a minor is acting voluntarily and/or without coercion is able to liaise with other professionals to determine the case. It is highly likely that they will bring in counsellors or social workers and provide support to that child. They would also pick up the phone and call the Department of Communities if they had concerns about whether this was a mandatory reporting requirement and to get some guidance on how to do that.

Ms L. METTAM: Ensuring that minors have the counselling support they require is obviously very important, particularly in situations in which young children undertake these procedures without the support of their parent.

I know the minister touched on this, but can the minister provide some more clarification of the obligations for counselling or information to be provided to minors who are undertaking such a procedure, potentially without the support of a family unit?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Health practitioners face this issue every day. It is not something that will occur just under this bill; it happens now. It is rare that children will present pregnant, but it does occur. More often, they present with sexually transmitted infections. Health practitioners are skilled and experienced at screening STIs and in understanding the circumstances under which it occurs and supporting a child through that. This bill does not seek to add any further mandatory requirements for counselling or information outside of what is best clinical practice and the best judgement of the clinician who is supporting the child. There are already significant obligations under the mandatory reporting requirements, their own code of conduct, their ethical requirements and their own practice to ensure that their patients are supported in a multidisciplinary sense if required. This is happening now. When children present with STIs, they are supported and treated, and work is done with them. Nurses in particular will work with children to understand how an infection occurred and the circumstances in which it occurred, to keep those children safe.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister explain the principle around proposed section 202MM, “Consent to performance of abortion on children who are not mature minors”? As I understand it, it is to provide legal clarity on the ability of a parent or guardian to consent to the abortion of a non-Gillick competent child. Can the minister provide an overview of the principle of this proposed section?

Ms A. SANDERSON: The bill before us will provide clarity that parents will be able to provide permission. The reason that is being included is that there is no case law in WA pertaining to a parent’s or guardian’s ability to give consent for their child to have an abortion. Several judges in Queensland’s Supreme Court have taken a very conservative approach and stated that abortion sits outside the scope of the medical treatment that a parent may decide for their child. Essentially, if a parent and a child agree that an abortion is required, they still have to go to the Supreme Court. To avoid that, we have been very explicit in this bill that a parent in Western Australia may decide and may essentially give informed consent. Does that clarify the member’s question?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes. How does this compare with other states?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Queensland is very conservative. In other states, the language used is extremely loose and a bit wishy-washy, if not silent on this. To avoid any doubt or complicating already complicated situations, we determined that we would be specific and explicit in this bill about a parent’s right to provide informed consent.

Ms L. METTAM: I thank the minister for that clarification. We touched on cases that are reported to child protection. Is the minister able to provide how many cases are reported to child protection in relation to offences against minors?

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is not data that the Department of Health holds. It is managed by the Department of Communities and the act that they manage.

Ms L. METTAM: I am still dealing with the same clause, but a different section—proposed new section 202MN, “Unqualified person must not perform abortion”, otherwise known as backyard abortion, as it has been termed. I note that the purpose of this section is that those who are unqualified would no longer be considered committing a crime under this section, in circumstances in which they are administering the abortion in good faith. Can the minister explain this? I imagine there could be circumstances in which what might be described as a backyard abortion has a legitimate reason, and it might be more than medical malpractice. Is there scope for individuals to be recognised in the law as being negligent?

Ms A. SANDERSON: I do not want to paraphrase, so the member can tell me if I am wrong. Is the member asking whether someone is completely unqualified, as in not a medical practitioner whatsoever?

Ms L. Mettam: Like criminal liability.

Ms A. SANDERSON: They would be operating outside of their scope—for example, the gentleman who allegedly put mifepristone in his ex-girlfriend’s drink. Essentially, it is not intended that the factual scenarios presented in so-called fetal homicide be prosecuted as offences against proposed new section 202MN, although both the current section 199 of the Criminal Code and proposed definition make it notionally possible for a person to be charged with the offence of abortion, when they harm a pregnant woman. This could be by assaulting them with the intention of causing them to miscarry. This has never been done under section 199 of the Criminal Code and it is unlikely that the Director of Public Prosecutions would do so via proposed new section 202MN. This position is put beyond doubt by the offence being located in the Public Health Act 2016, and made to apply to unqualified persons, which impliedly makes the qualifications of the accused person central to the offence. There are other provisions that the DPP would use, and has used, to prosecute that offence.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister clarify what constitutes an unqualified person in this section and are there thresholds attached to what is considered unqualified care when it comes to pharmacists or prescribers, and health and medical practitioners?

Ms A. SANDERSON: It depends on the stage of the pregnancy as to whether someone is qualified. Clause 8 captures that an unqualified person is someone who is not a medical practitioner. For example, if a nurse practitioner was to attempt a surgical abortion on a woman more than 23 weeks pregnant, she is unqualified under this act; it is only a medical practitioner who is qualified. A pharmacist is not qualified to perform an abortion. They are authorised under the act to dispense the medication, but it is a qualified person who prescribes the medication. Does that make sense?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes. Does the minister have any figures on how many cases might have been captured by this new amendment over the past 12 months, or any figures to indicate how many professionals might have been captured by the performance of an abortion by unqualified persons?

Ms A. SANDERSON: We are not capturing data based on this bill and these provisions. I think that is what the member is asking. We do not capture that data. The police would potentially capture data of people who had breached the existing legislation, although I am not aware of any. But we are not able to present data that is formulated to reflect this current bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Before I give you the call, Leader of the Liberal Party, I just say that I allow these sorts of questions and I know that the minister is answering the questions in good faith, so I encourage that, but I do not think that questions about data and who has committed various offences or examples in the community are strictly consideration in detail questions, which should be restricted to the clause and the bill itself. I want to make sure that I am not setting a precedent by allowing the questions, but I will certainly allow things to keep going, because I think it is all in good faith.

The Leader of the Liberal Party with a further question.

Ms L. METTAM: Thank you, Acting Speaker. I refer to proposed section 202MP(3) and (4). Clinicians have advised that they support ongoing mandatory notification of abortion, regardless of the gestational age at which the abortion is performed. This information is obviously important for assessing health care trends, which include the progressive decline in terminations for adolescent women, and planning healthcare education and interventions, as well. As I understand it, regardless of the outcome, all births at greater than 23 weeks' gestation are subject to mandatory notification through the Midwives Notification System, and the important information that this data provides for healthcare planning justifies the retention of mandatory reporting of abortion. It is obviously important that late-term abortions are reviewed by healthcare organisations that perform the procedures, and reporting the reasons for late abortions, which I understand is standard in the United Kingdom, is important to this process and confirms to the public of WA that late abortions are performed in only very serious situations or conditions. For the provision of data, can the minister please outline exactly what changes are being implemented and what data will now be provided?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Under the current act, forms prescribed under section 335 of the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act are used to report or notify the Chief Health Officer that a patient has received an abortion. The forms are not and will not be tabled or published. There is always a need to balance public interest with access to information. The information does not fall in the scope of section 82 of the Financial Management Act. This bill will repeal the reporting of those provisions under the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act. This includes any reference to abortion or collection of abortion information from those forms and introduces a new framework about the collection, use, management and disclosure of abortion information.

We consulted quite extensively with particularly clinicians on what is useful for service planning and, essentially, that is how we landed with those provisions in the bill. It is data collection for the purpose of service planning to improve access to services and understand trends, as the member rightly outlined, and it is essential for looking at how we can improve those health outcomes for women. The data collection is really to identify issues and trends regarding access to services and appropriateness of preventive sexual health services, crisis services, contraception and sexual health services; to identify issues and trends; to assess the appropriateness of abortion services and issues such as rural and remote access to services; and to identify language, financial or other barriers. Metrics are key to the analysis of these types of trends, such as the broad demographics of the person, so whether they hold Aboriginal status or identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, or the broad location, such as rural versus regional. In the bill, we have specifically outlined exclusions to the kind of data that can be included so that we protect people's privacy. It is a statistical summary of information. It cannot include any particulars from which it may be possible to ascertain the identity of a person on whom an abortion has been performed or a person who has performed or who has assisted in the performance of an abortion. It also cannot include the postcode, suburb or address of a person who has received an abortion or someone who has performed an abortion. It also cannot include the age of a person on whom an abortion has been performed other than an age category including a range of not less than five years—under 15, 15 to 19 and so on. It cannot include a particular race or nationality of a person. It cannot include the exact gestational age, other than a range, and that is outlined in the bill, or the particular reason for an abortion having been performed on a person, including any particular clinical reason. It cannot include the particular clinical method used to perform an abortion, or the particular clinic details, or outcomes associated with the admission of a hospital or a person on whom an abortion is performed.

Essentially, that is to provide broad service planning information without compromising people's privacy. There are consistent questions from the upper house and certainly questions in Parliament on details of clinicians who have performed abortions and details of the circumstances that women have found themselves in. We have given broad regional areas. The reason we have not given specific postcodes is in small country towns, particularly if someone has had a late-term abortion, if that data appears as a postcode, it can be very easy to identify the individual referred to. We have provided for regional areas, and we have used the same regional areas that the WA Country Health Service or Health uses for planning, so Pilbara, Gascoyne, Kimberley and so on and so forth.

Ms L. METTAM: The minister mentioned the gestational age of the fetus and said that it is in general terms. It is noted on page 22 of the bill. Will that include late term, post-23 weeks?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes, it will.

Ms L. METTAM: Will the data capture all terminations? Are there any terminations that will not be captured by this data?

Ms A. SANDERSON: The Chief Health Officer will make a direction to all practitioners that this is the data that is required to be reported to the Chief Health Officer's office. It is very difficult, as it is now, to police and monitor every GP consult. Clinicians work under the requirements of the law. An important part of that six-month implementation period will be educating clinicians in their obligations under the new laws.

Ms L. METTAM: How will the information be captured for those who prescribe an abortion drug for under nine weeks? Will the information be reported on the prescription of that drug?

Ms A. SANDERSON: That will be determined in the six-month implementation period. The Chief Health Officer's office is working through what that looks like. It is likely to be an online reporting mechanism for those clinicians.

Ms L. METTAM: How will this information or these reporting obligations be communicated to health professionals?

Ms A. SANDERSON: The Chief Health Officer's office has good in-reach into all clinics and primary care clinics. It will also work with the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, MSI Australia and those services that we know are engaged in this practice. Regular communication goes from WA Health out to primary health settings, as we have seen over COVID. It has good in-reach into those clinics and will make its obligations known.

Ms L. METTAM: Will these changes still enable data to be compared over time?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes, they will. Obviously, the data will be difficult to compare from this bill versus the last bill because they are different subsets of data. But certainly, trends over time and aggregated data will allow trends to be identified and compared over time.

Ms L. METTAM: What data, if any, will not be captured any longer? Will any data no longer be captured?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Without reading it all into *Hansard*, proposed sections 202MP(3) and 202MP(4) identify all the data that will not be collected, and that it is not to include.

Ms L. METTAM: Regarding the data that will no longer be captured, the minister said it is under proposed section 202MP(4), which includes —

- (e) the gestational age of the foetus at the date on which an abortion was performed on a person, other than as an age range ...

Can the minister explain that proposed paragraph?

Ms A. SANDERSON: We currently collect very specific gestational ages of abortions, for example at 13 weeks or at 21 weeks. It will move to a gestational age range, for example nine to 12 weeks, 12 to 16 weeks, 16 to 20 weeks, 20 to 24 weeks and so on and so forth. It will be a broader range. The other things that will not be included, which are currently included in the form 1, which is the statutory form, are some of the very antiquated terms for methods of termination and so on and so forth. That will no longer be required.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 14 put and passed.

Clause 15: Section 306C inserted —

Ms L. METTAM: Regarding a review of the act being undertaken after five years, can the minister provide further details on this? First and foremost, what aspects will be reviewed?

Ms A. SANDERSON: A statutory review is a standard clause. It is a determination of the terms of reference that will be decided by the minister at the time. For example, it could be a review of whether the act is operating as Parliament intended or whether the minister at the time determined to broaden the review, for example, requirements and so on and so forth. It is a determination for the minister at the time.

Ms L. METTAM: Will it utilise the data that is being provided and will it compare WA with other jurisdictions?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Again, it will be a determination for the minister at the time. For example, if I were the minister, I would not, because that would not be the purpose of the statutory review. Again, it really depends on the terms of reference set by the government of the day.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16 put and passed.

Clause 17: Act amended —

Ms A. SANDERSON: I request permission to swap out one of the advisers.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Permission granted.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Thank you. May I also take the opportunity to provide additional information that I committed to providing yesterday, with the indulgence of the Acting Speaker. Yesterday, I committed to providing additional information on whether other Australian jurisdictions have a framework to enable registered health practitioners to perform an abortion. I can advise that South Australia and Victoria both have statutory mechanisms to enable registered health practitioners to perform an abortion in their own right. New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory currently do not enable other registered health practitioners to perform an abortion; however, the Queensland government has already indicated that it intends to amend its legislation to reflect the new Therapeutic Goods Administration guidelines and allow health practitioners to prescribe medical abortions.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Just before I give the call to the Leader of the Liberal Party, I ask the minister to confirm which adviser has left the chamber and who has joined us.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes. Dr Clare Huppertz, the Deputy Chief Health Officer, has left the chamber, and we are joined by Sara da Motta.

Ms L. METTAM: We started consideration in detail today by covering off on questions about the provisions captured in this clause, but can the minister explain the importance of clause 17 in relation to the Children's Court of Western Australia?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Essentially this will normalise the process for informed consent around medical decisions for minors, which will be in the Supreme Court, not the Children's Court. A special provision in the current abortion legislation requires that decisions go to the Children's Court so it will bring it into line with other healthcare decisions that need to be made for minors. The new bill will also introduce the concept of a mature minor, which is absent in the current law.

The clause will amend section 20 of the act to remove the exclusive jurisdiction of the Children's Court of Western Australia to hear and determine all applications made with regard to a child under section 334 of the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, which will be repealed. This change is consistent with the new framework for abortion to be established by the bill with regard to children deemed to be mature minors or non-mature minors. Under section 334(8)(a) of the HMP act, to be repealed, a parent of a child 15 years or younger seeking an abortion is required to be informed and have an opportunity to be involved in the counselling process and medical consultations, and subsection (9) provides that a dependent minor may apply to the Children's Court for an order that the custodial parent should not be given the information and opportunity referred to in subsection (8)(a). The repeal of this section will mean that parental involvement is not mandated in the same way and it is not required in order for a child to consent and provision for an application to the Children's Court is not needed.

Ms L. METTAM: This clause will ensure that the Children's Court is not the exclusive jurisdiction, but can the minister imagine there might be occasions on which the Children's Court would be the suitable jurisdiction involved?

Ms A. SANDERSON: No, the Children's Court would not be involved; it will be the Family Court or the Supreme Court. That is standard for disputed medical procedures for minors.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 18 and 19 put and passed.

Clause 20: Section 3B inserted —

Ms L. METTAM: We touched on this clause a bit earlier, it clarifies that when a child dies as a result of a lawful abortion, the death is not a reportable death for the purposes of the Coroners Act. To start with, can the minister explain the principle behind this clause of the bill?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yesterday in consideration of this bill we went into considerable detail on the process of a late-term termination when a fetus, or baby, is born alive and that is the very informed decision of the parents that that be the case. We will remove the requirement for the death to be a reportable death because that will reflect the fact that the death was brought about by legal abortion and was an expected and very closely planned death. It would not be appropriate to require a coronial or police investigation and the questioning of families for each of those deaths unless there was a suspicion the proper process for accessing the abortion was not followed. A person

who has taken the decision to terminate their pregnancy at a later stage, often due to a severe medical condition of the fetus or the mother, would be informed that they are lawfully entitled to have an abortion due to the significant medical complications involved, and once the procedure is complete they would have a legitimate expectation that no further investigation is required or would be conducted.

Ms L. METTAM: The minister rightfully stated that we did go into this in some detail when we debated another clause yesterday. To clarify, what is involved in a coronial investigation? I ask because clinicians have raised with me the situation in which a child with a lethal abnormality and the rare occasions when the death of a fetus, or a baby, is captured by this provision of the act and the distress that such an investigation may cause. I think it would be worth clarifying the situation.

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is correct. It is distressing for the family and the clinicians involved. Under the current regime, the definition of reportable death obliges the doctor to report the death to the coroner, obliging the coroner to contact the person who has undergone the abortion despite the death being not unexpected and explainable by the lawful abortion procedure that has taken place. A coronial investigation would then require statements to be obtained from the mother, reports to be obtained from the doctors performing the termination, pathologists and possibly specialists. Administrative findings would need to be made and referrals to the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages would be required.

From a practical point of view, when a baby is born with signs of life and passes away after birth, as we have outlined, it is a very planned and controlled process. There are good reasons why parents want to spend those last few minutes with their live child and often prefer to remain with the child for some time. Special cooling cots and equipment allows parents to remain with their child for some time to allow for family, cultural and religious processes to take place. Under the reportable death procedure, there is the potential, and it has occurred, that the baby is removed by police for the coroner, and that is incongruent with the legal and fully informed process that the family is going through and during what is already a very distressing time.

Ms L. METTAM: Further to this and in relation to a matter that was raised earlier, can the minister see any circumstances in which a termination would not be reported under the amendments that are being implemented by this bill?

Ms A. SANDERSON: On a point of clarification, is it “would be” or “would not be” reported?

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister see any circumstances in which a termination would not be reported? I am not referring to the coroner; I am asking whether there would be any circumstances in which a termination could take place, particularly a surgical termination, and the procedure not be reported by a medical practitioner or a health practitioner.

Ms A. SANDERSON: It will be a requirement under the legislation that we are debating now. The Chief Health Officer will require them all to be reported to him. There is not a circumstance I could foresee, if a practitioner was operating legally, in which it would not be reported.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 21 and 22 put and passed.

Clause 23: Act amended —

Ms L. METTAM: As I understand it, this clause is to enable abortion information to be exempt under the Freedom of Information Act. Can the minister please explain what the considerations were around this amendment?

Ms A. SANDERSON: The government has determined that information pertaining to someone’s access to abortion care should be exempt and should not be subject to any assessment of public interest. That could have variable results depending on the view of the agency decision-maker, who could have varying levels of experience, skill or points of view on this issue. At present, if an individual makes an application for the release of information pertaining to an abortion or abortions that have taken place, the agency holding the documents must release that information subject to the exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act. Currently, the key exemptions relevant to this context are those of “personal information” and “endanger the life and safety of any person”. An agency would not be allowed to release matters that reveal personal information about an individual, whether living or dead. However, this information can be revealed if the applicant establishes that the third party has consented to their information being released, or if, on balance, the release of the information is in the public interest.

What this means is that, currently, the decision whether to release personal information about a patient will be made in each instance by an officer at the agency holding the documents. The officer can decide, for example, to release personal information about a patient or information that might identify them by default, then they are required to take reasonable steps to contact and consult that person in accordance with section 32 of the FOI act. Another reason for including a standalone exemption for the abortion information is the requirement under section 32(b) of the FOI act that if an agency intends to give access to a document containing personal information about a third party, the agency is not to give access unless it has taken such steps as are reasonably practicable to obtain the view of

the third party about whether the document contains information that is exempt. That could result in a person who has accessed abortion care being contacted about an access application, causing distress or concern regarding the potential release of their personal information. The standalone exemption precludes that from happening. Essentially, at the moment, it is at the discretion of an officer in the agency. This clause will remove that discretion.

Ms L. METTAM: How does this provision about freedom of information for abortion information compare with other states?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Western Australia will be the first state to introduce a standalone exemption for the FOI act.

Ms L. METTAM: Will information such as age, gestation and the types of abortion practice still be captured under this act? What will the significant exclusions be?

Ms A. SANDERSON: The aggregated information that the Chief Health Officer will collect will not be captured by this provision. It will still be collected for the purposes of service planning and data, but the requirement for certain information and data to be collected and the exemptions of certain data that will not be collected is not captured under this provision. It will still be collected by the Chief Health Officer. This will allow the ability for any other outside third party to access that information.

Ms L. METTAM: The reason I am asking is that the information captured by the Chief Health Officer, which we have asked some questions about, is helpful information in relation to trends. Will that information be publicly available, particularly considering that there will be some restrictions under freedom of information?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Aggregated data is important for service planning. There will be no requirement for it to be published under this act and there will be no prohibition for it to be published under this act. It could be requested through the usual processes of questions on notice, for example, as is the case now. All those principles around privacy and so forth would be very carefully adhered to in the release of that information. Useful information for service planning does not necessarily need to be confidential. Having said that, it would obviously also have to be very carefully aggregated so as not to identify individuals, particularly in regional and remote areas.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 24 put and passed.

Clause 25: Act amended —

Ms L. METTAM: This clause deals with the Guardianship and Administration Act. As I understand it, this amendment is about the appeal from the tribunal's decision relating to the consent to and the performance of an abortion. Can the minister explain the principle around this amendment?

Ms A. SANDERSON: The bill will repeal section 334 of the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911 that requires that for an abortion to be lawful, the woman upon whom it is performed must give informed consent. The section defines "informed consent" to include the provision of counselling and information to the woman by a medical practitioner.

Prospect of repeal of informed consent provisions in section 334 led to consideration of a new decision-making regime for adults without capacity who seek an abortion. The new provisions are based on the premise that guardians and other responsible people should not be permitted to unilaterally consent to an abortion on behalf of a person who lacks the decision-making capacity. This is due to the particular implications of such a procedure and the possibility of a conflict of interest between the guardian when one has been appointed and a represented person or person who lacks decision-making capacity. It is more appropriate in the case of an abortion decision to require an application to be made to the State Administrative Tribunal to provide consent. This is the position in other Australian states and territories with regard to abortion for people who lack decision-making capacity.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT AND REPEAL BILL 2023 — IMPLEMENTATION

513. **Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:**

I refer to the minister's abject failure in developing and implementing the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, including the inability to take seriously community concerns and a failure to educate and properly consult.

- (1) Noting that the minister's Aboriginal Heritage Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 2023 and amendments to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 were drafted in a matter of days, how can the community have confidence that this bill will not also have fatal flaws?
- (2) Following the passage of the bill, will there be education sessions on the amended legislation and will the minister work with the implementation group on its rollout?
- (3) How much will the rollout of the amended act cost Western Australian taxpayers?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

(1)–(3) As the member would know through his two briefings on the proposed bill, the new legislation builds on what has been in existence since 1972. Most of what is in the bill has been there since 1972. One major amendment to the section 18 consent process requires the transfer of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council into the new regime. They are the two major amendments to the bill.

It is not a complex bill. The member has received briefings. There will be consideration in detail. We are engaged in consultation with various groups now. The implementation group will remain. As with the 2021 act, consultation will be demand-driven. If further education or consultation is needed, that will take place. As the member very well knows, this is something that he supported. This is something that the farming industry is well aware of. Industry representatives said that they had worked with this act since 1972 and were happy with it. The mining industry has worked with it and it is happy with it. Developers have worked with it, and they are happy with it. I have not found anyone in major disagreement with respect of what is proposed.

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT AND REPEAL BILL 2023 —
IMPLEMENTATION

514. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

I have a supplementary question. How can be there any confidence in the minister's capacity to oversee the education of the community coming hot off the back of the botching of his last round?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I will do what needs to be done to ensure that those who do not understand the act that has been in existence since 1972 do understand it, and everyone said that they have worked with that and they understood it —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Dr A.D. BUTI: The community has been consulted on the amendments being made. There will be further consultation with community, and if education needs to be rolled out, it will be rolled out.

Visitors — City of Perth Operations Team

The SPEAKER: Just before I give the member the call, I acknowledge staff from the City of Perth operations team in the public gallery today. Welcome to question time in Parliament.

METRONET — SOUTHERN SUBURBS RAIL PROJECTS

515. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the record investment in public transport and infrastructure by the Cook Labor government including significant rail projects in Perth's southern suburbs.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the delivery of the transformative Victoria Park–Canning level crossing removal project and the construction of the Metronet Thornlie–Cockburn Link and Byford rail extension?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how these significant infrastructure projects are being facilitated?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. We are embarking on the biggest transformation of the Armadale rail line in history. Some believe that the infrastructure in that corridor should never be touched again and it should be left alone—then others like us believe in investing in key areas in our network, including the Armadale line corridor. That is why we are investing in the transformation of the Armadale rail line corridor; removing level crossings through Victoria Park, Cannington and Armadale; building the extension to Byford, member for Darling Range; creating a new train station in Armadale, member for Armadale; and completing the Thornlie–Cockburn Link, members Southern River and Thornlie—a massive transformation.

As part of that transformation, we need to shut down the Armadale rail line up to Victoria Park for up to 18 months. To make sure that we minimise the disruption to the community, we will be undertaking seven new bus routes and five enhanced existing bus routes with 100 extra buses on the network. We are building technology across the system, including monitoring traffic to ensure that incidents can be responded to with a new incident response team. We are moving transit officers from the train line to the bus network and enhancing the security along that line by 20 per cent. We are building 1.2 kilometres of new infrastructure across the route to give buses priority. Members, that is a massive transformation. Although disruption is hard, I know that everyone in that corridor accepts and understands that this is the investment of a lifetime in that area. New train stations and the removal of those boom gates will save people time across the network. Throughout Victoria Park and Cannington, we are opening up six hectares of land for new community open space.

I know that the Liberal Party is opposed to the project.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They don't like it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They do not like rail networks. The Nationals in particular hate trains. I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition is here. Members will remember that when I go through the car park, I notice the stickers members have on their cars. I found a hat that the Leader of the Opposition dropped on his way from the Rockingham by-election. He seems to drop a lot of things in that car park, but a Liberal Party hat!

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's got your DNA on it. Don't you worry!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Luckily we have his DNA on record. Here is his hat.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition!

Mr R.S. Love: You made that yourself.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am very good with craft, member. I helped my daughter with her Book Week costume today. But I should have started with saying "Go, Matildas!" for tonight. It will be an incredible time and I know that the whole nation will be behind the Matildas. What an incredible game it will be this evening against our old enemies. I am already excited and nervous. We wish them all the best and hope to see them get to the World Cup final against Spain. We wish them all the best. They have done Australia proud. They have done us all proud. It has been an incredible time for the nation. It has captured the nation's spirit and we will be supporting our incredible team 100 per cent.

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL — NEONATAL SURGICAL PROCEDURES

516. **Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the minister's comment, when defending her decision to locate the new women's and babies' hospital at the Fiona Stanley Hospital site, some 20 kilometres away from Perth Children's Hospital, that around 40 to 45 babies a year may need surgery within the first hour of life. Joanne Beedie from Helping Little Hands, an advocacy group that supports parents of premature babies, said it was upsetting that these numbers were being used as justification, "as if those lives are less valuable than any other child's". Yesterday, the minister called this scaremongering. What does the minister say to Joanne Beedie and other mothers of premature babies who found her comments ignorant, ill-informed and disrespectful?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I find the member's commentary distasteful. Her comments are distasteful and personal and do no justice to this debate or discussion. I have been very clear that we are going to get the best possible outcomes for women and their babies with these decisions. The subtext of the member's comments is incredibly distasteful, but that is in keeping with her modus operandi, so no-one is surprised by that. The government has made a very difficult decision around how to deliver the best possible hospital for women across Western Australia, because regional women with acute needs will also need this hospital. We were provided with a 200-page document that outlined the insurmountable risks to other parts of the health system in delivering this project. No reasonable and responsible government would accept those risks on behalf of taxpayers. We are working with the very highly specialised, highly skilled clinicians who are involved in neonatal surgery around the safest and best way to do this, given the concerns around the extra 15 minutes of transport. These babies are currently transported through our world-class Newborn Emergency Transport Service, which has received a multimillion-dollar investment over the last few years. NETS safely transfers babies from Broome, Kalgoorlie and Esperance—all over the state—to tertiary hospitals in Western Australia. There is a concern about increasing the travel time by another 15 minutes as these babies are very fragile. We are working with clinicians around what we need to do to provide the safest environment for mothers and babies. I caution the member about the tone of her commentary and exactly what she is accusing me of; it is becoming distasteful and personal.

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL — NEONATAL SURGICAL PROCEDURES

517. **Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:**

I have a supplementary question. How can the minister stand by this decision when the justification—the Infrastructure WA report—did not consider clinical outcomes?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

The business case is around the deliverability of the infrastructure and it outlines the time frame, risks and sequence of work. That is the reality. All of the former clinical services planning was right to identify the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site. That is why we went ahead with that site, because that was the best-case scenario. However, the infrastructure experts who will have to build the hospital and keep Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Perth Children's Hospital running said, "You can't do this."

Ms L. Mettam: It was a desktop report.

Ms A. SANDERSON: The Leader of the Liberal Party should read the whole document.

Ms L. Mettam: I did.

Ms A. SANDERSON: All 180 pages?

Ms L. Mettam: I have.

Ms A. SANDERSON: No, she has not. If she has read that business case and hand on heart says that she would continue, she is reckless and irresponsible.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

518. **Ms C.M. COLLINS to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's successful delivery of five FIFA Women's World Cup matches in Perth.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government will support major sporting events, such as the FIFA Women's World Cup, by strengthening its investment in sporting infrastructure and community sports?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how Western Australians can support the Matildas in tonight's semifinal?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

- (1)–(2) Yes, I can. If my maths from Northam Senior High School is right, I reckon it is about three hours and 45 minutes before the big kick-off takes place and we will see the magnificent Matildas take on England. We are all behind them and hope they will be successful tonight and go on to the final against Spain later this week. As the Deputy Premier said, all of Australia is behind them. It is a tremendous achievement for all the host cities, including those in the eastern states and Auckland in New Zealand, that hosted the preliminaries, the elimination series and, now, the finals. We have done very, very well in Perth. There were great numbers at what was called, during FIFA, the round stadium—sorry, not round; the rectangular stadium! It is not round; it is rectangular. I am an expert in sport; ask me anything! We had nearly sell-out crowds, with more than 85 000 people going to those five games. We had tremendous attendances, so we played our part.

To answer the last part of the question, if people want to come out tonight, we really encourage them to do so. People can go to the rectangular stadium, or HBF Stadium as we can now call it again. Gates 1 and 4 will open at five o'clock. People can bring their picnic rugs. They can bring whatever they like, except chairs.

Ms R. Saffioti: And no footballs.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They cannot bring footballs either. That is about all. Food and beverages will be available. It is going to be great if people want to go there. We expect a few thousand people to turn up. The Fan Festival experience, which has been operating out of Forrest Place for the last couple of weeks during the preliminary games, has been hugely successful. The Deputy Premier has been down there nearly every night! The piazza in Northbridge will also show the game on the big screen. Get down and support them. I am very appreciative of my very good friend the manager of opposition business; we contrived last night that the house will adjourn at six tonight, because we knew that the member for Cottesloe, who is handling private members' business, was probably not going to have much of an audience if it went past six. We will also be glued to our screens.

What has this done for football in Western Australia? Of course, there has been a huge investment in HBF Stadium to upgrade it to FIFA standard. That will be a great legacy for future matches of all codes that might be played at the rectangular stadium. As the member would be well aware, we built and opened the Football Centre in the Cannington electorate. That was a \$46 million investment in football. It means that, after all these years, football finally has a home. That is a tremendous achievement that was committed to by this government. That will be a great legacy for the future. We also upgraded a whole range of facilities across the metropolitan area, including Dorrien Gardens, Kingsway Regional Sporting Complex and Percy Doyle Reserve. I know the facility in the member for Landsdale's electorate received \$2.7 million for upgrades. Of course, Denmark was quartered there during the preliminaries. As the member would also know, we have increased the community sporting and recreation facilities fund—a \$7.5 million increase in the last budget to make it \$20 million a year.

Ms L. Mettam: Like it was before!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What is wrong with you? Have you been sucking on those lemons again? You have, haven't you! You got up this morning, went to the fruit bowl and got one out! Why don't you join in the exaltation of this experience? Why do you criticise great things like \$20 million each year for the CSRFF? Why are you complaining about that? You really do need to get into the spirit of being a Western Australian and supporting Western Australia rather than being so negative. All you do is come in here with a glum look on your face. It is sad.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: This unbridled attack on the member for Vasse is irrelevant to the question and I ask that the minister be brought back to answering the question at hand.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you for the point of order, which, members, I will rule on. The issue here is that the opposition member interjected a number of times and the minister has responded, albeit robustly. Minister.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not know why the member for Vasse is so anti the investment in female sport. That is what we have done: we have invested hugely in female sport so that more girls and young women can play the codes they want to play and get out there and be active. That is what we have done, and we will keep doing it. Even if you keep criticising, we will keep doing it—keep criticising, we will keep doing it; keep criticising, we will keep doing it! All I can say is that we are very proud of the legacy that we will leave as part of being a host city for the FIFA Women's World Cup. Girls and young women will now have access to far more great facilities than they have ever had because of the investment by this government and because we believe that sport is for all and sport should be made available to everybody. We will keep investing money, as we have with legacy items, and as we have with the additional money to the community sporting and recreation facilities fund.

Go the Matildas! We want to see them win. We want to see them win tonight and we want to see them go on to win the world cup!

POLICE — FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TEAMS

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

I refer to figures on the Western Australia Police Force website that across WA family-related offences were up 18 per cent from 2022–23 compared with the year prior and that the number of WAPOL officers dedicated to tackling family and domestic violence fell from 90 in 2020–21 to 87 in 2021–22. Why is it that with family and domestic violence rising in WA the number of WA police officers dedicated to family violence is fewer than it was two years ago?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question because it gives me the opportunity to clarify a couple of things. The member referred to the number of police officers dedicated to family violence teams. In the past, some governments ago, there may have been dedicated individuals who responded as primary responders, but they are not that now. Those teams the member refers to—it is 87.66 FTE; a difference of 1.4 FTE—review all responses to family and domestic violence incidents. As the member would be aware, thanks to the Speaker in her term as the Minister for Police, every police officer in Western Australia responding to an incident has a body-worn camera. They are activated in those instances. The encounters between victims and offenders are recorded and those officers review them to ensure that procedures have been followed. Every single police office in Western Australia is trained in FDV response.

The days of FDV not being considered as a serious offence are long gone. That is a good thing. It means that, increasingly, potential victims of family and domestic violence can feel confident that they can notify police, whereas in the past they may not have done that. They feel confident that they can and they will be treated respectfully, and the offence that they are potentially the victim of will be treated as a serious crime. That is a good thing and that is a part of the contribution to the increase we are seeing. It is not the only thing. FDV is an appalling thing. It was a hidden epidemic. It was something that was not recorded, reported or acknowledged in society. It is a good thing that that has now changed. It is terrible that it is there but it is great that we are increasingly focused on responding to it. I assure the member that there is no removal of resources for that. As she knows, we are training more police officers. They are all being trained in FDV. There are 300 officers at the academy right now, and 1 600 Western Australians and 1 335 international officers have applied to join the Western Australia Police Force. All of them will receive FDV training and all of them will respond appropriately.

POLICE — FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TEAMS

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

I have a supplementary question. Given the minister's response, are we likely to see an increase in the number of those officers? Will the minister commit to additional WAPOL officers or will the status quo remain?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Where the officers go and the nature of their assignment is entirely the responsibility of the commissioner. In this case it is partly that the practice has changed over the years. There was a time when a couple of officers in each subdistrict were dedicated to responding to family and domestic violence. Now, they increasingly train everybody and everyone is assumed to be capable of responding to FDV. Those are specialist officers who assess the contacts and encounters, and determine and confirm that proper procedures are followed. I am aware that within those

numbers, officers are rotated over a period. From my recollection, they do around six to nine months there and then return to other duties so that other officers are afforded the opportunity to build their expertise and knowledge in that role. It is likely that people will move through. I do not know whether they will increase the number; it is up to the commissioner whether it is required.

The SPEAKER: The member for Rockingham with her first question!

SCHOOLS — CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

521. Mrs M. MARSHALL to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's \$1.5 billion public education capital works program that is delivering new and improved facilities across Western Australia. Can the minister outline to the house how the major redevelopments of both Rockingham and Safety Bay Senior High Schools will help all students reach their full potential?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I thank the member for asking me her first question in this place and acknowledge her fantastic inaugural speech last night. The people of Rockingham have selected an incredible candidate to represent them in this house and I look forward to working with her in matters of education and other areas to improve the lifestyle and the future of Rockingham residents.

The member mentioned the \$100 million investment in the Rockingham and Safety Bay Senior High Schools, plus the Rockingham Senior High School Education Support Centre. These are major investments. Rockingham Senior High School was opened in 1971 and Safety Bay Senior High School in 1978, with the education support centre opened in 1999. Much has changed in the design of schools since those days. It was very much necessary to upgrade those facilities at the two high schools and also the ed support centre.

With regard to the \$60 million investment at the Rockingham Senior High School Education Support Centre, a completely new education support building will include classrooms and an internal activity area, a low stimulus room, a therapy room, a sensory room, multipurpose rooms and toilets, and a new bus drop-off area, courtyards and external areas, which is really important in an education support centre environment. The senior high school in Rockingham will have a new technology block comprising materials, technology workshops and a home economics studio, a new sports hall with a fitness centre, storerooms, change rooms and toilets, a new arts and IT learning area that will include visual arts, media and music as well as IT labs. The old sports hall will be converted into a performing arts centre and dance studio and there will be refurbishment of other parts of the school. That will be a major investment in Rockingham Senior High School.

Safety Bay Senior High School is in desperate need of an upgrade. The \$40 million will go towards a new arts learning area, including visual arts media and music, a new sports hall with a fitness centre, storerooms, change rooms and toilets, and a new administration block with the former administration block being used for student services. Safety Bay Senior High School has had a particular focus on improving its student services, so this will be a great advantage and assistance for it. There will also be a conversion of the old sports hall into a drama and cheer dance space. The projects for these three schools—the education support centre has its own principal—will commence construction in 2025 and the completion will be a staged approach starting in 2028. I look forward to being down there with the member for Rockingham to open these new facilities. This is all part of the Cook government's investment in education—a record \$6.4 billion investment in the last budget—which is all part of improving the future of our schoolchildren to ensure that we have a pipeline of skilled workers for the future. I look forward to working with the member on improving education.

ENERGY — SUPPLY

522. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:

The most recent Australian Energy Market Operator's *Gas statement of opportunities* for Western Australia has already forecast a gas shortage in the forward estimates to 2032, with additional strong growth in gas demand fuelled by the premature closure of government coal-fired power stations, delays in future gas projects due to extended approval processes, and the financial insecurity around our two major coal mines.

- (1) What is this government doing to ensure that we do not see a repeat of the requirement for industry to shut down over summer to cope with peak energy demand, as we saw in January this year?
- (2) Is the minister persisting with plans for the forced early shutdown over the government-owned coal-fired power stations in Collie?
- (3) Is the minister still confident that we will not see the state plunged into an energy crisis in the next few years because of his mismanagement of the energy sector?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(3) This is a bizarre question from a man who does not know his own role. I recently saw a letter signed by the member for Cottesloe. On his letterhead, he said that he was the shadow Minister for Energy. Indeed, in his

signature block, he also says that he is the shadow Minister for Energy. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could remind us who the shadow Minister for Energy is, because I thought it was Hon Dr Steve Thomas. In fact —

Dr D.J. Honey: That was an old letterhead!

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: How come it was in his address block? How come a letter that he signed this month states in his address block that he is the shadow Minister for Energy? He is a man who cannot remember his own job title; it is not surprising that he does not understand anything about energy policy in Western Australia.

I just want to point out a few things here. In January this year, there was no energy crisis that forced industry shutdown. What occurred was when Santos was not able to deliver gas to two companies that buy their gas from Santos, those companies then used the flexibility and dynamic nature of Western Australia's energy sector to buy gas to fulfil those needs that were contracted by Santos from Chevron. Chevron's gas supply was extra to the gas supply that Santos was required to provide to its customers. Those two customers made business decisions to not have gas in storage. There were three other large users of natural gas at the same time that were impacted by the three outages caused by mechanical equipment failure at these privately owned gas facilities: Synergy, Alinta Energy and Wesfarmers' Kleenheat. All those companies had gas in storage and were therefore able to manage the issues for that short period while the Wheatstone facility was brought back online.

There are 11 separate points of injection of natural gas in Western Australia; indeed, I note that the North West Shelf facility is running significantly below its nameplate capacity. If there were a genuine crisis of energy supply in Western Australia, the North West Shelf could significantly increase its supply.

I also note that if there were a genuine energy crisis, laws in Western Australia provide enormous powers of intervention to both the Minister for Energy and the Coordinator of Energy. Had those powers needed to be used, they could have been used. But the fact remains that they were never required in January this year.

Now, there is a separate issue. That is what the member got wrong in his preamble. Then he went to the question of the transition of the energy system in Western Australia. Firstly, I want to remind the member for Cottesloe that even after the 2021 election, he was still promoting his plan to close all government-owned coal-fired power stations, not in 2029, but in 2025. That was his policy! He was elected at the last election and he sits in this chamber on the basis of his policy, which was to close every government-owned power station by 2025, and then he comes along and criticises our structured, sensible plan. He also forgets about why we have come up with our structured, sensible plan. We are not going on ideology like he did at the election when he said that hydrogen was the future and that only hydrogen production could supply energy to the south west system here in Western Australia.

Dr D.J. Honey: You know that's not true.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is exactly what you said. Go and read your own documentation! I point out to the member that the reason we are retiring the coal-fired power plants is they no longer fit into the energy system in Western Australia.

Ms J.J. Shaw: And he was on the committee!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He knows this!

Ms J.J. Shaw: He knows this!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is exactly right. This is the thing.

Ms J.J. Shaw: He made the recommendations!

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is absolutely true that he was on the committee that made these very recommendations. No wonder we are implementing the suggestions that he had. I just put to the member that at some point he is going to have to stop listening to the people who look at the past and start thinking about the future. We have the big battery already working in Kwinana, the Kwinana battery energy storage system 2 under construction, and CBESS down in Collie is awaiting planning approvals, but long-lead items have already been purchased and the contractor has already been arranged. Neoen is also building a battery in Collie. Another company—it is up to that company, because it is a listed company—is pending for its battery. The electrical system in Western Australia is transitioning at pace. We have the north west interconnected system. For the first time in 40 years, we finally got agreement to an integrated energy scheme in the north west. The achievements in the energy system here on this side of the Parliament are legendary, and the member sits there, advertising his ignorance and showing his lack of understanding.

ENERGY — SUPPLY

523. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. When will the minister reveal the detailed plan to demonstrate that we can have a reliable power supply with the Collie power stations closed?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

The member must not read the budget papers.

Dr D.J. Honey: That is not a plan.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I do not understand. This shows the depth of the ignorance of the member for Cottesloe. No wonder he was dumped as shadow Minister for Energy! The Australian Energy Market Operator operates the electricity system in the south west interconnected system. What we are doing in our investments is replacing the coal-fired power stations in Collie, and we have a detailed plan. It is not some future plan; it is currently being implemented. Let us understand that KBESS 1 and 2 and CBESS will provide 800 megawatts of instantaneous energy capacity. That is more than is currently available in the coal-fired power stations.

Dr D.J. Honey: For a couple of hours. Where is your modelling? Where is it?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As I keep saying to the member, it is just mind-blowing how little he understands about the electricity system. It will have 800-megawatt capacity. I am not talking about its storage capacity; I am talking about its instantaneous capacity to discharge electricity. That means it will have more capacity to put electricity into the system than the coal-fired power stations combined. Remember, peak time is only a few hours. That is why the Australian Energy Market Operator has not asked for long-term energy storage. When the Australian Energy Market Operator recommends—it is the one that makes those decisions—that we need long-term storage, it will go to market and ask for it. At the moment, it is asking for what is called four-hour storage, and that is exactly what the private sector and the public sector are providing. As I keep saying, we are replacing the capacity of the coal-fired power stations. We are going from systems that need 24 hours, 48 hours or three-days' notice to come online to systems that are instantaneously available. It is because the system is based on renewable energy. We are going from one-third renewable to two-thirds renewable within seven years. This is a great celebration. People come from around the world to see how we are managing this transition because we are ahead of the transition in the rest of the world. I understand that the member is stuck in the past, but that is no excuse for ignorance.

PORT INFRASTRUCTURE

524. Mr K.J.J. MICHEL to the Minister for Ports:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to expand and build on the capacity of Western Australian ports.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's investment in port infrastructure is allowing record levels of export pretty clearly in the Pilbara?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government's strong management of Western Australian ports is powering the nation's economy?

Mr D.R. MICHAEL replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) It is great to advise the house on the continued success of Pilbara ports. I am sure members will be aware of the incredible importance of the ports under the Pilbara Ports Authority in Port Hedland, Dampier and Ashburton, especially, and the activity that happens at these ports and how critical it is for both our state's and our country's economy. During the pandemic, Australia depended on Western Australian ports and its customers to maintain export activity and the flow of royalties and revenue to our economy. This was no small feat, given the global impacts of the pandemic on shipping and supply chain management. Since 2020, the Pilbara Ports Authority has seen record volumes of export commodities through its ports. The majority has been iron ore but there are also a significant exports of other commodities, including other minerals and liquefied natural gas, which generate vital income for the country, the state and the Pilbara region.

During the 2020–21 financial year, total Pilbara ports throughput volumes exceeded 720 million tonnes for the first time. In 2021–22, this grew to 733 million tonnes. Today I report that last financial year there was a further three per cent increase to a record 752 million tonnes exported through Pilbara ports. The value of the goods handled by Pilbara ports is now estimated at \$164 billion, which is an incredible number. Pilbara ports handles nearly all Australia's iron ore exports. In fact—this statistic is unbelievable—they account for almost 44 per cent of the world's total seaborne iron ore trade, most of that coming out of Port Hedland. To give an indication of the scale of this task, that is over 200 million tonnes of product a day. The ports continue to provide a reliable, flexible and consistent service to their customers despite

the complexity, tidal restrictions and frequent weather interruptions, especially in the wet season. There is an average of 48 vessel movements a day, carrying up to 200 000 tonnes each. The port of Port Hedland is the busiest of Pilbara ports, and responsible last year for 566 million tonnes of exports alone.

I was recently able to visit the Town of Port Hedland with the member and Premier Cook. We took the opportunity to observe the passage of ships through the channel from the Pilbara Ports Authority control tower, which was an unbelievable sight. The whole operation is carefully managed with what I thought was a pretty modest team, with the cooperation of port users, coordinated by the port authority's harbourmaster so that the absolute maximum volume of shipping can be supported. The shipping movements are so tightly managed that the gap between the hull of the ship and the channel bottom can be as little as the length of a mobile phone, which is absolutely unbelievable. Unlike other states, Western Australia has maintained public ownership of the port authorities, something that we know the Liberal Party tried to chip away at the end of its last term. Thankfully, that was not able to happen.

The successful operation of the Pilbara Ports Authority is continuing to break throughput records in close partnership with the private sector, its customers and terminal operators. I thank and congratulate the Pilbara Ports Authority, its customers and especially all those workers who had a part in breaking another record and for their contribution to Western Australia's and Australia's economies.

REX AIRLINES — INTRASTATE AIR ROUTES

525. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Transport:

I, too, as shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation on behalf of the opposition wish the Matildas all the best for tonight.

I refer to the recent announcement that Rex Airlines has been awarded for five years exclusive rights to operate on select regional Western Australian routes, which are fully regulated by the state government, including routes between Perth and Albany, Esperance, Carnarvon and Monkey Mia.

- (1) Noting the concerning trend of significant delays and unreliability of services provided, what specific time lines and measures have been put in place to ensure that Rex Airlines complies with its obligations to provide residents, medical professionals, and accommodation and tourism providers with a service they can rely on?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house what steps she will take as minister if Rex Airlines fails to meet its obligations?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) I find the whole issue of aviation deeply interesting. During COVID we saw a lot of airlines struggle. Post COVID we are now seeing a massive bounce back in travel around the world, across the nation and within WA. As a result, many airlines have been struggling with getting pilots back in their planes and also with aircraft availability. As a result, all airlines, whether people have experienced this nationally, internationally or domestically, have had a level of cancellations and some on-time performance, whether departures or arrivals, has not been what is expected. It is an issue across the economy and the aircraft sector.

In relation to areas that only one flight, or aircraft, services, any issues of cancellation and on-time performance are exacerbated because people do not have another choice. I understand and respect the views from many in Albany, in particular, and Esperance and the representatives from those areas. The member for Albany and Hon Shelley Payne have raised some of the community's concerns with Rex's performance. But in looking and considering the independent assessment of the tender process, I asked to look at the cancellation rates and the on-time performance rates of this airline compared with others operating in WA. It is not the worst. In some cases, its on-time performance or cancellation rates are a lot lower than others. Its on-time performance is comparable to others.

Mr R.S. Love: On those particular routes, though?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is the only ones flying those routes.

Mr R.S. Love: You are talking about national things, are you?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, I am talking about on-time performance and cancellation statistics in WA.

As I said, Rex is not the worst. In some cases it is the top one or two in relation to its performance. I will say, the problem in these ports is that it is the only service, so people feel the impact of any cancellation because there are no other services. I understand the community concern.

In WA we have had, in a sense, an immature aviation market. We are trying to create more activity across WA. The good thing is that our airfare cap scheme is seeing more activity. As I outlined yesterday, under the airfare

cap scheme, 151 000 flights have been booked. If we look at the level of activity across WA, intrastate activity is actually up. There is more activity and more people are flying in WA now than ever because of the cap scheme. There is massive demand on pilots and aircraft.

I think the member for North West Central highlighted that in some of these markets, there was only one tenderer. I would say that that is the number one point. We can have either no service or this service. The second point is that I spoke directly to the managing director about a couple of things, including its communication. I think it needs to communicate better, in particular when there is a cancellation or a performance issue. It needs a better presence and better communication in WA. I have spoken to the managing director, and I understand that senior executives will be coming to WA in the next two weeks to inform themselves better about how they should communicate.

We talked about capacity and contingency. In many instances, if there is a maintenance issue with an aircraft, an airline wants to have redundancy and another aircraft to fly. It has also purchased, over the past six months, a fly-in fly-out charter, and it has now purchased another charter that will help expand capacity in the Carnarvon route, for example. That will also provide some redundancy in its network.

Rex is also working to attract more pilots. I think it has hired 60 additional pilots, and it is giving priority to WA services ahead of over-east services. With all those considerations and because of the decision-making of the independent assessment panel, Rex has held onto those areas.

I have a view that the more services and airlines we have operating in WA, in particular in regional WA, the better. I have a view that we have to increase the number of people flying and support more services across the state because I believe that air services play a key role in WA. That is why we are creating subsidised airfares and will continue to work with airlines.

Going forward, there are targets for on-time performance and cancellations, as well as direct communication. I will say that Rex's performance is in line with the market, and I am not about to basically cut from WA an airline that sometimes is the only airline willing to service some of our communities.

The SPEAKER: I will note that, given the time, this will be the last question, given that I want to get on to private members' business.

REX AIRLINES — INTRASTATE AIR ROUTES

526. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Transport:

I have a supplementary question. In the interest of transparency, will the minister commit to tabling the performance of all airlines operating regulated routes against their KPIs every quarter?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I will seek advice about regulated routes versus unregulated routes because I think the member should compare all of them.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics publishes everything.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, it would do. I am actually disappointed in people wanting to attack an airline that, honestly, was the easiest to deal with during COVID. It kept going. I remember during COVID, when every other airline said that they would not fly in WA, one airline stood by WA and kept going. I will say that.

As for communications, it was the one that took our phone calls and kept flights into key areas. I think Rex's management has acknowledged some of the community concerns, in particular about communication, and I understand it has issued a statement acknowledging the respect the WA government has given to Rex and that its duty is, of course, to continue performing.

I will not execute airlines and drop services because then, next week, the member would be coming in saying, "Why hasn't Carnarvon got a service?" That is what the member would be saying. In public policy, we are always making judgements. There is never a perfect answer, but there is the best answer, and we have to judge all the competing issues. That is why I am confident about this decision. I do not want to leave areas like Carnarvon without a service. If the member's policy is to say that this airline should not operate in WA and that Carnarvon should not have a service, that is his policy. I do not think it is a policy that the Nationals WA would want to execute in Carnarvon, but if the member is saying that he wants to send the only airline willing to fly to Carnarvon back over east, that is his policy, not ours.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Madam Speaker, I have a very brief question, if I may have another question.

The SPEAKER: That was a supplementary. Sorry, I am not going to allow further questions. I have said that. I note that normally we do not have an MPI on a Wednesday. It is often on a Tuesday. You are entitled to have it today, but in order to move onto private member's business by four o'clock, I really need to bring the MPI on now. That is the rationale for it.

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL — RELOCATION*Matter of Public Interest*

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

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

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [2.55 pm]: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To clarify, the reason the opposition is moving this motion today is in response to the government's request to allow for the inaugural speech of the new member for Rockingham.

The SPEAKER: Can we pause for a moment, please? There is too much noise in the house. Those who are leaving, please leave. Thank you.

Ms L. METTAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have spoken about this issue at length in this place. We on this side of the house will continue to do so to ensure the best outcomes are delivered for our most vulnerable, who do not have a voice. It is undeniable that when the Labor government made its captain's call to shift the women's and babies' hospital to the Murdoch centre —

The SPEAKER: Member, I am loath to interrupt you, but could you just move the motion standing in your name?

Ms L. METTAM: Sorry. I thought I had. As a matter of public interest, I move —

That this house condemns the WA Labor government for ignoring its own business case into the new women's and babies' hospital, which recommends Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre as the preferred site, and joins health experts, clinicians and advocacy groups in urging the government to reverse this dangerous decision.

The SPEAKER: You could just move the motion standing in your name. That is just a formality that is required under the standing orders, but please go ahead.

Ms L. METTAM: Thank you. I will try again. As I have stated, I have spoken in this house and in public at length.

Ms A. Sanderson: But she hasn't moved it.

The SPEAKER: She has. It has been moved.

Ms L. METTAM: I did. It is all moved. It is undeniable that when the decision was made in April this year, it was met with absolute shock by clinicians, doctors and advocacy groups. The AMA was astounded, stating —

No consultation with clinical or consumer groups occurred before the announcement abandoning the QEII plan.

That is my understanding as well. I continue to receive emails from medical and health staff saying that very senior health staff were extremely embarrassed because they did not know that the government and the Premier at the time were going to make the announcement of the abrupt shift to the new hospital site. The minister was less than apologetic for not consulting with health workers about the decision. She said —

“When you're faced with irrefutable evidence and fact, there's no amount of consultation that will change those facts,” ...

“And the fact is, these risks cannot be reasonably mitigated.

“I realise that this came as a surprise to people. I think the vast majority of the community want us to get on with building our women's and newborns' hospital.”

The feedback that I have heard from clinicians and from the broader community is —

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: Interruptions are not being invited. They are distracting, and they are unhelpful to the debate. I ask that you ask the member for Burns Beach to desist.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member. I shall not uphold that point of order, but if the member could cease those interjections, it would be appreciated. Carry on, Leader of the Opposition.

Debate Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: Clinical outcomes are the reason there has been so much concern. The reason this is underpinned by location is quite simply that babies who have to be transferred to a specialist neonatal intensive care unit have poorer neurological outcomes that are lifelong, with transport itself being a contributing factor. In the house today, the minister talked about a 15-minute trip between Perth Children's Hospital and Fiona Stanley Hospital. I would

say it would be significantly longer than that. The additional 20 kilometres that the government is now proposing along a busy freeway will be a significant challenge to those babies who need immediate care. Helicopters are not an option due to the vibrations. We are talking about the most fragile babies. Karen Simmer, the ex-ICU lead at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women spoke on behalf of clinicians who could not speak up at the time. I quote —

“Transporting critically sick infants does increase the risks of things going wrong and unfortunately for this very vulnerable population, that includes death or damage to their brain,” Professor Simmer said.

“It’s totally amazing that with all the wealth of expertise we have at King Edward and the children’s hospital that none of these people were involved in this radical change of decision.”

...

“These aren’t just babies in a little cot next to their mother having tube feeding, these are intensive care patients on life support, often needing surgery, even open-heart surgery.

She talks about there being 100 babies at King Edward or 2 000 patients over the last 10 years who have needed to be transferred.

The tri-located facility supporting adults, women and newborns, and paediatrics has had bipartisan support for two decades. This was considered gold standard for best practice care. It was supported by the Reid review and Jim McGinty under the former government.

Ms A. Sanderson: You junked it!

Ms L. METTAM: The proposed new facility at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital —

Ms A. Sanderson: You threw it in the bin when you came to government!

Ms L. METTAM: The minister is throwing this in the bin.

The proposed new facility at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital with Perth Children’s Hospital was recommended in the Reid review, commissioned under former health minister McGinty, and had received bipartisan support since. The logic was that seriously ill newborns could quickly transfer to Perth Children’s Hospital ICU. The proposed design was to have these facilities adjacent with an overpass linking all three to provide a world-class range of specialities, also adding to the research capacity at the site. When the government decided not to pursue this preferred option, there was much appetite to see what the evidence was and the business case that underpinned this decision.

Ms J.L. Hanns interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: The member did not listen to my earlier comments and reference to Karen Simmer. We are talking about critically ill babies who have already been born at King Edward hospital. I have already touched on the risk associated with helicopters as well.

To be clear, the project vision for the women and newborn service relocation project was developed in consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders. I quote the business case —

To enable the Women and Newborn Health Service to deliver world-class, innovative and comprehensive health care services to women, newborns, families and the community of Western Australia.

This would enable the state to build capacity at Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, but also to ensure Western Australia was not the only state in Australia to have a tri-located facility. The business case states —

WNSRP will support contemporary models of care for women and newborns, strengthen integration of services with specialist adult and paediatric services at QEIMC, enhance safety and quality of care, and further embed education and research into clinical practice.

Incredibly, the business case that was released last week does not actually support the government’s decision to abandon these plans. As I have stated in this place, Fiona Stanley Hospital is not even mentioned. I quote the business case again —

The Preferred Option is a defined scope of the site and Reference Design for the relocation of the services, including the Enabling Works necessary for services that are required to move to facilitate the construction of the nWNH, and SCGH refurbishment works required to support the project.

...

The north option, on the site of the existing SCGH E Block, was determined to be the preferred site due to its clear alignment with a future proofing strategy for QEIMC.

I will keep going. The project’s objective is about —

... improving safety and quality of care for women and newborns by removing the need for critical care transfers and reducing the distance and complexity of remaining transfers.

According to the business case, this site was considered along with a number of recommendations. It was about enabling the separation of construction related activities and daily campus traffic operations. It also considered major elements and minimal disruption. That is why this site was decided as the preferred location. The current Premier, the Minister for Health at the time, stated that just because this project was challenging did not mean it was not the right thing to pursue.

Faced with a business case that favours the QEII site, the government elected to get Infrastructure WA to assess the issues after the decision was made. What I find even more extraordinary about members of the government's response, which they certainly lent on in their media response last week as opposed to the business case provided, was that they ignored their own assessment guidelines and the business case provided, which had this clear recommendation of the QEII site and instead focused on a letter provided by the director general from the Department of Health, which was dated 25 July, some months after the decision had already been made.

This letter and its attachments were provided to Infrastructure Western Australia three months after the decision was already made to move the hospital. What choice did IWA possibly have but to endorse the decision? Furthermore, the IWA report—a thin document in comparison; a desktop report that this government likes to lean on—did not take into account the clinical considerations of this decision. The business case highlights that risks can be managed and mitigated. I quote again —

Lessons learned from recent projects completed on the QEIIIMC such as the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, PathWest, the Ralph and Patricia Sarich Neurosciences Research Institute ...

It goes on, illustrating that appropriate planning can minimise disruption and avoid adverse events. For the time line, the business case also highlights that the preferred option would be completed by 2034. The minister was quite correct when she stated the construction will not commence until 2028; she had read at least that much of the business case. However, to claim it would take decades is simply astounding. In terms of the cost, it is \$228 million. When we are talking about a world-class facility, which will support women and newborns for decades to come, every Western Australian has every right to question why that should be used as an excuse at all.

I pointed to the announcement that was made last week and some very real concerns that were raised by Helping Little Hands, which has followed this project as a key advocacy team. Joanne Beedie stated about 200 babies per year required time-critical transport to Perth Children's Hospital where the state's most specialised paediatric services are based. She also raised the issue about Perth Children's Hospital being the only hospital in the state with a concentration of subspecialty medical staff that are required by sick babies and how it is unlikely these services could be duplicated or extended to Fiona Stanley Hospital. The Australian Medical Association Western Australia was also quite astounded by the comments made by government. Its president, Michael Page, accused the government of being naive in its defence of the Murdoch plan and said —

“The premier and the health minister have both stated that neonatal surgery can be performed at Fiona Stanley Hospital if and when required. That is news to the pediatric surgeons of Perth,” ...

“It also shows a naivety as to how pediatric surgery is performed.

I could go on. We heard from Perth parents Sarah and Brad Girvan about the importance of co-location or the close proximity of King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women to Perth Children's Hospital when it came to the treatment of their son Noah who was born prematurely. I have heard from staff at King Edward and Perth Children's Hospital who are completely distressed. Many are considering resigning if this move goes ahead. Their passion is excellent care for mothers and babies and they feel that they cannot participate in anything that does them more harm than good. That is the feedback that I have received in an email in just the last couple of weeks. Those staff feel that babies were not considered when the government made this decision. The government is now proposing a “patchwork” of obstetric and paediatric services and there is also a shortage of obstetricians, midwives and specialist neonatal intensive care nurses across those current services.

I know that others want to speak, but this raises the question about how this decision was actually made and the evidence underpinning it. We heard about how government is leaning heavily on the desktop report that did not consider clinical or operational considerations. The real concern is that this government is turning its back on a gold standard of care, which has had the support of clinicians, advocacy groups, doctors and medical experts for some time. With the promise of a business case last week we were expecting to get some answers, but it has raised more questions, which is why we are supporting and moving this motion today.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [3.12 pm]: I rise to support this excellent motion from the Leader of the Liberal Party, our shadow Minister for Health, on something that is literally about life and death. I was fascinated to hear the minister use the same Labor tactic again in question time: when a minister cannot answer a question, attack the member who asked it instead. It implied some impropriety on the part of the Leader of the Liberal Party that she should have the temerity to ask a question about a decision that will have massive clinical implications. The Leader of the Liberal Party talked about the lived experience of parents whose child was at risk and the concern that the decision the minister is making will put more children at risk. The minister said that she was concerned about the tone of

the question. The critical question here is: is the minister concerned about the patients or is this a thought bubble of the government that was made on the spur of the moment that the government is desperately trying to subsequently justify? As I said, attacking the Leader of the Liberal Party for her very reasonable question highlights the minister's sensitivity for something that she cannot actually justify.

If the minister is relying on this tawdry analysis provided by Infrastructure Western Australia to justify her decision, what an absolute disgrace. The minister has said that we on this side have concerns about Infrastructure WA—yes, we do. I remember vividly the first report that Infrastructure WA delivered apparently on the infrastructure of this state. It spent millions of dollars on, and goodness knows how many hours, going through that process and came out with a report that said, “You know what? These are the sorts of things we have to look at and someone should look into it.” That was in its first report that cost millions of dollars. This is a superficial analysis that does not withstand scrutiny.

I will go to the very start of the report. Infrastructure WA was told what to find at the start. The letter it was sent told it what to find, and that is summarised under point 1, “Purpose”. Infrastructure WA was not asked to consider an open analysis of two options, no, but to —

consider the risks outlined in the Business Case/Project Definition Plan ... for the new WBH option at the QEIIMC ...

It was told to look at that and then evaluate the decision to select the Fiona Stanley Hospital precinct. It was told to find all the problems. Guess what? It delivered on what it was told to do.

I get groans from the other side when I come in here and say that I have actually experienced a few things in my life before I came into Parliament. A number of members of Parliament have not had much experience outside the world of politics, but in my previous roles I have had a lot of experience with major capital projects and their delivery. I will not go on at length about that, but I do have the capacity to recognise what is a superficial effort when I see it. This review is a superficial effort. I will go back to the start of this process.

Just imagine a government that is making a decision that will have massive clinical implications—in fact, it is a life and death decision, given the time that it will take to get this new site up and running and the existing expertise at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. The government has promised that somehow it will magically procure all the required services at Fiona Stanley Hospital, as has already been pointed out by the Leader of the Liberal Party. The experts, the people who actually know what they are talking about—not a minister sitting in here and not the Premier when he made that thought bubble announcement back in April—are saying that that will not be achieved. This is a life and death decision. Imagine a government saying that it is going to look at this option but not consider the clinical implications. For goodness sake! That should be at the top of the list. I would have thought that the health of those women and, in particular, those young babies would be the number one priority. Apparently not! If it were not so serious, it would be a joke. I know that some members are students of *Yes Minister*. This is like the episode in which a hospital was awarded the best hospital of the year, but it had no patients. That is the calibre of this situation. It is the best place, but do not worry about the patients. Imagine that! If it were not so serious, it would be a joke.

I will go into a little bit of detail on this, but it will take far more time than we have. For a start, I was absolutely dumbfounded to hear the minister quoting capital estimates for this. We have an early definition of the work at the QEII Medical Centre site. There is no way on this God's earth, outside of doing detailed engineering, that the government could have a cost estimate better than plus or minus 30 per cent. In fact, the cost estimate it has done to date is probably plus or minus 50 per cent. What work has it done for Fiona Stanley Hospital? None! The infrastructure folk walked over there, had a bit of a look around, stuck their thumbs up and said, “We reckon” and then the minister has said in this place that one of the reasons this government is going to transfer services from the QEII site to the Fiona Stanley site is because the Fiona Stanley Hospital is a couple of hundred million dollars over. What a farce! Based on the government's record on Metronet and its mismanagement of other capital projects, if this hospital is built for even a fraction of the cost overrun stated, it will be a miracle, but to use a \$200 million difference as justification is farcical. Infrastructure WA could not possibly have done any significant work on the issues involved in the hospital going to the Fiona Stanley Hospital site. I do not think it is comparing apples with oranges; I think it is comparing apples with a tennis ball in Mukinbudin. It is a completely farcical comparison! To say that it gives any credibility to the assessment of this document is a joke. No credible business that compares estimates would publish a paper with their name on it that did that. What has Infrastructure WA gone and done? It found what it was told to find. It was told to go and find problems, so it has made up problems. Who knows? There might be unforeseen ground conditions. There we go! Perhaps there might be an old bomb there. We can think of lots of things that might be there. This has no credibility whatsoever as any sort of analysis; it is superficial at best. Infrastructure WA found the result that the government wanted.

I will touch on something else. Funnily enough, Infrastructure WA said that it could not look at the clinical aspects, but, suddenly, it could look at the transport aspects. There is no doubt that there are constraints on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site, as there are on the Fiona Stanley Hospital site. What was not mentioned

is that Fiona Stanley Hospital is located on the major route for heavy vehicles off Roe Highway. That is what that site intersects with. Imagine all the construction activity and all the vehicles going in there. The report did not mention that, because it was instructed to find problems only with the QEII site.

I will just eat into a moment of the Leader of the Opposition's time to talk about the ridiculous time lines that have been published. What a conflation to say that this will take 20 years. When we look at everything else that will be done on the QEII site, it will take 20 years. That means that this would take 20 years, or even 10 years. When the coalition was in government, we built in substantially less time two major hospitals that transformed our health system in this state. If engineers are saying that they cannot do that work in under 10 years, the government should get new engineers. As I said, I have lived this life. If the minister sits there and accepts that situation, that is ridiculous and a farce. The minister needs to do her job. I will go right to the top: to ignore clinical outcomes is a disgrace!

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.22 pm]: I rise to support this motion by the Leader of the Liberal Party and shadow Minister for Health about the relocation of the proposed women's and babies' hospital to the Fiona Stanley Hospital site—a captain's call from a government. We are becoming accustomed to captain's calls. I remember when this minister was in charge of the environment portfolio and did the survey that led to the captain's call to shut down the forestry industry. This is another unjustified decision by this government. The decision is not backed by science.

I will look very quickly at the background of what happened. We know that a business case was finalised in March. A desktop study was then hastily called by this government to try to make a case to go not to the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site, but to the Fiona Stanley Hospital site. After a hasty analysis of that desktop study, the captain's call to relocate the hospital was made on 11 April. Engagement with clinicians commenced only in May—a month after the discussion had already been had in cabinet and the announcement made. If we look at what happened in estimates in May, the former Premier was quizzed by the member for Central Wheatbelt on what role Infrastructure WA might have. The then Premier went on to say —

Once we publish the business case and it is there for all to see, we can consider that.

He was referring to the referral to Infrastructure WA. He continued —

We will publish the business case before such time as we consider it.

We know that did not happen. We saw the business case at the same time as this very slender recommendation from Infrastructure WA. As the member for Cottesloe has pointed out—a man with considerable experience in this type of engineering situation—this is a very slim analysis. By its own admission, Infrastructure WA said —

Clinical services and operational planning are not within IWA's remit or expertise and related risks have therefore been excluded from this review.

Infrastructure WA said at the very outset of the review that it did not look at the clinical risks and operational planning matters around the running of the hospital. I go back to the point the member for Cottesloe made: this is truly a *Yes Minister* decision. This decision has been made without patients being at the centre of it. I thought the health system was supposed to be a patient-centred system that put patients at the forefront. What we are seeing here is the government putting traffic flow, convenience and cost at the forefront. As the member for Cottesloe quite rightly pointed out, there has not been any quantification of that cost; it is just a wild estimate at this point. To say definitively that there will be \$228 million in extra costs to build at the Fiona Stanley Hospital site rather than the QEII site cannot be sustained by any real analysis. It is another captain's call by this government, which is becoming dangerously used to captain's calls. Now that we have that man in charge, goodness knows what is going to happen!

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [3.26 pm]: In the last 30 minutes, the opposition has personally insulted the director general of Health; personally insulted and called into question the integrity of the experts at Infrastructure WA, an independent statutory authority; personally insulted the competency of the Newborn Emergency Transport Service; and insulted the competence of neonatal specialists who work outside the Child and Adolescent Health Service and Perth Children's Hospital. Great work! It is not a universal position of clinicians. One would think, from listening to the opposition, that this was the only work that went on in this area. This is not a universally held position by clinicians. I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party visited the maternity and neonatal wards at Fiona Stanley Hospital on my encouragement. We facilitated that. When she was there, she did not ask clinicians one single question about the relocation of the hospital.

Ms L. Mettam: That's not true.

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is certainly not the report that I had.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is certainly not the report that I had. I do not want to miss this: let me just remind —

Ms M.J. Davies: Do you think any of your department staff were going to step outside the line when you were listening to everything they said?

Ms A. SANDERSON: The Nationals are on very thin ice when it comes to responsible decisions of government, particularly fiscal decisions and business cases.

Let me just remind the chamber of what the member for Cottesloe said in November 2022—just last year. He said —

The hospital is being located in Nedlands—not on any public transport route—where it will be extremely difficult to access, and where there are already major issues with traffic and parking that affect residents all through the area. Murdoch University would have been a good location for that hospital ...

That was the member for Cottesloe! He also said —

That is where the Liberal government located its hospital.

He said that area would be more accessible to the people of metropolitan Perth. He said of Nedlands —

It is an area that people find extremely difficult to access. We have been through that issue and raised questions in this place ...

That was the member for Cottesloe. The opposition actually stated that Murdoch would be a better site for the women's hospital. I should have tabled with the business case an explanation for the opposition of what a business case is, because we know the opposition did not believe in them and did not do them in government. When members opposite did do them and did not get the answer they wanted, they ignored them completely. A business case is a tool for planning and implementing projects. It is not an options assessment. The Leader of the Liberal Party keeps asking why Fiona Stanley Hospital was not in the business case. It is because it was a business case for the QEII site. It is done by infrastructure and delivery experts on delivering infrastructure on that site. That is what the business case is for. We tabled the business case, which is a new level of transparency in government, because the member's government certainly did not table business cases. In fact, when we came to government and the Minister for Transport requested the business case for the Forrestfield–Airport Link, the former government refused to hand it over. It is not an options assessment. They looked at the options on one site. It is clear that the business case is lost on members opposite. It is 180 pages—the opposition has cherry-picked a few quotes—because we wanted to deliver the project there. The government's full intention was to deliver the project on the QEII site, which is why we did the business case and the project definition plan.

The risks outlined in the business case were insurmountable. When we asked the department to do the business case, it did not tell us what we wanted to hear; it told us the truth. That is the integrity of the public sector. It gives the honest truth, with eyes wide open, of a project the government is embarking on. Importantly, it also informs the tender and the contract so that the government does not inadvertently sign up the state to a multitude of variations, which we saw at Perth Children's Hospital. The former government did not do a proper business case before that project. It changed the bed numbers, the scope and the variations constantly, and it informed the overall cost. That is an important part of the process. Treasuries around the world rely on business cases to make informed decisions about appropriate investment of taxpayer funds. That is the rigours of government. That is the appropriate mechanism of government.

Do members think the government ever wanted to receive a business case that had a multitude of risks and said, "You can't build it here"? What a ridiculous proposition—that somehow the government invited a business case, having made two years of announcements and decisions, that would say, "You can't do it here." That is what we invited. It is an absolutely and utterly absurd proposition. It outlines the risks, the time frames and, of course, the schedule of works. Let us run through the business case.

Three areas are important to note—namely, a significant and unmanageable disruption to services at hospitals already on the site, unacceptable time frame escalation and unacceptable cost escalation. If we go with the first, the unmanageable disruption, it states that at least 32 patient services would be impacted. I quote —

There is a risk that ongoing services and operations at SCGH will be materially and adversely disrupted by construction activities.

The opposition clearly is happy to accept that risk. We would need to decant services from Charlies—there is no room to do this—and the business case looked at the best and safest way to do this. That is the job of the business case. It states —

... there are limited available areas of the required sizes and functional adjacencies within existing SCGH buildings.

We cannot decant the current services, as there is nowhere for them to go. That is what the business case says. We cannot decant current outpatient services. Is the opposition suggesting that we just shut down the outpatient services and say, "No, you can't have your outpatient services leading up to your elective surgery"? That is the risk the opposition is suggesting we accept. The business case states also that progressive development on the QEII site has resulted in an inefficient allocation of land use. The opposition has a newfound commitment to the Reid report, yet the first thing Kim Hames and Colin Barnett did when they were in government was junk it and put it in the bin. The former government maintained all the services at the tertiary site of Royal Perth Hospital, and Perth Children's

Hospital frog-leaped a women's and newborns' facility. Members opposite had no commitment to women and newborns previously. They chose Perth Children's Hospital over that even though King Eddy's was decades past its use-by date. We do not have time on our side because of that decision. It is decades past its use-by date. Members opposite made that call and then made it harder to deliver another tertiary facility there.

There is a long list of issues to consider. I refer members opposite to pages 38, 39 and 81. For the information of the opposition, the plan states that the existing central energy plant chilled water and high-temperature heating hot-water plants are not capable of fully supporting the women's and newborn's development from a capacity, redundancy and operational resilience perspective. It states there are insufficient parking bays to support staff, patients and visitors.

We all know about the contract the former government entered into, so I will not go over that again. The plan identified challenges in overall accessibility and wayfinding for both pedestrians and ambulances—ambulances, member. There were challenges for ambulances accessing two tertiary hospitals. That is apparently a very acceptable risk for the opposition, never mind how urgently those ambulances need to access the hospital. It states further that maintaining essential and safe access to two emergency departments is challenging and may not be reasonably mitigated. It refers to maintaining existing building emergency evacuation egress routes and enabling the safe positioning of tower cranes, hoists, platforms and other scaffolding structures in a way to minimise impact on operations and key access routes and helicopter flight paths; enabling construction-related deliveries, site access, laydown and construction compounds with careful and safe considerations for the rest of the QEII site. The business case refers to —

Maintaining a safe and secure construction site with non-scalable fencing, particularly due to the proximity with ED and the presence of agitated and aroused patients

This is in the business case, members. I put a question to members opposite. It may be hypothetical; I will let them sit on it. Does the opposition support the comprehensive cancer centre being built on the QEII site?

Ms L. Mettam: What's your position on it?

Ms A. SANDERSON: We support it; we are doing a business case. Does the opposition support it?

Ms L. Mettam: We haven't been opposed.

Ms A. SANDERSON: The opposition is not opposed. It cannot support building this hospital at the same time; it cannot possibly do it. If the opposition supports the comprehensive cancer centre, it cannot possibly support building another tertiary hospital on the site at the same time.

Another point in the business case is the unacceptable time frames. The main works go live in 2034. The member for Cottesloe says, "Fire the engineers! Fire the people who will deliver the project. Don't like the advice. Just fire them." What an atrocious and appalling way to treat both public and private sector experts who build the state's infrastructure. King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women is over 100 years old. It has 18 buildings in varying states of condition, most of which are aged and deteriorating and no longer fit for purpose. The people who work at King Edward want a new women's and newborn's hospital. They are decades behind having a new facility because of the decision the opposition made when in government. It criticised the government for investing in King Edward and is now suggesting that we should somehow extend its life even further.

The government is absolutely committed to providing world-class healthcare and we cannot provide it at King Edward forever. We cannot continue to provide it for another decade or two, which is essentially what Infrastructure Western Australia has outlined, not to mention the personal insults of the people involved in developing this infrastructure and claiming that somehow the director general has provided political advice. This is the director general appointed by the former government with a deep commitment to the public health system and a strong sense of integrity. He has commissioned and opened two hospitals and he knows the risks associated with not only building, commissioning and opening two hospitals, but with this particular site, because he has also run Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. I can tell members that when I received the business case, it was not welcome news. As a minister, I received this business case for a project that we had been fully committed to for two years. I lost many, many nights' sleep over this hospital.

The thing I go back to when we make important decisions as a government is the inquiry into the Perth Children's Hospital and the absolute debacle the Liberal-National government made of planning and building. It could not even commission the hospital; the Labor government had to do it. I go back to that. I am determined not to make the same mistakes that members opposite made and sign the WA taxpayer up to unnecessary delays and hundreds of millions of dollars of compensation because of that government's bad contract management and inability to plan. Let us look at that project and some of the similarities that may occur with what happened on that side that we are determined to avoid.

At least there was a business case in 2010. On the back of that, the Liberal government announced that the project would commence in 2013 with practical completion on 30 June 2015. We all know that that was not met. They

said that the project would take two years; it did not take two years. They said that the project would cost \$1.17 billion; it certainly did not cost \$1.17 billion. The project had asbestos in the ceiling and lead in the water, and it took a building commission report for the former government to admit that it had failed to assess those risks throughout the build. It is clear that the Liberal–National government did exactly what members opposite are accusing us of—in government, they only wanted to receive the advice that they wanted to hear.

According to the committee report, the state—the former government—accepted an extremely competitive bid with little margin for error from an entity that it had not previously used to manage construction projects of this scale and this complexity. It accepted the bid at that cost, and the project was not at that cost. We are listening to the experts, we are taking the advice seriously, and we are making an incredibly difficult decision based on that advice.

The report states that the former Liberal coalition government’s project was —

... remarkable for the number of ultimately inaccurate public statements ... concerning the construction program and opening date.

Let us not forget that Dean Nalder, a former senior minister in that government, the Minister for Finance, who was involved in this project, was part of that committee. Again, we will not do that. We will not take on unacceptable risk. No government wants to hear that its project is not going to work, but when it continues down the road of unacceptable risk, it supports a range of things. It is trying to have a bet both ways on the comprehensive cancer centre and the women’s and newborns’ hospital and not actually understanding the landscape that will be created by spreading services out further into the communities.

When the Leader of the Liberal Party says that she does not support the new women’s and newborns’ hospital relocation to the Murdoch Fiona Stanley Hospital precinct, she is also saying that she does not support women and families south of the river, because nearly half the women who use King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women live south and east of the river. She does not support them having services closer to them. Of the women who use King Edward, 65 per cent are there for medical reasons and are not from the local catchment. We are putting those services closer to where they live—north, south, and easier to access from the east. She does not support the expansion of Osborne Park Hospital. She does not care about the northern suburbs. “We do not want more maternity for the northern suburbs”, says the Leader of the Liberal Party!

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: She doesn’t know where it is!

Ms A. SANDERSON: She does not even know where the northern suburbs are.

The leader of the Liberal Party said that Osborne Park Hospital is a community hospital that will require urgent and significant upgrades. If she spent any time out there, she would understand that that is why people like Osborne Park Hospital and that is why they want to have more babies there. It is a community-based hospital with more parking and more access, and that is exactly why people like it. There will be a brand new family birthing centre, we will expand neonate capacity, and we will double the number of maternity beds in that hospital. That is an incredible outcome for the northern suburbs that the Leader of the Liberal Party does not support. She does not support regional women having easier access to a tertiary women’s hospital. She wants to make it harder for them when they come from the Royal Flying Doctor Service airport, and she supports absolute chaos on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site for the next two decades.

That is what she is supporting. She is supporting limited access to ambulances and to Sir Charles Gairdner and Perth Children’s Hospitals. She is making it harder for people with sick children to get to the children’s hospital. I have to say, it is already badly designed. Whoever designed that hospital did not have to get to the emergency department on their own with a sick toddler at two o’clock in the morning. I have done it, and it is diabolical. When you are on your own, in the dark, with a sick child, running to the emergency department, it is already difficult, and there are limited options to resolve that. I will not make the mistakes members on the other side made because we are putting women and babies at the centre of this, and they live in the suburbs. That is where they live and that is where they want the services.

We will resolve the concerns of those clinicians, because there are other clinicians who are also very disturbed by the tone of the Liberal Party.

Ms L. Mettam: Oh, really?

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes.

Ms L. Mettam: Who? Bring them forward!

Ms A. SANDERSON: You do not ask them!

Ms L. Mettam: On the tour, minister, you failed to include the fact that they raised very serious concerns with me about the decision of the government. If you want to bring up that tour, the consultants at King Edward raised very real concerns about that decision.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I am talking about Fiona Stanley Hospital and the excellent clinicians who work there.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Ms A. SANDERSON: I know that the Australian Medical Association is in a very difficult position here, because there are three groups of clinicians.

I think it is an interesting position that the Leader of the Liberal Party is taking because she has never had to make a really difficult decision, but we put women and babies at the centre of this, and they live in the suburbs. I stand by this decision. It was a difficult decision. We will absolutely work with those clinicians to resolve the concerns that they have, and we will deliver a world-class maternity hospital and maternity services closer to where women live.

MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.46 pm]: The member for Cottesloe got to his feet to make a contribution to this debate and beat his chest about what an absolute disgrace this government is for the hard decisions that we have made, but I can tell members honestly that the only disgrace in this chamber is the member for Cottesloe. He wilfully ignores irrefutable facts that are displayed in business cases and reports.

Withdrawal of Remark

Ms L. METTAM: Deputy Speaker, that is unparliamentary language.

Ms A. Sanderson: Which part? I think what you have accused me of is a lot worse, quite frankly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, members! There is no point of order. Carry on.

Debate Resumed

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. He wilfully ignores irrefutable facts and talks about perceived attacks on the Leader of the Opposition; he then turns around in the very next breath and takes a cheap shot at the newest member of Parliament, saying that she has no real-life experience. Just very quickly, for anybody who has worked —

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: I did not say that! The member is misleading the house. I made no such comment about the newest member of Parliament at all.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member. There is no point of order. Carry on, member.

Debate Resumed

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: Thank you. It was the inference that because she had only ever worked in political offices, she had no real-world experience. Let me tell the member: any good member worth their salt or any electoral officer will tell the member that working in an electorate and actually servicing that electorate, which I know is a foreign concept for the member, actually exposes one to a wide gamut of issues and problems that we deal with in our community.

Let us go back to the case at hand. This opposition has just blatantly ignored the business case and what it is. It is a business case for the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site. It is not an options paper on which sites would be best for this project; it is a business case for the QEII site. We are a responsible government that understands the need to balance all aspects and competing demands for a project and to provide the best option on the balance of consideration of all those competing demands. The member can get up and squawk that we have ignored the clinical advice. We have not ignored the clinical advice; it has been taken into account on the balance of other advice. We cannot just build a project based on one piece of advice, unlike the former government. The Langoulant report found that few projects examined by the special inquirer had the benefit of detailed planning before being announced, and too many major projects were undertaken on an ad hoc basis without adequate planning.

We have learnt from the opposition's lessons and we have done adequate planning. We have done the business case. When we made the decision, we had it reviewed by Infrastructure WA, which the Langoulant inquiry called for. In fact, the Leader of the Liberal Party supported the establishment of Infrastructure WA. In her contribution she said —

I would also like to contribute to the debate on the Infrastructure Western Australia Bill 2019, and acknowledge that the opposition supports it.

In fact, the member said that Infrastructure Western Australia would provide an independent voice —

Ms A. Sanderson: They asked for it.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: They asked for it. Here is the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Liberal Party. She went on 6PR last Friday and claimed that IWA's assessment of the new women's and babies' hospital was

“political trickery”. How can it be political trickery if it is providing independent advice? It is glaringly obvious that the member does not understand the role of Infrastructure WA or its report. She said the assessment basically manipulated data to support its own decision. An infrastructure report is there to give advice on, unsurprisingly, infrastructure! It is unbelievable how ridiculous the member is and how silly she looks when she does these things. She is the one who called for this report, and now denies that she called for it. But for the chamber and for Hansard I can provide the detail of when she called for this. In estimates she asked —

Would the more recent decision for the hospital to be built 20 kilometres south on a new site with a new scope warrant oversight by Infrastructure WA?

She also asked —

Will Infrastructure WA have a role in assessing how the decision that we have heard about recently in relation to the women’s and babies’ hospital was made and in looking at the business case ...

Twice she called for it, and we did it. We had Infrastructure WA review the decision as per the request and it came back with an infrastructure report. On 4 July, the Premier requested Infrastructure WA to review the government’s decision to proceed with the construction of the new women’s and babies’ hospital within the Fiona Stanley Hospital precinct instead of to the north of G block at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site, because that was the decision. That is what was called for and that is what was delivered.

I understand that members opposite do not read reports very well, but we would have thought they would have read point 1.1, “Key considerations”. It states that the review —

... focused on the new WBH project construction and deliverability related risks.

If they had kept reading they would have seen that it continues —

Clinical services and operational planning are not within IWA’s remit or expertise ...

How can it be asked to provide context on things that are not within its expertise or remit? I can honestly say I am not surprised that the member cannot understand documents when she cannot even listen to answers in question time. Today, the minister very clearly talked about a possible additional 15 minutes in transport time. At no point did she say that the transportation time was 15 minutes. It boggles the mind. If she cannot listen to an answer in question time, how can she read reports?

I would like to talk about something that is closer to my heart. I understand that members opposite have no idea what is north of Vincent Street, because none of them have electorates there and none of them travel there, but there is a great hospital that services the northern suburbs called Osborne Park Hospital. Members opposite have failed to acknowledge that this plan also allows for expansion at Osborne Park Hospital. I have two nieces who were born at Osborne Park Hospital for the very reason that the opposition is having a go about. The Leader of the Liberal Party said, “It is a community hospital that does not have an emergency department.” Yes, that is why my sister-in-law chose to go and have her babies there, because it is a community hospital. It has a community feel. A total of 8 706 babies were born there from 2017–18 to 2022–23. People have chosen to have their babies there because it is a community hospital.

The Leader of the Liberal Party saying it is a community hospital like it is a bad thing shows she does not understand anything about the northern suburbs or Osborne Park Hospital. The hospital will undergo an expansion of its obstetrics, gynaecology, and neonatal services. It will have new birthing suites and theatres, including a new family birthing centre. For those who do not have a high-risk pregnancy, a family birthing centre will be a wonderful addition to the Osborne Park Hospital. It is a wonderful option for those women who want to give birth in a more natural and inclusive way, but also want the security of giving birth in a hospital. That is essentially what family birthing suites are. We are going to get one and provide that option for all the families in the northern suburbs. Like I said, I know the member does not know or care about the northern suburbs, but I do. I live in the northern suburbs. My colleagues live in the northern suburbs. My family lives in the northern suburbs. I want to make sure that this government delivers for people in the northern suburbs. We are doing this by delivering the expansion at the Osborne Park Hospital.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: It is unbelievable that the Leader of the Liberal Party says it will require —

... significant upgrades to make sure mothers north of the river have appropriate facilities to give birth close to home ...

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: We are! I cannot understand how the member does not get this! That is exactly what this government is doing. Perhaps the member, instead of bringing frivolous arguments to Parliament, should take a good, hard look at herself.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (6)

Ms M.J. Davies
Dr D.J. Honey

Mr R.S. Love
Ms L. Mettam

Mr P.J. Rundle
Ms M. Beard (*Teller*)

Noes (41)

Mr S.N. Aubrey
Mr G. Baker
Ms L.L. Baker
Dr A.D. Buti
Mr J.N. Carey
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke
Ms C.M. Collins
Ms L. Dalton
Ms D.G. D'Anna
Mr M.J. Folkard
Ms E.L. Hamilton

Ms M.J. Hammat
Ms J.L. Hanns
Mr T.J. Healy
Mr M. Hughes
Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr H.T. Jones
Ms A.E. Kent
Mr P. Lilburne
Mrs M. Marshall
Ms S.F. McGurk
Mr D.R. Michael

Mr K.J.J. Michel
Mr Y. Mubarakai
Ms L.A. Munday
Mrs L.M. O'Malley
Mr P. Papalia
Mr S.J. Price
Mr D.T. Punch
Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms R. Saffioti
Ms A. Sanderson
Mr D.A.E. Scaife

Ms J.J. Shaw
Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Dr K. Stratton
Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms C.M. Tonkin
Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms C.M. Rowe (*Teller*)

Question thus negatived.

ENERGY — SUPPLY*Motion*

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [4.01 pm]: I move —

This house condemns the Western Australian Labor government's neglect of the state's energy future and its inability to safeguard a dependable energy supply, enable development or process approvals, which thereby risks Western Australia's energy security and the economic development of our state.

I indicate that I am the lead speaker in this debate. It troubles me to report that the energy portfolio is being mismanaged to the detriment of our state and, obviously, to all domestic electricity consumers. It affects not just electricity consumers but also energy consumers at both the domestic and broader state levels, particularly in industry.

I believe our energy sector is in an extraordinarily dangerous place, and it was put there by this government through its actions and inactions. I have spoken before about the very serious degradation of our rural power grid under this Labor government and the resulting unacceptable level of electricity supply disruption. I will not go through that in detail; we have done that before, but I will remind members of the damning words from the *Independent review of Christmas 2021 power outages*, which stated —

This data shows over a four-year period a 'materially' worsening customer outage experience trend in CBD and rural areas, with flat performance in urban areas.

The minister made the point that the CBD does not have many outages, so a few seems like a lot in percentage terms. Nevertheless, we know that in rural areas, we have seen substantial deterioration in supply.

I have said before that I do not think we have had such a poor situation in which our power system has been allowed to deteriorate in this way. The government has form in this, in the disastrous Ripper disaggregation of the power system, which the Barnett government tried to remedy to some extent. Despite warnings that that was the wrong way to go, the Labor government of the day was determined to go down that route. What do we see here? We see that this government in its path to decarbonisation is making risky decisions that will put the future of energy users in this state at risk in the relatively near term.

Let us make something very clear. We get lots of gratuitous comments from the other side. We had some gratuitous comments from the Minister for Energy today that do not bear scrutiny. I believe that it makes sense for us to move down the path of decarbonisation from a sovereign risk point of view and otherwise. I have said that before, and I support that, but the pace this state government is doing it at is putting the state at risk. I will go through some level of detail to outline that.

It may make for a good headline to say that the government will do this, and it may appease the crowd when the minister says he will do it. All the smiling faces in the backbench will say, "Yes. This is what we want to do." It has not been announced, but I suspect that maybe the minister will not be here for so much longer that he will have to live with the outcome of it. Pandering to an audience is no substitute for good policy.

I will touch a little bit on question time today. The minister has form in this. As I have said in this place, he is a minister whom I rate for his hard work but, unfortunately, he undoes that good reputation by plunging into the gutter with gratuitous insults. We had a ludicrous episode today in question time about my staff printing off the incorrect letterhead; somehow, that is a great indictment of me. I certainly approved the letter's content, and the minister would know this from his own circumstances, but is this some great "gotcha" from the minister, who does

have a good capacity as I have said many times in this place? He plunged into a schoolchild level of criticism about that. To say that policies were continued into 2021 is rubbish. The minister takes a selective part of a statement, conflates it with something else, asserts it and then expects people to dismiss that. I will not dwell on that because there is an enormous amount of detail to go through and discuss in this place.

Again, I was fascinated to hear the minister's answer to the question. He talked about the budget being a plan. A budget is no plan. The statement of activities that the government intends to carry out is no plan. That is just a list of actions. A plan is a detailed analysis of the problem and a detailed explanation of how the government will meet that problem. We have had neither of those from this minister. I call on the minister, I ask him and I plead with him to publicise the modelling that is the basis of his so-called plan and to show how his plan will meet the energy needs of the state. Perhaps I did not indicate at the start that I am the lead speaker in this debate, but the time indicates that is the case. What the minister announced to date is utterly inadequate to meet the power requirements of this state. Let us see the detailed modelling. Do not have it hidden in a room. Do not have a group of bureaucrats sitting around all agreeing with each other—a bit of groupthink—that they have the analysis in hand and have done the right analysis. Release it to the public of Western Australia and show it. The minister can sit here and say that it is this group or that group. No, he is the Minister for Energy for the state government of Western Australia, and he is the minister who has to be satisfied that the detail is accurate.

The other thing is that not all wisdom exists within government agencies. There is a lot of wisdom within government agencies and there are some good people within government agencies, but not all wisdom exists within government agencies. There are many good people outside of government who have the capacity to analyse, comment and say whether, one, the government's analysis of what we are facing in the future is actually correct and, two, the plan the government has published is sufficient to meet those needs. I think that is pretty straightforward and fair. The broader public of Western Australia and industry in Western Australia will live with the outcome of the government's decisions. It is not just an outcome that, if the government gets it wrong, will get it a bit of political odium and make it suffer at the polls when the public passes judgement on how it has failed to manage this properly. The broader public are going to be living without electricity and losing the food in their houses. Industries will have to shut down to meet the energy demands of households when there is a shortage of gas. These people will pay the price so let them see that detail. That is what we do not see. The minister referred to a little bit of detail today. He talked about a couple of batteries and said they were replacing the coal-fired power stations. What an absolute joke. I will go through that. I am not trying to puff up the minister and then tear him down; I know he would not care if I did. However, to say that 800 megawatts of batteries will replace the Collie coal-fired power stations is farcical. I cannot believe that this minister genuinely thinks that that is the case. Again, I will take members through some detail to illustrate the point because members in this place need to understand that detail and understand the challenge that this state is facing. These are dangerous times.

As a little bit of background, our two major coal mines are facing serious economic challenges. I will discuss just how important they are in our energy system in a while. Premier Coal is owned by Yancoal Australia. We had a farcical situation in summer of getting coal from Newcastle, at enormous cost, to meet the power requirements for the state. Clearly, there were serious financial issues. Griffin Coal is owned by Lanco Infratech. Its power station is absolutely pivotal to the good economic fortunes of this state at this time. Firstly, it supplies a substantial amount of energy into the south west interconnected system at the Bluewaters power station, which depends on the Griffin mine. Secondly, there is South32 alumina refinery. I have spoken about this before; South32 is looking to convert. I visited the refinery and was grateful for the company talking about its plans. I am not here to reveal the intimate details of those discussions, although I doubt they are matters they have not discussed with many others before. It is going through a conversion process and trying to convert to gas. Again, that will cause another issue, which I will dwell on. It depends critically on coal from the Griffin Coal mine. That refinery directly employs around 2 000 people. If anyone looks at a normal multiple of that sort of business and the impact it has on the local community, the normal multiplier is about four times, which is 8 000 jobs. The great majority of employees at that refinery come from the local community—Collie, Bunbury and other areas around that refinery. It has a massive impact. If Griffin Coal mine stopped tomorrow, it would cause enormous difficulties. These two mines are in financial difficulty.

The state government appointed Cor Cordis to provide expert advice to the government on how it should manage and develop this. The government has clearly hit the panic button. An article was published in *The West Australian* on 9 August this year titled, "State Government hires KPMG as it mulls more money for doomed Collie coal mines". It has now had to appoint KPMG. As the article points out, \$23 million of state money has already been sunk into that. The new Deputy Premier, Hon Rita Saffioti, has outlined the government's approach. The government really has money in this. The minister said the government is doing this to try to ensure that it gets a solution. It is looking to reach a commercial decision, but the government cannot sit at a distance from this. It has to make sure and has to tell us—it is our money—what else it intends to do to ensure that the mines keep going. This state is in an enormously risky, heightened situation at the moment. Griffin appointed Deloitte Australia as receivers for the business to try to help manage it. We hear that its owners, Lanco Infratech, are frustrated with the job that the receivers are carrying out and it is looking to replace the receivers.

Then we go to gas. I know my colleague the Leader of the Opposition is going to talk in detail about this, but I will look at the last statement of opportunity provided by the Australian Energy Market Operator. It looks into the future supply of gas into the state. It indicates that there are some serious issues with supply of gas. We have a gas pipeline that comes from the north west. The minister pointed out that a number of parties put gas into that pipeline, but there are significant constraints on that system. I am going to summarise a 2022 AEMO report. From 2030 onwards, the gas market is forecast to move into a larger deficit with shortfalls of over 200 terajoules a day between 2030 and 2032. That will be driven by the coal retirements increasing the need for gas generation and a decline in production from existing fields. It has gone through and done that. More specifically, the AEMO forecasts a gas shortage of 213 terajoules a day in 2030. That will increase to a gas shortage of 296 terajoules a day. That is a massive increase. We have spoken a little bit about this before in this place. The minister said, “Don’t worry. They’ll take care of it. They’ll find it.” What we see is increasing demand on the network. It looks like South32 is going to have to rapidly transition its refinery to gas. It has partially converted some of its boilers to gas but the transition is not complete. It still has to convert the majority of its boilers to gas. That is going to cause even more demand. That is true for other users as well.

This is not just some sort of rhetoric on my part. The AEMO report goes on to say —

Since ... 2021 ... the gas generation profile has changed markedly, due to Synergy’s announcement of the scheduled closure of all its remaining coal-fired generators within the outlook period.

The early closure of those plants will contribute to that gas shortage and difficulty. I heard the minister talk about a plan for 2025. It is funny. This is a senior minister—one of the most senior ministers in this government that introduced the Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation. Only five weeks out from actually having the regulations in place, when the act was in force, the government said, “No. We’re going to bail out of that completely because we’ve seen additional information and the issues that have arisen from this.” That was despite being warned. The government thinks that is a reasonable thing to do. I assume this minister, as a senior member of cabinet, thinks that is pretty fair reasoning. As I am going to take members through here, there is certainly good information and new information to say that the government’s hope of reversing away from coal-fired power stations without a significant impact on power reliability in this state is very problematic and will cause issues for Western Australia.

As I said before, the government has said it has a plan. Today the Minister for Energy talked about his batteries. Back on 14 May 2023, the former Premier McGowan made a media announcement —

WA’s first big battery ready, with bigger battery on the way

The McGowan Government plan —

That cult worship is over now —

for cleaner, reliable and affordable energy for Western Australia has achieved an important milestone, with the State’s first large-scale battery storage system ready to charge and discharge energy into the grid.

It lists the projects —

- First large-scale battery storage project in WA ...
- Kwinana Battery Energy Storage System supporting WA’s transition ...
- 2023–24 State Budget includes funding for a ... bigger battery ...
- ... \$3 billion investment to tackle climate change ...

The announcement then refers to the 100 megawatt/200 megawatt-hour battery at Kwinana. It subsequently refers to the proposed big battery in Collie that will provide 500 megawatts for up to four hours. I want members to remember these numbers. That means that that big battery can provide 2 000-megawatt hours in the absence of being charged up, and the other battery at Kwinana can provide 200-megawatt hours, so that is 2 200-megawatt hours. I want members to remember those numbers so that they can contextualise the challenge we face in providing stable energy for just the power grid in Western Australia.

For a little while, I want to touch on the challenge that this state faces, but I also want to touch on the challenge that our nation faces in relation to where we are going with the power transition. The report I am holding in my hand, and I would encourage every member in this place to read it, is the *Final modelling results* published in April 2023 by Net Zero Australia. I will tell members a little bit about Net Zero Australia. Net Zero Australia is a group made up of the University of Melbourne, the University of Queensland, Princeton University in the United States and Nous—I think that is the correct pronunciation.

Mr D.R. Michael: Something you guys don’t have.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you for that kind interjection, member—that was necessary.

I am informed that it is a reputable group. Certainly the universities that I have mentioned are highly reputable organisations. The researchers are listed. I will not go through them in detail, but a number are extremely well-qualified.

I will mention some of the steering committee members: Robin Batterham, Katherin Domansky, Michael Brear from the University of Melbourne, Simon Smart from the University of Queensland, Chris Greig from Princeton University and Richard Bolt from Nous. These are serious people who are committed to the transition to net zero. This is not some sort of naysaying libertarian group that does not want to transition to renewable energy. This is a group of people who are absolutely committed to that green transition. I mention that because I think it helps to—let us put it this way: they are not a group of people who are going to over-egg the challenge that Australia faces in converting to net zero. I do not intend to go through their entire study, but I would encourage all members to look it up. They have an excellent website with everything from executive summaries through to detailed presentations and the basis for all the calculations that they have used to derive their estimate.

They say that just the capital investment—not the operating cost—to transition to net zero by 2060 is between \$7 and \$9 trillion. In this place numbers roll off people's tongues pretty easily, but I want to mention what \$7 to \$9 trillion means, and then what that means in terms of Australia and Western Australia. Let us say it is \$8 trillion. Let us hit the number in the middle. I have played with some numbers. I thought that number sounded reasonable. They have done vastly more clever work than I could probably ever do, so I am not going to challenge it. They say it will cost \$8 trillion for that transition. That is \$1 000, essentially, for every person in the world, just for Australia to reduce its 1.2 per cent net emissions to zero—\$1 000 for every person alive in the world. Just imagine that! Let us take it down. The minister might say “So what? What is this to do with me?” His federal colleagues have legislated that we have to reduce our net emissions by 43 per cent—I think it is against the 2005 level—by 2030. That is going to have a massive impact on the state of Western Australia. I will mention the challenge of this.

I know that people love to go to all the detail, but, currently, Australia has only eight per cent renewables of its total energy consumption. One thing I find disingenuous or misleading in this debate is when lots of people talk about electricity. Even in this state, the government talks about electricity. There is substantial penetration of renewables into our electricity network, but electricity only represents 12 per cent of the state's energy consumption. Electricity is a relative sideshow. It is still significant, but it is only 12 per cent of the state's energy consumption. The great bulk of energy consumption in this state is not by homes or businesses connected to the electricity network, but by industry—transport is significant, but it is industry. Industry is the great consumer of energy in Australia. This federal government policy will have a massive impact on industry, including industry in Western Australia.

I hope that the minister is taking some note of what I am saying, but I also hope that he will work with his federal colleagues to try to get them to see some sense and make a sensible decision to reverse that challenge. Do I disagree with their aspiration in terms of reducing carbon emissions? I do not. However, the time line that they have set is utterly unachievable. This can be dimensioned any way you like. It can be dimensioned in terms of the material flows that are required, the procurement of equipment, the amount of equipment that has been to installed in the time that it can be done, but I will go straight to the financial level.

Renewable energy currently makes up only eight per cent of the energy consumed in Australia. It may surprise members in this place that half of that is biomass. Every windmill, every wind turbine, every solar panel and every interconnected battery—every conventional renewable project in Australia—accounts for four per cent of Australia's energy consumption. Imagine that. A 10-fold increase is needed by 2030 to get to 43 per cent. Imagine that. It is just a phenomenal challenge. We have 35 per cent to go. If we pro rata that against the \$8 trillion, it is \$2.8 trillion. People just say things in this place; numbers just roll off their tongue. We have seven years until 2030, including this year. That means that \$400 billion of capital expenditure is needed each year to achieve that target. Australia's total capital expenditure for every road, every bridge, every mine, every energy project and every stadium in Australia currently hovers at around \$500 billion. The 43 per cent emissions reduction target that has now been legislated, with a carbon tax applied to it, will almost double Australia's total capital expenditure year on year to 2030. It is impossible. It cannot be achieved. It cannot be done. The country does not have the money. We are not going to stop building hospitals, roads, schools and the like.

What will this mean for our larger emitters? As I have pointed out in this place, the big emitters are typically downstream manufacturers—the very thing this government says it wants. They are the ones that will be belted by the federal government's scheme. Some members may know that if the 200 big emitters that have been identified cannot meet that target, they will have to either offset their emissions, which they are not going to be able to do because there is enormous competition for offsets everywhere, or pay a tax to the federal government. That tax will be 5.3 per cent, and then the next year it will be 10.6 per cent and so on. What will that mean? It will mean that it is likely that those bigger industries in Western Australia will shut down. That is why I want the energy minister to talk to his federal colleagues about this and work with them—I am sure he has some gravitas amongst them—to get them to reverse that situation. I know it was not this minister's decision, but the reason I raise this is that it will have the most enormously detrimental impact on the state of Western Australia. It terrifies me. People who were involved in that decision either just wanted a carbon tax and this was a back-door way of introducing it or did absolutely no analysis whatsoever of the magnitude of the task ahead of them. I think the report from Net Zero Australia came out after the federal government's decision. In that case, it should go back and reconsider it. Maybe the minister could send a text message. The Premier is in the eastern states talking to his colleagues; they should talk about this.

I want to talk about the size of the challenge in Western Australia and why what the government is doing will not achieve it. In fact, it is foolhardy. I have some sheets here for members' education. I am happy to table them. They are not hard to find. The minister has often exhorted me to look at the Australian Energy Market Operator's website, so I spent time a little time looking through it. AEMO has an excellent website that provides all sorts of information. I have here the fuel mix, as it is called, for last week. I will explain it. The black is coal, suitably; green is gas; light green is distributed photovoltaics; and the other is wind. I will read out the numbers. In the last week, distributed PV was 12 per cent of the total energy supply going into electricity, wind was 8.6 per cent, coal was 33 per cent and gas was 44 per cent. Members might say that that is just a week of energy. If I look at the figures for the last six months, distributed PV was 12 per cent; wind was 14 per cent; and utility solar, down the bottom, was 1.5 per cent. That shows that 27.5 per cent of energy over the last six months came from renewables. Despite the massive penetration of rooftop solar and all the wind farms we see when we drive up the coast road, 33.5 per cent of our energy still comes from gas and 39 per cent from coal. Seventy-two per cent of the energy that was ultimately turned into electricity in this state came from those sources. I note that a third was from coal.

Members might say that I am selectively picking out the data. Let us look at the last 12 months. What do members notice? A big, thick black line down the bottom. I will go through it. Distributed PV was 16 per cent, wind was 16 per cent and utility solar was 1.8 per cent—that is, 33.8 per cent came from what members would consider to be renewables. Gas was 38 per cent and coal was 27 per cent. Therefore, 65 per cent of our energy supply came from non-renewable sources over the last year, with almost one-third of that being coal. That is the magnitude that has to be replaced. To reinforce the point, going back over the last week—the website gives a picture of the renewables in green and the non-renewables in red—22 per cent of energy came from renewables and 78 per cent from non-renewables. Members might say, “So what?” It is an enormous task. I think one in three houses in Perth has solar panels on their roof and we see all the wind farms, yet this government says that we will be able to replace one-third of our energy from coal in the next handful of years.

I talked earlier about batteries. I told members to remember those numbers. I said it was 2 200 megawatt hours. I have just taken a little slice of the graph that I showed members before on renewables versus non-renewables. On 10 August—green indicates renewables and red indicates non-renewables—renewables provided 6.3 gigawatt hours across the whole day. That is 6 300 megawatt hours for the whole day. The non-renewable supply on that day was 57 000 megawatt hours. Can members tell me how 2 200 hours of battery storage can possibly provide the backup for 57 000 megawatt hours of additional energy requirement? It simply cannot. If we were to have enough batteries to do that, I suspect we would bankrupt Western Power and the like. The minister pointed out today that when we have these small fluctuations in the system, the batteries are useful. He is right. When we have small fluctuations in the power system, the batteries are useful. But when we are trying in a whole day to make up 57 000 megawatt hours of energy consumption —

Mr W.J. Johnston: You need to learn to understand mathematics.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Oh, yes!

When we are trying to make up 57 000 megawatt hours —

Mr W.J. Johnston: You don't understand. Can I make a point to you? You understand that in the middle of the day, demand is lower. It is only at the peak that you need to dispatch the batteries. You don't have to dispatch them 24 hours a day. That is why the Australian Energy Market Operator has not yet asked for any long-term storage. When it does, then we will get long-term storage. At the moment, it is asking for two-hour storage; then it will ask for four-hour storage, and later on it will ask for eight hours.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Minister, I agree with you.

Mr W.J. Johnston: What point are you trying to make?

Dr D.J. HONEY: The point I am making is that the system —

Mr W.J. Johnston: That you don't understand what you're talking about.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I do understand, because this is not just a momentary introduction.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Minister, please stop. You will have a chance to respond.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have a point of order.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Lilburne): Thank you, member for Cottesloe. The point of order will be heard in silence. Thank you.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister is interjecting in an uninvited manner on the member of Cottesloe, who is making his contribution. The minister will have his chance to respond later. I ask him to desist in interjecting.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Just one moment, member for Cottesloe.

Please, minister, can we allow the member for Cottesloe to continue. He allowed for some interjections there but now wishes to continue with his valid points. I will continue from that point.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker, for your very clear direction.

Minister, I understand, but the trouble is that that 2 200 megawatt hours of battery storage will be gone in an hour—that is the problem—because we do not have enough storage there. The minister can say that the AEMO will ask for more storage, and I will go through this in some more detail because it illustrates the point. This winter, we have seen consecutive days of almost no wind and almost no sun. The problem with these batteries is that if we are going to use renewable power, we cannot use just that power; we have to replace it. Therein lies a major problem for the network and for the supposed plan. This is why I want to see the detail. We have to see a massive excess of renewable generation capacity to cope with those extended periods; otherwise, we have to accept that we are going to have major power outages over that time.

I want to go into the detail. I am happy to share this with the minister. I have said to the minister on many occasions that I am very happy to learn, but I hope that the minister is as well. I have permission from the author of this document to share it and get it out there. This is a summary of a detailed analysis of the challenge that the state government faces in doing what it says it wants to do. It is an analysis carried out by Mark Chatfield.

Mr W.J. Johnston: He's an idiot!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr W.J. Johnston: That's why he was sacked from Synergy.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, I would ask you please to desist at that point. Thank you.

Dr D.J. HONEY: As I said, I have high regard for the minister in many ways, but his gratuitous insults bring him down.

Mr W.J. Johnston: He's an idiot; that's why he got sacked from Synergy.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Your gratuitous insults bring you down, minister. That is an offensive slur on someone who is an outstanding engineer and was an outstanding public servant. Mark Chatfield is an electrical engineer. I might say that I have looked in detail at the work he has done, and I can tell the minister that he is a considerable expert in the area of electrical engineering and particularly in modelling those systems. I have every reason to believe that the work he has produced is good work. As I say, the minister can make his gratuitous insults here, but I challenge him with his modelling to disprove the conclusions that Mark Chatfield has made. He is a former general manager of the generation division of Western Power and an executive director of ACIL Allen.

Ms M.J. Davies: I don't think the minister got the memo about arrogance.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Not at all.

Ms M.J. Davies: I think he missed it. Either that or he cannot read.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: For goodness sake!

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I seek some direction here on whether this labelling of a person, who is actually not in the Parliament to defend themselves, in the pejorative manner that the minister is doing, is actually allowed; and, if not, I ask that you order him to desist.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. Just one moment.

I direct that there is no specific point of order. I will ask for the second time for the minister to please await an opportunity to respond to the member for Cottesloe's points, and I will rule further if those directions are not followed.

I ask that the member for Cottesloe please continue.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much. I think it is a shame that the minister has gone down that path. As I said, I think that when he does that, it undermines his credibility in other areas.

If we look at the south west interconnected system energy sources in 2022, we see that 29 per cent is coal; 15 per cent is domestic solar; two per cent is commercial solar; 18 per cent is wind; and 35 per cent is gas. That is a huge part

of our network. The problem is that members and others look at the installed capacity of these systems and say, “We have this installed capacity; therefore, everything looks sweet.” I know the old saying that it is not sunny all the time and the wind does not blow all the time; in fact, it may surprise members. The average wind output was 40 per cent of the nameplate capacity. The annual capacity factor of domestic solar was only 14 per cent; that is, we got only 14 per cent of the nameplate capacity from domestic solar. Obviously, the sun is not shining at night, but the sun is also mitigated for significant parts of the day.

Mr Chatfield has gone through and done a very detailed analysis called Monte Carlo modelling. He has developed a model of the entire SWIS and looked at various cases. I have had a chance to look at that modelling; I believe it is an extremely rigorous approach to the problem, and I would assume—I would hope—that the government has access to similar modelling. He has not used made-up data, but has used the established wind and solar profiles over a period—it would be wrong for me to quote, but certainly more than a year—to look at the actual output of power and then what we could possibly achieve, and he has gone through different scenarios. I will not go through the current situation. In the SWIS network, if we added 7 000 megawatts of renewables into the system above what we have now, the gas consumption, which is now at 97 terajoules a day, would peak at 470 kilojoules a day. This is one problem with relying totally on gas as backup. It is all right to talk about how much gas we have over the year, but there is only so much gas that can come down that line, and it can come down only at a certain rate. The problem is that when we look at the modelled scenarios, we see that we would exceed the total amount of gas that can come down that pipeline, but we would also significantly exceed the peak rates that gas can come down that pipeline. In that scenario, we would exceed the capacity of the line on 62 occasions per annum. That is with another 7 000 megawatts—seven gigawatts—of renewables in the system. If we add 3 000 megawatts of batteries into the system, we would exceed the amount of gas that can come down into the system on 15 occasions per annum. We are talking about a massive increase in the amount of renewable and battery energy into that network.

Even in the most extreme solutions in that system, taking wind to 12 000 megawatts, commercial solar to 5 000 megawatts and batteries to 5 000 megawatts, that line would have capacity on 15 days of the year. Why? First, there would be a massive increase. Something around 29 gigajoules of renewable capacity would be needed. The reason is that on those low-wind, low-solar days, a massive excess of power is needed in the grid, but it also needs to recharge the batteries. The trouble is that when adequate renewable sources are going into the grid, if that peak four gigawatt requirement of renewables is met, all renewable capacity above that is useless. Only a small amount of it can be stored; otherwise, it is useless. Most of the time, that massive excess of about 25 gigawatts in renewable capacity needed in Western Australia is useless. At least in the foreseeable future, it will not exceed more than about four gigawatts in that electricity network. It can go to other purposes, but if it is dedicated to our electricity network, it is useless capacity.

I am happy to share that with the minister. I am not doing this to score points. Like the minister, I care about the state of Western Australia and its future. I especially care about those industries threatened by the federal government’s 43 per cent emissions reduction target and the aggressive time frame—sorry; its 30 per cent emissions reduction target. I will get it right. Sorry, members; it has been a long day. The aggressive time frame of the 43 per cent emissions reduction target causes threat to industry in Western Australia. I am extremely concerned about the fact that if the government goes ahead with its south west interconnected system plan, it has massively underestimated the cost of the entire project and its requirements. The minister said that the private sector will fund this massive increase in the cost of the distribution network. I have not had time to cover that, but the government has massively underestimated the calculable expense, and massively overestimated industry’s capacity to pay for that required upgrade.

I do not resile from the fact that we should go through this transition, but the time line and the plan set by this government will not achieve what is required. The minister should reveal the detailed modelling so that it can be scrutinised by people outside government. He should reveal the detailed planning, not the glib announcements about this factory, because clearly what has been announced to date is massively inadequate to cope with the problems and challenges this state will face.

I touch very briefly on hydrogen. One aspect of hydrogen is the failure of this government to develop the hydrogen estate at Oakajee. I say it again and again: it is still a paddock. We hear about the propositions put forward and the six proponents. The government is apparently assessing that site, but the fact is that the site is undeveloped. This is the largest development opportunity for this state and it has been completely missed by this government. We need to see a proper focus. The government has touted its hydrogen strategy. We were told recently that the hydrogen strategy would be reset, and now the government will go to a summit on hydrogen when it fails to achieve anything. If the Oakajee estate does not progress in the near future, this state will miss out on the opportunity to develop not only major industry, but also a major regional centre outside metropolitan Perth. On that note, I hand over to my colleague.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.54 pm]: I rise today to speak on something developing in the world of energy. It is mainly my electorate of Roe that I am concerned about, but it is an issue around the state. I briefly mentioned to the minister last night that I have a few questions about things happening in my electorate, and I am keen to get his thoughts in response.

Firstly, my discussions today will be mainly about wind farms and the communities surrounding them. To be honest, I am relatively ambivalent about renewables. I understand the majority of the population is keen to look at renewable energy sources. I understand that wind and solar are an important part of that. I am concerned about the unrest this is causing in neighbourhoods in my electorate. In my electorate of Roe, there are several potential wind farms coming to fruition or in the planning stage—the Flat Rocks wind farm in Broomehill, wind farms in Kojonup, Tambellup and Williams, one on the horizon in Narrogin and the prospect of a wind farm in Darkan. Behind Darkan, on the way to the member for Collie–Preston’s electorate, I understand there are several proposals. I understand the potential consequences of those to the Collie arrangements that the member for Cottesloe was alluding to. I have also heard about a potential wind farm in Ongerup, which will be interesting. One part of the scenario is the connection to the south west interconnected system, and the other is the transmission lines that have recently come to light as both a federal and state issue, especially in Victoria.

There is real concern over the value of land and farm land, and a reduction in the opportunity for farmers to farm their land. That is a brief summary of issues that I am concerned about. The biggest concern is potentially that a proponent in neighbourhoods in which there might be a farmer, or two or three or four farmers in a group, being negotiated with, and surrounding farmers might not necessarily be in favour. We are seeing long-term family and neighbour relationships being fractured. I am worried that this will go down generations and lead to the breakdown of our good regional communities and local neighbourhoods. That concerns me more than whether or not a wind farm happens.

Some of the information that I have gathered shows that the large-scale renewable energy sector is experiencing unprecedented activity across Australia and rural Western Australia. According to the Clean Energy Council, in WA, there are 15 operational wind farms, 12 large-scale renewable projects and five large-scale battery storage projects underway. A report by the ABC in April 2023 titled “Australians are cashing in on rapid wind farm expansion, but it’s tearing some towns apart” stated —

... power and money are pitting neighbour against neighbour as this old farming community grapples with a new, rapidly growing industry.

Some farmers see it as an opportunity to futureproof their operations, with some landholders in the eastern states being offered between \$15 000 and \$30 000 per turbine a year for the life of the contract. But those opposed to the size, scale and proximity to homes of renewable projects are feeling isolated and shut out of the development and negotiation process. A major failing in many renewable projects is poor community engagement over a long time, and I cannot emphasise that enough. It is about communication and it is about community engagement.

The growth of industry and economic benefits to the state’s coffers should not be at the expense of our rural communities. Obviously, in respect of the state’s coffers, we refer to the energy that is supplied. The government’s push to meet targets in the state’s energy transformation strategy should be carefully considered and not go down the same path as the scenarios in which we have seen unintended consequences. I think the government needs to keep that in mind.

Current regulations need to be strengthened. Wind farms are a viable renewable energy alternative and WA, with an enviable climate and the luxury of wide open spaces, is well placed to deliver world-class large-scale renewable projects. But the state must learn to get the planning and the consultation right and not blindsides regional communities. As we know, there are many benefits to clean wind energy, but consideration must be given to the impacts of electromagnetic interference and shadow flicker; EMI with pre-existing television, radar and radio reception or transmission; construction and decommissioning requirements; local aviation safety, integrity and efficiency; audible acoustic emissions; separation distances from sensitive sites; scenic and character amenity; and flora and fauna and traffic access. Not only the wind turbines, but also the ancillary structures—including wind farm monitoring towers and electrical infrastructure connecting wind turbines and substations, permanent operation and maintenance buildings, access roads and underground cabling—can all have a detrimental impact on the amenity and function of a regional community.

I want to point out that the WA Planning Commission’s *Position statement: Renewable facilities: March 2020* focuses on the benefits of renewable projects but gives little protection to neighbouring properties impacted by wind farms. The Clean Energy Council’s “Voluntary best practice charter for renewable energy projects” is designed to clearly communicate the standards that the signatories will uphold in the development of current and new clean energy projects. Certainly, I would like to see wind farm and exploration guidelines strengthened in WA to better prepare and protect regional communities.

From my perspective, I have some interesting information. When we look at site selection in the *Position statement: Renewable facilities: March 2020*, we see that the main points include —

5. Policy measures

...

5.2 Local planning framework

Local governments should address renewable energy facilities in their local planning framework.

A question I have is: do local governments have the capacity to deal with the planning arrangements for these wind farms? Under part 5.2.1, “Local planning strategy”, the statement says that under the provisions of *State planning policy 2.5: Rural planning* —

Large facilities should be located close to the network grid and preferably on cleared rural land with low agricultural value.

That is what worries me. In my electorate, some of these wind farms are popping up on high-value agricultural land. Out the back of the member for Central Wheatbelt’s electorate, there are certainly areas with wind farms, and potential wind farms are being planned on land that may be of lower potential agricultural value, but I am worried that seemingly the majority of these wind farms are planned for very high quality agricultural land. That is a real issue. It continues —

Where practicable, the agricultural use of land should continue after installation of a renewable energy facility. Under part 5.3.2, “Environmental impact”, it states —

To understand the impact of wind turbines on birds and bats, the following matters should be considered:

- stopover sites, local bird species roosting and nesting.

Farmers are unable to clear trees on their fence lines as there may be the odd instance of an endangered black cockatoo using a tree hollow as they migrate between the Swan coastal plain and the wheatbelt, but seemingly that is not an issue with wind farms. Renewable energy companies are selecting sites based on existing infrastructure, which generally places them in higher density rural areas. While the demand for renewable energy remains strong and more power users are moving to offset their emissions, we are going to see only more pressure on regional communities from companies looking to cash in.

I have been contacted by many constituents. I have also had discussions with wind farm proponents here in Parliament and out in my electorate, so I am trying to get a balanced view. As I said, I am not necessarily in favour of or against wind farms. I am not in favour of the heat and the angst that it is causing my constituents.

I want to move on to the transmission lines part of the matter, about which constituents right across the electorate have also contacted me. High-voltage powerlines from renewable energy projects feeding through properties across regional WA is a very new reality. State guidelines need to protect properties from the incursion of transmission lines. Communities will be severely impacted if there is not careful planning, including in relation to aerial spraying, loss of visual amenity and grazing. In an ABC article of 22 July 2022 titled “Australia’s energy transformation is ramping up, but there are major challenges ahead”, the federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen, is reported to have said —

“The missing piece has been transmission: getting the energy from where it’s produced to where it’s going to be consumed,” ...

The Australian Energy Market Operator predicted in a 20-year forecast that we would require more than 10 000 kilometres of new transmission lines and nine times the large-scale renewable generation we currently have. WA landholders need to be informed of the potential for large-scale transmission lines across their farms.

A very interesting recent article from Judith Sloan in *The Australian* of 15 August 2023 states —

It is slowly dawning on more people that destroying the environment to save the environment doesn’t really make any sense ...

...

... the harsh reality is that many of us are not keen to see our landscapes plundered and ruined by the intrusion of monstrous turbines measuring up to 250 metres in height (nearly three times the height of the Statue of Liberty) ...

She states —

... the kilometre upon kilometre of new transmission lines required to hook up wind and solar installations to the grid. Think here huge steel pylons up to 100 metres in height requiring easements of up to 50 metres on each side.

For scale, the Rio Tinto building in Perth is 51 storeys high—that is, 249 metres tall. No buildings in Perth are as tall as some of the turbines being built or that are proposed to be built in regional WA. If the minister maintains the same rules for where a turbine can exist in regional areas—I am talking prime farming land—as it does in the city, a turbine can be built as long as it is more than 1 500 metres from the closest dwelling.

I am sure there are places in Kings Park where a turbine could be built 1 500 metres from the nearest house, but of course we would never do that because there would be a phenomenal outcry. If it is built in the bush, there are fewer people to protest and therefore less noise from the regional areas of WA where the voices have been silenced thanks to this government.

In Victoria, we have seen issues cropping up with the Victorian government, landholders and high-voltage transmission lines. There was an article about that in *The Australian Financial Review* on 2 August 2023. In *The Canberra Times* on 13 June 2023, David Littleproud, the leader of the federal National Party, called for a pause on plans to construct electricity transmission lines that Victorian farmers claim will have adverse impacts on their properties. He stated —

The national energy market operator is planning to build 28,000 kilometres of power lines from the western Victorian town of Bulgana to just north of Jerilderie in southern NSW.

That is different from the quote from the Australian Energy Market Operator. David Littleproud says —

“It is time to pause to plan better and to make sure that the unintended consequences of this reckless race are taken into account.” ...

I want to see better protection for landholders and enhanced regulation in WA for wind farm development because, as I said, I worry about the long-term negative impacts on neighbours and I worry about families in conflict. I worry about thousands of kilometres of transmission lines through valuable farming land that will potentially devalue that land. I worry that this government will sit by and not improve regulation and communication. They are the issues that I worry about on behalf of my constituents and on behalf of those neighbours who are not always necessarily in favour. I do not want to stray into saying, “It’s great”, or, “It’s not great.” I am ambivalent about renewable resources. I am worried about my constituents and their grief. I know the minister will no doubt deal with this in the years ahead. I know the Minister for Water will as well, because there was a large Water Corporation commitment in the last budget of roughly \$180 million for a large wind farm project. This is an issue that the Minister for Water will no doubt be dealing with as well.

I just wanted to put on record the concerns that I have for my constituents, the concerns about neighbourhood conflict and what it will potentially do to generations to come. I do not want to see it. I do not want to see when neighbours are in dispute and they will not attend a fire or something else in the middle of summer because they do not talk to their neighbours anymore. That is where I am coming from and I look forward to the minister’s response on that. I understand the member for Moore is going to make a —

Mr W.J. Johnston: I was told there were going to be two speakers.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: No, an hour and a half and then a half hour response is the arrangement that we had negotiated.

Dr D.J. Honey: Minister, we were told an hour and a half for the opposition and half an hour for the government.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I was told there were two speakers for the opposition, so I am taking the call.

Mr P.J. Rundle: The whip is right behind you there, minister.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I will take the call in a minute.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [5.13 pm]: I thought the opposition was being very amenable to allow for the reduction in its own time because the government wanted to go to the soccer. Apparently, that is now being thrown back in our face. I thank the member for Cottesloe for his contribution. He has tremendous experience in the industrial scene here in Western Australia and has a deep understanding of the issues about which he has spoken. Thank you also to the member for Roe who spoke from the heart about the issues he sees developing in his community due to the development of renewable energy sources into the future. Before I comment on those matters, I will return to the actual motion, which was —

This house condemns the WA Labor government’s neglect of the state’s future of energy and its inability to safeguard a dependable energy supply, enable developments or process approvals, and thereby risks Western Australia’s energy security and the economic development of our state.

We are at a fundamentally important moment in time, as we in this house all know, as the shift from fossil fuels takes place and the move to new sources of energy is underway. I want to comment on the safeguard of having a dependable energy supply. It would be neglectful of me as a member for the area that includes much of the midwest not to point out the terrible electricity reliability issues that plague communities such as Dongara, Port Gregory, much of the North Midlands and the Batavia Coast. This situation has not improved. In my view, it has become worse under this government, and yet we see little being done with any urgency to tackle those issues.

Turning to the issue of wind farms and those matters in the future, I echo the view of the member for Roe insofar as local government is calling out for some assistance in dealing with the very large applications that are coming their way. Shires such as Northampton, Morawa, Geraldton and Chapman Valley have many proponents who are heading into their areas and signing up large areas of land to create availability for wind towers and transmission lines. Local governments are struggling to properly address this. It is a matter that was discussed at the latest North Midlands zone meeting and it seems to me that right across the state at the moment, that sector needs to have some consideration from government so that we can make sure that the appropriate planning practices take place going forward.

Many communities in Western Australia at the moment are echoing the concerns outlined by the member for Roe. He spoke of the calls from his community and from politicians that have taken place. This is something that the Nationals WA lay members will bring to the table at our forthcoming conference on 26 August, because there will be a motion for the state convention of the Nationals WA to call on the state government to regulate a community benefit linked to the proposed and actual energy production of the project for the regional towns and cities that are facilitating and hosting energy transition projects. There is a general concern that the regions will pay the price. They will be the ones left with an altered landscape but where will the economic development opportunities be? I am not opposed to development. I want the regions to join in that opportunity. That is very much the ethos there.

The member for Cottesloe spoke well about the ongoing gas situation. We know that the Australian Energy Market Operator in its 2022 Western Australian *Gas statement of opportunities* has outlined a whole series of expected shortfalls in gas production going forward. There is an expectation that new gas supplies will come on stream and that will help to address those issues. That is something that cannot be assumed. The government cannot assume that fresh supplies are going to be developed and made available. I note the government's recent announcement about the Perth Basin and ensuring that it remains in the domestic gas supply. That may be the case but there needs to be further development of gas supplies apart from Perth Basin if we are going to make sure we do not have a shortfall. The statement of opportunities shows that between 2023 and 2026 the domestic gas market could easily move into surplus or deficit, depending on whether or not those things come online and whether there are any changes.

The key risks to the supply and demand balance include market flexibility and the situation with coal. The domestic gas market could be pushed further into deficit if coal supply continues to be restricted. Additional gas demand might come on for new projects—this specifically quotes the Perdaman project—which could increase gas demand and result in supply shortfalls from 2026 onwards and the delay of new gas projects. As I mentioned, this government cannot just sit on its laurels and expect that these things will happen. I am afraid that this government does not really see that risk and is not taking this very seriously. We know that those new supplies could well be threatened into the future. For instance, we know that the federal government has become more adventurous in its foray into developing its own environmental protection agency. I also suspect that consideration is still going on about Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation at a federal level, all of which could impact upon the timely approval of gas projects going forward.

Of course, we know about the union situation on existing projects. We are hearing about strike action being planned on some of the offshore production units. That itself is going to threaten supply going forward. It is actually sending a chill through not only Western Australian industry, but also right through Asia where there are demands for that gas going forward. Western Australia's reputation is on the line here. The minister needs to ensure that he and the government in Canberra are doing all they can to settle this situation and make sure that supply goes on uninterrupted. We know that the decision of the federal environment minister to overturn approvals has meant that gas organisations have had to greatly expand their legal networks and consultations around new developments. That will itself cause expense and delay. I am not saying it is right or wrong, but it will potentially impact on the supply of future projects and it needs to be acknowledged and looked at.

I know that the minister is very keen to respond. I will not be much longer. As we know, the Economics and Industry Standing Committee has launched an inquiry into aspects of the Western Australian domestic gas policy, which is vital for the supply of gas as a very necessary transition fuel for Western Australia going forward. I spoke to Hon Dr Steve Thomas on Monday about this. He kindly furnished me with his submission to that inquiry, which goes through a number of issues in the domestic gas reservation policy. I know that the policy itself says that gas equivalent to 15 per cent of exports will be reserved domestically.

However, there are a lot of grey areas in that. There is no actual idea of what is a competitive or realistic price for that gas. Each of the negotiations is a project matter. Indeed, it is a player-by-player matter. It is difficult to understand just how much of the gas is actually being supplied to Western Australia. This is something that former National Party member Terry Redman was very keen on understanding when he was in Parliament. He did a lot of questioning in this area. He had contact with stakeholders and we have had contact with them ever since. It would seem that probably about nine or 10 per cent is actually being supplied at the moment. The minister might be able to address that in his response. That is my understanding. That means that there is a considerable shortfall between what is thought to be the 15 per cent supply and what is actually being delivered. There are a whole range of reasons for that. Sometimes there are triggers to the supply. It could be that the gas company says, "Down the track we will supply that, and we will get it back in balance", but there is no guarantee that that project will run forever; it could be that it is always in shortfall. It is very important that both the government and the committee look at making sure that that policy is working well.

Much of the credit for that goes to the Carpenter government that introduced the policy. However, it was not the first time that a domestic gas policy was in place, as it happened back in the development of the North West Shelf that was underpinned by state agreements. There were extensive obligations for that gas to be supplied locally. Without that supply into the local market, the project would not have gone ahead. Nonetheless, I give credit to the Carpenter government for further developing that. However, I believe there needs to be a fresh set of eyes cast

over it to ensure that it has transparent operations and transactions and that there are appropriate pricing and timing signals—I am not talking about controls. There also needs to be an understanding of the timing of the supply of reserved gas. Those are issues that will need to be dealt with in the near future if we are going to see reliable energy supplied in Western Australia. My fear is that we are heading for a situation in which we are not doing enough to ensure that those domestic gas supplies are secured. Indeed, we would then be put in a situation in which that shortfall would affect a whole range of industry and projects in Western Australia. Much of the mining industry and processing of minerals, but also the general day-to-day commerce of Western Australia is reliant on that gas. We saw the situation in which Wheatstone was shut down a little while ago and what that meant to the industries of Western Australia. Some had to voluntarily shut down to enable sufficient supply in the state.

I will wrap up at this point because we have only half an hour left and I very much want to hear the minister's response.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [5.27 pm]: I want to address the member for Roe first. There are no special land-clearing rules for wind farms. The land-clearing rules that apply to a farmer apply exactly the same to a wind farm proponent. I want to make it clear that there is no special treatment for a wind farm.

At the moment, leaving aside the five wind turbines at the Agnew goldmine, every wind farm in Western Australia is on privately owned land—land owned in freehold. It is not on government land. Personally, I do not think the government should intervene to stop private landowners doing what they want with their own land. That is the approach that I take. If a landowner agrees to having a wind farm on their land, I do not understand the objection. In a world in which we rely on people being able to do what they need to with their own land, what will happen next? Will the government of Western Australia control how farmers operate their farms? I do not think that is a good approach.

The Warradarge wind farm is owned by Bright Energy Investments, which is 19.9 per cent owned by Synergy. Of the land that the Warradarge wind farm is on, 0.15 per cent is used by the infrastructure of the wind farm. That includes the pad for the turbine, the wind farm access road for service vehicles, and, obviously, the cable that runs to the turbine that runs in the road-clearing space. Using a farm and having a wind farm on the same land is entirely consistent. There is no conflict between the operation of a wind farm and the operation of a farm. Remember, the only farms that have a wind farm on them are those that the landowner has decided to do that with. I just want to clear that up.

The next thing is the question of the necessary transmission lines that connect a wind farm to the network. We have not built a transmission line in Western Australia like the south west interconnected system since the Mid West Energy Project took the line to Eneabba all those years ago. I think Peter Collier was the minister who commissioned it and Mike Nahan was the minister who opened it. We have not built a transmission line since then. Of course, we have built the lines that connect an individual wind farm to the existing transmission lines, and they may sometimes run over private property. Again, it is not Western Power using its authority under the energy powers act; that is a commercial arrangement between different people. To date, we have not had the challenges like those that are being talked about in Victoria.

Let me be blunt: I live less than 100 metres from a high-voltage transmission line. If somebody says that a high-voltage transmission line 1.5 kilometres away is something they do not want, I say that I live 100 metres from a transmission line. I live in the middle of the city and I have a highway on one side and a rail line on the other, as well as a transmission line. I am not asking anybody to do anything that I am not prepared to do. There is no research anywhere in the world—ask the member for Cottesloe this—that says that a transmission line is, of itself, dangerous. Obviously, if it falls down, that is a different thing. But there is no research in the world that says that the transmission line itself causes health effects; and, if there were research that showed that, I would obviously respond in the same way as I do on health and safety matters. A lot of people run around for their own reasons stirring up trouble in rural communities about transmission lines. The member says that he is neither for nor against. I would like him to support science. I would like him to ask the member for Cottesloe to point out to people that transmission lines are not dangerous, because that is absolutely essential.

Mr P.J. Rundle: I didn't say they were.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I know, but the member is a leader in the community; he has some responsibilities as well.

Mr P.J. Rundle: I'm talking about devaluing farmland.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, but I am making the point that that is a separate issue and we can talk about that. There are all sorts of different issues that we can deal with there. In terms of the construction of transmission lines, people are running around in Victoria right now telling farmers that a transmission line will kill them. That is crazy. It should not be allowed. The member is a leader in the community and I ask him to get off the fence and support the necessary actions.

There is a separate question about land access. Connecting a line to a wind farm should be done on a commercial basis, and whatever agreement is reached between the proponent and the landowners, that is okay. We have to build some transmission lines. Both lines that are at the top of the list are ones that the member for Cottesloe

raises with me regularly. The first is the extension to the north to allow the Oakajee project to go ahead. That is the number one priority arising from the SWIS demand assessment. The second is the reinforcement of the line to Kalgoorlie. Both lines will run through rural properties; there is no question about that. Obviously, we are at the start of the planning process and we have not got to line definition or anything like that. Obviously, there will be lots of opportunities for Western Power to engage with communities, just as it did when it built the MWEP. But we cannot have the line zigzag because the costs will go up; every time a line turns, the costs increase massively. We have to have a generally straight line for transmission infrastructure. We can avoid sensitive areas; lines run for hundreds of kilometres, so we can plan over that long distance. But let us not kid ourselves: it will not run as a zigzag; it will generally be in a straight line.

Member for Moore and member for Roe, we are going to have to talk about this, because the member for Cottesloe is demanding that we deliver power to Oakajee. The government has a plan to do it. We can do that only by running powerlines through the seat of Moore. The member for Cottesloe says that we should build extra infrastructure for industry in Kalgoorlie. The government has a plan to do that. It will go through the electorates of the member for Moore and the member for Central Wheatbelt. The new wind farms that are being developed in the south east of the state are in the member for Roe's electorate. It will not be like the extension for Oakajee, but sometime over the next 10 years, there will be another transmission line to the south east. It is coming. It is publicly available information. This is not a secret. We have already published our high-level plan that has arisen from the SWIS demand assessment. It is public; we have put it out there. We are not hiding anything. As opposed to a person who does modelling on his laptop over the weekend, this is a proper complex model built by the consulting firm EY that can model the electricity system at five-minute intervals over 20 years. We have done that modelling. The results of the modelling are public. Obviously, the specifics are not, because that type of modelling is never going to be 100 per cent accurate and there could be a debate about whether it will be this day or that day. It is not worth it. The outcomes are public information. The demand for 4 000 kilometres of transmission infrastructure is public. We do not have a route; we have not done that type of detailed planning. We will do that detailed planning only when we are ready to do the project, and we will do it in consultation with the community. It will probably be five years before the consultation starts, but when it is ready, we will go out to the member's community and consult with it about where the transmission line will run.

There is a proponent who wants to build a major hydrogen project around Esperance. If that project were to move ahead faster than we think, it would also bring forward the need for that transmission line, because obviously the larger the grid, the lower the marginal cost and, therefore, it would be better for the people who want to do that project in Esperance. I understand there is a lot of excitement about the potential of a hydrogen project exporting out of Esperance. That can be achieved only if there is transmission infrastructure. To the extent that the people in the member's electorate are looking forward to these projects, it means that there will be infrastructure. We have to come to terms with that. I again make the point that I live 100 metres from a transmission line. I am not asking anybody to do anything that I am not personally doing myself.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Finally, minister, do you think there should be any regulation for how far turbines should be from people's residences or the boundaries of other farms?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Environmental approval is needed to build a wind farm. The Environmental Protection Authority does all that stuff already. It takes account of all the challenges, including birds. Interestingly, people at the Warradarge wind farm have to go around every morning to see whether any birds have been killed overnight. I think they have maybe one a week. It is very uncommon for wind farms in Western Australia to kill birds. I know that there is all this stuff about Robbins Island off Tasmania being used for only nine months of the year, but in Western Australia, there is no evidence of significant bird kills at wind farms. The member for Moore was with me at the opening of the Warradarge wind farm. It was one of the topics of conversation on that day. Another topic was whether there were actually 57 turbines, because I could not count them all. I do not know whether the member for Moore did, but we stood there and took it in.

There is no inconsistency between farming and wind farms, which is why I have been told by a number of proponents that people from neighbouring properties have asked whether their properties could be looked at for wind farms. I am not saying that everybody wants a wind farm, but clearly there is an appetite. I think the member said that it is a stable income because they get paid. I do not know what they get paid, because it is a private treaty, but significant money is paid per turbine to the farmers for the lease of the land.

In respect of the gas demand, when the Premier was the Deputy Premier, he wrote to the chair of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee and asked it to do a review of the outcomes of the 2011 inquiry. We know that different people have different views about gas supply. We have our own model. We know where things are going.

People raised the question of Perdaman. One hundred per cent of Perdaman's gas is supplied from Scarborough; it has no impact on existing supply. The Australian Energy Market Operator has a more conservative attitude to the supply of gas than the government. Even AEMO does not say that we are short of gas; it says that it will be in balance and out of balance in individual years—out to about 2030. AEMO says that that balance can be managed through storage. It has come to that conclusion. Given that gas demand will grow here in Western Australia, at the

moment we do not have any great fear for the next six or seven years. Then we will. We need a significant supply of gas. The Premier's agency, in his role as the Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade, works on this challenge. There are a range of proponents in the midwest with gas projects. They keep saying that they should be allowed to export. I keep saying to them that they have not produced any gas, so how can they export? If they start producing some gas, we will have a look.

I remind everybody that the domestic gas reservation policy applies to gas that comes from commonwealth waters. It is not our gas; it is the commonwealth's gas, but we have control over the onshore infrastructure. That is why no domestic gas comes from the Ichthys gas field, which is located off Darwin. No domestic gas comes from Prelude, which goes out from its floating platform. They need our agreement to build the onshore infrastructure.

We are working with the proponents. It is not the government that invests; it is the private sector. The government has levers and we are looking at each of those levers to consider how we might respond. If we believe that we need to take additional action, we will. One of the recommendations from the 2011 inquiry was that retention licences in the offshore region be more rigorously opposed. The retention licence scheme is managed by a joint authority. I am the Western Australian member of the Offshore Petroleum Joint Authority and Minister King is the commonwealth's representative. In the end, it is the commonwealth's decision. I have been briefed directly by the National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator about some of these projects. There are six specific projects in the offshore region that I think should be closely examined. We will have to see what happens. Refusing a retention licence does not mean that the gas automatically comes to market. If a retention licence is not granted, the proponent would have five years to bring the project into development. Two of the North West Shelf's domestic trains are underutilised. There is ullage at Wheatstone. Macedon, Devil's Creek and Varanus are not fully utilised. They have ullage, which is unused capacity. Those projects should enter commercial negotiations with the owners of that infrastructure to get themselves to market. As I said, that includes Wheatstone, which is already doing third-party gas. That is my view.

In the end, it is not my decision; it is the decision of the commonwealth. There are a range of issues. I am sure the owners of those resources will have their own reasons for not agreeing with me, but I make it clear that in the end, it is their decision because they own the rights to develop the gas. It is in commonwealth waters, so I have no control over that. We will continue to pressure in any way we can.

Now I turn to the member for Cottesloe. Mark Chatfield works for a company but it is not his company that is doing the analysis; it is him on the weekend. We have a model. Unlike his, ours is sophisticated and detailed, and it works. I invite members to google his background. Just because he says something does not make it true. His own company does not endorse his commentary. They are his personal views. The member for Cottesloe says that Mr Chatfield works for ACIL Allen. Yes, he does, but it is not ACIL Allen's view; it is his view. I have an agency with 120 people in it which has engaged Ernst and Young to do the modelling of the south west interconnected system. We have done it. We ran it a few years ago when we developed the energy transformation strategy. If members asked anyone in the sector what they think of the ETS, they would say it was a brilliant system. Did I do it? No, we got Steve Edwell to lead that piece of work. Now we have Energy Policy WA, which is one of the things we developed out of the ETS. It is doing the work. These are dedicated public servants who are doing the modelling.

People get confused. Clearly, the member for Cottesloe is confused about the difference between replacing the coal-fired power stations and providing electricity for the system. Sixty per cent of the electricity in the south west interconnected system is already provided by the private sector. Synergy is only 40 per cent of the system. Already today, before there was any demand growth, Synergy is not even half the system.

The member for Cottesloe talked about the total number of electrons that come from each energy source. I put it as one-third gas, one-third coal and one-third renewables. That is what it is in round figures. It might be 40 per cent gas one day and 20 per cent on another day. We should not forget that on an individual day, we have 80 per cent renewables in the SWIS. We have 80 per cent renewables on a Sunday in October. The member forgets to talk about the price of electricity. For the most recent week reported on the AEMO website—it does not report live; it is a week behind—from 31 July to 6 August, the maximum price was \$324 and the minimum price was \$62. I wanted to find a week in spring because the figures are starker. For the week 10 to 16 October, the maximum price was \$290 while the minimum price was minus \$1 000. That was because so much extra energy went into the system that one generator was prepared to pay to have another generator switch off. Members have to understand that this is a dynamic system. That is why the peak is important. The volume in the middle of the day can be half the peak load. On a weekend in spring, we almost get down to 600 megawatts. When I became minister, people told me it could not go below 900 megawatts; now we are getting it down to nearly 600 megawatts, but that evening, it will be 2 000 megawatts. This idea that a coal plant can fit into a market like that is mind-blowingly stupid. On those days, we have to switch the coal-fired power station off.

Ms J.L. Hanns: Don't say that, please, minister.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It takes three days to turn on the Collie coal-fired power station if it is cold. That is 72 hours.

Ms J.L. Hanns: And a grumpy husband!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, and a grumpy husband.

It takes 48 hours to turn on an individual station. That is why we put a cold start facility into Muja a couple of years ago. Until now, we could not switch all of Muja off at the same time; we had to keep one unit running. If we did not keep it running, we could not switch the other units back on. We put in a cold start facility so we can switch off all the units because we do not need them in October. Last year we put the Collie coal-fired power station on an outage to save coal, but the year before, it was out for six weeks anyway because it could not be used; there was not enough demand. That is why the batteries are so good; we only need to chop off the peak.

The member for Cottesloe talked about the volume of energy stored. That is not the question; the question is about the capacity to discharge. When they are all built, the total volume of instantaneous discharge will be 800 megawatts. That means that at the time we need those electrons, they will be available. A gas turbine takes about 16 to 20 minutes to shoot up. It is instantaneous. AEMO can press a button and get the electrons out of the battery at that moment. It is the first time we have had an instantaneous response from any kit. We are all learning how to use these things. That is why we did KBESS 1 as a small unit—100 by 200. That is 100 megawatts of capacity and 200 megawatt hours of storage. In other words, it is rated at 50 megawatts in the system. It has four-hour storage but it can do 100 megawatts. The KBESS 2 is 200 megawatts of instantaneous capacity and 800 megawatt hours of storage, so it can run for four hours. Collie is 500/2 000, so 500 megawatts of instantaneous response and 2 000 megawatt hours. If it ran at 250 megawatts, it would be eight hours of storage, but that is not the way it will be rated. That is the way they rate the one in KBESS 1. That is why we know that we can switch it off. Where are we going to get the electricity from? As I said, last week during the day it was minus \$62. Synergy is selling electricity at \$62 negative. It is paying \$62 for people to take its electricity. Members can see why we would go to a battery. Instead of selling the electricity at a negative price, we can put it into the battery and then use it when we need to. I do not understand how the member for Cottesloe can read things and not understand them. Mark Chatfield should be embarrassed by the idea that he is some expert. Every time he opens his mouth, just like Paul Murray, he shows that he does not understand the modern electricity system.

I want to show people something: this is the new Liberal energy jobs plan. It is on the Liberal Party's website right now. It says the Liberal Party was going to close all coal-fired power stations by 2025. Do members know how big the battery was going to be? It was going to be 500 megawatts. What a joke! Remember, we are building the battery energy storage systems KBESS 1 and KBESS 2 and Collie BESS 1. However, that is not the end of it; we still have more battery infrastructure to build. Is that going to be the only thing the network needs? Of course not, because the Australian Energy Market Operator operates the south west system and it is taking the action that it needs to take. We have had flat demand for electricity for over 10 years, and that is no longer the case. We now have rising demand, principally driven by industry. Western Australia has a successful economy drawing in new investments and, therefore, electricity demand is going up.

We have a capacity market that works three years in advance. They are going to go to market and they will specify how much additional capacity is required and they will procure that capacity through the capacity market. That is exactly what the government has designed it to do. That was designed in 2004. By the way, that was the underpinnings of the change when we disaggregated Western Power back in the Ripper and Carpenter days. It was not changed by members opposite. That is exactly the system that was used. The only change the former government made was to get rid of the Independent Market Operator and replace it with AEMO. That is the only change it made. Because it was not a significant change, I was happy to see it. There is a strong argument to say that AEMO has more resources than the Independent Market Operator and, therefore, can provide a better job.

I will move on. I have only a couple of minutes to go because we have an agreement across the chamber that people will be able to get out of here at six o'clock.

There is a conflation of the needs of the south west interconnected system and the energy system in Western Australia. As I have said to the member for Cottesloe in this chamber on many occasions, over half the electricity used in Western Australia is not distributed through a grid. That means that future energy demand is not being secured in the south west interconnected system; it is going to be secured in the north west interconnected system.

Do members know what we have just done? For the first time ever we have got the large users and producers of electricity in the Pilbara to agree to have an integrated grid. That is something people have been trying to achieve for 40 years. There are three rail lines running next to each other because the iron ore companies will not share. But they have actually agreed to share. This is groundbreaking. That is why it is being reported here in Australia and around the world that this is a massive change, because a high renewable energy system will be done at a lower cost through an integrated grid. That will be the first time that has been able to be achieved. Unlike the former member for Cottesloe who used to come in here and blow his own trumpet and say how wonderful he was, I do not come in here to blow my trumpet on this point. However, I am very pleased that I was able to get the companies around the table through the Pilbara industry roundtable over four meetings over the past 12 months, with a working group underpinning that work so that everybody could be assured that their interests would not be ignored as we move forward. I was very pleased when all the companies—all of them—agreed to participate in an integrated grid.

There is a lot of work to be done before we can integrate the grid. Previously there was no point even talking about it if the companies were not prepared to use it. That would be the most ridiculous thing in the world. It is the biggest advancement for energy policy in Western Australia since the original North West Shelf project. It is extraordinary that they have all agreed to do that and it is absolutely transformational. Things like the POSCO project that is proposed for Boodarie cannot proceed without an integrated grid. It is genuinely transformational. That the member did not mention it in any of his comments just shows that he does not talk to anybody about it. It is very frustrating.

The member says that it is good enough for him that Mark Chatfield says that on 62 occasions, or 15 occasions depending on the scenario, the pipeline would not be able to supply sufficient gas to the south west. There are two things about that. I have already said in public that it is possible that we will need additional storage in the gas system at the southern end of the pipeline, because at the moment the two storage facilities are at the northern end of the pipeline. I have already said in public that that is a possibility. The other thing people forget is that most of the natural gas that comes down the pipeline is not used to make electricity; it is used as either feedstock in the production process to make explosives or fertiliser, or at Alcoa, where the member for Cottesloe used to work, to make alumina. In fact, 40 per cent of the gas coming down the pipeline goes to Alcoa and it does not make electricity with it; it makes alumina. Alcoa has already said that it wants to electrify that process. If it electrifies the process, the gas it currently uses will not be used to make alumina anymore. That means that gas will then be available to feed peaking plants.

Dr D.J. Honey: Not by 2030.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Who knows? The point is that until it electrifies, the demand for electricity is not present. When it moves to renewables, the gas will be there. It is only for peaking or support, because principally the electricity will come from renewable energy. The member for Cottesloe knows that because I imagine he would talk to the company and it has told the member what its plan is. This is the ridiculous thing: the member complains about a world that does not exist. He complains that we have not done the plans that we have done. He complains that none of it is public when it is all on a website. He complains that it is insecure when it is not. January showed that our gas supply system was secure and June showed that our electricity system was secure. We had three coal-fired power stations break down at the same time and we still managed the system. The people at AEMO and Western Power do a great job. I do not understand why the member keeps criticising. I do not understand how the member reads the AEMO website but does not understand it. And I do not know why he goes back to people from the past to talk about the future. I am happy to have the work of Energy Policy WA and its consultants put up any day against Mark Chatfield and Paul Murray. It is just crazy. Coal has played an essential part in our electricity system and we will need coal until we do not need coal. I have always said that if there needs to be an adjustment of the retirement dates, we can do that because it is common sense. We are not doing this for ideological reasons; we are doing it for commonsense, practical reasons. We said at the start that if we had to adjust one element or another, of course we would do that, but we have a plan and it is working.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms C.M. Rowe**.

House adjourned at 5.59 pm
