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(HANSARD)

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Wednesday, 4 August 2021

Legislative Assembly

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

PAPERS TABLED

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

VISITORS — ST KIERAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.03 pm]: Just before we proceed, on behalf of the member for Balcatta, I welcome the staff and students from year 6 at St Kieran Catholic Primary School in Tuart Hill. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly today.

HOMELESSNESS — MEDICAL RECOVERY CENTRE

Statement by Minister for Health

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [12.03 pm]: The McGowan government has announced the state's first medical recovery centre, setting a new benchmark for providing medical care and support services for the homeless. The \$4.4 million that is allocated for two years of operation will allow for a 24/7 medical recovery centre to address the current gap in caring for people who are homeless. The primary focus of the centre will be to support the individual to receive post-acute care during their recovery from illness or injury in a safe environment. Additionally, it will provide a window of opportunity to link the person with community and social supports and relevant organisations to help them out of homelessness. Admission to the centre will be possible only via a referral from an emergency department or during a public hospital admission. The centre will be operated by a consortium led by Homeless Healthcare with Ruah Community Services and Uniting WA following a competitive tender process to select the most suitable provider. The consortium members have a track record of strong collaboration and partnerships, with person-centred approaches, to achieve outcomes and the delivery of programs to assist individuals who are homeless to engage with support services.

The centre, which has been secured by the consortium, is a former backpacker hostel located in Palmerston Street in Northbridge and will be converted to provide the required services. The medical recovery centre is a key deliverable of the sustainable health review. The review highlighted the complexity of issues facing one of the most vulnerable groups in our society: people experiencing homelessness. Homeless people face a high rate of chronic health issues, frequently have complex comorbidities and can often have conditions left undiagnosed and untreated for long periods of time. This results in an over-reliance on acute health services. I commend all those involved in the consortium and look forward to the great progress of the service.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT — LAW REFORM COMMISSION PROJECT 111

Statement by Attorney General

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.05 pm]: I rise to update the house regarding the Western Australian Law Reform Commission's project 111, review of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984. We have come a long way since 1984. Our understanding of various important concepts—discrimination, bullying, victimisation, sexual harassment, workplace conduct and gender identity—has continued to evolve, influencing our understanding of what behaviour is acceptable in workplaces, and the provision of products and services. Despite this, there are many aspects of the Equal Opportunity Act that have remained unchanged since its enactment in 1984. Accordingly, in early 2019, I referred to the Law Reform Commission a wideranging project examining the Equal Opportunity Act. Some of the specific matters that the Law Reform Commission has been requested to consider are: the grounds of discrimination, including introducing grounds of gender identity and intersex status; definitions in the act, including discrimination, harassment, impairment, victimisation, services and employment; the inclusion of vilification, including racial, religious, sexual orientation and impairment; exceptions to grounds of discrimination, including those for religious institutions; and interaction with commonwealth laws or proposed laws. I also understand that the Law Reform Commission will discuss the appropriate applicability of the legislation to members of Parliament and judicial officers. The Law Reform Commission is due to publish its discussion paper by the end of the month. It will then take submissions on the matters raised and is scheduled to deliver its final report in February 2022.

I encourage all members and their constituents to review the discussion paper and consider making a submission. Public submissions will help to inform the commission's work and will be considered by the commission prior to it making its recommendations to government. I look forward to presenting the Law Reform Commission's final report to the house next year.

KIRSTEN CHIVERS — PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL*Statement by Attorney General*

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.08 pm]: As part of this year's Queen's Birthday 2021 honours list, Acting Deputy State Solicitor, Kirsten Chivers, was awarded one of three Western Australian Public Service Medals. This prestigious award recognises outstanding service by government employees who have displayed innovation, leadership or achievement. Ms Chivers has worked for the State Solicitor's Office since 2002. During that time, she has primarily worked in advising, providing legal advice to ministers, state agencies and instrumentalities. Ms Chivers now leads the State Solicitor's Office advice, policy and public law section and is a deputy to Western Australia's State Solicitor, Mr Nicholas Egan. Since 2019, Ms Chivers has also been a member of the WA Law Reform Commission. The importance of government's legal advisers cannot be overstated. The most visible lawyers may be our litigators and counsel appearing at courts and tribunals. However, what may not be widely appreciated is the extent of legal advice provided to government on a daily basis. This advising function is essential to the proper functioning of government and the administration of justice. For instance, with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms Chivers has continued to be in high demand across government to provide advice at short notice on dynamic issues affecting the state's pandemic response. It is clear to me that Western Australia's response to the pandemic, including deaths avoided, could not have happened without this advice.

In addition to being a key legal adviser to government, Ms Chivers is also the mother of two young boys, Flynn and Noah. Discharging her duties during the pandemic has therefore meant great sacrifice, and so her family, including her husband, Ben, are also to be thanked. It is my privilege to congratulate Ms Chivers on receiving her award. I sincerely thank her for her service to the people of Western Australia.

**GREATER BUNBURY REGION SCHEME AMENDMENT 0059/41 —
WANJU URBAN EXPANSION AREA***Statement by Minister for Planning*

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [12.10 pm]: I present today for tabling the *Greater Bunbury region scheme amendment 0059/41: Wanju urban expansion area*, which will facilitate the rezoning of 1 134 hectares of rural zoned land to urban deferred zone to allow for the growth of the greater Bunbury area. This amendment will also facilitate the Wanju district structure plan located east of the Eaton town site and positioned wholly within the Shire of Dardanup. The district structure plan was developed in a partnership between the Shire of Dardanup and the Western Australian Planning Commission and incorporates feedback from the community and stakeholders after a thorough consultation period.

Planning for Wanju marks a turning point in the development of not only the Shire of Dardanup, but also the greater Bunbury area. When fully developed, the Wanju urban expansion area will be home to an expected population of up to 45 000 residents and accommodate a variety of different uses. To develop Wanju from the ground up presents an incredible opportunity to create a vibrant and exciting environment that will be unlike anything we have in this area. The plan for the Wanju urban expansion area is ambitious and contemporary, and will offer a range of multistorey housing, an emphasis on mixed uses, and extensive opportunities to walk, cycle and use public transport. A new town centre, schools, community hubs and district playing fields will provide great opportunities for local sporting and recreational activities.

Much consideration has been given to the positive environmental aspects of the new development opportunity. It also considers the alignment of Bunbury Outer Ring Road to the east of the urban area, providing a more permeable and connected urban extension, together with 100 hectares of additional developable land. Major future regional growth centres must reflect the highest standards of contemporary land use planning and execution to advance regional Western Australia's social and economic strengths, which this amendment will facilitate.

In accordance with the statutory provisions for region scheme amendments, this amendment was advertised for three months, ending on 14 December 2020. Of the 12 submissions received, all either supported or did not object to the rezoning proposal. Copies of the submissions and the Western Australian Planning Commission's report on submissions are also tabled today. I am pleased to now table the documentation for the Greater Bunbury region scheme amendment 0059/41 and I commend it to the house.

[See papers [413](#) and [414](#).]

EDITH COWAN — INAUGURAL SPEECH — 100TH ANNIVERSARY*Statement by Minister for Women's Interests*

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [12.13 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the 100th anniversary of the inaugural speech of Edith Cowan was last week. As many members are aware, in 1921, Edith Cowan became the first woman elected to any Australian Parliament. Following her unexpected win, the state newspaper of the day declared that women should not be in Parliament; their place is in the home. So unexpected was Edith's victory that the WA Parliament did not bother to install a women's toilet. For three years Edith had to go to her own home to use the bathroom and then run back to Parliament.

It is an honour to be the Minister for Women's Interests on this significant anniversary, and this is particularly special for me as I sit in the same place that Edith did when she was a member of the WA Parliament. Although a lot has changed for women since she took her seat in Parliament, it is important to remember that we still have a long way to go. Women now make up 45 per cent of the WA Parliament, which is a significant increase from the 31 per cent in 2017. The WA Labor caucus is made up of 52 per cent female members of Parliament, which is historic. The McGowan government is serious about ensuring that women have a seat at the table. We have worked hard to bolster female representation in Parliament and the results speak for themselves.

Western Australia has a proud history of firsts, from Australia's first female member of Parliament, Edith Cowan, and Australia's first female Premier, Carmen Lawrence, to the first Indigenous woman ever to be elected to any Parliament, Carol Martin. The current term has continued this tradition of firsts, with our first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, yourself, Michelle Roberts; our first member of Parliament of African descent, Ayor Makur Chuot; and the 100th woman elected to the Western Australian Parliament, Caitlin Collins.

Unfortunately, issues around discrimination and safety do still exist for women, especially in our federal Parliament. There is still work to do. Despite this, I am so proud to stand with my female colleagues in a Parliament that has almost reached parity. We stand on the shoulders of Edith Cowan, who paved the way. Younger women often tell me that they cannot believe how long it is taking, but with each first and every woman elected to Parliaments around Australia, this job gets a little easier for the next female leaders to come along.

COMMUNITIES — CHILDREN IN CARE — ACHIEVER AWARDS

Statement by Minister for Child Protection

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [12.15 pm]: I have the great pleasure to update the house on the Department of Communities' annual Achiever Awards program. Now in its thirty-first year, this unique program celebrates the efforts of young Western Australians with a care experience, who are pursuing further education and training.

As the Minister for Child Protection, I acknowledge that young people in out-of-home care are some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Due to the significant trauma many have experienced during their lives, they consistently experience greater disadvantage than most young people in the general population. There were 31 young people announced as winners across the awards for university achiever, registered training achiever and apprenticeship or traineeship achiever. This year, the winners included 11 Aboriginal young people across all categories. In addition to these education and training awards, winners were also announced for the community spirit award, for showing leadership and making a positive impact on their community. The excellence in education and training award recognises a Department of Communities staff member for their outstanding commitment to furthering education and training outcomes in child protection.

The achievements of this year's young winners highlights their incredible resilience and determination despite facing significant personal obstacles. Their hard work and perseverance is testament to their incredible spirit and will see them well placed to achieve their career goals and life ambitions. I am proud to be part of a government that has a genuine commitment to achieving better outcomes for vulnerable young people. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate all the 2021 award winners and wish them all the best for their education and training endeavours.

HOUSING — MAINTENANCE

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [12.17 pm]: I rise to advise the house that, this week, Pindan Asset Management was purchased by Programmed Facility Management, which will now deliver maintenance works for the Department of Communities. The McGowan government took a measured and considered approach to the Pindan Asset Management contract when the company entered voluntary administration. Our safe, steady and prudent approach has secured the jobs of around 90 staff and their staff entitlements, and has also helped to deliver a better outcome for the subcontractors, many of whom would have received nothing if we had terminated the head maintenance contract. It is expected that unsecured creditors, including subcontractors, will receive between 48¢ and 81¢ in the dollar on money owed.

This sale will also bring with it stability to a large number of tradespeople, subcontractors and small businesses in the affected regions who are ensuring that the critical pipeline of maintenance work will continue. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Department of Communities, along with Ernst and Young and Programmed, to deliver this outcome, particularly within such a tight time frame, and their continued work to expedite, when appropriate, the necessary contractual arrangements for the sale. Importantly, this outcome also ensures that critical maintenance work will continue on thousands of social housing properties in the midwest, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions.

The prudent and sensible approach this government took is another clear demonstration of how the state government is on the side of working people and small business, and how only our government can be trusted to take measured,

sensible decisions in difficult times. Termination of the contract would have resulted in an instant loss of jobs in the regions where this critical maintenance work occurs and would have left many subcontractors and small business owners out of pocket and their businesses in peril in what had already been a difficult and turbulent year.

I would like to thank the original employees of Pindan Asset Management for their patience and understanding while this process took place. I understand that many of these employees will be transferring to employment under the new owner.

WITTENOOM CLOSURE BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Lands)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Lands) [12.20 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to allow for the acquisition of the last remaining privately held properties within the former Wittenoom town site. Acquisition of the 14 remaining freehold properties will occur by using the compulsory acquisition provisions of the Land Administration Act 1997. The previous version of this bill was introduced by Hon Ben Wyatt during the last Parliament, and although it was passed by the Legislative Assembly, it was unable to progress through the Legislative Council prior to the Parliament being dissolved ahead of the 2021 state election. In introducing this updated bill, it is my intention to finalise the acquisition of the last remaining private properties within Wittenoom as soon as possible.

It has been more than 100 years since blue asbestos was first identified in the Hamersley Ranges and more than 80 years since it was first mined and milled in the area's gorges and surrounds. What followed that initial discovery and mining was a replication of what was occurring elsewhere in Western Australia when a new mineral deposit was found; that is, a workers' camp was established, which then evolved into a thriving town site. In this case, it led to the establishment of the town of Wittenoom, which, at its peak, was reported to be home to 20 000 workers and residents.

The mining of asbestos in Wittenoom ceased in 1966 as the significant health impacts on workers and residents became more evident. In 1978, the government of Western Australia made the unprecedented decision to phase down the town. As part of the phasing-down process, the government closed the Wittenoom town site—it was formally abolished as a town in 2007—withdrawn the provision of services, installed significant warning signs and, more importantly, purchased a significant number of the privately held Wittenoom properties from owners who sold voluntarily.

Since the previous version of this bill was first introduced into Parliament, two of the remaining property owners have taken up an offer from the government and subsequently transferred their properties to the state. There now remain three property owners, who collectively own 14 properties within the former town site and with whom the government has been unable to reach a final agreement. Given the ongoing health risks associated with residing in and visiting Wittenoom, the intention of this bill is to compulsorily acquire these last remaining properties as a public work under the provisions of the Land Administration Act. The bill will also provide each landowner with compensation to be paid commensurate to the value of each property, based on property type. Once the bill is passed and the private properties have been acquired, the government will remove all remaining above-ground infrastructure within the former town site to limit the attraction and opportunity for people to visit and stay in the area.

By no means will this bill put an end to the contamination issue in the area; it is part of a larger body of work required to mitigate future public health risks and manage the contamination caused by the mining and use of asbestos in and around Wittenoom. Further, the bill is a significant step in resolving the unfortunate legacy of one of Australia's worst industrial disasters, which has led to thousands of deaths and the area's reputation as the largest contaminated area in the Southern Hemisphere.

I acknowledge the Banjima people, who are the traditional owners of the land on which the former town of Wittenoom is situated and who have been, and continue to be, heavily impacted by exposure to asbestos. It is essential that the Banjima people are part of the decision-making process in finding a suitable outcome to the ongoing management of asbestos contamination on their country. The government has committed to work with the Banjima people to address this longstanding industrial legacy and support them in their aims when possible.

I commend this bill to the house.

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

LEGAL PROFESSION UNIFORM LAW APPLICATION BILL 2021

Third Reading

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.25 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [12.25 pm]: I rise to close the debate and thank the Attorney General for providing responses to the questions that we raised last evening. As I said, the opposition is supportive of the legislation progressing. I am sure that our shadow Attorney General will ask some further questions when the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Bill 2021 reaches the Legislative Council.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.26 pm] — in reply: I thank the opposition for its support of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Bill 2021. I also thank the Leader of the Opposition for her acknowledgement—we did our best to answer all the questions about the 13 recommendations that came from the committee—and for her support of the amendments. No doubt the bill will be re-examined in the Council very soon. The profession is hoping that the legislation is fully operative by 1 January 2022.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ARTS AND CULTURE TRUST BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 June.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston) [12.27 pm]: I rise today to speak in support of the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. In doing so, and to begin, I acknowledge that today is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, the theme of which is proud in culture, strong in spirit. I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues in this and the other house who have Indigenous children and grandchildren. I also pay tribute to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who work with Indigenous children across the state and Australia.

The Arts and Culture Trust Bill is a reform initiative that will improve the governance and broaden the powers of the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979, which restricts the activities and the venues at which these activities can be performed under arts and cultural pursuits. In casting my mind back to 1979, I am looking around the chamber; hopefully, we were all here in 1979! In 1979, I was seven years old. I note that many members of Parliament, such as the members for Hillarys and Cockburn, were born in 1988. I mention that to frame the context of what I am about to discuss.

The member for Cockburn tells me that when he was born in 1988, as a bicentennial baby, he received a \$50 deposit as a national initiative. I was not so lucky, being born in 1972, but in 1979 I did receive a grey book that commemorated 150 years of the establishment of the Swan River settlement. Obviously, at that time, sadly, the many, many thousands of years of Indigenous ownership and trusteeship of this land was not acknowledged. I remember receiving my commemorative book as a school student. It was a sticker book in which we could put stickers of the black swan and all those things. Unfortunately, my book was destroyed by a rogue bicycle rider in combination with a puddle of mud on my way home, and I cried for days about that particular occurrence.

I talk about this because I want to set the context of arts and culture in 1979 and acknowledge that it was a very different society from today's. I thought I would raise some fun facts about arts and culture in 1979. This was the year that the Art Gallery of Western Australia was built. It is referred to in architectural terms as belonging to the brutalist style of architecture, and we can see other examples of that form of architecture in Perth. In relation to other aspects of arts and culture, *Kramer vs. Kramer* was the highest grossing film of that year, but my personal favourite, as a seven-year-old, was Jim Henson's *The Muppet Movie*. *Simon Townsend's Wonder World* debuted on television and the Australian top 10 in the music charts featured classics like *Up There Cazaly*, *Y.M.C.A.* and *C'mon Aussie C'mon*, and the number one song from that era was *Lay Your Love On Me* by Racey. Thankfully, we have no karaoke in the chamber today, but I think all of those are worthy of mention! In 1979, the Archibald Prize was won by Wes Walters for a portrait of Phillip Adams, OAM, and my favourite band of all time, INXS, was still called The Farriss Brothers. I give these examples today to demonstrate that our approach to arts and culture is very different from what it was in 1979 when the Perth Theatre Trust was established. I think this is a timely review of the legislation and I welcome broadening the scope of arts and culture in line with 2021 and beyond.

The Perth Theatre Trust is very Perth-centric in nature. Three out of the eight members of the theatre trust are City of Perth nominees. The new legislation will mean that arts and culture activities carried out under it can happen anywhere across Western Australia, and that is of particular relevance to me, as a regional member of Parliament. I look around and see many other regional members of Parliament here today and I am sure it makes everybody very happy that, if this legislation is passed, we will certainly be able to diversify what arts and culture means in the regions. I would like to say that regional members from both the government and the opposition should welcome this initiative under the banner of arts and culture.

Under the legislation, the minister will be able to declare any part of the state as a venue. That can be done within either a sunset clause—so, a set period of time—or an enduring clause. I see this as a significant benefit for regional Western Australia and the arts and culture scene and I think the possibilities are endless. I look at and reflect on the areas of visual arts—festivals, concerts, exhibitions, dances, theatre, music, recreation, and education and production activities around arts and culture. I particularly wish to highlight the opportunities that could be undertaken around Indigenous arts and culture if these activities are moved to regional areas under the new legislation.

Scope is available for this to involve both government and private and public partnerships, which means that major arts and cultural events will be able to be brought to the regions with both government support and private investment. Under the new legislation, we will also have the ability to broaden employment powers, which means that in regional Western Australia, arts and cultural activities will be able to create employment activities relating to arts and culture, particularly when the employment opportunities allow for ongoing and casual employment. This means that there will certainly be other opportunities for regional employment around arts and culture, which is often restricted in the regions. The activities that we see in the regions, particularly in my area of Collie–Preston, are often mining based and certainly do not feature arts and culture heavily. The opportunity to bring into the regions employment with an arts and culture focus is certainly going to be welcomed in communities like mine.

If we pass the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021, the minister will be able to declare any part of the state a venue. I do not have a very good imagination. I love art and culture, but I do not have an artistic bone in my body, but I can just imagine something like the West Australian Symphony Orchestra performing by candlelight in some of the gorges in Karijini National Park in association with camping and Indigenous pursuits, whether that be dance, culture or music. I think activities like that that stretch beyond the Perth-centric focus of the Perth Theatre Trust will bring some exciting opportunities for regional arts and culture.

I refer to the member for Albany. I can imagine—again, my imagination is very limited to what I have seen and done—giant puppets, like those that were in Western Australia several years ago, telling the story of the Anzac legend of the *Lighthouse Girl*. *Lighthouse Girl* is the story of a girl who grew up in Albany, so I imagine that the minister would be able to declare Albany a venue that could host giant puppets walking through the streets of Albany and telling the story of the *Lighthouse Girl*. The lighthouse girl was the last human contact for troops departing for Gallipoli in 1914, so there are immense opportunities to weave some of those arts and cultural activities into an understanding of our heritage and history.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's also a great play. Did you see the play at the State Theatre?

Ms J.L. HANNS: No, minister, I did not.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It was very good.

Ms J.L. HANNS: Thank you.

I of course now focus on Collie–Preston and the Wellington Dam wall mural and the associated art trails through Collie. It was a \$1.5 million commitment from the McGowan Labor government. The Premier's definition of "art" in the original concept for this mural was to paint a picture of Hon Mick Murray reclining on the dam wall. Significantly, that concept was rejected—thankfully for all of us!

Mr D.A. Templeman: Thankfully, it wasn't a nude!

Ms J.L. HANNS: No; correct. That is a thought I will put out of my mind for now!

Ms K.E. Giddens: Not a helpful interjection!

Ms J.L. HANNS: No, it was not a helpful interjection!

Mr D.A. Templeman: I'm quite often unhelpful with my interjections!

Ms J.L. HANNS: I think of the opportunities if the minister declared Wellington National Park as a venue under the Arts and Culture Trust Bill, if it is successful. A recent concert that occurred in Perth was performed by the WA Symphony Orchestra in conjunction with Birds of Tokyo. I have a contact in that band because my cousin is one of the guitarists in Birds of Tokyo—hi, Adam Spark; how are you going? The ability to declare that national park as a venue under this bill means that we could have an amazing facility lighting up experiences around the dam mural at night-time under the Southern Cross. There would be some incredible opportunities for my region and other regions around Western Australia.

I ask all the other people in the chamber today to take the time to think about their areas, communities and electorates and what locations might possibly be declared as venues if the Arts and Culture Trust Bill is passed. The opportunities under this legislation are not limited to the examples I have given today, and I challenge members to think about what this could mean for their areas and regions. As I said, despite being an enthusiastic advocate of the arts and culture, I do not have an artistic bone in my body. It is not my strong point, but there are many people who will have better examples of opportunities and can make better suggestions under this new legislation.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You are underselling yourself!

Ms J.L. HANNS: I don't know about that!

I would like to reinforce that opportunities for arts and culture events in the regions will be very much enhanced by members in the chamber supporting this legislation. I commend this bill to the house—I do not know whether I can do that, minister?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Of course, you can.

Ms J.L. HANNS: I commend this bill to the house. I ask all members to support this very important legislation and understand its possible impact on regional Western Australia.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [12.40 pm]: I rise today to also contribute to the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. I have stated in this place before that in my view art is incredibly significant to the fabric of our society and, indeed, our culture. It can enhance our sense of identity, express a complex set of emotions in vastly different and myriad ways and formats, share unique stories, shine a light on really important issues, illuminate audiences, record our history, foster diversity, honour our heritage and share our pain, provide deep insights, and, ultimately, bring communities together.

The arts sector continues to enrich our lives by way of entertainment, but it can do so much more. The arts and culture sectors employ a significant number of Western Australians and are important industries for the local economy in not only the metropolitan area but also the regions. It is important to be able to share our own very Western Australian stories in creative ways and across a variety of mediums, especially in an era of hyper-globalisation. Art acts to both nourish and preserve our culture. Thankfully, the McGowan government recognises the valuable role that the arts plays in our community. I wish, however, to especially acknowledge the commitment of the Minister for Culture and the Arts for always looking at every way of supporting and driving the success of this sector right across our state in both the present term and the previous term. I extend big congratulations to him for his continued efforts in this field.

It was unfortunate, of course, that this bill did not pass during the last parliamentary sitting or the last term, but that has provided us with an opportunity to include a further set of clauses that will indeed revolutionise the creative arts in this state. I refer, of course, to the establishment of a screen production facility in WA. This legislative change will allow us to deliver one of our key 2021 election commitments—that is, putting \$100 million towards the creation of a state-of-the-art film studio in Fremantle. As possibly one of the only members of this place who has a diploma in screenwriting, I am most excited at the prospect of eventually being able to use this skill one day.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A Rowe blockbuster!

Ms C.M. ROWE: A Rowe blockbuster, indeed; but perhaps not.

On a serious note, the arts and culture is an absolute passion of mine. I am very keen that we protect our local arts sectors so that it can thrive not only during the pandemic but absolutely beyond and in perpetuity. I was previously a board member and chair of a not-for-profit organisation in this area—that is, the Film and Television Institute WA—for over 10 years. That experience has given me great insight into the critical need for governments on all levels to provide support for these industries, because without critical support, these industries cannot continue to thrive, improve and enhance our lives.

This huge infrastructure project will provide local artists with a world-class facility right here on our doorstep and I believe it will catapult our film industry to a whole new level. It will also attract artistic projects from overseas and provide a huge number of employment opportunities for local artists and crew. From the screen industry's point of view, it will really put us on the map. Furthermore, it will considerably boost local tourism. We will be able to showcase our local scenery right across the state. Crucially, this project signals to the arts industry and the broader community as a whole that the McGowan government genuinely values the arts sector. By investing in this landmark project, our government will be allowing artists to pursue their dreams and create local content for not only domestic audiences but also international audiences to consume and enjoy for years to come.

Our commitment to the arts is not limited to this groundbreaking project though. The McGowan government has consistently provided support for the industry when it has needed it the most over the last four years and especially throughout the pandemic. We have committed \$159 million to the Lotterywest COVID-19 relief fund in response to the hardships being experienced by the Western Australian community as a result of the pandemic and lockdowns. In addition, we have supported the sector by allocating \$2.4 million to the Arts U-15k grant program and the contemporary music fund grant program. Our government has also provided a \$1.5 million support package to Western Australian visual artists. As part of the government's recovery plan, a \$76 million recovery package was announced in August last year to support culture and the arts in WA. As part of that program, \$30 million has been allocated to the redevelopment of the Perth Concert Hall and \$15 million provided for upgrades to His Majesty's Theatre. I also remind members about the projects that have received funding as part of further arts recovery packages, including more than \$5.5 million towards venue hire waivers for local performing arts companies; \$9 million to underwrite COVID-19-associated financial risks for live music and performance; a \$5 million investment in Lotterywest for the Creative Communities COVID-19 Recovery Program: Artist-in-Residence Program; \$2 million to begin planning a new Aboriginal cultural centre; a \$2 million investment in the design and delivery of online portals for Aboriginal art sales and to present performance arts activities; and a \$350 000 contribution to events that are delivered by West Australian Music Industry Association members.

This funding has been critical for the sector, especially in the last 18 months during the pandemic. COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on many industries right across the state, and the arts, given its reliance, of course, on live audiences and performances, has been especially vulnerable to major disruptions caused by the pandemic and

the subsequent lockdowns that have needed to be implemented. At a time when in-person events and crowds have not necessarily always been possible in many other parts of the world, we in WA have been able to experience festivals, concerts and performances right across the arts sector. I really think it is important to note that it is thanks to good governance by our state government that we have been able to protect not only the arts sectors but also many industries right across our state from being impacted by the pandemic.

One such event that I would like to give a special shout-out to is that of a good friend of mine, Michael McCall. He recently directed a production of the New York Broadway and West End of London hit *The Addams Family* at the Regal Theatre. It sounds as though quite a few members have been to see that. I would like to give Mike a shout-out. He has been involved in the arts industry for a long time and it was very well received. It was also very heartwarming to see a number of—in fact, I think they were all—local artists, many of them from our very own Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts here in WA, which is just fantastic.

To date, we have been able to manage the pandemic effectively. That has meant we have been able to provide a safe environment in which to produce film content in our state. Also, as touted by celebrities and artists in the film industry, Western Australia has a similar climate to that of California. Those comparisons about our climate and WA's suitability for film studios that have been touted for many years means that it is absolutely high time to have our very own state-of-the-art project unveiled.

We are also providing an additional \$20 million for a screen production attraction fund to help attract large film projects to WA. This funding is in addition to some of the other incentive programs offered by the state government and the federal government to attract big productions. It is an added incentive to come west. Not only are we a safe environment, but there will also be a financial incentive.

The new screen production facility will diversify our economy 100 per cent. It will potentially create thousands of jobs, not only in the film industry, but also in hospitality venues near the centre in Fremantle. Without a doubt, it will take our screen industry to a whole new level. It is really exciting. We have never seen anything like this in our state. I cannot wait to see what it will look like. I believe that the new film studio will radically transform and enhance our artistic capacity in WA and allow the industry to expand dramatically. It makes me really proud to see our government, particularly the minister, fostering the arts sector wholeheartedly. As Pablo Picasso said, "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." I 100 per cent commend this bill to the house.

MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.51 pm]: The member for Belmont wrapped up rather quickly. I rise for the second time to speak on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. I was very passionate when I spoke on it the last time it came to this house. As those members who were away with me last week can attest, I enjoy singing, though whether I am good at it is still out for comment! As a former singer, thespian and screen actor, I applaud the Minister for Culture and the Arts for introducing the bill to the house again. The McGowan government has a vision for a trust that can manage not only theatres, but also other cultural assets entrusted into its care. In its current form, the Perth Theatre Trust cannot achieve this to the fullest extent.

There are so many opportunities here in Perth. I have been listening to other members, whether they be metropolitan or regional members, talking about the opportunities available and the enormous pride that all our communities show in their arts and culture. This type of legislation is really great for embracing arts and culture in Western Australia, but also on an economic level, it can help us diversify our economic offerings. As most people will know and acknowledge, arts and culture drives activation and patronage. If we go to the theatre, the movies or a musical performance, quite often we team that, as I have, with a "date night"—one of the few that we get—by going out to dinner or ice-cream or coffee before or after the event. This drives economic activity towards our small businesses such as restaurants, bars and cafes. Indirectly, it also drives activity towards our tourism operators, such as clothing and gift shops in regional areas.

Culture and the arts is about so much more than the theatre. This bill repeals the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979. We understand that entertainment encompasses more than just theatre nowadays: we have outdoor theatres, flash mobs, screen, television and, increasingly, virtual reality, which we are well positioned to explore and promote in Western Australia.

There has been lots of interest in creating television and film productions in Western Australia. We have so many synergies and great locations. We have some of the rarest and most unique locations in the world, from the Bungle Bungle Range in the Kimberley down to Cervantes with its beautiful outback scenes right next to the beach, and forests and beaches in the south west. Obviously, our weather is a great asset for all types of art in Western Australia. We have the capacity to undertake a lot of outdoor art and culture activities.

I think I mentioned in my previous speech that I travelled to Japan a few years ago—more than a few years ago now because nobody has travelled anywhere recently. After that visit, a student stayed with us. We took her to a number of different venues, including the only drive-in cinema left in the metropolitan area in my electorate of Kingsley to watch *The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part*. We also took her to Opera in the Quarry and another arts and culture activity held outside. As we were leaving the Quarry Amphitheatre, she asked, "Do you do everything outside?" I said, "Well, yes, because we can." We have the weather and the locations to do that.

Of course, there are obvious synergies with having the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in Western Australia. We are so lucky and fortunate to have WAAPA here. The quality and level of talent that comes out of that place is amazing. We definitely should be capitalising on that. That does not just sit in theatre. We have musical theatre, as the minister well knows. He attempted to audition there recently. I am not sure whether he was successful.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I haven't had a call back yet.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: It can take a bit of time.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They're still assessing.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: It is seeing what characters the minister is suitable for. WAAPA provides very strong screen and technical courses.

We are in an enviable position: we have the makings of a fantastic screen industry. I wanted to talk about that next. As the minister knows, because I harass him regularly about it, I have very strong contacts in the screen industry in Western Australia. I am very proud of the things that we have done in the screen industry. A very good friend of mine, Roderick MacKay, created a movie called *The Furnace* that was launched last year. It was the only Australian film to be accepted in the Venice International Film Festival in 2020. It was filmed around the beautiful gorges and areas surrounding Mt Magnet and Kalbarri. I remember chatting to him on the night that it premiered at The Backlot, a private theatre in West Perth. He commented that they booked out five weeks' worth of accommodation in Mt Magnet during filming of *The Furnace*. That would never normally happen in Mt Magnet. People could not get a bed in Mt Magnet during filming because every room had been booked. This is a great demonstration of how arts and culture can drive economic activity, not just in the Perth metropolitan area, but also in the entire state of Western Australia. Our capacity to harness this talent and use it to create another industry or to encourage the creation of a bigger industry than we already have in Western Australia is an integral part of this legislation.

It would be safe to say that I was very happy when the minister announced that the government would build a \$100 million film studio in Fremantle. That type of critical infrastructure is needed to ensure that we can bring productions here and have a long pipeline of work for Western Australia. What made me even happier was that it was coupled with \$20 million of production attraction funding. This is really important. We have great crew members and actors in Western Australia. We need to make sure that they can stay here—that they have enough work here so they do not have to go east or overseas to ensure that they have money coming in. This is a really important part of the matrix of how we ensure that our screen industry continues to grow. It is already there; we just need to encourage it so it can continue to grow.

When the announcement was made to build the studio and provide investment funding, Screenwest received some great responses. Its original press release states —

... screen investment in Western Australia hit over \$51 million, doubling the size of the Western Australian Screen Industry over the past three years, with a strong flow of production originating in and coming into the state.

...

The development projects approximately 2800 film production and precinct hospitality jobs to be supported each year in the longer term through the studio.

This is not just about creating a studio where television and film can be made; it is about becoming an economic driver in not only Fremantle, but also the larger part of the Perth metropolitan area.

I was also very lucky recently to have attended the 100th episode celebrations of one of my husband's favourite TV shows, *Outback Truckers*, produced by local company Prospero Productions. Julia Redwood is a friend of mine who invited me to attend the celebration. What I particularly loved about the celebration was that it highlighted in a video package on the night that this was not just about producing 100 episodes. Anyone who has worked in film and TV knows that getting any show to 100 episodes is a massive milestone, but getting a factual show, a non-drama-centred show, to 100 episodes is magnificent. However, the celebration was not just about producing the 100th episode of *Outback Truckers*. It also highlighted how many jobs and how much economic activity was created. At the event, Julia described that it took four years and numerous rejections for Prospero to get the series going in the first place. It has now run for nine seasons and has been seen by millions of viewers in over 120 countries around the world. This is a production from a little production company in little old Perth being seen in 120 countries around the world. The event highlighted that *Outback Truckers* had supported 450 jobs throughout its life to date, and has provided some rare working continuity for a number of screen professionals in Western Australia. That is a key thing that I appreciate about the film studio that we are building in Fremantle. It is about providing continuity for our screen professionals here in Western Australia. Prospero is one of WA's success stories of the WA screen industry, with factual TV productions such as *Outback Truckers*. As I have said, that is my husband's favourite, but I firmly sit in the camp of *Opal Hunters*. That is definitely my favourite show to watch.

Prospero has also produced films such as *Ningaloo: Australia's Other Great Reef, Whale Super Highway* and the very soon to be released *Star Dreaming*. That looks like a phenomenal piece of work. It links the stars to Aboriginal storytelling here in Western Australia. Once that is released, I would highly recommend members see it.

As a quick aside, the film *Ningaloo* demonstrated to me how arts and culture can cultivate more than just economic activity. I took my daughter to see the premiere of *Ningaloo* about three years ago. As members might have guessed, *Ningaloo* is all about Ningaloo Reef and how it is coping with climate change. From that one experience of watching *Ningaloo* a few years ago, my daughter went on a research project with her school to investigate how climate change impacts on oceans. She came out of the blue with it; we did not encourage her to do it. Because she had seen that one film, she went on a six-month research project with the SHINE program at her school and created a whole presentation about Ningaloo and the impact climate change is having on Ningaloo Reef, even down to creating her own experiment by putting a piece of coral into my slow cooker to see what happens when the water is heated.

Getting back to the screen industry, I think it is really important in this context to highlight and promote the contribution that the screen industry makes to the Western Australian economy and the capacity for a growing screen industry to assist with diversifying our economy. Snapshot data from project shooting over the past five financial years, 2015–16 to 2019–20, shows that the Western Australian screen industry has increased in size, with contracted production budgets rising from just over \$48 million in 2015–16 to just over \$89 million in 2018–19. It is already more than \$72.8 million in 2019–20. Over the past five financial years, the value of the Western Australian expenditure leverage for every dollar that Screenwest invested has been more than \$4. Every \$1 of production funding that we spend through Screenwest is a \$4 investment that comes back to us. Obviously, last year was a very hard year for many people in the culture and arts industry. Although it was heavily impacted by COVID, Screenwest supported productions that were able to deliver the creation of 5 617 FTE jobs. That is not 5 617 jobs; it is 5 617 FTE jobs, including direct and indirect impacts. The screen industry also generated \$383 million in total income. We need to celebrate the success of other WA documentaries such as *Aussie Gold Hunters*, which is screened in over 130 countries and is Discovery Channel Australia's highest rating local show. As I mentioned, the feature film *The Furnace* was shown at the Venice International Film Festival and the feature film *H for Happiness* was shot in Albany. The member for Albany is not here. That film premiered at the 2020 Berlin International Film Festival. Two seasons of ABC's drama *The Heights* were acquired by BBC One in the UK. ABC's children's series *ITCH* has been sold to numerous territories, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Finland and the United States. These are all locally made productions and local talents being exported across the world. It is important to invest in our local infrastructure and secure the screen attraction funding because it will provide stability for our local industry so that it will have a pipeline of work moving through.

Recently, our federal colleague Josh Wilson, the member for Fremantle, also spoke in federal Parliament about the screen industry. I would like to put on record that I agree with him that Australia, and particularly Western Australia, has shown itself to be a place where screen productions can safely be made in picturesque locations with talented professionals. He also called for a more balanced producer offset for film and television without cutting into one to meet the needs of the other. I am really glad that the federal government has put off that idea for now. I think other members would agree with me that we should be pushing the local content requirements in Australia to protect our screen industry, particularly for streaming services.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: If the last year has taught us anything, it is that we all like our streaming services, whether it is Netflix, Stan or Disney+, which is my kids' favourite.

Mr J.N. Carey: That's good.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: It is good.

Mr J.N. Carey: *Star Wars*.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: The member for Perth likes *The Mandalorian*.

Streaming services have great shows screening on them, but we need to ensure that we also have Australian content so that we are not consuming just overseas content.

My hope is that this new film studio will also help bridge the gap left by the dissolution of the Film and Television Institute. The member for Belmont spoke briefly about that. When I was making student films at university, one of the things we valued was that we could hire equipment from the FTI. Universities do not always have the most up-to-date equipment, but there is a high demand for it. Having the ability to go to something like the FTI and hire equipment, a sound stage or whatever it might be is really important and we need to look at how we can holistically address the needs of the screen industry.

Film studios are a great vehicle for that and this legislation will enable that to happen. It is important that this bill encompasses the whole state. The Perth Theatre Trust has a metro-centric focus, but culture and the arts does not stop at the boundaries of the metropolitan area, and we heard the great contribution from the member for Collie–Preston.

Mr P.J. Rundle: What about Albany?

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: Albany has some events, but technically it is the Perth Theatre Trust and having members of the trust come from the Perth council is not right. The trust needs a whole-of-state focus and should not be so metro-centric in its offerings. Culture and the arts can be the backbone of regional communities and that should be encompassed by this legislation. I commend the minister for the bill's whole-of-state focus instead of a Perth focus.

In my contribution to debate on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020, I highlighted the links between arts and culture and tourism, particularly the links between Aboriginal experiences and arts and culture and tourism. This has been quoted many times in this house, but 80 per cent of people who come to Western Australia want to have an Aboriginal culture experience, but only 27 per cent leave having achieved that. My hope is that this legislation will enable growth in the industry of Aboriginal cultural tourism and heritage. This is really important for not only adults, but also our children as they grow up. I was born, bred and schooled in Western Australia and I was not taught half the things that my children are now taught in school about our actual history—the history of both sides. It is great that schools are teaching that now, but we need to complement that by offering Aboriginal tourism experiences in this state.

I also mentioned that this bill will create an opportunity for creative, out-of-the-box thinking. We could do so much in Western Australia. When we could travel, we would go to Singapore to attend the multimedia live-action light, water and fire projection display at Sentosa. At the moment, it is called *Wings of Time*, but then it was a different story and had another name. We have an opportunity to weave our cultural stories into arts and culture to create a unique tourism opportunity in Western Australia using all the things that Western Australians are good at—multimedia and live-action performances. Enabling legislation such as this is helpful to provide opportunities and allow for that out-of-the-box thinking.

Most members know that the love of culture and the arts starts at a very young age and we have a high demand from schools to introduce arts in its many forms—dance, music and theatre. The desire for performing arts spaces is at an all-time high. My electorate has been very lucky to secure an election promise of \$5 million for Warwick Senior High School to build a new performing arts space. Greenwood College will get a massive \$17 million revamp and upgrade of a number of spaces. The primary driver for that upgrade was to build a gymnasium. It is a specialist volleyball school and they could not spike their volleyballs—they kept getting stuck in the roof! The funding has been critical in building a new gymnasium and upgrading and adapting the existing gymnasium into a new performing arts centre. Before the last election, I was proud to stand there and announce that it would get a \$17 million upgrade across the school, but predominantly around the new gymnasium and performing arts centre. Woodvale Secondary College, in the north of my electorate, is currently campaigning for an upgrade to its old gymnasium into a performing arts centre. This will be essential for Woodvale Secondary College because it is a specialist music school. I attended a couple of music performances there when they had to hire seating to fit the people who wanted to watch the performances. It is essential that Woodvale has a performing arts centre with seating capacity for its specialist music program. I commend Woodvale for its campaign and wholeheartedly support it. I will definitely be working with the school to see that come to fruition.

I commend this bill to the house. The 2020 bill was great, but it is even better now with the addition of the capacity to build a film studio. This is something close to my heart. I know that the member for Fremantle will love having the film studio in her electorate.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: The minister will be in the background playing a walk-on part!

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: Yes, she will be with Doug. Doug will be a feature!

The capacity to deliver this is important for not only the Fremantle area, but also the screen industry as a whole. I commend the bill to the house.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [1.15 pm]: I begin by stating that my colleague the member for Kingsley is a tough act to follow. Although I share her passion for singing, I share none of her talent!

I rise to add my contribution to the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 or, as I like to call it, the “Highway to Hell Bill”. I refer, of course, to the phenomenally successful and historically significant cultural event that famously closed 10 kilometres of Canning Highway, beginning at Canning Bridge in my colleague the member for Bateman's electorate and heading west through my electorate of Bicton, concluding in my colleague the member for Fremantle's electorate. In my opinion, it was a living, breathing, heaving illustration of what the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 can enable more of once passed in this and the other place, and, of course, in a post-COVID world.

As the world was holding its breath with the advance of the coronavirus pandemic, on 1 March 2020, the tens of thousands who attended *Highway to Hell* were holding up the sign of the horns in a salute to Fremantle-raised rock icon Bon Scott, the original lead singer of AC/DC. It was 40 years to the day on which Bon's ashes were laid to rest in Fremantle Cemetery. I will say more on *Highway to Hell* later.

The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 is a reform initiative to improve the governance of the state's arts and cultural assets. The Arts and Culture Trust will be a contemporary statutory authority and have broader powers than the

Perth Theatre Trust, which is limited to managing performing arts theatres. I refer to a little of the history of the Perth Theatre Trust. Many of the state's most iconic theatres, such as His Majesty's Theatre, are managed by the PTT, which has served this role in accordance with the powers granted to it under the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979.

I refer to the history of the bill before us now. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 passed the Legislative Assembly on 15 September 2020 and was read into the Legislative Council on 16 September 2020. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 lapsed when Parliament was prorogued in December last year. Following on from the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 being drafted and introduced into the fortieth Parliament, a market-led proposal for a screen production facility was initiated. This proposal has been referred to by earlier speakers but it is worth highlighting further here. It was part of the McGowan government's market-led proposal program, which allows government to provide focused opportunities for industry to respond with innovative solutions that stimulate the economy and create jobs for Western Australians.

The proposal for a state-of-the-art film studio was born from this program, which called for proponents to build, locate and operate a screen production facility in Western Australia. This facility would provide studio, digital and post-production activities to complement the boom in location-based screen activities across regional Western Australia. The proposed facility would also need to meet the requirements of the emerging games and immersive technology sectors.

In February 2021, the McGowan Labor government committed \$100 million, if re-elected, to build a state-of-the-art film studio and screen production facility at Victoria Quay in the electorate of my colleague the member for Fremantle, which also happens to be alongside the electorate of Bicton, ensuring that we will also benefit greatly from this opportunity, as will all those right across Western Australia. The facility is the critical piece of infrastructure needed to take WA's film industry to the next level, with potentially 2 800 new ongoing jobs to be created in film production and hospitality. It will contain a number of purpose-built, highly sound resistant stages and other onsite facilities such as offices, construction space, parking, set storage and other amenities. It is envisaged that the facility will take the local screen industry to the next level, creating jobs for locals in the industry and affiliated areas, such as mine, the electorate of Bicton. It will also support the immersive technology and video games industries.

The proposal to develop the studio was part of the McGowan government's problem and opportunity statements initiative of last year, which brings the government and private sector together to stimulate the economy and create jobs in WA. That is something I am particularly passionate about. Individuals within certain parts of the electorate of Bicton derive their primary income from small business—up to and beyond 40 per cent of those local communities. It is an incredibly important and significant part of the electorate. The construction of the Fremantle-based film facility will create more than 580 jobs, with approximately 2 800 film production and precinct hospitality jobs supported per year for the longer term.

Back to the bill before us now. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 was subsequently amended to give effect to advice from the State Solicitor's Office concerning the proposal that the state will require legislative authority to establish, own and operate the screen production facility business. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 was then introduced to this Parliament on 23 June 2021.

The Perth Theatre Trust has done what it was intended to do over many years but it is time for reform to enable it to take on an expanded role in the management of state cultural assets and embrace the McGowan government's vision of a PTT, which manages not only theatres, but also cultural centres and more under a framework that modernises and transforms it into a new and modern trust. Some of the most important reforms include the trust having powers to manage all kinds of arts and cultural venues, including outdoor spaces such as the Perth Cultural Centre and, of course, the example of *Highway to Hell*. It will include state-owned assets assigned to the trust and potentially any privately owned assets that enter into partnership with it. It will benefit the cultural institutions such as the WA Museum, Art Gallery of WA and State Library, as the buildings in which they care for and provide access to the collections will be linked to a purpose-designed, contemporary statutory authority with a focus on arts and cultural assets. It will streamline governance and provide a strategic focus on the management and maintenance of the assets. The trust will have increased power to participate in commercial activities and business arrangements with the private sector, enabling the trust to optimise the business potential of the assets it controls. The trust will also have a greater power to engage in business arrangements, subject to the Treasurer's approval, again ensuring that there is great sustainability in the future, which is very much a feature of the McGowan Labor government. The trust can operate under different trading names and will have broader employment powers. It will allow the government to declare a state-funded arts organisation to be a resident company. To enable the trust to hold short-term events or opportunities that can arise within the cultural and artistic sector, the minister will have power to declare any part of the state a venue, with the agreement of all parties, if it is intended to be used partially or wholly as a place for cultural and artistic purposes, and for any duration of time that the minister thinks is appropriate. Board members will be required by law to possess skills and experience that directly relate to the trust's operations.

These reforms will provide opportunity for artists, performers and, importantly, those employed within the sector. The bill strikes the right balance between opportunity and protection of state cultural assets by allowing operational regulations regarding trust property such as management of venues, admission of people to trust property, the

behaviour of people who visit trust venues, consumption of alcohol at trust venues, the imposition of fees by the trust and parking management on trust land. The reforms are also good for business and support the creation of greater diversity in our local economy, and the Arts and Culture Trust will be wonderful for our community, bringing culture, colour, music, movement and the creative arts into the lives of more Western Australians than ever before, enriching them in many ways. My colleague the member for Kingsley talked about activation earlier, and for me that absolutely means activation in our community spaces. The experience of *Highway to Hell* taught us how many people in our communities participate when we bring an event such as that to them.

I will conclude by heading back to *Highway to Hell*. I refer to an article published by the ABC on 1 March 2020, which states —

No stop signs or speed limit—nobody was going to slow down Perth as more than 150,000 people turned out to pay tribute to a legendary Australian rock band.

Forty years to the day since Bon Scott's ashes were laid to rest in Fremantle Cemetery, one of the state's major highways became a 'Highway to Hell' as fans lined the route to hear bands riding on trucks perform cover versions of AC/DC classics.

Eight bands turned the highway into a 10-kilometre concert stage, performing non-stop on the trucks and stopping at intervals to play entire songs for larger crowds.

...

"Let there be rock!" proclaimed WA Premier Mark McGowan as he officially opened the event by ringing a 'hell's bell'.

World records were broken, and I refer, of course, to the biggest gathering of air guitarists. The successful record attempt was led by Australian air guitar champion Alex Roberts, aka "Jinja Assassin", with more than 3 500 people pointing their hands to the sky and strumming to a recording of *Highway to Hell*.

Businesses and service and sporting clubs along the route prospered. Hotels that had once hosted Bon and the band back in the day, like the Raffles Hotel in Applecross and my local in Bicton, the Leopold Hotel—a favourite watering hole of Bon Scott's—were swamped with trade. The Palmyra-Bicton RSL sub-branch even ran out of Swan Draught. It was so much fun! My overwhelming feeling from being there was one of great pride and excitement in really seeing the community come together. It certainly left me with that ongoing impression that under a McGowan Labor government Western Australians can pretty much do anything. If we can stop 10 kilometres of highway traffic and bring the community out, I think the sky—or beyond!—is the limit. *Highway to Hell* was our last hurrah before COVID, and how fortunate we were to have it. We are now able to look back on this magnificent event during all the time that has followed. Acting Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to support the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. I congratulate the minister for bringing this bill to this place and I commend it to the house. Rock on!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, I am thunderstruck!

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.R. Whitby (Minister for Emergency Services)**.

CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 2 June.

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [1.29 pm]: I rise to commend the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021 to the house. This is an important bill that seeks the support of every member sitting in this house. To emphasise the importance of looking after our kids in our state, let me share a personal story of being a general practitioner and providing care to a little child. It was only weeks since I had arrived in Australia when I was consulting, and to my surprise the mother walked in, suddenly opened her handbag and pulled a very weird object out of it. It was a balloon and a plastic tube. She said, "Test this; test this." I could not understand what she was trying to say. I got more curious to find out what was going on. I asked whether she could explain what it was. She said, "You don't know about this?" and I said, "No, I'm sorry, I don't know about this." That balloon contained her kid's urine and the adults were pretending to give a sample by using the balloon to pass the drug test. Unfortunately, that sample tested positive, which means someone had given drugs to that child. It was an eye-opener to me. I went to my supervisor for further advice because I was very new in Australia. My supervisor eventually reported that matter to Child Protection. Further investigations revealed that the child was in a dire state and severe help was needed to rescue the child and put them in proper placement. It was a pity to go through that and I emphasise again that it is essential that we tighten the laws to protect our kids who are going through difficult times. As members of this house we need to remember that every child in Western Australia is the future of Western Australia. They are the pillars for a strong Western Australian future.

I was brought up in a boarding school by the choice of my parents because my father was busy in his business and my mum was not educated enough to support me with my school homework. As a young kid I realised the cultural differences I had to accommodate from being in a home environment with its own cultural set-up to a boarding

school environment with an entirely different religion and set of principles followed. As a kid I experienced how difficult it is to accommodate such differences at very short notice. When kids are placed in another environment, it is important to make sure that we take the utmost care in matching that environment as closely as possible to make that child as comfortable as possible in order to lead a normal life.

This bill will bring about important reform, which means mandatory reporting will include doctors, nurses, midwives, police officers, teachers, boarding supervisors, early childhood workers, ministers of religion, out-of-home care workers, school counsellors, registered psychologists and youth justice workers. I would call people in that list the first contact for a kid in the community who can recognise really, really early that there is a problem. If these people are not included in mandatory reporting, who else will ring the bell early on to protect the child? That is all the more reason why I plead with every member in this house to commend this bill to contribute towards protecting our kids and our future.

I come to the placement principles and cultural support planning for when kids are placed. We currently follow an order that, firstly, places the child with a member of the child's family; secondly, it places them with an Aboriginal person within the child's community in accordance with local customary practice; thirdly, with an Aboriginal person who might be anywhere in Western Australia; and, fourthly, with a non-Aboriginal person who may be anywhere in Australia. This bill amends this order to make it even more suitable for kids to be accommodated in more suitable places. The order of placement will now be, firstly, with a member of the child's family; secondly, with an Aboriginal person in the child's community; and, thirdly, with an Aboriginal person in close proximity to the child's community who can better understand their culture. This is a new insertion. The order continues with placement with either an Aboriginal person who may reside anywhere in Western Australia or a non-Aboriginal person who is in close proximity to the child's community who may have a better understanding of community than an Aboriginal person who is far away and has nothing to do with this community, and, finally, with a non-Aboriginal person who may reside anywhere in Western Australia. This order has been delicately done with the intention of providing the maximum cultural support that kids need when they are put in placement to grow or feel the same as their community, because they are our future. An amendment requires that the CEO consult with the important agencies before making a placement. This is, again, essential, because it is not just about ticking the boxes or matching it with an Excel spreadsheet. It is about matching cultural differences, matching familiarity and bringing about better health and lifestyle outcomes for kids who are going to be placed.

Amendments will be made to special guardianship orders and the courts will have restrictions on making such orders, which will only strengthen the rights of these kids to live a normal life. The most important parts of this bill are, firstly, the family contact plan and, secondly, a cultural support plan. These are essential parts of the amendments of this bill providing further support to make sure that the child is in constant contact with a family to relate back to their roots, and a continued cultural support plan to ensure that they understand and maintain their cultural heritage without losing it during the placement. The bill also includes investigative powers to make sure the relevant authorities are able to investigate when the time comes to pick up things early. I thank you for this opportunity, Madam Acting Speaker. I commend the bill to the house and seek the support of every member.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston) [1.38 pm]: I rise today in support of the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. I will talk specifically to particular aspects of this bill with reference to my previous experience as both a teacher and deputy principal. I feel very honoured this early in my first year of being a member of Parliament to rise today with the ability to potentially make a difference to a group of people I have dedicated 30 years of my life to working with and protecting, and that is the children of Western Australia.

To give members some background and context, mandatory reporting was introduced in 2009. I became a teacher in 1994, so I operated in a system whose job was to educate and protect children, without a system able to do that for 15 years. In my early stages as a young teacher, when I was about 24 years of age, I worked in schools where children reported certain instances of sexual assault and abuse to me. It was a big load to carry as a young person and as a teacher. At that time, there was not support from the system to carry through and support those children effectively. Therefore, I welcome the changes that mandatory reporting has brought across the many years I have been in the school system as both a teacher and a deputy principal.

As per the royal commission recommendations that were taken into account in developing this bill, the current mandatory reporters obviously include people such as me in my previous role, doctors, nurses, midwives, police officers, teachers and boarding supervisors. People who had accounts of children being sexually abused would have to report that to me, as a teacher, and I would have to report that on their behalf. Therefore, that information was being passed along second and third-hand because I needed to obviously take in the information, understand the information and report that through. I certainly welcome expanding the definition of "mandatory reporters" to include early childhood workers, ministers of religion, out-of-home care workers, registered psychologists, school counsellors and youth justice workers. As referenced by the member for Riverton, the earlier we can intervene in circumstances of child sexual abuse and help those children, and their families, who sometimes are unaware that that abuse is happening, the better. To provide support for children and their families very early on will certainly lead to the best possible outcomes for young people.

As a teacher, I was required to report through the mandatory reporting system. The question that I was asked as a mandatory reporter was: do you believe that child sexual assault has taken place? As the mandatory reporter, I might have heard this second or third-hand from somebody else. All I am required to do as a mandatory reporter is to lodge the report. As a mandatory reporter, it is not my role to investigate any of the circumstances. I report what I know and it might be days or dates or names of people. That information is all lodged within a very secure portal and the Department of Communities picks up that information and it may contact the police. The department may contact the mandatory reporter and ask for clarifying information. I would like to assure people who are concerned about potentially being included in the new definition that this is a way in which we can support mandatory reporting and expand support to families and children without it being our responsibility to do the investigating. That is the role of another agency and another department.

I have been asked to help supervise young people when subsequent police investigations have needed some further information from them about the circumstances of an alleged sexual assault. It is a pretty harrowing time, but that is the only time at which I needed to get involved in the details of what was happening. Otherwise, it was a case of doing my job and reporting the information. Oftentimes, I did not hear anything back; the investigation happened behind the scenes. To those people who might be concerned about being drawn into the new definition of “mandatory reporters” under this new legislation, from my experience it has been only positive and it means that we have been able to intervene in circumstances in which children were at risk.

Another important issue that in this day and age is often overlooked is schoolchildren exchanging nude selfies. That in itself can be subject to mandatory reporting. I have had to assist young people to report that information or pass that information on to police and be involved with families. This is all around supporting young people who have been through really difficult circumstances and making sure that their claims are investigated and followed up and those people are secure in our community.

I will move on to reflecting about children in care. Again, in my role in schools as a teacher and deputy principal, I dealt with many children in care, whether that was in foster care or group homes. Children are placed in group homes when there are no other options; all the other options have been explored and there is just nobody who can take care of those children. It breaks my heart to think that our society has reached a point at which families are dealing with such difficult circumstances and they are unable to care for their own children or grandchildren or extended family members. I would like to highlight Minister McGurk’s initial address to the house on Wednesday, 2 June, and the statistics and information the minister gave us around Aboriginal children in care. She said —

As at 30 April this year, 5 349 children aged under 18 years were in the care of the chief executive officer of the department. Fifty-seven per cent of these children were Aboriginal —

That is a staggering figure given that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent only five per cent of our population. The minister said —

Fifty-seven per cent of these children were Aboriginal, despite Aboriginal children forming only 6.7 per cent of Western Australia’s child population. This is the troubling reality facing Aboriginal families and their communities, and government, despite all the goodwill and efforts undertaken to reduce these disproportionate figures.

We have to ensure that those children in care and their care concerns are paramount. That leads to the ability to access social work and counsellors and to make sure that they are engaged in education on an ongoing basis. I have been in the unfortunate position in which I have had to help people say to the Department of Communities that they felt really unsafe in their own homes, and I had to facilitate them being able to report their concerns to the Department of Communities. I have spent many sleepless nights worrying about their care arrangements and where they were placed. Oftentimes they were in schools and we did not see them for a couple of weeks, and I can honestly say that that was a particularly worrying time. Those kids whom we teach across a school year become part of our own family in some ways, and we care for them as much as we care for our own children.

I welcome the arrangements for the hierarchy of care, particularly around Aboriginal children. I welcome them because the primary focus will be that Aboriginal children are placed with either Aboriginal family members or placed with either an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal family within their own community so that their attachment to country and their extended family will be protected. I think this is a really strong feature of the proposed legislation. I have had very, very many examples of Aboriginal children—and non-Aboriginal children, I might add—not being able to reside with their own families, but in this case the hierarchy will mean that Aboriginal children who are not able to stay within their family structure will be able to stay with non-Aboriginal families who are very supportive of culture and encouraging continued family connections with the idea that eventually the family will be reunified. I have seen some really successful examples of care placements that have been made with those sensibilities in mind. I think it is an incredible opportunity for young Indigenous people to stay connected to their culture, their families and the broader community at large. When young Indigenous people are supported, they often can complete their formal education, look to further education and, potentially, return to the community they grew up in and support other Indigenous people to build a better life for their future families.

In concluding today, I would like to highlight that the two points I discussed around mandatory reporting and children in care highlight that this legislation takes into account that considerations of children and community services and around the care for and protection of some of the most vulnerable young people in our society should be paramount to all the decisions we make as a government. As the member for Riverton so eloquently said, they are the future of our society and we absolutely have to do everything we can to protect those young people.

MS D.G. D'ANNA (Kimberley) [1.50 pm]: I rise in support of the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. Children within state care deserve to have long-term stability and connections to family. As a state, we need to make sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care have strong connections to culture, country, families and communities. Along with my colleagues, I too acknowledge that today is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day. The theme for 2021 is "Proud in culture, strong in spirit". Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in state care deserve the right to continue their connection to culture, country and families. This is what it means to be proud in culture and strong in spirit. We are lucky to have so many cultures throughout the nation, the state and, especially for me, in the Kimberley region, where communities and families have raised their children to be strong and safe in culturally traditional practices for thousands of generations.

I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities across the Kimberley. I also acknowledge all the non-Aboriginal people who are sharing, learning and educating others about the importance of Aboriginal children and their place in society and their connection.

Today is also an opportunity for us all to learn more about the crucial impact culture, family and community plays in the life of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child. This bill recognises the importance of culture, language, country, community and family to the wellbeing and development of our children and their outcomes.

In 2021, as a country and state, we acknowledged and apologised for the policy of forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have come far from those dark days, but we still see a gross over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in our state care. Again, as the member for Collie–Preston mentioned, as at 30 April this year, 57 per cent of children in state care were Aboriginal, despite Aboriginal children forming only 6.7 per cent of Western Australia's child population. This is the reality that many Aboriginal families and communities face. There is much more to be done to reduce these disproportionate figures.

One of the recommendations in the *Bringing them home* report was the implementation of the Indigenous child placement principle. This is a notion that when an Indigenous child must be removed, they should be placed with a family member, a member of the child's community or another Indigenous carer. The bill in front of us will amend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle to prioritise placements in closer proximity to the child's community. In the Kimberley, we all know how important it is for our children to be close to family and country and we all acknowledge that not all Indigenous people and tribes are the same.

Previously, under that principle, a child would be placed with a member of the family; if that was not successful, it would be an Aboriginal member within the community, then any Aboriginal person in Western Australia, and then a non-Aboriginal person anywhere in Western Australia. With the changes in the bill, depending on the best interests of the child in care, the priority will change to a member of the child's family, an Aboriginal person within the child's community, an Aboriginal person within a close area of the community, an Aboriginal person anywhere in WA, a non-Aboriginal person within a close area of the community and then a non-Aboriginal person anywhere in WA. These changes aim to maintain connection with family, culture and country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care.

With that thought, I would like to mention that there have been many successful cases of children being placed in state care. As the member for Collie–Preston mentioned, it is sad that while a lot of families struggle to support their own families, they are still willing to take in their family members. They have been faced with the reality of their brother, daughter, son or grandchild being sent away down south. As I said before, not all Indigenous people are the same; there are differences. Even within the Kimberley region, the culture and practices as far north as the Miriuwung and Wunambal people are separate from those down south in Karajarri, Bardi and Yawuru. I have seen two children who have been in state care who were from a different part of the Kimberley region. Unfortunately, they did not have the luxury of having a strong enough family network to support them through their state care. I have seen them go through one set of carers—I take my hat off to these carers; there is hardly enough for support—then non-Indigenous carers and Indigenous carers in the community. I have seen these children—without giving away anything—grow in care for almost 10 years. I have watched them with a family. They were lucky enough not to be sent far from home; they stayed close and the whole community rallied around in support of the children and of the non-Indigenous carer. They made sure that she had opportunities to explore the cultural opportunities from which they were removed. They came as little children, so they had to be reintroduced to where they came from. Sorry; I went off track.

On cultural planning, another crucial amendment in this bill is planning for placement. Prior to placement, the state must consult with Aboriginal members of the child's family, an Aboriginal representative organisation, an Aboriginal officer and an Aboriginal officer of the Department of Communities, who will have knowledge of the child, their family and their community. This is also very important because each child and each family is different,

as are their needs. Aboriginal representative organisations may include existing native title bodies or other Aboriginal community-controlled organisations that are recognised by the local community and that have knowledge of the child, the child's family or the child's community.

There will also be an opportunity for Aboriginal representative organisations to participate in the development of an Aboriginal child's cultural support plan, including participation in reviews of the plan. This is an important amendment that acknowledges that the involvement and participation of Aboriginal people in decision-making is key to better outcomes that are culturally appropriate and reflect a greater understanding of the Aboriginal people whom the decisions affect.

In 2018, the Premier made a formal apology in state Parliament to all Western Australian survivors of child sexual abuse—an important moment in our state's history moving forward. There are no recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that have not been accepted by this government. The McGowan government continues to work towards the delivery of a staged implementation plan of the recommendations, and this bill acquits an important recommendation.

The bill introduces new occupational groups to join doctors, nurses, midwives, police officers, teachers and boarding supervisors in being required to make a report if they believe that a child has been or is being sexually abused. The new groups are early childhood workers, ministers of religion, out-of-home care workers, school counsellors, registered psychologists, and youth justice workers. Importantly, there will be no excuse for failing to make a mandatory report because a minister's belief was based on information disclosed to the minister during a religious confession, or because making the report would otherwise be contrary to the tenets of the minister's faith or religion.

The highest priority for us is to keep children safe. All children deserve to grow up in a healthy, happy and safe environment, and I will continue to advocate for the children of the Kimberley electorate to have the same access to this right as any other child in the state. I commend the bill to the house.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [2.00 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise to speak again on the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. It is a bill that I feel deeply passionate about. I would like to take this opportunity to again acknowledge and thank the incredible dedication of Minister McGurk in putting forward such a comprehensive reform in this bill. As I said, it is something that I feel very passionate about, and I would like to take this opportunity to speak around the mandatory reporting aspect, especially as it pertains to the protection of children. I, too, would like to acknowledge the impact that this has especially on Aboriginal children in foster care, and how difficult it is for children who experience trauma to then recover.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2327.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE — PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.01 pm]: Members, that takes us to question time. I note that the Premier and Deputy Premier are currently giving a press conference so they will arrive late to question time today. If there are questions for either of them, could members ask them once they have arrived.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

328. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We were informed just before coming into the chamber that that was the case. We will do our best to put those questions that we have for the Premier and the Minister for Health to the bottom of the list. As it happens, the first question of the day is to the Attorney General.

I refer the minister to his government's plan to reduce regional representation in state Parliament and to the ministerial expert committee he has commissioned to review and report on the system used for the election of members to the Western Australian Legislative Council.

- (1) Have the review and report been concluded?
- (2) Does the minister have a copy of the report?
- (3) When will the government table the report in Parliament?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

- (1) Yes, the report has been concluded—finished by the ministerial expert panel.
- (2) Yes, I do have a copy of it. It was delivered cabinet-in-confidence to me by the chairperson of the ministerial expert panel.
- (3) The report is currently before cabinet for its consideration. As soon as that process is concluded, I undertake to have it tabled in this Parliament for community and parliamentary discussion.

MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

329. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister advise what priority the legislation will be given on the parliamentary agenda; is it one of the government's main priorities to be completed before the end of this year?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

The Leader of the Opposition would have to ask the Leader of the House that question. Obviously, the matter has had priority because I convened a ministerial expert panel to report by, I think, 30 June. As the member knows, we rose for the winter break and ministers and opposition members have been away on leave. I am getting it together, back for full discussion with the full cabinet, and we will table the report. The cabinet will make decisions accordingly.

METRONET PROJECTS

330. Ms H.M. BEAZLEY to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's record investment in job-creating transport projects, including the delivery of Metronet.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the work underway to remove level crossings along the Armadale line throughout Victoria Park and Canning, and outline what this project will mean for those in my community?
- (2) Can the minister update the house on the delivery of other Metronet projects, including the Forrestfield–Airport Link?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1) I thank the member for Victoria Park for the question. Of course, a few weeks ago we were out at Cannington station outlining our plans for the removal of five level crossings and the creation of four new train stations. We will be removing the level crossings at Wharf Street, Hamilton Street, Welshpool Road, Oats Street and Mint Street. We will be building four new train stations at Oats Street, Carlisle, Queens Park and Cannington. This is an incredible project. We outlined the form of the new project; that is, a single viaduct will carry the two lines through Victoria Park and Cannington. It was great to see the federal member for Swan there as well as the Mayor of Cannington, who supports the projects and understands exactly the community benefit that it will bring. Of course, this project will create thousands of jobs. It will make sure that we continue our economic activity.
- (2) Another project nearing completion is the Forrestfield–Airport Link. That project has now seen the completion of laying of all the rail. We are now working on the overhead conductor lines. We are making sure that we deliver world-class new train stations. It is another Metronet project being delivered in Western Australia. Again, it is a program of works that we know the Nationals WA and Liberal Party hate and protested against. They still have their bumper stickers protesting against Metronet, but we are out there being very productive.

On the issue of being productive, it was great to see the first meeting of the Liberal Party and National Party alliance! On 27 July, we saw the tweet from the National Party. It said what a great day it was, a productive day, with the first meeting between the Liberal and National teams to plan for the next six months ahead—#RegionalAlWays.

I was quite curious about where they actually met. Was it in the beautiful town of Albany? Was it in Kalgoorlie, where the Labor Party spent a good part of last week? Was it in the north west? Was it in the Kimberley?

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have a point of order. It goes to the subject. This has nothing whatsoever to do with the question that was asked.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, interestingly, I rule on the points of orders, not you. I will not rule that as a point of order; it is an opinion. I will ask the minister to conclude her answer.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am glad that the member for Cottesloe stood up to make a point of order because he hosted the #RegionalAlWays get-together of the National Party and Liberal Party. The first meeting of the new alliance was at the Mosman Park Bowling Club! At least National and Liberal Party members did not have to travel far to get there. If I can compare and contrast, we are out there creating jobs, visiting regional Western Australia, actually in regional Western Australia, and producing for not only the metropolitan area but also everyone in Western Australia. Plans are being delivered throughout regional Western Australia. As for #RegionalAlWays, as far as I can see, the Mosman Park Bowling Club does not equal #RegionalAlWays.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AUTHORITY — TRANSIT OFFICERS — ASSAULTS AGAINST

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

I refer to recent Public Transport Authority data that shows a 20 per cent increase over the last 12-month reporting period in the number of physical assaults on Perth transit officers. What concrete actions is the minister taking to address these alarming figures and protect those transit officers, and also the passengers on the trains, from physical assaults and dangerous offenders?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

We are big supporters of public transport in Western Australia. What we do not do is talk down public transport in WA, as the Nationals WA and the Liberal Party want to do all the time. The Liberal and National Parties do not support public transport in WA. We support public transport. One of the key things is to get more people to catch public transport.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are building Metronet, which means building new train stations, improving safety and installing more CCTV cameras across the network. You oppose the rejuvenation of our public transport system. You oppose investing in our public transport system, so do not come in here and talk about public transport when you run it down every day of the week! Go and look at the cars in the car park, members.

They are still running down public transport. That is what they are doing. What we are doing is supporting our transit officers and we want more people catching public transport.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry?

Ms M.J. Davies: I was talking to the minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay; keep talking.

Ms M.J. Davies: I was talking to the minister next to you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is question time. This is not the time for a conversation across the chamber. What was the Leader of the Opposition saying? She does this all the time, members—just talks, talks and talks but is too gutless to stand up and say anything of any consequence.

Ms M.J. Davies: You're a delight, you are.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am a hard worker; that is what I am.

Back to public transport. We support public transport. We do not undermine public transport in Western Australia. The opposition goes around undermining public transport. What are we doing? We are improving safety across the network, installing more CCTV cameras and employing more transit officers than ever. We are investing in our public transport network. Of course we want more people to catch public transport.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are bringing in initiatives like the two-zone cap, which will get more people onto our public transport and give them more confidence, unlike opposition members, who want to undermine public transport every day of the week.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AUTHORITY — TRANSIT OFFICERS — ASSAULTS AGAINST

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

I have a supplementary question. Given the stark increase in the number of assaults that have occurred, while patronage has dropped, how are Western Australians meant to have confidence that the government will ensure the adequate protection of officers and passengers when numbers rebound?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

Again, the Nationals WA is undermining public transport in WA. No-one believes that members opposite support public transport, so they should not pretend that they support public transport or transit officers. We are having a record investment. We are supporting our transit officers. We are making sure that as part of our upgrades, we are improving CCTV surveillance and all the other measures to improve safety across the network. We want more people to catch public transport. We do not want the National and Liberal Parties undermining public transport, as they do every day of the week.

POLICE — RECRUITMENT

333. Mrs L.A. MUNDAY to the Minister for Police:

I note the McGowan government's unprecedented support for our frontline police force. Can the minister update the house on the work underway to deliver this government's unprecedented commitment to recruit a record 950 additional police officers?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question and acknowledge her deep knowledge and understanding of all things first responder and her great support for police in the electorate of Dawesville. I also acknowledge you, Madam Speaker, as the architect of this incredible increase in police numbers—950 over four years, which is a 15 per cent increase in numbers. In the past financial year, the objective of recruiting 350 additional police officers above attrition was achieved. I can report that as of 2 July, some 173 had graduated and by October, the remainder of that first tranche of officers will have graduated from the academy. I can also confirm that a lot of effort is going into attracting new recruits to fill these numbers. We have to do another 200 every year for the next three years. We are out there telling people what an attractive, exciting, interesting and diverse career path can be offered in the Western Australia Police Force. There is a range of advertising activities in the Let's Join Forces campaign, but also, recently, I attended a jobs expo at the police academy. There was an extraordinary turnout. Noting that it is the middle of winter and quite miserable weather, several thousand people came. Some 1 200 potential recruits preregistered for that day, so they would have been amongst the crowd that attended. On the day, over 100 applications were physically received by police from potential recruits. There were also around 700 applications handed out to people on the day.

I also note that it was wonderful to see not just what might in the past have been the expected recruitment target audience for the police. We had a really diverse crowd there. There were a lot of people from our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests assisted in passing out the word through our networks and our community connections that there are great jobs to be had, there is wonderful service to be delivered and everyone in Western Australia—all our citizens—are sought to join in this effort to join forces with the Western Australia Police Force and ensure that Western Australia remains the safest and strongest part of the world to live in.

CORONAVIRUS — COMMUNITY CASE

334. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

Noting that the Premier and the Minister for Health have just returned from providing a press conference, perhaps the Premier would like to update the house on the matters that he has just advised the state's media of.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Earlier today, the Minister for Health and I were informed of a potential COVID-positive person who has been in Western Australia over recent weeks. The gentleman is a FIFO worker who flew from Perth to the Cloudbreak mine on 20 July. He was at the airport at the same time as the person who came from Queensland and had been let out of hotel quarantine after a negative test. We do not know whether they were in touch or whether they were in proximity, but they were both at the airport at the same time. The most plausible explanation for the Western Australian case is that he was at the airport at the same time as the Queensland person. The Queensland person was subsequently found to be positive when he returned to Queensland and was in a youth hostel, as members might recall, when he was unwell and got tested and he was still positive, having been in hotel quarantine and earlier being cleared.

It is a bizarre situation that occurred. Our gentleman was at the airport at the same time. He flew to Cloudbreak and he was there for a week. He was at the airport on 20 and 27 July. On 20 July, he was at terminals 3 and 4 between 4.00 and 7.00 am and on 27 July, he was at terminals 3 and 4 between 4.00 and 6.00 am. From 27 July until now, he has been in the community, at this point in time, in the Greenwood area and the Fremantle area, as people do. As a young man, he has visited a few pubs and the like. He has been out in the community. We will publish everywhere he has been as best we can work out through our contact tracing teams as soon as we can. Our request is that people who were at the airport at those times go and get tested and isolate pending a negative result. If they were at any of the exposure sites, when they are published, they need to go and get tested and isolate pending a negative result. Fortescue Metals Group is currently going through a process with its workforce, which I encourage it to do expeditiously, to test its workforce as well. That is an ongoing process.

Obviously, we are ramping up our testing facilities around Perth to get as many people tested as possible. If you are unwell, get tested. If you have been to any of the exposure sites, get tested. The FIFO worker's partner has returned a negative result, but she will isolate for 14 days. Of his three closest colleagues, one has returned a negative result and the results of tests on the others are pending.

That is as much as we know at this point. Obviously, it demonstrates that COVID is with us. It is out there around the world. We are not immune to it coming in. We do our best to deal with it if it does. What has occurred was totally unpredicted and unforeseen. I urge all Western Australians to please go and get vaccinated.

CORONAVIRUS — COMMUNITY CASE

335. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Can the Premier advise the house what numbers will cause concern and what will happen if we start to see positive results? Will masks be required? Is the government already considering that if the situation escalates, in order to protect the community?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

We sought the advice of the Chief Health Officer on those matters this afternoon. We had an emergency management team meeting at 1.30 this afternoon. Obviously, it depends on the circumstances. The last time we had a lockdown, whenever that was—six weeks ago—I recall that we had perhaps four community cases and we decided to impose a lockdown. We managed to crush and kill the virus in Western Australia. At this point, we have had one positive—weak. According to medical advice, there is the prospect that this guy was not infectious because he was COVID-positive last year. This complicates matters. On return from overseas last year, he was COVID-positive. The chances are or the prospect is that he is not infectious, but we do not know, so that is why we are cautious. Whether we put further measures in place, like lockdowns, mask wearing or the like, depends on circumstances and medical advice. We will monitor the situation carefully today and tomorrow. Obviously, we are highly sensitive and very cautious about these matters and will do whatever is required.

CORONAVIRUS — STATE ECONOMY

336. Mr H.T. JONES to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to drive Western Australia's economic recovery, which has delivered the strongest economy in the country and created more jobs for Western Australians. Can the Premier update the house on how the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented investment in cutting red tape and streamlining the state's approvals process will help further drive our economy and create more local jobs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Darling Range for the question. We are obviously working hard on our economy. We were the first government in Australia to release an economic recovery plan out of COVID—over a year ago now. The latest building approvals figures, which came out yesterday, are further vindication of our economic response. They showed that last financial year, approvals increased by 88.7 per cent—the fastest rate of annual growth on record, and the strongest growth in Australia. All up, there were 26 866 home building approvals last financial year, the highest annual level in more than five years. We have seen record growth in finance lending for home owners. Housing finance commitments grew by 74.9 per cent, the fastest rate of annual growth on record. Lending for the construction of new homes was up 151 per cent, the fastest annual growth on record. Investors are returning to the market. Obviously, our housing industry is going really well in terms of construction all over Western Australia. The government wants to continue that.

We have billions of dollars of capital projects in the approvals process. We want to make sure we can meet the demands for timely assessments and approvals. That is why we are making the single biggest investment in approvals in Western Australian history. The state budget will include \$120 million to expand our red-tape reduction measures across government. This will mean an additional 150 frontline officers across five agencies to help speed up approvals processes. At the same time, we will maintain our strong environmental protection measures. This is the single biggest investment in approvals in the state's history. It builds on our track record of cutting red tape; reforming planning, environment and liquor laws; and creating Environment Online, the Biodiversity Information Office and Streamline WA. We are doing all we can to ensure that we get speedier approvals in place in Western Australia without dropping standards.

All of our efforts have meant that more people from across Australia are choosing to move to WA. In the March quarter, 1 600 people moved to Western Australia from the eastern states, the largest gain in numbers in nine years. Obviously, people in the east are recognising the strength of Western Australia, the strength of our economy and the opportunity for employment here.

HOSPITALS — CODE YELLOW DECLARATIONS

337. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the increasing number of incidences of code yellow internal emergencies being called in our state's public hospitals and the minister's refusal to publish this data yesterday.

- (1) Is the number and severity of these code yellows recorded by hospitals used to track trends and assist in the management of hospitals?
- (2) Are these numbers reported to the director general and the minister; and, if not, has the minister asked to see the data?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) Code yellow is a WA hospital emergency code based upon the Australian standards for planning for emergencies. It is an internal mechanism that is used to signal to staff that they need to look for opportunities to discharge patients who do not need to be there in order to free up beds. It is a normal part of a hospital system operating model to ensure that we get the best possible use of our resources. It is enlivened in those situations in particular when a large number of people come into emergency departments and we are yet to

identify the beds in which those people, in the event that they are admitted, are required to be accommodated. We continue to use these mechanisms to ensure that our hospital system is running smoothly. From time to time, they will be used if a number of beds are taken out of the system for a period of time. That will temporarily contract the number of beds available. It is not a metric that we use to understand whether the system is operating efficiently. That goes to other issues such as transfer of care times in EDs, our four-hour rule wait times and length of episode of care in EDs, as well as elective surgery and outpatient metrics. From that point of view, the WA public has a great opportunity to not only see how well the system is operating, but also understand how much it is under pressure at the moment. A lot of these metrics are live.

As a result of the policies that we have put in place, we make sure that people can get accurate, up-to-date information about how well their hospital system is operating. From that point of view, the WA public has the opportunity to understand how well the system is operating. Our hospital leaders have that opportunity. I do not think there is a league table of code yellows and code blacks. There is such a thing as a code brown, but we do not want to contemplate that sort of outcome. From that point of view, these mechanisms are all part of managing a dynamic, diverse and complex health system.

HOSPITALS — CODE YELLOW DECLARATIONS

338. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Is it not true that the minister is choosing not to release this information because it would demonstrate exactly what the faculty chair of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, Dr Peter Allely, said—that most departments are running at almost disaster level?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

No.

HOMELESSNESS — LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND

339. Ms S.E. WINTON to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented investment in initiatives that aim to break the cycle of homelessness for those Western Australians doing it tough. Can the minister update the house on the \$6 million local government partnership fund for homelessness and outline how locally designed and collaborative responses such as this will help further address homelessness in the community?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am very happy to answer the member's question, particularly as it is Homelessness Week. This is an important time for us to focus on some of the more vulnerable in our community, people who are doing it tough and, of course, people who are chronically homeless and sleeping rough in our urban areas or the city centre. That is one form of homelessness, but it can take many forms; people can be sleeping in their cars and in a very precarious housing situation. As a government, we are committed to understanding the best evidence and taking the best approach to make sure that we can address those difficult issues that challenge governments and communities the world over.

As part of Homelessness Week, I was proud to announce a \$6 million local government partnership fund. This will be an opportunity for local governments to apply for grants of between \$25 000 and \$200 000. That is the breadth of the grants, and we will match that funding. These are one-off grants for local initiatives. We know that local governments are close to their communities and know what might work best in their local area. This initiative is not designed to be a new system or to put in place ongoing services in those communities. We wanted to recognise that local governments are often stepping up and trying to meet the needs of the people who are homeless in their communities, and that they need some support. This funding is in recognition of the local governments that are active in this area and want to do something that is bespoke to their community.

I want to address some feedback we had from some local government representatives that asked on social media whether this means that local governments will be responsible for homelessness. That is not the case. This is new money; it does not replace the more than \$100 million that we are spending now on homelessness services across the state. In fact, we spend much more than that because we are putting in place new money with our Housing First initiative, with the collection of the By-Name List real-time data to understand what is happening on the streets, and the reform we are putting in place called No Wrong Door, which is designed to make sure that the services and organisations dealing with vulnerable people talk to each other.

I also acknowledge the Minister for Health's announcement this week of the WA respite centre in Northbridge. That will be a 24/7 facility for street-present people who have been in hospital but are neither sick enough to stay in hospital nor well enough to be out on their own to come and recover. It is appropriate to them and they will be able to link in with services. That is a really good initiative that was welcomed by Homeless Healthcare yesterday. I am proud of the significant extra resources that this government is putting in to address homelessness. Importantly, we are drawing on the best evidence to make sure that we have systems reform and we start to drive down the number of the most vulnerable in our community.

SCHOOLS — HEALTH SUPPORT STAFF

340. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the state government school study by DETECT WA in partnership with the Telethon Kids Institute that found that around 40 per cent of secondary school students were experiencing moderate to high levels of emotional stress. Given that these findings are three times higher than the last similar survey results and that we continue to face a drastic shortage of school psychologists and speech and hearing therapists and extended wait times, what steps are being taken to rectify this shortage of crucial health support staff?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

It is a good question and underpins many of the points I was making yesterday that one of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic is that we have elevated levels of anxiety in our community, which of itself is one of the pressure factors on hospital services. As I mentioned in this place before, if members look at eating disorder presentations at Perth Children's Hospital between June last year and June this year, they will see that we have had an 86 per cent increase in the number of children presenting with eating disorder issues. This is a very real and important issue. As it so happens, the Labor Party, in the lead-up to the last election, made a \$36 million commitment around boosting the number of school psychologists in our schools. That is a very welcome commitment and one that will play an important role as we go forward to continue to reassure the young people of Western Australia that we will do everything we can to protect them, their families and their friends from the consequences of COVID-19. We have been successful to date and we will go on being successful, I believe, because we are resolute in our response to any potential outbreak of the disease and making sure that we continue to stay on top of it.

Another issue, of course, is vaccination. Once again, do the events of today not underscore how important it is for those people who are eligible to get themselves vaccinated? It is so important. Yesterday, of the 46 000 30 to 39-year-olds whom we contacted by text who had registered to receive the vaccine when their opportunity fell due, over 24 000 had booked their next vax booking by the end of the day. That is a terrific result and that will go to making sure that we can continue to keep Western Australians safe.

SCHOOLS — HEALTH SUPPORT STAFF

341. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. I am very worried about the mental health of our youth. I know that that takes up only 6.5 per cent of the budget. Is the minister looking to increase that budget so that our families can have confidence that the government is actually addressing these essential services?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Obviously, I will not be talking about what is in the forthcoming budget, but I will direct the member's attention to the way that the McGowan government has kept every one of its election commitments. We made a commitment at the last election—I think the investment was \$36 million—that we would boost school psychologists by around 100 new school psychologists. That is the colour of our money when it comes to wanting to make sure that we can continue to protect the mental health and wellbeing of our young people.

CORONAVIRUS — TOURISM — RELOOK AND BOOK CAMPAIGN

342. Ms D.G. D'ANNA to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's ongoing support for workers and businesses in Western Australia's tourism industry throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Can the minister outline to the house how the government's Relook and Book campaign has supported Western Australia's tourism providers and helped support jobs in the sector, and can the minister advise the house how the McGowan Labor government continues to encourage Western Australians to travel throughout our state and support local regional economies?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for Kimberley for her continued interest in the importance of our tourism industry, particularly in regional Western Australia during the COVID-19 challenge that we, of course, face. As the member knows very well, in regional Western Australia, because of the government's very strong commitments to ensuring that the state is kept safe, there has been an outstanding number of people moving within the state. In regional Western Australia, including the Kimberley region, we have had record numbers of Western Australians exploring the regions. That has happened in all our regions throughout Western Australia.

When interstate restrictions have been put in place, as we have seen with the states that are currently experiencing COVID-19 infections, such as New South Wales and Queensland, and recently in Victoria in particular, the impact has been cancellations by interstate visitors. We developed a program that the member highlighted, which is, of course, the Relook and Book program. We want to backfill those vacancies that have been created because of the cancellations from interstate visitors. In the first 24 hours, the uptake was outstanding. The encouragement of people in Western Australia to relook at booking a holiday and associated experiences in the regions was encouraged

and included the offer through Webjet of some 3 000 flight bookings with a discount of \$100, which I understand are now almost sold out. This demonstrates that Western Australians understand that they can play a big part in supporting regional businesses, be they businesses directly involved in tourism or because of the attraction of a particular community.

I encourage all Western Australians during this time, if they want to get out into the regions, to relook at the availability of both accommodation and experiences. When Western Australians book accommodation, whether it be in Kalbarri, the Kimberley, the south west or other parts of the state, we want them also to look at the suite of options available in terms of experiences. That is one area in which there has been an impact. We want to encourage people not only to book a holiday in those places and to take advantage of the \$100 subsidy that I mentioned with Webjet, but also, while they are staying there, to book an experience. It might be an Indigenous experience or a whale shark experience if they are in Ningaloo. It is because that will all assist and help maintain those businesses.

Of course, as the member for Kimberley would know, the National Visitor Survey showed that almost eight million trips were taken by intrastate travellers within the state between July 2020 and April 2021. Visitors took up the urge to Wander out Yonder. That supports regional economies and will ensure that regional economies continue to prosper. But if people are intending to get out into the regions—and we encourage people to do that—please make sure you also book those experiences. That will assist the tourist operators who provide experiences in regional Western Australia. I thank the member for Kimberley, and all members in the regions, for their ongoing advocacy for businesses in those communities. The tourism industry and associated hospitality businesses are very, very important for local economies and we need to entice intrastate visitation and ask that they increase their spend while they are in those communities because that will continue to assist those communities to remain strong.

PUBLIC HOUSING — NUMBER

343. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to an answer to a question asked in the Legislative Council on 17 June highlighting that there are now 1 372 fewer public houses in Western Australia compared with when Labor came to power. Can the minister confirm that selling off public housing has had a terrible impact on vulnerable Western Australians, including 56 homeless people who sadly died on the streets of Perth this year?

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The preface to that question relates to responsibilities under the Minister for Housing, not the Minister for Community Services. I seek some clarification.

The SPEAKER: Under the standing orders you are required to ask questions of the relevant minister.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is a question in regard to the homeless.

The SPEAKER: Would you like to rephrase your question, then?

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I refer to a question asked in the Legislative Council on 17 June that relates to 1 372 fewer public houses in Western Australia compared with the number when Labor came to power. I ask the minister, as the minister with responsibility for the homeless, whether she can confirm that selling off public housing has had a terrible impact on vulnerable Western Australians, including the 56 homeless people who sadly died on the streets of Perth this year?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

If the member for North West Central had listened to the answer I gave previously when we talked about the local government fund that the government announced this Homelessness Week 2021, I made the point that homelessness is a problem that bedevils communities around the world, and is a difficult issue. Those people who are street present in particular, often have very complex problems that are not easily resolved. In fact, the attention that this government has put in place since coming to office in 2017 into not only extra financial resources but also the strategic work that draws on evidence is something we certainly did not see from the last government, including the previous Liberal–National government that the member for North West Central was part of. The previous Liberal–National government paid absolutely no attention at all to the problem of homelessness; in fact, members in that government wanted to sell off public housing units in their electorates and to turn the sprinklers on to people who were sheltering in streets in the city such as King Street and the like. That was the sort of approach that we saw from the previous government.

Since coming to government in 2017, we have taken the time to develop what the sector calls a world-class strategy. We are drawing on the best evidence to know how we can support those people who are homeless. We have put significant new resources, including the announcement of two Common Ground facilities, and we are now rolling out the Housing First approach in the metropolitan area, Geraldton, Bunbury, Rockingham and Mandurah. We have embarked on some real-time data collection on people on the street through the By-Name List, where we use

service providers to go out and count the number of people who are street present so we can start to understand both identified and de-identified data on how we best track them. In fact, the latest figures in the Perth and Fremantle areas show a reduction in the number of people who are street present, but we are exercising cautious optimism around this because it is very early days. We have shown an unprecedented amount of focus, an evidence-based response and new money that we are putting into addressing homelessness.

If we think that building more public housing is the only solution to homelessness, we are in trouble. We need system reform. We need to draw on evidence for how to make sure we have the right sort of accommodation as well as supports, and we need to work with existing service providers and what they can do so that all of us in partnership are in the best position to support those very challenging issues.

The SPEAKER: We will take a supplementary question and that will be the last question for question time.

PUBLIC HOUSING — NUMBER

344. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Community Services:

I have a supplementary question. Will the minister advocate to replace the 1 372 public houses sold off by Labor to curb the homeless crisis that this state is facing?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I can assure the house that I will not be taking advice from the member for North West Central about how to advocate for homeless people in our community. As the minister and the member for Fremantle, I know where the member lives and I know that he does not experience a lot of homelessness where he lives —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for North West Central!

Ms S.F. McGURK: — or in the electorate that he represents!

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, your interjections are repetitive. I ask you to desist.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I have worked very hard since being a minister to understand from the community services sector, people with lived experiences and researchers how we tackle some of these issues. We are well placed for systems reform to work with existing service providers. We are providing new money and we are in a good place to make serious inroads into homelessness in Western Australia. We all need to be part of that. It needs to include all layers of government, the community sector and the community as a whole, but I am not sure whether the opposition really understands any of those issues, or particularly cares.

CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [2.49 pm]: I had just begun my contribution to this very important Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021 when, of course, we had to interrupt debate for question time, so I would just like to once again place on the record how important this legislation is. I had an opportunity to speak on an earlier version of this bill when it was introduced by Minister McGurk in the previous Parliament, and I note her significant contribution to this reform. I think it will have a very important and significant impact on many children right across Western Australia and especially those who are most vulnerable in our community.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind members and tell some of our new members why this reform is so important, as I did in my original contribution on this bill, by going through a particular instance. Back in 1979, John Pirona was a 13-year-old student at St Pius X High School in Adamstown. Mr Pirona should have been enjoying school and enjoying his childhood. He had his whole life ahead of him and he should have been afforded a carefree adolescence. Instead, Mr Pirona was sexually abused by notorious Catholic priest and teacher John Denham. In 2018, Denham was found guilty of abusing his fifty-eighth victim between 1968 and 1986—58 children whose childhoods were destroyed by a single man. Fifty-eight—that is two classrooms full of utter destruction left in the wake of a man whose depravity and pure evil should have no place on this earth. Denham was protected by St Pius principal and priest Tom Brennan, who was also acknowledged by the church as a child sex abuser.

Mr Pirona did not tell his wife or other family members of the abuse until 2008. By this time, the abuse that he had suffered had led to an intermittent struggle with alcohol and drugs. In 2012, Mr Pirona tragically died by suicide. He was found with a note that read “too much pain”. The years of pain and substance abuse issues stemming from his abuse as a child drove Mr Pirona to take his own life. It left a gaping hole, of course, in the lives of his parents, wife and two young children, and sparked a national cry for action. It proved to be the catalyst for the royal commission announced by then Prime Minister Julia Gillard in late 2012.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was as damning as it was utterly disgusting. The sheer scale of institutionalised abuse is difficult to comprehend and perhaps is why definitive action

has been so hard to come by. When the damage is so vast and so prevalent, it is hard to imagine what can possibly provide adequate compensation, reconciliation and atonement. The commission was contacted by 16 953 people who were within its terms of reference. The commissioners listened to the personal stories of over 7 981 survivors and read 1 344 written accounts. Sadly, Western Australia was at the forefront of this investigation. Three of the top four church institutions reported for incidents of child sexual abuse from 1980 to 2015 are in Western Australia.

The Children and Community Services Amendment Bill continues our government's commitment to bringing Western Australia in line with the 310 recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. One of these recommendations relates to the reporting of suspected child sexual abuse. This government will make it mandatory under the law for a religious minister to report reasonable belief that a child has been, or is being, sexually abused, which I think is incredibly important. The abuse that survivors are subject to as children has long-lasting, incredibly debilitating and often irreversible effects on that person's life and trajectory. Studies have shown time and again that trauma of this kind experienced in childhood leads to a greater risk of serious mental health and substance abuse issues later in life.

Associate Professor Judith Cashmore and Dr Rita Shackel acknowledge in their paper, *The long-term effects of child sexual abuse*, that aspects of abuse are significant factors in the mental wellbeing of victims, which is of course entirely understandable. One of those factors is the relationship with the perpetrator and the betrayal of trust between the perpetrator and the victim. This is particularly pertinent for the reform that we are considering today. A minister of religion should never ignore suspected child abuse for the protection of colleagues or institutional reputation. Religious institutions and those who lead them should welcome these reforms that are designed to protect vulnerable children. Instead, I was absolutely shocked and affronted when Perth's Catholic Archbishop, Timothy Costelloe, criticised these long overdue reforms in *The West Australian* in 2019 when we first introduced this bill into the house. I must say that this particularly troubles me, given that my two children are baptised and go to a Catholic school. I am personally very disappointed that the church was not more forthcoming in embracing these changes. The archbishop was quoted as saying that he saw these reforms as "interfering with the free practice of the Catholic faith". Let us be very clear: this legislation will not allow for the broadcast of every utterance made in confession. It is targeting the most heinous and evil of confessions that could be heard by priests—that of child abuse. When reflecting on the intention of those coming to confession, the archbishop was quoted again in *The West Australian* in May 2019 —

You don't come to confession unless you have recognised the sinful nature of your behaviour, are filled with sorrow and shame of it and determined never to commit such sins again.

I do not believe that sorrow and a commitment not to reoffend are in any way adequate in dealing with such crimes.

This, of course, is the great conceit of confession when considered against our modern and ever-evolving legal system and the expectations of our community. Although the sinner can wipe clean their conscience and maintain never to return to their sins, effectively absolving themselves of these crimes in the eyes of the church, this provides not a skerrick of comfort for the victims, and, of course, no justice in the eyes of the law. Confession is a matter of absolving sins, not of righting wrongs. The archbishop and the Catholic Church need to ask themselves whether holding on to the secrecy of confession in the most egregious and extreme circumstances is more important than the protection of children from further abuse. I have friends who are practising Catholics who really struggle with this concept, and I appreciate that it is difficult for practising Catholics to see this point of view; however, it is an important acknowledgement and the church really should embrace these changes.

The stories of child sexual abuse that have come to light in the past decade have been absolutely gut-wrenching, and the covering up of these crimes has been at best despicable, cowardly and thoroughly disappointing on all fronts. Any individual who chooses not to report a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is being, sexually abused needs to be held responsible for the consequences of their inaction. As a mother of two, I cannot even begin to fathom the devastating effects that the sexual abuse of a child has on the victim and the victim's family. Knowing that a trusted local figure had prior knowledge of the abuse and chose not to report it would only intensify the agony for the victim and their family. There really is no excuse not to report suspected child abuse. It flies in the face of our principles of decency and justice. The damage that this non-disclosure can cause is devastating, long-lasting and in some instances can prove fatal when a victim feels that there is no option other than to take their life to release themselves from the pain. We owe this to every victim who has taken their life, to every victim who never got to see justice served and to every survivor who has suffered in silence when a mandatory report could have seen them receive the help they desperately needed to heal from this trauma. As a Parliament, we have an undeniable obligation to protect the most vulnerable in our society, and I think that everybody who is sitting here in this chamber would acknowledge that. Mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse will result in earlier identification of child sexual abuse cases. In these cases, support will be able to be provided to the victim earlier than has previously been the case. This will hopefully mitigate some of the damaging mental health and substance abuse effects that child sexual abuse is known to have on victims. Mandatory reporting will ensure that child sex offenders are apprehended and brought to justice earlier than they have been in the past. This will stop repeat offenders before they can traumatise children to the extent that John Denham did over 18 years.

Other amendments in the bill align with the royal commission's recommendation 12.20 regarding full implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle, and recommendation 12.22 for strengthened supports to assist care leavers to safely and successfully transition to independent living. The member for Kimberley touched on both of these, and they are incredibly important elements of this bill.

The Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021 will also implement recommendations of the *Statutory review of the Children and Community Services Act 2004*. The act was reviewed in 2017 by the then Department for Child Protection and Family Support, on behalf of the minister. It established five terms of reference. This bill implements recommendations concerning four of those five terms of reference. The fifth term of reference needs to be considered within the context of broader reforms underway in family law and Children's Court jurisdictions.

The amendments to the principles in part 2 of the act are crucial in the promotion of long-term stability for a child in care, with consideration of whether it is appropriate to work towards reunification with their parents. These principles will guide the planning conducted by the Department of Communities for children under the care of the CEO, which will aim to provide the best possible outcome for this group of vulnerable young Western Australians. The objectives of this planning include achieving continuity and stability in living arrangements; enhancing the child's relationships with family, subject to protecting the child from harm and meeting the child's needs; and for an Aboriginal child or a child from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, enhancing connections to culture and family traditions. As the member for Kimberley pointed out, that is incredibly important. I acknowledge Kinship Connections in my community in Belmont that does a lot of great work in that space around connecting kids in care with culture and family. It is fantastic work. More needs to be done, as the member for Kimberley already touched on in her contribution. The objectives for a placement arrangement include placing the child with family, placing the child with siblings and placing the child with people who are prepared to encourage and support the child's contact with family, subject to decisions under the act about that contact. These principles strongly set out a long-term plan for children in care, taking into account the very different situations each of them face, and the importance of cultural considerations in their continued wellbeing.

Connection to family, culture and country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is critical to their emotional, social and physical health. The amendments in this bill have a strong focus on preserving these principles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care. This aligns with recommendation 12.20 of the royal commission—that governments work towards full implementation of the Aboriginal child placement principle and a greater understanding of its intent, which is to enhance and preserve Aboriginal children's connection to family and community, as well as a sense of identity and culture. The amendments achieve this by illustrating an order of priority for the placement of an Aboriginal child. This order has been devised with the principle of connection to family, culture and country in mind. It acknowledges that if the optimal placement of an Aboriginal child with family is not possible, there are placements that would better preserve the aforementioned principles than others would. The amendments also provide for greater participation in the placement process by Aboriginal members of the child's family and Aboriginal representatives. This approach will solidify the emphasis placed on connection to family, culture and country by ensuring that decisions are made in collaboration only with representatives who have a strong knowledge of each child's heritage and community.

This bill is a vital compilation of amendments that will strengthen legislation regarding some of the most vulnerable Western Australians in our state. These changes will have a real impact. The expansion of mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse to include ministers of religion will result in earlier identification of child sexual abuse victims, helping to stop repeat offenders and providing assistance to victims who may otherwise not be identified. The updated principles for child care placement will provide a more conclusive set of guidelines to ensure that children in care have long-term stability, with culturally appropriate plans in place. Overall, this bill will provide at-risk Western Australians with greater protections under the law, a long-term focus on child care placements that are culturally sensitive, and assistance that does not cease once a child has left care.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms C.M. ROWE: I am incredibly proud to be part of a government that is implementing such important reform for children in the care of the Department of Communities. I once again would like to acknowledge the commitment of the minister, who has worked tirelessly to produce this bill and the amendments in line with the royal commission. The work and dedication of the minister is very impressive. Finally, I would like to express my deepest and most sincere condolences to all victims of child sexual abuse and their families, as well as those children who have had detrimental experiences in care in Western Australia. It is my hope and belief that this bill will prevent other young Western Australians from experiencing similar abuse and trauma through their childhood. I commend the bill to the house.

MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.07 pm]: I rise to make a brief contribution on the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. I do so from an informed place, as the only member left in this chamber who served on the fortieth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People that undertook an inquiry and produced the report *From words to action: Fulfilling the obligation to be child safe*. The *From words to action* report addressed some of the issues we are talking about in

this bill and it looked at how different jurisdictions around the world were progressing with their version of our royal commission. It is fair to say that Australia is not unique or alone in its quest to prevent child sexual abuse or improve outcomes for children who experience institutional child sexual abuse. Every jurisdiction around the world is grappling with how we change from words to action. This report investigated how we could do that in a Western Australian context and what we could learn from other jurisdictions. The inquiry took us to a number of jurisdictions in the United Kingdom and Ireland. I particularly want to talk about Ireland, because while we were there doing this inquiry, we visited some Irish departments that deal specifically with institutional child sexual abuse ramifications, and one of the questions I asked at the time was how they deal with breaking the seal of confession. As most members would understand, Ireland is one of the world's Catholic strongholds. I am Irish and Catholic and we hold both our Irish nationalism and Catholicism very close to our hearts. However, it was very clear in that meeting in Ireland that it would not be tolerated. I cannot remember the exact words but it was something along the lines of, "If they want to practise their faith in Ireland, they abide by Irish law." That is really important for us here because it can be very challenging. As someone brought up in the Catholic faith, I uphold many Catholic traditions and practices and I send my children to a Catholic school. I understand the importance of confession held by Catholics and how important it is to us in our faith. However, I challenge those protesting against the amendment in this Children and Community Services Amendment Bill and claiming that it goes against their Catholic faith and that we are interfering in their Catholic faith, to sit back and think about the ramifications of what they are saying.

They are saying that their personal Catholic faith is more important than a child—more important than a child's safety and more important than a child's life. Let us not pretend that acts such as those perpetrated against children do not end in death—not all the time but sometimes. A lot of times, it does. Are we so selfish as Catholics that we think our personal faith is more important than a child's life? That is the question I put to those who claim that the Western Australian government is interfering in our faith. I will stand here strongly and proudly as a Catholic and say that I think a child's life is more important than not breaking the seal of confession, because we cannot in good conscience claim that we are more important than our children, than their future. I ask those who are challenging this to stop and think: if it were your child, how would you feel?

I note also that one of the findings in the report that came from this inquiry was that the prevalence of child-on-child sexual abuse is rising, or the reporting of it is rising. In breaking the seal of confession to report a child-on-child sexual abuse situation we may not be saving or helping just one child but, in fact, two children. It has been found over and over again that children who perpetrate sexual abuse on other children have often been the victims in other circumstances. Yes, it is uncomfortable; this whole topic is uncomfortable, but that does not mean that we hide behind something. It means that we accept that we are the responsible adults in the room, and we have a responsibility to the children who are victims and, equally in these situations, to the children who are perpetrators, because they need as much support and help to remedy their actions as their victims need to recover from them.

I ask those who are protesting against the idea of breaking the seal of confession to really stop and think about what their reasons are for doing it and whether they can justify them against the lives of children. It sounds very grim and scary and I probably have not made any friends now in my Catholic community but I stand by my comments.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Well done, member.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: I am in the rare position of being part of a foster family. A number of foster children came and lived with us when I was a child. That has given me firsthand experience of how good decisions can be really great for children in care but, equally, bad decisions can be devastating. I will not go into the specifics of family and my foster siblings because I have not asked for their permission to do so. However, I will say that changing decisions around placement for Aboriginal people and being sensitive to the individual circumstances of children is important. The best place for an Aboriginal child on country might be with a white person in that community because there is nobody of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent in that community who has capacity. Moving them off country could have a far more devastating effect than keeping them on country with a white person. I commend the minister for including this in the bill and for being sensitive and responsive to the needs of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters in our community. Until we understand that we can make better decisions, we cannot hope for changes in their future. I commend the minister for including this in the bill.

I go back quickly to the report I was talking about. If members have an interest in this area, I strongly advise that they read this report, *From words to action: Fulfilling the obligation to be child safe*. It has made a lasting impression on me as one of the members involved in the report. I know that the learnings from this will stay with me for a long time. One of the things I am still advocating for—the poor minister is probably sick and tired of hearing from me about these issues—is the professionalisation of child safety officers. We have done it before. The changes in this bill are a great step, but they are a step in a journey; they are not the end. I do not think we will ever see the end of our journey to ensure the safety of our children, but the professionalisation of child safety was a learning that came out repeatedly in every jurisdiction we visited. We have done it before. Twenty or 30 years ago, occupational health and safety was almost non-existent in workplaces and on worksites—probably going back even further. Now it is standard practice in workplaces that there is occupational health and safety. It is a targeted objective that we make a conscious effort to ensure we all go to work and go home safe. The same type of thinking could be applied to the professionalisation of child safety officers in schools, churches, community organisations and sporting groups.

They can be used to create child-friendly workplaces. Once we start thinking about children and how we interact with them, Parliament is probably a good example of how not to interact with children. Our committees, for example, cannot take evidence from children. There is no capacity for them to do that, yet a lot of things we speak about have a direct impact on them. There is work for us to do and we should lead by example in that. The idea of professionalising child safety is not to point out one person and say, “You are our person who deals with everything.” It is to ensure that there is professional knowledge that understands that child safety is paramount. If a child is interacting in an organisation, we need to ensure they can do that safely. A professional child safety officer—it does not have to be called that, but whatever it is called—will be the person who implements those strategies and changes across an organisation. Yes, part of that may include being the funnel for mandatory reporting if that is a requirement.

I would like to reflect on the Scotland experience. When we were in Scotland, we kept hearing that as parents we are all responsible for the wellbeing of a child. The responsibility does not sit with the mum or the dad. How many times have we heard the saying, “It takes a village to raise a child”? I certainly know that my co-members of Parliament who have young children agree that it is impossible to rely on just the parents to raise a child because this job does not allow for it. We have to depend on our village, and I think that is a really important sentiment that we need to build into organisations. It is about the responsibility of adults to look after children. We should not be putting this back on the child; after all, they are children, although some can advocate for themselves. I am sure that my 11-year-old would advocate to anyone who will listen to her, but others cannot. As responsible adults, it is our opportunity to look after all children, not just those who fall directly within our care. I would like to commend the minister for this. I know we have done a lot of great work in the area of children in care.

I would especially like to thank the minister for bringing forward the election commitment called Home Stretch. It is something I have earbashed the minister about for a number of years. For those who are not aware, children in care are looked after by the department until they are 18 years old and Home Stretch stretches that out to 21 years. Having had a number of foster siblings over the years and having had exposure to foster families, I can tell members they do not just look after children until they are 18 years old. I could claim that for most of us here, our parents probably did not look after us until we were 18 and then pat us on the back before sending us out into the world. Of course, parents look after children long after they turn 18 years old. I commend the minister for that change and I look forward to it being implemented. Equally, this legislation is a great step on our journey to ensuring our children’s safety. I commend the bill to the house.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [3.21 pm]: I am pleased to speak today on this important bill, the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. I congratulate the minister for bringing this bill back to this house in this term of Parliament because it is an important piece of legislation. As we have heard from other speakers, this bill responds to recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which was a landmark royal commission commissioned by the Australian government some years ago now. It uncovered a history of child sexual abuse in institutions around the country that was lamentable and is arguably one of the greatest stains on the history of this country. The bill is also a response to the 2017 statutory review of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 and implements important reforms in that respect.

My contribution today will be largely limited to the issue of mandatory reporting for ministers of religion. That is only one feature of this bill but it is obviously a feature that has attracted significant commentary in the community at large, particularly—obviously—from religious leaders in the community. It is important to acknowledge at the outset that the reform that this bill implements of making it mandatory for ministers of religion to report allegations of child sexual abuse, including when the material is provided to the minister in the confession, is a reform that is supported very broadly by a large number of stakeholders. It was a recommendation of the royal commission. It is supported by survivor advocacy organisations like the Blue Knot Foundation. It is also supported by social services peak bodies like the Western Australian Council of Social Service. However, it needs to be acknowledged that one group, unfortunately from this Parliament, thought that it knew better than people in those groups. That was the majority of the Standing Committee on Legislation in the last Parliament, which recommended against this reform in its report. That majority was made up of Hon Simon O’Brien, Hon Jackie Boydell and Hon Nick Goiran. What I would say to those members and former members who made those recommendations in the last Parliament—who think that they know better than survivors of child sexual abuse and advocacy organisations—is that it is clear they are still not listening. A clear finding of the royal commission is that institutions did not listen to victims, did not listen to survivors and did not listen to their families. It is a true shame that it is still the case that people are not listening to survivors. I am here today to say that I am listening to survivors. I have heard survivors. I will be voting in favour of this bill because it makes important reforms that will make children safer.

It is worth reflecting on the findings of the royal commission, which set out exactly why mandatory reporting, including for ministers of religion, is so important. The first pertinent finding that the royal commission made was that ministers of religion interact frequently with children in the course of their work. I will quote from the report of the royal commission. The royal commissioners said —

The many ways that people in religious ministry engage with children, sometimes on a daily basis, enable them to detect and receive disclosures of both familial and institutional child sexual abuse. Extending laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities to people in religious ministry could

therefore play a powerful role in preventing or intervening at an early stage in child sexual abuse cases. Further, reporting to a child protection authority may be the most appropriate reporting pathway in the first instance for religious institutions where there is little separation between the church and the family.

This extract from the final report of the royal commission sets out that one of the reasons this reform is so important is because ministers of religion, by virtue of their vocation and their calling, have interaction with children on a day-to-day basis and therefore they are in a prime position to report and encourage early intervention in cases of child sexual abuse.

The other finding of the royal commission that is crucial here to understanding where this reform comes from is that there was a culture of hierarchy and secrecy in many religious institutions and that those cultures were antithetical, essentially, to reporting and disclosure of allegations of child sexual abuse. I quote again from the final report of the royal commission. The royal commissioners said —

... many of the religious institutions we examined in our case studies had institutional cultures that discouraged reporting of child sexual abuse. Obliging people in religious ministry to report child sexual abuse to child protection authorities may help overcome cultural, scriptural, hierarchical and other barriers to reporting.

That observation is the next step on the road towards this reform because mandatory reporting is all about piercing the culture of secrecy, the cultural authority, the culture of hierarchy that allowed child sexual abuse to unfortunately fester in religious institutions for many years. Insisting that ministers of religion report allegations of child sexual abuse that are disclosed to them in confession is an important part of changing that culture. As I alluded to earlier, the way that children were treated in many instances when they were in institutional care—in some cases, government-run institutions and also in institutions run by third parties such as religious organisations—is a stain on the history of this country.

On the issue of the need to break the seal of confession, which is pertinent obviously to the Roman Catholic Church, it is notable that 61.8 per cent of sexual abuse allegations investigated by the royal commission were accounted for by the Roman Catholic Church—the vast majority. It cannot be denied that the Catholic Church has a particular responsibility and a particular history that means that action is needed to ensure that child sexual abuse does not continue.

I would like to draw the chamber's attention to a recent decision of the District Court of Western Australia that graphically outlines the horror of that history of child sexual abuse against particular victims. The case that I am referring to is *Lawrence v Province Leader of the Oceania Province of the Congregation of the Christian Brothers* [2020] WADC 27 and it is the judgement of Judge Herron. The judgement concerns a personal injuries claim made by John Lawrence. John Lawrence was a victim of a number of Christian Brothers, but particularly Brother Lawrence Murphy, when he was in the care of the Christian Brothers at Castledare Boys' Home and Clontarf Boys' Home in the 1950s. I am going to read some extracts from the judgement because I think it is important that we speak in this place honestly and openly about the reality of child sexual abuse, but I give a warning that some of the statements made by Judge Herron that reflect on Mr Lawrence's history could be seriously distressing for people, particularly survivors of child sexual abuse. I also want to say that although I think it is necessary to put these extracts on the record, the true focus of this judgement should be on the bravery of John Lawrence in coming forward and telling his story repeatedly when he was not believed and pursuing his case all the way through our court system to seek justice for himself. He may have been a victim of child sexual abuse, but he is not defined by his victimhood. This is a sample of the findings that Judge Herron made in the decision on the abuse suffered by Mr Lawrence. This is from paragraph 732 of the judgement —

Following the initial violent and brutal anal rape perpetrated upon Mr Lawrence when he was a 9 year old child by Brother Murphy, the course and trajectory of Mr Lawrence's life was irrevocably determined. From that moment it was inevitable Mr Lawrence would be tormented by what was done to him for the rest of his life and suffer serious psychiatric injury. If there could possibly be any uncertainty about that, the outcome was put beyond doubt by the ongoing repeated anal rapes committed by Brother Murphy over the next approximately two years when Mr Lawrence was aged 9 and 10. Mr Lawrence was a small boy, about 3 foot in height. Brother Murphy was an adult, about 6 foot in height, twice the height of Mr Lawrence. Brother Murphy was supposed to be Mr Lawrence's carer. He was his teacher. Mr Lawrence was a young, isolated, vulnerable boy, abandoned by his mother who had treated him poorly. He was in desperate need of care and support. The Christian Brothers, as an institution, and those Brothers who sexually abused Mr Lawrence, particularly Brother Murphy, failed to come close to providing the care and support Mr Lawrence so desperately needed. Of course, that need for care and support was only heightened after Mr Lawrence was first anally raped by Brother Murphy.

The judgement goes on but, truthfully, it is too distressing even for me to put on the record in this place. However, it is worth members reflecting on the point that these are not abstract concepts that we are talking about; these are real children who have been and, unfortunately, are being affected by the most serious violation of their privacy, dignity and humanity.

It is obviously the case that in a debate on a bill like this, we are focused on the best interests of the child. This is where I do not follow those who oppose mandatory reporting for ministers of religion, including breaking the seal of confession. These are the same people who day in and day out tell us that the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration in all sorts of political debates. These are the same commentators who refused to support marriage equality because of this dogmatic and misguided position that children's best interests are somehow served by having a mother and a father.

These opponents have to ask themselves this question, because it points out a fundamental cognitive dissonance in their position: how do they square their position on the importance of the best interests of the child, yet deny that anybody who became aware of Brother Murphy's offending in confession should have been obliged by the law to report it? One of the arguments that is put by people who oppose this change is that there is no need for it. They say that abuse is almost never, if not never, disclosed in confession, but that is not the case. Again, the following paragraph is taken from the judgement of Judge Herron and it is from the paragraphs about the case for exemplary damages to be awarded. Those damages were ultimately declined but the following paragraph is telling. This is paragraph 954 —

The next day, 7 January 1937, Brother Noonan wrote to Brother Hanrahan, the Brother Provincial in the following terms, relevantly in relation to Brother Traynor:

I saw him yesterday, 6th and outlined the procedure. He told me the whole ugly story—in Loyola with two (perhaps three) of his boys, Ronnie Dunne, Lyal Hawthorne and (perhaps) Chas. Davies. I give the names lest they might be required later. After the deeds he apologised, urged them —

The victims —

to tell all in confession and went to Sacrament himself. All occurred in the boys' separate bedrooms. He was in a wretched state and expressed the dearest wish of his life to be retained ... Our duty is to protect the children entrusted to us; to safeguard the reputation of the Congregation and to be just to all. I gave him until to-day to consider whether he would risk expulsion by appearing before the Council, or apply voluntarily for a dispensation. He has just sent me word that he is applying for a dispensation. The letter is in the post and I shall have it this evening. Meantime I have sent the Bursar General to fit him out. This is a sad ending. May God help us and protect us.

That is not the sad ending to that story. The sad ending was right back when the abuse was committed. The sad ending is not the fact that Brother Traynor was in a terrible state and that he volunteered for a dispensation. In any event, the paragraph that is quoted from that correspondence, dating as far back as 1937, demonstrates that there was knowledge of abuse. It was revealed in confession, potentially by victims but certainly by the perpetrator, so it is historical abuse that has been disclosed in confession and therefore shows a need for this reform.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: That finding is also consistent with the findings of the royal commissioners. I will quote again from the final report, in which the royal commissioners stated —

We are satisfied that the practice of the sacrament of reconciliation (confession) contributed to both the occurrence of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and to inadequate institutional responses to abuse. We heard in case studies and private sessions that disclosures of child sexual abuse by perpetrators or victims during confession were not reported to civil authorities or otherwise acted on. We heard that the sacrament is based in a theology of sin and forgiveness, and that some Catholic Church leaders have viewed child sexual abuse as a sin to be dealt with through private absolution and penance rather than as a crime to be reported to police. The sacrament of reconciliation enabled perpetrators to resolve their sense of guilt without fear of being reported. Also, the sacrament created a situation where children were alone with a priest. In some cases we heard that children experienced sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic priests in confessionals.

There really can be no doubt about the evidence that supports the need for the reforms in this bill. Even if it is the case that child sexual abuse is disclosed in a confessional, once is reason enough to justify this reform. One disclosure of child sexual abuse in a confessional is one too many, and it is plainly a matter that should be reported to the relevant authorities.

One of the other arguments that is marshalled against this reform is an appeal to religious freedom. Members will get no arguments from me about the importance of religious freedom. Those who know me know that I worked as an industrial relations lawyer for a number of years. I often dealt with cases in which people were discriminated against in the workplace based on their political opinion or their religious beliefs. There is no doubt that that is not only unlawful, but also immoral in our country. There is no argument from me that religious freedom is not important. Plainly, as with all rights and freedoms, it has to be balanced against other rights and freedoms and it has to be interpreted given the expectations of our society.

One of those expectations from the community is what I have already referred to—the importance of the best interests of children, some of our most vulnerable members of the community. This point was acknowledged by the royal commissioners. In the final report, they stated —

Although it is important that civil society recognise the right of a person to practise a religion in accordance with their own beliefs, that right cannot prevail over the safety of children. The right to practise one’s religious beliefs must accommodate civil society’s obligation to provide for the safety of all individuals. Institutions directed to caring for and providing services for children, including religious institutions, must provide an environment where children are safe from sexual abuse.

In my view, arguments about what is mandated by canon law in the Roman Catholic Church are futile because it is plainly a principle of our society that laws of any religion must give way to secular law. Yet it is galling to note that there have been indications from the Catholic Church, some quite recently, that that will not be the case. I refer members to an article on ABC online dated 12 September 2020 entitled “Queensland Bishop Michael McCarthy says priests will not break seal of confession to report sex abuse, despite new law”. It states —

But Bishop McCarthy said Rome had not changed its view.

“Within the Catholic Church, a priest is not allowed to break the seal of confession. That is what we have all promised and what we have all signed up to do,” he said.

“It’s a real dilemma that we have the state law that has been passed and it has been passed in other jurisdictions now.

“However, confession is conversation between that person and God.

“Certainly in confession, there is the opportunity to say to people—if it is criminal, or evil—then it is time to go and talk to the police.”

That is not an answer to someone who is put in the position of child sexual abuse being disclosed to them—to simply say they should just inform the alleged perpetrator or the person who made the disclosure that maybe they should talk to the police. Expectations have changed. The community expects people to report those allegations to relevant authorities so we break down the secrecy and the silence and ensure intervention in these cases at the earliest possible stage.

What is interesting about Bishop McCarthy’s statement is that it flies in the face of comments that were made by representatives of the Catholic Church to the royal commission when they gave oral testimony. I will quote a statement made by Cardinal George Pell during his oral testimony to the royal commission. He said —

We have always complied with the law of the land, and we will comply with the law of the land in the future ... I repeat, whatever we are compelled to do, we will do.

Apparently, that is no longer the case, at least for Bishop McCarthy. This is a reflection of what is referred to as the outward face of religious institutions, particularly the Catholic Church, in an article entitled “Catholic Church Responses to Clergy–Child Sexual Abuse and Mandatory Reporting Exemptions in Victoria, Australia: A Discursive Critique” by Michael Guerzoni and Hannah Graham, published in the *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*. I recommend that members read that article if they have time. The authors reflect on the fact that there are two faces of the Catholic Church: there is an outward face, which claims some level of responsibility for the abuse that has occurred in the past, and there is also an inward face, where there is a denial of responsibility and an appeal to higher loyalties. I have given the example of the outward face, which is the statement of Cardinal Pell. I also want to give some examples of what the authors describe as denials of responsibility. The authors set out a supplementary submission from the Catholic Church in Victoria, which said —

... the decision to report belongs to the victim. The law in Victoria does not require the reporting of criminal offences to the police. If a victim does not want to report the abuse to police, the Church has no right or obligation to do so.

This is the inward face of the Catholic Church that denies responsibility for having to report child sex abuse. Of course, the appeal to higher loyalties that is used to avoid reporting disclosures is reflected in appeals to the seal of confession and the inviolability of that disclosure. The authors of the Victorian supplement also stated in their report —

Any legislative amendment that purported to require priests to violate the sacramental seal of confession will be ineffective as *priests will simply be unable and unwilling to comply...* *Canonical obligations override* inconsistent obligations purportedly imposed by civil law ...

It is an extremely troubling position to take that members of the Catholic Church—ministers of religion—are not responsible for following the law in our jurisdiction. I would simply say to the opponents of this reform that they should search their conscience on this issue long and hard, because no amount of obscurantism and no amount of appeal to vague academic arguments are an excuse for failing to report child sexual abuse. They offer no real justice and no real way forward for victims. If the position of opponents of this reform is that they do, they should search their conscience. There is resounding evidence that this reform is needed.

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [3.51 pm]: I am pleased to stand in support of the amendments in the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. I, too, wish to speak in particular to the changes to mandatory reporting. I was working as a social worker at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children when mandatory reporting first came onto the legislative agenda. Working in a setting in which the care and wellbeing of children was our core business, we welcomed this change. No longer would reporting rely on reciprocal agreements between departments, or worse, on the individual decision-making of practitioners. Although mandatory reporting certainly is not a panacea or a preventive mechanism, it is a mechanism for ensuring that children's disclosures are not only heard, but also acted upon and that their protection is at the core of all decision-making, not the protection of institutions, professions, individuals or traditions and processes.

The bill now adds additional occupational groupings to the original list of mandatory reporters from that which was first formulated in 2009. This change recognises that many other professionals and groups have the moral responsibility and now the legal responsibility to act on children's disclosures of sexual abuse. I recognise that this is a response from the McGowan government to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and note that the McGowan government has accepted all the recommendations of the royal commission. I would like to particularly thank and commend the Minister for Community Services for her ongoing work to continue to progress those recommendations in the Western Australian context.

Prior to entering Parliament, I served on the board of Forgotten Australians Coming Together, operating as Tuart Place in Fremantle. This is a unique not-for-profit Western Australian organisation representing and providing services for people who were in out-of-home care during childhood, including former child migrants. The voice of lived experience is highly privileged at Tuart Place and people with a lived experience of out-of-home care comprise half the board. It was both an education and an honour to serve alongside them. It is my learning from the participants at Tuart Place that I stand to give my support for this amending bill.

The participants of Tuart Place are largely older Australians in their 60s, 70s and 80s, and many were in church-run orphanages, organisations and other forms of institutional care in childhood. Many of those participants were courageous in stepping up to provide evidence to the royal commission. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the leadership of Tuart Place, director Dr Philippa White, board chair Cevrina Reed and deputy chair Dale Lynch, as well as senior practitioners Susy Vaughan and Jan Newman, for their support to survivors in giving very, very difficult and challenging evidence as well as the multiple written submissions that Tuart Place made on behalf of survivors of child sexual abuse throughout the royal commission. I thank them for that particular piece of work as well as their ongoing work advocating for the needs of all survivors of all types of childhood abuse.

Participants who provided evidence to the royal commission relived their experience of childhood sexual abuse at the hands of those meant to care for, nurture and protect them. Perhaps worse still, however, was the evidence that they gave of telling trusted adults and institutional leaders about their abuse and of not being believed and, indeed, of being told to stay silent, of being told that they were wrong, of being told that they deserved what happened to them and of nothing being done. When nothing is done in the face of a child's disclosure of child sexual abuse, that lack of action subjects those children to ongoing abuse that we know has a lifelong impact on a child's physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual health and impacts on their sense of identity, their sense of self, their self-esteem and their ability to go on to form relationships of safety and trust. Telling someone who had the ability to act but did not is, I would argue, a violent violation of that trust and safety.

On 27 June 2018, I sat in the public gallery here with participants of Tuart Place and other survivors of childhood sexual abuse as Premier Mark McGowan delivered an apology on behalf of the state for the sexual abuse of children in Western Australian government institutions and other institutions of care. As I sat with those survivors, the power of that apology was palpable. I felt it in my body and in my heart, and I saw it in the tears of the survivors and I heard it in their thanks to the Premier and the minister following the apology. For those survivors, they had at long last been heard, seen and believed. Their pain, survival and resilience was recognised at long last. They all wish for child sexual abuse to never happen to another child, but when that does occur and when a child discloses, they wish for them to be heard. But beyond being heard, they wish for them to be believed and for that disclosure to be acted upon.

I was brought up to understand that the worst thing you could be in the face of injustice was a bystander. I teach my children to intervene when they see a wrong being done. Mandatory reporting is more than a legal responsibility; it is a moral one and a human one, and it is one that we must enact without fear or favour. To the participants of Tuart Place and all the survivors who gave evidence to the royal commission, I stand today to commend this bill to the house in your name and in your honour. Thank you.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Water) [3.57 pm]: I rise to make a contribution on the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. Members will note that this bill came through this Parliament in the previous term and I was very supportive of it in my previous contribution. It was a great disappointment that we were not able to get this bill through the previous Parliament, but I am very pleased that the Minister for Community Services has managed to get this bill back on the notice paper and before Parliament so soon into the second term, because it is a very important bill. I am very pleased that the minister has worked so hard

to ensure that as a state government we are able to support and implement all the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This bill forms part of our implementation of those recommendations.

The bill has a number of aspects. I simply want to address the issue of mandatory reporting, which under this bill will extend the provisions to require ministers of religion to report information they have when they reasonably believe that a child has been abused.

This reform has been a long time coming. Most people would say it is fairly obvious that if any person is in possession of information that would lead them to believe a child has been abused, obviously, they should report it. Unfortunately, there is a whole history in this state and around the world of people not reporting abuse. This bill will extend the reporting requirements to ministers of religion. I know for some people that that is controversial. I simply say to them that the community has long since come to the view that there is not a special category for ministers of religion and that ministers of religion, like anybody else, should report. One of the groups that has been quite vocal in its opposition is the Catholic church through various bishops, but in particular the bishop of the Perth Archdiocese, who has been very vocal on this point.

I am conscious that we are approaching a certain time and it may be that I will complete my contribution when this matter is next before the house. As I said, I spoke on this bill in the last Parliament and if people read the *Hansard*, they might conclude that this is a repetition of the previous speech, but, in my view, we can never talk about issues of child sexual abuse too much.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

PREMIER

Question without Notice 334 — Personal Explanation

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [4.01 pm]: Mr Deputy Speaker, under standing order 148, I seek to make a personal explanation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is granted.

Mr M. McGOWAN: During question time, I was asked a question by the Leader of the Opposition about the latest case of a COVID-positive person in Western Australia and I inadvertently gave one inaccurate fact, which I would like to now correct.

I was advised that the person in question had been at the Perth Airport terminal on the morning of 27 July. It turns out that he was at Perth Airport terminals 3 and 4 on 27 July 2021 between 4.30 and 6.00 that evening. Therefore, rather than being there in the morning, he was there in the evening.

I further advise the house of the most recent update put on the government health website that details the locations that people have been in. I would like to let the house know that on Tuesday, 20 July, between 4.00 and 7.00 am, the COVID-positive person was at Perth Airport terminals 3 and 4. On 27 July, he was at Perth Airport terminals 3 and 4 between 4.30 and 6.00 pm. On 28 July between 5.00 and 7.30 pm, he was at the Old Faithful Bar and BBQ in Fremantle. On 29 July 2021 between 7.30 pm and 1.00 am, he was in Scarborough at the Indian Ocean Hotel, the Indi Bar. On 31 July 2021 between 6.30 pm and 12.00 am, he was at the Subiaco Hotel, and on 2 August 2021 between 1.00 and 3.00 pm, he was at the PathWest waiting room at Fremantle Hospital. Obviously, as further locations come to hand, we will publish them.

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — HEALTH — PERFORMANCE

Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [4.04 pm]: Deputy Speaker, it really is going well this week because I have left my piece of paper on the desk! I move —

That this house condemns the Labor government for its failure to prioritise a safe and efficient health service for Western Australians, resulting in a broad range of economic and social impacts.

This is a very serious issue, and we have just had news of a COVID-positive individual in our community. The opposition continues to raise questions because there is not only an impact on our workforce and people who are being caught up in our hospital system, the emergency departments, St John Ambulance and a whole raft of areas in their everyday efforts to access quality health care, but also the spectre of COVID is hanging over us. When incidents of individuals testing positive to COVID occur, the first thing we think about is how our health system and hospitals could possibly cope if we had any kind of outbreak like the one that is occurring in New South Wales. That would be an additional burden on what is already a stressed system in crisis, as some would put it, although the Minister for Health still refuses to acknowledge that. Our health system cannot cope with any additional burden that would come from such an incident. I put on record that I truly hope that this was, in fact, a weak positive-negative result and that all the close contacts test negative and are therefore ruled out, because I would not like to see our state end up where New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and other places around the world have ended up. We continue to raise the issue of the health system because we know that it is already overburdened. The challenge is that if we

see COVID creep into our state, I fear very greatly for the staff who are already working at capacity and for our ability to access healthcare services for all the things that we do on a daily basis. The opposition will go through how we believe the mismanagement of our health system is impacting not only our community at a personal level, but also, from an economic perspective, across other sectors.

I spoke yesterday about ambulance ramping. As we put forward yesterday, everyone knows that the Western Australian health system is in crisis. In fact, last week the ABC 7.30 report highlighted that the numbers we see with ambulance ramping are at a level that is not only a national but an international disgrace. The WA faculty chair of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, Dr Peter Allely, highlighted the dangers when he said —

... most departments are running at almost disaster level, at least several times a week ...

Again, I quote —

... to have overcrowding in the twenty-first century in one of the richest countries in the world is scandalous.

We agree, yet the minister refuses to say the word “crisis”, even when we have people in the system working on the front line saying that it is at a “disaster level”. We in the opposition asked for information about code yellows that are being triggered by staff. It may well be an internal measure, but the Australian Nursing Federation has been asking for this to be published live and online, much like other information is published, and I think the public and the opposition have a right to know what that information is. I do not understand why the minister will not agree to publish that information. Is it because it would demonstrate just how close to the wire our health system operates every day?

How do we know that the system is in crisis? We have used the health minister’s own benchmark. We outlined yesterday that when he was in opposition, this minister complained that 1 030 hours of ambulance ramping was a massive failure, resulting in horror stories that were shocking. But in July this year, we had ambulance ramping numbers that were five times greater than the number that the minister referred to as a massive failure. I really think it reflects on the Minister for Health and how he is approaching this crisis that he can accuse someone of a massive failure at that point in time and then has numbers five times worse than that when he is responsible for the health system, but will take no responsibility or accountability for that. In fact, we see everybody else is being blamed, including the people who walk through the front doors of emergency departments. That has been the latest excuse. Last week, 7.30 on the ABC highlighted the broader issue of those code yellows that I spoke to.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr R.S. Love: If you are going to interject, at least do it loud enough so we can hear.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Is the minister okay there muttering under his breath? Would the minister like to contribute?

Last week, 7.30 on the ABC highlighted the broader issue of the code yellows that we have now asked two questions on in relation to why this Minister for Health and government refuses to table the data. That is a transparency issue for us, and again I wonder why the minister refuses to provide that information. The WA faculty chair for the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, Dr Peter Allely, really highlighted this risk when he said there are internal disasters, and he used that language, regularly happening in our hospitals. He is right; they are internal disasters. I have some examples of people in my constituency and others who have raised issues that have occurred as they have traversed their way through this health system in crisis, and they do not make for good reading. It is quite devastating to have a family member or individual who has fallen through the gaps in a system under pressure. All of them go to great pains to say that it is not the staff’s fault, but that they are overworked and there are simply not enough people in these hospitals to deal with the situation that is emerging.

The Australian Nursing Federation is calling for those code yellow updates and the data to be provided, and it wants it provided online and in real time. We consider this to be a sensible and important request. This is the Australian Nursing Federation, which represents the people who work on the front line in all of these hospitals. It is saying this information would assist and it should be made public so we can assess just how severe this crisis is. It is not just an internal management situation; it is impacting on these people’s lives as they go to their places of employment every day, and it is impacting on patients. I recall reading some information that had been provided earlier this year by another professional in the sector who said that code yellows did not use to occur regularly, but now they seem almost normal. At the time, the Minister for Health reflected on this and said it was just business as usual and it was just the hospital managing its business. He said if a code yellow is called, it means that all staff have to step up and manage how to progress patients through the system. But if that is happening all the time, it is a red flag that is not being addressed. Surely, if it occurs rarely, it is taken notice of and some changes might be made to the process, but if it is happening every day and becoming business as usual, that is a system at breaking point. A code yellow should not be called and put in place on a daily basis, whether it is in one of our major tertiary hospitals or one of our hospitals around regional Western Australia. That points to under-resourcing and a failure to invest over a long time, because these issues have not emerged overnight. I will come to it in a while, but there is also opinion from those who work in these emergency departments that it is not normal. Let us not forget that this minister who at last count has five portfolios, and I consider health the one that needs the most attention at this point, was the one complaining in opposition that no information was available and he was going to provide all this

information on the health department website. That was what he was going to do. It is remarkable that we have now asked twice, and a key stakeholder in the minister's portfolio, the Australian Nursing Federation, has also called for that data to be released, but the minister is refusing to do it. I remind members that the current government famously committed to a gold standard in transparency when it came to power. To quote the minister —

“The McGowan Government made a commitment to improve the accessibility and transparency of information around the Western Australian public health system.

We are calling on this health minister to immediately commit to implementing real-time reporting of code yellows, or internal disasters as those working the system refer to them. If he does not, it is another reflection on the way this minister is handling his portfolio, and it is not a good reflection. I do not think it is an unreasonable request. The Australian Nursing Federation does not think it is an unreasonable request. The minister made it a personal election commitment to provide greater accessibility to, and transparency of, health data, so he must deliver. That has to be an outcome, or at least a response. Outside question time, in which we know there is theatre, bluster and all the rest of it, we have the opportunity in this debate to understand more fully why the minister will not provide code yellow data.

We spoke at length yesterday about ambulance response times. I am setting the scene for my colleagues to progress through how this issue is impacting on a broader range of economic and social areas in our state. I think it is important to have on the record the data we have to hand and, again, the measures we are looking at to say that this is a crisis. The crisis in the emergency departments are now having broader and much more dangerous flow-on impacts on St John Ambulance—on paid paramedics, officials and volunteers. Because St John's ambulances are trapped—they are ramped and cannot get out—they are unable to get back into the community and respond to emergencies. That will cause some concern in the community.

That is starting to be reflected in the data collected in relation to its services. I remind members that at the same time we are dealing with this, this Labor government has a committee, dominated by government members, to investigate the St John Ambulance contract. I am not sure that we need an investigation; we need the government to provide a contract that goes for longer than 12 months. That is what has been happening; the contracts have been rolling over in a very short-term way, which does not allow any organisation to respond to the challenges. If the minister says that the scenario now is completely different from what it was four years ago, two years ago or one year ago, St John Ambulance is dealing with that same challenge, yet it is on a short-term contract and is not getting any support. But what it will get is a committee to scrutinise its activities.

The data that St John Ambulance collects is very telling. For the month of June, only 79 per cent of priority 1 emergency calls were responded to within 15 minutes; well below the 90 per cent response time benchmark. That is incredibly worrying, but one of the reasons St John is unable to do that is that half of its ambulances and officers are ramped up on every tertiary hospital emergency department entry. That is an appalling use of resources. Priority 2 and 3 cases also fell well short, with response times at 67 per cent and 63 per cent respectively. When we talk about these percentages, we have to remember that there is someone in the back of all of these ambulances and that there are people who are making calls who are not being responded to. If something has happened to a critical patient and they need urgent assistance and all the ambulances are tied up because our hospitals are failing to process patients through either the emergency department or in the wards, we are failing the people of Western Australia. To me, these figures are truly shocking. It is concerning that the response times appear to be falling off a cliff. We appear to be getting to a point at which they are getting worse and worse, and I have a feeling that that is because this government has a record of blaming everyone but itself and that St John is about to take the fall for the appalling performance we see in our health system, which is under stress and under pressure.

So that members know, St John Ambulance service response time benchmarks are as follows—this is what they aim to achieve: attend to 90 per cent of priority 1 calls, which are emergency calls, within 15 minutes; attend to 90 per cent of priority 2 calls, or urgent calls, within 25 minutes; and attend to 90 per cent of priority 3 calls, or non-urgent calls, within 60 minutes. If I go back, in the month of June, only 79 per cent of priority 1 emergency calls were responded to within 15 minutes. St John Ambulance is not meeting its benchmarks, and that comes right back to the way our hospitals are operating at the moment. That is not the fault of St John Ambulance. Twenty-one per cent of people who make a phone call to 000 with an emergency, perhaps a heart attack or any other life-threatening issue, will not have an ambulance arrive within 15 minutes to provide potential lifesaving aid. How scary would that be? We teach our kids that in an emergency, if they dial 000, someone will be at the other end of the phone to send someone to take care of them. I acknowledge that that is slightly more challenging in a regional setting, but our emergency volunteers in regional Western Australia do a remarkable job under enormous pressure. However, if people who live in the Perth metropolitan area or a major regional centre dial 000, 21 per cent of them will not be responded to within the appropriate time. That is an appalling indictment on this minister's handling of our health system. Imagine if that happened to one of your family members. We should not have to imagine that happening to someone we know and love because we have a responsibility to the people of Western Australia. Just imagine if it was someone we knew who was waiting desperately for assistance. How would we feel? What if it happened to one of our constituents? A number of my constituents have contacted me about this. Can members look their constituents in the eye and say, “We did everything we could to make sure we have a health system that doesn't let your family down”? I am not sure that anyone in this government could say that.

The minister needs to stand up for what is right because that is what Western Australians demand. In a state as wealthy as Western Australia, with a potential to deliver a \$5 billion surplus, we deserve a first-class health system. That is what the people of Western Australia deserve. It is bad enough that we are experiencing record levels of ambulance ramping, which has contributed to a delayed response time for ambulances to get to emergency calls. It is good that the patients in those ramped ambulances still have the St John Ambulance crew looking after them, but those ambulances that have come from regional Western Australia in particular have already driven a considerable time to get to an emergency department. Most of my constituents will end up at Midland Public Hospital, but if it is on bypass, they will be sent to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital or Royal Perth Hospital. That ambulance crew may have already driven two or three hours, possibly five. It depends on how busy the local crews are and whether they have had to call in a crew from another town. Those volunteers are amazing. In the middle of the night they get into the ambulance and drive a patient to Perth. They then stay with the patient if they have been ramped, possibly for another two or three hours, and then have to turn around and drive back to the community in regional Western Australia, clean down the ambulance and probably do a full day's work the next day. They do it and they do not expect very much from our community. But we expect to have a system that means that they do not have to sit for three or four hours outside an emergency department. The situation is far from ideal.

Statistical information shows that people die as a result of ambulance ramping and bed block in hospitals. This is inevitable because people are not being treated. We have all these specialists, wonderful nurses and medical experts, yet we do not have enough of them, so people will inevitably die. The Australian Medical Association has said that an Australian study has shown that if a patient presents to an overcrowded emergency department, there is a 10 per cent increased risk of death, and deaths on the ramp are occurring. If people are dying whilst ramped outside an ED, we can only imagine what will happen if there is no St John crew there to provide first aid. We are putting an enormous amount of pressure on the service. I am not going to pretend that this organisation is perfect; no organisation is, but it is responsible for turning up when we are at our most desperate. St John staff are being inhibited from doing their job because this state is not investing into its health system.

From a COVID perspective, another one of the minister's explanations is that this is all happening all over Australia. His words yesterday were that we were in the blast—I cannot quite remember. He used the word “blast”, but we are in the shadow of a COVID pandemic. But plenty of people who work in the health system and health experts say that there were markers of a crisis in Western Australia's health system well in advance of COVID arriving on our doorstep. One can only imagine, if we actually did have an outbreak here, how much more pressure would be applied to an already stressed system. Australia has had virtually no outbreaks. I will give credit where credit is due. How the state government and the Premier have managed this state with quick, sharp lockdowns has been acknowledged around Australia; I get that feedback wherever I travel around the state. We are not disputing the fact that we do not have COVID on our doorstep and that people in this state are very lucky to be living in the way we are, but we cannot then say that we blame COVID for the problems in our health system. I have no doubt that there is a corollary of impacts, but, by and large, in Western Australia, we have been able to move about freely and we have not had lengthy lockdowns. There have definitely been concerns about the impact of that on small business, which we have raised in this place. The government could certainly go further to provide security or at least some assurance to the business community that if we are to enter another lockdown, what funding they might be eligible for. Going from lockdown to lockdown certainly increases the stress and pressure on those business owners who are trying to take care of their finances and employees.

We have to be realistic here. The issues we face in Western Australia are a result of under resourcing and under investment. I go back to the fact that with this state's wealth, we should have a world-class system. Dr Peter Allely said that the system is at disaster levels. He states —

“Everyone's ... exhausted and burnt out. We haven't had a COVID outbreak ... and it kind of frightens me to think how our staff would cope if we did.”

Dr Allely is the faculty chair of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine. He is an ED doctor. That should ring massive alarm bells. One of our leading experts is metaphorically screaming at the minister and the government that we are not prepared. There is a litany of other concerns about the preparedness of Western Australia for a COVID outbreak, as evidenced by the breaches at Geraldton Health Campus, Fiona Stanley Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital. Minister, this begs the question: why, 18 months down the track, outside that very serious and early emergency, do we not have the processes in place so that we do not have these breaches? They send shock waves through the community every time they happen. I understand that people are human and mistakes will be made, but we should have protocols and processes in place that prevent the type of outbreaks that have happened at Geraldton Health Campus, Fiona Stanley Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital. All the hospital staff involved should receive full training on handling COVID-positive cases in an appropriate way.

The opposition suspects that these breaches have occurred because staff are so stretched with their daily duties that possibly they have no time to do that important preparation, training and practice. Every emergency department doctor and staffer in the health system will tell us how they need to have time to prepare and execute when they face an emergency. It is clear that this government has let our hospitals get to a tipping point. Now we have COVID on our doorstep again. Today we are in the shadow of another potential outbreak. I truly hope that this gentleman who we have heard about today has not caused community spread. However, it is very concerning when professionals like Dr Peter Allely talk about the system being at disaster levels.

We have talked about the staff and our concerns about staff in the system. What concerns me most, though, is the enormous pressure and stress that is being placed on our nurses and healthcare workers. These people commit their lives to looking after others and many of them feel obligated to make up time for the shortfalls in shifts. A shortage of staff is resulting in healthcare staff operating over multiple shifts. We heard those personal reflections when a rally was held earlier this year. I understand another rally is going to be held. That is not a good outcome. These amazing staff members are feeling so lost and distraught in the system that they feel they have to come out to rally. It is unacceptable that they are being put in this position. They entered this profession because they want to help people. On many occasions they feel that they cannot turn down extra shifts because they know that it will impact on their fellow workers if they do. This hurts the staff and their families and certainly increases the pressure they are under and affects their mental health and wellbeing. But the biggest concern is that this is poor workplace practice. We cannot have people working shifts end on end in an ongoing fashion, shift after shift after shift. They become exhausted and there is a lack of focus and serious incidents take place.

One obvious problem is that we do not have enough nurses. The Minister for Health promised that 1 000 new nurses will be recruited this year, but the Australian Nursing Federation says that the minister failed to disclose that at the same time between 600 and 700 nurses will retire. We may be recruiting 1 000 nurses but that figure does not take into consideration the attrition rate. I suggest that there will be a significant attrition rate in the sector at the moment given the pressure that staff are under and that that will only be exacerbated. I expect that we will be seeing more of that, just as we saw that happen in 2008 when the mining sector started to pick up and attractive salaries were on offer. There was pressure on the public service because workers left the public service. I expect a similar thing will happen while the government continues to increase public service salaries by only \$1 000 a year. That cannot be sustained in the long term. It is certainly not sustainable while people work considerably longer hours, and are overworked and under-resourced. I expect there will be many, many cries for increased pay. I know that negotiations on an enterprise bargaining agreement will be underway shortly, if they are not already underway. The 1 000 extra nurses that the minister promised would be coming into the system will be offset, according to the Australian Nursing Federation, by those 600 or 700 who are due to retire over that period.

We need to know what efforts are being made to up the ante on that recruitment campaign. I have not seen a recruitment campaign. The Australian Nursing Federation tells us that it has not seen a recruitment campaign. Has any advertising campaign been commissioned? Are there adverts on TV? Are we working through professional networks? Are we looking for nurses from interstate or overseas? If we do not bring any new nurses in, all we will be doing is rearranging the deckchairs. One hospital will poach nurses from another hospital that is poaching nurses from another hospital. We know that when this happens regional communities typically lose out. That cannot be the solution. I wonder how much and how many resources have been spent on this or whether any resources have been allocated to any recruitment campaign. How many nurses do we expect will be recruited from each jurisdiction? Where are the targets? How many have been recruited to date? No-one knows. The Australian Nursing Federation has told us that it has not seen any evidence of this.

Mr R.S. Love: I doubt the minister has either.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Perhaps the minister can stand up today and answer some of these questions and table the advertising or recruitment plan so that we can see what the government is planning to do. We keep hearing that 1 000 nurses are coming into the system, but we need to know how that is going to take place. Like everywhere else, workforce shortages are having a serious impact on major sectors of the community. I wonder how exactly we are going to achieve these lofty aims. They are indeed admirable, but we have to be able to achieve them.

They are the questions that the opposition has. How will that interact if we indeed recruit from overseas or interstate? Where are we going to put those people? If they come from overseas, will they have to be within the international arrivals cap? Was the health workforce discussed at the government's skills summit? I understand there is a great need for staff within our mining industry and agricultural sector. The Housing Industry Association has been calling for additional workers so that places can be built for people to live, and I am sure the health services sector has been making the same calls. I would be interested to hear the minister address those questions in some detail during this private members' business motion. We have asked questions about this throughout the year, but we really have not seen any detail.

I am conscious of the time, but I wanted to put a personal face on some of the challenges that are brought to our electorate offices. Yesterday, I outlined the measures that absolutely demonstrate that the health system is in crisis and the impact it is having across the whole state, but I want to bring it down to an individual level. I have a number of comments to read into the record. I am not going to identify any person because they have said that they would prefer their names not to be read into the record. I assure the minister that some of these issues have been resolved with the assistance of the Department of Health and the minister's office, and that others are reflections of people's incredibly traumatising experiences. The first comment is from somebody from my electorate. It states —

Midland Hospital is chaotic. Don't know whether anyone else had told you about the number of people being recalled or having to return due to illness. There have been a number of cases—one of which I am aware went down with neck pain. Was sent home. Went down by ambulance the next day and had two litres

of fluid pulled off his lungs. People are going to die—if they haven't already. Mum was recalled after her X-rays were reviewed the following day. They don't have enough staff or beds. Mum was placed in an emergency paediatric area—lucky she's small!

She also commented on what the minister said about people presenting unnecessarily to emergency departments. She was pretty up-front about it and said —

This is rubbish. Today, Chittering Ambulance was called to Caraban because no other ambulance was available. They were ramping.

The distance between Chittering and Carrabin—in the member for Moore's electorate—is 75 kilometres. They had to call an ambulance from 75 kilometres away to collect someone so they could go to hospital.

I have another comment from a person in a different town in my electorate. It states —

I was on a stretcher in the corridor in agony at Midland Hospital, for 3 hours. The two young Ambos could not leave me until I had been admitted to ED. The place was a nightmare, so short staffed and as a result I had a cannula left in my arm for 3 days and ended up with septacemia. My story isn't unusual either.

I have other messages, many from people who have had to front up to an emergency department. I understand Health is complex and emergency departments face difficult problems and have all sorts of people walking through their doors. As has been said, there are many challenges due to the number of mental health patients who front up. It takes many resources to deal with those people. They are problems that are confronting both staff and individuals and that is certainly reflected in a lot of the commentary that is heard in my office.

A number of people have also spoken to me about their difficulty in trying to line up their elective surgery or having their elective surgery cancelled at short notice. I understand that can be inconvenient for someone living in the Perth metropolitan area because they have to live with something that is very uncomfortable and it may prevent them from going back to work, but for people who live in regional Western Australia there is the added concern of getting transport down to a Perth hospital to have that surgery. If someone from the country has their elective surgery—or any kind of surgery—cancelled at short notice in the metropolitan area due to understaffing, under-resourcing or changing priorities, that has a serious impact particularly for people who cannot have that surgery at a local hospital and do not have access to transport. Those are a number of the issues that come through my office and I am sure that other members get the same. These are the people we are concerned about, in addition to those who work in the health system. We bring this issue to Parliament again and again because we do not think this government is addressing the issue. At this time, in a state as wealthy as Western Australia, we do not think the minister's full attention is on trying to resolve these very wicked problems. We urge the minister to take the time to respond to the matters raised today, give us the detail and make sure that we have access to the information that has been requested by not only the opposition, but also people who work in the system and those who represent them.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [4.40 pm]: Can members picture this? The Premier is on a stage and is just about to take a bow. In the background is a banner stating “Keep WA Safe”. He had done a play about keeping WA safe. We can hear accolades and people clapping. He says, “Welcome to the health minister. Health minister, please come out.” As he comes on stage, he trips and knocks over the “Keep WA Safe” banner—what we see is a health crisis and a housing crisis. We see crises everywhere. Prior to the election, the government said it was keeping Western Australia safe, but we now discover there are gaps and holes that the Labor government, led by Premier Mark McGowan, has not addressed. The wealthy state of Western Australia, which is leading the nation because of our iron ore royalties, has Third World conditions in its regional health services.

I want to talk about some of the issues in my shadow portfolio of Aboriginal affairs. I will start with the May 2019 *Statement of intent on Aboriginal youth suicide*. The report is a preliminary response to the State Coroner's inquest into the deaths of 13 children and young persons in the Kimberley region and *Learnings from the message stick: The report of the inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas*. The report and its recommendations are interesting. In part, the government response states —

The Western Australian Government supports the overall intent of this recommendation and notes that it is consistent with the National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan 2018–2028.

However, if we look for this government's action on the recommendations, they simply are not there. When it comes to the need for appropriate specialist clinical resources and service providers, they are in short supply and thinly stretched throughout regional Western Australia and in remote areas. The response also states —

In the same way, there are also limited resources currently available to facilitate follow-up and therapeutic treatment for those diagnosed with FASD and other development-related conditions.

At present, all children who enter the care of the Department of Communities are referred for a comprehensive health assessment, which considers health and development, oral and dental health, and mental health. A key issue in the Kimberley and other regional areas, however, is a lack of culturally appropriate therapeutic and treatment services for Aboriginal children and young people. Those services that do exist have significant waitlists, struggle to service all referrals, and have limited capacity to transfer referrals if a family moves to other areas or regions.

Simply, this government has avoided funding and appropriately addressing a key recommendation of this report. In another report, under the heading “Commitment 6: Better access to clinical services”, it states —

Young people and their families in remote areas and communities are experiencing difficulties in accessing the services and follow-up they need. We will work to address these issues, balancing the needs of the community with the challenges posed by regional and remote Western Australia.

That was a commitment the government made to one of the key recommendations, but we still have not seen that. We have seen a lot of focus on the Kimberley. The report continues —

The Kimberley community workshops highlighted the importance of accessible, sustainable, integrated services or service hubs, better access for young people in remote communities, shorter waiting times, and more youth mental health facilities in the Kimberley.

A range of strategies, programs and approaches will be developed to deliver better access to clinical services, including:

- expanded access to clinical care through 24/7 telehealth access across the state;
- exploring innovations in remote service delivery;
- identifying opportunities for better coordination of State and Commonwealth services, and increased involvement of the community sector;
- investigating options for additional health and rehabilitation facilities in the Kimberley; and
- the initial actions for FASD, including:
 - exploring options for a FASD screening tool, which is a critical first step towards broader screening of children in Western Australia; and
 - investigating how Children’s Court-ordered assessment reports of young people suspected of having FASD can be made available to families and other government agencies (including State and Commonwealth health and disability agencies) as needed to improve treatment of and support for children with FASD and other cognitive impairments.

It will be interesting to hear how the Minister for Health reacts and whether he can enlighten members of Parliament on how the government is tracking on the key recommendations from the May 2019 report.

I do not want to take anything away from the tragic suicides in the Kimberley, but a report of 10 March 2020 on The Stringer Independent News website reads —

Highest suicide rate — health inequality is discrimination

... In 2014, I disaggregated to the Kimberley’s First Nations peoples, the nation’s highest suicide rate, one of the world’s highest, at over 70 suicides per 100,000 population (First Nations), thereabouts seven times the national rate. Fortunately, although there is a devastatingly long way to go, the suicide rate has been reduced to less than 50 per 100,000.

That is in the Kimberley. The article continues —

But the nation’s most affected are now the Murchison–Gascoyne’s ... Last year they recorded the nation’s highest suicide rate; nearly 90 suicides per 100 000 population ... more than seven times the national rate.

When members think about suicides, often what is happening in the Kimberley is highlighted, but what happens in the Gascoyne–Murchison in the midwest—I am reluctant to say midwest because that captures a large area of the Gascoyne–Murchison and places in the electorates of the members for Moore and Geraldton—is often not heard about. Sadly, what we often hear is happening in the Kimberley and Pilbara is happening to a greater degree in the Gascoyne and midwest. It says that Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service CEO, Deb Woods, stated to the *National Indigenous Times* —

“We are calling on both the State and the Commonwealth to support the peak health service of the Yamatji people to each provide funding for two full-time psychologists and at least six fulltime Aboriginal mental health practitioners. If combined, the State and the Commonwealth, they can both provide the long overdue rudimentary mental health needs for our forever forgotten ... Yamatji people; four full-time psychologists, at least 12 full-time Aboriginal mental health practitioners. We are struggling with one part-time psychologist only for the whole of the Murchison–Gascoyne.”

There is only one, members. That is absolutely disgraceful, especially after we read report after report about what is happening with youth suicide, particularly in Aboriginal communities. It goes on —

“We need the psychologists and mental health specialists to be there for our most vulnerable, and to be able to plan outreach, a vital missing link, and the flow on effect will be improved access to primary and secondary healthcare.”

The article also quotes Deborah Woods as stating —

“The McGowan Government has approved \$73 million to redevelop Geraldton Health Campus, \$5.93 million for Geraldton allied health services and \$12 million for a range of allied health services across the Midwest but the GRAMS —

That is the Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service —

which represents 12 per cent of the region’s total population has been not offered a single dollar. Do our people matter?”

That leading Aboriginal medical service, which covers Geraldton, Carnarvon and Mount Magnet, does not have the resources, nor has it been offered the resources, after pleading to the state government that action needs to be taken in this space, given the fact that the suicide rates in the Gascoyne–Murchison and midwest are the highest in the state, far surpassing the extremely high rate in the Kimberley.

The article states also —

Avoidable mortality is tragically at 58% of Murchison–Gascoyne resident deaths under the age of 75 years. These deaths could have been avoided through the better use of primary prevention and treatment interventions. The avoidable mortality rate for Yamatji is 5 times higher than for the rest of the Midwest’s population.

Despite that, access to services is non-existent in places like the Gascoyne–Murchison. Those services have generally been moved to places like Geraldton, which now has to provide outreach services to struggling communities that have complex mental health, suicide and preventive health issues, and cover vast distances. People in the metropolitan area do not have to suffer in silence. They can see their GP or go to an emergency department. When it comes to health services in regional WA, they are somewhat scarce, and the provision of those outreach services may be funded for only a visit here and there over time.

The then Minister for Mental Health, Hon Stephen Dawson, went to the launch of a GRAMS suicide prevention program. At that launch, he stated —

“We know to tackle the suicide problem that local solutions are what is needed—solutions that are evidence-based and well implemented.”

What is needed is to properly resource the health services in the midwest and Gascoyne. All we are seeing is lip-service. I go back to my opening remark about how the Premier stood on the stage and bowed, because he has kept Western Australia safe, as the Minister for Health came in and knocked over what was behind him, and then we started to see the unravelling and the crisis that the health system of this state is in.

Mr P.J. Rundle: It started on 4 March.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It started, actually, in March 2017, when we heard all the promises made by the then Leader of the Opposition and opposition health spokesperson. All we have seen over the last four years is a lack of action by this government to address the desperate situation faced by Aboriginal people in regional communities. All we have seen is lip-service. The Premier is telling everyone that they are safe. However, we are now finding out that people are anything but safe. Even without the spread of COVID-19, this state has a health crisis. When we listen to radio, we hear all the excuses, as we did in Parliament yesterday, and all the reasons why our health system is under stress, like the rest of the country. All we hear from the Labor government is how wonderful it is, and that perhaps the people on the east coast should be doing exactly what it has done. The arrogance of the Premier! The Premier has said that New South Wales has an arrogant Premier. New South Wales is in crisis. We as Australians should be helping each other, not labelling the NSW Premier as arrogant. When this state has a health crisis, we are told that the rest of the country has a health crisis, so we have to have one. This state does not have COVID-19. We are not in lockdown. We do not have those issues. It is unbelievable. That is not being a Western Australian.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The comments by the Premier and by the Minister for Health are anything but being a Western Australian. We help those in times of need.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Presently, the health system needs help. The government has a \$5 billion surplus. This government has had a windfall of who knows how many billions of dollars over the last five years, yet our health system cannot provide for the basic needs of the most vulnerable people in our community. In regional WA, Aboriginal youth suicide rates are going through the roof, yet there are no programs or financial support for those who are crying out to be able to come up with local solutions for those issues. I am ashamed to be a Western Australian when the Premier and the Minister for Health are treating Aboriginal youth and regional people like second-class citizens. The government thinks it does not matter if people who live in Cue, Yalgoo or Sandstone have only one nurse in

their community. That nurse is under the pump, trying to provide security for the community seven days a week. How is one nurse able to provide any service to the community in an emergency, or any health prevention measures to help that community going forward?

[Member's time extended.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is a great shame, considering the lack of health services in places like Yalgoo, Cue, Sandstone and Coral Bay, that the Minister for Tourism would get on his high horse and say how wonderful it is that so many people are travelling around Western Australia, as he did today. The people of Western Australia cannot go anywhere, hence they are travelling around the state. It is not because of what the state government has done. It is because they cannot afford to go over east because of what is happening and the uncertainty of lockdowns. We accept that. The number of people who are travelling around this state is putting pressure on the sole nurses in places like Cue, Yalgoo and Coral Bay. Exmouth is getting 20 000 tourists on any given day. The population is generally around 2 500 people. The pressure is such that the health services cannot cope. Can I say, minister, I got a phone call today from an irate constituent in Exmouth, who said that she has not been able to get her COVID vaccine because Pfizer is being provided only every three weeks, for half a day. Do members think people can go online to book it? No. That is because Exmouth does not exist. Exmouth is not on the map. How can we expect regional people to do what the Premier is preaching and get vaccinated? I urge everyone to get vaccinated, but they cannot.

Dr A.D. Buti: Does the federal government have any responsibility?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No. It is because the state government, which the minister is a part of, is providing only three nurses every three weeks —

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Members, listen to this. Three nurses are travelling from Denham to Exmouth to do the vaccinations. Three nurses every three weeks! Come on. Is that the federal government's fault, or is that the state government rolling out the vaccination process and not providing the same amount of vigour to the process for people in places like Exmouth to be able to get vaccinated that it is providing people in Perth? That is why.

When we look at the state of the health service in the metropolitan area and see code yellows, ambulance ramping, and preventive issues presenting to places like Perth Children's Hospital, meaning that young people are not able to get the treatment they deserve, we have to question: are we COVID ready? I think we have been told that we are keeping Western Australia safe, but we are anything but. What we are seeing is lip service. What we are seeing are statements rolled out by spin, but when we look behind the curtain, we see the dysfunction that is occurring.

Members, I will keep going on about suicide and the rate of suicide. I urge everyone in this house to read the opinion by Dr Tracy Westerman, a proud Nyamal woman from the Pilbara region of Western Australia who is widely recognised for spending over two decades working to reduce the burden of mental health and suicide in Aboriginal communities. The article is called "Funding football programs is not suicide prevention". I am not going to read out all of the article; I just seek the indulgence of the house, because she makes some very, very compelling points. No-one in the state government is listening to this; mind you, I would say that the federal government is not listening either. The article reads —

This article was first published in The Australian on the 19th April as 'Sick Heart of a Generation'.

As I said, this article was written by Dr Tracy Westerman. She wrote —

Despite this, and as a country facing this growing tragedy of inter-generational Indigenous child suicides, we still have no nationally accepted evidence-based programs across the spectrum of early intervention and prevention activities.

Staggeringly, funded programs are not required to demonstrate evidence of impact, nor are they required to demonstrate a measurable reduction in suicide risk factors.

Given this, governments cannot actually claim they are funding suicide prevention.

You can't claim prevention if you aren't measuring risk. It's that simple.

Restrict alcohol if communities want that, but don't call it suicide prevention. Employ youth mentors, but don't call it suicide prevention. Funding football programs is not suicide prevention. Sending high risk kids to elders is not suicide prevention.

...

In an area as complex as Indigenous suicide, it is crucial that funding decisions unsupported by clinical and cultural expertise are challenged and redirected in the best way possible. Toward the evidence. Report after report has pointed to the need for 'evidence-based approaches'—we must question why it continues to remain elusive while our child suicides escalate.

...

Without measurability there is no accountability.

I am sure that the Minister for Health has read what Dr Tracy Westerman has published. It is quite staggering. When I read the report that she has published and other reports, clearly, when the government looks at funding, it is not looking at measurability. It is not looking at accountability, or how the funding has actually reduced harm to our children through suicide prevention. It has gone the other way. Aboriginal health has gone completely the other way. It is not just this current government that is to blame, although it is flush with money. We have the pandemic, the epicentre, as I think the Minister for Health described it yesterday, and we have these issues that are not being addressed. Dr Tracy Westerman said that report after report has been handed down, but that —

Without measurability we are failing to gather crucial evidence of what works to better inform current and future practitioners struggling to halt the intergenerational transmission of suicide risk.

That is a quote from Dr Tracy Westerman. As I said, I ask members to please read this. The article continues —

So where does the focus need to be?

First, we need to recognise the significant societal contributors to child suicides, and this must start with changing the narrative on Indigenous suicides.

...

If you eliminate a ‘cause’ you eliminate suicides, so having a national dialogue that consistently refers to alcohol, poverty, abuse, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, colonialisation as causes is clinically incorrect. These are not causes. They are risk factors, not causes.

I encourage members and this government to take note of what Dr Tracy Westerman said in her opinion piece. I encourage all members to read this. It was published on 7 May 2019. I am happy to give members a copy of this report. It clearly identifies the lack of government accountability and measurability and the lack of actually tackling what is a growing problem in regional Western Australia in our Aboriginal communities, particularly for Aboriginal youth. I urge the Minister for Health and the Premier to keep Western Australians safe by reading these opinion pieces by the experts and properly funding those communities, which are the generators of our wealth when it comes to the resources sector in remote areas such as the Gascoyne, Pilbara, Kimberley, Murchison and the midwest. Let us give a bit back.

I will talk a little bit about what is happening in my electorate. Like I said, it is very hard for someone living in Exmouth to get a COVID jab. There is nothing available I think until December, but people are still not able to book, given that the Pfizer vaccine is only available for half a day every three weeks. That is absolutely disgraceful. Last week in Shark Bay, in Denham, there was a struggle to provide housing for the Silver Chain nurse practitioner, yet we see Government Regional Officers’ Housing in Shark Bay and Denham that is empty. We are trying to get a house for a nurse to deliver our health service in Denham, and it is unbelievable; we cannot get the Department of Housing to provide that empty GROH house for a nurse practitioner. It is only for eight weeks. Why? It is because the Shire of Shark Bay is trying to find a solution after that eight weeks at a cost to the ratepayer. Like I said, in this day and age, having only one nurse in Cue, Yalgoo, Sandstone and Coral Bay is absolutely disgraceful. At the last election, for a \$45 million hospital in Meekatharra, the government promised \$13 million. How is that working?

When it comes to promoting businesses, the SafeWA app is absolutely vital, given what we heard just before question time. We need to make sure that our businesses are telling people that they need to register with the SafeWA app or write down on the form to say that they have visited that business, but that is not happening in regional Western Australia.

The other issue is shipping. We have a lot of pilots in places like Denham and Carnarvon going out to ships coming in from around the world. What is the process for making sure that the community is protected, given that these pilots get on these ships, come back, have a meal and a beer at the pub and then get on a plane and go without any appropriate PPE gear to protect them?

It is absolutely disgraceful when the government is flush with funds—\$5 billion, if not more, from last year. It is disgraceful. Let us put it back into the health system and really provide some definition around keeping Western Australia safe. Let us put some money back into the health system to deal with the absolute crisis that is gripping our state and our regional towns. It is a disgrace.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.10 pm]: I, too, would like to speak to this motion that condemns the Labor government for its failure to prioritise a safe and efficient health service for Western Australians, resulting in a broad range of economic and social impacts. I note that Western Australia has been relatively free of COVID-19. That is something to do with the relative geographic isolation of our state, along with the actions of all Western Australians in keeping our state safe. However, there has been a lack of planning in developing the health services that will be necessary if there is ever a COVID outbreak in this state. That has led to the government becoming very complacent; it is actually drinking its own Kool Aid now, and believes it has done a wonderful job in all things to do with health. In fact, its only real success has been in controlling the entry of COVID-19 to the state in many circumstances.

We have seen a very slack approach to vaccination. Yesterday I highlighted that the northern regional areas of this state have the lowest vaccination rates in Australia, but we do not have to go that far north to run into problems

obtaining vaccines. I have had consistent complaints from people around the Lancelin area, where there is a health centre and a doctor, but those people apparently have no access to vaccines and are having to travel to access them. There are very significant populations in some of the coastal communities I represent, and it is not easy for some of these people to get to Perth. Only today I read a Twitter tweet from one of my constituents in the northern midlands that a person in Three Springs had their second AstraZeneca vaccination cancelled at the very last minute, requiring them to make an urgent trip to Perth to access their second jab in time. As we know, it is critical to get the second dose within the right amount of time. Having to drive all that distance to do that at late notice and presumably ring around to find someone in Perth to provide it is not conducive to rolling out a decent vaccination program in our state. That is very worrying indeed, and if the government's current lackadaisical methodology continues, our state will not lead the way with vaccinations.

I want to speak about a few other issues. We note there are a range of problems that are conflated with this lack of planning in health. I want to talk about the lack of planning in one aspect of health, to do with the Metronet program: the proposal to shut down the Mandurah line between Elizabeth Quay and Fiona Stanley Hospital for 25 days in January next year. That will also lead to reduced services for Mandurah. Fiona Stanley Hospital is the premier hospital in this state and we already know that the freeway running alongside it is often clogged and difficult to navigate. It does not seem to have occurred to anyone that closing that train line in the middle of a pandemic might lead to problems for people trying to get to that hospital.

The Minister for Transport put out a press release on 6 June titled "Let's prepare: Perth's biggest public transport shutdown coming". Well, that is true. The Mandurah line will be closed completely between Aubin Grove station and Elizabeth Quay station. The press release explains that the Public Transport Authority will arrange replacement bus services for affected commuters and specific services for key workers, including at Fiona Stanley Hospital. I wonder how putting buses on an already clogged freeway will assist in getting those workers to the hospital? Given that the freeway is already a parking lot at various times of the day, one can only imagine that the only practical solution for getting workers and patients into the hospital might be to hire a fleet of helicopters or some sort of airship to go above the traffic and get to the hospital, because there is no way that they are going to get there on the freeway. To close that vital piece of infrastructure and isolate our premier hospital is, I think, a risk that nobody seems to be taking seriously. I think it is something we need to take seriously. As we know, if there is a major outbreak, as there has unfortunately been in some parts of Australia, there will be a lot of demand placed on hospitals such as Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Yesterday I spoke to the matter of public interest regarding the situation at Geraldton, where there was a COVID breach at the Geraldton Health Campus. Western Australia is a state that relies greatly on trade for our economy, and this trade often takes place at isolated points. I think the member for North West Central spoke about the midwest ports, including the Useless Loop port at Shark Bay, for instance, where pilots go out to incoming ships. We have been asking questions since March 2020 to try to ensure that there are adequate protocols in place for handling the COVID risk involved with ships coming in from international ports. We know there are places in the world where COVID-19 is rampant, so it is inevitable that there will be cases on some of these ships. Some shipping companies have taken extraordinary measures to try to control it. I have heard tales of sea captains who have not left their vessels since the pandemic began because the risk to their company of having key personnel succumb to the disease is just too great. Some extraordinary measures have had to be taken, so we would think that the Western Australian government would have had an opportunity to look at all the necessary protocols and procedures for ensuring that, if there is a COVID case in one of our ports, we can handle it successfully.

As I said yesterday, an infected crew member of the MV *Emerald Indah* was transferred to the Geraldton hospital and there was a breach, which led to around 50 people, including staff members, having to be isolated because the crew member was put into a lift that was not used appropriately afterwards. That led to the possibility of people being infected. In addition, the person spent three hours in the emergency department. That was a very worrying situation for the people of Geraldton, and I talked about the fact that very little information was given to the local community at that time.

I understand that a review of the Geraldton breach was undertaken; that is something that I called for immediately after the breach. The review is being carried out by the WA Country Health Service, which was confirmed in an answer given to a question asked yesterday in the Legislative Council by my colleague Hon Martin Aldridge. The minister was asked if he would table the review. I understand that the review is not going to be tabled or made public, so I ask the minister why that report is not going to be tabled. Is it because it is embarrassing? If so, that is not a good enough reason to not release it. There must be a better reason than that it is embarrassing to the minister or to the government that this breach has been allowed to occur. I also ask the minister to commit to ensuring that whatever processes need to be put in place to handle such situations in the future are put in place in a timely manner. We need to rule out the possibility of this happening again; we cannot afford to have these types of breaches occurring on a regular basis.

As we know, 20 days after the infection in Geraldton, there was another case of COVID-19 off the Fremantle coast that led to another breach when the MV *Darya Krishna* arrived with infected crew aboard. This time, at that most sophisticated hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital—where members would think that all the plans would be in place to handle the situation and there would have been no need to worry—there was another breach of procedure or equipment failure, which might have led to a COVID outbreak in the city of Perth. That causes disruption and a lot of concern in the community, which are the secondary effects that flow on from that initial situation in the hospital

to businesses, the community and shipping. The ships that arrive here have visited many ports and there could be a person infected with COVID onboard, so we have to ensure that we are prepared to handle that situation if it happens in Western Australia. We rely on that trade and we need to be able to make it happen.

Why, after all this time, are our hospital staff not fully trained in handling these positive COVID cases? Why was the equipment not properly tested? Why were insufficient procedures in place to keep the COVID situation under control within the health system, health service and health centre? Is it because, as the Leader of the Nationals WA said earlier, the system is so stretched that the healthcare workers, their supervisors and the support staff simply do not have the time and opportunity to train, prepare and practise. I think the member said that practice makes perfect and you have to have time to do that. If everyone is flat strap doing their job, they do not have time to ensure that they know what to do when a COVID infection case shows up in the hospital or health centre.

It is clear that our hospitals are struggling at the moment in controlling those very few isolated cases that appear either via travellers or people coming in by ship. One can only imagine what is going to happen if a major situation developed. How on earth would our hospitals possibly cope? The 7.30 report, which we have all referred to at some point this week, made it quite clear that there is concern right across the country about the preparedness of this government. The only people who do not seem to be concerned about that preparedness are the minister responsible and his government. They seem to have no concern about this. The Premier had a kneejerk reaction and named a particular nation and said, "Here is a high risk. We have these ships coming from these ports." He did not learn from the experience of a Labor government a number of years ago when it had a similar kneejerk reaction and made similar statements and banned live cattle export to Indonesia on the back of a report. That ended up in a court case. The court found that those actions were unreasonable, and compensation in the last year or so has flowed to a number of businesses, farmers and other entities that had been badly affected by that unreasonable decision, which was very, very costly and very damaging to our reputation.

Last week, a notice was given to the shipping industry in Western Australia around the protocols and standards for commercial vessels arriving at Western Australian ports. I have no problem with the document itself, because since March 2020, we have been calling for this type of clear and transparent communication to be put out there and for industry to know that there are expectations. A lot of what is in this document is quite reasonable. It is important that people in the shipping industry take note of what is laid out in this notice. I am sure many of them already have. The actual notice itself states —

Over 15,000 commercial vessels have visited Western Australia since March 2020 ...

This gives a pretty good indication of the scale of the trade in tonnage and the immense contribution of the trade to our state. With 15 000 vessels, there has been only a small number of COVID-19 incidents in Western Australian ports. It continues —

Those incidents have been successfully managed by WA authorities with no resulting community transmission.

Seriously? It was not successfully managed in Geraldton on 7 July or in Fremantle on 27 July. I think the government is having a lend if it can seriously write that it has successfully managed all these outcomes and situations, because that is certainly not the case. As a result of that, we know that the government needs to clamp down and, if you like, move some of the blame to the shipping industry. I do not mind the idea that protocols are in place. It is good that it is clear and it is out there, but the government needs to accept that the Western Australian authorities themselves need to look at their processes and not just blame it on the shippers. That would be seriously foolish and it would indicate that the government is not listening and learning as we go through this situation.

The notice continues —

... the WA Government gives notice to vessel owners, charterers, masters, exporters, importers and the shipping industry generally ... of ... expectations and approach in managing COVID-19 risks from commercial shipping, and the measures which might be adopted if those expectations are not met.

The notice has within it a series of expectations. One of them, I note, is that the crew must be vaccinated. That is interesting because there is no mandate in Western Australia for other industries to do that. We know, for instance, it is not mandated that aged-care workers be vaccinated. We see the WA Police Union coming out against the measures that the Commissioner of Police has put in place for those officers who have not been vaccinated.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: We know that in other industries, in other areas, that mandatory vaccination has not occurred. It is interesting that it is a requirement of foreign workers in this case. It is one rule for us and one rule for them, I guess. As I say, I am not necessarily opposed to most of what is in this notice, but I just think it is strange and quite odd that it is a requirement for foreign workers but not for Western Australians.

Another section is titled "Expectations of Vessel Owners and Industry Using Ports of Higher Risk". I am glad that the government did not just use the name of one particular country to our immediate north and instead used a more generic term, because there is a very real danger of the Premier causing harm to the very important trade between us and that particular country. We know what the consequences of that were before. That particular country is also

struggling with a very high number of COVID cases and it is not necessarily helpful to seek to blame it. We need to be very careful to ensure that we have our processes and practices in place rather than throwing the blame back on the shippers and the countries from which they came.

Given that some of the ports where our vessels go to are only about three and a half days steaming, there is not an opportunity for a lengthy period of travel as there would be if a ship were coming from Europe. In that instance we could assume that there would be incubation of the disease, giving people time to pick up that it was on board before the ship came here. We must be very alert, but we must also be very careful not to damage trade relations with those very important nations to our near north. If the government had handled the situation within our health system better, it would not have had to resort to the language that it used about those ships and countries, and it would not have necessarily put in place actions that could threaten trade with those nations into the future.

The government has done one thing well; it has publicised to the Western Australian community that it should be grateful to the government for keeping it safe. But that accounts for only keeping the place tightly locked to outside intrusions. It has done very little—next to nothing—to prepare for a serious event in Western Australia. We have seen how poorly the government has handled the limited cases that have come into the country on a limited number of vessels. In official government documents, the government congratulates itself on handling these situations well when, in fact, its performance has been anything but well done in those circumstances.

I urge the minister to take on board those issues. I ask again that he consider releasing the report about what happened in Geraldton so that people can be assured that learnings are being taken and that any recommendations come from the report will be adopted. It is very important that the government handles similar situations better than it did with those at Fiona Stanley Hospital and Geraldton Health Campus in July.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [5.31 pm]: I express my support for the Leader of the Opposition's motion condemning the Labor government and the Minister for Health. My shadow ministry is education. The *DETECT schools study: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 in Western Australian schools* was released a couple of weeks ago by the Department of Education, the Department of Health and the Telethon Kids Institute, which did an excellent job on the report. What the report identified is quite concerning; 40 per cent of secondary student respondents reported scores of emotional distress, which is three times the number of those who reported scores of emotional distress when the study was last done in 2014. That is a real issue for our secondary students. Today I asked a question of the Minister for Health, and I am pleased that he responded in a more sensible manner than he did yesterday when we raised the issue of vaccinating regional people at events such as our large field days when there are a lot of people in the same place at the same time, which is a real opportunity. The health minister did not treat that suggestion seriously, which is disappointing. As I said to one of my colleagues, it is amazing how one day we seem to get a good response with an issue taken seriously, but the next day when we ask an equally serious question, there seems to be no response and it is all a bit of a joke. I am looking for consistency. I appreciated the minister's response today in dealing with the serious issue of secondary students feeling emotional distress. We really need to focus on this issue.

I have concerns about the education system. There is a lot of pressure on our teachers at the moment. They do not know whether they will have to deal with online learning, lockdowns, wearing masks and students wearing masks. All these things are up in the air. As I said today, 6.5 per cent of our mental health budget is for youth and that needs to be increased. The DETECT report, which is a government report, has signalled that there are real issues. I hope the minister takes them seriously. I have consulted with quite a few stakeholders over the last five or six weeks. I have spoken with representatives of the Principals' Federation of Western Australia, which is calling for an increase in resourcing to manage complex medical and mental health issues for not only students, but also staff. That seemed to be the recurring theme with everybody I met with over the winter break. The Western Australian Primary Principals' Association has called for the need to prioritise mental health in our primary schools. We are also seeing those mental health issues flowing into the 13 and 14-year-old age groups and into the year 10 and 11 cohorts. It is a key concern that needs to be looked at by the Minister for Health, the Department of Health and the Department of Education. Unfortunately, mental health issues will increase with the stresses in our education system, such as the shortage of relief teachers. What does that mean? It means that other teachers who thought they might have had lunchtime off or whatever are loaded up because they are called in to do relief. That increases the load on them and increases the pressures they face. The level of resourcing needed to manage complex medical and mental health issues will need to be increased. Today I asked the Minister for Health about funding for psychologist and other professionals. I am glad that he treated my question and the issue seriously.

Another area that needs to be looked at is disability funding access. There is good access for autistic kids within the education system, but that is because autism has been identified within the Department of Education. But the parents of students with several other disabilities that are even more serious and lower functioning cannot get funding. This issue will need to be addressed in time and I will be looking at it. I have been contacted by parents and schools that deal with special education and they are really concerned about the categorisation of these students. I will be raising this issue over the course of the next few months.

As I said, yesterday I asked a question about COVID-19 vaccinations. I thought it was a reasonable question but the Premier and the health minister did not take it seriously. This is the old story about regional equity and access.

As members know, as at 2 August, 37.67 per cent of the Western Australian population had had one dose of the vaccination, which is the lowest rate in Australia, and only 16.83 per cent of the Western Australian population is covered with two doses of the vaccination. We have the lowest rate in the nation. We offered a solution to improve the vaccination rate in the regions, but it was laughed off by the minister who did not seem interested; “We’ve got a few information kiosks out there and we’re rolling out a few other WA country health opportunities.” This is the time to take it on seriously. Yesterday, when I spoke to the president of Newdegate Machinery Field Days, he said “That would be fantastic. I have to go to Narrogin today. I’ll lose the best part of a day to get my vaccination; I’d love to have it at the Newdegate field day.”

Ms M.J. Davies: I’d love to have mine there, too.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, that is right. The Leader of the Opposition, the member for Moore and I would all love to have our second vaccination when we go to the field days in a couple of weeks. That is one part of the issue.

As the member for North West Central identified, the lid has been kept on this health crisis. I have to congratulate the government. It is funny how the health crisis started on 14 March, the day after the election. We know that there are 25-odd journalists and the like amongst the mix in the government’s spin machine who managed to keep a lid on this health crisis right up until 13 March; I have to congratulate them for the way that they did that. Funnily enough, on 14 March, the journalists were unleashed and now we are seeing the true extent of this health crisis. The Leader of the Opposition went through some quite disturbing ambulance ramping figures. As was well recorded, when those numbers were back around 20 or 25 per cent of what they are now, the now Minister for Health in his former role as shadow Minister for Health called it a disaster and a crisis, but now it is not a problem: we are going along well. We are not going along well and we see the pressure on our volunteers and St John Ambulance staff because of the committee inquiry that has been launched. Peter Kennedy, a well-respected political commentator, has written an interesting article. He states —

It’s not clear how the ambulance service influences the level of ramping. After all, the ambulances simply deliver the patients to the emergency departments of the major hospitals. It’s the ED’s job to move patients through with the emphasis on their care.

That is exactly right. Those ambulances are there to drop off the patients at the front door of the hospital. He then goes on to question the independence of the United Workers Union and states how it is —

... easily the most politically influential in the union movement—has long been seeking to break by ending the contract with St John and having the service provided in house by a government body.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Liberal Party spoke about the insourcing of 600-odd health workers, cleaners and the like. No doubt, along with that insourcing, they got sent an application form for United Voice; I am sure that was well and truly attached to the paperwork when they were brought into the public sector. I am concerned about the way that this has come on. Hon Pierre Yang has links with the same union and just happens to be the chair of that committee. As Peter Kennedy talks about here —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, can I just remind you that that is verging on an imputation. I would be careful not to proceed with that line.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. I would like to add to my comments by just saying that I am concerned about the way in which 300 education assistants have been hired. Hundreds of jobs at Fiona Stanley Hospital and the Water Corporation have been reverted from private contractors to the government. The Leader of the Liberal Party was right on the money yesterday when he pointed out what is going on with this insourcing.

I would like to go back to the vaccination scenario because I am concerned about the way in which this government is dealing with it. The Delta variant is spreading in the eastern states. I am certainly hopeful that we have not got it here. I agree with the comments of the member for North West Central when he spoke about the level of criticism that this government has levelled on other governments around Australia: “Look at us. We can handle it better than you.” We are all Australians. It is not a case of one state versus another. I am disappointed to see the way that national cabinet has deteriorated to some extent over the last couple of months. I would like more of a constructive attitude with everyone working together. Places such as Hong Kong have put strategies in place. It is a very small area with thousands of planes and ships coming in every month, but somehow it seems to have managed things in a better way. I would love to see that happening here—a more constructive and less reactive strategy, if you like. The Deputy Premier; Minister for Health—two in one—needs to put in place some strategies and communicate to the people of Western Australia the implications of a slow vaccination rate. He needs to tell the people of WA that both available vaccines are safe, that their lives matter and not to put themselves and their families at risk if they decide to wait and see about getting vaccinated. As we have all identified, getting vaccinated is our only weapon in this battle. Conspiracy theorists are active and causing vaccination hesitancy.

Dr D.J. Honey: None more so than Albanese.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is right. We know about Anthony Albanese’s comments.

Dr D.J. Honey: The Premier and the health minister support it.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The Premier does seem to be jumping on the bandwagon with Anthony Albanese; that may be one of his bigger mistakes as far as I am concerned. We need this government to tell the truth and to forget the spin. Tell us what the long-term strategy is and give us consistency of messaging. When a crisis arises, we have a press conference that involves the Premier and the Minister for Health, and when there is bad news, the Chief Health Officer is wheeled out. We want a consistent message and we want something that gives the people of WA confidence. The other day someone spoke to me about the difficulties that people coming into WA from other states have had. I had a complaint this morning about a G2G PASS application. People are rightfully trying to come back to their families or come here for work, but this pass continues to create difficulties and increase grief for these people with its lack of consistency and multiple rejections. These people are all prepared to quarantine properly. They sometimes come from regional areas in Victoria and the like. I have had families of students from Marcus Oldham College who have been told that the college is closing down for a month. The students have nowhere to stay and they have to go back to their home state, but their application to return is being rejected by our authorities. These students are quite worried because they have nowhere to go. However, if they broke the law, entered the state and were put in jail, they would be offered the Pfizer vaccine. Last week we had the scenario in which 4 000 prisoners in the WA prison system were offered the Pfizer vaccine. Of those prisoners, 260 were potentially able to have the Pfizer vaccine because they were over 60 years of age, but no-one in Western Australia over 60 years of age and vulnerable can get the Pfizer vaccine unless they apply to the panel through a very complex scenario in which just about every single person is rejected. It is those people in their 80s and 90s, the most vulnerable people in the population, who are vaccine hesitant.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Some of them are waiting to have the Pfizer vaccine. Many people in aged-care villages are waiting for the Pfizer vaccine and are concerned that the prison population is getting the Pfizer vaccine with no problems at all. There are 4 000 people in the prison system. We know that they live closely together and are a vulnerable part of the population, but, at the same time, the prison officers who are working with them and are going in and out of the community every day cannot get the Pfizer vaccine. We are offering Pfizer to prisoners but we are not offering it to prison officers who are going in and out of the prison community. I do not see the logic in that. That is a weakness.

I want to briefly wrap up and make a couple of comments about the disparity in the ships that are coming to Western Australia, which the member for Moore pointed out. Over the past 12 months, more than 26 000 ships have come to Australia, but only 15 of them have had COVID on board, five of which came to Perth. The risk is very small. There is a bigger risk at the moment to our barley and other exports that are not getting to China easily. There was commentary about our need to diversify and to consider selling our grain to other countries. We were told that we needed to engage with other Asian countries such as Indonesia. What happened? Down came the ships and they were sent back without being loaded up. This government needs to find a way to work through this. As I said, 26 000 ships come to Australia every year. There is no point. Iron ore ships do not seem to have any problem coming to the state, but if a ship happens to have grain on it, there is a problem.

Another disappointing part of this has been the lack of consultation with the WA farming industry. Trevor Whittington, the CEO of WAFarmers, was very critical of this same thing in an article he wrote the other week. He talked about the processes and that we needed to sort them out. As the member for North West Central pointed out, it does not seem to be a problem for pilots to board those ships to steer them into the port and to then go back into the community, but we cannot touch or deal with the other 20 or 30 crew on the ship. We need some logical thinking.

A 20-million-tonne harvest is hopefully coming up for Western Australian farmers. We need to be able to load that grain onto ships, because there will be no room for it in our storage facilities and our ports. That was just something that I wanted to add on top of the comments of the member for North West Central and member for Moore.

We need to sit down and work out a process. In Hong Kong, it is laid out. I have given it to the Minister for Health to look at. It is a very simple and solid regime, and it has kept Hong Kong pretty safe. Here is our opportunity to follow the guidelines of countries that are doing it well. I might leave it at that.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [5.53 pm]: I have to say that it is preposterous for the opposition to move a motion about the government's failure to prioritise a safe and efficient health service for Western Australians. The member of this place who moved this motion and those opposite who have spoken to it have absolutely no credibility when it comes to speaking about the efficient and safe operation of public health in Western Australia. They are members of political parties that called for the border to be torn down during the last term of Parliament. Those people belong to political parties that breached the trust of the people of Western Australia by backing Clive Palmer's challenge to WA's effective border restrictions. Those members are not making a serious contribution to the debate and they are not serious contributors to a debate on the management of public health in Western Australia. That was highlighted just now by some of the comments made by the member for Roe and helped out by some interjections from the member for Cottesloe, who was sledging the federal leader of the Labor Party on vaccine hesitancy. What does the federal member for Dawson, who sits in the National Party room, say about COVID-19 and vaccines? It is nothing that helps the case on vaccine hesitancy, I can tell members that. What has former member of the Liberal Party

Craig Kelly been saying about COVID and vaccines? The member for Roe and the member for Cottesloe had the gall to turn up here today and pretend that they are somehow saints on the management of public health in Western Australia. It is truly beyond belief that they can say that with a straight face.

Yesterday, the member for Roe and member for Cottesloe were out there basically banging the drum in favour of the privatisation of health services in Western Australia. They just cannot help themselves! It is like it is in their DNA—as soon as they see a public asset, they have to sell it off. They are decrying the fact that this government has brought health services at Fiona Stanley Hospital back into Health.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I see that the member for Cottesloe is starting to arc up. I have learnt in my time in here that he does that only when he knows we have got him. What an election-winning strategy for the member for Cottesloe! He is saying, “We don’t want public health services in public hands.” What a great strategy! It is almost as good as the strategy that he ran in the election campaign in March.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I will say something about that. His political party and his colleagues in the National Party have never apologised for their breach of trust at the last election. What was the first thing that Annastacia Palaszczuk did when she assumed the leadership of the Queensland Labor Party after the defeat of Campbell Newman? She apologised for those policies that had breached the trust of the people of Queensland. The member for Cottesloe has never done that. The people of Western Australia will absolutely remember that. They will remember his contributions on the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and the management of our health services.

The Minister for Health is in here every day reminding members of the opposition that we are in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic. That pandemic has had an impact on the way that people access health care and on the health issues that people present with to our hospitals. That is incontrovertible. The response of the Leader of the Opposition and others has been simply to say, “We don’t have any COVID-19 here.” That is quite an amazing political move. It is an interesting bait and switch to say, “We’re criticising the government on this because it has done such a great job to keep COVID-19 out of Western Australia.” That is another great political strategy out of the opposition’s playbook. But the evidence shows that despite this government doing an excellent job to keep the COVID-19 pandemic out of Western Australia, we are living in a climate in which the pandemic is still raging across the world and is having an impact on the way that people access health services.

Rather than just coming out with platitudes as the opposition does, I am going to refer to evidence and make a serious contribution. I refer to an article published by the Centre for Social Impact at the University of Western Australia in a report titled *The impact of COVID-19 on families in hardship in Western Australia*. They are the families that the Labor Party has always been squarely focused on. That report says —

Over a third ... of family members reported they had felt depressed or anxious for most to all of the time during the past week, compared to 17.1% of the national sample. Just over a fifth of both family members ... and the national sample ... reported feeling depressed or anxious for some of the time during the past week. Less than half (40.6%) of family members reported feeling depressed or anxious for little to none of the time, during the past week, compared to 59.6% of the national sample. These figures indicate that the family members in the study were experiencing much higher rates of depression and/or anxiety symptoms than the Australian general population. It should be noted that across all 12 waves of the Taking the Pulse of the Nation survey, the highest proportion of Australians that felt anxious or depressed for most to all of the week was 20.0% ... well below the proportion of family members reported here. Similarly, the lowest proportion of Australians that felt anxious or depressed for little to none of the week was 52.9% (highest 60.6%), which is still substantially higher than the proportion of family members reported here.

At the conclusion of the report, the authors say —

Mental health impacts of COVID-19 in the form of increased feelings of depression and anxiety were prevalent among family members.

That refers to the family members in the study. That is actual evidence of what the Minister for Health has been trying to explain to the opposition for some time now. This government has not shied away from the challenges with the health system. This government’s health minister has stood in this place and acknowledged that our health system is under pressure. He has never shied away from that. This government has also been very clear about its support for frontline healthcare workers—the doctors, nurses and other staff in our hospitals who keep us safe. We have never shied away from the challenge. Indeed, this government is just getting on with the job. This government is not interested in grabbing a headline the way that the opposition is; it is putting patients first and delivering projects that benefit the people of Western Australia, including close to my own electorate of Cockburn. Members may be aware that this government has invested in the Fremantle Hospital mental health expansion; an additional 40 beds will essentially transform Fremantle Hospital into a key hub for mental health services in the southern suburbs. It adds to the previous 64-bed inpatient admission capacity at Fremantle Hospital. That is consistent with

the government's commitment on mental health through allocating \$46.9 million for suicide prevention programs and initiatives. They are very substantial investments in mental health. In fact, this government invested a record \$306 million additional funds in mental health in the 2020–21 budget. That compares very favourably with the record of those on the conservative side of politics when they were last in government.

The contributions this government is making are not simply restricted to mental health. This government is working ferociously to ensure that health services in our regions are also improved. Although I represent the electorate of Cockburn, I will always be a Bunbury boy at heart. I figure, seeing as we have a Premier from Rockingham, that, hopefully, that will not be held against me in any way! One of the signature contributions this government is making to the south west, of course, is a \$200 million redevelopment of Bunbury Hospital at South West Health Campus. I had procedures at that hospital while I was growing up, and it is relied upon by people in the south west and greater Bunbury region. In fact, something like 170 000 residents of the south west rely on that hospital, and this government is investing \$200 million over the long term in redeveloping that hospital. This government has already dedicated \$60.8 million to the redevelopment. That is a practical contribution of an additional operating theatre, a reconfiguration of the emergency department fast-track area and the establishment of an acute medical assessment unit, and will see the implementation of a mental health observation area. It is a significant investment in a variety of healthcare areas—mental health, acute care, emergency. Of course, I have to acknowledge the excellent work of the member for Bunbury, with the health minister in this case, ensuring that funds for those commitments are being delivered for the people of Bunbury and the greater south west who rely on it. It shows that this government is doing things not only in mental health and not only in the metropolitan area, but also in our regional centres.

Kalgoorlie is another regional centre that has benefited from this government's work. Work is being performed at Kalgoorlie, including, quite recently, a new MRI machine. The member for Kalgoorlie is not here today but I acknowledge her contribution to ensuring that project was delivered. The new MRI machine got up and running only two months ago, in June. It has just opened. The project languished under the previous Liberal–National government. It was flagged something like 12 years ago as a development that needed to occur. The Liberal Party and Nationals members talk a big game on investment in regional areas, but the simple delivery of an MRI machine to the people of Kalgoorlie languished on their watch. It took the people of Western Australia electing a Labor government to ensure that that was delivered. The MRI machine came at a cost of about \$1.2 million, but it is part of a total \$6.2 million package because we had to build a whole new section of the hospital dedicated to the MRI machine.

I also acknowledge the member for Collie–Preston's excellent work. She is another proud regional Labor member who has done sterling work, again with the Minister for Health, on the \$12 million stage 2 upgrade to Collie Hospital, which will see upgrades to operating theatres as well. The recurring theme here is that at the last election, and the election before that, the people of Western Australia overwhelmingly turned to the Labor Party to ensure that commitments to vital health services would be delivered to them. They did not look to the Liberals or the Nationals because those parties had breached their trust when it came to the management of public health in Western Australia.

I can go further. We have also funded and built new helicopter landing sites at Jurien Bay Health Centre and Narrogin Hospital. Also on the rails is \$73.3 million for the redevelopment of Geraldton Health Campus. The first stage has been completed, which includes a new ambulance entry. Over the next couple of years, during this term of government, we will see more parts of that facility come online. At this point, we are looking at the projected completion of an expanded emergency department and an integrated mental health facility at the end of 2023, and the balance of works, which includes redevelopment of intensive care and high-dependency units, in 2024. They are all on the books to be delivered in this term of government by this Labor government.

It really is preposterous for the Liberal Party and the Nationals to stand in this chamber and lecture anybody about running an efficient and safe health service. It is in the DNA of these political parties to privatise public health services. They do not support them and they have not made investments in them except when they can grab a media line out of it.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the fact that many of the commitments that this government is making are having positive impacts for people in my own electorate of Cockburn. As I mentioned, the expansion of mental health beds at Fremantle Hospital is a significant commitment for my local community. People in my community have been calling for that facility, and they will come to rely on that facility in the future. In another area of health, we have the establishment of a new family birthing centre at Fiona Stanley Hospital, which is again a facility that people in any electorate will come to rely on.

The motion makes reference to “a broad range of economic and social impacts”. I thought that was odd. One of the things that is happening in my electorate is the major investment by Bethesda Health Care in the development of a 120-bed private mental health facility. It is not a public facility. The question that comes up is: why would Bethesda feel confident about making investments in Western Australia? The answer is simple. It is because this government's management of the pandemic and of the economy is world-first. That not only frees the government to make the investments that I have outlined today, but also gives private capital the confidence that it needs to invest in private healthcare in this state that will complement the existing public health facilities.

This motion from the opposition is seemingly without explanation. I have listened to all the opposition contributions so far, and I could not identify anything that suggested that this government is anything but serious about tackling the challenges that our health system is facing. The opposition has chosen a very strange hill to die on, in circumstances in which it has no credibility on this topic whatsoever. It is not a topic that the people of Western Australia trusts the opposition on, and I doubt very much that it is a topic that the people of Western Australia will trust the opposition on at the next election.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [6.11 pm]: It is fascinating to listen to the member for Cockburn. If there is one thing that I have learnt in this place, it is that the more privileged the life people have led, and the more privileged the education they have had, the more desperate they are to prove that they are one of the workers in this place. There are some members in this house, including the member who has just entered the chamber, who have great credibility in representing workers in this community. That is a person in this place whom I have praised before. The member for Cockburn does not share that distinction.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): I would remind you not to draw the chair into the debate.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am not, member for Cockburn, at all. I trust, Acting Speaker, that you will play your role as you should, and I am sure you will.

Lawyers are supposed to have some regard for truth, members. We heard this lecture, this homily, on privatisation. The member for Cockburn clearly is ignorant of the fact that his Labor government, which is anti-privatisation, privatised the Warradarge wind farm. It is trying desperately to privatise the TAB at the moment. Most of all, any lawyer who cares about the maintenance of land titles in this state—land being the principal store of wealth for most people—should be concerned that this government privatised Landgate. I heard the member for Cockburn's homily on the evils of private people running hospitals. Later in his speech, he told us about how Bethesda Health Care is building a mental health hospital. I will tell the member why it is building that, virtually in the member for Cockburn's seat. The reason is that this state government has failed to provide adequate mental health services in this state. As I will point out, this state is the worst performing state in Australia in the provision of mental health hospital services.

This government is a one-trick government. This government is basking in the accolades for its management of COVID-19. We on this side congratulate the government for that. That is keeping COVID out of our community. There is no doubt that COVID has not been a major issue in the Western Australian community. The government has to take credit for that. There are other factors, as the member for Roe said, with the first being our isolation, and the second, can I say, the fact that we have relatively few overseas visitors a year compared with the major states on the east coast. Nevertheless, I do not resile from the fact that this state government has done a good job. The Minister for Health is shaking his head. I like numbers. At the start of this crisis—it would have been in about April—I did a graph of the number of COVID cases in each state versus the annual number of overseas visitors. The correlation coefficient was almost one; that is, the number of COVID cases was related to the number of people from overseas who had come into the country at the start of this crisis. That is why I made that comment, minister. I am happy to share that information with the minister.

Mr R.H. Cook: We had more people coming back to Western Australia and through our hotel quarantine system per capita than any other state.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Yes, once we got COVID underway, but, when the initial outbreaks occurred, it was positively correlated. In fact, it was almost a one-to-one correlation with the number of overseas visitors who had come to this state.

Let me carry on, please, members, because I am sure members are anxious for me to finish. I am also sure that the Minister for Health is anxious to give his reply, and I am certainly looking forward to his reply to the excellent points that have been made by opposition members today.

What we see is a government that is failing in almost all the critical aspects in this state. Opposition members have pointed out, and I will point out, the failures in health. The simple reality is that the health of Western Australians is at risk because of the inaction of this government over the last four and a half years. This government has not done its job over the last four and a half years. We hear spin on a daily basis. We heard it yesterday in question time from the Minister for Health, with his selective quotation of statistics. He compared the depths of the lockdown last year with this year and told us to look at the increase, when we know that over time—I will go through the detail for the minister—the trend in hospital presentations is simply a continuation of the trend that we have had over the last four years. This government has ignored those trends. It has not prepared our health system to cope with the predicted increase over that long trend in hospital presentations.

We only have to see what is happening with housing. Last night, there was a heartbreaking vigil on the steps of Parliament House to note the deaths of 56 homeless people on our streets. Although that is not a root cause, there is no doubt whatsoever that the lack of adequate housing for people in this state, particularly people doing it tough, is a significant contributor to the hardship that people are experiencing on the streets of Perth and in broader

Western Australia. Can I say that is true. I have made a point of visiting every regional centre that I can in the time that I have available. I have literally gone from Kununurra to Esperance. That is a problem in every single community. In Esperance, about a dozen people are sleeping in the streets every night. That was the case when I was down there.

We have a government that is ignoring the importance of international trade. That point has already been made. I have some sympathy for the Minister for Health in some ways. The health minister has a big job. We know that health is a big portfolio. We have made the comment about the health minister being a part-time health minister, not that we think that he does not take it seriously. The Minister for Health is the Deputy Premier. He is also Minister for Medical Research; State Development, Jobs and Trade; Science. Twelve months ago, we were saying that this minister needs to focus on health. It is a big job. It is an enormous job. That job needs to be his focus. The minister has not done that, and we see the results in the problems in the health system.

This is not a government that is without resources. Because of the federal government's GST fix, led by Mathias Cormann, which is bringing billions of dollars of extra revenue to this state government above the initial budget forecast in 2017, and because of the massive inflation in iron ore prices, this government will be sitting on, as we are told in this budget, a more than \$5 billion record surplus. This government can do something about it. It has the opportunity, and it has had the opportunity, to do something about it, because those record surpluses have been the case for some considerable time. In fact, for the term of this government, the iron ore price has been substantially above the budget forecast price. That windfall gain has not been re-invested in an appropriate way. This government refuses to say that it is a crisis. *The West Australian*, I have to say, has given this government a pretty good run, which is a generous way of putting it. Even that newspaper is calling it a crisis, but this government refuses to call it a crisis. We have experts across the system saying this; it is not us. Yes, we care about our communities and about our role as opposition to hold this government to account, but it is the experts in the health system who are saying that it is a crisis. I will go to that. I refer to February 2017, which was a happier time for the Minister for Health. Not to be pejorative, but he looked quite a bit younger and less concerned in this photo on a press release of 12 February 2017. The screaming headline reads, "Barnett Liberals fail on Health: record ambulance ramping, record waitlists and a Government with no plan for healthcare in WA". I think we can see the consequence of a government that actually has no plan for health care and has had no plan for health care in Western Australia. Here is the detail of the press release —

Health Department figures show ambulances were ramped outside Perth hospitals for 1,030 hours in January. The previous worst January was 980 hours, in 2015.

... shocking year for ambulance ramping ...

The now minister further commented —

"These shocking statistics add up to a massive failure by the Barnett Liberal Government to manage our health system ...

The now minister mentioned sick Western Australians and the care they actually deserve. His press release goes on to refer to "horror stories of sick people waiting for hours for ambulances to arrive or waiting for hours when they arrive at hospital". Here we have it; this is the glorious promise of the now minister —

"WA Labor's Putting Patients First policy has a focus on freeing up hospital beds, ensuring patients are treated in a timelier manner and reducing waitlists in our hospitals. We've recognised that providing quality patient care is about more than just building hospital buildings.

What have we seen? Members opposite want to deny it and say that suddenly it is not a problem, but we have seen a horrendous increase. If 1 300 was a horror story, what is over 5 000 hours? That is a catastrophic, horrendous nightmare in the language that the minister was using back in 2017. There are real consequences. I heard the minister's comment yesterday. He was picking up on the detail of something that I had said, and he said that patients who are seriously injured or sick are going in straightaway. That is just not true. Yes, if someone is actually dying, maybe they get prioritised, but there are people in those ambulances who are seriously sick, who are being compelled to wait in those ambulances or in corridors. We have heard stories of seriously ill patients waiting in the corridors of hospitals for days, not able to get into a ward to get the care that they need.

I am going to dwell a little bit on this Australian Medical Association media release that was put out on Monday, 12 July 2021 by Dr Mark Duncan-Smith, President of the Australian Medical Association of Western Australia. This is not me or the Liberal Party; this is a highly regarded peer in the medical profession. He is highly respected. He goes through the critical points. I will quote him and not summarise him. The media release states —

AMA (WA) President Dr Mark Duncan-Smith said the State Government had long run out of excuses for the near-catastrophic congestion that is choking our emergency departments and leading to ambulances endlessly waiting in hospital lines.

He quoted the statistics —

"Ramping for the first six months of 2021 is almost equal to WA's total ramping for 2016 and 2017 combined ...

This is when the minister said it was a crisis. In the first part of this year, ambulance ramping has been more than the total for the last two years of the Barnett government, when the minister was on television. I remember the footage of the minister standing outside hospitals with ambulances lined up behind him, telling us it was a crisis. That is the record of this government, members.

Dr Duncan-Smith recalled the comments made by the minister, who was then the opposition health spokesperson. He quoted the minister; I will not quote that again. He said —

“This situation is out of control and the Minister for Health is simply missing in action, unable to respond to the crisis.”

That was at 1 000 hours. What do members say now at 5 000 hours? A non-existent minister, missing in action. It is more than “missing in action” when he has achieved that target. I quote the numbers, against what is just a normal increase in presentations over the longer term in the hospital.

Dr Duncan-Smith said —

“To add insult to injury, we’ve had every imaginable excuse now that Mr Cook is actually in a position to address the situation.

“The Government can’t just blame mental health attendances for increased ramping rates, for example, as the Premier and the Health Minister are wont to do.

“Since Mr McGowan has been Premier, mental health attendances have increased by less than 14 per cent —

Less than 14 per cent over four and a bit years, members —

while ramping has increased by an eye-watering 375 per cent.

What we have seen is a less than 14 per cent increase in presentations over the term of this government, and that, we would say, is a normal run rate for that, about three to four per cent per annum, but ramping has increased by 375 per cent, so that excuse simply does not hold any water. It is a false excuse. It is spin that is in fact beneath the calibre of this minister.

I continue the quote —

“There has not been a massive increase in activity and presentations to the emergency department,”
Dr Mark Duncan-Smith said.

“Activity pre-COVID in 2018/2019 was growing steadily at about 4 per cent.

This is not me, members. This is the head of the AMA, a highly respected leader in the medical community in Western Australia. The media release referred to the dip in activity in the first half of 2020 and then the increase in 2020–21, back to the levels, but only back to the trend line. This is not some exotic, abnormal, COVID-related, sudden burst of activity. These presentations to the hospitals are purely what we would expect on the trend line over the term of this government. I had a lecture from the member for Cockburn. This government needs to be honest. This government has not responded to the normal growth in activity of the hospitals, and to say that there is a sudden trend, a massive increase, and that is the reason it is overwhelmed and the reason the government could not respond, is untrue. It is untrue and it is beneath the dignity of this minister to say it.

The article refers to the number of beds. This is a problem we have. We see that Western Australia has the lowest number of public hospital beds available per 1 000 head of population of any state in Australia. The wealthiest state in Australia, in relative terms, the state that is responsible for almost half of Australia’s export income has the lowest number of hospital beds. When a government has been in office for four and a half years and is heading into its fifth year of government, that is its problem. It has not responded to the normal growth in presentations to hospitals, and it has not responded to the requirement for hospital beds.

Thank God we did not have a COVID outbreak in Western Australia, because, if we had, it would have been carnage and chaos. We would have been the least able state in Australia to respond to that. As I said, we have congratulated the government on doing it, but thank God something did not go wrong. As much as it is good management, it is good luck.

[Member’s time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank God we did not have an outbreak; thank God we did not have someone taking it out into the community. We know we have had a number of incidents in which people, such as security guards or workers in hotels, have gone out into the community and interacted with hundreds or thousands of people, but for whatever magic reason, we did not see spread from those individuals. That was not the government’s management; that was pure dumb luck on our part. If we had seen those massive outbreaks, our hospital system would not have been just at breaking point, it would have been broken.

I will not go on, because I have to cover a number of other areas. When we look at the time it takes for people to get treated, we see that our hospitals are full all the time, based on a normal trend increase in the expectation for

hospital beds. We see a government with wrong priorities. In the middle of this pandemic and crisis, with the lowest number of hospital beds per person of any state or territory in Australia, what is the government focused on? It is focused on Metronet. There is our COVID solution! Metronet is going to solve COVID. The budget for Metronet has blown out from an estimate of less than \$3 billion to more than \$7 billion in the last budget. I can only wait to see what it is going to be in this budget. If the government is honest, the cost of that project is going to be \$10 billion. In any case, it is the largest cost blowout of any capital project in the history of Western Australia. It makes Colin Barnett a fiscal prude.

I am sure the Minister for Health has been going to cabinet and saying, “Look, I need more support and extra resources”, but instead of the Minister for Health getting that money, the Minister for Transport gets it because that minister clearly carries a bigger stick. The Minister for Transport has received another more than \$4 billion for her project while our health system is in absolute crisis. Apart from the Forrestfield–Airport Link, not a single inch of rail has been laid for the Metronet project. I cannot wait to see how the government will deliver all its projects. We heard the minister —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Leader of the House!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the House to order for the first time, and I impress on him the importance of being a role model for members in circumstances in which he is the Leader of the House!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. I am grateful for your protection from the verbose Leader of the House!

As I pointed out yesterday, the Minister for Health has been focusing his mind on some things. He has been focusing his mind on building union membership in his own union! Again, \$93 million is being spent on insourcing to government the services of 633 workers. As was pointed out by the member for Roe, I would not mind betting that the union application went out with a letter informing them of their new employment conditions. The government will be hoping that they will all be union members. That will mean that the Minister for Health will carry a bigger stick when it comes to the executive of the ALP and choosing who gets preselected for what. It is a trick that the minister learnt from the Minister for Water, who has been merrily insourcing services to the Water Corporation at a rate of knots—more than 500 people.

I thought what the minister and other members said about private services was really insulting. We are not talking about a service or a company; we are talking about people, some of whom are probably members of the minister’s own union. Members said that these people were not doing their job properly and were failing: “They’re not doing their job properly. They’re not really worthy people because they happen to work for a private business.” They are talking about people when they make those criticisms. I will tell members what: those people are fantastic. I have been out to those facilities and I have seen those people. I have been out to Midland Public Hospital. For new members who want to talk about public versus private, Midland Public Hospital was built for one-third the cost, per bed, of Fiona Stanley Hospital. I advise members to go out there. I have been out there a number of times. I have met the management and the people who work there. I have met the engineers who run the place. What a fantastic facility. It handles more high-priority ED patients than Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital—way above anything that was contracted. That is the service you get. I support public hospitals and I support private hospitals, but this juvenile contention that because a hospital is a private facility it somehow does not provide better service is a falsehood—an insulting falsehood to the doctors, nurses, orderlies, cleaners and all the other people who work in those private facilities or in the services provided by contractors. Some members opposite should have the decency to not do that.

Then there is the government’s attack on St John Ambulance—talk about wrong priorities. We know what is behind the attack on St John Ambulance. It is interesting to go back a little in history, because history repeats itself, and look at an ABC online news article from 23 April 2008, which states —

The State Opposition says it is strongly opposed to stripping control of Western Australia’s ambulance services from the not-for-profit organisation, St John.

The Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union says because St John Ambulance depends on patient transfer fees, employees are under pressure to make thousands of unnecessary trips to emergency departments.

It says this is leading to overcrowding in hospitals and it is urging the Government to take control of the service.

Hop in your time machines, members, because that article was from 23 April 2008. It continues —

The Health Minister Jim McGinty says he will consider the proposal, —

That the union was putting up —

but says any change should be based on the best interests of patients.

Thank goodness he said that. Why do I raise that example? It is because the current Minister for Health, in a debate in this place on Wednesday, 5 May 2021, talked about a range of issues and said, in agreement with the member for North West Central —

... as the member for North West Central said, my idol, Jim McGinty, was the Minister for Health.

That is here in *Hansard*, minister! Your own words. It does look like the minister is taking his guidance from his idol. I might also say that Mr McGinty has certainly done very well, with a large range of appointments under this Minister for Health. The minister's idol has been parachuted onto the boards of the North Metropolitan Health Service, Lotterywest and Healthway. It is very clear that the examination of St John Ambulance is nothing to do with the delivery of services to the people of Western Australia; it is another thrust by the minister to simply increase union membership—something that he has copied from the playbook of his idol, Jim McGinty, from 2008.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Absolutely. We see history repeating itself. It is not in the interests of patients and it is a distraction from the problem. As I said, the problem is that this government has completely failed to react to a normal continuing increase in presentations to hospitals for various health issues.

Yesterday we heard, chapter and verse, from a government now drunk with its own power. It has ascendancy in numbers and accolades from the community for its reaction to COVID, and that is apparently a green light for the renationalisation of health services. We have heard a number of speakers in this place, including the minister and Premier, launch into virulent attacks on the private health sector. Despite the member for Cockburn lauding Bethesda Hospital for building its new mental health unit in his electorate, members in this place have launched criticisms of the private health sector—the usual infantile arguments that because these people are making a profit, they are somehow not delivering the best health service, the workers are not doing the best job, and that somehow the community is not getting good services from those groups. We know that that is totally false. It is purely a facade so that this government can continue its nationalisation program of those facilities. All the distraction about St John Ambulance and all the criticism of the private health services are excuses for this government to try to cover up its own failure.

Government members talk about the wrong priorities. There is a housing crisis. Keeping people safe is the most important thing that a government does. The government says, “We did that for COVID.” What about those tens of thousands of people who cannot get houses? There are thousands and thousands of people on waitlists for houses. Not only has the government not done anything to improve public housing; in fact, it has destroyed it. This government has reduced public housing, since it came to power, from 44 087 public houses to 42 715. I hear the bleating of the bleeding heart elite socialists in this place—the privileged university students and others who know all about the struggles of the workers—and they have reduced the number of public houses by 1 300.

Mr R.R. Whitby interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have already pointed out the finances, minister. This government spent \$300 million to reduce the public service by 3 000—spent the \$300 million and increased the public service by 7 000. Again, I tell members, Colin Barnett is looking pretty good. Perhaps the government should bring him into its party as an adviser!

Regarding people who cannot get houses, we heard the stories last night during the vigil for Alana. I spoke with her family. But not one Labor Party member turned up to that vigil—not one of you. Not one of you was out there in the front and certainly not one of you was invited to speak. That group was very precise in its criticism and they pinned home the failures in housing to the failures of this government in great detail, and I will be exploring those matters with those people.

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [6.42 pm]: We all accept—there is no doubt; there is no dispute—that we are in the middle of a pandemic. Over the last 18 months, the government, the Minister for Health, frontline health workers, nurses, doctors and administration staff have got out of bed every day with the fear of dying, of being contagious and infecting somebody else, and have provided the service they need to provide for the people of Western Australia to keep them safe and provide an efficient health system. I oppose this motion for criticising these people for not having provided a safe and efficient health system. That does not make any sense to me. That is the biggest insult that the opposition can give the frontline health workers by criticising them for not providing a safe and efficient health system when they have worked so hard to keep us safe. The whole world agrees with that except for our opposition here in this chamber.

Let me go to some numbers. As of today, the number of COVID cases in Western Australia from the start of the pandemic is 1 058. Throughout Australia, it is 35 089. That is three per cent. The number of active cases as of today in Western Australia is 10 and throughout Australia, it is 3 725. That is 0.3 per cent. Is this not an example of safe and efficient health care being provided? What else is it?

Turning to vaccinations, there is a big myth, especially among the opposition, that somehow the state government has to pull out a magic wand to vaccinate everybody in the state. Traditionally, the federal government has taken

the brunt of the responsibility for providing vaccinations. Over 95 per cent of major vaccination programs in this country has been run by primary care, which is GPs. Today, less than 20 per cent of general practices are approved to give the Pfizer vaccine. People are having to travel from one end of town to the other end to get a second dose of the vaccine. People are having to wait until December. I have heard all this from the opposition. I plead with opposition members to speak to their federal colleagues to sort out the shambolic program that is the rolling out of the COVID vaccination here in Australia. In the 15 years being a GP in Australia, I have never seen a worse program rollout than the COVID vaccination program. If opposition members can, please facilitate more vaccine supplies to GP practices and the Western Australian government. Based on the last seven days' average, modelling shows that we could achieve 60 per cent vaccination in 61 days; we could achieve 70 per cent in 89 days; and we could achieve 80 per cent in 117 days. In four months from now, before Christmas, we could achieve 80 per cent, provided the federal government offers the certainty of supplying the vaccines for us to give them to the people.

Several members interjected.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: But the federal government has to supply it. There has been partiality; we have been penalised for controlling COVID well. People who do not control COVID well get a lot more vaccines. For some reason, the opposition thinks that there is no COVID in Western Australia, so there should be no impact on the health system. It is completely wrong. At any given point, without the pandemic in place, 10 to 15 per cent of the people of Western Australia are not living in Western Australia. They have either travelled interstate or internationally. Because of the pandemic, that 10 to 15 per cent—the number can vary depending on whether it is school holidays or university holidays or whatever—of people remain in Western Australia create that additional demand. To keep Western Australians safe, there is additional demand being created. How can we ease this problem? Again, we can ease this problem by attaining a high number of vaccinations, opening the borders, getting freedom again and having people able to move about, thereby reducing the demand so that we can cater to the highest level.

For some reason the opposition portrays a picture as if a patient were sitting in the back of an ambulance with continuous oxygen and injections and medications, waiting. Let me explain what ambulance ramping means. Ambulance ramping means that the patient who was transported in the ambulance is yet to be cared for by the medical team. It does not mean that they remain in the ambulance. They can be in the hospital. The paramedics are continuing to care for the patient while the medical team takes over. There is an increase in demand. Hospital staff manage that by not sending ambulances back into the community to cause problems for people who have already entered the system. This is ramping. Continuing to portray an image as if there are patients in the back of the ambulance dying, gasping for oxygen, is not exactly what happens in the hospital system.

Mrs L.A. Munday: They still do X-rays. They still do bloods. The system goes on.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: Yes. The member for Dawesville, who has provided the service for over 20 years, saving so many lives, is endorsing my statement. Thank you, member for Dawesville.

Not Perth, not Western Australia, not Australia—throughout the world, over 70 studies have proved that mental health issues have doubled in number. Do we expect to not have that impact because there is no COVID in Western Australia? The impacts of COVID are still there. The member for North West Central clearly stated with evidence how the impact of mental health issues has caused problems, particularly in the remote communities. How can we deny that that has had an impact on the demand for emergency services and community mental health services? There is significant investment from this government and this Minister for Health in combating all that. Every effort is being made day in, day out, so for the opposition to criticise this government and say that it has failed to provide a safe and efficient health system is pathetic and unacceptable.

I repeat that the federal government needs to step up and take more responsibility for health. What is bed-blocking? Let me explain how it works. When an elderly person has a fall, it is an unplanned admission, an emergency, and we do not know how long the person will occupy the bed. It may be two days or five days. If it is two days, the procedures of two other patients are cancelled and they go to the back of the list. If it is five days, five people who were supposed to have procedures have their procedures cancelled and they go to the back of the list. This is unplanned. We all know that aged care primary care and prevention is a federal government responsibility. What investment is going into the prevention of falls of the elderly? It is zero dollars. If we could prevent falls, we would reduce the impact of the pressure on our emergency systems and hospitals. If there is a leak in the roof, the opposition is saying buy more mops instead of stopping the leak. I am pleading with the opposition to please join hands and cooperate with us to provide the best health care system for the people of Western Australia. With health, there should be no difference between the parties or any side of politics. We should work together to fight and work hard to provide the best for the people of Western Australia. I once again plead with the opposition to join hands.

Since 2017, there has been a \$1.1 billion increase in health spending by this McGowan government. There is a \$1.8 billion commitment to build a new women's and babies' hospital and investments for upgrades at Peel Health Campus and Joondalup Health Campus, and a Fiona Stanley Hospital transition plan, which has already been implemented. I am very surprised that the opposition opposes improving those services, and is putting it back on

the government. On one hand it is saying that we are not spending enough, but on the other hand it makes accusations when the minister spends money. What should be done? This is where we need to unite and combine and put in every effort to bring about better health outcomes for every Western Australian.

This health minister has invested in medical research with the future health research and innovation fund. Last May, an amendment was made to divert the interest that comes from the fund towards local health medical research and innovation. This health minister has invested in the life sciences industry. The McGowan government has a \$13 million WA cancer plan. Is that not efficient health care service? If that is not safe health care service, what is?

In his contribution, the member for Cockburn mentioned the birthing centre at Fiona Stanley Hospital, which benefits the people of his and my electorates. The uniqueness of the centre is that the majority of the antenatal care provided to women is done by the same team who conduct the deliveries, which means that women feel more comfortable, safe and cared for. Unique programs are being implemented to bring about better health outcomes. It is very sad that the opposition simply complains and insults frontline workers by saying that they do not provide safe and efficient health care. I oppose the motion, and I am thankful for the opportunity to make a contribution.

MS K.E. GIDDENS (Bateman) [6.54 pm]: I stand today to talk about this very important issue because, of course, the delivery of health is a core responsibility of government. Indeed, the three key areas of government are health, education and safety. I put on record tonight my deep concern about the politicisation of this issue. Health should not be politicised. There is a clear difference between accountability and politicisation.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Ms K.E. GIDDENS: The member for Cottesloe scoffs, which is fitting, because I will refer to a quote to demonstrate my point about this politicisation. I refer to yesterday's uncorrected *Hansard* in which the member for Cottesloe said —

The government is heading into its fifth year in government and it is “going to do” something about the health crisis. It needed to start doing something four years ago. It was told about it. The government knew it was in crisis.

I want to remind members where we were at four years ago in 2017, at the end of the Barnett government. According to the uncorrected *Hansard*, the member for Cottesloe's next sentence was —

This government makes fun of the hospital system, but it inherited a rebuilt hospital system from the former government.

Members of this place, let us consider that on the one hand, four years ago, we knew that there was a crisis and failed to act but, on the other hand, we inherited a rebuilt hospital system. Talk about having a bet each way. Which way is it? That is cynical and it politicises this very important issue.

We have spoken plenty about the demands placed on our health system as a result of COVID-19. Reference was made to the government using COVID as an excuse and blaming COVID. There is no blame on COVID; it is just fact. The demand that has come out of this pandemic is fact. Opposition members cannot correlate the number of cases in Western Australia with that demand because they know that we put energy and human resources into planning and prevention and into people vaccinating and testing for COVID-19. The number of COVID cases in Western Australia is not a direct correlation with the demand that the pandemic has placed on our health system.

My colleagues in this place have spoken very well about those demands and about the response of the McGowan Labor government. I want to speak about another aspect of the motion, the economic and social impacts, because that deserves a quick mention. Of course, there have been economic and social impacts from COVID, but I am really curious to look at the situation in Western Australia. It is widely recognised that this government's management of COVID-19 has kept the Western Australian economy open. It is also widely recognised that we have the strongest economy in the nation and one of the strongest in the world. Every job lost in Western Australia due to COVID-19 has been replaced, and to that we can add another 21 000. We can round it up a little bit, just for argument's sake. Employment in Western Australia is now the highest it has ever been. This McGowan Labor government has created more than 100 000 jobs since coming to office, despite the pandemic. Consumer confidence is at record highs. I hope that the situation in New South Wales and the management of the COVID outbreak there is rapidly brought under control because I would not like to see that undermine the confidence we experience as a result of this government's good management of COVID.

The McGowan Labor government has a plan. It was one of the first governments in the nation to implement a COVID recovery plan. It is a \$5.5 billion well-resourced response to the pandemic, which includes the economy, industry, community and infrastructure. It is a comprehensive, detailed and funded plan to respond to COVID and the challenges it poses.

I turn to some of the great things that we are doing in Western Australia. The Australian National Phenome Centre is located in the Murdoch health precinct, which is just outside my electorate, but I like to claim it a little bit because it is such a magnificent gem.

Mr R.H. Cook: Nicely played!

Ms K.E. GIDDENS: I will take what I can out of it!

For those members who have not visited the centre, please contact its staff; they would be happy to show them through. I warn members that if they are feeling halfway intelligent walking into the centre, they will not feel that way walking out because of the skills and knowledge of the staff and the level of research that is taking place there. That centre is contributing significantly to the world's response to COVID-19. It is a significant world leader and it is right here in Perth, Western Australia. Of course, the centre is focusing on a number of areas that have implications for the future economy of our state. The brains trust of that centre in the contribution to our future economy and diversification of our state is significant. We are extremely lucky to have that centre.

I will conclude my remarks because I am very aware of the time. We have challenges in Western Australia just as there are challenges across Australia and the world. There is no doubt that the pandemic has accelerated these challenges, but we also have unique strengths and opportunities. We have incredibly dedicated and skilled health professionals in Western Australia. We have world-class hospitals and we are on our way to having a new women's and babies' hospital, a \$1.8 billion investment. We have the strongest economy in the nation and, as a result, we have been able to respond and put resources into our health system to meet the demand. We have more hospital beds and increased funding for mental health. We have provided for more graduate nurse positions and we are recruiting more nursing graduates into the health system. I would like to end by returning to the warning that I gave at the beginning about the politicisation of this very important area.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

COMMERCE — NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE REPORT — 273 FULHAM STREET, CLOVERDALE

8. Mr V.A. Catania to the Minister for Commerce:

I refer to the National Construction Compliance Certificate Report from February 2019 in relation to the property at 273 Fulham Street, Cloverdale, and I ask:

- (a) Has the Building Commission investigated the content of the report:
 - (i) If not, why not;
- (b) Please outline the nature of planning, building and construction defects – latent or otherwise – identified in the report;
- (c) Were any of the defects identified considered likely to present a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of building occupants;
- (d) What, if any, action has been taken in response to recommendations contained in the report;
- (e) Is the Minister aware of any legal proceedings associated with the publication of the report; and
- (f) Will the Minister table a copy of the report:
 - (i) If not, why not?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) I am advised that there is no National Construction Compliance Certificate Report. The report of February 2019 is a General Inspection Report undertaken by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety – Building and Energy Division itself.
 - (i) Not applicable.
- (b) The information cannot be disclosed. The *Building Services (Complaint Resolution and Administration) Act 2011* (WA) (the Act) provides that any person engaged in the performance of functions under the Act must not disclose information obtained in the performance of these functions, unless a particular set of circumstances, detailed in s103 of the Act, applies. None of these exceptions applies in this case.
- (c) As above.
- (d) I am advised all serious non-compliances found during Building and Energy’s inspections are referred to the relevant local government permit authorities for their consideration of appropriate enforcement actions.
- (e) I am advised there are civil proceedings underway and it is not appropriate for me to comment on these.
- (f) No.
 - (i) I refer to my earlier answer about disclosure of information gathered under the *Building Services (Complaint Resolution and Administration) Act 2011*.

ENVIRONMENT — MURUJUGA ROCK ART — MONITORING CONTRACT

9. Mr V.A. Catania to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to your announcement on 15 June 2021 that Calibre Ventures was awarded the contract to continue the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program, and I ask:

- (a) Please detail reasons why the previous contract with joint venture Puliypang was ended and on what date did it end;
- (b) Was the new contract awarded to Calibre subject to a competitive tender, expression of interest or similar process;
- (c) What experience does Calibre have in ancient rock art monitoring to qualify it for the current contract it holds;
- (d) Does the contract require any traditional owner involvement and if so, please detail who or what organisations are involved and in what capacity;
- (e) How much has the State government invested in the Burrup Rock Art Monitoring Project since it was announced in March 2019; and
- (f) How much has the private sector contributed to the Burrup Rock Art Monitoring Project since it was announced in March 2019?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation terminated the contract with Puliypang Pty Ltd on 30 April 2021 due to breach of contract.
- (b) The contract was awarded to Calibre under a sole supply arrangement. The operational aspects of the previous contract, delivered by Calibre and its sub-contractors, were performed to the satisfaction of the Department.
- (c) The monitoring program needs various skills to meet the requirements of the contract including scientific and project management expertise. Calibre is the project manager for the program, and has subcontracts including Curtin University, Art Care and the Chemcentre. Calibre performed this role to the satisfaction of the Department under the previous contract and has experience in project management in the Pilbara.
- (d) Yes. The contract requires that the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program be guided and informed by the cultural law, knowledge and practices of the Circle of Elders, Traditional Owners and Custodians of Murujuga. The Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation is a partner in the program, and oversees the implementation of the contract. The Government is funding the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation to undertake this role. To support the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation in its long-term endeavour to manage the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program, Murujuga rangers will be trained by leading experts to participate in all aspects of the monitoring program including monitoring the rock art in the field.
- (e) The State Government has committed \$2.3 million to implement the *Murujuga Rock Art Strategy* from March 2019 to 30 June 2024.
- (f) Funding for the Murujuga Rock Art Monitoring Program is provided by industry participants under a Memorandum of Understanding. The funding details are confidential.

HEALTH — CALL AND RESPOND EARLY SYSTEM

10. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many Call and Respond Early (CARE) calls were recorded in:
 - (a) 2017–2018;
 - (b) 2018–2019;
 - (c) 2019–2020; and
 - (d) 2020–2021?
- (2) For each of those years, how many of the calls were made in:
 - (a) Armadale/Kelmscott Hospital;
 - (b) Joondalup Hospital;
 - (c) Fiona Stanley Hospital;
 - (d) Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital;
 - (e) Perth Children’s Hospital;
 - (f) Rockingham General Hospital;
 - (g) King Edward Memorial Hospital;
 - (h) Peel Health Campus;
 - (i) St John of God Midland Hospital;
 - (j) Royal Perth Hospital; and
 - (k) Regional hospitals?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

I am advised:

- (1)
 - (a) 73
 - (b) 67
 - (c) 101
 - (d) 160 (up to and inclusive of 23 June 2021)

(2)

	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021
(a)	–	–	–	2
(b)	27	22	41	59

(c)	4	10	18	16
(d)	1	3	6	9
(e)	3	4	4	10
(f)	1	—	—	—
(g)	—	—	1	6
(h)	16	12	3	3
(i)	3	—	11	7
(j)	10	3	1	12

(k)

Region	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Goldfields	—	1	—	3
Great Southern	—	—	1	7
Kimberley	—	—	—	2
Midwest	2	2	6	11
Pilbara	—	—	1	4
South West	6	10	8	5
Wheatbelt	—	—	—	2

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

14. Ms M.J. Davies to the Premier representing the Minister for Regional Development:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
- (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr M. McGowan replied:

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place. Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.
- (iii) 3 formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) As of 31 December 2020, 1 formal report produced has been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

16. Ms M.J. Davies to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Medical Research; State Development, Jobs and Trade; Science:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
- (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation advises:

- (iii) One formal report has been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) As of 31 December 2020, one formal report produced has been publicly released.

WA Health advises:

- (iii) 21 formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) As of 31 December 2020, nil formal reports produced have been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

Health & Disability Services Complaints Office:

- (iii) Nil.
- (iv) Not applicable.

Healthway advises:

- (iii) Nil.
- (iv) Not applicable.

Animal Resources Authority advises:

- (iii) Nil.
- (iv) Not applicable.

ChemCentre advises:

- (iii) 5 formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) As of 31 December 2020, no formal reports produced have been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

18. Ms M.J. Davies to the minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food; Hydrogen Industry:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
 - (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr D.A. Templeman replied:

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place. Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.
- (iii) 2 formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) As of 31 December 2020, neither formal report produced has been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

MINISTER FOR TOURISM — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

19. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Tourism; Culture and the Arts; Heritage:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
 - (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr D.A. Templeman replied:Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

(i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

(iii) Three formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.

(iv) As of 31 December 2020, one formal report produced has been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

Art Gallery of Western Australia

(i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

(iii) One formal report has been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.

(iv) As of 31 December 2020, one formal report produced has been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

Western Australian Museum

(i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

(iii) No formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.

(iv) As of 31 December 2020, no formal report produced has been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

Perth Theatre Trust

(a) (i) Nil.

(ii)–(iv) Not Applicable.

State Library of Western Australia

(a) (i) Nil.

(ii)–(iv) Not Applicable.

Tourism WA

(a) (i)–(iv) Please refer to Legislative Assembly question on notice 16.

Rottneest Island Authority

(a) (i)–(iv) Please refer to Legislative Assembly question on notice 27.

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

(a) (i)–(iv) Please refer to Legislative Assembly question on notice 23.

National Trust of Western Australia

(a) (i) Nil.

(ii)–(iv) Not Applicable.

MINISTER FOR POLICE — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

21. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Police; Road Safety; Defence Industry; Veterans Issues:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

(a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:

(i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;

(ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;

- (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
- (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr P. Papalia replied:**(a) Western Australia Police Force**

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

- (iii) Two formal reports have been produced as of 30 June 2021. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) As of 30 June 2021, nil formal reports produced have been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

Department of Jobs Tourism Science and Innovation

- (i)–(iv) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 16.

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS**23. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Transport; Planning; Ports:**

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
 - (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

MINISTER FOR FINANCE — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS**24. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Finance; Lands; Sport and Recreation; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests:**

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
 - (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Dr A.D. Buti replied:

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

Department of Finance:

The Department of Finance advises:

- (iii) Nil formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) Not applicable.

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage:

- (a) (i)–(iv) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 23.

DevelopmentWA:

- (iii) Nil formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) Not applicable.

Landgate:

- (iii) Nil formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) Not applicable.

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries:

- (a) (i)–(iv) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 19.

VenuesWest:

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.
Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.
- (iii) Nil formal reports have been produced as of 31 December 2020. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) As of 31 December 2020, nil formal reports produced have been publicly released. This figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

MINISTER FOR WATER — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

26. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Water; Forestry; Youth:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
 - (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr D.J. Kelly replied:Aqwest, Busselton Water, Forest Products Commission and Water Corporation:

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

- (iii) Nil.
- (iv) Not applicable.

Department of Communities

Please refer to question on notice LA 25.

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Please refer to question on notice LA 27.

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

27. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Environment; Climate Action; Commerce:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
 - (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (i)–(ii) As part of this government’s ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency, and in accordance with Premier’s Circular 2019/06, a six-monthly “Report on Consultants Engaged by the Government” is tabled in this place.

Reports for the 2020/21 financial year will be tabled shortly.

- (iii) Eight formal reports have been produced as of 30 June 2021. As was practice under the previous government, consultants may be engaged by the government to provide strategic advice.
- (iv) As of 30 June 2021, no formal reports produced have been publicly released. This is figure is subject to change as reports produced are considered by government.

MINISTER FOR HOUSING — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

28. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Housing; Local Government:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
- (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr J.N. Carey replied:Department of Communities

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 25.

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 19.

Metropolitan Cemeteries Board

- (a) (i) Nil.
- (ii)–(iv) Not Applicable.

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

29. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Disability Services; Fisheries; Innovation and ICT; Seniors and Ageing:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
- (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr D.T. Punch replied:For the Hon Don Punch MLA’s ICT portfolio, the Office of Digital Government advises:

Please refer to the response provided by the Premier, Hon Mark McGowan MLA for Legislative Assembly question on notice 15.

For the Hon Don Punch MLA’s Disability Services and Seniors and Ageing portfolios, the Department of Communities advises:

Please refer to the response provided by the Hon Simone McGurk MLA for Legislative Assembly question on notice 25.

For the Hon Don Punch MLA’s Fisheries portfolio, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development advises:

Please refer to the response provided by the Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLC for the Legislative Assembly question on notice 18.

For the Hon Don Punch MLA’s Innovation portfolio, the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation advises:

Please refer to the response provided by the Hon Roger Cook MLA for the Legislative Assembly question on notice 16.

MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES — PORTFOLIOS — CONSULTANTS

30. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Emergency Services; Racing and Gaming; Small Business; Volunteering:

I refer to external consultants hired and tasked with assisting Departments, and ask:

- (a) For all departments or agencies under your responsibility, please detail:
 - (i) The number of private consultants hired in the 2020–21 Financial Year;
 - (ii) The total cost to the department for hiring those consultants;
 - (iii) The number of reports produced by those private consultants; and
 - (iv) The number of reports made public?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

Department for Emergency Services, WAGRA, RWWA, Burswood Park, Small Business Development Corporation:

(i)–(iv) Nil.

Department of Communities (Volunteering)

The Department of Communities advises to please refer to the response provided by the Hon Simone McGurk for the Legislative Assembly Question On Notice 25.

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (Racing & Gaming)

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries advises to please refer to the response provided by the Hon David Templeman for the Legislative Assembly Question On Notice 19.

ROADS — INDIAN OCEAN DRIVE — NOISE MONITORING

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

Will the Minister advise when the results of the April 2021 noise monitoring survey conducted on Indian Ocean Drive, across three lower coastal communities within the Gingin Shire, will be publicly released?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

Main Roads is awaiting the acoustic report, which is expected to be received later this month.

NORTHLINK WA — VEHICLE DAMAGE

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

I refer to the extension of Tonkin Highway between Ellenbrook and Muchea (NorthLink), since the project opened to traffic in April 2020, and I ask:

- (a) How many claims for compensation has Main Roads WA or its contractors received relating to damage caused by loose surface material; and
- (b) How many claims have been settled and what is the total value of compensation payments to date?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

(a) 1742.

(b) As at 20 July 2021, there has been 1604 claims resolved with payments totalling \$1,107,057.11.

METRONET — STATION COMPLETION

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

I refer to Metronet, and I ask:

- (a) Have any changes been made to the timelines for completion of Metronet station projects since 13 March 2021:
 - (i) If yes, please detail?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

It is noted that the Opposition has resisted METRONET for several years. The Leader of the Opposition Mia Davies has labelled METRONET as “not the need-to-have projects” and a “vanity project” that should be pushed back. The Member must clarify which METRONET projects the Opposition wants to cancel.

The Member will know the McGowan Labor Government currently has 9 METRONET projects underway and 1 project completed.

- (a) Given the record investment by the State Government in rail and road infrastructure, the forecast completion of METRONET projects is constantly reviewed, taking into account the availability of resources.
 - (i) N/A.

METRONET — ELLENBROOK RAIL LINE

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

I refer to the Metronet Morley–Ellenbrook line, and I ask:

- (a) What was the announced completion timeline;
- (b) What is the expected completion timeline;
- (c) Please detail the timeline for staging;
- (d) What was the initial forecast cost for the project;
- (e) What is the current forecast cost for the project; and
- (f) Please detail any changes in contract costs?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

It is noted that the Opposition has resisted METRONET for several years. The Leader of the Opposition Mia Davies has labelled METRONET as “not the need-to-have projects” and a “vanity project” that should be pushed back. The Member must clarify whether the METRONET Morley–Ellenbrook Line is a project that the Opposition wants to cancel.

The Member will know the McGowan Labor Government currently has 9 METRONET projects underway and 1 project completed.

- (a)–(b) Please refer to the ministerial media statement dated 18 October 2020.
- (c) The Member is asked to clarify what is meant by the term staging.
- (d)–(f) Refer to the 2020–21 State Budget Papers and ministerial media statement dated 18 October 2020.

METRONET — THORNLIE–COCKBURN LINK

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

I refer to the Metronet Thornlie–Cockburn Link, and I ask:

- (a) What is the announced completion timeline;
- (b) What is the expected completion timeline;
- (c) Please detail the timeline for staging;
- (d) What was the initial forecast cost for the project;
- (e) What is the current forecast cost for the project; and
- (f) Please detail changes in contract costs?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

It is noted that the Opposition has resisted METRONET for several years. The Leader of the Opposition Mia Davies has labelled METRONET as “not the need-to-have projects” and a “vanity project” that should be pushed back. The Member must clarify whether the METRONET Thornlie–Cockburn Link is a project that the Opposition wants to cancel.

The Member will know the McGowan Labor Government currently has 9 METRONET projects underway and 1 project completed.

- (a)–(b) Please refer to the ministerial media statement dated 23 August 2020.
- (c) The Member is asked to clarify what is meant by the term staging.
- (d)–(f) Refer to the 2020–21 State Budget Papers and ministerial media statement dated 23 August 2020.

METRONET — FORRESTFIELD–AIRPORT LINK

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

I refer to the Metronet Forrestfield Airport Link, and I ask:

- (a) What is the announced completion date;
- (b) What is the expected completion date;
- (c) Please detail the timeline for staging;
- (d) What was the initial forecast cost for the project;
- (e) What is the current forecast cost for the project; and
- (f) Please detail any changes in contract costs?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

It is noted that the Opposition has resisted METRONET for several years. The Leader of the Opposition Mia Davies has labelled METRONET as “not the need-to-have projects” and a “vanity project” that should be pushed back. The Member must clarify whether the METRONET Forrestfield–Airport Link is a project that the Opposition wants to cancel.

The Member will know the McGowan Labor Government currently has 9 METRONET projects underway and 1 project completed.

- (a)–(b) Please refer to the Ministerial media statement dated 7 May 2021.
- (c) The Member is asked to clarify what he means by the term staging
- (d)–(f) Refer to the 2020–2021 State Budget papers and Ministerial media statement dated 7 May 2021.

METRONET — YANCHEP RAIL EXTENSION

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

I refer to the Metronet Yanchep Rail Extension, and I ask:

- (a) What was the announced completion date;
- (b) What was the expected completion date;
- (c) Please detail the timeline for staging;
- (d) What was the initial forecast cost for the project;
- (e) What is the current forecast cost for the project; and
- (f) Please detail any changes in contract costs?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

It is noted that the Opposition has resisted METRONET for several years. The Leader of the Opposition Mia Davies has labelled METRONET as “not the need-to-have projects” and a “vanity project” that should be pushed back. The Member must clarify whether the METRONET Yanchep Rail Extension is a project that the Opposition wants to cancel.

The Member will know the McGowan Labor Government currently has 9 METRONET projects underway and 1 project completed.

- (a)–(b) Please refer to the ministerial media statement dated 24 November 2019.
- (c) The Member is asked to clarify what is meant by the term staging.
- (d)–(f) Refer to the 2020–21 State Budget Papers and ministerial media statement dated 24 November 2019.

METRONET — BELLEVUE ASSEMBLY FACILITY

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

I refer to Metronet and the Bellevue Assembly Facility, and I ask:

- (a) How much of the \$1.25 billion contract has been awarded to local Western Australian manufacturers;
- (b) How much of the \$1.25 billion has been awarded to non-local manufacturers;
- (c) How many full-time equivalent (FTE) are associated with this facility? Please breakdown into casual, full time and part time employees;
- (d) How many training placements will be available at the facility for:
 - (i) 2020–21;
 - (ii) 2021–22;
 - (iii) 2022–23; and
 - (iv) 2023–24;
- (e) Can the Minister confirm that the only diesel trains assembled at the facility will be for the Australind Rail Service line; and
- (f) Has the timeline for the Australind project changed:
 - (i) If yes, please detail?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

It is noted that the Opposition has resisted METRONET for several years. The Leader of the Opposition Mia Davies has labelled METRONET as “not the need-to-have projects” and a “vanity project” that should be pushed back. The Member must clarify whether the METRONET Bellevue Facility is a project that the Opposition wants to cancel.

The Member will know the McGowan Labor Government currently has 9 METRONET projects underway and 1 project completed.

(a)–(i) Please refer to ministerial media statements dated 7 June 2021, 24 November 2020 and 10 March 2020.

CLIMATE ACTION — PORTFOLIO

45. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Climate Action:

I refer to the portfolio of Climate Action, and I ask:

- (a) What are the roles and responsibilities you seek to bring to this portfolio, which would have previously been administered by other departments;
- (b) Has the Minister declared any conflicts of interest with regards to the portfolio to date:
 - (i) If yes, please detail;
- (c) Which departments are responsible for managing the Climate Action portfolio;
- (d) How many full-time equivalent (FTE) are located within each department;
- (e) How many FTE are:
 - (i) Casual;
 - (ii) Full Time; and
 - (iii) Part Time;
- (f) What is the lead department for Climate Action;
- (g) Where are staff primarily located;
- (h) What is the Annual Budget for the Climate Action portfolio;
- (i) What websites fall under the administration of the Climate Action portfolio;
- (j) With regards to the electric highway project:
 - (i) Will the Minister have an active role in pursuing this project; and
 - (ii) Has the Minister engaged the Federal Government on this project, If yes, please table documents related to this engagement which can be made public;
- (k) Does the Minister plan to convene any meetings, forums or the like in relation to Climate Action:
 - (i) If yes, please detail;
- (l) Has the Minister met with the following groups in her capacity as Minister for Climate Action and if yes, please detail the date and who she met with:
 - (i) Cleanstate;
 - (ii) Extinction Rebellion;
 - (iii) 350 Perth;
 - (iv) WA Forest Alliance;
 - (v) WA Farmers;
 - (vi) Pastoral and Graziers Association;
 - (vii) Chamber of Minerals and Energy;
 - (viii) Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry;
 - (ix) Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia;
 - (x) Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association;
 - (xi) Electric Vehicle Association of WA;
 - (xii) RegenWA;
 - (xiii) State Soil and Land Conservation Commissioner; and
 - (xiv) Natural Resource Management groups.;
- (m) Can you provide an organisational flow chart of management associated with this portfolio:
 - (i) Is there a strategic plan for this portfolio. If so, please detail that plan;
- (n) Does the Minister for Climate Change have a formal consultation role in any decisions of government; and
- (o) Was the Minister for Climate Change consulted regarding approvals for the Scarborough Gas Field?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) and (c)–(i) The Climate Action portfolio supports the McGowan Government’s commitments for climate change, ensuring a timely and coordinated transition to net zero emissions by 2050 and enhanced climate resilience. The Government’s response to climate change is coordinated by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER). DWER, and its predecessor agencies, has had a long-standing role coordinating the response to climate change following formation of a dedicated climate change function in the Environment portfolio by the Carpenter Government in 2007.

DWER’s head office is in Prime House, Joondalup and the Climate Change Unit works collaboratively with other Government agencies and Government trading enterprises to address climate change issues relevant to the portfolios of energy, transport, planning, primary industries, mines, jobs, tourism, health, education, environment, biodiversity, local government, emergency services, communities, water and waste.

The Climate Change Unit has eight FTE, of which six are full time and two are part time. The Unit is situated in the Strategic Policy directorate and is supported by the Director and Executive Director Strategic Policy. An additional two FTE are funded from July 2021 to administer the Carbon Innovation Grants program, announced in March 2021. Listed FTE do not include resourcing for climate-related functions of other Government agencies.

The annual budget for the Climate Action portfolio varies from year to year depending on grant-related expenditure for the Clean Energy Future Fund and Carbon Innovation Grants Program, and project costs including consultancies. This spending is spread across a range of agencies and related to a range of climate action initiatives.

The primary source of information on climate change initiatives is available at <https://www.wa.gov.au/service/environment/environment-information-services/western-australian-climate-change-policy>.

Noting the across-portfolio nature of climate change, additional information on specific initiatives is available from links in the Western Australian Climate Policy at https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/Western_Australian_Climate_Policy.pdf.

The primary source of information on electric vehicle policy is <https://www.wa.gov.au/service/environment/environment-information-services/electric-vehicle-strategy>.

- (b) No.
- (j) (i) The Minister for Climate Action leads the development of electric vehicle policy and therefore is overseeing the implementation of the State Electric Vehicle Strategy, including the electric vehicle fast charging network. The Minister for Energy also has a direct role in the implementation of this initiative.
- (ii) On the Minister’s behalf, DWER and other Government agencies and Government trading enterprises have engaged with the Commonwealth Government regarding electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the Western Australian fast charging network.
- (k) In June 2021, I established the Ministerial Taskforce on Climate Action. The Taskforce is chaired by the Minister for Climate Action and includes the Ministers for State Development; Jobs and Trade, Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; Hydrogen Industry, Mines and Petroleum; Energy, Transport; Planning, Lands; Finance; and Water.

(l)

Organisation	Meeting
(i) Cleanstate	No
(ii) Extinction Rebellion	Yes – Extinction Rebellion Grandparents only
(iii) 350 Perth	No
(iv) WA Forest Alliance	Meeting scheduled
(v) WA Farmers	No
(vi) Pastoral and Graziers Association	Yes
(vii) Chamber of Minerals and Energy	Yes
(viii) Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry	No

(ix) Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia	Yes
(x) Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association	Yes
(xi) Electric Vehicle Association of WA,	No
(xii) RegenWA	No
(xiii) State Soil and Land Conservation Commissioner and	No
(xiv) Natural Resource Management groups	No

(m) [See tabled paper no [412](#).]

(n)–(o) The Minister for Environment has powers under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* in relation to the direction of the Environmental Protection Authority, the referral and assessment of proposals under Part IV, and appeals.

Decisions regarding the processing of gas from the Scarborough gas field at the Pluto LNG plant were made by the former Minister for Environment, Hon Stephen Dawson MLC. In June 2021, the Minister for Environment approved Pluto LNG's new Greenhouse Gas Abatement Program, significantly reducing the project's projected carbon impact. The Minister has also requested the Environmental Protection Authority review Woodside's Ministerial Statement to reflect the revised program, ensuring strengthened compliance with the new targets.
