

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2023–24) BILL 2023
APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2023–24) BILL 2023

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR P. LILBURNE (Carine) [6.00 pm]: Previously, I mentioned Standard and Poor’s endorsement in relation to the latest state budget, delivered by our Treasurer on Thursday. Standard and Poor’s assessment was that this state has returned to a AAA credit rating. Further evidence that supports this exemplary budget is that the growth rate in Western Australia is the strongest in nine years. It provides for students in Western Australian schools a chance to demonstrate their learning, by discussing the economic impacts of positive multipliers in our state. Students may well be asked in their ATAR exams how a positive multiplier would influence the Western Australian economy. A key tenet of Keynesian economic theory is that of the multiplier, the notion that economic activity can be easily influenced by investments, causing more income for companies and workers, more supply and, ultimately, greater aggregate demand. When a spending project creates jobs, for example, this creates extra injections of income and demand in a country’s circular flow. In short, for every dollar injected into the economy, approximately five times its value is injected back into the economy as it approaches equilibrium in the future.

Job creation is another facet of economic analysis that further supports the first title of my summary, economic excellence. In the Western Australian budget, Treasury states that over 218 000 jobs have been created since March 2017. The Western Australian public knows that economic prosperity is created by near full employment in a society. When I sit amongst my constituents at local cafes and eating establishments, through their conversations with me they acknowledge the successful management of the community by Hon Mark McGowan, MLA. My constituents understand that our state is booming and blossoming under our current leadership. The strong WA economy is creating opportunities, with a record 1.5 million Western Australians in work, including the highest ever level of full-time employment in living memory. The Western Australian public know the facts regarding the economy and will not be deluded by the opposition parties’ petty and ill-intentioned speeches. The McGowan Labor government’s economic excellence is supported by a \$3.3 billion net operating surplus. The Western Australian economy remains strong, with gross state product expected to be its strongest since 2013.

Population growth is being supported by strong migration to the state since the reopening of international borders with the state’s population now expected to grow on average by 1.7 per cent. The McGowan budget includes an additional investment of \$460 million to further diversify the state’s economy by exploring initiatives to accelerate critical mineral discoveries.

The second title of my summary, which relates to my Venn diagram thesis on the Western Australian budget, deals with the concept of forward thinking. I believe forward thinking enables both economic diversification of products and new associated markets. The Western Australian entrepreneurship of businesses is well known in international markets. Western Australians are dynamic, adaptive and forward thinking in their approaches to business creation. Our people are aware of the importance of innovation, adaption and product specialisation in a modern and progressive economy. Within our relatively small population of 2.8 million lies a creative spirit born from long periods of hard sustained work with the objective of increasing each other’s standard of living. This desire to increase living standards is shown by the Treasurer’s announcement of the \$2.3 billion investment in Synergy to deliver a 500-megawatt battery storage system in Collie and a second 200-megawatt battery in Kwinana. The people of Western Australia understand that by acting on climate change and achieving net zero emissions by 2050, our children and grandchildren’s standard of living will be higher.

Lastly, to adapt to our changing climate, this budget provides \$190 million to commence works for Perth’s third desalination plant. These listed initiatives by the Treasurer are outstanding examples of forward thinking. In relation to this forward-thinking concept, \$28 million has been allocated to support the state’s investment and trade initiatives. That includes establishing a new Invest and Trade WA hub in Texas. This is to enhance our relationship with the Americas. In the Carine electorate, plans for a state-of-the-art car park located at Greenwood train station will futureproof those constituents wishing to park and ride on the Metronet rail system.

The last concept regarding the 2023–24 budget that I will discuss is that of delivery. The noun “delivery” is instinctively linked with keeping a promise. The fact of achieving or producing something that has been promised is associated with the McGowan Labor government because the Western Australian electorate knows that we deliver. Our promise to our people continues to be substantiated by the listed economic announcements that I have discussed. Our people are educated, well-informed and highly critical in their understanding of what good government looks like. The people of Western Australia like what they see in this budget and I know this because my constituents have told me. The recent record turnout at the Treasurer’s budget information breakfast tells me. The public harmony and business-as-usual reaction to the budget tells me. The level of economic activity in my Carine electorate and the land and home value increases in my electorate tell me that the community knows what good

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government looks like. The McGowan Labor government is delivering for Western Australians by giving them cost-of-living relief in the realm of over \$715 million, providing every WA household with a \$400 electricity credit with targeted electricity support totalling over \$800 for those households in most need. That is good.

A record \$2.7 billion of additional investment in our health and mental health systems will bring the total new investment to \$10 billion in this term to deliver quality health care for Western Australians.

These same Western Australians know what good government looks like. The Treasurer announced that public transport will be free on the first Sunday of every month as part of the government's Fare Free Sunday Sessions—I like the sound of those Sunday sessions! The seniors' cost-of-living rebate will also be increased to further support some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Another vulnerable section of our community is our children. They will also be protected by the McGowan Labor government's budget. The budget includes an additional \$960 million for education and training initiatives. In 2023–24, total spending to deliver quality education to Western Australian schools will increase by more than half a billion dollars to \$6.4 billion.

The Western Australian community knows what good government looks like. The community will not be distracted by sour and jilted journalists at a newspaper, because Western Australians know what good government looks like.

In my electorate of Carine, construction will begin on a new specialist classroom block and STEM laboratory at Duncraig Senior High School, to the value of \$38 million. The ongoing construction of Carine Senior High School, with a value of over \$35 million, is nearing completion. It has been my pleasure to watch and regularly report to my constituents about the continued development of the worksite at Carine Senior High School on my Facebook and Instagram social media accounts.

The Western Australian public knows that the McGowan Labor government is looking after their needs.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. LILBURNE: The ongoing vigilance in relation to COVID-19 is well understood by my constituents and they know that the Labor government stands ready with the finances and physical capacity to deal with any further outbreaks or variations that could cause harm to our population. Another initiative that is already in place is free flu vaccines for all Western Australians in May 2023, which follows WA's free flu vaccines in 2022.

Community safety is a priority and additional measures to support our frontline officers in the 2023–24 budget include over \$81 million to upgrade and maintain the state's emergency radio network and equipment used by frontline officers, including police officers and firefighters, and an additional \$24 million to permanently appoint 29 dedicated disaster recovery officers to form WA's largest ever recovery team to respond to any future disasters in Western Australia.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the \$11 million to extend Operation Regional Shield, maintaining additional police resources in communities hardest hit by youth crime.

The McGowan Labor government is committed to continuing its work towards achieving gender equality and greater protection for women in our community. In relation to the Stronger Together program, which is Western Australia's plan for gender equality, the 2023–24 budget includes \$19 million for community legal services and Legal Aid Western Australia to support access to legal services for people in need.

There is over \$540 million to commence construction of the new women's and babies' hospital to replace the 100-year-old King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women.

The three main concepts covered in my speech of economic excellence, forward thinking and delivery meet in a confluence—namely, public knowledge of what good government looks like. During my speech, I have listed dozens of financed examples of how the Treasurer's budget will continue to provide the leadership and compassion needed in the uncertain times in which we all live. Hon Mark McGowan, MLA, and the Department of Treasury have formulated a progressive, proactive and sensible budget that deserves positive accolades. I commend this budget to the Legislative Assembly.

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [6.15 pm]: I rise today to discuss the outstanding Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023. As my colleagues have already mentioned, the 2023–24 state budget is commendable for so many reasons. WA's responsible financial management provides the opportunity to make significant investments in what matters to all Western Australians, while keeping the budget in a strong position for future generations. Importantly, this budget continues our record of delivering for the goldfields, helping to ease the cost-of-living pressures and investing in the region's future. Our government is investing a record amount into regional infrastructure and delivering a significant boost for health and housing in the region. The

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goldfields is a major economic driver for not only the state, but the whole country. That is why this state government is investing heavily in the regions through the budget and funding initiatives that will drive future benefits to the community and the local economy. It is great to see that we are also delivering initiatives to ease cost-of-living pressures and making access to vital health care easier for those in our goldfields community.

The McGowan government is getting on with delivering on the issues that matter to people in the goldfields and Kalgoorlie specifically. Our significant regional investment continues in the 2023–24 state budget, with \$11.2 billion committed to the regions to deliver important projects and improve lives across the state. The state budget also includes \$4 billion in royalties for regions expenditure over the next four years towards initiatives that will strengthen regional communities and ensure that services remain close to where people live.

Let me talk about what the families and households in my community of the goldfields are really appreciative of. Let me start with the McGowan government's \$715 million commitment to deliver further cost-of-living relief. As many of my colleagues have already said, all Western Australian households will receive a minimum \$400 household electricity credit. Also, additional targeted support of \$326 will be provided for those households that need it most. Small businesses will also receive a \$650 credit on their energy bills. That is wonderful news for everyone.

Next I would like to talk about what my constituents absolutely love, and that is the \$20.7 million boost to meet the increased demand for the highly successful regional airfare zone cap, providing affordable airfares for regional residents. As I said earlier, from July last year, residents were able to book a flight to Perth and not pay more than \$199 each way. This has been wonderfully embraced by goldfielders. Some 14 600 residents have taken advantage of this. The high cost of airfares affects every resident in many ways. For some, it might be a medical appointment or an unexpected family emergency, or just going to see a show or watch the footy. I will give members an example of the difference that this will make to residents. If I had to go from Kalgoorlie to Perth tomorrow, I would pay \$805 one way. That is \$805 one way as opposed to \$400 return. What a difference it makes to goldfields residents to know that they can visit that sick relative at a moment's notice and not pay more than \$199 each way.

I was at the airport the other week—there is nothing new there. There were two blokes standing behind me in the queue and one said to the other, “How good are these cheap airfares, mate?” The other guy said, “So good. My missus can pop down to see her mum regularly now and it helps us so much to keep in touch.” People are benefiting every day. This initiative means so much to our community, and I am proud of the McGowan government and the Minister for Transport for putting in the hard yards and making this such an important initiative.

Health is such an important service for us regional people. The McGowan government is delivering a record \$2.7 billion of additional investment into the WA health system, with the 2023–24 state budget featuring a significant investment into regional health and mental health. This includes more than \$2.2 billion per annum on regional health and mental health services; \$28.5 million for initiatives to attract and retain key health and mental health professionals, primarily to work in regional Western Australia; \$24.4 million to extend mental health emergency telehealth services, providing 24/7 mental health support to allow country doctors to make referrals wherever needed; \$8.2 million to upgrade WA Country Health Service staff housing, including safety and security upgrades in the goldfields; \$6.3 million to extend regional cancer services; and an additional \$6.7 million towards regional renal support teams.

I wish to highlight a commitment of mine that is already underway and which I have talked about previously in this house, but is significant enough to mention again, as it demonstrates the ongoing support to regional health from the state government. As the past president of the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre, I was, and am, fully aware of the impact on women's health when services get depleted. This happened in 2019 when the previous federal government made changes to Medicare that resulted in major women's health services being cut. Things like cervical screening and testing, and sexually transmitted infections screening and treatment require a general physician to perform rather than a clinical nurse. Prior to 2019, an average of over 1 000 clients per annum took advantage of these services that the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre provided. With the demise of these services, our screening numbers in the goldfields fell to 43.3 per cent, well under the state's average screening rate of 55.4 per cent. There were already barriers for women in regional areas, where large numbers do not screen regularly, and therefore the risk of developing cervical cancer is higher. Consequently, we could not continue to put women's lives at risk. I advocated strongly, alongside Gloria Moyle, CEO of the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre, for the creation of a dedicated goldfields women's wellness centre, and I am absolutely thrilled to say that this state provided \$1.78 million to provide a GP permanently in the goldfields. That meant that the 5 000 women who use the centre in our community could now get ongoing access for medical services for women and their families.

I want to give members some startling statistics. In the last 12 months Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre has identified a number of women who were found to have stage 3 and 4 cervical cancer. These women had not been to a GP elsewhere because of their financial situations. How awful is that? Now that the women have had their

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cancer detected, they have been treated without delay. It would not be a stretch to say that this government's GP funding has potentially saved quite a number of women's lives.

I want to give the house an example that touched my heart, and I am sure will touch all members' hearts too. A 59-year-old woman with no significant past medical history and noncompliant with any age-appropriate cancer screening presented to the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre. She had experienced progressively worsening shortness of breath and a cough and chest tightness for the past six weeks. She had also had progressive fatigue and reported weight loss of 30 kilograms in the last year. She had not seen a physician in the last eight years and had never had a Pap smear, mammogram or colonoscopy done. The centre's GP conducted a Pap smear, and with her symptoms recommended the patient attend accident and emergency immediately. Gloria from the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre took her to the hospital. The GP raised a concern about cervical cancer having gone to the lungs, and the patient was requested to be seen by a gynaecologist immediately. The patient was admitted, and during her hospital stay, her symptoms worsened, eventually developing into multiple organ failure with renal dysfunction. The family decided to proceed with comfort care measures, and the patient passed away some weeks later. The Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre was advised that the patient had been in advanced stages of cervical cancer, could no longer afford to access her GP due to her financial decline and was too proud to ask for help. She only approached the women's healthcare centre as she had heard Gloria on the radio promoting the cervical screen with the free GP service. This is a tragic circumstance and highlights the issue for all of us. By providing this critical GP service, the women's healthcare centre hopes to lessen any further women losing their lives so needlessly. The goldfields community is a massive winner from this funding, and many lives will be saved because of the compassion and foresight of the state Labor government.

I want to highlight the many other budget inclusions for the region that will have an impact on the goldfields, such as boosting the commitment to refurbish and deliver Government Regional Officers' Housing by \$61.6 million; \$49 million to partner with community housing providers to provide 100 social homes across regional WA; \$450 million into the social housing investment fund to deliver more social housing; \$2.5 million to increase the travel accommodation allowance for regional TAFE students; \$2.9 million to provide a weekly allowance for regional students studying a Diploma of Nursing; \$10.4 million to enhance the banned drinkers register, including across goldfields towns; \$5.8 million to extend the successful driving access and equity program to deliver driver training to disadvantaged young people; \$4.9 million to continue the regional athlete support program to help talented regionally based athletes meet their full potential; an additional \$42.6 million for upgrades to water and wastewater systems in remote communities; and \$6.2 million for the Kalgoorlie family and domestic violence one-stop hub. The one-stop family and domestic violence hub connects victim-survivors with a range of important local services like mental health, housing, legal, financial counselling, alcohol and other drugs and parenting support. We find that people who access the services overwhelmingly describe their feelings of increased safety, choice and timely access to services, as well as cultural respect. Hope Community Services in the goldfields said the extension of the funding for the FDV hub was welcome news. The manager said —

It is heartening that the State Government is investing in a model that is evidence based and aims to reduce unnecessary re-telling of traumatic experiences, increase timely sharing of vital information, and centres victim/survivors with services reaching in rather than the onus being on the victim ... to navigate a complex service system.

This is such a valuable service in my community.

I have highlighted and talked about a number of initiatives, and the list is amazing and the dollars mind-blowing. It builds on the diverse range of projects and programs already underway in the goldfields. There is \$10 million for a new workshop and upgrades to Central Regional TAFE's Kalgoorlie campus. This is under construction and almost finished. There is \$28 million to deliver the new Laverton hospital, which will now include nurses' accommodation; \$1 million for a STEM classroom upgrade at Kalgoorlie-Boulder Community High School; \$150 million over the next four years towards sealing the Outback Way; and, as I talked about earlier, \$5 million towards the highly anticipated upgrade of the Niels Hansen Basketball Stadium, which is currently under construction.

The McGowan Labor government is truly the government for regional Western Australia, and it was not by luck that we managed to gain a surplus; it was because we created our own amazing financial management.

[Quorum formed.]

Ms A.E. KENT: Are members not going to stay and listen to my speech? It is dinner time after all!

I shall continue. It was not through luck that we managed to gain a surplus; it was because we created our own amazing good financial management. The government's financial management is the envy of the nation, and this budget clearly demonstrates the McGowan government's continued support to keep regional Western Australia and the goldfields strong. I commend the budget bills to the house.

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MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [6.31 pm]: It is my pleasure to rise tonight to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023. Before I do, I want to settle an argument that I witnessed during private members' business between the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Regional Development. The Minister for Regional Development claimed that between 5 000 and 6 000 voters voted at the recent by-election for the electorate of North West Central. The Leader of the Opposition responded that that was incorrect. He said that the minister needed to do his research. I am pleased to advise the house that the total number of votes cast at the by-election was 5 335, which is between 5 000 and 6 000—so that is one for the Minister for Regional Development and zero for the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. Love: I will have to check *Hansard* to see whether he said those who voted or those who were enrolled.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I was listening, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, and he referred to the number of people who voted in that election.

Mr R.S. Love: My apologies if that was that case. I will check *Hansard*.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I was listening and I am very confident in that interpretation. He said it was a number of electors who voted in that by-election, and he was entirely correct about that.

I will move on to the budget. The theme of this budget is the McGowan government's strong financial management. That is a theme of the last six years of this government's term in office, and it has been recognised by rating agencies such as Standard and Poor's and governments of other jurisdictions. It is something the Premier; Treasurer and the former Treasurer should be credited for because it is only by managing the state's finances responsibly that we as a Labor government can deliver on our commitments and our vision for a fairer Western Australia in which people have access to quality public services and our economy is diversified to deliver secure local jobs of the future.

I want to respond to some claims made by the member for Roe in debate yesterday. Unfortunately, I did not witness the contributions of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Central Wheatbelt, but I listened with great interest to the contribution of the member for Roe. He made a couple of claims yesterday that I thought were curious. He started with the defence of his own abilities by saying that he understands the budget because he has run a farm budget for 40 years. I think that is a case of, maybe, protesting too much. If a member needs to tell people that they understand the budget before they have even explained their understanding of the budget, it is not a great start. But he then went on to make the following points. He said that we had had \$19 billion in surpluses over the last five years and will have \$11 billion of surpluses over the next five years. He then added those surpluses together and said it was \$30 billion in surpluses. He then asked: why is state debt forecast to rise to \$35.9 billion in June 2027 when over the last five years and for the next five years there is \$30 billion of surpluses? The difficulty for the member for Roe is that either his first statement is false, because the following statements are proof that he does not actually understand the budget, or he understands the budget and he is being deliberately obtuse about how surpluses work. I do not know the answer to that.

I hoped that the member would be here so that I could ask him some questions. I wanted to ask him whether he drew up forward estimates when he was doing his farm budgets. I thought it would also be interesting to ask the member for Roe whether the state government surplus is a cash surplus or an operational surplus. I think it would also be worth asking the member for Roe whether the government surpluses over the last five years and the projected surpluses over the next five years are actually just cash lying around in a bank account somewhere. I think the member for Roe's answers to those questions would tell us a little bit about his understanding of the budget and the budget process.

For the education of the member for Roe, and maybe the Leader of the Opposition and others, I want to draw members' attention to the fact that the state government runs operational surpluses. It does not run and has not been reporting on cash surpluses. If members opposite want to be the alternative government in this state, they should understand the basic distinction between an operational surplus and a cash surplus. An operational surplus is pretty simple. It means that the revenue that the government brings in is more than its operating expenses. This just means that the money we bring in is more than our recurrent expenses such as wages, funding for programs and rents—those types of expenses. That operational surplus does not include capital expenditure. This is different from the federal government. When the federal government reports in its budget, it reports whether or not it is in a cash surplus or a cash deficit. The federal government uses a different reporting framework.

That operational surplus does not account for government spending on infrastructure. We are spending record amounts on infrastructure at the moment as we pursue state-building projects such as Metronet and the women's and babies' hospital.

We distinguish between recurrent expenses and spending on infrastructure and capital works, because when governments spend money on capital works, they get assets for that spending and those assets have value and, furthermore, those assets drive economic growth. If the government were to invest in port infrastructure, it would

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get the value of that asset and it would deliver economic benefits for Western Australia over the coming decades as well. It is not the same as a person spending money on their electricity bill to keep the lights on.

The previous Liberal–National government failed to run operational surpluses during its last three years. That is a completely wild approach to economics because if the government is not running an operational surplus, it means that it is literally borrowing money to keep the lights on. That is what it was doing. The government did not get to the point at which it was investing in infrastructure and building the capacity of the state to deliver the services it needs into the future; it was just keeping the lights on and borrowing against the house to do that. The government had to borrow further if it wanted to deliver on assets. Sure—operating expenses are obviously essential to the proper functioning of a government, but if the government is constantly borrowing to keep the lights on, it will eventually run out of money, it will eventually run out of borrowings, and along the way it will have to pay more and more interest as its borrowings increase. That is the first point I would make to the member for Roe. I hope he takes that on board, because I really did not get the impression from his budget reply speech that he understands what an operating surplus is or the distinction between capital expenditure and operational expenditure by the state government.

Setting aside that issue, surpluses cannot be aggregated in the way that the member for Roe talked about. He added up all the past and projected surpluses as though it were one bucket of money—as though we could stuff it all under a mattress or something like that. It is not spare money because, as I have said, money in an operational surplus gets reinvested by the state government. At the moment, it is being reinvested by the state government into our infrastructure program, which is a record infrastructure investment by the state government. But even if the government were running a cash surplus, like the federal government has predicted in its current budget, it still would not get to stuff money under a mattress for a rainy day. It would put that money to work in some way. It could use it to retire debt, which this government has done in previous budgets. It could put it into a special purpose account to fund the new women’s and babies’ hospital, which is precisely what this government did in 2020, or it could put it into something like a medical research future fund. It is not money lying around in some dusty vault waiting to be used; it is always money that is put to use by the government.

The third point I want to make is that the member for Roe asked why net debt is projected to increase over the forward estimates. That is such a strange question to ask, because all the answers are in the budget papers. I have found this with the opposition. Members opposite ask questions during the consideration in detail stage of a bill, and the answers are literally in clauses in front of them. I take my hat off to the ministers in this chamber, because I have watched them give an answer and pretend that it was not in the clause in front of them so as not to embarrass opposition members. To be fair, it is also because those ministers know that the quickest way through the consideration in detail stage is just to give the answer, get it done and move on. But it is also the case with the questions that the member for Roe asked about the budget. The answers to the questions he asked are in the budget papers and he should try reading them. Net debt is projected to increase over the forward estimates because of the significant investments we are making in infrastructure. Those are important investments in infrastructure that will deliver essential services and drive economic growth in the state. We are doing things like building Metronet, connecting our suburbs with the first east–west rail line in the Perth metropolitan area; I refer to the Thornlie–Cockburn Link, which will make Cockburn the CBD of the southern suburbs. We are also using our strong financial management to fund Metronet projects like the Morley–Ellenbrook line, a project that the previous Liberal–National government constantly promised to do—I think it went to three or four elections promising to do it—and never did anything about. It did not even commence work on it. It barely even had a thought about that project after it had made the election commitment.

This budget also delivers \$2.3 billion for the 500-megawatt battery energy storage system in Collie, which will be a critical piece of infrastructure if we are going to decarbonise our electricity network in the coming decade. Decarbonisation is the environmental and economic challenge of our time. That battery energy storage system will be hugely important to our storage capacity, to our ability to harness the power of solar and wind, and to provide an ongoing supply of power to the electricity network. It is a great investment by this government. But we are also investing in smaller pieces of infrastructure and smaller upgrades to infrastructure that will deliver economic returns to the state over the long term. An example of that is almost \$14 million for upgraded roads and berthing facilities at Esperance port. Major exports such as iron ore, grain and nickel go through Esperance. Those are key commodities and they earn large revenues for Western Australia. These \$14 million upgrades mean that we can continue to support our resources sector, support our agricultural sector and grow our economy into the future. That is one of the reasons for the projected increase in net debt. Of course, another reason is that we make conservative estimates of our revenue. That is another reason net debt is projected to increase. Unlike the previous Liberal–National government, we do not put inflated estimates of iron ore prices into our budget. That is a trick that the Barnett government used to try to make its budgets look better. It used to say, “We’ll predict that the iron ore price will be \$US120 a tonne”, when any sensible forecast would have predicted something more like \$US80 or \$US60 a tonne, so the projections in the budget would look better than they otherwise would be, but, of course,

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when it came to the crunch and delivering the budget, it would fall short. That is how that government ended up with operating deficits.

I agree with some comments made by the Minister for Energy earlier today in this chamber. In my opinion, the opposition does not understand the budget. I do not know whether members opposite have read the budget; if they have, it is clear that they do not understand it. It is clear they do not understand the budgeting process. We know that from the Langoullant report and the way the former government ran the budget process. It had a budget process and a shadow budget process—a Liberal budget process and a National budget process. It never said no to anybody and it just piled on and piled on—spend, spend, spend. I am really concerned that opposition members are essentially economically illiterate. They do not seem to understand basic facts about —

Mr P.J. Rundle: You're a hard man.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: There is no doubt about that, member for Roe; I am a hard man.

Unfortunately, it is true, and I think it is dangerous to Western Australia.

There are two things I will quickly cover off before I sit down. The first is that there is a lot of good news in this budget for my constituents in Cockburn. We are obviously providing significant cost-of-living relief across Western Australia through our \$400 electricity credit for households, which brings the total credit that we have provided over the last few years to \$1 400. We are doing that at the same time as running an operational surplus. That is deflationary. That means we are doing the hard macro-economic work to rein in inflation while providing cost-of-living relief.

Secondly, I am really pleased to see the \$2.5 million committed to upgrades to the Cockburn Aquatic and Recreation Centre. The Cockburn ARC is a fantastic facility in my electorate. Even though it is quite new, it is under a lot of demand and pressure. It is sought after as a facility. That \$2.5 million will go towards an upgrade that will increase gym floor space to 1 500 square metres and the mind and body studio to 250 square metres. It will also install two unisex community change rooms to suit all grades and abilities, one changing room for female talent for the Dockers and community female football, multipurpose education and meeting spaces, spectator terraces and public amenities. That is a really great upgrade.

I am pleased to see in the *Budget statement* that works at Cockburn station for the Thornlie–Cockburn Link are expected to be completed by the end of this year. Sometimes it feels like a construction site around Cockburn. I am grateful for that because it shows that we are an area of great growth and economic importance, but sometimes those roadworks can be frustrating, and it is really good to see that they will be completed soon. I also say how welcome the announcement is for my community that the new women's and babies' hospital will be built just up the road at the Fiona Stanley Hospital precinct.

Finally, I want to give a shout-out to Beelihar Spirit Association Football Club and acknowledge it as one of the many great sporting clubs in my electorate. I was down at Beelihar reserve on 7 May handing out soccer balls branded with the logo of the Belt Up campaign. That is a campaign initiative run by the Insurance Commission of Western Australia to remind everyone that seatbelts save lives and to belt up while on the road. It was great to be down there with Beelihar Spirit, handing out those soccer balls.

Beelihar Spirit is, like many clubs, experiencing massive growth as more families move into my neighbourhood and, importantly, women and girls get more active in sports like soccer. That is putting Beelihar Reserve under pressure. I am pleased that the City of Cockburn is looking at upgrading Beelihar Reserve and its facilities. That would be of great benefit to my community, to Beelihar Spirit, and to Phoenix Beelihar Cricket Club, which also uses the reserve. I recently attended a consultation run by the City of Cockburn, along with members of those clubs, and I will continue to advocate for upgrades. I would like to acknowledge all the committee members and volunteers of Beelihar Spirit, particularly president Richard Collier; vice-president Daniel Gonzalez; secretary Moa-Li Blomberg; treasurer Aaron Howell; and registrar Christie Ledwidge. On that basis, I commend the budget to the house.

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.50 pm]: I rise to speak to the 2022–23 state budget and what it means to the people of my electorate of Victoria Park. I am truly proud of the budget that the McGowan government has handed down for 2023–24. It is a fiscally responsible document that delivers a \$3.3 billion surplus and reduces the state's net debt to \$27.9 billion. That is \$16 billion less debt than the Liberals left us with in 2017 and it means that the state pays \$4.3 billion less in interest payments. This government's hard work and financial prudence means that the budget has the capacity to give back to my constituents in Victoria Park and to households across WA.

Our state economy remains strong in spite of unfavourable global economic conditions and high inflation, but I know that these pressures are hitting household budgets hard. I am delighted that the McGowan government is giving back to Western Australians during these hard times, with \$715 million invested in a package to help locals

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manage their costs of living. I know people in my electorate welcome the \$400 electricity credit that will be paid into their electricity accounts and will be relieved that we have managed to keep the increase in fees and charges to just below 2.4 per cent—well below inflation.

People on fixed incomes are struggling more than most, so I am pleased to see that the energy assistance payment of \$350 from the federal Labor government, which will provide help to 350 000 of our most vulnerable households, will be in addition to the state government's \$400 rebate. People on fixed incomes, students and casual workers will also particularly benefit from the two-zone cap we have implemented on Perth's public transport network, together with free public transport on the first Sunday of every month.

These measures come on top of our cost-of-living rebate; two consecutive years of free flu vaccines; free COVID RATs for every WA household; and increasing the hardship utility grant by 10 per cent for those in financial hardship. Although it is crucial that we assist our seniors and others on fixed incomes, the Labor government knows that the most effective way to create a fair and equal society is through job creation. We came to the 2021 election with a promise to create 125 000 jobs by 2025–26. As of this budget, we have already delivered 121 632 new jobs—or 97 per cent of the target, with two years to go. Our state now has a record 1.53 million Western Australians in work—a figure that includes the highest number of people in full-time work ever recorded in our state.

In my conversations with my constituents in Vic Park, the four main topics of concern that come up again and again are housing, health, education and climate change. I am delighted that this budget has delivered funding initiatives in every one of these crucial policy areas. Victoria Park is an inner-city electorate that has keenly felt the housing pressures that the rest of Australia has experienced since COVID. I do not need to tell anyone in this place about the impact that the incredibly tight housing supply has had on rental prices and demand for social housing. The \$511 million boost for social housing and homelessness provided in this budget is sorely needed, and brings the total government spend in this area to a record \$2.6 billion over four years. This funding will deliver more than 4 000 additional social housing dwellings and will establish a dedicated office of homelessness. Those members from inner-city electorates or who have engaged closely with community support services will be very pleased about this government's focus on this urgent social issue. However, social housing cannot be the only response to our current housing issues. We also need to ensure that new dwellings are being constructed. In this regard, the budget provides a \$48 million package to accelerate construction of the 27 500 new homes in the pipeline over the coming year. This package will focus on expanding our local workforce through boosting funding for apprentices.

Finally, I know my constituents in Bentley will be incredibly happy to learn about the McGowan government's commitment of \$48 million to facilitate medium to high-density housing in Bentley as part of the Bentley residential redevelopment project, also known as Bentley 360 in my community. This project, which aims to revitalise the area with a mix of social, affordable and private accommodation, has a long history. Unfortunately, it stalled for many years under the previous Liberal–National government before roaring ahead in 2019 with the demolition of the old-style social housing complex known as Brownlie Towers—twin 10-storey towers built in 1970 that taught us many lessons about urban planning and social housing.

Bentley is home to a diverse population, with 65 per cent of its residents born outside Australia. It is serviced by Bentley Hospital and Bentley Primary School. Located only eight kilometres from Perth's city centre, Bentley deserves this investment from the state government. I am excited to be part of realising its potential as a thriving, dynamic community. This brings us one step closer to realising this local dream.

The 2023–24 budget health spend provides a further investment into Bentley, with \$150 million committed to our Bentley Surgicentre to expand elective surgery capacity. My constituents tell me how important it is to their recovery to have high-quality local health facilities, and we are investing an extra \$2.7 billion into health and our hospitals in this budget, bringing our total health spend to \$10 billion. Of that, \$75 million has been allocated to emergency departments designed to ease pressure and reduce ambulance ramping. Healthy hospitals are vital to a healthy state, and our McGowan government is investing \$544 million to start construction of the \$1.8 billion, state-of-the-art women's and babies' hospital. We are also investing in mental health, with \$219 million in funding committed to redeveloping and expanding Graylands Hospital, and \$201 million to mental health services. This comes on top of the \$7 million our government provided and delivered in the last budget for Western Australia's first mental health transitional care unit, which opened last year in St James in my electorate. Already, this 40-bed service, which is designed to help people with a mental health illness recover and return to community living, is doing just that. It should be noted that this wonderful service is now known as the Bidi Wungen Kaat Centre. It even provides an outdoor recreation area that is open for the whole of our community to use.

The McGowan government invests in the health of our people. We have the highest health spend per capita of any state—18 per cent above the national average. Of course, this investment is only possible due to our responsible handling of the state's finances. Western Australia's strong economy, tipped to grow by 4.25 per cent in 2022–23, also allows us to invest in other fundamental policy areas like education. We are delivering a \$965 million investment

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into education and training, with a \$227 million funding package for infrastructure upgrades and \$325 million for our primary and secondary schools.

As a parent of a child with a disability, I am particularly pleased, proud and relieved about the significantly increased spending in this budget to support students with a disability and complex behaviour within our education system. Indeed, \$533.8 million has been invested in this year's education budget to support students with disability and complex behaviour. This is an increase of almost \$75 million compared with last year's budget and includes the expansion of specialist learning programs for students with autism spectrum disorder and an increase to the educational adjustment allocation to support more students with undiagnosed disabilities and learning difficulties. I have spoken openly about my experience as the mother of a child with a disability and, as a result, I have a lot of conversations with other parents and carers of children with disabilities. Often they are trying to understand their child's condition and obtain an official diagnosis while also ensuring that their child's educational needs are met. It can be very challenging for these parents to effectively advocate for their child's needs to both their paediatrician and school, and I am glad that this budget allocates funding for more support for these families.

My electorate is also home to South Metropolitan TAFE. TAFEs will benefit from the government's \$93.5 million investment in the training sector. This investment has been allocated to encourage women and First Nations youth to gain access to trade apprenticeships, support our construction needs and expand the skills of our local workforce. As well as ensuring that we have a pipeline of skilled workers for the future, the McGowan government is investing in the technology and industry that will facilitate our state's transition to a clean energy future. The 2023–24 budget includes a massive \$3 billion spend for action on climate change and projects that will facilitate our goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Climate change is enormously important to me and the people of Victoria Park. It is often the top issue raised with me when I hold mobile offices at the Vic Park Farmers' Market. In my last electorate-wide survey, it rated in the top three priorities in my electorate. I am so pleased that at my next farmers' market mobile office, I will be able to tell my constituents that the McGowan government is investing \$2.8 billion to decarbonise the south west interconnected system and replace state-owned coal-fired power stations by 2030. We will do that by providing \$2.22 billion to Synergy to construct a 500-megawatt battery energy storage system in Collie and a second 200-megawatt battery storage system in Kwinana, as well as \$368 million to build a new wind farm at King Rocks and expand our existing wind farm network.

The McGowan government now has a raft of climate change measures, including the climate change action fund, the ban on native logging, the electric vehicle highway and its commitment to introducing climate change legislation later this year to mandate emission reduction targets. To that work, this budget adds \$126 million towards energy network upgrades that will help us transition to net zero and \$196 million towards Perth's third desalination plant and other climate change initiatives.

I am proud of this budget; it delivers on the four policy areas for the people of Victoria Park. It also delivers directly to the electorate of Victoria Park. In addition to the investments in Bentley that I mentioned earlier, the budget contains \$127.8 million in funding to transform the state hockey centre, which is located in my electorate on Curtin University campus. This will be a boom to local business, our sporting community and budding hockey champions here and across the country.

Finally, any discussion of the McGowan government's investment in Victoria Park would be incomplete if I did not mention our local Metronet project that will see three level crossings removed from my electorate. Works are already underway, with high-voltage transmission lines being laid along Beatty Avenue and Somerset Street. I would like to thank the residents of these two streets and the surrounds for their patience and understanding while these works are occurring. I understand the disruption that construction causes; their forbearance is deeply appreciated.

The McGowan government is investing \$5.9 billion over the next four years to build our transformational Metronet network, with \$467 million allocated to the Victoria Park–Canning level crossing removals in 2023–24. Earlier this year, the Department of Transport released designs for the new local Oats Street and Carlisle train stations, as well as the use of the public space underneath the rail. Raising the Armadale rail line will create six hectares of useable public space that is now occupied by rail. Vic Park has a shortfall of green open space, so the new open landscaped area with various recreational activities, including everything from basketball courts to auditoriums for concerts, will be greatly appreciated. The McGowan Labor government is committed to building up our urban tree canopy, and under the project's tree retention and planting policy, the number of trees along the corridor will double.

Metronet construction through Victoria Park is due to accelerate over the next financial year. This means unavoidable disruption to the locals, who will experience issues related to new buses and road changes. Again, I thank the local residents for their patience during this time in advance. I promise that it will be worth the wait. My electorate will also enjoy greater connectivity with the CBD, with the construction of the \$100 million Causeway pedestrian

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and cycle bridge—a six-metre-wide shared pathway linking Vic Park and the foreshore at McCallum Park with Heirisson Island and the Perth CBD at Point Fraser. This bridge will be a major landmark for Perth and will enhance the natural environment and public amenity. Importantly, it will significantly improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.

I stand here proud of what the McGowan government has been able to achieve in the term and a half it has had in government. We have paid down net debt by almost \$26 billion, delivered a state surplus of \$3.3 billion, delivered the strongest growth in the economy for nine years and delivered almost 219 000 jobs for Western Australians. Our continued discipline allows the 2023–24 budget to deliver massive investments in the key policy areas of health, education, housing and climate change, as well as other priority areas such as transport and the cost of living. I believe this budget reflects our values as a Labor government and assists households now, while preparing them for the future—that future being a greener one. It gives me great pleasure to commend the bills to the house.

MS D.G. D'ANNA (Kimberley) [7.06 pm]: I rise to speak on the McGowan Labor government's budget, which demonstrates the financial strength of our state and the benefits that financial stability brings to all those who live and work here. The sound financial management of this government will enable many projects and supports being made available for regions like the Kimberley, which I am very proud to represent. The budget is investing millions of dollars to improve our regions, create local jobs, build infrastructure and support families and young people. It will provide critical support to our remote communities, with millions more to be invested in housing, health—particularly mental health—local training and recovery. This budget delivered by the McGowan Labor government is sound, financially responsible and delivers for people in regional WA.

I would like to reflect on the day after the budget was handed down. I had the privilege of going with Minister Ellery to deliver the budget in Broome and Kununurra. I was quite taken aback when a constituent of mine whom I have known for a long time walked up to me and said “This is the best and most targeted budget I have seen in 10 years, and that means a lot coming from me—A Liberal voter!”. I said “Will you be voting for me?” and he said “I wouldn't push it that far,” but I will still work on him. It takes a lot for people like that, who are hardcore—believe me, he is a very hardcore man—to be so severely impressed to actually physically seek me out to make that comment. It is something that resonated with me. He then proceeded to speak to Minister Ellery as well.

As I have said many times in this place, I am passionate about making sure that my constituents and the people of the Kimberley are afforded the same access to quality care and opportunities that people have here in Perth. My colleague the member for Collie–Preston said that she would continue to fight like a “chi-chuana”, and that is exactly right. We have got a lot of exciting initiatives in this budget for the people of Western Australia and the Kimberley. I am going to skim over a few and really go into some that are important to me personally.

Some key measures in the budget include the \$463 million investment in new economic infrastructure and diversification initiatives, and the biggest ever \$2.7 billion investment in health and mental health, with a package of targeted measures to address staffing, emergency department pressures and ambulance ramping. This budget will provide continuing support to regional economic development grants, with a further \$20 million to drive job creation and business diversification and to support regional communities. I am also pleased to see that the budget supports Western Australians by offsetting cost-of-living pressures with the strong surplus to deliver a \$715 million energy relief package with a \$400 energy credit payable to every WA household. This may seem like small money to some people in this house, but, believe me, that \$400 credit means a whole lot to a lot of people where I come from. A total of \$826 will be available to 350 000 of our most vulnerable households.

The regional airfare zone cap scheme continues to benefit people in the regions, especially in the Kimberley. The government's commitment is welcome with the delivery of an additional \$20.7 million in the current budget, bringing the total investment to more than \$40 million. I, too, had the pleasure of being with the members for Pilbara and Geraldton, and the Ministers for Tourism and Transport this morning, when Brendon Grylls said that it was the best thing ever.

Mr P.J. Rundle: After royalties for regions, that is.

Mr K. Michel interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Ms D.G. D'ANNA: I think he thinks we are doing a job; no need to come back—right, Kev?

It was especially heartwarming to attend that launch this morning, because Nexus Airlines, or Aviair as it is formally known, is committed to keeping regional communities connected. It is a locally based grassroots company from Kununurra, so I will claim them because that is in the Kimberley. Nexus had seen the need, the gap and the potential to branch out to service regional people.

The budget delivers a \$463 million windfall to build on economic diversification initiatives and funds a range of local industries including energy, tourism and events, primary industries and science, and innovation and technology.

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The \$13.8 million boost to the Aboriginal ranger program through royalties for regions will see the fantastic initiative continue. Aboriginal rangers in the Kimberley form an integral conduit to connectivity with country and provide meaningful employment opportunities for Indigenous people. A great example of the calibre of employers who take part in the Aboriginal ranger program is a young bloke named Braedon Taylor, who is a current finalist in this year's 7News Young Achiever Awards. Braedon is the first Indigenous male ranger coordinator in the Kimberley region and the youngest to have the role. He has been working on country for seven years. He has led in remote field work and collaborated with scientists, state government agencies and other experts in a two-way science and knowledge exchange.

The massive investment by this government in health and mental health is truly historic. The \$2.7 billion being invested in this budget added to the spend over the past three years that totals a staggering \$10 billion. There is continued support for the WA Country Health Service mental health emergency telehealth service, with \$24.4 million to extend the service and allow country doctors to make referrals whenever needed. It is important for the Kimberley region. Access to a dedicated professional mental health service 24/7 can make a world of difference for anyone with a mental health condition in a remote or regional area. The Broome step-up, step-down facility is an important facility for people with mental health issues. It provides short-term residential support and individualised care, allowing people to reside safely in their community and stay close to personal supports, family and friends. There has been \$2 million allocated in this year's budget to fund the Broome step-up, step-down facility. It will address the cost escalations associated with the challenging construction market conditions in the region. The 2023–24 funding will ensure the delivery of this vitally important and much-needed facility.

Remote communities have not been forgotten in this year's budget, with upgrades to Warmun Clinic being funded. An additional investment of \$7.1 million in this year's budget, out of a total of \$28.3 million over four years, will be delivered to the north west drug and alcohol support program in the Kimberley. Drug and alcohol support is a vital part of wraparound support for people with drug and/or alcohol dependence, and this government's investment in this essential service is very much appreciated. We can always do more as we talk more about the impact of drugs and alcohol on families, communities and our children.

It is pleasing to see that an additional \$5.4 million will be invested over four years, with \$1.3 million in this year's budget, to continue the psychiatry and staff educator positions in the East Kimberley, which is funded under the *Commitment to Aboriginal youth wellbeing*.

The Kimberley, like many regions, is experiencing an increase in youth offending. Many conversations have been had and concerns raised about community safety and the wellbeing of families and children. In this place, we have heard at length about this government's steps taken toward this issue. This issue has been on the front pages of our newspapers and on our televisions, and is the topic of conversation in our communities and on our local Facebook noticeboards. The 2023–24 budget offers many initiatives aimed at addressing youth offending, diversion and the rehabilitation of young offenders. If we, as a society, are serious about rehabilitating these young people, we need to make sure that all efforts are done to give support and understanding to these young ones and help them turn a corner before it is too late. This in turn will ensure a safer community for all.

I thank the government for the budget commitment of \$54.6 million in additional support for initiatives that will reduce the number of youths and vulnerable people coming into contact with the justice system, including extending the Target 120 program for at-risk youth across all 20 locations in WA, which is most welcome. Target 120 is a collaborative, targeted and flexible early intervention program, providing young offenders and their families with coordinated and timely access to the services they need. This program supports young people aged between 10 and 14 years who are at risk of becoming repeat offenders, and helps to steer them away from the criminal justice system. This program works with not only the individual, but also the families, surroundings and environment in which that child comes from. The program addresses the issues around substance abuse, a lack of housing, domestic violence, trauma, mental health issues and poor attendance at school. It is a whole wraparound service. Target 120 is currently running in Kununurra and contracts have recently been announced—thank you, Minister Winton—for delivery in Broome and Derby. Negotiations are still underway with a service provider in Fitzroy Crossing where people look forward to having this program.

Operation Regional Shield has had an impact in the regions, and I am pleased that \$11.7 million has been allocated for this project to continue, boosting police resourcing in Kimberley communities hard-hit by crime. The establishment of an immediate response safe space pilot program in Broome is yet another example of innovation and forward thinking.

The government is investing \$872 million of additional spending to improve education outcomes. I am proud to see that this budget commits significant resources to new and expanding initiatives to support students with disabilities and additional learning needs. It is a really important investment in our education system. I personally

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welcome that because my grandson has been diagnosed as needing extra support with his learning. I have already seen how much difference it makes to the life of both the child and the family.

There was an announcement that \$3.6 million has been allocated for Aboriginal and Islander education officers in schools, bringing the overall total to \$14.3 million over four years. It is particularly welcomed in the Kimberley region where our young people gain so much knowledge from our Indigenous staff.

There are so many other initiatives that I could go through, but I am very aware that I am running out of time. I would like to quickly go through the investment in roads and ports and transport infrastructure, which is essential to keep our community connected. I spoke extensively on this the other day during debate on the Main Roads Amendment Bill 2023.

We understand that our region is undergoing a housing crisis, as are many other parts of the state. I am very happy to see a massive \$750 million investment to boost housing supply and housing choice. The \$511 million for social housing and homelessness measures is of particular importance in my electorate, and, with this year's spend, it will bring the total to \$2.6 billion.

In the last moments of my speech, I would like to skip all these pages and the awesome things that the government is doing because I am running out of time! However, I cannot miss this opportunity to thank the McGowan Labor government and all the ministers who have been able to visit and support the communities affected by the flooding as a result of ex-tropical cyclone Ellie. As members are aware, many communities in my electorate suffered isolation and extensive damage to housing and infrastructure as a result of this event. Community-led working groups, agencies and government and community members have been working tirelessly side by side to deliver assistance and support for flood-affected people and to formulate the best way forward to recovery. I take this opportunity to give a shout-out to Rob Cossart, our Kimberley recovery coordinator. I know he does not sleep because he is constantly working! The support from the government has been instrumental in assisting recovery, and soon demolition will start on the old bridge in Fitzroy Crossing, which everybody talks about and actually pays to go and see, to make way for a stronger, longer two-way super bridge.

A few examples of the multimillion dollars in joint state and federal funding that have gone into this process include \$80 million for Main Roads WA to complete emergency road recovery work; \$42 million for a freight assistance package to offset the impact of increased freight costs for flood-affected Kimberley businesses; \$33 million for stand-up temporary accommodation in the short to medium term for flood-affected families in Fitzroy Crossing and Derby while their damaged homes are being repaired or rebuilt; \$30 million for clean-up and debris removal from residences and local communities, the disposal of debris to landfill and management of hazardous waste; and \$9.2 million for the community and industry recovery officer program to coordinate welfare support, provide referrals to services, provide legal and technical advice in relation to environmental planning and provide business financial counselling advice to support the community's recovery. In addition, the state government has approved \$13.4 million to fund the establishment of a recovery task force that will manage and support recovery in the Kimberley over the next two years; \$5.9 million for a tourism flood recovery package, which includes additional tourism marketing, 19 000 discounted airfares to Broome and Kununurra and a tourism voucher program; and \$336 000 for the Department of Transport to meet the additional demand for flights between Derby and Broome in the wake of the floods.

In this year's budget, we have seen a commitment of \$24 million to permanently appoint 29 dedicated disaster recovery officers to form WA's largest ever recovery team. I would like to shout-out to the SES people because it is Wear Orange Wednesday and I know a lot of people from my district are very thankful for the volunteers who went up to help. There is continued support for the Kimberley following the destructive flooding, coming to \$13.4 million allocated for a task force to manage and support recovery building in multimillion-dollar support packages. A huge amount has been achieved so far. I acknowledge the amount of work still ahead of us, and I also acknowledge the mental health supports and the money that has been put aside for mental health supports, led by the child and adolescent mental health service, to empower local service providers. The focus remains on the people who have been directly impacted but we do not forget how it impacts the whole of the Kimberley.

The communities involved have struggled with many changes to their lives and I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to working quickly after this event, working collaboratively with communities to recover from this natural disaster. All these investments I have outlined show what people in the regions all know: this Labor government is a government for the people living in the regions. We know the importance of supporting people and that is what I will continue to focus on. I commend the bills to the house.

MR K.J.J. MICHEL (Pilbara) [7.26 pm]: I rise today to support the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023 and outline what this means for the local Pilbara communities. I acknowledge and thank the Premier and his cabinet for the wonderful work they have done and for a good budget along with an operating surplus. I commend the Treasurer on delivering his third state budget as Treasurer and his

Extract from Hansard

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continued support for strong leadership. I am proud to be a part of the McGowan Labor government that has demonstrated responsible financial management and I congratulate the Treasurer on delivering a strong and fair budget. I thank the Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, Hon Dr Tony Buti, MLA, for doing a budget breakfast in Karratha on Friday. I also thank the Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and the Digital Economy; Medical Research; Volunteering, Hon Stephen Dawson, for doing a sundowner in Port Hedland. I am not forgetting my Minister for Regional Development; Disability Services; Fisheries; Seniors and Ageing, Hon Don Punch, for doing a breakfast yesterday in Newman.

The Pilbara drives the Western Australian economy and is the economic powerhouse of the nation. The 2023–24 state budget reinforces the McGowan government's commitment to the Pilbara. I am proud that the budget provides significant investment in areas I know are important to the people of the Pilbara—health, housing and community safety—and includes measures to ease cost-of-living pressures. It is also fantastic to see continued support for local projects and a big boost for our training sector. The McGowan government is setting up the Pilbara for the long term by diversifying and creating jobs, boosting regional health and mental health, transforming our regional roads and transport networks, and delivering stronger and safer communities.

I thank the McGowan government for providing important cost-of-living relief for local households. The McGowan government's \$400 household electricity credit, and an additional targeted support totalling \$826 for households who need it most, will be a welcome relief for Pilbara residents. This is on top of the more than \$2.7 billion invested over the next four years to subsidise the costs of providing water and electricity to regional residents in the Pilbara. To continue to ease cost-of-living pressures in the regions, the McGowan government will deliver a \$20.7 million boost to meet increased demand for the highly successful regional airfare zone cap, which provides affordable airfares for regional residents. Thank you to the McGowan government for continuing to deliver on a major election commitment to make airfares more affordable for regional residents. Airfares from the Pilbara are capped at \$299 one way for regional residents, which is anyone living a driving distance of 1 000 kilometres from Perth. This includes travellers from Karratha, Port Hedland and Newman. I hear the opposition talk a lot about royalties for regions, saying they are regional members, blah, blah, blah; they go on and on in this Parliament. This is a commitment I have advocated for very strongly, having listened to the people of the Pilbara in 2017, to make sure that every regional person from any regional place has a discounted airfare. I have not seen any members of the opposition do anything like that anywhere for regional people, yet they call themselves members for the regions.

The McGowan government is delivering a record \$2.7 billion of additional investment in WA's health system, with a 2023–24 state budget featuring a significant investment in regional health and mental health, including more than \$2.2 billion per annum on regional health and mental health services; \$28.5 million for initiatives to start and retain key health and mental health professionals, primarily to work in regional WA, with priority given to hard-to-staff sites; \$24.4 million to extend the mental health emergency telehealth service, providing 24/7 mental health support and allowing country doctors to make referrals whenever needed; \$6.3 million to extend regional cancer services; and an additional \$6.7 million towards regional renal support teams. I am proud that the McGowan government is focusing on improving health care across WA especially in the Pilbara, and on attracting and retaining a sustainable health workforce. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our dedicated healthcare workers, especially in the Pilbara, who continued to provide first-class patient care every single day throughout the challenges of the pandemic and while living in a remote area. Being on the front line is not easy, but it is very much appreciated.

The 2023–24 budget strengthens the McGowan government's record investment in housing.

This budget provides continued support to the Pilbara's resources sector. I am pleased that the McGowan government has committed \$129.1 million towards the expansion of Lumsden Point at the port of Port Hedland, plus \$565 million from the commonwealth to deliver new multi-user facilities and berths that will diversify trade in the Pilbara. This is a critical economic infrastructure project for the Pilbara, as Lumsden Point will enable the growth of the renewable energy sector. My constituents have spoken to me about this project since 2017, and I am proud we are delivering it.

In the 2023–24 budget, the McGowan government continues to deliver on the WA Plan for Jobs, diversifying regional economies, creating new jobs for the future and developing a pipeline of skills in the regions. Key Pilbara initiatives include \$20.4 million towards the redevelopment of Roebourne District High School, bringing the total investment to \$724 million. This development will support families who are not in central areas to have access to quality education close to home, for students from kindergarten to secondary school. Again, this was another initiative brought to me by the residents of Roebourne in 2017. I have been living in the Pilbara for 20 years, this is my twenty-first year, and only a McGowan government will deliver schools for Aboriginal people. There is \$3.5 million to expand the heavy vehicle driving operations training program to the Pilbara and the Kimberley regions. There is \$2.5 million to increase the travel and accommodation allowance for WA apprentices and trainees who are required to travel long distances off the job for their training, doubling the travel subsidy to 40¢ per

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kilometre and increasing the accommodation allowance from \$110 to \$150 per night. There is \$2.9 million to provide eligible regional Diploma of Nursing students with financial support to undertake up to 400 hours of practical placement, including an allowance of \$350 per week with a travel allowance of up to \$1 000 per training block in the Pilbara.

There is \$5.8 million to extend the successful driving access and equity program to deliver driving training to disadvantaged young people. This is another great initiative to help disadvantaged youth to find a job. As people in the Pilbara do not have access to constant transport, it is a massive issue for our disengaged youth. This program helps our youth to get a licence and get a job. I have been told that more than 200 people have taken up this opportunity and 200 have got a licence and a job. I would like to give a special shout-out to Ashburton Aboriginal Corporation and Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation—NBAC. It is a little bit hard to say; NBAC is easier anyway.

The Pilbara region has a lot of potential and I am pleased to be part of the McGowan government, working hard to support and grow established sectors while providing important investment so that the Pilbara can capitalise on new economic opportunities. I am pleased that the McGowan government has invested \$300 million in assets to facilitate the job-creating Perdaman urea project, including updating the Dampier Cargo Wharf, the Burrup seawater supply scheme and roads in the Burrup Strategic Industrial Area. The Perdaman urea project will create 2 500 jobs during construction and 200 operational jobs for the Pilbara and WA. The project will convert Western Australia's natural gas from Woodside's Scarborough gas project into an estimated 2.3 million tonnes of urea per annum. Urea is a widely used form of fertiliser for food production. Australia imports 2.4 million tonnes of urea a year. This project will strengthen our regional economy and support our local economy. This is another great project on which I have worked hard with the McGowan government. I must thank my good friend and former minister Hon Alannah MacTiernan for helping me advocate for this project.

The McGowan government continues its record investment in regional roads and transport projects, including \$407 million on regional road projects and in this budget, bringing the total investment over the next four years to \$5.3 billion. There is \$175 million for the joint commonwealth and state government-funded regional road safety program. As someone who needs to drive around my electorate, often for six hours at a time, this is fantastic news. I know that many residents within the Pilbara and travellers to the region will benefit from these road projects. As the member for Roe said, I would like to see Brendon Grylls travelling 50 000 kilometres a year on the road going to every regional part of the electorate.

Mr P.J. Rundle: He's coming back. I have just been texting him.

Mr K.J.J. MICHEL: You are all talk, member. You are just talk. Bring it on.

There is \$11.7 million in this budget to extend Operation Regional Shield to deliver police in regional communities experiencing youth crime issues, including in the Pilbara. I take this opportunity to thank our police officers for the excellent job they do to keep our Pilbara community safe. The budget delivers \$11.7 million to continue rolling out Target 120 across the regions, including in the Pilbara. This investment will bring this successful McGowan government program to Karratha, Newman and Port Hedland, giving authorities more resources to work with young people and their families to address these issues. I was pleased to attend Karratha and Newman earlier this year to announce the new Target 120 sites. I thank the Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services, Hon Sabine Winton, MLA, and the Minister for Regional Development; Disability Services; Fisheries; Seniors and Ageing, Hon Don Punch, MLA, for making the trip north to make this important announcement.

The 2023–24 state budget is a major investment in WA's future, tackling climate change through a \$3 billion package as well as investing in protecting the environment. Initiatives in the Pilbara include the \$40 million sustainable geoscience investment package to accelerate critical minerals discoveries, ensuring that Western Australia is well placed to grasp economic opportunities as the world works towards a net zero future; \$22 million to deliver an electric vehicle smart charger and vehicle-to-grid trial through Horizon Power; and \$20 million to continue the regional economic development grants program, to drive economic development and support regional communities. The RED grants are much loved by a lot of constituents and businesses in my electorate. I must once again thank the Pilbara Development Commission for its hard work in getting businesses to put in good cases that will develop the region.

Other initiatives in the 2023–24 state budget include \$4 billion of royalties for regions expenditure over the next four years to support important initiatives across the regions. This includes new spending of \$358 million towards initiatives that strengthen regional communities and ensure that services remain close to where people live.

The McGowan government will also invest \$77 million to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in WA, including support for new local Aboriginal cultural heritage services.

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This year's budget builds on the diverse range of projects and programs already underway in the Pilbara, including \$187.5 million for Port Hedland's Spoilbank Marina, which is currently under construction. Once again, Deputy Speaker, the former Liberal–National government had been promising this project since 2002, but it was never delivered. It was all talk, once again—blah, blah, blah! Members go on, but they never delivered anything. It is ridiculous how the opposition goes on in this Parliament but it does not deliver anything. The McGowan government is delivering this project. I had a briefing only two weeks ago about where the project is at. If everything goes well, the ramp should open in December this year. My parliamentary colleague Hon Stephen Dawson from the other house and I went to have a look at what is going on and to see how we can develop the outer edge of the marina. I think it is a great initiative for Port Hedland, which will change Port Hedland. The former Liberal–National government never did much for Hedland. Members opposite always sit in the chamber and talk rubbish. All they do is talk the talk; they do not walk the walk.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr K.J.J. MICHEL: Member, when we came to government, there was not even a sketch plan of what the marina would look like.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Six years!

Mr K.J.J. MICHEL: That is what I am trying to tell the member. The opposition is all talk, anyway.

There is \$8 million for new facilities and upgrades at the North Regional TAFE campus in Roebourne. There is \$48.7 million for a major upgrade, including new trades training facilities, at the North Regional TAFE Pundulmurra campus in South Hedland, which is under construction. There is \$3.5 million for the expansion of Baler Primary School and \$4.5 million for a new classroom block at Cassia Primary School. There is \$107.5 million to upgrade three key rail crossings in Hedland, which are currently under construction; \$380 million for the Manuwarra Red Dog Highway between Karratha and Tom Price, with stage 3 complete and planning for stage 4 underway; and \$10 million towards the Port Hedland sports and community hub redevelopment, which is currently underway. Hopefully, the Minister for Sport and Recreation and I will be there to open that facility this weekend.

There are many other commitments in this budget that will help keep our regional economy growing while delivering on our election commitments for the local community. I congratulate the Premier; Treasurer and ministers for delivering a budget that will keep the Pilbara strong and vibrant as well as continue to set up our region for the future. There has been no better time in the Pilbara than now and no-one else can make the changes in the Pilbara that the McGowan Labor government can. On behalf of the Pilbara community, I commend the bills to the house.

MR H.T. JONES (Darling Range) [7.44 pm]: I will probably be a bit more mellow than the member for Pilbara.

I rise to make a brief contribution to the second reading debate on the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023. The budget itself is clearly a win for Western Australia, especially for the electorate of Darling Range. I have a lot of things to talk about relating to my area. I firstly acknowledge the Serpentine Jarrahdale and Armadale State Emergency Service volunteers on Wear Orange Wednesday. I thank them for the countless hours they put in for training and for turning up when required. It is usually unpleasant, stormy weather. They turn out, do their best and save people's properties and lives.

Darling Range is not immune from the pressures of inflation and mortgage stress. The member for Burns Beach mentioned his barometer is going to the supermarket on a Tuesday morning. Mine is going to the Byford Baptist Church free food market on a Thursday. The pastor, Don Warner, is presently overseas. However, Lesley Driscoll is running the show while Don is away. She probably runs it all the time anyway. When I saw her on Monday, she mentioned that the church had given out 280 boxes of food to people who needed it, which is an increase and the most boxes it has given out. Some of that is probably due to people becoming more aware of the service. However, people are obviously doing it tough.

I am glad that the budget will give some relief in the form of electricity bills. All households will receive a \$400 rebate. A further \$426 will be given to those who are in receipt of the energy assistance payment through a combined state and federal commitment. That will go a long way towards helping people cope with their day-to-day expenses. I commend the Treasurer for making that commitment.

The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale is variously referred to as one of the fastest growing local governments in WA, and indeed in Australia. After years of neglect by successive Liberal Party and National Party state governments and their members, I am proud to be part of the McGowan Labor government that is delivering for Darling Range and part of the south-east corridor. I want to acknowledge the strong advocacy of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale in presenting the case for infrastructure spending. I acknowledge that as a growing local government, it does not have the rate base and the businesses to support that spending, which puts a lot of pressure on residential ratepayers to balance their budgets and on shire councillors to provide things like roads and sporting facilities.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 17 May 2023]

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The first thing I want to talk about is the Byford health hub. This year the government committed \$36.3 million, bringing total investment to \$42.2 million, which is almost \$12 million more than the original commitment we made prior to the election. It will be a multidisciplinary health and social service site. The government recognises the importance of investing in WA's future through ensuring communities have access to clinical services, particularly around Byford, because prior to the rail line going in, it was arguably not as easy to get from Byford to Armadale on public transport, with residents just relying on bus services. Part of that commitment included engagement with Byford Secondary College in 2022. The health science students helped prepare a youth perspective on how to attract people to a health hub. In April, a couple of days of public consultation were hosted by members of the East Metropolitan Health Service. They were originally in the breezeway next to Coles but we went into Coles because it was so breezy. They engaged with the public and got some ideas. I look forward to receiving a briefing from the East Metropolitan Health Service in the next week or two about the feedback process and any progress that has been made.

Also on health, the government committed \$5.7 million this year, which will go towards a \$15.7 million commitment for a mental health emergency centre in Armadale.

Another commitment to sport in this budget is \$2 million for the Keirnan Park Recreation and Sporting Complex located on the corner of Keirnan Street and South Western Highway in Mundijong. This 63-hectare site was gifted to the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale by the state government. The government made a commitment of \$20 million to fund stage 1A of the project to provide a pavilion, a clubhouse and a couple of footy fields. Last year, the shire president wrote a letter to Minister Templeman requesting a further \$4 million to allow for extra expenses and a bit of creep in the scope, and I am happy to say that the minister signed off on an extra \$2 million via the Expenditure Review Committee, contingent on the shire providing the other \$2 million. That is a total commitment of \$22 million from the state government, plus the land. Subject to the shire finding \$2 million, that will allow the football community to move to Mundijong. It wants two ovals co-located so that different grades of football can be played at the same time and to allow cricket to be played there.

I have already mentioned some of the shire's issues, with a lack of shire space and a growing community. According to the Parks and Leisure Australia Western Australia guidelines, in accordance with the shire population, the shire should have five soccer pitches and one rugby pitch, but it has none of these. I think that AFL, baseball and softball are the main sports catered for. There is a Serpentine–Jarrahdale Serpents Rugby League and Sporting Club. The players train there but do not have a ground to play at; I believe they play their home games in Willagee. There is no rugby union team; the closest one is the ARKS Rugby Union Club in Harrisdale. ARKS stands for Armadale Roleystone Kelmscott, and the club draws players from all these areas. I acknowledge Terry Foster and his wife, Margaret. Terry has volunteered for 44 years with the ARKS and has now decided to hang up his boots. He will be retiring from his coaching responsibilities. I will not divulge his age, but it is somewhere between 70 and 80 years. He has finally decided to spend more time with his family. Volunteers like Terry allow these clubs to function and thrive. These grassroots clubs produce professional players and players who go on to great things.

There is no soccer club in Serpentine–Jarrahdale. There is the Kelmscott Roos Soccer Club in Kelmscott, which plays in Clifton Hills. It is on the edge of the electorate of the member for Armadale, so there is always a tussle over who has the right to go and claim the Kelmscott Roos, and I often defer to the member for Armadale; however, strictly, it is my area. We were there on Sunday and we did a joint presentation of 12 soccer balls to the ladies' team as part of the Belt Up promotion for the Insurance Commission of Western Australia and Football West.

Other works in progress include Armadale TAFE and a new South Metropolitan TAFE campus. That is in build at the moment. In this budget, I was glad to see \$19 million committed to that project, making a total commitment of \$39 million. As previously announced, there is a \$9.7 million commitment to Roleystone Community College for classrooms, a hall to cater for drama and sports, and an internal area in which to hold assemblies, because the school does not currently have that. It has a lean-to-type building for its assemblies. We are giving the college an undercover area in which the students can all assemble. There is \$4.5 million in this budget for that commitment.

This budget contains a final instalment of \$75 000 for West Byford Primary School towards a total \$2.1 million commitment for extra classroom space. The Minister for Education, the member for Armadale, was out at West Byford on 5 May for the Colour Fun Run, which he had earlier committed to attend. We were out there to help support the year 6 leaders' committee to raise money for their graduation, excursions and camps et cetera. The minister donned a one-piece protective suit, because he is a bit soft! I was in a T-shirt and jeans. We both got covered in chalk. I do not know how much money the committee raised, but it was tens of thousands of dollars. That was a great event. I heard a provider of foam machines who goes to various schools say to the principal that the kids were the best behaved kids she had ever encountered when producing foam for colour runs.

Time is moving on. The Liberals said that we did not need the Byford rail extension until 2050. Obviously that project is cracking on. It will be 7.8 kilometres from Armadale to Byford. Later this year, the rail line will shut down for 18 months. As part of that shutdown, a great deal of work has been committed to providing alternative transport

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arrangements for the people who live in Serpentine–Jarrahdale, Armadale, Roleystone and around Kelmscott to allow them to go down the line to the city or further. Eventually, that will open up great opportunities for people, particularly in Byford and the surrounding areas. I expect that once the rail extension is completed, the Transperth bus routes will be aligned with the trains as well, allowing people living in the area to take advantage of the two-zone capped fares to commute for their education, entertainment and work. It will not be far to go to Optus Stadium to watch the football or even Cold Play—although they will not be there then.

The member for Cockburn mentioned that Cockburn was a bit of a building site. He should take a look at Serpentine–Jarrahdale, where a massive amount of roadworks is happening. There is the stage 1 and 2 planning for the Thomas Road and Anketell Road freight upgrade. There is \$31 million in the budget for that out of a total of \$105 million. The Thomas Road–Kwinana Freeway–Nicholson Road upgrade received another \$10 million of a \$43 million commitment. That will improve safety along that section of road from Nicholson Road to Kwinana Freeway. I used to travel on that road all the time on the way to Garden Island. It is an east–west road, so drivers get the sun in their eyes in the evening. It was not the safest road. I am glad to see that it will get improved street lighting to improve the safety there. The budget provides another \$9 million out of a \$69 million commitment for the Thomas Road Bridge. The third and fourth lanes of the four-lane bridge are almost complete. I expect that in July the traffic will be able to go in both directions. There is also \$290 million for the South Western Highway to Tonkin Highway dual carriageway on Thomas Road, which, again, will make the world of difference to the people who drive through there. They are from not just SJ, but also Armadale and further up in Gosnells who might use the South Western Highway and Thomas Road to get where they need to go.

I refer to the Byford skate park youth precinct. I am glad that it is eight o'clock because all the skaters will be able to watch live. We made an \$800 000 commitment, with \$400 000 provided for in this budget. The concept designs have been drawn up. On 23 May, another workshop will be held to invite young people to come along and give their ideas about the concepts.

A great amount of money is being spent in the area. If we include the money locked away for the Tonkin Highway extension, \$2.213 billion will be spent in the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale and its surrounds. It is an immense amount of money.

In closing, I thank the officers of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, who are often maligned for their work, but they have an immense workload to get through. I thank Paul Martin, CEO; Brian Oliver, the newly appointed director of community engagement; Frazer Sullivan, director of corporate services; Andrew Trosic, director of development services, who has a lot of work; and Reza Najafzadeh, director of infrastructure services. I will give Hansard a copy of that name! As I said, they are doing a tremendous job. I urge councillors to support officers in their work and to avoid throwing rocks. There is enough rock throwing from community members. The councillors need to get around their shire officers, support them, understand how much work they are doing and the time lines they need to adhere to, and think about the delivery of \$2.213 billion of infrastructure in the area. Councillors need to put their personal ambitions aside. I recognise there will be an election in October, which will be the first time we will directly elect a shire president. However, the important thing is to deliver infrastructure to the people of Darling Range. I urge councillors to get behind the officers and let them do their work. With that, I commend the bills to the house.

MS L. DALTON (Geraldton) [8.01 pm]: I am very pleased to make a contribution in support of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023, and to highlight some of the wonderful outcomes for my electorate of Geraldton and the midwest. Budgets are probably the ultimate expression of the values and priorities of any government. As many of my colleagues have already pointed out, this budget is a very clear statement about Labor values, and I am very proud to be able to speak to it. This budget is about a number of things. There are several things locally and a number of things more broadly that I wish to cover tonight.

I am confident in saying that the government's commitment to investing in regional development and infrastructure is a step in the right direction. At every turn, it will work to create equity to ensure that everyone in our community gets the sort of support they need. Importantly for me, one of the values I maintain, a Labor value, is the importance of regional equity. This budget shows how committed the McGowan Labor government is to the people of Geraldton and regional Western Australia. For my community, this budget focuses on the things that are important to us—things like education, health, jobs, transport, the environment, infrastructure, our commitment to a clean energy future and the new heavy industries that will deliver for my community and the state as a whole.

This budget includes a significant allocation to upgrade local roads and infrastructure to support the growth of industry and tourism in the region. This investment will create job opportunities and stimulate economic growth, which is crucial for the region's long-term success. Furthermore, the government has announced a range of initiatives that will benefit the community on a broader scale, including funding for mental health support, education and training programs and upgrades to local schools and healthcare facilities. I believe that the state government's focus on improving regional infrastructure and services is a positive step forward. The midwest region has enormous

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potential for growth and development, and these initiatives will help to unlock this potential and provide new opportunities for the community and future generations.

The values of this government are writ large in the budget. To take the key learnings of a one-in-100-year pandemic and apply them to investment in regional health and mental health is a great example of how this government is delivering for my community. The government is seeking to provide for my community the most modern health delivery and best support possible. The government has invested more than \$2.2 billion per annum in regional health and mental health services, of which I am particularly proud of the \$8.2 million for the upgrade of WA Country Health Service staff housing, including safety and security upgrades; the \$6.3 million for the extension of regional cancer services; and the \$3.1 million to support the palliative care workforce.

I am particularly proud of the government's offer to pay up to \$12 000 of HECS-HELP loans for newly qualified nurses and midwives commencing employment in regional Western Australia. Already so many people have reached out to me in my electorate to talk to me about how wonderful they think this particular commitment is. We know how important it is to keep regional people in the regions. This government investment in regional health is an acquittal of the McGowan government's commitment to regional Western Australia. This is about health investment, health training, health jobs, health outcomes for my community, and quality of life for the recipients of that care. These are all Labor values.

The naysayers will detract and we will hear, as we heard today, criticism from the opposition about Geraldton Health Campus.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Six years!

Ms L. DALTON: What I have to say about that, member for Roe, is that I have been the member for Geraldton for a couple of years, but I have lived in Geraldton all my life. I have lived under Liberal-National governments with Liberal-National local members, and in the whole time the opposition was in government, we never saw a hospital built. There was nothing in the budgets, just empty promises. This government is actually delivering.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Order, members! Member for Geraldton, are you taking interjections?

Ms L. DALTON: Yes, I am happy to take an interjection because I know the member talks nonsense when he talks about this. We are actually delivering on our promises and I can say, hand on heart, that that is happening. Members opposite joke about a parking lot, but in actual fact that was the first stage of the redevelopment. We started the first stage of the redevelopment, we put our money where our mouth was, and we built an entrance and a parking lot. Then we had—what do we call it?—a global pandemic. A cyclone also hit our region and things changed. We pivoted and had to respond to those changes.

Do members know what this government did? It put more money in the budget and allocated more funds to that hospital, and it is now on its way to the second stage of its redevelopment. The member can say that we are not doing it, but we are doing it. We are building the hospital. We made an announcement today about the progress —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Ms L. DALTON: Yes, and is it not great? We are progressing, which is more than the previous Liberal-National government ever did. We actually put it in the budget, so the member can keep detracting and naysaying about it, but the only governments that build hospitals in Geraldton are Labor governments.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Ms L. DALTON: Exactly—everything. Every vision for Geraldton has come from a Labor government.

However, I digress. The fact of the matter is that the opposition has never built a hospital in Geraldton and it has no key learnings from the pandemic; that is self-evident. This government has committed \$122.7 million towards the Geraldton Health Campus redevelopment, which is \$122.7 million more than the opposition ever has, and I look forward to speaking more about that soon.

I spoke earlier about a budget being an expression of the values and priorities of a government, and this budget delivers on that by investing in regional health and mental health; delivering regional housing; delivering a cleaner, stronger future for the midwest; delivering a pipeline of skills; upgrading roads and transport networks; and building stronger, safer communities. There is no doubt that we have retained our focus on the things that we were elected to deliver on—health, education, infrastructure and jobs—and whether that be in transport, community safety or transitioning to a low-carbon economy, these are the things that we have continued to work on in government.

I have already touched on this budget including a significant allocation for upgrading local roads and infrastructure to support the growth of industry. The opportunities that are real and current in my community are well supported

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by this budget. This government continues to make the measured and appropriate investment in what is needed to work towards that future. The opportunities afforded by the Oakajee Strategic Industrial Area and the \$330 million Geraldton port maximisation project to my community are boundless. It is quite laughable when we hear that the government is not investing in the regions. I can already think about the spend in my electorate alone and the opportunities that are being created there.

The Deputy Premier, Roger Cook, attended the Geraldton budget breakfast, which was attended by more than 120 people. There was a sense of optimism. When I hear the member for Vasse say that we have left the regions in a mess and that everyone in the regions is down and unhappy, I am reminded that I did not get that feeling at the budget breakfast. Everyone was very optimistic and pleased with the way this government is focusing on the regions, particularly in my electorate of Geraldton.

It is absolutely critical that we continue to invest in the skills and intellectual capital of our state and make sure that we invest in the infrastructure, networks and human capital to support new and clean industrialisation in our regions.

This budget reflects another strong Labor value—a classic, if you will—in education. The clean energy future that this government is creating will require a skilled workforce and it is absolutely critical that we continue to invest in the skills and intellectual capital of our state and ensure that the foundations of that education are available locally. That is why this government is continuing to deliver \$1.5 million each year for new science, technology, engineering and mathematics classrooms at Geraldton Senior High School and Champion Bay High School, with planning underway at both.

There is no greater universal tool for the uplift of any community than the ability to receive a world-class education. I have visited nearly every school in my electorate for events with students or to meet with principals, staff and P&Cs. It is P&C Day WA on Friday. Happy P&C Day to all the P&Cs on Friday. Here is a shout-out to the volunteers who support our education sector. In working collaboratively with schools in my electorate, I recently had lunch with the 2022 recipients of the Edith Dircksey Cowan achievement award. We are currently working closely with schools to deliver another round of bikes for school-run programs to promote healthy transport and safety. I apologise for digressing; I have undertaken these programs of my own volition.

A strong message that I have received in my regular interactions with my school communities, and in the conversations I have had with principals and teachers, has been the need for specialist education support in the Geraldton area. That is why I am proud that this budget delivers \$9 million for an education support facility at Waggrakine Primary School—a fabulous lighthouse school—to provide every student the opportunity to be everything they can be. All students can be the best they can be with this budget providing \$11.7 million to continue the successful Target 120 youth early intervention program, including in Geraldton. Target 120 is another invaluable McGowan government election commitment that has been announced and delivered, and it continues to provide substantive and measurable outcomes for my community. This budget and its support of the education sector is Labor values in practice.

I have already touched on the opportunities of the Oakajee SIA and the port maximisation project. There is more in this space that I really want to get behind and champion on behalf of my community. The upgrades to Western Power's north region network as part of a \$126 million investment to kickstart the energy grid's transition to net zero and facilitate the green energy boom is something I am particularly excited about and so is my electorate. I have met with proponents who are making significant investments in my area. Being able to lay the groundwork for critical infrastructure to support a new clean industry is what the McGowan Labor government is all about.

The maritime sector in my community is well supported in this budget, with \$10 million for works at the Geraldton Fishing Boat Harbour and \$7.2 million for upgrades at the port that continue to underwrite this significant driver of regional economic growth. Maritime industries in Geraldton have the confidence to undertake expansion and capital works due to the support of the McGowan Labor government. This is shown by the likes of Dongara Marine opening its new boatbuilding facility at the Fishing Boat Harbour in March. I was proud to be at the launch—no pun intended!

Our support for regional industry and our belief in a cleaner, stronger future also goes to our support for families and their hip pockets. The \$2.8 billion investment to transition Western Australia's energy system for a low-carbon future, including funding for a potential expansion of Bright Energy Investments at Warradarge wind farm, is central to WA's transition to cleaner, stronger, reliable and affordable energy. On our way to that low-carbon future we will support households, providing every WA household with a \$400 electricity credit and additional targeted support, totalling \$826 for households that need it most. I have spoken to many people in our community about that, and they are thrilled to have that support.

Speaking of households and Labor values, I want to touch on how this government is delivering for the housing sector. Housing demand in all sectors is a national problem—we get that—and it is a Labor value to make sure

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Mr Paul Lilburne; Ms Alison Kent; Mr David Scaife; Ms Hannah Beazley; Ms Divina D'Anna; Mr Kevin Michel; Mr Hugh Jones; Ms Lara Dalton

that everyone who needs a home can get a home. Another Labor value is to support working families, low-income earners, renters, social housing tenants and rough sleepers. That is why this budget will provide a \$61.6 million boost to Government Regional Officers' Housing to refurbish existing properties and add new supply, and \$49 million to partner with community housing providers to provide 100 homes across regional WA in a supported landlord model for people in regional WA experiencing rough sleeping. These are fabulous initiatives and we have already seen that they work. Beyond that, we are contributing \$450 million into the social housing investment fund to boost social housing across the state, and \$12 million over four years to deliver more development-ready land throughout regional Western Australia, through the regional development assistance program. Locally, this budget will provide \$8.3 million towards operating the \$27.8 million Geraldton Aboriginal short-stay accommodation, anticipated to open in 2025.

This budget, heavily nuanced in Labor values, is testament to the McGowan government's commitment to the people of Geraldton, the midwest and regional Western Australia. We are on the precipice of an exciting era for Geraldton with the opportunities abundant in the Oakajee Strategic Industrial Area and the port maximisation project. These are 24-hour industries that need to be supported by the best local health care in the unfortunate circumstance of an industrial incident, because making sure that workers are supported is a core Labor value. By providing the opportunity for local children to get the skills they need for the exciting new opportunities that will become available in their region, these Labor values are supporting workers, educating children, providing the best possible health care and driving the support, infrastructure and networks to underwrite a strong local economy.

In conclusion, I welcome the Western Australian state budget for 2023–24 and the positive outcomes it will deliver for the City of Greater Geraldton and the midwest region. Through targeted investment in infrastructure, education and health care, I believe we can create a brighter future for our communities and ensure sustainable growth and prosperity for all. Thank you for your attention. I commend the bills to the house.

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

House adjourned at 8.19 pm
