

Mr Peter Rundle; Dr David Honey; Deputy Speaker; Ms Mia Davies; Ms Merome Beard; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Terry Healy; Dr Katrina Stratton; Mr Peter Tinley; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Ms Rebecca Stephens; Mr Chris Tallentire

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.59 pm]: I look forward to continuing my contribution. Unfortunately, the Premier has disappeared. I was starting to talk about his shortfalls. The Minister for Police and the Minister for Education have also departed the scene. I want to continue with my comments on the police force. Since July last year, these are the headlines of the WA Police Union's media statements: "Human resources powering police exodus, not resources sector", "Perth prices up more in one year than police pay in five years", "Assaults on cops at 10-year peak... violent crime at all-time high", "Police vote to reject pay offer", "Record no. of police resignations and retirements", "WA Police Union releases report on suicide by police officers in Australia" and "Ramming police cars". In just seven months, the media statements say it all. Our police force is struggling. We see it in the news and we see it in our communities. The police minister is deficient in his duties when he tells Parliament that there is no problem and quotes local government officials saying that all is well when clearly this is not the case. The complex nature of the issues facing children in Banksia Hill Detention Centre is known. The Premier seems unwilling to hear the way these complex issues are displayed in the individuals. The lack of options given to the judiciary is incredible. Putting children on remand in the same facility as those who have been convicted is unacceptable for a start. The definition of "insanity" is doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome. Surely the history of juvenile incarceration in WA fits that definition. These are not simply children with criminal backgrounds who should be locked up forever; they are children with deep psychological and physical trauma and should be treated as such.

We need to talk about the health system again. For the regional areas lucky enough to have a doctor, it takes at least three weeks to get an appointment. I know of people in my electorate who do not bother to ring for an appointment and will either self-medicate or not seek treatment at all. I know of many who are not seeking allied health care for themselves or their family because the wait time is too long or they simply cannot afford to travel to Perth for crucial care.

The Premier loves to overstate what his ministers have done for the health system but, in truth, the McGowan government is still riding on the coat-tails of the previous government's hospital building program—Fiona Stanley Hospital, Perth Children's Hospital, Midland Public Hospital and hospitals in Albany, Busselton, Narrogin, Katanning and Karratha. All these hospitals started with investment by the previous Liberal–National government. All the McGowan government has done is announce the new women's and babies' hospital, but it is so far out in the forward estimates that the current Minister for Health might just be Premier when that sod finally turns. We will not let the health system slip off the radar. This government can no longer pull the wool over the eyes of WA. The failings are there for all to see. This government needs to forget the fluffy media statements, stop blaming COVID-19, stop blaming St John Ambulance and get to work by fixing the systemic failures in WA's health system.

I turn to the flooding of the Fitzroy River in the Kimberley in January, which was described as WA's worst flood after heavy rains. It was an event that cut off towns and communities and left a path of destruction through roads, stations, towns and lives. I would like to commend the efforts to date of emergency services and the Minister for Transport, as we heard today, for dealing with those major road reconstructions and movements of large recovery and construction teams to the area. My hope is that this government does not repeat the appalling mismanagement of the cyclone Seroja disaster with rebuilding, funding, distribution and support. Reconstruction and recovery in the Kimberley will be a difficult journey, but we will not let this government forget the residents of the Kimberley and leave them floundering like it did for the communities in Seroja's path.

The cost of living has become a real issue for many people. Foodbank of Western Australia and Anglicare are saying that the cost-of-living crisis is pushing families to their limit. The lack of housing sees lines of more than 100 people applying for rentals. Increasing mortgage rates are having a flow-on effect for families, and the rise in utility service charges is constant and becoming unaffordable for some people. The Leader of the Opposition, the member for North West Central and I visited Foodbank last week. We got a firsthand understanding of what is happening in these set-ups. Foodbank is doing a fantastic job, along with Anglicare, the Western Australian Council of Social Service and many other institutions.

We come to a new year when the Premier is still hanging on to the self-belief that he can do no wrong and that his massive treasure chest is his and his alone to allocate as he sees fit. His new front bench adds a couple of new faces, which is certainly challenging to say the least. Giving the already enormous portfolio of Communities, with the added pressure points of early childhood, prevention of family and domestic violence, and child protection, to a new minister is what I would term a hospital hand pass. I wish the new minister luck. It is certainly a real challenge

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for a new minister to take on that portfolio. It will be a test to see whether the resulting outcomes for a huge demographic of vulnerable people who are at risk will come to the fore. I will be watching that closely.

We know that the education system has taken much of the brunt of the pandemic over the last three years. Principals, teachers, students and parents have had to adopt to changed practices like never before. Although change can be a good thing, the speed at which these changes happened stunned much of the system. We can now reflect on what impact those changes have had on this sector. To this end, I would like to congratulate the Premier on his appointment of the new Minister for Education. There is much for this minister to do. I hope his recent announcements of university entrance requirements and writing letters to year 12s are not a distraction from the real problems facing the education system in this state. Education is a crucial shadow portfolio and one area about which I receive daily correspondence on all aspects of the portfolio. The Premier might be surprised to learn that I hear not only from parents, but also from many people who work in the sector. Primarily, they say that the education system is a mess, school education and standards are suffering, there is very poor management and, finally, “we are up the creek without a paddle”. The State School Teachers’ Union of WA has found the sector so badly in freefall that it is using members’ fees to commission an independent review of the public education system. Tellingly, in December, the union was vocal in its outrage about the plan to use underqualified teachers to solve staff shortages in schools. This comes on the back of the warnings issued to the government by the union years ago, well before COVID struck, of the looming crisis in staffing.

Let me remind the Premier of the main issues facing teachers and principals in schools. Metropolitan and regional schools have their own unique problems. As I mentioned before, using underqualified teachers to fill positions, especially in the regional areas, is a desperate attempt to fulfil the notion of a teacher in front of every class. The president of the State School Teachers’ Union of WA, Matt Jarman, said last month —

While having a teacher in front of every class is fundamental, not having the right teacher in the right place will eventually only add to the shortage. Teachers placed into roles they’re not suited to or not fully qualified for will burn out more quickly and are more likely to leave their jobs.

That was quoted in *The West Australian* of Monday, 30 January 2023.

I note that the new minister wants students to take more ATAR subjects and push themselves towards better choices. Although this is a worthwhile sentiment, teachers will be needed to deliver the courses he is pushing students to undertake. This is no small task for the new minister. Predominantly, teacher workloads are the main disincentive for teachers remaining in the sector. Without assistance, teachers will continue to leave. Principals have come through an incredibly complicated and stressful few years with COVID and are still grappling with its impacts. In 2021, the Grattan Institute reported that 90 per cent of the participants surveyed—5 442 Australian teachers and leaders—said they did not have enough time to prepare effectively for classroom teaching. It has been well documented by the Productivity Commission that teachers spend 60 per cent of their time on administrative tasks and just 40 per cent on teaching. That is not good enough, Leader of the House. Teachers are facing —

Mr D.A. Templeman: You don’t normally read verbatim, do you?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a lot to say in a short space of time.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: We listened to the Premier’s Statement in complete silence, and I think it behoves the government to do the same.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Cottesloe. Thank you, Leader of the House. There is no point of order, but the member for Roe, the now Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, will be heard in silence.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As I said, Leader of the House, I have a lot to say in a short space of time. Unlike the Premier, I will not be reading word for word, but there will be quite a bit of information provided for the Leader of the House’s benefit!

Teachers are facing a growing number of issues in the classroom, and the feedback I have had from teachers who have left the profession is that those issues are the difference between staying and leaving. Workload is a major contributor and feeling undervalued is very predominant. That is something that is really affecting our teachers.

The increase in violence in schools is an alarming problem facing the new Minister for Education. This is not isolated to classrooms, but can find its source in many and varied situations outside the classroom that teachers are not equipped to handle. My concerns are also directed at departmental support for staff members who are victims

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of violent acts in classrooms. From the evidence I have heard and from what I have seen with many teachers, the support is not adequate when they have to face violent acts in our classrooms. I know of many teachers who have actually left the profession in the last year or two simply because of the lack of support from the department. That is something that needs to be taken into account. In some cases, support has been minimal or non-existent.

Over \$6.7 million was paid out to departmental staff for mental stress in 2020–21. Some of that may be COVID-related; however, the trend of these payouts is increasing, and the department needs to take responsibility. The previous Minister for Education and Training announced a raft of incentive packages that have been described as confusing; I will be asking questions over the year about the outcomes of those packages, because they came very late in the piece last year. We look forward to getting some information as to how successful those packages have been, especially in remote and regional communities.

As members know, last week there were 24 principal positions advertised on the Jobs WA website; of those, nine were regional. A particular challenge is the number of principals who are holding substantive positions. In 2022 there were 792, and this number seems to have been reasonably constant over the past four years. We have a merry-go-round of teachers and principals holding onto their positions when they are not actually at the school. They can be five or six years down the track from where they were, but unfortunately they are still holding that position. That creates a cascade of different teachers and principals not holding their substantive positions. Some of my smaller regional schools have had anything up to seven or eight principals in the space of two or three years because of this merry-go-round. That is a real disappointment to me.

Last year, the Premier said there would be career practitioners employed in 70 public schools in WA. I will be asking questions to see whether that target has been reached.

I refer to an article about truancy by Holly Thompson that appeared in WAtoday yesterday. The article refers to an Indigenous education officer who is very concerned.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The officer is very concerned about Indigenous children not coming to school and fewer people being employed to directly address the issue. My concern is that maybe we have a few too many people up on Royal Street and we need a few more Indigenous education officers out there addressing why these students are not at school. The article states —

The officer, who is not named to protect her job, said there had been a 30 per cent drop in education officer roles in the past few years, and it was hard to attract younger workers without career progression or a living wage, as there were not many full-time options.

...

The data shows that by year 10, Indigenous attendance rates last year dropped to 54 per cent—30 per cent lower than their non-Indigenous peers.

That is a real concern. Flowing on from that, the article quotes Shane Yardley as stating —

“There's nowhere near enough funding or resourcing going into engaging [Indigenous] students.”

...

SMYL Community College acting principal Shane Yardley works with young people who have disengaged or who are at-risk of disengaging from mainstream education.

“It's getting more and more difficult to get [Aboriginal education] workers. There are not enough of them in areas of need,” he said.

Tellingly, the article continues —

Yardley said new Education Minister Tony Buti appeared to be readying to focus on ATAR and university entry rates, rather than attendance and engagement.

“I think that's the wrong thing to be doing,” he said.

“Encouraging VET, certificate courses and other alternative pathways and ways to employment is where we would actually improve the lives of the Indigenous students and their families and improve things for the next [generation].”

I think those are telling comments by Shane Yardley, and I think it is something that the new Minister for Education needs to take heed of. The minister has brought up a scenario with ATAR students, which is fine, and in some ways I tend to agree with him on certain elements and in relation to university pathways, but the number of ATAR students has dropped to somewhere in the order of 32 per cent. It is important that we actually look at the other 68

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per cent of students. What are their pathways? Where are they going? How can we support them? I understand what the Minister for Education is trying to do, but I worry that he is trying to distract us from some of the more important issues. We will see what happens this year through various questions.

I want to talk about our district offices in the regions, which have been relegated to minor points of contact for regional schools. The regional directors have very big areas to cover and it is very challenging for them to have direct contact with their principals, and some of them are new principals out in the regions. As far as I am concerned, we need to focus on places like Narrogin, where there used to be a very strong presence in the regional education sector and a lot of good mentoring came out of that regional office. It is now a challenge, because the regional education directors in wheatbelt regions, as the members for Central Wheatbelt and Moore know, have a massive area to cover. That is challenging.

While I am on the subject of gaps in resources, let us look at how the crumbling health system is affecting the education system. Children who are being referred to the public health system for an autism assessment are being told they will have to wait for two years before they can be assessed. That leaves parents floundering and wondering how they can best support their child or children over those two years. It means that their child might miss out on critical learning and therapies during their important formative years. We then have the shocking statistics that 5 000 children are on a waitlist to see a speech pathologist and 6 000 children are waiting to see a paediatrician. That is not good enough. We need a holistic approach to both health and education, especially in this early childhood sector. I know that the member for Central Wheatbelt, Hon Donna Faragher in the other place and I are very interested in what this government will do in the early childhood space.

I have mentioned this before. If a principal is going for a job, why would they look at a regional post if they have to pay an extra \$30 000 from their salary to rent a house? Why would they not just apply for a metropolitan job down the road? What is the incentive to apply for a regional principal position if there is one? I would be happy to hear of that incentive from the Premier or from the Minister for Education. That is a real challenge out in the regions. We have been told that a teacher is in front of every class, but I know of many schools that already have relief teachers filling gaps. The current education minister and the director general are papering over the cracks, saying that there is nothing to see here and that a teacher is in front of every class. I can tell members what: as the State School Teachers Union president pointed out, we actually need the right teacher in front of every class, and merging classes and grades is not the way to make the statement that a teacher is in front of every class.

Another area of concern is the School of Isolated and Distance Education. Some metropolitan members may not be aware that SIDE is now actually the largest school in the state. My understanding is that SIDE has nearly 6 000 students. In the first few days of the school year, we had a less than streamlined start, with SIDE's ATAR students being left in the dark about their timetables and lessons. I saw on the SIDE website that the first three days were about getting computers and Moodle organised, and SIDE would look at timetabling as it went along. Straightaway, those ATAR students lost the first three days of the school year and had very few lessons in the second week as well. Many of those students are in regional areas. That has put them behind the eight ball by a week already, which is another area of concern for me.

On top of the education positions advertised, we have 38 TAFE lecturing positions advertised. Businesses have contacted me because their apprentices cannot access block training in a timely manner, so their trade certification is being held up, which no-one wants. These positions are in the traditional trade areas like electrical, light auto, heavy vehicle operation, civil construction and mining. It is no wonder that the private registered training organisation sector is gaining ground when the TAFE sector is unable to offer some of those courses.

I was slightly mystified by the new Minister for Training when she recently announced the \$2.9 million investment to attract TAFE lecturers to the Pilbara, Kimberley and Kalgoorlie. Even with a \$15 000 top incentive, we are talking about 193 lecturers. I am baffled by this number, and I am also baffled that the program does not include Carnarvon and some of our other TAFE places in the Gascoyne. I am sure the member for North West Central will enlighten us about that later this afternoon.

The money spent by the McGowan government in my electorate of Roe has been pitiful. Esperance Senior High School remains a high priority, and the community is heartily sick of hearing excuses from this government. The community has formed a subcommittee and it is working very hard to talk to the education minister and the Department of Education. We have a scenario in which the realisation of the state of the 1960s buildings of Esperance Senior High School is coming to the fore for the infrastructure division of the education department. I have written to the new education minister, as have the community and the shire president, and I really hope that the minister takes that on board because the students of Esperance deserve better. Their results are fantastic, given the tough conditions in which they work, and I really hope the new minister takes that on board.

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Before I close my contribution, I briefly mention that the Auditor General has been busy in the last few years reporting on this government, and I would like to congratulate the Auditor General for her work. The Auditor General's overview of the *Financial audit results: state government 2021–22* states —

Regrettably, fatigue and a lack of attention to some of the core foundations of public financial management remain prevalent.

The report found an increase from 17 to 21 in serious deficiencies that required a qualified opinion on financial statements and/or controls. There were 35 separate qualification matters with the Auditor General, and it is anticipated that once the audit is completed, there will be 41 qualification matters across 24 state entities. The only response we have had from the government is to celebrate the fact that the Auditor General has improved access to government information. It is no surprise that there is little response to the Auditor General's report. This is typical of this government: deflect, attack and deny. I commend the Auditor General on the fantastic work that she has done in attempting to hold this government to account.

This McGowan government looks tired. A very real feeling of autocratic fatigue is emerging. Too much power makes for a tired Premier.

Amendment to Question

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As a result of the systemic failures of this government and the real concerns of Western Australian people in relation to the education system, I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and that this house condemns the McGowan Labor government's failure to invest in the health and wellbeing of our state's education system, forcing teachers into early retirement and leaving both students and teachers lacking support

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [3.27 pm]: I rise to speak to the amendment, which I am sure we will get a copy of shortly, and I commend the member for Roe and Deputy Leader of the Opposition's contribution. He has had a keen interest in education since he came to this place. He has a very good understanding of the challenges faced by not only the teaching, administrative and department staff, but also parents and families as they seek to make sure their children can access the best education possible. Without doubt, challenges are impacting the system, and it seems incongruent in a state as wealthy as Western Australia that we have challenges in what I would call one of the two basic delivery areas for a state government: education and health. It is a truism to say, particularly in regional areas, that people will leave communities if they cannot get access to decent education for their kids, for themselves or for their employees, or if they cannot access good health services.

They are the two deal-breakers for a majority of families, particularly when they live in regional Western Australia and do not have ready access to what others may take for granted. The system in the metropolitan area is not perfect, but there are some compounding challenges for those who live in regional, remote and rural areas of Western Australia, and that is something I would like to focus on.

I come back to the underlying issue, which is that education and health are basic service areas for governments to deliver. The two are intertwined, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out. A passion and focus of mine, particularly from an electorate perspective, not only when I was a member for the Agricultural Region but also as the member for Central Wheatbelt, has been to try to improve access to education services in my electorate right from the very beginning—from child care and early education services right through to university, TAFE and our vocational education and training system. I have been involved in a number of projects and programs and I also formulated policy when we were in government to deliver on some of the things that we believed would deliver a better outcome for communities, not only in the wheatbelt, but also right across regional areas.

This government made its mark on coming to power in 2017 by launching an all-out attack on regional education. That is how Labor chose to start its tenure in government. I do not say that lightly. It was absolutely a misstep and it still underlies people's views about how this government goes about education in regional Western Australia. I am sure the member for North West Central can speak about the cuts to Schools of the Air, as she has had a long affiliation with that organisation. Those cuts were eventually reversed because the community would not tolerate them. The government also refused to fund Moora Residential College when it was clear that that decision would significantly impact access to education in that part of the world. I must say that that facility is nearly full and providing an amazing service for that community and the regional district, but this government refused to fund it; we had to go to the federal government for funding to make sure that those upgrades were delivered. A raft of other cuts to the education system made things very challenging, including to the boarding away from home allowance. That has not been rectified. The boarding away from home allowance is often dismissed or referred to in this Parliament by members opposite as something that is there to support rich families who want to send their kids to

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private boarding schools. That could not be further from the truth. This happens when people have no other option—they run out of education for their kids because there is no school within their perimeter, region or district that they can send their children to for those later years. They have to send them somewhere else. They may send them to Perth for a private school education, but in many cases they send them to a senior high school somewhere down the road and they board at a residential college.

When we were in government, we invested significantly in residential colleges to make them attractive and appropriate for parents who were forced to send their kids away to live and get educated. Alongside that investment in residential colleges across the state, we upgraded the senior high schools. No parent should walk into a facility and feel like they are making a second choice or a choice that is not good enough for their kids. I can tell members that on coming to government, we went to visit Merredin Residential College, which had not seen a lick of paint since it was built in the 1970s. If I had kids, I would never have felt comfortable sending them there. I would have turned around and said that I was going to either leave town and put myself under considerable financial pressure, or find a way for them to go to school somewhere else, because it was simply not what most people would find acceptable for their kids to live in. As a result, we had a significant program of investment through royalties for regions to upgrade residential colleges, including the Esperance facility in the electorate of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—an amazing facility—and Merredin Residential College. There are a number of residential colleges across the regions. Moora Residential College was the one that achieved great infamy, but it is still there serving that region. However, this government decided not to invest in it.

I am talking about this at length but investment in our schools, residential colleges, early childhood centres and the higher education sector in regional Western Australia is important because everyone has a right to an education. As the Premier said in his speech, the way to lift communities is by providing opportunities to families who would otherwise not have them. However, if education is not accessible or affordable in a local area, we are not doing our best in a state that has a \$6 billion surplus because we are not serving the best interests of those communities. The infrastructure is as important as the people we pay to deliver that education to our kids, whether they are early childhood educators, primary school teachers, administrators, deputy principals or principals. All that work compounds to make sure that our kids get the best educational outcomes possible.

Our government made a significant commitment to improve infrastructure in the regions. There was more to do, but we made a very good start. I am very proud when I walk into a school like Northam Senior High School and see a state-of-the-art arts facility that allows that school to offer some fantastic opportunities, whether in learning how to operate state-of-the-art new technology, manage a theatre, run dance classes or do all the behind-the-scenes work. They hold music classes at this facility, and the community can use the facility as well. It is absolutely amazing. We have not seen that kind of transformative investment from this government, as opposed to just patching things up. When I say “patching things up”, I think of schools like Hedland Senior High School, which our side of politics has raised again and again. It is not good enough to just patch over some of the damage. Wherever kids are, they deserve the best infrastructure. If the government cannot fix a school in a town like Port Hedland, where the wealth is generated, then its priorities are wrong.

I wanted to also talk about another challenge. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition talked about attracting and retaining staff. This was also a challenge when we came to government in 2008. Forgive me for the history lesson, but it comes around quickly, and the lessons have not been learnt by this government. The challenge that we faced when we came to government in 2008 was that there had been no investment in housing or land packages. That included investment in Government Regional Officers' Housing. Our government had a significant and expansive program to deliver 400 GROH properties, and we achieved that before 2013. This is a lesson for the ministers opposite, and particularly the new Minister for Community Services: we also had a program that sat alongside that to invest in housing for non-government organisations. If the government will not give those organisations the money to enable them to deliver services to support our communities, such as speech pathology and other wraparound services, it should at least provide some funding for affordable housing so that they can attract and retain staff in those communities. We did that too. This government, this Minister for Housing and this Premier talk ad nauseam about their investment in the housing sector and what they are aspiring to do, but they have actually not delivered anything at this point. We had significantly less in the bank when we were making these investments, but we prioritised them. We said that it was important. We asked: how do we attract a teacher, a nurse, a speech pathologist or any kind of public servant or community service organisation without having appropriate housing? We hit our commitment. A media statement was put out on 31 October 2013 about an 18-unit complex in Halls Creek, which included the 400th GROH home for regional Western Australia. That was in addition to the cost-of-living work we had done to incentivise people to move to the regions. That was not just for teachers, but teachers were included. We had a “housing our workers” initiative through the GROH program, and we delivered almost before the end of our first term of government. I am yet to see anything like that under this government, other than promises and

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press conferences at which the minister earnestly says that he is doing his best. Meanwhile, we are really struggling to fill those teaching positions.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was quite right. When I spoke to the local governments in every single one of the communities that I visited in my electorate at the end of last year for school graduations, they said that they had had conversations with the Department of Education and various other government agencies about building houses. These are local governments that do not have big rate bases. My biggest community is Northam. After that, we get down to communities that have maybe 200 or 250 people in them if they are lucky. Some of those communities are big ratepayers because they have land, but many of them are not. The government is abrogating its responsibility to build houses and open up land, or at least incentivise the private sector or the local government sector to invest in that by removing some of the expense of putting in the headworks. Last year, the opposition made a commitment that if we had the opportunity—we looked to the government to match it with its \$6 billion surplus—there should be an ongoing headworks program that incentivises and makes it easier for investment in regional communities, whether through the residential, commercial or business sectors. Take out the barriers that we know make it more difficult for houses to be built and for local government to consider that as something that is real. If the government will not do that, it will have to build them itself, and that is what the state government is failing to do.

We have the challenge of having a significant number of teacher vacancies. Programs have been initiated and an incentive program has been introduced for various schools to add bonuses to attract and retain staff, but that just skews the market. Wyalkatchem District High School is on the list that was announced at the end of last year to attract staff because it has obviously had a number of vacancies over time that put it into that category. That school has been put on the program. Tannin is not more than 25 minutes down the road, and Cunderdin is the same distance in the opposite direction. There is also Kellerberrin and Koorda to the north. All those communities are probably saying, “Hang on. We’ve got great staff. How do we reward them?” It is not a perfect system. I have been in government and had to make decisions like that. Every policy has adverse outcomes. I am not sure whether this one was very well thought through. In fact, given that the opposition has been asking quite consistently for the Minister for Education to say whether we will have a teacher in front of every classroom, and we have not had a great response from the minister, I believe that the government thought up this program to prove that it was doing everything it could to put a teacher in front of every classroom. I think every relief teacher in regional Western Australia has been called back in, including those who have just recently retired. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition told me about someone in Darkan who retired and was called directly back in for the new year. That is great and it is a wonderful opportunity for them to stay in the workforce, but it is not growing or creating new opportunities or dealing with the systemic challenge that we have, which is that there simply are not enough teachers in the market.

Before I get to the end of my contribution, I want to quickly recap my conversation up to this point. There has been an opportunity for this government to do a few things to improve, particularly around housing. That is something the opposition has been pursuing for some time. I talked about the boarding away from home allowance. The Nationals WA went to the last election with a comprehensive policy about how that could be restored, particularly in light of the cost-of-living challenges we are facing now that have only escalated since March 2021. The government would do well to look at how it might be able to put that in place to reduce some of pressures on those families who do not have any other choice.

Another thing I want to talk about very briefly in the five minutes I have left is that the government could be engaging more on early childhood education. The Productivity Commission has just announced an inquiry into early childhood education. I will be making a submission to it, and I note that the opposition shadow spokesperson will do the same. When I first started as a member of Parliament, we had a very patchwork network of small but very committed volunteer-run childcare centres across my electorate and the wheatbelt in particular. They were not sustainable and they caused an enormous amount of grief for the volunteers who ran them. As a consequence, we stepped back when the federal government changed its regulatory environment and looked at how we might better deliver a service that was sustainable for our smaller communities, because without child care, early education and early education opportunities for our kids, we are doing them a huge disservice. The Regional Early Education and Development model came out of work done by some very committed people. It was initially funded through a Lotterywest grant and it was one of those policies that survived the change of government. It was good enough to get through. I commend the government for continuing to support it, but what is needed now is additional support to make sure that we escalate those issues and the wins that we have had through that process up to the federal Minister for Early Childhood Education. Ann Aly, the federal minister, was at the conference held by REED earlier in the year. There were so many learnings to be taken from that process. We must make sure that the federal government understands the opportunities that are there, having had a homegrown model that is now not only providing early education opportunities for kids, but also employment opportunities and higher education opportunities. It has given a greater level of respect and opportunities for people coming through who work in that system. We need to pay

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early childhood educators more. I do not think anyone here would not agree with that. That is a federal government responsibility, but I will join hands with whoever in this Parliament wants to say that we need to do more on that front, because that early education piece is critical. Not enough of our kids, particularly in Western Australia, get the opportunity to participate in that. I am willing to work with anyone in the government or non-government sector about progressing those opportunities and taking the learnings that are evidence based and have been done incredibly well, and applying them beyond the wheatbelt where it exists at the moment, because it is too good to pass up that opportunity. The pipeline of education needs to continue from the very earliest moments of life through to university and higher education. I was very pleased to see that the federal government, before it changed, funded a wheatbelt university centre for our communities. That means there is support for university students undertaking degrees in the wheatbelt where we have a significantly lower number of university students compared with the metropolitan area or broader Western Australia undertaking university education. I think the Minister for Education is interested in that. He has made comments around ATAR and the pursuit of education through university degrees. We need to make sure that these university centres are supported through not only the federal government, but also the state government.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have one minute. It is called Lumen Wheatbelt University Centre. It is a permutation of the Geraldton and Albany models that suits the wheatbelt, and it is just getting started. I congratulate Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt, and Mandy and “Tuck”, the chair, for pursuing it. It is an amazing opportunity for our students. It is a lifelong education opportunity where there are very limited opportunities for support in our regional areas, particularly in the wheatbelt and central wheatbelt.

I urge this government to do better when it comes to investing in education and stop just papering over the cracks. In a government that has a \$6 billion surplus, we have to see a better outcome across the board, whether it is early, primary, secondary or higher education.

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [3.47 pm]: I rise to talk further on the comments that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and member for Central Wheatbelt made about education. Clearly, my conversation on education today will be around the northern part of the state. I have no doubt that everyone here is very aware of some of the challenges that everyone is facing throughout the north west. This comes back to education every time. Every time we read on the front page of the paper what is going on in those towns and what is happening in those communities, it can be traced back to education.

It is clear that education is the key to change. It is what we need to turn the dial and change the lives of the young people in those towns and communities. It will improve their behaviour and quality of life. It will create employment opportunities, their self-esteem will return and they will have a sense of belonging, whereas at the moment a lot of them just travel the streets daily and at night, and there is no clear direction for them.

I would also like to take a second to commend and thank all the really hardworking and dedicated people that we have in the region. There are massive deficits across the board, particularly in specialist teaching. I will share an example. There is no cookie-cutter approach. I went through Mt Magnet, Cue and Meekatharra a few months ago and one of the teachers invited me to come on the bus that takes the kids to school in the morning. I said, “Sure, fantastic.” He said, “Wear your runners.” I expected an orange school bus with wheels to turn up, but the school bus in that town involves the principal walking along the streets of the town with his two dogs. By the time we got to the schools, we had 15 or 20 kids following. That is the school bus in their town. It is an example of educators in different places making different rules and taking different kinds of actions to make kids want to go to school. That was a really innovative experience for me. I am just highlighting that there is no cookie-cutter approach for these schools.

Like the member for Central Wheatbelt, I began and finished my primary school education with Schools of the Air, which is well known. For me, it is a critical arm of education that cannot be underestimated. My daughter has just gone away to school in Perth. A number of girls in her cohort were in different years at Schools of the Air. Without that, they would have had to leave their home a lot earlier than they have. It keeps people in the region and educates people in their own environment. The point of that is that there are many ways to learn. In my electorate, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. We need alternative pathways. We have a large number of disengaged children and many very young children. I know that the mantra amongst all members is that parents need to stand up and be held accountable. In many instances, the parents of the kids who are not being parented have never learnt to be parents. They never had parents; they never had role models. To expect them to stand up and be parents who instil rules in these kids and give them guidance is drawing a long bow. I think we need to instil education in these young kids. We need to give them pathways. I spoke to an eight-year-old on the street recently when I was in the north and I asked him why he was not at school. He said that it was because when he went to school, he could not understand anything. What he was really saying was that he had not been to school much throughout the 12-month period. If all the days that he had spent at school were added up, he probably would have been in a year 1 space. He went

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into a classroom and he had no idea what anyone was speaking about. Then he rebelled; he threw a chair through the window. He told me that. There are reasons why. This is what we need to look at when I say that we need to be innovative in managing these situations and catering education for this cohort of kids. The second chance school in Carnarvon, where some of these kids went, is no longer operational. The school up there is looking for another space where it can cater for these children who do not fit into the mainstream school. They have not been to school at all. One little boy had gone for his second day and I think he was in grade 2. That is where we are at. We need to look at ways to find spaces for these children. I urge the government to help local shires and communities to make these models fit within their requirements.

Truancy is another issue that has dropped off. We do not have truancy patrols in the regions like we used to have 10 years ago. Local people have made the observation that a lot of regional managers in many agencies have been removed from the Gascoyne and have been centralised in the midwest in Geraldton, which is a 500-kilometre drive away. If they are centralised in Perth, it is 1 000 kilometres, and if they are in Exmouth, it is even further; it is another 500 kilometres. That makes it really cumbersome for people to make decisions on the ground. Education is one part of it. Education clearly needs the support of child protection and housing. There needs to be an all-of-government approach, which the Premier mentioned today. Education is linked strongly to all these different agencies that I have just mentioned.

There is overcrowding in housing. I spoke to a person who used to collect these children and take them to school. They are too afraid to go now because their parents are saying that they do not need to go to school. They are getting embroiled in these discussions with the parents of the children, who are not encouraging them to go to school, so the children are confused. There are clearly very specific situations in different towns, and each community will have its own set of circumstances. I urge the government to be open to whatever that might be. Some kids do not want to sit down in a classroom. At one of the schools, they played skittles on the oval and the kids eventually learnt to count. That is a generic example. They had never sat in a classroom, hence the need for diverse ways of learning.

Some of the disengaged children in the north particularly and, I imagine, throughout the state who are in need of intervention also need specialist services. Some of them have foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autism but it has not been diagnosed. I spoke to a foster carer the other day who said that she had been looking after a child since she was very small and the child is now 16. She has recently found out that the child has FASD. The foster carer has now been skilled in how and why the child reacts. She knows not to intervene or pull the child into line when she is highly activated. She did not know that for a long time. We have a lot of work to do to help the people on the ground, as well as the displaced children.

I also observed that a lot of these kids were suspended last year. I had great conversations with them on the street. I asked them what they were doing and they said that they had been suspended. I asked them how long they had been suspended for and they said that they were not sure but they were just suspended. My first thought was that if they were suspended, they should be in some form of care. They were being dropped at home but they were not staying there; they were roaming the street for 10 days. There needs to be an alternative for children who are disruptive for lots of reasons so that they are in some form of education, whatever that might look like and at whatever level it might be. The Edmund Rice Education Australia second chance school, which is closed, was a good example of a school that dealt with some of the issues of children not having anywhere to go.

As members have mentioned, teacher support is critical. The safety of teachers is absolutely critical. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition touched on the recent announcement about TAFE. A person said to me on the weekend that they did not understand why the incentive was not extended to the Exmouth and Carnarvon TAFEs that sit under Central Regional TAFE. They said to me that before Christmas, lecturers were offered incentives to leave—I understand a couple did—and that this year fee-free courses are being promoted. Their question was: what does that mean? They wanted to know whether they will have limited lecturers to meet an increased demand, because incentives are again being offered for lecturers to work in the area. This has all happened in five months. Their question to me was: where will that leave education at the Carnarvon and Exmouth campuses and what is their future, given that this seems to be a conflict, as the agriculture sector is also looking at implementing some courses? That is something to consider for TAFE lecturers and some of the people on the ground. It has raised questions for them. This is really important, because we want to try to bring young people through. Some may be doing a trade, but some who are not going to high school may need to do alternative courses, so we need to make them available for those young people.

In summary, this is nothing new, but a whole-of-government approach is needed, as the Premier said today. Education is crucially important. The children in Banksia Hill Detention Centre and those who come out of Banksia Hill are not getting that opportunity. I suggest that a number of them probably have not been to school for a long period. They also do not have the benefit that we have—being a parent who can be a role model and explain to their children that this is the pathway they need to take. We need to find alternative ways, and that is something that I would love to work together with people on. It is crucially important, and I think we need to work together, from every

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aspect and on every side of politics, to try to make a small change. I acknowledge that some plans are already in place and are definitely a positive step forward, but they will not help the immediate cohort, as it will take time for those plans to filter down, so we need to find other ways.

The safe house option is a very good start. These children do not go to sleep at night, so when we say, “Oh, you have just woken up,” and it is 11 in the morning, that is because they were on the street at four in the morning. Therefore, having a safe space for the police to take these children to between 11.00 pm and 7.00 am really is important. I called the 24/7 helpline for a lady last Friday night when I was at home. It was a complicated situation, and on Monday she was none the wiser. Therefore, we do need localised safe spaces and we need to cater for these kids during the night when they are running the streets. They will at least get a sleep. They will at least have breakfast, and hopefully we can get them to school the next day. That will go a long way towards helping the children we see, in the north particularly, who are wandering around aimlessly. A lot of them are hungry as well, and I know that when my kids are hungry they are not happy campers.

I will wrap this up by reiterating what the member for Central Wheatbelt said regarding early intervention. Intervention in some of these towns, I believe, should happen very early. If we can intervene with alternative methods in the short term, it will need to carry through to the primary school years for some of these children. It will not be easy; there is no silver bullet. I encourage the government to see whether there are other ways, within each of these communities, to engage that initial group of children at that end of the scale who are at the next stage of going through the justice system. I think that will go a long way towards reducing some of the dysfunction that the children are suffering right now.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Education) [4.02 pm]: Picture this: it is day one, 1 February 2023. There are 481 000 students in our state and non-government schools. There are 831 public schools, and if we add the non-government schools, it takes the number to over 1 000. There are about 321 000 students in public schools and there is a teacher in front of every classroom. This is not what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition tried to tell journalists. He tried to tell them that every class did not have a teacher in front of them; they did! It was very disappointing that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would go out and deliberately mislead journalists about the state of public education on day one, 1 February 2023. We had a teacher in front of every classroom, an amazing recruitment system, and high-quality teachers, principals, gardeners, cleaners, allied professionals, Aboriginal and Islander education officers and education assistants to ensure that this great machinery of public education in Western Australia could go ahead. That is what we had, and we achieved what we set out to do. This is not what the member said to a certain journalist—that there was not a teacher in front of every classroom—without providing the journalist with any examples, may I add. There was a teacher in front of every classroom, and we had the additional challenge of the flooding in the Kimberley, and I will get on to that shortly.

As the Premier mentioned in the Premier’s Statement today, we also had five new schools opening on day one: four new primary schools and one secondary school. There has been an immense increase in infrastructure in the education system since this government was elected in 2017. With regard to the four new primary schools, they are from kindergarten to year 6 and, as I said, there is one new secondary school. Despite the pressures we have in the infrastructure construction market, we were able to open those schools. I can assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that those schools are state-of-the-art facilities. I went to the opening of the Landsdale Gardens Primary School, which the member was invited to but had other commitments. Had he been there, he would also have been very proud to be part of the opening ceremony of a new school that will educate our next generation. Therefore, let me just repeat: about 481 000 students came back to school on day one, 1 February 2023; 321 000 are in public schools; and there was a teacher in front of every classroom.

I would have thought that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would know how recruitment happens in the education system. As members know, there is a large number of independent public schools, and just because there may be a vacancy on a website, it does not mean that there will not be a teacher for that position. As the member very well knows, there are people who hold a permanent position and they may go off to another school to help out or go on holiday, so that position is then filled on a temporary or casual basis. It does not mean that there will not be a teacher in front of every classroom. The member knows that. He very well knows that. Even the member for Central Wheatbelt knows that. She talked about not enough teachers being available. There were enough teachers. This happens every year. It is not surprising. Teachers move positions. We should also welcome the 400 new graduates who commenced teaching this year. I wish the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would champion our public education system.

The member for North West Central said that she wants to work with anyone who is interested in helping our students. Then work with us! All the Deputy Leader of the Opposition did through January was try to run down our education system by saying that there was not going to be enough teachers. I must say, I had a little chuckle when

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the Deputy Leader of the Opposition cited the unions. This is from the individual who, when we were debating the legislation regarding the independent monitor to oversee the recommendations of the royal commission into Crown, said that the former High Court judge, whom we wanted to appoint to that position, should be banned from that position because he had been a union official—even though they had been a High Court judge! When we were discussing the protected entertainment precincts, or PEP, legislation, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition brought in an amendment to try to overrule the clause that would allow freedom of association and freedom of industrial action in one of those precincts. Therefore, one thing that the member should not be doing is quoting the union when he hates unions. It is quite clear that he hates unions, because he would ban a High Court judge who had been a union official from being an independent monitor. I mean, that is just amazing. Bob Hawke was a union official; does the member think he should have been banned from being Prime Minister of Australia? Let us continue.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for North West Central have a choice over the next two years. They can work with us—as the member for North West Central said she wants to—to ensure that we develop the best possible system for our children and students or they can continue to criticise and drive down the appeal of teaching as a profession. After hearing all the things that they say are wrong in the education system, why would anyone want to be a teacher? Would they not rather champion teaching as a great profession and the measures that we have put in place to ensure that we have enough teachers? I will go through some of those in a minute. Let me repeat that on day one we had 24 500 teachers teaching in the public education system. We also had 413 full-time school psychologists.

The amendment moved by the member for Roe refers to the wellbeing of the state's education system, so I assume that includes the students. The government has put significant money into increasing the number of school psychologists for students. Over 50 000 teachers are registered, which is an increase of about 3.1 per cent from last year. Four thousand new graduates have started teaching. People have come from the Teach for Australia program. It is a great program, as I am sure the member for Roe would agree. If we break that down, the 481 000 students who attended on day one was an increase of 1.1 per cent, or 5 100, from the same time last year. Of the 321 400 students who were in the public school system for that day, 23 300 were kindergarten students; 178 700 were in compulsory primary school; and 119 400 were secondary students. I do not have the exact number, but around 160 000 students were in the non-government system on that day, which included just over 10 000 kindergarten students; 68 000 students in compulsory primary school; and 81 800 in secondary school. As I said, there were five new public schools and five schools that commenced as independent public schools on day one, bringing the total to 624.

The member for Roe likes to selectively use the union that he hates—because he hates unions. Does he agree with the secretary of the State School Teachers' Union of WA about independent public schools?

Mr P.J. Rundle: I am still considering my position. I've got the report.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What do you mean? How long have you been the education spokesman—two years?

Mr P.J. Rundle: I'll tell you what I don't agree with. The School of Isolated and Distance Education didn't fire a shot.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have been going for only four or five minutes. Give me a break!

The member for Roe is still considering his position on IPS. He is on the side that brought it in. Did he know that? Now he is still considering his position on the policy that his party brought in; is that it? He has been a spokesperson for two years and he does not have a position on IPS. That is amazing. The alternative minister for education in Western Australia, who has been in the position for two years, still does not have a position on IPS, which is a policy that his party brought in. The fact is that we have gone from a very small number of independent public schools in the first year to the 624 we have now. That shows that principals and teachers are voting with their feet on that matter. However, we will wait for the member's considered position on that.

Madora Bay Primary School, Wellard Village Primary School, Dayton Primary School and Landsdale Gardens Primary School were open on day one. I attended a smoking ceremony at Piara Waters Senior High School on day one, and what an unbelievably incredible school it is. There are only year 7s there at the moment, but each year the number of year levels will increase. It is an amazing facility. Considerable works have been done on stage 2 projects and there have been minor works on other school projects. The government is investing in the infrastructure of our education system by building new schools and ensuring that the current schools receive the maintenance they deserve. We are investing in our students. We are ensuring that there is high-quality teaching every day in front of our classes. I congratulate the teachers of Western Australia. The situation with COVID-19 in Western Australia over the past two to three years has been very challenging. This year is the first year in three years that the COVID measures did not need to be put in place to the degree they have been in the past. Teachers, principals, allied professionals, education assistants, Aboriginal and Islander education officers, cleaners and gardeners—all the people

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who make our schools what they are today—have done it tough over the past couple of years and I congratulate them and wish them well for this year.

Let us turn to the Kimberley. Has the member for Roe been up there to check out the schools?

Mr P.J. Rundle: No, I have not been there in the past few weeks, but I will be in the weeks ahead.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member probably does not want to go there at the moment; it is very, very hot!

Mr P.J. Rundle: The member for Central Wheatbelt has been up there.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I know. It has faced a one-in-100-year flood. The way the Department of Education responded was exemplary. Education facilities have been used by emergency service personnel and the Army. The Fitzroy Valley District High School was used by the Army. The Broome school camp site was used by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. It is very fortunate that the communities where most of the schools are situated are on higher land so damage to schools has not been as severe as in other parts of the infrastructure layer of the communities. However, it has been a mammoth exercise. The Minister for Transport mentioned that the Fitzroy River Bridge is down, which has made it difficult for teachers to get across to teach.

Yesterday I visited the Bayulu Remote Community School, which is on the east side of the river. Up until this week, the teachers were being helicoptered over every day. Now they are helicoptered over on the Monday morning and stay at the Fitzroy River Lodge. On the weekends, they go back to the west side and their homes in Fitzroy Crossing. It was very interesting to visit the Bayulu Remote Community School. It was the first school established on a pastoral station. It was established in 1957 in a cave on the side of the hill on Gogo station. Members have probably heard of it. We met an elder called Andy yesterday who showed me a photograph taken in the school administration block of him as a young boy in 1972 when Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon visited the community. There he was, very proud to see the royal family there in that little community. The way the teachers, the principal and Paul Bridge from the education department have responded in the Kimberley has been amazing. When students have not been able to get back to their communities, they have been accommodated in other schools under section 24 of the act.

The government is doing a lot in the education field. It has spent considerable money ensuring high-quality teaching and also infrastructure build so that students can enjoy a nice environment in which to learn each day from high-quality teachers. Obviously, the government will oppose this silly amendment that the opposition has moved.

Division

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

Ayes (6)

Ms M.J. Davies	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle
Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam	Ms M. Beard (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (46)

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

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [4.24 pm]: May I start by saying how absolutely fantastic it is to be back in this Parliament again this year. I look forward to what it may hold for everyone and congratulate all the members who have been promoted.

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The year 2022 was challenging for my electorate. We have three major infrastructure projects going on in my electorate that have tried the patience of many of my constituents, as members could well imagine. We cannot move that much dirt and not get it under people's nails sometimes. I have had to channel many issues through to various ministers. The three projects include the Tonkin Highway gap project, which is massive. I share that with the members for Belmont and Bassendean; we are in a three-way on that. There is also the development of Morley train station, which I share with the Minister for Health and the member for Bassendean, but it is squarely in my electorate, and of course the Bayswater train station redevelopment, which impacts not only Bayswater, but also a lot of my electorate. These are massive projects that will take years to finish, even though progress on most of them has been pretty quick. I thank my electorate so much for its perseverance and patience. As I said, there is a lot of dirt digging and disruption, and my constituents have to deal with all of it. I am proud to be their member and to represent them in this Parliament.

The year 2022 was a watershed year for me. I studied WA's contemporary industry profile in order to identify industries that I could support that met my personal and professional ethical positions while still delivering on jobs and industry diversification, particularly STEM and R&D, while tackling climate change and food security and achieving improved animal welfare outcomes. Members might think about that list and just say, "She's joking; there's absolutely no way you can find such an industry. It would be impossible to match that profile. Lisa, your expectations are too high. Go and sit down." Well, I do not give up. I knew there must be a solution if I lifted my gaze from local industry to look globally at what was happening around the world. Sure enough, I found the sector profile that delivers on all my parameters—the rapidly growing alternative protein sector. I have studied examples in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Asia-Pacific, Australia and Italy. My studies included meetings with the amazing Ari Nessel, the founder and president of Food Solutions Action in California. He is a remarkable individual who is doing amazing work to promote alternative meat products in America.

I also met with Paul Shapiro and his vice-president, Doni, from the Better Meat Co. Wildtype makes salmon out of a tiny salmon cell. They have been deriving cells from the one salmon for over six years to produce cultivated salmon. It does not involve the death of any animal, fish or otherwise, and it is ready to be sold in five-star restaurants. It is an amazing product. Aryé Elfenbein is the co-founder of Wildtype. Sabina Vyas is the senior director of input strategies at the Plant Based Foods Association. I met with Miyoko Schinner, who will I talk about again later. She is an outstanding businesswoman, who is in the *Forbes* top 50 richest woman over 50 in America. She is a remarkable woman who started a business called Miyoko's Creamery when she was aged 64. She is a dynamo.

The others included a group called AMPS Innovation, which is a trade coalition for US-based cultivated meats and includes David Kay from Upside Foods, Kati Karotki from New Age Eats, Patricia Bubner, PhD, and her partner, Gabriel Levesque-Tremblay from Orbillion, who make cellular meats of exotic animals such as bison. There were others, but these people are groundbreaking in this sector—truly remarkable individuals.

I was invited to attend a global summit on food security in Italy at the end of last year. This global summit, which was run by Edible Planet Ventures, introduced me to 140 experts from around the world—experts in science, research, farming, regeneration and animal welfare. I was the only elected member of Parliament from around the world who was invited to attend this forum, and I have to tell members, it was revolutionary for me. It has changed my life and it has made me lift my gaze from some of the negativity I get in this chamber and from some of the more conservative groups that question the development of this in the context of climate change and food security. It has made me understand that I am, indeed, supporting the right industry. The massive learning curve that I used to educate myself on the impact of climate change included how it relates to global food security, the breadth and scope of alternative proteins and the solutions that this industry holds to address the following facts, and I do state the facts.

In 2050, it is going to be impossible for the world to produce enough animal-based protein to sustain a predicted population of nine billion people. This is not fantasy; this is fact. We will not be able to feed the world by 2050. It is really hard to have this conversation in Australia because we have a lot of land and a lot of food, but believe you me, if members lift their gaze from what is happening on our doorstep and look overseas, they will understand the critical nature of food security and climate change. Agricultural expansion is driving 90 per cent of deforestation across the globe, including 49.6 per cent from the expansion of cropland and 38.5 per cent from livestock grazing.

I refer to an article by George Monbiot that appeared in *The Guardian* of 1 February this year, just a few days ago. It states —

Already, 60% of the mammals on Earth by weight are livestock. Humans account for 36%, wild mammals for just 4%. Of birds, poultry make up 71%, wild species only 29%. While the human population is growing at 1% a year, the livestock population is growing at 2.4%.

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Yet we still will not meet that target of feeding the world in 2050; we would have to quadruple that growth rate. It is an impossible target. The article continues —

Global average meat consumption per person is 43kg a year, but swiftly heading towards the UK level of 82kg.

That is massive. It continues —

So, if you don't like the new technologies, what solution do you propose? I keep asking, and the response is either furious or evasive.

Let us look at the energy industry, which in many respects has borne the brunt of climate change strategies and tactics. I understand why that has happened; however, if we look at the facts, climate change from food production is actually a far greater problem. Governments globally simply do not want to talk about it, because it is very, very difficult to have that conversation. Animal-based foods as they exist now bear a huge responsibility for global climate change.

Going back to the energy system, the Monbiot article continues —

It's as if we were urging people to burn less fossil fuel without offering a replacement: no solar, wind, geothermal or nuclear power. This issue is just as urgent, arguably even more so, as livestock farming attacks every Earth system. It's the primary agent of habitat destruction and wildlife loss. It's causing riverside and dead zones at sea. It generates more greenhouse gas emissions than all the world's transport. It sprawls across vast tracts of the planet, inflicting massive carbon and ecological opportunity costs. Both historically and currently, livestock farming is probably the world's most powerful agent of colonial land grabbing and the displacement of Indigenous people. Meat is consuming the planet.

Substitutes for animal products can greatly reduce this damage. They can allow vast areas to be returned to dispossessed people and the ecosystems they defended.

The first cell-cultured meat recently gained regulatory approval in the United States.

That is chicken; chicken has received unconditional FDA approval in America and is now able to be put on menus all across America, and it is poised to expand beyond there very quickly. It joins Singapore in having the first cultured meat accepted and ready for distribution and consumption.

I would like to talk a bit about exactly what I mean by the alternative protein sector. At the outset, I think it is important to understand what that covers and does not cover. In short, alternative proteins are either plant-based or food technology alternatives to animal protein. I often get asked: "Is it as good?" Protein is protein. Animal-based protein will supply all the amino acids and other stuff that your body needs to be healthy. Plant-based protein is a little more complicated; not all plants produce the right type of amino acids to nurture your body the way it should be, so we have to combine some of them. There is a massive list, including buckwheat, lentils, peas and lupins—a very long list of plant-based protein that will give people everything their bodies need.

What is included under the heading of "alternative protein"? It includes traditional plant-based proteins processed into different forms, basically trying to resemble traditional meats and dairy products. It also picks up microproteins, micro-algae and cultivated meat, and I will talk a bit more about that. I have left this one until last, because it is not really on my menu: edible insects. A lot of cultures eat them; I am not one of them, but then I am not one culture! "Cultivated meat" refers to meat from animals that is produced by cultivating a cell directly.

I just want to refer to a chap who appeared on my phone when I googled the topic of animal protein. He is a strange-looking character with a top hat and a double-breasted suit, an older gentleman; I think the photo is dated 1931. I will give members his quote before I say who said it —

We shall escape the absurdity of growing a whole chicken in order to eat the breast or wing, by growing these parts separately under a suitable medium.

Thank you, Winston Churchill. He picked that back in 1931; he was a good man. I am telling members that this is not a new idea; it has been in the mix for a very long time.

Using this kind of cultivated cell technology eliminates the need to raise and farm animals for food in the way we do at the moment. It is made of the same cell types, arranged in a similar structure as animal tissue and, as a result, it replicates more closely the nutritional profiles of conventional meat. There are a number of Australian companies making meat from the cells of animals; however, they are not yet commercially available, for a range of reasons. As I have mentioned, Singapore and the US have now opened the gate. There are companies waiting to get approval in Australia, and I am told that that will not be long in coming. The company that was approved in the US is called Impossible Foods, for its chicken nuggets.

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We are going to see a lot more products entering the market, but will people want them? That is a good question. Alternative proteins are experiencing unparalleled growth worldwide. The shift to plant-based and more sustainable foods is in line with efforts from governments all over the world to bolster food security and reduce emissions as an instrument in the fight against climate change. There are, of course, many people who will balk at the concept of actually eating what they think is an alternative meat product. Some people hate the idea of animal-free meat and there is furious opposition to that prospect in some pockets, but we must understand that the demand for animal-produced meat will never stop. The demand is already excessive and is increasing exponentially, so this is not a threat to our livestock industry as there is no way that we can produce enough animal-produced meat the way we are doing it at the moment.

Going back to changing consumer behaviour, a number of recent reports into the Australian protein industry have investigated the current market share of and likely future demand for alternative proteins. This included reports from the CSIRO, Food Innovation Australia Ltd and AgriFutures Australia, and a white paper by Cellular Agriculture Australia. All the reports concluded that current trends and changing consumer behaviour mean that Australia is already in the midst of changes in food trends. One finding of these reports was that although the majority of Australian consumers are currently animal-meat eaters, meat-reducers, flexitarians and vegetarians are a significant part of the market niche to be targeted as consumers of alternative proteins.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: Current and future trends are also likely to increase the number of Australians seeking meat alternatives. The proportion of the Australian population making almost all vegetarian food choices went from 9.7 per cent in 2012 up to 11.2 per cent in 2016, which was the last time it was measured. I am not sure what proportion it is now but 2016 was a long time ago, so I think it would have increased a lot. Further, the reports found that one in three Australian consumers already consciously limit their consumption of traditional animal-source meat protein, primarily due to health concerns. If anybody has ever been to the doctor for a gastric, bowel or other kind of intestinal problem, they will have been recommended not to include red meat and processed meat in their diet into the future, as they should stay away from that stuff.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the recent foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Indonesia and the conflict in Ukraine have highlighted food supply chain vulnerabilities. Thoughts on nearshoring to promote future resilience are sharpening quickly. Issues like food security may see countries place restrictions on the export of agricultural products, as we witnessed during the COVID-19 crisis. Environmental concerns and changing dietary preferences are likely to lead to a longer term change in consumer preferences towards plant-based or other alternative proteins. Geostategic concerns will also result in a greater focus on food security. Trends such as the shift towards multipolar global power structures constituted by the United States, China, Japan, India and Russia; unresolved and overlapping territorial and maritime claims; and various transnational issues, such as forest-fire harm, climate change, terrorism and people smuggling—there is a whole range of them—will all create opportunities for the alternative protein sector. As a result of some of these trends, many new and innovative cultured meat and dairy products, as well as sophisticated plant-based alternatives, are close to market entry or are already pressing into markets here in Australia and overseas.

I will take members back to the conference that I attended, because this is an emerging industry. There are tensions within the industry, as there are in many industries. The idea of making alternatives to meat products is anathema to some people. They say, "Eat meat or don't eat meat; why make an alternative to meat?" I have already said that it is because most of the population are still looking for the texture and taste of animal-based meat protein, so this is a transitional arrangement. Friends of mine who are in a stronger position on this subject, particularly the wonderful Miyoko Schinner, would argue that the future is about choice. The Alpha generation, and sometimes the Z generation, will simply say, "We want a choice." When they sit down for a cheese platter, they will want to choose between cow cheese, goat cheese, buffalo cheese and plant-based cheese. They will want choice; that is what they are going to ask for. Bear in mind that we are talking about a new generation that gets it; they understand that a crisis is coming and that there is a need for choice in the market.

Miyoko is the CEO and founder of Miyoko's Creamery, which offers a program to work with dairy farmers who are feeling the pressure from changing market trends and the downturn in dairy. By the way, I was very interested to know which unit product moved off American grocery shelves the most last year. Members will never guess which item grocery shops in America sell more units of than any other—it is oat milk. With that kind of pressure happening on a massive market like America, we know that the push is changing things globally. Indeed, we see it in our own grocery shops. What do we need to do to protect farmers and work with agribusiness to help with this kind of opportunity? I think they should look at it not as a challenge but as an opportunity. As I said before, meat is still going to be eaten, but dairy is under a lot more pressure because of changing attitudes around animal welfare and the health of products. It is going to be a challenge for dairy. Miyoko's Creamery goes out to dairy

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farmers, particularly around San Francisco in California, and says: “What do you want us to do to work with you so that you can transition your dairy farm into a farm that produces the products that we need in order to make alternative dairy products?” Miyoko’s Creamery makes cheese, yoghurt and all sorts of fantastic things. Miyoko is on a mission to revolutionise the dairy industry and influence consumers.

The Edible Planet Ventures Summit was about redefining the narrative around food, humanity, the planet and animals. Although we can change consumer behaviour through price and other levers, ultimately, food is a visceral thing and it goes to the heart of one’s being. Until recently, someone born in Japan would have been brought up vegan. This would not be a discussion for people brought up in cultures that do not eat meat or meat-based products. There are some questions to answer about the growth of the middle class in that some people in developing countries might assume that once they become more wealthy, their diet should change, but that should not be the prevalent attitude. We need to work hard to make sure that the world changes its relationship with food, animals and the planet in general.

I would like to now mention some of the things being done by governments around the world and to celebrate some of the work that the McGowan government is doing in this space. Overseas investment research suggests that by 2040, at least a quarter of all food could be sourced from alternative proteins. Further advances in technology and shifts in consumer attitude are driving startups, established companies and investors to enter the alternative protein market, which is projected to reach \$US290 billion by 2030–35. That is nothing to sneeze at. There has been a strong start for alternative proteins in Australia in 2023, with key announcements made by a number of governments, including investment in new protein fractionation facilities in South Australia and a plant protein research and development facility in Horsham, Victoria. This follows on from growing action in this space in Australia in recent years. The CSIRO in particular has invested heavily in alternative protein companies, related facilities and collaborative research. It has a very productive company called v2food, which I think is funded in part by Jack Cowin. For those members who do not know who Jack Cowin is, think of Hungry Jack’s; he is the man behind that. These are really savvy venture capitalists and businessmen who are investing in this sector. They see what is coming. They understand where investment should be placed. The recently re-elected Andrews Labor government in Victoria, which has so often been a leader and role model for those of us interested in progressive policy making, appears set to make this a key area of focus in its third term of government. Think about that! Former Victorian Minister for Agriculture; Regional Development Hon Mary-Anne Thomas already signalled the importance that governments now place on the opportunities made possible through alternative proteins. She emphasised that these proteins present opportunities to boost local food manufacturing and export capability, with room for everyone to grow.

The McGowan Labor government also sees this potential, and I am proud to be part of a government that was the driving force behind some exciting initiatives like the Western Australian food innovation project, a \$21.7 million facility to foster industry innovation, drive business growth, develop new products, and transform our food and beverage manufacturing industry. Construction was completed in mid-2022, and it now includes research and development capabilities, an innovation centre and a production warehouse. The facility will function as a centre of excellence, enabling commercial research, development and prototyping; market-testing of food and beverage products; as well as networking for WA food producers. It will house agrifood experts, innovative startups, business services, trades and markets, and a 600-square-metre common-use food technology facility. It has representation from universities and state government experts. The state government estimates this facility will bring a \$1 billion boost to Western Australia by enabling an additional \$330 million of production in the food and beverage sector, and another \$737 million boost in the wider community over the next five years.

Let us talk about some of the Western Australian companies already doing well in this space. I stress that this is just a very small sample; there are many innovative startups. I start with Wide Open Agriculture, which is listed on the ASX and on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, and is doing amazing things with its labels, such as Dirty Clean Food, particularly in the regenerative food sector. It is a wonderful company. It is a really very clever and professional organisation.

Ilia Gasteovski’s Future Farm Co is a Western Australian wholesaler of plant-based foods. Ilia is bringing plant-based food into Australia and New Zealand, including brands such as Beyond Meat, Gardein, Sophie’s Kitchen, Plantivore and Not Milk. The company aims to educate consumers on the benefits of a plant-based lifestyle, including healthy, more sustainable and environmentally friendly food choices. It has been a huge success already, and there is more to come. In 2019, the CSIRO established v2food, which I have already mentioned is a plant-based meat company. It is exporting widely and with great success through Asia.

If people go into a Woolworths and look in the freezer section, they will find Fancy Plants. It is a Melbourne-based company that produces plant-based desserts. Its tiny pods are sold in Coles and Woolworths, and I should say that the chocolate one is really yummy. Fancy Plants aims to increase the number of people choosing plant-based food

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options, focusing on the positive health and environmental benefits of a plant-based diet. Fancy Plants donates one per cent of its sales back to the 1% for the Planet organisation.

I have talked about the need to have good relationships with traditional agriculture. The road ahead is wide open, just like Wide Open Agriculture. The road ahead for our agribusiness sector's export market is massive and productive, and it is there for the taking. To this end, I am very proud to say that I have worked with the member for Collie–Preston to put on an industry briefing next week for the alternative protein sector in relation to the Collie transition program. It seems to me that with all Collie has to offer—its workforce, location, geography, infrastructure, railway and the like—it is a brilliant place to do business. I am really hoping that the half a dozen or so innovative startups coming to the table to hear about the Collie transition program take advantage of it. Whatever happens, it will be great to have them all online to have a conversation.

I am really hoping to win over the Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy, who is in the upper house, so he will fund a conference on this topic in the second half of the year. He has not had a formal approach from me yet, but it is coming. I am warning him in case he plans to leave the country! I really think that this is a prime opportunity to put on an information session that promotes the opportunities available to venture capitalists and to consumers.

Finally, I want to thank Liz Lennon, my amazing researcher, who did the preparatory work for my study. I now have Simon Barry in my office. What an addition he has been. I must credit him with some of the guts of this speech. He is a remarkable writer. I have forgiven him for being a lawyer; he is still allowed to be a part of my team. He is an amazing addition, and I am very pleased to have him on board.

I finish by asking: if not now, when? If we are serious about the future of agribusiness in a sustainable and commercially viable way for the immediate future, alternative protein is one of the very best alternatives we have.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.55 pm]: I rise very proudly to make my contribution to the Premier's Statement for 2023, and I welcome all my colleagues back for a very productive year serving our community.

First, I acknowledge and say happy Valentine's Day to everyone. I acknowledge two of my constituents who today, on Valentine's Day, celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Joe and Carmen D'Souza of Southern River were married exactly 50 years ago today at Mount Carmel Church in Bombay. On behalf of the Parliament, Mark McGowan and all of us, we say happy wedding anniversary, and I wish them another wonderful and happy 50 years of marriage and love.

I would like to wish a very happy birthday to one of my constituents, Mr Robert Powell, who next month will turn 100 years old. To Mr Powell and his family, I say happy birthday. On behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia, I wish him the very best. We wish him safe and happy times, and congratulations on reaching this wonderful birthday. We look forward to acknowledging his birthday festivities in the community. Happy birthday from all of us.

It gives me great pride to inform the chamber that Hollywood has come to Gosnells. Members would be aware that the state government is funding a film that is being filmed right now in Gosnells. I am very proud to be one of the representatives for Gosnells and to acknowledge that "Gozzywood" is a very real and wonderful thing. The minister, the members for the area of Gosnells and I will be going out to the film site this week. I want to say a very big welcome to the film crew on behalf of everyone in Gosnells. We are very proud to have a wonderful film being filmed right here in the heart of Gosnells in our community. We are all very proud of "Gozzywood". I would also like to give a shout-out to Golly cakes, a local biscuit company that has been making our very wonderful "Gozzywood" cookies, which are being made available in and taken up by the Gosnells community. Thank you very much to Julie and the Golly cakes production team, and I look forward to entering forevermore into the parliamentary *Hansard* the term "Gozzywood".

Acting Speaker, I seek leave to lay this document on the table of the house.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): For the balance of the day, leave is granted.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am very proud to have delivered on my promise of \$2 million towards a youth plaza at Sutherlands Park. Works will begin in April this year on the first tranche. There will be a fantastic youth plaza and skate park that the community has told us will be very similar to the Mills Park design. There will be a wonderful playground, a climbing wall and materials for the community. As I promised at the previous election, I have delivered on our \$2 million towards that. I want to commend the local council for the great work it continues to do, and the contribution it makes to the youth plaza and the facility that the community needs. I am the father of a four-year-old and a six-year-old, and there are plenty of parks and playgrounds for my children but not as many for teenagers. I look forward to the work starting on the youth plaza very soon. Also very soon—I believe people will see the

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date and details of this at the bottom of the video—I would like to invite the community down to have a community signing of the next stage of the funding agreement. Please, come down to the future site at Sutherlands Park and sign the agreement—all the community has already indicated its support for the youth plaza—and acknowledge that the state government, Mark McGowan and I, as promised, have delivered on providing that \$2 million. Again, I commend the council and the community working together to do that.

I am very, very proud that we in the community have funded a number of major infrastructure projects. I invite the community to take part in a conversation with me about the future of the Nicholson Road roundabout and what we will do with the four palm trees. Members would be aware that the McGowan government, in conjunction with the federal government, has funded \$80 million for a flyover over the Nicholson Road–Garden Street–Yale Road intersection, which is right next to the Nicholson Road train station, which is another promised and delivered infrastructure development that is progressing very well. The \$80 million was funded in last year's state budget. The next conversation we will have on creating the detailed design and plans—the next phase for which funding is already committed—is about the four beautiful palm trees that exist at that roundabout. I really want to know from our community what we should do with those palm trees. They are quite large. They probably cannot go in someone's front yard, but I would love to hear from the community what it thinks would be a positive contribution about where those four palm trees should go. Please send me an email at terry.healy@mp.wa.gov.au or go to terryhealy.com.au and let me know what you think we should do with the palm trees as we move to that next phase of delivering all our major infrastructure promises in my community.

On Tuesday, 4 April, Spider-Man is coming to my electorate office. I take great pride in informing the chamber of that and in inviting everyone in my community. Following on from the success of free *Frozen* nights when people could meet Elsa, Spider-Man will be at my electorate office on Tuesday, 4 April from 4.00 pm to 5.30 pm. It is a free event. With the cost of all the milk and groceries going up, it is a free event. There will be free face painting. I encourage young boys, girls and families to come from across the community. Get dressed up in your favourite costume if you like. There will be colouring in and movies in my electorate office at 466 Warton Road, Southern River. Again, people can google Terry Healy Spider-Man and, I believe, they can register. It is a free event. Please come along, spread the word and enjoy Spider-Man, some Spider-Man music and colouring-in activities. As I said, there will be free face painting for all the children, but especially all the MLAs in this chamber! I look forward to seeing you all then.

I am very proud to have worked with the Gosnells council to deliver on my promise of providing \$475 000 to remove all the speed humps on Harpenden Street. We are ready to go. Members across the Huntingdale and Southern River communities have all been mailed a flyer with the current designs of the chicanes of the mini roundabouts for the Harpenden Street design. I have always found, as I have said in this chamber many times, including when we removed the speed bumps on Gay Street, that speed bumps do not seem to work in our community. I slow down and members slow down, but the idiots do not. Chicanes and mini roundabouts seem to be a far better engineering solution design to do that. I want to hear the feedback from my community. People will have been emailed and there are copies of the design on my Facebook page and also on the Your Say Gosnells page. Please call me if you have not had a chance to contribute to those designs. Again, we promised it and we have funded it. The works should start in a couple of months. Please make sure that you get a chance to give me your feedback.

I am very lucky to have some fantastic local student leaders in my community. I have some amazing high schools and primary schools in my electorate. I have to say that the student executive and student leadership of those schools assist me greatly in doing what I do. Mark McGowan and I, as the local community leaders, do our jobs better when we work very, very closely with the student leadership of those schools. I want to say thank you to each and every student leader and their families for standing up, putting their names forward and serving in those roles. I look forward to working with them as part of the 2023 student executive. I greatly appreciate your service.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student executive and leadership team of Wirrabirra Primary School. I acknowledge the service of Wirrabirra Primary School and the Wirrabirra Education Support Centre. I would like to thank our head girl, Sophie Ross-Parker; head boy, Samuel Ansah; and our year 6 student councillors Kaidyn Brady, Elka Friend, Mitun Sujesh, Amirtha Thirupathi, Jeremiah Tomda and Hafsa Muhammad. In year 5, our councillors are Verity Kimbar, Shafee Rahaman and Latiah Woods. In year 4, they are Henry Kunzli, Ayaan Mehan and Marley-Jade Power. I greatly appreciate the service they have provided to our school community and I look forward to continuing to work with them.

I take great pride in informing the chamber and the Parliament of Western Australia of the service of St Munchin's Catholic School and its student executive. I would like to acknowledge in particular the student council—Rosemary Saw, in charge of sustainability; Lily Page, in charge of wellbeing; Emnet Bekele, technology; and Jonty Dye, discipleship. I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of the sports captains—Adriel Kistopersad, Zane Philander, Juliah Ortega, Kenisa Vijayakumar, Peter Wheaton, Thomas Coffey, Ayomikun Okeowo and

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Chantelle Xie. I thank them for their services as sports captains and in their leadership roles. Again, I greatly look forward to working with them in their capacity as student leaders at our school.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr T.J. HEALY: I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Southern River College, a school I used to teach at. I acknowledge our head year 12 prefects, Jaishree Charan and Maddison Clark, and Reeve Mainard, deputy head prefect. The year 12 student councillors are Mi Soi Tar Non, Pratishee Luchoomun, Ryan Gwilym, Nikita Barrett, Julia Christmas, Susan Mohammadi, Rhiannon Gay and Cooper Macey. Thank you.

Our year 11 student councillors are Katie Russell, who is also a Western Australian student ministerial adviser; Soleil Oost; Charmaine Fruelda; Amelia Dillon; Dylan Claassens; Adam Khurram; Saira Mohammadi; Nicole Whittle; and Sunday Thaymu.

The year 10 student councillors are Amelia Thornton, Kaeden Amos, Liane Cano, Jashan Kaur, Naw Rebecca Moo Kwa and Hayley Verco.

Our year 9 student councillors are Han Gay Benny, Lucas Groenewege, Dakota Smith, Ibrahim Khurram, Caitlin Freear, Brayden Spicer, Jayda Dillon and Bethany Dearnley.

Our year 8 councillors are Eloisa Ecoy, Celeste Hansen, Aimee Houston, Harmony Francis, Abigail Owen and Cooper Holden. I look forward to working with them in their roles as our student leadership.

I would like to inform the chamber of the very hardworking student ministers at Southern Grove Primary School where they have student ministers instead of councillors. I would like to acknowledge minister Grace Coke, minister Tyson Ngeth, minister Chloe Armstrong, minister Setayesh Auhadi, minister Matilda Kranz, minister Soha Alam, minister Ayaan Rusmaully and minister Imran Balkhi. I thank them for their service.

Members, I would like to congratulate and acknowledge in the Parliament of Western Australia the service of the Seaforth Primary School student leadership. In particular, I acknowledge our student councillors Hashini Vinayagam and Sybilya Vonhoff and our faction captains Tusipale Tusigaigoa Isaako and Mudasir Rustami of the blue faction and Jayharn Bennell and Leah Williams of the green faction. Thank you.

Members, I would like to acknowledge the prefects of Providence Christian College and thank them for all their service to our community. The prefects are Megan Bell, Zoe Bell, Aileen Benedict, Amelia Cox, Jolene George, Carolyn Hartono, Bethany Jensen, Cyrus Lie, Tadi Madzongo, Sarah Ng, Orphelia Pattula, James Prosser, Isabelle Ramsey and Ann Varghese. I thank them for their service.

I would like to acknowledge the service of the Huntingdale Primary School student executive and acknowledge our student councillors Grace Oldham, Kingston Terito-Hewison, Chloe Fenner, Sebastian Fulton, Atiana Gellin, Hayden De Luca, Grace Lin and Quinn Green. I also acknowledge our faction captains Samantha Kremer and Mitchell Kessell from Hovea faction, Brady Harris and Anthony Vallve from Acacia faction, Ranya Znad and Solomon Taylor from Zamia faction, and Tia Bonnefin and Samar Jaswal from Banksia faction. Thank you.

Members, I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student executive of Excelsior Primary School in Canning Vale. I would like to acknowledge the student leadership councillors Vatsal Chouhan, Zaid Qalandari, Rian Tan, Eva Appel, Sienna Dale and Sienna Wulff. Thank you for your service.

Members, I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Canning Vale College and I look forward to working with them. I acknowledge our college captains Jessica Birrell and Raafat El-Mongi. I was honoured to be there when they were announced at their school graduation last year. I acknowledge the year 12 student councillors Conor Brophy, Emily Parks, Abbey Johnson and Ally Wai—congratulations. To our year 11 student councillors Ariana Carot Collins, Ella McGoldrick and Sam Mamootil, congratulations. To our year 10 student councillors Ana Hall, Eva Carot Collins, Jayden McGoldrick, Munira Alizada, Oliver Birrel and Samantha Herbert, congratulations. I congratulate our year 9 student councillor Isla Cook. In year 8, I congratulate councillors Chloe Drew, Lina Ichigaya, Rhyley MacPherson and Riley Price. Thank you.

Members, I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Campbell Primary School in Canning Vale. Please can I say a great congratulations to, and I look forward to serving with, our student council members Arav, Stella, Timothy, Carson, Zoe, Mason, Layla, Ella, Kyle and Amy. Congratulations. To our faction captains Arav, Stella, Timothy, Carson, Zoe, Mason, Layla, Ella, Kyle and Amy—congratulations.

Members, I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student leadership of Caladenia Primary School. I look forward to working with them. Our head girl is Tara-Ravina Rupesh and our head boy is Nicholas Luong. Our student executive is Rosie Chapman, Ailee Yan, Chloe Dunn, Vidhee Chaudhary, Chelsea Burnett, Nate Ranalli,

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Tyreece Dickson, Cruz Sutherland, Austin Conick and Edward Chopping. I was privileged to be at their student elections last year and I commend all the people who stood. I look forward to working with them.

I would also like to congratulate our music captains for 2023, Nimrat Kaur Sandhu and Sebastian Walker. I congratulate our red faction captains Shahil Ramlugan and Sally Huang and vice-captains Lily Adams, Sloka Juvvadi, Suleiman Alfauri and Alex Zhang. I congratulate green faction captains Levi Wilson and Pei Shan Lee and vice-captains Amanda Tsekos, Orianna Tan, Max Andrezza and Lucas Liu. I also acknowledge our blue faction captains Lachlan Bathgate and Varshaa Mukunthan and vice-captains Eboni Richards, Grace Samuell, Zachary Sasidharan and Mason Bathgate. Thank you for your service. I congratulate our gold faction captains Edwin Wang and Sathie Sabarikanth and vice-captains Ebony Lankowski, Meishu Zhao, Glen Pagtakhan and Henri Manners. Thank you.

Members, I take great pride in informing the chamber of the student executive of Bletchley Park Primary School. I would like to congratulate our student councillors—head boy Conrad Gbajabiamila, Talhah Mohd Rafiz Awar, head girl Aria Arndt, Liam Chapman, Joshua Shibu, Logan Vincent, Luke Barry and Ella Zhao. I acknowledge our faction captains James Jacob and Bridgett Stone from Fraser, Taylor Orr and Kobe Michael from Farmer, Mason Africa and Alaina Page from the Strickland faction, and Chayce Quinn and Peyton Hodge from the Bradman faction. Thank you for your service.

Members, I would like to acknowledge the student councillors and leadership of Ashburton Drive Primary School in my community in Gosnells. I would like to acknowledge student councillors Callie Abogado, Ava McLaughlin, Ryan Tylor, Kira Travaglini, Grace Stolk and Neve Morrison, and our faction captains Amber Garrigan from Murchison, Keylan Appadoo from De Grey, Ashton Meas from Fortescue and Maliyah Bohari from Gascoyne. Thank you.

I would like to acknowledge the fortieth anniversary of the Gosnells Writers Circle in my community. The Gosnells Writers Circle commenced in 1982 and I say happy birthday from all of us here in the Parliament of Western Australia. Its object, which I support as a former English teacher, is to encourage and promote the craft of writing in all forms. Its criteria for membership is to improve one's writing. It is a not-for-profit group that loves the written word and has many like-minded community members who contribute on a voluntary basis. I give a special shout-out to its magazine, *SHOWCASE*, which has recently published its thirty-fifth issue. I also give a special shout-out to Barbara Gurney and her leadership team. I doorknocked Barbara on the weekend. There is an amazing team of people and I want to thank them for all the things they have done. A number of them have published books; I think 15 of their current members have published a book in the last few years. We know there is a great future for the Gosnells Writers Circle. Thank you.

I would like to acknowledge the fortieth anniversary of the City of Gosnells Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, which was formed in 1983 through the amalgamation of the three existing bush fire brigades—namely, the Gosnells, Orange Grove and Southern Districts Bush Fire Brigades, each of which has its own long history of service. The brigade has continued to grow, with currently a total of five fire trucks, an emergency operations centre and 65-plus volunteers providing a 24/7 fire response. The brigade has gone through a number of different technologies, including pagers and mobiles and utilising water-bombing aircraft. The way that we fight fires in the communities in Gosnells has changed, and the brigade has evolved and stepped up every single time. I look forward to being a part of its fortieth anniversary celebrations in the months to come. I give a special shout-out to Rodney Wallington, AFSM, our chief bushfire control officer, and I look forward to working with the brigade. If members of the community have stories that they would like to share for our anniversary, I encourage them to email me or brigade@gosnellsbfb.com.au. Again, I want to say thank you to the state government and the Gosnells council for its role in supporting the great work that our Gosnells bush fire brigade has done and will continue to do for many years. I say happy birthday from all of us here in the Parliament of Western Australia.

I take great pride in informing the chamber of the national Prime Minister's Spelling Bee champion who came from Southern River. I would like to give a special mention to Ozi Egesi. For the purposes of Hansard, I will provide the spelling of all the words I am about to say that he passed with. Ozi is a Perth boy. He is an 11-year-old student at Providence Christian College in my electorate who credits his mother with encouraging him to read. He won the national Prime Minister's Spelling Bee just recently and we all greatly congratulate him. He won a return flight to Canberra to meet the Prime Minister and he won an iPad—he might have been more excited about the iPad than about meeting "Albo"! He scored a perfect 30 out of 30 in one minute and 32 seconds in the years 5 to 6 group, despite getting words like baize, adenoids and a number of other tricky words. He is currently in year 6 at Providence Christian College and we send him all our best. I congratulate him. I would also like to acknowledge Aiden, from Harrisdale Senior High School, who scored fifth place in the years 7 to 8 category. He got 24 out of 30 words in two minutes and four seconds.

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I would like to wish Quickmail in my community of Gosnells a very happy thirtieth birthday. Quickmail has been an integral part of the City of Gosnells. If people have received from me a flyer, a newsletter or anything that I have designed in the last few years, be it about youth plazas, local jobs or local trains, Quickmail has supported that. I want to say thank you and happy birthday to another great local supplier in my community.

I would like to acknowledge the fortieth birthday of the Huntingdale Junior Football Club, a fantastic local sporting organisation in my community that trains at Sutherlands Park. I want to acknowledge its leadership over many decades, the number of young people who have trained and continue to train, the coaches, the parents and the supporters. I look forward to being a part of its fortieth anniversary celebrations this year. It has a number of different events. On behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia, I would like to acknowledge its service and the role it has played in our community. Again, on behalf of all of us, we say happy birthday.

I would like to congratulate Natraplas, a local Canning Vale business that was recently nominated for and awarded the Western Australian startup of the year at the RISE Business Awards. Natraplas is a great local organisation. It is a great local Canning Vale business. Over the last 18 months of the COVID pandemic, it donated thousands of masks to my office for distribution to the community, which, at a time of great stress, was greatly appreciated. On behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia, I would like to acknowledge that we greatly appreciate the role that Natraplas has played in our community.

I would like to congratulate Yaso Ponnuthurai on her new role as the head of the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia. She is a great local friend of my community and I say thank you to her for her service.

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [5.25 pm]: I rise to add my contribution to the Premier's Statement. The seat of Nedlands is home to fantastic public education. Indeed, it is one of the reasons that families across generations have decided to move to the electorate. We are home to seven public primary schools, one Catholic primary school and three public high schools—Shenton College, Perth Modern School and the brand new Bob Hawke College. These great public education opportunities are why my parents moved to Nedlands over 40 years ago—so that my brother and sister and I could go to Hollywood Senior High School. It is why we moved back to Nedlands when my youngest was a baby—so that my kids could go to Shenton College. That baby just started year 9 at the college earlier this month.

I would like to extend my congratulations to Shenton College on winning the Excellence in School Leadership Award at the WA Education Awards held in late 2022. As the award acknowledged, one of the features of leadership at Shenton College is that it is both expected and entrusted at every level of the school—teachers, students, staff, the parents and citizens association, the board and the school leadership team headed by Principal Mike Morgan and Deputy Principal Chris Hill. As a parent, one of the things I greatly admire and appreciate about the school is that no matter a child's pathway, whether it be ATAR or vocational education and training, they are encouraged, supported and championed to pursue their own goals and their own dreams. This, too, was acknowledged in the award, and it is this exceptional leadership approach itself that creates the outstanding student results that Shenton College enjoys. Shenton considers results well beyond the numbers and the letters on a student's report card; it is their ability to work as part of a team, to care for others, to advocate for themselves and others, and to be the change that they want to see in the world and their own leadership that is also celebrated. That student participation and leadership is supported through a student council with 80 elected representatives from years 7 to 12. I have met many of those councillors over the last two years and I have experienced them as being both leaders and change-makers concerned with bigger social issues such as inclusivity, climate action and youth mental health. They have taken action on these concerns and also have partnered with teachers, non-profit organisations, local community groups and other community members to take action on these important issues. This is a key aim of the school. In the words of Principal Mike Morgan, it is to prepare confident, outward-looking, collaborative young adults for a life of agency, contribution and fulfilment.

I also acknowledge that this leadership has been tested early in the school year. I want to acknowledge the compassion, understanding and respect with which the school has helped a community that has been absolutely shattered by an unimaginable tragedy.

Of course, the outstanding and holistic approach and outcomes at Shenton College make it a very popular school. Indeed, as I have said, many families moved to the area, just as we did, to be in the Shenton College catchment zone. Alongside the P&C president, Adrian Barich, and the board chair, Mal Cooke, we have been working with the Minister for Education on solutions to ever-increasing student numbers. I was therefore proud to stand alongside the then Minister for Education and Training, Hon Sue Ellery, Shenton College students and the principal, as well as Adrian and Mal, for an announcement late last year about both short and long-term strategies to ensure that this growth at Shenton College is sustainable. The college is going to receive a new and innovative double-storey modular building. The new build will be able to accommodate an additional 300 students. It will house 11 general learning classrooms, a science classroom, staff areas and, of course, the usual student facilities. This investment

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of \$15 million is an efficient way of accommodating the growth and minimising any impact to student learning while it is constructed. The modular building is anticipated to be available for the school year commencing 2024. For the longer term, the Department of Education is developing a strategy to address enrolment growth at public schools in the western suburbs. With approximately 2 700 students and growing enrolments at Shenton, this strategy will ensure that long-term plans are in place to meet the educational needs of the growing population of young families in these areas as they seek the excellent educational opportunities available in the western suburbs. This strategy will provide the government with recommendations on solutions that will deliver for local students, local families and ultimately our local community. I would like to thank the school leadership, including Adrian Barich and Mal Cooke, for their respectful, informed and engaging advocacy for the needs of the growing Shenton College community.

In another major milestone for secondary public education in the seat of Nedlands, I look forward to the opening of the second stage of Bob Hawke College, which will double student capacity to 2 000 students and include a new performing arts centre, dance and visual arts studios, music rooms and a rooftop garden—the first in the state, apparently. The school is beautifully integrated with its existing environment, utilising Subiaco Oval for physical education and recreation opportunities. The architecture is such that as one walks through the school halls, one feels as though one is surrounded by the tree canopy in Kitchener Park, while also being a seamless part of the urban environment. The recent installation of a signal road crossing on Roberts Road is the delivery of a 2021 election commitment, and helps manage traffic and pedestrian flow and safety around the college.

The students of Bob Hawke College, in particular the social justice club, are wonderful advocates for what they want their school culture and physical environment to look and feel like. The commitment of the social justice club to inclusion and equity is something it should be very proud of, and I know that it continues to undertake this work with the full support of the school leadership, including the board and the parents and citizens association. I am excited to see the social justice club's advocacy come to life when we open the second stage of the college later this term.

In my statement last year, I talked about the important work of TransFolk of WA. TransFolk of WA are a peer-led volunteer organisation providing a range of services and advocacy for trans and gender diverse people. It is the only specific support service in WA for trans and gender diverse people—people who often experience significant discrimination including in accessing medical, social and community services as well as experiencing a greater risk of mental health issues, including self-harm, suicide and social isolation. In 2021, TransFolk of WA was the recipient of a Lotterywest grant to build capacity in its governance, volunteers, policies and procedures. The grant allowed TransFolk of WA to employ someone for the first time to build the capacity that the grant was aimed at. With that success and its ongoing advocacy, TransFolk of WA secured state government funding in August last year. I would like to thank the then Minister for Youth, Hon Dave Kelly, for his announcement last year on International Youth Day of \$300 000 worth of funding over three years for TransFolk of WA to deliver support services and expand its youth service project. The youth service project provides support and assistance for transgender and gender diverse young people through meetings, fortnightly workshops, safe and secure online platforms, social opportunities and community connection. With this funding, TransFolk of WA has employed a youth project officer and a team leader, and now has accommodation at City West Lotteries House in West Perth. This space means that it can work with other LGBTQIA+ organisations also located in the building to continue to build its partnerships and capacity. Indeed, TransFolk of WA's success is in part built on its ability to build relationships with other organisations, creating allies and advocates, including the Perth Inner City Youth Service, located in my electorate, Perth City Farm and Rainbow Futures WA.

Along with others, TransFolk of WA has also been a strong voice for change to Western Australia's Gender Reassignment Board, and I thank it for its advocacy on this important issue of equality, fairness, dignity and respect. I am proud to be a part of a government that will abolish the outdated gender reassignment board, creating instead a simple administrative process for updating gender on important identity documents. This means that people seeking to update sex or gender information on a birth certificate will no longer be required to demonstrate that they have undertaken surgical or medical intervention. Applications will be processed by the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. This process is one that is far more equitable for gender diverse people. It is also a far more respectful process that honours people's lived experience and affirms their identity.

Of course, these reforms complement our government's commitment to introduce a new Equal Opportunity Act for Western Australia. These reforms will further entrench anti-discrimination protections to those who are trans, gender diverse or non-binary. As a social worker I have spent my entire 25-year career fighting for systems, structures and communities that are equitable and inclusive. It is, therefore, an honour to be part of the McGowan Labor government that will overhaul and modernise our Equal Opportunity Act. The coming reforms will provide stronger protections for women, survivors of family and domestic violence and LGBTQIA+ communities. It will modernise definitions to recognise the innate harms and disadvantages of sexual and racial harassment; strengthen equal opportunity protections for LGBTQIA+ staff and students in religious educational institutions; and protect

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family and domestic violence victims from discrimination. I know my community of Nedlands has a strong track record of voting in support of progressive referendums and plebiscites, with the highest yes vote for the same-sex marriage plebiscite in 2017. I know that my community will welcome the changes to this act in both principle and practice.

One of the other ways my community has demonstrated its inclusivity and compassion is being in support of the children's hospice. Nearly 600 community members have signed my open letter in support of the coming children's hospice. It will be the first in WA and will provide best practice care to children at the end of their lives. It will be embedded in nature, by the ocean, and will allow families to be together. I had many local residents contact my office deeply concerned by a local government decision that they felt misrepresented our community. Instead, they wanted families and the dedicated hospice staff to know that our community will provide them with welcoming care and compassion.

The comments that have accompanied that letter have not only told of this welcome and compassion, but also shown the need for the hospice. People have shared with us their own families' experience of caring for a child with a terminal illness. Some of these memories and experiences are decades old. They tell of the experience of family separation; of sterile hospital rooms, despite the warmth and care of hospital staff; and of their child's final view being of a concrete jungle. A local resident wrote, according to my notes —

As soon as I saw this proposal I knew the site was perfect! Natural, secluded, with fresh air and greenery. It won't bother anyone (really!) once its there. The incredibly unfortunate children and their families who will reside there will be lucky in this small way to have such a beautiful place to spend precious moments together. We are a wealthy community in so many ways and this site is just one of the many treasures we have. Let us share it with those who are suffering, it is such a small thing to ask of our community.

According to my notes, another local resident wrote of where priorities should surely lie —

Nobody ever wants to be in the position of having to saying goodbye to a child with a terminal diagnosis. The least we can do as a community is to provide a place of comfort, beauty and care so the families can make this saddest of times a special time.

I thank those nearly 600 community members who signed that letter, shared their stories and showed the children and families who need the use of a hospice exactly what the welcoming values of our community look like. Planning for the hospice continues, and I thank the Perth Children's Hospital Foundation for its ongoing fundraising and advocacy on this important service for our whole WA community.

Finally, I would like to mention two local residents and their contribution to our community. "RecyclemanPerth" is a young man with Down syndrome who runs his own microbusiness in the western suburbs. He collects Containers for Change. In recognition of his efforts, RecyclemanPerth—also known as Vik—won the Individual Change Maker of the Year at the Containers for Change Change Maker Awards gala at the end of the last year. Vik provides businesses and residents with a "Vik bin", which is essentially a rubbish bin, and he leaves them at businesses. He will also deliver one if you are having a party or a function. People place their containers in their special Vik bins. I have one that is permanently outside my office. It has become known as the place to drop off containers. Vik collects that bin once a week, but we often call him to collect it on additional days. He won this award in recognition of keeping eligible containers out of landfill, raising awareness of the Containers for Change scheme and encouraging people to use the Containers for Change scheme. By providing a Vik bin, he has made it easier and more accessible for people to bring in their containers. By running this microbusiness, Vik is not only keeping eligible containers out of landfill and encouraging people to participate in the scheme, but also funding his independence. This microbusiness is meaningful work for Vik, his family and us as a local community, and of course it is also meaningful for our environment.

The other resident that I would like to acknowledge is local author Shannon Meyerkort. Her debut children's book, *Brilliant Minds: 30 Dyslexic Heroes Who Changed Our World*, has recently landed in bookstores. The book began as an idea and a concept because Shannon's own daughter could not find any role models of people who, like her, lived with dyslexia. She could not find any stories of success. The book has been well informed and researched through Shannon's own background in public health and anthropology. It is a collection of stories of people. It does not shy away from the challenges, struggles and difficulties in engaging in mainstream education and the resilience that children and young people with dyslexia need to develop. It also shows children, their teachers and their families that there is always hope, there is always a place for ambition and there are many different paths to be forged, like those that have been forged by people who feature in the book—the chef Jamie Oliver, award-winning director Steven Spielberg, popular Australian author Jackie French, entrepreneur Richard Branson, astronaut Pete Conrad, and Australia's very own Chief Scientist, Dr Cathy Foley. I was lucky enough to collect signed copies of the books, which I will be donating to each of the primary school libraries in my electorate. Just as a plug, Shannon works

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locally at Dymocks in Subiaco on Thursdays and Fridays and is very happy to sign copies of the book. I would like to thank Shannon for showcasing these stories and experiences and showing children and families that there are multiple pathways.

There is much to look forward to in the seat of Nedlands this year. I have really appreciated how the community has continued to engage with us, particularly in our activation activities on Hampden Road. I would like to thank Hon Don Punch for joining us on our Halloween trail, complete with costume, as we welcomed over 120 families on a trick-or-treat trail with the small businesses on Hampden Road. We repeated that with a Christmas treasure hunt in late December, again with very enthusiastic participation from our local businesses on Hampden Road.

I want to thank residents for coming to me with their questions and concerns, to my coffee mornings, and volunteering in my office, particularly those who collected community views for our tree canopy survey. With that, I look forward to 2023, for all that is to come for our local community and also for creating a more just and inclusive community for Western Australia.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [5.43 pm]: It is a great pleasure to rise today. I have noticed that the speeches from many members in this place have been far and wideranging, but many are telling local stories. It is gratifying and a great privilege to hear stories from the suburbs, country towns, places and regions of Western Australia. Some members have touched more broadly on issues affecting the Western Australian community and the Australian community. I want to spend the time I am on my feet today talking about something that I think so much about, that revolves around something even as serious as global climate change. I am talking about the delamination of the globalised society. I am talking about how our world has never been more threatened by the social structures or inaction by governments and peoples around the world to attend to a substantive structural issue that bites both at democracy and at capitalism itself. The capitalist market and capitalist free market has been the deliverer of a quality of life and a standard of living and raised so many people out of poverty that these sorts of matters cannot be ignored by any level of government, particularly those closest to the state government.

Like me, I am sure all members had a stack of books next to their beds, some unstarted, some partially started and some that have been circling for years. I, too, knock them off over the summer when I can. I am not the fastest reader in the world. A book I read over the summer break was particularly poignant to me. I was interested in why there is a skill shortage in Australia, particularly in Western Australia. We can find sectoral issues and localised economic issues that lead to these skill shortages. We can find some structural issues. I looked at it more globally. It seems that every developed nation in the world is suffering from skills shortages. When we deep dive into it and we want to find out the reasons, we get quite shocked by what is happening. Typically, a labour shortage occurs when there are not enough available workers—we all know that—participating in the labour market to meet the demand of employers. As a result, that is one of the contributors to the rampant inflation we have had. In places such as the United States, there are nearly 11 million job vacancies but only 6.5 million workers were listed as unemployed in 2022. The mismatch in the US is a very good example. The high level of job openings is not only affecting employers in the United States. For example, early in 2022, employers in Europe were struggling to fill over 1.2 million open job roles. Australia is no less affected. We are trying to fill 400 000 vacant positions. It is the same in Singapore, with 163 job vacancies for every 100 available candidates. So, there is more work than workers.

There are several reasons for this. As always with these complex issues, there are multifactorial matters. The rapid rise of technology and digital transformation has created demand that many skills are not suited for. There is an ageing demographic in many countries. I will circle back to that. There is basically a shrinking pool of workers. There is a lack of investment in education programs that mismatch the modern skills, which I have already touched on, and a reworking of the workforce. Globalisation has increased competition and made it difficult for companies to find workers in a global labour-constrained market. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic has had its own implications; it has disrupted education training programs and interrupted immigration policies.

In some cases, skill shortages may have driven a lack of interest in certain fields and industries, as younger generations opt for careers that are experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. We often talk about the local context. There are more teachers driving Haulpak trucks than there are Haulpak truck drivers. For example, a mining boom does not necessarily create more jobs; it actually shifts labour from one industry to another. I want to dwell on this point for a moment. There is an existential crisis that will confront us over the next 10, 20 and maybe 30 years. That is this idea of an ageing demographic—the world's ageing population. The world is ageing. For years, it has been slowly declining. In the United States, more than 10 000 people a day reach the age of 65 years. I repeat: every day 10 000 people in the US reach the age of 65. That is the US's threshold for retirement. It is expected to continue until at least 2029. That is not too far away.

In the world's largest economy and most robust democracy, we have a massive exodus from the workforce, and that is expected to increase. Studies estimate that by 2031, one in six people in the world will be aged 65 years and

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over; by 2050, that number will double. On top of that, birthrates in many countries are falling, and that is the salient point. People are retiring and leaving the workforce, but fewer babies are being born to replace them. That is a set of diminishing returns right there. Studies have shown that by 2050, the working population in China will drop by 20 per cent; in Japan, by 40 per cent. We all talk about the Japanese challenge, and China is also fast becoming a challenge.

According to UN and World Bank statistics, 75 countries already have fertility rates that fall well below the desired replacement rate of 2.1—that is, 2.1 babies per woman of birthing age. That rate does not meet the replacement requirement; if it goes on, there will be a smaller number of people trying to replace a smaller number of people.

I refer to a recent *The Economist* article titled, “Richer societies mean fewer babies. Right?” It states —

One way to see if this is true is to compare fertility rates across countries with differing incomes and female labour-force participation ... In 1980 countries in the OECD with higher female participation rates had lower rates of fertility. By 2000 that relationship had flipped: countries with higher rates of female labour-force participation had higher rates of fertility ... Since then, the picture has muddied slightly.

By 2019 the new relationship had weakened a little, and it looks less sturdy when considering GDP per person rather than labour-force participation.

“GDP per person” is actually a good way to talk about it and ask whether women who are making the choice to have children have childcare choices, work-from-home options and the sorts of things that will support them re-entering the workforce. Of course, if they are opting to stay at home, obviously their income will reduce.

Our region is not any different. One of the key demographic challenges facing the ASEAN region is ageing. That might sound odd, considering that it is a region with 660 million people. As with many other countries, the ageing population of ASEAN countries is of concern. The ASEAN population over the age of 60 is expected to reach 18 per cent by 2030 and 25 per cent by 2050. This trend is expected to put significant pressure on healthcare systems, as we can imagine, and social security programs in the region.

That, again, is exacerbated by declining birthrates. That trend is particularly prevalent in Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, where fertility rates have fallen below replacement levels. In Singapore, the fertility rate was 1.14 children per woman in 2020, one of the lowest in the world. This trend will have a significant impact on the region’s workforce, as we can imagine. There will be a smaller pool of younger workers available to replace retiring workers.

To counteract these effects, Australia will need to explore new ways to promote economic growth. Just going through the birthrates, the magic number is 2.1 for replacement. Just to give a complete set, the numbers as at 2020 include Indonesia at 2.04, which is good for us as a destination market; New Zealand, 1.87; United Kingdom, 1.86; United States, 1.84; Vietnam, which is largely a young population with more people under the age of 40, has a birthrate of 1.77; Australia is 1.74; and China, 1.6.

These are the structural issues that confront the entire developed world. Our way around this is to make sure that we are diversifying our economy, investing in technology and innovation and increasing productivity to attract foreign investment. As we have seen recently from the commonwealth government, we will need to do more with social security systems that encourage participation by older Australians in the workforce to maintain their productivity.

Beyond all this, there are the social implications of an ageing population. Fewer children will mean that there will be a smaller future generation to support the older generation. The tax base will be depleted and we will have to consider other ways of raising revenue to support the older generation. This will obviously lead to strain on the social network and social support systems, and the safety net that we are so proud of as the Labor Party. It may also lead to a reduction in the number of workers who can support community services such as healthcare and education.

There is also the impact of globalisation. COVID highlighted and, in part, accelerated people exiting the workforce. In the US during the period of COVID over the last three years, 30 million workers exited the workforce and are not expected to return. In addition to demographic trends, changing economic and geopolitical factors will have an impact on Australia’s future. We have to embrace and understand them. We, as a sub-national government, will have to have a singular focus on how we are going to sustain the quality of life that all Western Australians have enjoyed for two generations; we have become a middle-class power.

The other thing to consider is that we are seeing a decline in US global power. Its capacity to influence the world in the way it used to in the Cold War era, pre-1989, is now diminished. We are moving towards a multi-polar world, where global power will be spread between powers such as the US, China, India and Indonesia. As a result, regional complexities will make it very difficult to provide security. There is an important point to make about globalisation, because security is something that we have all taken for granted. The current global security

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arrangements started with the Bretton Woods agreement post–World War II, which created a new order that allowed countries to divert a lot of their attention and resources towards growing their own economies and supporting their own populations.

If we think of Europe pre–World War I, for hundreds of years there were always wars between continental European nation states. Bretton Woods brought that to a close. Of course, it caused problems—particularly in the Middle East, which was divided along non-tribal, non-ethnic and non-linguistic boundaries, and in Africa; we cannot deny that. But global sea lanes have largely been secured to allow the passage of trade, and we underestimate that development. We now have so much activity on the oceans; there are container ships that can hold 20 000 containers, and that has been growing exponentially since the end of World War II. That is an emblematic point to make about how global trade is so important to us all. We are seeing a decline in local manufacturing, and these are the things that happen because of globalisation. We can be thankful that our flat screen TVs are so cheap, because they are part of a globalised supply chain. These are all hallmarks of a globalised system that will come under threat when the security of the sea lanes and of nation states and their borders are threatened.

The war in Ukraine is a classic example of that; Ukrainian sovereignty is being heavily threatened by Russia, and that has disrupted the European and global energy markets, and also commodities like wheat and other grains that Ukraine produced a large proportion of. That is having impacts everywhere. This multi-polar world will require us to understand that the US will be less influential—not without influence, but less influential—and that our relationships with countries like Indonesia are fundamentally important, not just for our economy but also for our security. Engagement with our nearest neighbour cannot be overstated.

As we adapt to changing international systems, this demographic decline is going to require some new and innovative approaches. One issue is our relationship with immigration. The United States has done very, very well out of allowing itself to be a home for the global citizen. The United States as a whole is a unique place. Although it has a declining birthrate of below 2.1 births per woman, it has a unique piece of geography. It has more rivers and arable land than any other country in the world. It has safe, secure borders. It has a two-ocean presence. Its capacity to survive the global demographic changes of an ageing population and the technological changes that we see is going to be very robust, and we should never deny that. The United States also has a very good relationship with its bordering countries, not only Canada, but also Mexico, as much as members might think that it does not. Mexican immigration and its partnership in the North American Free Trade Agreement has created a lot more wealth in Mexico, and more opportunities for both US Mexicans and native Mexicans. That is a good example of how the US will be inoculated in large part through the next 20 years, but not without its challenges.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I hope I have not belled the cat there. There is nothing new in what I have said. The demographic situation globally and the ageing population of the workforce is going to create extra challenges as we also try to decarbonise economies and attend to this idea that maybe capitalism needs to be reshaped. The idea of free market capitalism and productivity based on consumptive growth is something that we need to attend to. The climate change approach is one of those great opportunities through which we can attend to it. We need to start talking about how we are going to recycle, for example, the amount of electric vehicles, batteries and the like that are going to be coming in and out of our economy. It is a whole new industry, but we have to be innovative and technologically savvy, and we have to create a workforce that is open to the idea that we can go into a circular economy—something that we should be very much focused on.

I want to reserve my last couple of minutes to talk about the Voice. It is all fairly new as we try to get our head around the attitudes of our different electorates towards the idea of a referendum on the Voice. It is very important that each and every one of us is engaged in this. We are at a historic point in time. It will not end Aboriginal disadvantage, poverty or over-representation in incarceration rates, but, like so many attempts before it, it will be a waypoint. It will be a step in the direction towards who we want to be and the narrative of what it is to be an Australian, and, in our case, Western Australian. I went to an event that the member for Bateman organised at which Thomas Mayo spoke. It was a tremendous insight from someone who is a signatory of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. He chatted and presented us with a very reasoned approach about how First Nation Australians arrived at that moment. He read the Uluru Statement from the Heart. I had read it before, but, quite frankly, I had not heard it being read with the intensity that Thomas read it with. One particular paragraph captured my attention. It is not very long, so I will read it out —

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

...

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With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

That last sentence captured me. I often listen to many of the welcomes to country and I want to find access to it myself. I want to find out not only whether I am welcome, but also how do I engage. How do I find a place with First Nation Australians as a whitefella? It came to me in that last sentence —

... this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

That gives me an invitation and an opportunity to join with them in part of our national story, to join with 60 000 years of continuous habitation and become an extension of the story that is Australia. Many Aboriginal people in my electorate identify as Aboriginal Australians—absolutely. It does not mean that they are any less committed to their ethnic heritage than they are to the flag. In fact, when I circle around the idea of commitment to a nation, I, as a former soldier, am acutely aware that Aboriginal people were involved in every conflict of this country since before Federation for 87 years before they were even counted as Australian citizens. As a soldier, I find it quite galling that we can ask them to wear this country's uniform and fight, but they cannot actually be of this country. Yet, as descendants of European settlers, we landed in their country. The Voice and the “yes” campaign that I will be wholeheartedly supporting will be part of a narrative that extends back 60 000 years. Yes, it will be one more iteration of what will happen over the next 60 000 years, but I will be able to say to my kids, their kids and the 2 000 generations after I have gone, that they are part of a continuous place that is living with the land, not on the land, and they are working for the land. I use the term “land” in the very broad context of the spiritual encapsulation of the body corporate that is Australia.

I also want to note that small things matter. If some people trivialise this idea that a Voice to Parliament is just another Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, another consulting body, another hot air balloon or tokenism to First Nation Australians, I say, “Bring it. I will take it.” In my short lifetime, I have seen incremental changes that I never thought I would see. One of them happened in my first year as a member about 12 years ago. I went to the Cockburn RSL Anzac Day ceremony in the mid-morning and they did a welcome to country. It was not just a welcome to country, but they had a spirit dance and some Aboriginal service people there. My little old RSL in Cockburn was honouring First Nation Australians, and if a bunch of old veterans who ran that RSL could handle that and embrace it, there was something in it for all of us. That is the incremental change that we are talking about. It is the change that my son and daughter will embrace in a fuller voice than members or I ever will. The welcomes to country that we all slavishly sit through from time to time, and even some of those longer ones that go on and on, are all hallmarks, waypoints and incremental changes that need to happen. I have so much more ambition for the Voice, but if it is just that, that is good, because many other institutions fail us as a community. This one will not fail Aboriginal people. The point to note here is that with a referendum voice from Australian people to First Nation Australians, there is more to lose than there is to gain. I say to my former soldier mates who might have an indifferent view to this, because they are not as exposed perhaps as I am to the sorts of things that we see in our communities, that if it does them no harm, why do they bother? If it is trivial, that is no problem to them. Why would they deny First Nation Australians the opportunity to be part of a narrative that we own?

Finally, to land on something a little more controversial, some of the other more difficult reading that I did over summer was around Aboriginal resistance. As a former soldier, I am naturally drawn to the idea of conflict, how it resolves itself, how there are no just wars and how each and every one of them are actually destructive in an intergenerational way, regardless of how righteous they may or may not seem at the time. I looked into Aboriginal resistance in Western Australia. Nationally, there were some very good things, but I obviously tried to keep it close, particularly to the Beeliar area, where my seat is. I read articles about Aboriginal resistance to the European invasion of Australia by John Silvester in the *Journal of Black Studies*; Aboriginal resistance in Western Australia between 1826 and 1864 by Neville Green, which was very interesting reading; and Aboriginal resistance in the pastoral industry in Western Australia by Anne Scrimgeour, which was also very interesting. The authors talked at length about the things that had happened, like Yagan, the Aboriginal resistance leader; the Pinjarra massacre that we hear about from time to time; and various other acts like the battle of Pinjinnie—I do not know that one quite so well, but reference was made to it—and the Canning Stock Route conflict. I looked at these conflicts to see what their characteristics were. Basically, Aboriginal people had been assimilated into the settler lifestyle of the colony. Some were attracted to the trappings of assimilation, even though they were not full beneficiaries of it. But there were some who did resist.

As a former soldier, I find it very difficult that there is nowhere to honour them. One can go to Gallipoli, as I have, to see the Turkish monument to the Australian diggers who fell at Gallipoli. The moving poem by Ataturk talks about the sons of Australia now being in the bosom of the Turkish people, and how they own their enemy and everything they stood for, and respect and honour them. Where is the place in this state where we hold our former adversaries close to us and say, “Your dead are our sons and daughters now”? Where do we say that these people

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are understood? Where is the truth telling? We can find any number of war memorials on the big green up there that are a testament to the men and women of Western Australia who fell in countless conflicts. We are building a memorial for the Korean War—the forgotten war—and there is no end of support or funding for that. Where is the monument to the resisters, the original soldiers of Australia, where we can say, “We see you, we understand you, we respect you and we honour you”? Thank you.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [6.12 pm]: I am excited to rise to add my reflections on the past six years and expectations for 2023. As we begin the new sitting year, our seventh, I do so with a sense of gratitude and optimism, feeling energised and positive about what the McGowan Labor government has delivered, is delivering and will continue to deliver into the future. Deliver—that is what this government has been doing for the people of the electorate of Bicton and beyond since 2017. We have delivered on the commitments that we made prior to March 2017, and we have delivered or are delivering on the commitments that we made in the lead-up to the historic 2021 state election. Now, with the commencement of 2023, we are ready and raring to go to work harder than ever to keep delivering good government, important infrastructure and vital societal supports, because that is what the McGowan Labor government does.

As we commence the year, we do so on this side of the chamber with vitality and focus, in stark contrast to the embattled and quite literally absent members of the opposition. Since first coming to government in 2017, our state has seen significant economic and health challenges, particularly during the years of the global pandemic. The McGowan government greeted those challenges with diligence and vigour and is well prepared, as a united team, for whatever comes next.

My contribution today will be part reflection and part looking forward. As we commence this year, I believe it is important to spend some time looking back at where we have been in preparation for navigating the road ahead of us. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Premier, the cabinet and all my caucus colleagues for their incredible efforts and achievements thus far. I would also like to congratulate the newly appointed ministers and parliamentary secretaries, and thank all who have served in these positions during the time that I have been in this place. It is a privilege to serve my electorate in the Parliament as part of a diverse and cohesive team. It is as important to me as it is to them that we remain mindful of whom we are here to serve and the enormous responsibility that comes with that service. I would also like to acknowledge and commend the Premier and my colleagues who have spoken before me, and thank them for their thoughtful and positive contributions to the debate.

As I look back over the time since I first became the member for Bicton, I see the many great things the government has delivered in my electorate of Bicton and across our vast state—things that are making both an immediate and a long-term positive difference to the people of Bicton and beyond. We have delivered to schools through the schools maintenance blitz funding to help improve the physical appearance, safety, access and amenity of schools across Western Australia. Delivering on school maintenance was made possible because of the work of the McGowan Labor government to deliver on budget repair. The schools maintenance blitz funding is tangible evidence of this government's commitment to good financial management.

At Melville Senior High School, which is the only public high school in the electorate of Bicton, we are delivering upgrades with the allocation of \$100 000 to the school canteen, \$925 000 to STEM classrooms and \$7.5 million for a new gymnasium that will sit alongside the old and no longer fit-for-purpose building. Together with the \$4.5 million delivered by the McGowan Labor government in 2020, I am pleased and proud as both the member for Bicton and a Melville Senior High School parent to know that our government sees investment in public education in the electorate of Bicton and right across Western Australia as a top priority. The McGowan government's careful, diligent and disciplined approach to the state's finances means that every public school across Western Australia has received funding for vital maintenance work. All but one school in the electorate of Bicton is more than 50 years old, with at least two local primary schools having been built over 100 years ago. We know that ageing buildings require lots of work to keep them viable and fit for purpose. In all, \$724 624 was committed under the schools maintenance blitz funding in my electorate. The McGowan government has continued to deliver science labs across Bicton, with Bicton Primary School having run its lab successfully since 2019, and Attadale and Palmyra primary schools opening theirs in 2021 and Melville Primary School last year, in 2022. We are preparing our kids for the jobs of the future by investing in these science labs, STEM and coding.

As I mentioned earlier, many of my local public schools are ageing and no longer cater adequately for the changing needs of their communities or meet community expectations for facilities of learning. Richmond Primary School had an ageing administration building back in 2021. It celebrated its centenary that year, and that building definitely looked every bit of those 100 years. That was the case until just over \$700 000 was committed to update the building to incorporate contemporary features whilst maintaining the heritage exterior. It was a pleasure to attend the official opening following the refurbishments at the end of 2021, and then to see the now fit-for-purpose admin building in action throughout 2022. Similarly, Attadale Primary School opened its purpose-built early learning

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centre in our first term of government. It was wonderful to be at the official launch of the new school site-based early learning centre back then, and it is wonderful to think that those first students are now, in 2023, making their way through the middle years of primary school better equipped by the wonderful opportunities the dedicated centre opened up for them. The early years are such a crucial time in a child's life and lay the foundation for life outcomes. Play builds imagination and creativity, fosters cognitive growth, delivers emotional and behavioural benefits, improves literacy, encourages greater independence and promotes physical fitness. That is why I am so pleased and proud to have provided \$50 000 towards a nature playground at Palmyra Primary School, which I had the honour of officially opening and testing out last year.

Post-secondary education and training is a top priority of the McGowan Labor government, which it has demonstrated repeatedly since 2017. Many of the skills that are now in short supply are learnt at TAFE and training institutions, and by reducing or removing fees altogether, we are creating opportunities for young people to launch their careers by getting the skills that employers want, without expensive course fees. This in turn leads to more local skills and more local jobs. TAFE can be an important alternative pathway into university.

This is a great example of how the McGowan Labor government is leading the way in job creation, job security and career pathways for Western Australia's school leavers. Small to medium-sized enterprises are incredibly important employers. SMEs represent around 97 per cent of all businesses in WA. From manufacturing and business services to retail, hospitality, transport and so much more, the sector is a significant employer and job creator. This government is continuing to deliver for the small business owners of Bicton and beyond, and as someone with a small family business myself, I know firsthand how important it is that small business owners have access to resources, opportunity and support. In some parts of my electorate, income from small business ownership is the primary source of income for over half of that local population. In Attadale it is about 42 per cent. I acknowledge the former Minister for Small Business for his leadership in this area with the work that he did in the procurement space through our commitment to local content in state government procurement via the implementation of the Western Australian Jobs Act. I would like to congratulate the new Minister for Small Business, Hon Jackie Jarvis, and I am excited to see her bring her vast personal knowledge to a portfolio that has great significance for my electorate. The small business owners of Bicton simply want the best opportunity to secure work and grow their businesses, and that is what this government is doing.

The Western Australian Jobs Act, initiated when we came to government in 2017, sets out the government's commitment to ensure that the \$25 billion-plus spent annually on state government procurement maximises opportunities for local businesses and creates more jobs for Western Australians. The WA industry participation strategy sets out the pathway to this opportunity. There is a renewed confidence amongst the small businesses of Bicton and a sense that our economy is continuing to be on the up under this government's leadership. Likewise, the changes to payroll tax have also been welcomed by local small business owners. The delivery of payroll tax relief for WA businesses has long been called for by the sector, and proves once again that we are a government that listens. Again, this change was only made possible due to the McGowan government's careful budget management, which resulted in the payroll tax cut for nearly 12 000 small and medium businesses in WA, with around 1 000 businesses in Western Australia no longer being liable for any payroll tax, while also cutting payroll tax liability for an additional 11 000 businesses. The lifting of the exemption threshold to \$1 million over two years has been good for many small business owners in Bicton. These changes continue to provide important tax relief, with reduced costs for businesses leading to their ability to expand and create more jobs, which many are achieving, despite the challenges of the global pandemic and the ongoing economic fallout.

Good financial management is important to the people of my electorate. I know this because when I knock on the doors of Attadale, Bicton, Melville, Palmyra and East Fremantle, I am told repeatedly that this government has been doing a great job of managing the state's books through six years of challenge and change. It also means that several locally important infrastructure projects, both big and small, have either been delivered or are in the process of being delivered, including the East Fremantle Oval redevelopment, the signalised crossing of Canning Highway, nature playground at Davis Lawlor Park in Attadale, the pump track and nature playground in Gourley Park in East Fremantle, the Port Beach sand nourishment project, facility upgrades to Melville Reserve, and an equipment fit-out at Karlup Ceramics Studio in Alfred Cove. I am deeply grateful to the McGowan government for the announcement on the weekend that Bicton Baths will be the first place in the Swan River to have a shark safety swimming enclosure.

Another area I am personally very proud that the McGowan government is delivering in is preserving our environment and building healthy and resilient communities. We are taking the challenges of climate change very seriously. As a long-term community environmental advocate and former health and fitness leader, it is in these matters that I am most emotionally connected and engaged. My personal passion and commitment has deepened and strengthened through my experience as the member for Bicton over the past six years, and I am now more

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than ever aware of the link between a healthy planet and healthy communities. Wetlands keep our water cleaner and our air clearer, plus they contribute to mental and physical wellbeing and provide a home for a diverse group of animal and plant life. We came to government back in 2017 with a commitment to protect the Beeliar wetlands. I am proud that we delivered permanent protection of this important and significant place.

In my electorate of Bicton, I made a personal commitment to protect the open spaces adjacent to the Attadale foreshore on the Swan Estuary shoreline, which is an internationally significant bird migratory route, and contains a regionally significant bushland and wetland linkage that runs from Alfred Cove to Point Walter. I am therefore personally proud that it was the McGowan Labor government that delivered on protecting this important local open space by refusing to sell the crown land at Alfred Cove for the purposes of an artificial wave park. This resulted in continuous use of the crown land and the land adjacent as a vital natural buffer zone between river and land. Since then, the McGowan Labor government has delivered \$2 million towards greater river health by supporting the work of the Nature Conservancy's artificial shellfish reef restoration projects in local waters of the Swan River. We have delivered a new bird viewing deck at Point Waylen in Attadale so that all, including those with low mobility, can enjoy the spectacular scenery and abundant birdlife without negatively impacting on this ecologically and culturally significant place.

Our beautiful tree-filled open spaces along the river and our local parks are incredibly special to the people of my electorate, and the literature on the importance of public open space and its associated benefits is plentiful; they are well documented. Just some of these benefits include providing places for people to meet, socialise, play and connect, which is associated with increased physical activity and improved mental health. I think it is fair to say that access to these opportunities is more important than ever. No less important are the ecological benefits associated with pockets of urban bushland, local parks and reserves. Large, established trees provide habitat for birds and other wildlife, welcome shade for humans and are a vital antidote to the urban heat island effect. That is why I am particularly proud to have, with my colleague the member for Bateman, successfully campaigned alongside our communities to ensure that 13 parks in Bicton and Bateman are protected now and into the future as public open space. I acknowledge and thank the community campaigners who worked to help achieve this fantastic outcome.

I know firsthand what people power can achieve, so I strongly encourage those who live throughout my communities to get active on the issues that matter to them, like Tom and Jenny who established the Melville Bird Sanctuary and Discovery Centre and have single-handedly raised the establishment of a bird sanctuary in Alfred Cove to a point of such prominence that it is now well into the planning stages. I also acknowledge those involved in the Melville Tree Canopy Advocates community campaign, who are doing whatever they can to ensure greater protection of our local tree canopy.

I would also like to take the opportunity now to recommit to the people of my electorate that I will continue to do all that I can as their local member to protect our local natural environment now and into the future. The connection between a healthy environment and healthy humans is unmistakable. Healthy ecosystems provide the shelter, food, clean air and water that sustain all living organisms, including us. It is evident that under the leadership of the McGowan Labor government, our state's precious natural environment will remain a top priority.

Two-thirds of the electorate of Bicton is blessed to be bordered by the beautiful Swan River and we are incredibly fortunate to have several active and dedicated environmental community groups, including the Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group, the Bicton Environmental Action Group, the Friends of East Fremantle Foreshore, the Melville Senior High School sustainability group, the Friends of Attadale Foreshore and Santa Maria College's Eco Sisters.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many community volunteers dedicating their time, knowledge and skills to care for the natural places throughout the electorate of Bicton. I greatly admire the commitment of these individuals who go about their activities of weeding, planting, rubbish collection, revetment work, citizen science data collection and many more important actions, despite rain, mosquitoes or heat. It is always a joy to work side by side with some of these awesome individuals when time allows. It is wonderful to know that some of these groups will receive funding through this government's river care community grant program and natural resource management funding. I am proud to be a member of a government delivering the kind of environmental action my community expects.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to represent the people of Bicton in the Parliament of Western Australia. It is an enormous privilege, and one that I never take for granted. I am proud of what I have been able to deliver so far for my communities in my role as the member for Bicton and I look forward to working hard, engaging with my local communities and delivering more for Bicton in 2023.

MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany) [6.30 pm]: I am delighted to provide an update on the McGowan government's initiatives that have improved the lives of people in Albany. After two years in this place, it is a privilege to deliver

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an address, but it will be hard to condense it into the short amount of time I have because so much has happened in my electorate and across Western Australia under the McGowan government.

I am delighted to be back in Parliament for 2023. I think we have all had a short break and have been busy working in our electorates. I would like to start with health in my area. We have been delivering on some key health initiatives in Albany. I know former member for Albany Peter Watson, back in the day, really championed funding for a radiation oncology unit at the Albany Health Campus. We have provided \$13 million and the unit is now under construction. As I speak, the last piece of specialist equipment is being installed. We look forward to opening that unit in the next few months. We have also funded an additional 70 car parking bays. Like any hospital, there will never be enough car parking bays, and it has been welcomed by our community.

Another health initiative the government provides for regional constituents that I get a lot of support from and thanks for is the patient assisted travel scheme. Our government has invested \$19.7 million in the initiative and increased the overnight allowance to \$100. I have noticed that some of the more vulnerable people in my area are catching planes to Perth, and that assistance for when they have to stay in Perth has been welcome. I have a family member who is coming up to Perth for a specialist appointment who will be able to use PATS to make sure that they can get care. A number of people in my community also come up to Perth for specialist care at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women when they are delivering their baby. PATS has helped those members of my community.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is an incredible service that is vitally needed in regional areas. Funding of \$10.9 million to upgrade aircraft has been welcomed. I track the flights to Albany quite a lot; they come and go. The number of times that they come down to get critical patients is significant. Having these aircraft available has been vital for constituents in Albany who need to get to Perth for specialist treatment in emergency situations. When my dad was not well, he used the Royal Flying Doctor Service. My nephew was diagnosed with a hole in his heart when he was only 18 months old and it was vital that he got to Perth quickly to receive support.

We spoke about Ronald McDonald House with the Premier in the chamber this afternoon. There was another welcome announcement from the McGowan government about that service for regional communities. My family has used Ronald McDonald House. It is an incredible service for people who are going through hard and traumatic times with young children. People can go to that house where the volunteers cook for them and there are all sorts of activities that brighten their day. It is not only for the child who is unwell, but also the families. They can meet and network with other people in the community who are going through a hard time. My sister stayed there while my nephew had open-heart surgery. Unfortunately, her husband had had open heart surgery the week before, so I was at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children with my nephew while my sister was supporting her husband. We had two patients in hospital at the same time after open-heart surgery, which was pretty horrific. My sister was able to go back to Ronald McDonald House where she was able to chill out. When William was well enough, he went to Ronald McDonald House. He loved all the support services. He got teddies and all sorts of things while he stayed there. I know that it made my sister's experience much easier.

The investment of \$9.6 million will double the number of guestrooms. I know Ronald McDonald House probably will be oversubscribed because it is such a fantastic place to stay. It supports over 2 000 families a year who need to come to Perth. I always volunteer for McHappy Day. It is incredible to be able to give back. It sounds like the organisation is doing great things as well to support community members up here in Perth.

There is \$30 million to double the capacity of the dental service in Albany with a brand new clinic. The service is needed and the increase has been well received by our community.

Last year, we opened a permanent BreastScreen clinic in Albany. I know some of the member for Moore's constituents use the facility when they come to Albany to go shopping.

Mr P.J. Rundle: It's the member for Roe.

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: I did say "member for Roe"—didn't I? I am sorry, member for Roe.

People know that the facility is in Albany permanently, so when they come down for the school holidays or to do their shopping or other things in the community, they know that they can book in and use it. Some women have mentioned that they did not feel comfortable going into the van, but now they can get to know the staff and rebook appointments, knowing that the permanent facility will be open when they visit.

In the housing space, there is the Spencer Park renewal project. It is great to see that there is some construction going on along Hardie Road. Upgrading the road is part of the \$4 million Spencer Park renewal project, which will see eight new two-bedroom units built. Roslyn from local company Holmes Architecture has been appointed to design the units. I grew up in Spencer Park. We had some really ugly housing commission flats, but they have gone and Spencer Park is going through a real transformation. The school is open and willing to take on new students

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and the shopping centre is being upgraded. It is an amazing suburb that houses our hospital and other facilities. I quite often say to people that they should buy real estate in Spencer Park because it is going through such a transformation and it is close to all our facilities.

We are working with the City of Albany to make sure that the parks in the area are upgraded. Part of the \$4 million in funding will provide access ways to Mokare park. I did a mobile office in the area and met with some of the residents who are really keen to start a community bushcare group, which I think will be fantastic. The community can really own what is going on in the park.

The Albany ring-road is another fantastic project. Anyone who has been down to Albany lately will know it is pretty hard to miss. Dirt is being moved around all over the outskirts of Albany. It is a \$175 million project. The first grade separation has opened on Menang Drive and cars can fly over it on their way to the airport. The project has created over 1 000 local jobs. The construction is on time. Obviously, commuters are a little bit upset at the moment because roads have been closed, but the amount of work that has happened and will happen during the summer will create an 11-kilometre free-flowing route from South Coast Highway all the way down to Albany Highway, through to Princess Royal Drive. It will get trucks off our main roundabout, which will improve the efficiency of our freight route and stop the congestion at the entry to our city. The next stage down to Frenchman Bay Road has commenced and is going really well. We do not get many big road infrastructure projects in Albany so it is fantastic to see the scale of this project.

I would like to acknowledge the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, for her record investment in regional roads. Many of the people who came down to Albany over the summer period whinged about the many roadworks, but, unfortunately, to improve roads we need to do roadworks. I think we have seen significant investment. Even just in the great southern area we have had over 18 major road projects worth over \$19 million of investment. Some of the safety features and upgrades such as the widening of the shoulders and putting in the audible edges cannot be underestimated because they save lives. The feedback I get from the community is that simply widening the shoulders and adding the audible edges is welcomed.

In education, late last year the Premier and I were able to open the new refurbishments to Mount Lockyer Primary School, which is one of the oldest primary schools in my area. That was a \$16.6 million upgrade. It is an incredible transformation. The school has embraced not having as much outdoor space while it is under construction. A new principal has started there. The year 7 graduation had 110 year 7s. The school has nearly grown to capacity because so many people are living out that way. They are fortunate and happy for the facilities that they have been able to move into. I commend the parents and citizens association that really advocated to former member Peter Watson on some of the challenges and barriers of ensuring that all the kids could fit into the hall for the school assembly. As the government, we listened and were able to make sure that those facilities were fit for purpose for those students.

A new performing arts centre is being built at Albany Senior High School. That is transforming one of our old youth centres where I used to play basketball and we had to sit our exams on old wooden chairs back in the day. This will be an amazing facility for our young people to do performing arts. It will also have a training element whereby students will be able to do a certificate II or III in different hospitality vocations and performing arts, and it will provide the community with a space in which to watch young people perform. We have had a lot of investment in STEM classrooms in our area, as well as refurbishments to the school science labs at two of my old schools, Mount Lockyer and Spencer Park Primary Schools. During the election, I was able to meet with the P&Cs and chat to them about which small projects I could support them on. It was interesting that there were so many different projects in the electorate that people wanted funding for. I will list some of those. South Stirling Primary School wanted a library upgrade. That is a little school with about 25 kids in South Stirling. I got to open that and sit on the beautiful new library chair. The kids loved all their new books. At Little Grove Primary School, we developed an early childhood playground centre, at Yakamia Primary School, we developed a nature playground, and at Mount Lockyer we were able to contribute to the new playground facilities. At Flinders Park Primary School, we were able to assist with a new PA system that was used for the first time when school went back this year. Albany Primary School decided to paint “no bullying” murals in the toilet blocks, which I thought was interesting. They look fantastic. Spencer Park Primary School students painted some colour walls on the outside of the school telling their stories. Each year group has a different wall on which it has been able to put up artwork.

The training sector is an area I am quite passionate about, and I visited South Regional TAFE yesterday. The new trade training centre is well underway, with the construction contract being awarded to Wauters Building Company, which is a local building company that has done some major projects in the area. It will be an amazing facility that will upgrade the old facility that is over 50 years old. It will tailor the training in the metals, engineering, automotive, building and construction trades, as well as the carpentry and joinery trades. The trade centre will be in one location rather than separated throughout the college. That will obviously mean we will be able to train more jobseekers in

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our area, which is another fantastic reason we need these state-of-the-art facilities to keep our locals and apprentices trained in our area.

Last year, with the former Minister for Education and Training Sue Ellery, we opened the autonomous skills area. That is a whole new language that I am sure my kids will know more about than I will. It refers to some of the autonomous workplace operations. It is for robotics, drone works, new laser cutters and mobile communication. We met with the group of students who are doing their cert II in autonomous workplace operations from school. There were students from the Mt Barker, Denmark and Albany catchments who were really enjoying this new course that was able to be offered in Albany for the first time. That \$500 000 for equipment for South Regional TAFE was welcomed.

Last year, I was fortunate enough to go to Singapore with the Great Southern Development Commission for a Discover Great Southern event, which was really focused on ensuring that we could put the great southern on the international map as a premium food and wine destination. Like many, I love going out and eating beautiful produce and wine. Sometimes we are the poor cousin to Margaret River. That narrative is changing, and changing in a very fast and good way. We took more than 50 great southern winemakers and food producers to Singapore over three days where former minister Hon Alannah MacTiernan, the CEO of the development commission and I were able to showcase what the great southern had on a plate. The winemakers were able to speak to investors and we were able to host a dinner at the high commissioner's house where the produce showcased from my area was the akoya oyster. For someone who does not like oysters, they are meant to be amazing. Harvest Road is steaming ahead with those. Green Range Lamb is part of Dirty Clean Food, which the member for Maylands talked about earlier today. That is an amazing farm that sits at the site of Cheynes Beach where the happy lambs wander around to graze. It produces the best fat on a lamb cutlet. A farmer could probably explain the terminology better than I can, but that is what people were looking for, and it was absolutely delicious. The Futari Wagyu beef farm is located down the road from my house. Futari Wagyu exports produce, especially from Albany and the great southern region. I would like to acknowledge Natasha Monks, the CEO of the Great Southern Development Commission, who led the delegation. The comments from the industry were, "Why haven't we done this earlier?", and, "Why can't we collaborate?" I think the commissions have a fantastic connection and are bringing people together and really making sure that our regions are put on the map.

I would like to touch on Lotterywest. I think that in the regions everyone is always asking for funding. Lotterywest in my region has delivered on some quite diverse programs and projects. Only last week, it delivered \$100 000 to the City of Albany for *First Lights: Binalup* that will reflect on the Mammang culture and celebrate the local multicultural community. The event will be held in April. That will be a fantastic event that will project us into the 2026 bicentenary.

The Premier mentioned earlier some of the recovery and support that Lotterywest has been doing with different agencies around supporting our communities. One of the organisations in my community is Pivot Support Services. It was able to receive \$50 000 during the COVID pandemic that really helped support people in my community who were experiencing hardship. That program has been able to continue in another way, but it was really the support of Lotterywest that was able to assist that program. Another organisation that received funding was Gondwana Link, which received \$614 000 towards the delivery of an ecosystem restoration activity and cultural programs for Noongar people. That is another organisation that goes all the way across to Esperance to deliver amazing biodiversity projects that protect the environment. It especially involves Noongar people in restoration activities. This money has gone towards education in a certain area out near the Fitzgerald biosphere. They are some of the projects that have received Lotterywest funding.

Albany is the home of the Anzacs, and Lotterywest is delivering \$110 000 to the RSL Albany sub-branch to cover the cost of the 2023 Anzac Day events.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: I would like to finish with a short story from one of my community members who received a regional economic development grant. This young man, Elliott Reynolds, I think received \$150 000 to expand his business's shed. Elliott produces potter's wheels in Albany that are exported all over the world. The business is called Venco. Now I know them, I see them all over the place and in movies and things. It is incredible that this young man—he is about 28—with this grant is going to be able to transform his business and double its capacity. When the Activ Foundation left Albany, he was able to employ a lot of the people who had minor disabilities to help in his business. He also employs an Indigenous apprentice. He is a young person, but this grant that will transform his business will also provide job opportunities for more vulnerable people in our community. I think the RED grants have such a place in our regions. I commend former Minister MacTiernan for the work she did in the RED grants. I look forward to seeing other organisations apply for those grants in the future.

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I will leave my Premier's Statement reply there. I look forward to an exciting 2023 with the rest of my parliamentary colleagues and the minister. I thank the Premier for his ongoing hard work, and I look forward to working with the McGowan Labor government for the next few years.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [6.51 pm]: I am very pleased to follow on from so many other members who have spoken with great enthusiasm, confidence and positivity about what is going on right across the state. So many good and exciting stories is really something to behold. In my electorate, we have had some great progress with a key piece of infrastructure, Thornlie Senior High School, which desperately needs an upgrade. The school is over 50 years old now. It did not receive the big, multimillion-dollar upgrade that I know schools in other areas have had the benefit of. It was with great pleasure that I had Minister Buti come and visit the school and meet the principal, Donna McDonald, and the school P&C president, Michelle Manolas, and vice-president, Tracey Nelson. Between them, they were able to put forward to the minister a very clear case as to why Thornlie Senior High School desperately needs a major upgrade. I know they made that case most forcefully and clearly.

Minister Whitby has also been in the electorate recently. He was able to see the benefits of investment in the Canning River. There is an idea that a river in an urban area is often the first connection point for people who are newly arrived to Australia. Many people in my area are in that category. They can make that cultural connection with the natural environment or ecology of Western Australia and the south west area by being able to access the river. However, if the area is not particularly welcoming or it looks a little bit run-down, they will not make that connection.

Moving on to policing matters, we have had more than our fair share of illegal trail bike usage. However, I am very pleased to report to the Minister for Police that I think the overall sentiment is that that problem, thanks to a special task force, has ameliorated somewhat. Having said that, just yesterday I saw a balaclava-wearing person doing a wheelie along Yale Road. Just when you think you have got on top of something, it suddenly turns the other way. We have to persist with our work on illegal trail bike usage.

Minister Saffioti has done wonderful work with the transport links and train line extensions, including investment in cycling infrastructure, and I will come back to matters cycling in a moment. The Minister for Water will be pleased to know of progress with the Kelvin Road–Albany Highway water pipe. It is a very complicated and expensive project at well over \$10 million, but an essential one to enable a piece of urban renewal to take place in Maddington. Unfortunately, the original pipe was too close to the surface at Albany Highway so we could not do any intersection upgrades, which then prevented a whole lot of urban renewal happening on the old Maddington Oval site. Thankfully, we have managed to move that pipe. We are now proceeding with the upgrades to the intersections and urban renewal can take place. That will be a real boost for the whole Maddington community. We are going to do things like move the City of Gosnells operations centre out of its current location, which is right next to the Maddington train station. Urban renewal is something that our government can be so proud of. It is often quite expensive to kickstart it, and then you have to rely on private capital to come in and do things, but we have really paved the way for a lot of good stuff there.

I was delighted that the Minister for Sport and Recreation was able to confirm for me that Peter Bol, our Olympian—a man who lived for quite some time in his youth in the Thornlie electorate, and his family still live in the Thornlie electorate—had the very good news that his B-sample for an erythropoietin, or EPO, doping allegation has not confirmed his first sample. That means Peter Bol is able to compete again, which is good news.

Mr P.J. Rundle: What about the damage to his reputation?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I think the member is right. I know that Peter Bol was in the running for Australian of the Year in the youth category. Because of the allegation that was hanging over him, I think it has fallen away. The community will get behind Peter Bol now. I hope the suffering he has gone through can soon become a memory.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Are you going to write a letter to Sport Integrity Australia?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I do not have those contacts, but I am happy to talk to the member about it offline to see what can be done there.

There are two other matters in the sport portfolio, including the great work done by the Minister for Sport and Recreation around trails and centres like Dwellingup, Collie, Nannup and the Perth hills. All the great trails were absolutely fantastic, giving people a brilliant recreational opportunity. The ultimate of trails in Western Australia is the Bibbulmun Track, and in particular, for me, the Munda Biddi. I was able to do my second end-to-end Munda Biddi ride from Albany to Mundaring this time. I did it in nine days. We hear a lot about the Camino trail pilgrim walk to Camino de Santiago in Galicia in north western Spain. It is in green Spain with the Atlantic Ocean bringing in lots of rain, so even in summer they get lots of rain in that area. Pilgrims come from all over Europe to do this walk and they are looked after on the journey; people are respected. That idea is emerging with the Munda Biddi

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as well. I recall arriving at the Brockman tourist centre and how greatly I was welcomed as a Munda Bididi rider. I was certainly very red in the face at the time and they said to me, “Are you sure you shouldn’t be resting up and having a nice cool swim in Lake Brockman?” I said, “No, I’ve got to get to Dwelling tonight.” I had to stick to my schedule but they were quite concerned for my welfare and gave me a wonderful meal even though I think the kitchen was closed. That is the sort of quality of welcoming that all of us can appreciate. Similarly, Donnelly River Village gave a beautiful welcome, as well as places elsewhere along the way. You do see signs that some of our tourism cafe and restaurant sector has still not quite caught up. They are still waiting for backpackers and staff capability and experience to really kick in and deliver the quality of service we might all enjoy.

Mr D.A. Templeman: How long did you say it took you?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It was nine days.

Mr D.A. Templeman: How far is that?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It is 1 050 kilometres, but to put it into perspective, minister, the record is two days and 17 hours held by a young man by the name of Craig Wiggins. He is an elite athlete and also someone who has incredible bike handling skills and incredible endurance because he is able to ride without sleeping. I believe in his two days and 17 hours, he had a few hours’ kip in Manjimup, but it was amazing. I can sort of see how someone could get down to four days if they went through without sleeping.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Maybe the Minister for Sport and Recreation can have a crack at the record!

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I am glad the member has raised the general view of fitness in this place because that is a theme I want to come to—the importance of fitness. I would say that this Parliament overall, if we averaged it out, is probably the fittest Parliament in the history of Western Australia. That is something we can be proud of and something that we can all aspire to. There are all sorts of reasons why it is good to be fit and healthy, but the issue of longevity is one that really interests me. We all want to live for as long as possible with what has been called a health span. That means for as long as possible with good health. There is no point living into our 90s if we are completely bedbound. That is my personal view. We want to live as long as possible and as well as possible.

Some great research is coming out around the importance of a particular level of exercise. This is not the super intense stuff or the incredible endurance feats. This is called zone 2 exercising. I acknowledge the work of Dr Inigo San Millan at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. He is in the exercise physiology and human performance laboratory and he and Dr Peter Attia from Stanford University and Johns Hopkins Hospital—now based in Austin, Texas—are doing this research, and there are others as well.

What does zone 2 mean? I am sure many of us have smartphones and watches that tell us that we are walking at a rate in zone 2. It really seems to come down to our ability as an individual to improve our mitochondrial efficiency. It is all about that mitochondrial efficiency. The mitochondria really determine the amount of fat burning that we are able to do and the amount of oxygen that we are able to deliver to our muscles, but how do we improve that? It is not by necessarily exercising in some sort of short burst or at some very low level either. Zone 2 can be measured in the amount of lactate in our muscles, but that is hard and a bit painful to do; it is not practical. There are a few surrogates we can use and one is by exercising at a rate that is 75 per cent of our maximum heart rate, so in my case that is about 133 beats per minute. It is not too hard to get a heartrate monitor and do that. But there is an even simpler surrogate that we can use; that is, if we are exercising at a level at which we can just maintain a conversation—it is a bit uncomfortable, but we can just maintain a conversation—we are probably in zone 2. We have to do that for about an hour, and if we can do that four times a week, we are well on our way to really improving this very important thing, mitochondrial efficiency.

I say that we have a great sporting culture in Western Australia, but sitting down spectating and watching sport is not a sporty thing to do. I know that there are arguments that elite sport is there to inspire us and, yes, it is a wonderful thing to do. It gives us conversation as well. It helps us bond. Perhaps most important of all, elite sport has that capacity to bring together people from different cultures. We all know when the Olympics or world cups are on; there is this sense that the whole world is focusing on a particular event and coming together. That is a great thing. But let us not kid ourselves that when we are watching sport, we are improving our health in any way. I have personally found that one way around that is to set up my stationary bike in front of my TV when I am watching sport. I can do an hour on the trainer with a special program. There are loads of these very good programs and I do commend that to people.

Having said all that, I have a weakness for watching elite cycling and I had the pleasure of meeting Jai Hindley, who won the Giro d’Italia in the middle of last year and who is a very serious contender for the Tour de France this year. I admire what Jai and all those elite cyclists do. A quote about cycling from former Tour de France winner

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Greg LeMond is “It never gets easier; you just get faster.” In other words, we all suffer the same. That is rather a touching idea and we can all ride on the same roads and suffer the same; some people just go a whole lot faster!

I want to conclude with a bit of an analogy because I know in our culture we often talk about sport as a metaphor for what goes on in our world and we often resort to those Americanisms, saying things such as, “I’ll touch base with you”, “Hit that one out of the park” —

Ms M.M. Quirk: “Step up to the plate.”

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: “Step up to the plate” is the classic one—all those sporting ideas. I think that as a government, we are performing as a brilliant team and we are a peloton, really. We are the lead group. It is interesting just to take it a little further. It is interesting to ponder who the protected riders in our society are, who are the Jai Hindleys. I think some of the new technology sectors that the Premier spoke of earlier today—the space technology and our film industry—are the sectors that could really lead our economy. We just have to nurture them along and protect them a little bit initially and then they will be able to really take off at the right stage. Then, of course, we have the domestiques. These are the people in cycling who support us along the way. Our public service—our education, health and police services—is all about making sure that society functions. That is the role of the domestiques. There are also the breakaway riders who go way out in front, and I see our resources sector is a bit like that. Will it be able to sustain it over the centuries? It is making a great contribution to the interest in the race. Then there are the climbers—those general classification winners like Jai Hindley—and their amazing capacities, their watts per kilo that they are putting out. I think these are the leaders in our society—the professionals, the scientists, the creatives—who can really transform our society with their contributions. There are many others. Then, of course, we have the lanterne rouge. In the peloton there are the people who get dropped totally, and we see that on the global stage. The UK economy is perhaps a classic example of that; it is the only G7 economy that has not regained the level of gross domestic product that it had prior to the COVID pandemic.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Then there’s the opposition, who ride like *The Hillbilly Bears*. Do you remember that cartoon with the Hillbilly Bears?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Yes. Our opposition—where would we place them in the peloton?

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: We will find a good way to describe them, but it could be a lanterne rouge situation as well!

I think we should have confidence in the way the Western Australian economy is performing; it is absolutely outstanding. We can all be very proud of that. I am really struck by the ongoing cohesiveness of our society—this confidence that the Western Australian public has in us as a government and in decision-makers in general. It is very different from the level of cynicism that I encountered when I first came in here back in 2008. It was around for such a long time and it was so damaging. I think it is really fascinating to ponder how much a society, a community, can achieve when there is a good and strong rapport between the decision-makers and the broader community. So much of that is down to the excellent leadership that we have, and I commend the leadership of the Premier and our ministers. This is a great time to be in Western Australia and I see us going from strength to strength. I am very happy to support the Premier’s address.

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

House adjourned at 7.10 pm