

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 19 May 2022]

p2572c-2595a

Ms Lara Dalton; Ms Emily Hamilton; Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Peter Rundle; Speaker; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Ms Christine Tonkin; Mr Hugh Jones

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**APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2022–23) BILL 2022**

**APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2022–23) BILL 2022**

*Second Reading — Cognate Debate*

Resumed from 18 May.

**MS L. DALTON (Geraldton)** [9.42 am]: I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022. I want to start by saying that the McGowan Labor government has shown so much love for Geraldton and the midwest that I am nearly blushing! I am absolutely overwhelmed by the love shown to Geraldton and I just want say keep it coming!

**Mrs L.A. Munday:** Your red jacket matches your blush.

**Ms L. DALTON:** Yes, it does a little bit.

Looking through the budget on Thursday I was thrilled to see so many of the projects that my community and I had been advocating for made it through the Treasury process. A few weeks ago when the Minister for Health, Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, visited Geraldton to announce the additional funding of \$49.4 million to the Geraldton Health Campus redevelopment project, you could not wipe the smile from my face. This extra funding brings the total cost of the major upgrade to the hospital to \$122.7 million. At that announcement the joy of the local nurses, doctors and staff, many of whom I know, was palpable. This project has been in the forefront of people's minds for some time. The people of Geraldton and the midwest have been let down by previous governments' promises. Unlike members opposite, I live in Geraldton, and my family lives there, too, so I think I speak from a place of authority, knowing the history and the facts, when I talk about the long line of past and current Liberal–National members of state and federal Parliaments who have made promises about the Geraldton hospital that they have not been able to deliver. But we are delivering!

After talking to the project team at the WA Country Health Service, I can understand why the hospital redevelopment has to be approached in stages. It is a huge body of work that to be completed needs to be staged in a way that will have as little disruption as possible to the day-to-day business of the hospital. The first stage was completed in June 2021. It was a reconfigured main entry and the redesign and expansion of car parking. We welcome funding for the second stage that will include an expanded emergency department, a new intensive care unit and improved amenities to ensure patients continue to receive quality care close to home. As part of the redevelopment we will also have an integrated mental health service, which is something quite close to my heart, and inpatient and short-stay units.

The redevelopment of Geraldton Health Campus is the single biggest investment in this facility since the Gallop government redeveloped the hospital back in the early 2000s. The hospital provides great care for our community, and this is an extensive and welcome upgrade to complement that care. Geraldton has, and will have into the future, a regional hospital with terrific doctors, nurses and other staff, delivering excellent care for regional people.

I am proud to say that Geraldton is a progressive, forward-thinking city, with individuals, businesses and groups making exciting contributions and enhancements. I have always said that budgets affect everyone. They are not just about business; they are about people. Last Friday morning, along with many others from our community, I attended our state budget breakfast. We had the pleasure to have Hon Rita Saffioti, Minister for Transport; Planning; Ports as a special guest. Everyone who attended the breakfast welcomed the opportunity to speak with the minister and were very pleased with the wonderful announcement of \$332 million for a major upgrade to Geraldton port to cater to increased demands, including a new berth with ship loading and material handling infrastructure. Having been on the Mid West Ports Authority board for a couple of years and involved with the port maximisation plan, I can fully understand the magnitude of this investment. The port is the jewel in the crown of the midwest. It is the beating heart of Geraldton. I love to see the ships coming into the port and leaving again. Some days it looks like they are right on the main street; it is absolutely incredible to see.

The port maximisation project will be executed over four years, bringing forward the investment anticipated by the *Port of Geraldton master plan*. It will allow the Mid West Ports Authority to increase trade from 15 million tonnes per annum to 25 million tonnes per annum by 2026. This new trade is expected to be from 11 new customers and will be a diverse product mix, supported through a combination of de-bottlenecking and new economic infrastructure within the existing port footprint. The project is expected to create more than 2 700 jobs during construction, along with indirect jobs and opportunities for local subcontractors. This is great news for people in my electorate. This project will enable greater trade and is critical to enable growth in the region, providing an export path for new projects and commodities.

The McGowan Labor government is committed to setting up Geraldton and the midwest for the long term, with part of its record \$12 billion investment in regional infrastructure across the state so far diversifying the economy

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and creating jobs. We have already seen significant investment in Geraldton to create local jobs, support the local economy and improve health and education. Projects underway as part of this pipeline of works include the Central Regional TAFE campus visual arts upgrades, which have just been completed and I have been invited to have a look through; the Geraldton basketball stadium upgrades, which will provide extra courts and facilities for more families to enjoy; \$10 million towards the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park program; social housing investment, including for refurbishments and new builds; a \$9 million investment towards the renewal and revitalisation of Spalding; and maintenance works to local schools such as Champion Bay Senior High School, Geraldton Senior High School and Rangeway Primary School, just to name a few.

We have also committed to supporting development of the Oakajee strategic industrial area, with \$7.5 million of funding to develop road access to establish a renewable hydrogen hub in the midwest. We will also continue to advocate for federal funding to support our midwest clean hydrogen hub, which will leverage state government funding to support the construction of renewable energy infrastructure.

I would now like to go back to the significant investment of the social housing economic recovery package. I had the absolutely great opportunity to have the Minister for Housing; Homelessness, Hon John Carey, in Geraldton a couple of weeks ago to announce the opening of six recently refurbished units that will form part of a new pilot housing program for the homeless in the city. These units had been previously vacant but were refurbished and brought back online, and I have to say that they look absolutely fabulous. What a great program this is. It will provide housing and intensive wraparound supports to vulnerable members of the Geraldton community, including several rough sleepers.

The program will run in partnership between the local Department of Communities team and the ICARE drug and alcohol support service. I want to commend both these teams for their fantastic efforts in establishing this program. The ICARE team has been working with the residents for many months and is helping them transition into their new homes. I was really pleased to also provide the ICARE team with a \$200 Kmart voucher for the residents of each of the units so that they could, with the ICARE team's support, purchase homewares, such as cutlery, rugs, kettles et cetera, to support them in moving into their new homes. On the day I was there, a couple of different people had donated second-hand goods and some beds and mattresses had arrived through our midwest disaster relief program, but it touched me to think that it would be really nice for these people to have something new, because for a long time they had been rough sleeping and had not lived in their own home. I thought it would be a really nice experience for them to go to Kmart or the local Mitchell and Brown Retravision with the ICARE team and purchase a kettle, some rugs and new cutlery, just as we all would do when we move into a new home.

To break the cycle of homelessness, we know that we need to combine housing with intensive supports, and that is what this program is all about. To be there and to see the absolute joy on the faces of the new residents was one of the highlights so far for me as the member for Geraldton. Some of these people have been sleeping rough for many years and have never had a home of their own. One of the participants and I went to the same school, but we were a couple of years apart, so we reintroduced ourselves, and this had a huge impact on me. This is investment in social change and improving people's lives. This is real, important stuff and I am really proud to be part of a government that gets it. These six units are just a small snapshot of the significant investment and work happening in and around Geraldton, all focused on boosting the availability of social housing. Around 50 properties in the city either are undergoing or will undergo refurbishment to bring them back into stock and provide a significant boost in the availability of housing, as well as provide us with more options to support vulnerable people in Geraldton, including those sleeping rough.

One of the biggest issues facing regional centres such as Geraldton is the limited connectivity it has to the north of the state. Over the past 12 months, I have met with many businesses and they have raised the lack of this service with me. I have also met with the CEO of the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ms Joanne Fabling, who discussed a broad range of concerns, such as driver fatigue, travel costs and time, as well as the risk to the midwest that some businesses may have to relocate out of the region for better connectivity options. Members can imagine that I was pleased that the McGowan Labor government could also see these issues and listened to regional Western Australians. The commitment of over \$4 million in the 2022–23 state budget to support an expansion of the inter-regional flight network operated by Aviair to increase air connectivity and passenger capacity across the midwest, Pilbara and Kimberley is exactly what we have been advocating for for so long. The new Geraldton link will significantly reduce travel times between Geraldton and the Pilbara, with many small businesses and FIFO travellers in Geraldton currently travelling to the Pilbara via Perth. In addition, Aviair's plans to upgrade planes on the network from nine-seater to 70-seater aircraft will allow more passengers and freight to be transported throughout the regions and help improve airfare affordability. The expansion of the inter-regional flight network to include Geraldton will allow more regional residents to travel between the midwest and the northern regions. It really will be a game changer for the regions, because services like these are crucial for jobs, visiting family, business opportunities and supporting government and medical services. This is a great opportunity that will create more jobs within our region and keep businesses in the midwest. This investment is a further commitment by the McGowan

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government to enable better access to affordable air services for regional residents. I would really like to congratulate the CEO of the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ms Joanne Fabling, for her good work collaborating with Aviair and working with me to advocate for this project.

Overall, this budget is delivering for WA and, I am particularly pleased to say, for the midwest. The love for Geraldton is very, very evident. WA's strong financial position gives the state budget the capacity to invest a record \$2.5 billion in health and mental health, ensuring that all Western Australians, no matter where they live, receive quality health care, as well as a record \$12 billion in regional infrastructure and \$4.2 billion for the royalties for regions program, which will continue to deliver key regional projects and services to regional communities. Yes, the McGowan government has shown a lot of love for Geraldton, and I am proud to commend the bills to the house.

**MS E.L. HAMILTON (Joondalup)** [9.57 am]: I rise to make a contribution to debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 following the McGowan government's sixth budget—a budget that delivers for Joondalup and Western Australia. I am proud to be part of the McGowan Labor government and I am proud of the budget that our Premier and Treasurer has handed down. As the member for Joondalup, I am privileged to speak on the budget over the past six years. It is an honour and a privilege to represent locals living in Heathridge, Ocean Reef, Edgewater, Connolly, Joondalup, Iluka and Currabine. We have seen a significant level of investment over the years that is continuing to grow Joondalup, a beautiful part of the world, with a pristine coastline and a wonderful sense of community. It is inherently a Labor budget that provides much-needed relief for families and invests in our healthcare system, all the while paying down the debt that the Liberals and Nationals WA left us. It is a budget that is investing in our state for our kids and grandkids. It is investing in WA in the areas that matter—health and mental health, education and training, the prevention of family and domestic violence, climate change, infrastructure, and boosting support for our most vulnerable.

We are easing cost-of-living pressures by delivering a one-off \$400 credit for all WA households on their residential electricity bill. This is on top of having already delivered a \$600 credit in 2020. It will provide the average household with a month of bill relief, and I know how much of a difference this will make to so many households in Joondalup. After the last credit was delivered, I heard many stories detailing how much of a positive impact it had on the household budget. This year is the third year that fees and charges are being kept below the consumer price index, and the 2022–23 budget is the second time that government fees and charges have fallen. We have well and truly turned the finances of the state around. The state's books are in great condition because we have reversed the waste and neglect of the Liberals and Nationals. We are paying down Barnett's debt while delivering record investments across the board. A \$33.9 billion investment in WA's infrastructure, schools and health system will deliver for our community. This never happened under those opposite. When in office, the Liberals and Nationals consistently raised fees and charges. Not a day went by when they did not find a way to squeeze another dollar out of the WA public. This is yet another budget that has been handed down in the midst of the global pandemic, at a time when families and small businesses have been doing it tough. However, we have seen strong, decisive leadership from our Premier that has kept us safe and our economy strong.

Western Australia is a global leader in the way in which we have handled COVID-19, and we are the powerhouse of the nation. We have one of the strongest economies in the world, with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, and a high workforce participation rate. COVID-19 has been challenging for years now; it is being felt everywhere, and I know that Joondalup locals are not immune. But I also know that we are resilient. We have continued in the face of adversity and we are coming through what is often termed "COVID normal" with a new-found positivity and sense of community.

Our government is also addressing very real concerns about the personal cost of vigilance against COVID-19 in our community. That is why we have delivered free rapid antigen tests to every WA household. WA is the only state in the nation with a comprehensive free RAT program. My office has distributed 2 000 RAT tests to the Joondalup community. The initial 1 000 went to community organisations that support the most vulnerable in our community, and a further 1 000 have been made available for residents to collect from my office.

This year's budget truly delivers on the McGowan Labor government's commitment to create diverse local jobs across the state. A diverse and multifaceted economy is key to our future strength and prosperity, and the \$1.3 billion investment into diversifying WA's economy is a massive step towards delivering a stronger future for our state.

There are a number of areas I want to focus on today and issues that are very important to my constituents, and I will start with health. This budget is delivering the biggest ever investment in the WA public health system by any government in Western Australia's history, with a further record \$2.5 billion investment in health and mental health. That brings new investment to \$5.7 billion since the last budget was handed down in September last year. This Labor government understands how important it is to invest in high-quality, accessible health care close to home, and we are delivering.

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Locally, our Joondalup Health Campus is the major hospital servicing the northern corridor, and it is undergoing a major expansion—and rightfully so, given that our region is one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia and the campus’s emergency department is one of the busiest in the country. The major upgrade and expansion of the Joondalup Health Campus is critical for our northern suburbs communities. Health matters to my community, and locals have an expectation that they can receive quality health care close to home. That is what we are delivering under the strong leadership of our new Minister for Health, Amber-Jade Sanderson. The new Minister for Health was in Joondalup with me just last week to open the new Joondalup breast screening clinic—a state-of-the-art facility that will make a massive difference to the lives of women in Joondalup.

Investment in our health infrastructure locally continues to take place, and ensuring that we were able to deliver on our stroke unit back in 2019 ahead of the major works is something that I am proud of. In addition to the stroke unit, I, along with my parliamentary colleagues Sabine Winton and Margaret Quirk, have championed a new palliative care unit for the northern suburbs. Not only has that been delivered; it is now fully operational, having opened at the end of last year. We visited the site shortly after its opening and it is an asset to our health system. Speaking to staff members Tish Morrison and Dr Ellie Knight as we were taken around the facility, we could see that many patients have access to their own courtyards or views into the beautiful landscaped gardens. The new 10-bed palliative care unit ensures that loved ones can receive the care they need at the end of life at a location that is easily accessible by families and friends.

The McGowan government is committed to investing in our health care infrastructure and services in WA. I recently wrote a seventieth birthday card to a local constituent, Latha. Latha is the primary carer for her husband, who has Parkinson’s disease. She wrote to me outlining how grateful she was for the support and medical treatment provided to her husband across WA’s specialist and general health care system, including at Joondalup Health Campus.

In this year’s budget, there is investment in the Joondalup Health Campus as it moves into phase 2 of its \$256.7 million upgrade. There is a massive injection of resources and additional facilities, including a new mental health building; 12 emergency department beds; 90 inpatient beds; six coronary care beds; a new theatre; a cardiac catheterisation laboratory; a behavioural assessment urgent care clinic; auxiliary facilities; and increased more free-flowing parking. The additional emergency department beds are already operational and are taking patients. I note that these beds operate as part of the influenza-like illness unit, and allow for safely treating COVID-19-positive patients and others with infectious diseases. Additional resources to allow for the safe treatment of those with COVID-19 or other infectious diseases will be so important moving forward.

This also includes the construction of a new behavioural assessment urgent care clinic that will ensure that patients who are behaviourally affected by alcohol or drugs can be assessed safely without entering the main ED, which will improve patient flow through the provision of specialist inpatient beds. I was recently at the site with the Minister for Health, and it was great to see the significant progress being made on the construction of the expanded car parking facilities that will free up space for additional construction.

The 2022–23 budget will deliver \$252 million to improve access to emergency care in WA, and I know from firsthand experience that this has been well received by our community. There are pressures on our EDs across the country and here in WA. Our government is delivering the real investment, resources and staff needed to improve EDs across the state. This reform package is made up of 17 initiatives to deliver better care. Centrally, the reform package will deliver a 24/7 registered nurse at 15 ED waiting rooms across the state. The reform package also includes funding to support those with complex needs who often require external support and accommodation to exit the hospital system. This will free up considerable resources within the system.

The package also includes funding for the emergency access response program that will identify solutions for long-term improvements at EDs to reduce ramping. The government is delivering better access to emergency health care in a measured and considered way by delivering immediate programs to reduce the strain on EDs, while planning for future, long-term reform. It is a shame that the federal Liberal government’s continued neglect of the NDIS and the aged-care system means that many patients with complex needs will end up in EDs instead of receiving care within an established support network. The federal government must do better and invest in the NDIS and the aged-care system. I hope that on Saturday we have a change of government and, with that, a change of focus and investment for better outcomes for those accessing the NDIS and properly addressing the aged-care crisis.

This year’s budget sees significant funding for mental health. Mental health challenges facing our communities—Joondalup is not immune—are something we have unfortunately been aware of and that I hear about when I am out and about. Now more than ever, we need to ensure that our health system can continue to support children and young people who need access to mental health support. In Joondalup, we already have the mental health observation area at the Joondalup Health Campus—a 10-bed specialist unit next door to the main emergency department. This provides care to people presenting with psychiatric disorders in a more clinically appropriate environment. That facility is improving hospital-level clinical care for those impacted with mental health issues, and it is important

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that we continue to look at early intervention and other mental health management options without the need for hospital presentation.

This government is delivering a record \$1.3 billion investment into our mental health system. I have spoken about this in the house before, and I have heard about young primary school-age children presenting to hospitals with severe mental health issues. We need for these families to be able to receive the necessary support close to home in Joondalup, and this funding will address that. The funding includes an additional \$181 million to fund new, expanded mental health services, and \$47.3 million to support the rapid implementation of the Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents Aged 0–18 Years in Western Australia. The McGowan government will implement all 32 recommendations of the ministerial task force’s final report, which means that the WA Child and Adolescent Health Service will be radically reshaped to ensure better outcomes for children and families.

Services around the world are dealing with an increased volume of children struggling with mental illness. Children are presenting younger and often with more complexity. In WA, approximately 14 per cent of kids up to 17 years of age experience a mental health concern. This new suite of reforms will keep more children out of hospitals and provide better support for families. The reforms will also include a wideranging expansion of processes and available support to increase early intervention and appropriate clinical and non-clinical support.

Each and every time I speak about the health system I give a massive shout-out and thankyou to the wonderful staff in our health system. I extend my thanks to those at the Joondalup Health Campus in particular. The hospital is one of the largest employers in my electorate, with 70 per cent of the staff who work there living locally. They are a key part of our community and the one that I represent, and without them turning up every day in the face of adversity during the pandemic, we would not be where we are now, so thank you.

I applaud this year’s budget’s investment in the TAFE and training system. This budget will provide the single largest capital works investment of \$216 million for state-of-the-art facilities at WA TAFEs, which is proof of the government’s commitment to deliver high-quality training close to home. There will be an investment in the North Metropolitan TAFE in Joondalup, including \$20.4 million for a specialist light automotive training workshop at the McLarty Avenue campus. That investment into this infrastructure will cater for emerging automotive information and communication technologies. Maintaining cutting-edge training opportunities is essential for a strong future for WA, and the government’s investment into TAFE is a clear demonstration of the power of Labor governments. Labor governments invest in TAFE and training—the skills of the future—unlike our colleagues opposite. After years of Liberal–National government neglect, the Labor government is making TAFE more accessible than ever. Our Lower Fees, Local Skills program is keeping TAFE fees affordable for families. Free courses and an expanded program of short courses means that it has never been easier to pick up a new skill or to change industry. This helps to ensure that our community has the flexibility to learn something new in our rapidly changing world.

The government’s investment in TAFE is paying off. Enrolments have grown to a record 150 000 places for apprentices and trainees, which is up 31 per cent since last year. This record investment in TAFE and training is driven by serious investment in and attention to TAFE. It is delivering the skills that WA needs to secure a stronger future. A quarter of my electorate is under the age of 25 so ensuring training opportunities locally is fundamental.

The skills and training opportunities in Joondalup are not limited just to TAFE. There are many great education and training providers in Joondalup, and it is home to the top-tier Joondalup learning precinct, which includes Edith Cowan University, North Metropolitan TAFE, the Western Australian Police Academy and the Quadrangle, which is home to Edith Cowan College and Electrical Group Training.

The government understands the opportunities offered by rapidly growing and evolving digital industries, including those in cybersecurity. Joondalup is already making its mark as a centre for cybersecurity research, and engagement and employment opportunities. Cybersecurity is a rapidly growing industry and it will shape our local economy. The Australian cybersecurity industry is expected to be worth \$6 billion within the next 10 years, and 1.8 million jobs in the cyber industry are expected to be created in Australia over the next five years. This budget invests an additional \$400 million into the WA government’s digital capability fund, bringing the total investment to over \$900 million. This funding will be used to transform the IT infrastructure of the government and bolster the cybersecurity capabilities of the state. This is a significant investment that will transform the ways in which people interact with government agencies through improved digital services. It will also support local cyber and IT providers across the state.

A promising partnership between Edith Cowan University and the WA government that is delivering real results is the WA AustCyber Innovation Hub, which received \$1 million from the McGowan government’s new industries fund. The innovation hub is a collaboration between ECU, AustCyber and the City of Joondalup and is delivering solutions to businesses across WA to optimise their operations in a digital world. Joondalup is world-renowned

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for its cyber capabilities, and I am proud that the Labor government is investing in this growing workforce. The Lower Fees, Local Skills program has delivered significant reductions in the cost to obtain qualifications in industry. Take, for example, the advanced diploma of cybersecurity that can be studied at North Metro TAFE, which is recognised as a premier cybersecurity training provider. This advanced diploma is one of the many courses being offered at a low price for Western Australians. By charging lower fees for these courses, the government is supporting people to attain TAFE qualifications and is delivering a significant increase in enrolment and course completions across the industry.

In these rapidly evolving times, it is more important than ever that there is a visible training pathway from schools into TAFE and university, or even both. As part of the conversation about the diversification of the WA economy, the current challenge is how to market Joondalup cybersecurity and digital capabilities and industries both domestically and internationally. The \$17.1 million injection to expand WA's international trade offices will supercharge export and investment market opportunities both in my electorate and across the state. I am excited about the reconnection to the broader world following our exit from the pandemic and the resumption of widespread travel and trade, and rebuilding those relations globally.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms E.L. HAMILTON:** That brings me to my next point. The McGowan government understands and embraces the vast opportunities provided by innovative industries and is further fostering the growth of WA industry and manufacturing for the domestic export market. It is great to see the Labor government commit to one of the biggest automation and robotics test facilities in the world, right on Joondalup's doorstep in Neerabup, in my colleague the member for Wanneroo's electorate. The 51-hectare precinct will be home to a wide range of industries including mining and resources, defence, oil and gas, agriculture, space, logistics, construction, advanced manufacturing and the education sector. We have committed \$20 million to the precinct, which will deliver over 5 000 ongoing jobs in innovative fields. This cutting-edge precinct will support innovation and high-quality future-ready jobs close to home.

The diversification of the economy will bring about a major transformation in the jobs and skills landscape across the state, so we must ensure that we continue to prepare our kids for the jobs of future. The Labor government is doing just that. It is investing significantly in WA's schools so that our kids are ready for the jobs of the future. It is delivering a total of \$5.9 billion for school education across the state, a 4.7 per cent increase on last year's funding, and it demonstrates this government's commitment to continually improve education resources and facilities for our kids.

I spend a lot of time interacting with primary and high school communities in my electorate. Through the previous budget and the COVID-19 recovery fund, there has been some great investment in educational facilities in Joondalup. Many of the upgrades that were supported over the pandemic are now coming online. They include extended car parking, access upgrades and a new nature play space at Joondalup Primary School and Joondalup Education Support Centre. Heathridge Primary School also received \$1.5 million for upgrades in early learning areas.

The 2022–23 state budget will invest \$595 million in new and upgraded school facilities. These facility upgrades will mean that our kids will be able to access high-quality resources and facilities at great local schools. Schools in my electorate that will receive funding are Beaumaris Primary School, Heathridge Primary School and Ocean Reef Senior High School. I am particularly proud of the investment being delivered to Ocean Reef Senior High School, the only public high school in my area, to continue the construction of a new \$5 million state-of-the-art sports hall. I look forward to visiting the school next week and meeting with the new principal, James Kent, to look at the progress. This will be on top of the \$5 million performing arts centre that opened in 2020, which was fulfilling an election commitment I made in 2017. The new performing arts centre is a high-quality facility and is well utilised by the school community. It is fitted out with the latest technologies and allows students to acquire the skills that they will need to work in the performing arts and music industry. Construction is also underway on a new state-of-the-art STEM classroom, which will allow students to engage with the latest STEM concepts and teaching resources. In a rapidly evolving global economy, it has never been so important to equip our kids with the skills of the future, and this government's investment in STEM, particularly in the science program in schools, is delivering dedicated science labs to every primary school in my electorate.

Joondalup is home to many organisations that support children with special needs. The excellent team at the Joondalup Education Support Centre won WA Primary School of the Year in the 2021 WA Education Awards because of their dedication to supporting students with diverse needs from across our community. The centre's reputation has resulted in interest for enrolment coming from far and wide, across more than 30 Perth suburbs.

Joondalup is home to the great local not-for-profit organisation, All Stars for Autism. Based out of the Joondalup Family Centre, All Stars for Autism is providing Joondalup families with social opportunities and supporting a positive autistic identity. Just last weekend I stopped by to visit Jo McMillan, the co-founder, and her team of

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volunteers at their sausage sizzle fundraiser at the Joondalup Bunnings. Given we are currently celebrating National Volunteer Week, I wanted to take the opportunity to thank everyone that donates their time with All Stars for Autism.

It will be great to see more neurodiverse kids receive the support they need at school. In Joondalup, we have several schools providing specialist autism support programs, including Heathridge Primary School and Ocean Reef Senior High School. The fact that these programs cover primary and secondary education in my electorate is quite important and means that the students can continue their education from kindy to Western Australian Certificate of Education, all within the public school system and locally. We know how important it is to support those with diverse needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the teachers, early childhood educators, education assistants, university educators, training providers, administration and support staff in our educational facilities in Joondalup for their dedication to teaching our children and students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They have often been required to flex and move with changing circumstances and have done so with agility, whilst continuing to educate our children, and young people across Joondalup with the least amount of disruption possible. Thank you.

It would be remiss of me, speaking about our education system, not to mention that yesterday was Thank a Traffic Warden Day. To all of our traffic wardens who ensure our kids travel to and from schools safely each day, thank you. There are many traffic wardens at Joondalup, Connolly, Edgewater, Eddystone, Poseidon, Ocean Reef, St Simon Peter and Heathridge Primary Schools, and at Ocean Reef Senior High School.

Tomorrow is P&C Day WA. Happy P&C Day for 2022. P&Cs are fantastic organisations supporting our local schools and the broader community. Thank you to everyone who is involved in our P&Cs, dedicating time to support our school communities. These last two years have shown the strength of our community. I am very proud of the role P&Cs have had in building resilient and supportive communities in Joondalup. In the lead-up to P&C Day, I wish to take the opportunity to thank your P&C and its dedicated volunteers.

Thank you to the following P&C presidents and their teams: Mickey Stewart at Beaumaris Primary School; thanks to the outgoing president, Holly McBride, and welcome Kiah Snell at Connolly Primary School; Judy Edmeades, who is both P&C president and council chair at Eddystone Primary School; Jason Beltran at Edgewater Primary School; Amy Gilly at Heathridge Primary School; Amy Stewart at our Joondalup schools; Kat Backhouse at Ocean Reef Primary School; Emma Garside at Poseidon Primary School; and Chris McCafferty at Ocean Reef Senior High School. In celebration of P&C Day, I trust they will enjoy the coffee voucher that I have posted to them that can be shared at one of their upcoming meetings, whilst also supporting a number of our local small businesses. My apologies to the P&Cs that I was unable to visit over this past parliamentary sitting. I look forward to connecting with them again very soon at the Joondalup primary schools and Edgewater P&Cs.

This budget addresses the cost-of-living pressures that are being felt by our community. A number of measures are being implemented in this budget. One I want to mention is the capped public transport fares over two zones, with commuters paying no more than \$4.90 one way. Our Joondalup community is also benefiting from public transport links to the north with the Yanchep rail line extension as part of Metronet, connecting people from the north corridor to our Joondalup CBD. The \$448 million expansion of the Mitchell Freeway is set to transform our community's connectedness. The widening of the freeway southbound between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue and the expansion of smart freeway technology will bust congestion on our freeway. More importantly, it will reduce the time needed to commute, which means more time at home with family. Metronet is going to be important for how our community travels for years to come. I am proud that this government is investing in critical public transport infrastructure.

I want to take a moment to also mention the importance of this government understanding the challenges posed by continued climate change. The government is delivering on tackling the impacts of climate change here in WA. We are committed to securing a prosperous, low-carbon future for the next generations of Western Australians. This includes a significant investment of an additional \$500 million into the climate action fund, taking the total to \$1.25 billion.

Joondalup is the city centre that services the rapidly growing northern corridor. It needs to continue to grow its local economy so that it can continue to attract local business. A thriving city centre requires investment from all levels of government. But since taking office six years ago, I must say that federal interest, presence and investment in Joondalup is nowhere to be seen. It is a shame that the federal government does not recognise the importance of our strategic city centre and Joondalup's role as Perth's second CBD. There has been a complete lack of investment in and focus on Joondalup from the Morrison Liberal government and a wholesale failure of advocacy from the sitting Liberal member, Ian Goodenough. Instead, Mr Goodenough sings the praises of projects such as the \$448 million transformation of the Mitchell Freeway and Metronet, which I mentioned before. He fails to mention that the federal Liberal government had to be dragged kicking and screaming to support these key infrastructure projects.

Ms Lara Dalton; Ms Emily Hamilton; Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Peter Rundle; Speaker; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Ms Christine Tonkin; Mr Hugh Jones

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**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I will just interrupt for a moment. The member has only two minutes left. I am going to ask you to not continue to interject, member for North West Central.

**Ms E.L. HAMILTON:** I would like to note how important these major infrastructure projects are for Joondalup and thank Rita Saffioti and Premier Mark McGowan for getting these projects moving despite the heel dragging of Mr Morrison.

Mr Goodenough's track record of delivery for the Joondalup community is not there. It is plain to see. Only the other day there was a flyer in my letterbox that was meant to be proudly highlighting what is being delivered in Moore, but there were no local projects—nothing. Ian Goodenough and the Liberals do not care about Joondalup. They do not care to invest in our growing Joondalup city centre and they have failed to deliver the critical projects our community needs. There is nothing but a complete lack of vision and drive after an underwhelming three terms in office.

That is why on Saturday I will be proud to support my local Labor candidate for Moore, Tom French. Tom is a hardworking candidate who has been out there, on the doors and the phones talking to locals about what is important. He has run small businesses, worked in a country pub and is a former sparky turned law graduate and, most recently, a new dad to a son, Gabriel. He has a range of experiences and will be a strong voice in Canberra. I look forward to a change of government on Saturday.

I will conclude how I began. This is a Labor budget. It is a budget that invests for our kids and grandkids. It is investing in WA in areas that matter to all Western Australians. I congratulate the Treasurer on this budget and commend the two appropriation bills to the house.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wanneroo.

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry, member for Wanneroo. Just before you begin, because I would rather not interrupt your speech, member for North West Central, you seem compelled to consistently interject. I note your comment that it is a little quiet in here. If you would like to go somewhere noisier, please go and sit in the courtyard or somewhere else and make as much noise as you like.

**MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary)** [10.27 am]: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very happy that you are in the chair as I, too, make a contribution to the second reading of the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022.

Before I begin, can I say that it is a real pleasure to follow the member for Joondalup after her contribution. From the member's speech, it is clear to see the very significant investment and support that is being offered throughout the northern suburbs by this government. Whether it is infrastructure, the Joondalup Health Campus, education and TAFE, the Neerabup robotics precinct or, importantly, as the member for Joondalup mentioned, the capped two-zone fare for public transport. That is transformational stuff that is happening in the northern suburbs. I am glad that the member for Joondalup went through it in detail because I may or may not have an opportunity to go into the detail of what it might mean for the people of Wanneroo, but it is clear that the members for Joondalup, Burns Beach, Landsdale and Butler, who is sitting to my left, are delivering for the northern suburbs. Of course, we need to extend the northern suburbs a little bit more nowadays. We have the members for Hillarys, Carine and Scarborough serving the northern suburbs as part of the McGowan Labor government. To go a bit further towards the city, but still considered to be the northern suburbs, we have the fabulous members for Churchlands and Nedlands, all supporting our residents throughout the northern suburbs as part of the McGowan government. If people get the opportunity to listen to government members' contributions to this debate, it is crystal clear that this government delivers on the election commitment that it makes. Members would agree that when we talk to people and hear the conversations around the federal election, one of the key issues that they raise is that politicians do not keep their promises—they say one thing and do another. Members, the clear priority of this McGowan government is keeping its election commitments and promises, and it is continuing to do so.

Before I talk about the budget, I want to take the opportunity while I am on my feet to acknowledge that tomorrow is P&C Day WA. I am delighted that tomorrow I will be hosting my P&Cs at the Wanneroo Sports and Social Club for a play date. I am looking forward to that very much. The committee members of my various P&Cs will come together, and instead of them having to turn the sausages, as many of them will do on "democracy day", I will be turning the sausages for them and shouting them a drink. About 100 kids will also be coming along and will be using the playground at the Wanneroo Sports and Social Club, which was an election commitment that we have delivered and is much used by that club. To all my P&Cs, thank you. It has been a bit frustrating in the last little while that I have not been able to be more connected with you as a result of the pandemic, but I am very much looking forward to tomorrow afternoon and getting back to normal as we move through this stage of the pandemic.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 19 May 2022]

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Ms Lara Dalton; Ms Emily Hamilton; Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Peter Rundle; Speaker; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Ms Christine Tonkin; Mr Hugh Jones

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Of course, it is the budget that I really want to talk about. When we talk about election commitments, we need to emphasise that when we were first elected in 2017, we promised that we would get the state's finances back on track. We promised Western Australians that we would be a government that would be a strong financial manager of this state. That is what we promised. This McGowan government's sixth budget, and the second budget under our Premier; Treasurer, does just that. This budget demonstrates very clearly that the McGowan government is continuing to deliver on the commitment that we made to the people of Western Australia in 2017 that we would be a strong financial manager. Surely by now, after five years of strong financial management, the myth that Labor is not strong on the economy should be busted. How many responsible budgets do we need to deliver until those opposite—those few opposite—accept that Labor is a strong financial manager? How much of the debt that we inherited from the former government do we have to pay down before opposition members will accept that we are a strong financial manager? This budget is another strong budget that is fair and will set up our state for the longer term. This budget will continue our record of strong financial management, help Western Australians with the cost of living, and invest in our future, at the same time as—importantly—we have been paying down the debt that the Liberals left us with us, and have invested over \$11 billion in our safe management of the pandemic. That is quite extraordinary.

While Scott Morrison has been blaming the pandemic for the trillion-dollar debt in his government's budget, we have been able to continue our strong financial management despite the pandemic, and in some respects probably because of the pandemic. The difficult but decisive decisions made by our Premier—which have been knocked by those opposite all the way through the two years of the pandemic—have kept the Western Australian economy going from strength to strength. The numbers do not lie. Western Australia has performed the strongest of all states throughout the pandemic. Western Australia's domestic economy has grown by 7.2 per cent since the beginning of the pandemic. Western Australia has contributed almost 40 per cent of the growth in the national GDP over the past two financial years—40 per cent of the Australian GDP. No wonder Scott Morrison likes us! Spending has remained strong throughout the pandemic, despite what the opposition has been saying over the last two years. Retail trade spending is up 22.5 per cent above pre-COVID levels. More West Aussies have a job today than ever before, with a record 1.46 million people employed. Western Australia has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation at 3.4 per cent, a 13-year low. This state's financial position is strong. This government has delivered a strong operating surplus of \$5.7 billion. We are expecting a \$1.6 billion operating surplus for 2022–23, and solid surpluses going forward. Very importantly, those projected surpluses are based on conservative estimates of the iron ore price. That is unlike what the opposition did when it had control of the finances of this state.

Also, importantly, this budget continues the budget repair required as a result of the record debt that the Barnett Liberal government left us. It is quite extraordinary that the McGowan government has reduced net debt for a third consecutive year. Net debt is now almost \$14 billion lower than projected when Labor came to office. I want to highlight what I mentioned in the house the other day. It is important to remember that debt has to be repaid. Our reduction in debt means that we are saving \$2.5 billion in interest payments on that debt. That amounts to a saving of \$950 for every individual in Western Australia. That is the truth of the matter. When we compare that with the debt Australians are facing under Scott Morrison's "good financial management", we are talking about a debt of a trillion dollars—plus. In real terms, that means that the interest costs are expected to rise to almost \$25 billion a year. That is the seventh largest spend in the federal budget. It is more than the annual cost of the disability pension, which is \$22 billion, and about three-quarters of the annual cost of the aged-care system, which is \$33 billion. That is what the interest bill and the credit card max out under Scott Morrison will do for our future and for the future of my girls and all the people of this state who will have to pay that off.

The member for Joondalup did an excellent job in talking about the investment by the McGowan government into the northern suburbs. I want to quickly highlight some of the main features of this budget. This budget features an investment of \$1.3 billion to further strengthen and diversify our economy. That includes a robotics precinct in Neerabup. That is a classic example of the things that are possible with this investment. The budget also includes a \$2.5 billion investment in health and mental health. Of course, when we talk about cost-of-living support, we are delivering a \$400 per household electricity credit, on top of the \$600 credit that we delivered in the last budget, which in effect will reduce household fees and charges by 3.8 per cent. Importantly, we are investing over \$650 million in our response to climate change and to protect our environment. That includes support for electric vehicles, which means that the uptake will increase. We have made the decision to end logging of native forests. We also have record investment in infrastructure, to the tune of \$33.9 billion. We are looking to the future by investing in a new women's and babies' hospital, and a new desalination plant. This budget not only supports people right now, but also is forward thinking to provide for Western Australians into the future, along with the \$11 billion that we did not have to borrow and have been able to use to support our community as we deal with the pandemic.

I note that the Prime Minister is flying back to Western Australia one day out from the federal election. That seems like a bit of a mad scramble to save the furniture. I welcome him coming back to Wanneroo and the electorate of Pearce. Of course, those on the other side say that we got lucky with the GST and the price of iron ore, but the fact of the matter is that the former Liberal–National government could not get WA its fair share of the GST. The only

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reason that Scott Morrison gave us a fair share of the GST is because he saw the writing on the wall electorally after 2017; there is no doubt about that. He is using a similar tactic now in pretending to be Mark McGowan's friend post-2021 when we know that he holds hands with Clive Palmer and gives his preferences to Clive Palmer. He is hoping that Clive Palmer's preferences will get him over the line and help him perform a miracle; there is no doubt about that. It is offensive to every Western Australian when the opposition says that we were gifted the GST. We were not gifted it; it belonged to Western Australians. The former Liberal–National government could not get what WA deserved; indeed, WA got what it deserved only after we came to government in 2017.

The coalition government are financial wreckers. As much as Morrison wants to say, “Strong economy, strong future”, it is not borne out when we look at the spending in the federal budget. Prior to the pandemic, debt had already doubled. When the coalition came to power, gross debt stood at \$280 billion and by the end of 2020, debt was at \$568 billion. On 22 July 2020, debt stood at \$723 billion. In fact, two-thirds of the debt was borrowed by the government before the outbreak of COVID-19. There has never been a more important election for this country—and for my children and grandchildren—than this one.

My community in Pearce are doing it tough. Interest rates are on the rise and we see the impact of growing inflation when we buy groceries or fill up the car with petrol. In the context of my electorate and what matters most to the residents of my electorate, there is a clear choice to be made about who we want as our local voice in Canberra. Tracey Roberts, the Mayor of Wanneroo, has spent more than a decade advocating for the northern suburbs and her record is clear. She is committed, she works hard and she will continue to get things done. Of course, the Liberal Party had to find a new candidate after deciding that Christian Porter did not quite have the ticker to take her on. There is a bit of a stench about him and that \$1 million in that brown paper bag. Heaps of people in Pearce have told me that they are disappointed that Christian Porter is not running because they do not have the opportunity to tell him in person what they think of him. Of course, instead, Linda Aitken is the Liberal candidate for Pearce. The other day in Parliament, I called her a serial candidate. I stand by that. I was accused by the opposition of being nasty. I was not being nasty, Madam Acting Speaker; I was just telling the truth.

**The SPEAKER:** Member, I am not the Acting Speaker.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Linda Aitken first ran against the member for Butler back in March 2013, but she did not succeed.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I refer to standing order 94, “Relevance”. This is meant to be a budget reply contribution, not a criticism of federal coalition candidates.

**The SPEAKER:** Thanks for that point of order. As members would be aware, these budget reply contributions are generally fairly wideranging with a lot of latitude given. I note that members of your party, and members of the Liberal Party, were given similar latitude with their contributions.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** I repeat—she is a serial candidate. I am not being nasty; I am telling the truth. No-one is as good as Linda Aitken. She first ran in March 2013 but lost. In October 2013, she ran and succeeded in becoming a councillor. In March 2017, she had another crack at Hon John Quigley but lost again.

A government member interjected.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Oh no—there is a lot more to go.

She lost in March 2017. In October 2017 she said, “I’ll be a councillor again” and she was successful in that. Then she thought she would have a third crack at the member for Butler, and in March 2021 she had third go for the state seat and lost again. She decided in October 2021 that she would go back to being a councillor. But she is still not happy being a councillor because fewer than two months after asking ratepayers to let her represent them for four years, she has put her hand up for Pearce. Do you know what? I know there is a cunning plan by this serial pest; I think she is eyeing off being mayor after she is absolutely beaten to a wallop by Tracey Roberts. My biggest concern with Linda Aitken is not that she is a serial candidate. Good on her! She is persistent, is she not, member for Butler? It ought not concern me that she is a member of Margaret Court’s Victory Life Church, but it does, members, and I will tell you why. My biggest concern relates to a flyer that arrived in my mailbox yesterday. This is what is at the crux of the problem with the Liberal Party.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Like I said, I do not have anything against Linda Aitken. I do not. She is persistent and resilient—good on her. I like that; I like people who give it a crack! My concern relates to a flyer that she placed in my letterbox and the letterboxes of all residents yesterday in the seat of Pearce. This is not only the crux of the problem with the Liberal Party at the state level—we saw how that ended—but how it is how it might end for the federal

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Liberal Party as well. The crux of the problem with the Liberal Party is the Liberal candidates who have very radical and extreme views that do not represent the majority views of members of my community. In Pearce, Linda Aitken has at last shown her true colours and what motivates her in wanting a seat around the table. It is not about getting more infrastructure funding, easing the cost of living or wanting people to have a decent wage. It is about what is in her flyer. It states, “I will always support the right of faith-based schools to teach and operate according to their beliefs.” Don’t we all? This divisive and offensive flyer was dropped into my letterbox two days ago on 17 May, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia—talk about timing! On the international day on which we celebrate LGBTIQ people globally and raise awareness of the work that is still needed to combat discrimination, this flyer was dropped into my letterbox and all the letterboxes in my community. We know the position of Margaret Court from Victory Life. Linda Aitken is a leader at that church.

I will quote from an SBS article on Margaret Court’s position on people who are gay. I know members have heard this before, but I want to highlight it and read into the record of Parliament. It states —

Court, 78, is now a Pentecostal minister at a church in Perth and has drawn repeated criticism over recent years for her outspoken position on the LGBTIQ+ community.

Court has publicly opposed same-sex marriage, condemned transgender athletes ...

We know that that is a big issue out there in the sporting community! I have three daughters; I have spent my entire life going to sports with them and not once has the issue of transgender people in sport been an issue. In fact, it has not been raised by any sporting association anywhere around Australia, yet somehow it is a priority for Scott Morrison and people like Linda Aitken.

In 2013, Margaret Court wrote a letter to a newspaper decrying the birth of Australian tennis player Casey Dellacqua’s child in a same-sex relationship, and I quote —

“Personally, I have nothing against Casey Dellacqua or her “partner” ...

“It is with sadness that I see this baby has seemingly been deprived of his father.”

It goes on and on and on. She struck out against Qantas as well. She stated —

“I am disappointed that Qantas has become an active promoter for same-sex marriage ...

“I believe in marriage as a union between a man and a woman as stated in the Bible.

She then said that she was going to boycott Qantas—lucky Qantas to not have such a customer.

Is this really the main concern for the voters in Pearce? I do not think so. Despite her spending a huge amount of money telling that to every voter in my electorate, in the five years I have been the member for Wanneroo, no-one has come into my office and said, “There’s a bunch of gay teachers going crazy in private schools converting straight students!” Not one. Not one person has contacted my office telling me that there is a bunch of gay students in the private faith-based schools leading their petty peers astray. I find it utterly, utterly offensive. This stuff is divisive, abhorrent and unacceptable. Why can the media not call it out for what it is? Did members notice the front page spread on the federal candidate for Swan Zaneta Mascarenhas? *The West Australian* thought it was important to put her on the front page because she had a commitment to climate change. *The West* thought it was important that the electors of Swan were told that the Labor candidate for Swan was in support of action against climate change. Why is *The West* not reporting on the radical Liberals who are still getting preselection for these seats and who are not representing the people of Pearce? Why is that?

I want to talk a little about what people in my community think of the important matters at the upcoming federal election. It is the cost-of-living pressures, wasteful expenditure, and demand for an integrity system that holds politicians to account so they cannot have their local member running around like Christian Porter with a paper bag with a million dollars in it without any questions being asked. That is what the people in Pearce want. It is a broken promise by Scott Morrison. We know about the rorts and the blatant misuse of taxpayers’ money, but I want to focus on JobKeeper in particular. There is no question that it was a very important measure and it supported many small businesses through the pandemic restrictions. However, the waste from that scheme is quite simply outrageous. Billions of dollars were wasted. *The Australian Financial Review* quoted a Treasury report —

On page 40 of the report, Treasury explains that its analysis is based upon a \$47.6 billion sample of the \$70.3 billion paid in the first phase of JobKeeper. For reasons that are arguably flimsy and inarguably self-serving, Treasury’s analysis excluded all of the JobKeeper paid to not-for-profits like rich private schools —

There is a bit of a connection there —

and stadium churches —

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There is a bit of a connection there, too —

and to subsidiaries of consolidated groups like Specsavers and Harvey Norman.

*The Australian Financial Review* says that over \$40 billion was wasted, yet Scott Morrison begrudges an Anthony Albanese government that wants to spend a few billion dollars on the aged-care system. The priorities of the federal government are stunning.

Of course, JobKeeper went to many people and many businesses that needed it, but it also went to lots of people who did not need it. Members will be interested to know one of the groups that did not need it. According to a media report I have here, Margaret Court's Perth-based church received more than \$500 000 in JobKeeper payments. The report states —

But according to the report, Victory Life Centre's revenue fell by about 0.72 per cent (approximately \$19,669) during the 2019/20 financial year, excluding government subsidies.

The organisation did not need it; this is outrageous. It was given \$500 000 when other businesses, which members opposite harp on about all the time, received no support. Support was clearly given to a chosen few. It is outrageous that *The West Australian* during a federal election campaign does not truly investigate all the candidates who are putting up their hand—what they stand for, what motivates them and how they will represent Pearce.

In the past few weeks there has been a lot of talk about the need for wage increases. I note that members opposite tried to wedge the member for Joondalup by asking, "Do you support a wage increase?" as if that was such a bad thing. Sally McManus from the Australian Council of Trade Unions put it well when she said that the \$40 billion in JobKeeper payments to companies and organisations like Margaret Court and Linda Aitken's church that did not need it equates to an \$8-an-hour increase for the 2.6 million workers on the minimum wage. But they like to argue the toss about not being able to afford a decent wage increase to make sure the lowest wage earners keep pace with inflation and do not go backwards. An amount of \$40 billion was wasted in JobKeeper payments, largely to organisations like the one I have just highlighted instead of businesses that required it. That \$40 billion is now not available in the budget to pivot and provide genuine cost-of-living and wage relief for Australians.

The stench from the federal coalition government grows every day. Although Scott Morrison is seeking a second term, we need to remember that the coalition government has been in power for nearly a decade. It would like us to forget that. It would like us to forget the revolving door and its internal fights about its capacity, or stomach, to address climate change. That war is still going on, members—have no doubt about it.

Members, I am sorry I got a bit grumpy, but when I receive rubbish like this in my letterbox—I am a voter in Pearce because I live in Ashby in my electorate; I do not hang around the western suburbs—backed by the Christian lobby, I am outraged. I do not mind if Linda Aitken has such a position; I do not deny her that. However, she is not open with every single person she tries to meet at the polling booth and shake their hand. Candidates needs to be transparent and open if they want people to vote for them so that they fully understand the kind of agenda they have if they are going to serve them in the federal Parliament. It is clear that this situation is not acceptable and it does not reflect the majority of people in Pearce who want inclusive government. They know that the time is up for this divisive government. Pearce can do so much better and Australians can do so much better too.

**MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [10.59 am]:** I do not want to dwell on the federal politics or state issues that members opposite have. There have been some very interesting speeches on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 over the last couple of days. Members have talked about ice cream, fish and chip shops, ribs and all that! We have heard a lot about cost-of-living pressures. Anthony Albanese, the leader of the federal Labor Party and potentially our future Prime Minister, has said that he and the Labor Party are advocating for a wages increase of 5.1 per cent, which is in line with inflation growth. All the Labor Party members here, and their supporters, are going out there selling the campaign idea that under an Albanese federal Labor government, wages will increase by 5.1 per cent, keeping in line with inflation. Yet, here in Western Australia, we have a \$5.7 billion surplus, with \$12 billion or something over two years. Our inflation rate in Western Australia is 7.1 or 7.2 per cent; yet, the state Labor government is restricting wages growth, has had a \$1 000 cap on the public sector over the last five years and is offering 2.75 per cent over two years. Although the Western Australian inflation rate is over seven per cent and the national inflation rate is 5.1 per cent, a federal Labor government, which members opposite are campaigning for—rightfully so; they are members of the Labor Party—is advocating for a 5.1 per cent increase in wages. Why are members opposite not advocating for change within their own state government to lift wages here in Western Australia? Why does the government offer only 2.75 per cent when the inflation rate is well over seven per cent? Why are members opposite not advocating for, or talking about, that in the chamber? The unions have been a bit quiet; although, they are starting to get a bit agitated. It will be interesting to see what happens after next week and how the unions start to put pressure on the state government to change its wages policy, which is not keeping pace with inflation here in Western Australia. When members opposite

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talk about cost-of-living pressures, they should look in their own backyard first. That is all that I want to say on that matter because some of the speeches that have been delivered in this place have been unbelievably misguided and skewed. We have a federal election coming up, but we have not heard boo from members opposite prior to this federal election on the issues in their electorates. They just attack the Morrison government. Another issue members opposite have talked about is the investment that the federal government has made. Whether members opposite like Scott Morrison's coalition government or not, the investment into Western Australia has been extraordinary. Billions of dollars have been put in. Over the last five years, this government, the Minister for Transport and the Premier, who constantly refers to the Prime Minister as "My good friend", have been nothing but complimentary to the federal government for the billions of dollars it has put in, particularly to transport, Metronet and roads. My electorate has received a significant amount of federal funding for roads and projects. But we now have a federal election coming up and we see the attack on the federal government that has done right by Western Australia. Everything that the state Labor government has put to the federal government, the federal government has pretty much funded.

We are in a very good position here in Western Australia. We can argue. We sit here and laugh. We can pump our chests and say, "What a fantastic budget this is; we have a surplus of \$5.7 billion." However, the facts are that the change to the GST floor has helped the finances here in Western Australia. The iron ore prices have been at record highs, which has helped our budget here in Western Australia. That is nothing to criticise one political party or another for; it is fantastic for Western Australia. It is fantastic that we can have the surpluses off the back of our resources industry and off the back of the GST deal—a deal that I would say we deserve more than a 75¢ floor in the GST on. We have done well because the state and federal governments cooperated to do what is best for Australia and Western Australia.

Members opposite stand up and I know they are trying to jostle because there may be retirements in the future, so everyone wants to try to become a minister or parliamentary secretary or to move up the food chain, and the factions want to get at each other. We know that that is the case. But the fact remains that Western Australia has been in a very good financial position over the pandemic because of our resource industry and because of the GST. Other states have not had the luxury of those things. We can dress up the Labor Party as being a good financial manager, but I say that we have been in a very fortunate position here in Western Australia to benefit from both the GST and our resources—the number one revenue source for our state. Over the last couple of years, the iron ore sector has done well for our financial situation and has given us a huge surplus. The arguments should be around where that surplus should be spent or whether the government is spending the money in the right areas.

Enough of that. I want to talk about my electorate of North West Central. The electorate of North West Central has had to navigate uncharted waters over the past two and a half years, which has been extremely challenging and confronting for so many people, industries and local governments. They have needed to be resilient to change, and we have had to be accepting of the changes to our lives that have been thrust upon our communities as a result of the pandemic. Some industries have thrived very well while others have suffered enormously and have struggled to survive as we work through this COVID period, which has been all consuming despite the case numbers we are experiencing. It is important that we look forward to, seek out, create or support, new and emerging opportunities for our community and look to reset and build strong industries and prospects for now and for the future generations.

A range of exciting and emerging projects are being invested in by companies across my electorate, which are set to create jobs growth and opportunities to strengthen communities, and the prosperity of local economies in not only our local communities, but also our state and nation. One project that is extremely exciting and is getting close to a final investment decision is with Hastings Technology Metals Ltd. Hastings is a leading Australian rare-earth company and a significant producer of neodymium—hopefully I said that right. I am not going to read out the others because it gets more confusing. Perhaps I will give it to Hansard to put in! Hastings supplies and grows demand in technology metals, specifically the permanent magnets market. The Yangibana project in the Gascoyne is set to take the next step. This is a golden opportunity for Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction to not only support the Hastings operation, located 250 kilometres north-east of Carnarvon and around 150 kilometres north-east of Gascoyne Junction, but also grow, develop and further strengthen the prosperity of our local businesses, towns and region. With the prospect of around 30 or 40 jobs in Onslow and another 250 permanent jobs being created, we need to ensure that the Gascoyne region capitalises on this opportunity by catering for a residential workforce based in Carnarvon, Gascoyne Junction and Onslow. Hopefully we can limit the number of fly-in fly-out jobs that come from Perth and employ as many locals as possible. We need to ensure that there is the ability for people to move to places like the Gascoyne, being Carnarvon, Gascoyne Junction and, obviously, Onslow. Rare-earth ore will be mined, crushed, milled and processed into a concentrate at the Yangibana site and then trucked 450 kilometres to a plant in the Ashburton North Strategic Industrial Area near Onslow for further processing to a mixed rare-earth carbonate before being shipped to global customers.

I put on the record my thanks to the Minister for Lands, who, through his department, has assisted in enabling this processing plant to be based at the Ashburton North Strategic Industrial Area on a critical piece of land. Hastings Technology Metals will be the first tenant on that piece of land that will enable further growth and diversification to occur in Onslow. Being able to have that plant in the Ashburton North Strategic Industrial Area is a very important piece of the puzzle for Hastings Technology Metals to be able to go forward. A lot of work has already been undertaken, such as site access through the Cobra–Gifford Creek Road, while development of an accommodation village, the airstrip, a water supply and communications are well underway. The company plans to commence construction of the mine infrastructure processing plant and support infrastructure in the second half of this year following the finalisation of funding and a final investment decision by Hastings’ board of directors.

One major funding source has been the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, which has loaned Hastings Technology Metals \$140 million. That will really enable that project. Although I think companies are getting one of the highest prices at the moment for rare earths—close to \$30 000 a tonne—these projects are very complex and still need financial assistance from governments. It is a China-dominated market. This is all about trying to divest the reliance on China providing these rare earths, as China is the only country that processes rare earth. I am sure that Europe will have that processing capability in the future, because it is in the interests of the world when it comes to manufacturing, whether it be for hybrid cars or the electric cars that we hear a lot about. This metal is critical for the security of our transport system and our way of going forward to reach our net zero target by 2050, if not before.

A lot of companies are looking at hydrogen projects in the North West Central electorate. One that is very close to Carnarvon is a project involving Province Resources Ltd. The project aims to attract investment and create jobs in Carnarvon by developing renewable energy sources that will help meet the state government’s goal of 10 per cent green hydrogen by 2030, open new domestic and export markets and meet the carbonisation goals set by the nation. This is an exciting project. It is probably some way off—about 10 years—but the work is starting to occur, which is leading to opportunities for businesses in the Gascoyne, particularly Carnarvon, to supply the labour or resources needed to build a trial plant very close to Carnarvon at Town Common. That is exciting in itself, as Carnarvon and the Gascoyne are playing a major role in meeting the state and federal governments’ targets for net zero emissions.

Another company that is well advanced and doing a lot of work around the Gascoyne, as well as around this whole state, the nation and the globe, is Fortescue Future Industries. FFI has a goal of starting the process of meeting the emissions targets for Fortescue Metals Group by 2030, which is an admirable task. That will set in motion the ability to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. It is proposing to do that by taking a global leadership position in renewable energy and the green products industry by harnessing the world’s renewable energy resources to provide renewable electricity, green hydrogen and other green industrial products, such as green ammonia and green iron.

What is hydrogen? We hear a lot about hydrogen, but we actually do not talk a lot about hydrogen in this place. I think it is the future. It will be the way to meet our net zero emissions target into the future. If companies like FFI, Province or anyone else can crack the manufacture of green hydrogen, it will be a game changer for iron ore and any other commodities that need to be mined or processed, and will also provide cheaper and more reliable energy to Western Australia, Australia and the globe. That is something that we need to start investing in. We need to start to take that seriously.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** What is hydrogen? It is one of the most abundant elements on earth. It is the lightest and smallest element, being 14 times lighter than air. It is colourless, odourless, tasteless, non-toxic and non-poisonous. Hydrogen can be released without contributing to atmospheric or water pollution and can be stored in large quantities for large periods of time. Although the supply is infinite, hydrogen is not commonly found in its pure form in nature. It can be manually produced through a process called electrolysis. This process requires electricity, and when achieved using renewable energy resources like solar, wind, hydropower or geothermal energy with zero carbon dioxide emissions, the result is green hydrogen. There are great opportunities out there for hydrogen. As I said, and will keep repeating, it will play a role into the future in helping to meet our objectives as a state, political parties and a nation to reduce carbon and meet our net zero emissions target, hopefully before 2050.

I anticipate that hydrogen will be much like the discovery of iron ore back in the 1960s. That is how important hydrogen is to the state of Western Australia. I do not think anyone realised—perhaps the Premier at the time realised—where iron ore would be today, or over the last, say, 20 years. Hydrogen is in a similar vein. It is an opportunity to create jobs, help us meet our net zero emissions target and provide us with a resource to export around the world. That technology will be replicated around the world. This is a great opportunity that needs investment. When we look at the \$5.7 billion surplus, we need investment to go into these new and emerging industries. We hear a lot about diversification. This one is staring everyone in the face. Hydrogen is the future of being able to meet our target of net zero emissions. The Leader of the Liberal Party has been quite vocal on this. We see states like Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania putting land and money on the table to attract Western Australian

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companies like Fortescue Future Industries to build plant and other components there, because those governments realise the value of hydrogen. It is disappointing that the McGowan government has not grasped the opportunity of a Western Australian-owned company and said, “We want you to build a plant here.”

**Dr D.J. Honey:** Remember—he wanted to build a plant here.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The founder of FFI, Andrew Forrest, wanted to build a plant here in Western Australia; the Leader of the Liberal Party is correct. I am sure there were plenty of meetings and discussions about where and how FFI wanted to do it, and what it needed from the state government to be able to do it. Unfortunately, we have seen that slip through our fingers because of the government’s inaction. We hear rhetoric about what the government is doing, but here is a classic example of the need to invest in our new and emerging industries. This is an industry that could meet WA’s climate change obligations, and that is why we need that investment to occur.

Exciting and emerging industries are occurring around my electorate. Hydrogen is important, but it also creates a bit of conflict with landowners. As I have said, we hear a lot about hydrogen, but we do not actually understand how it is produced. It needs large wind turbines to make sure that it is green energy, so we need to take into account the visual impact of that on communities. There is also a need for these large turbines to coexist with a lot of farming and pastoral properties. That is where we could see diversification of pastoral leases. The Minister for Lands wants to try to bring these changes to the Land Act, hopefully in the second half of this year. That will allow for diversification. Negotiations in good faith are paramount to coexistence between landowners and hydrogen companies that want to utilise land in farming or pastoral areas. The minister can correct me if I am wrong, but I believe there is an opportunity for pastoralists to have right of refusal and say, “No, we don’t want to have any industry on our pastoral lease.” That is one area we know will have a huge impact. Hopefully, it could give some comfort to pastoralists that they will have the ability to negotiate in good faith but also be able to say no. There will also be some comfort in being able to see some detail of the legislation within the coming months so that pastoralists can actually see how those diversification changes are going to impact on their ability to continue carrying out pastoral activities while taking up the opportunity to coexist with industry through negotiation of a deal that will make their operations sustainable into the future. I note that there will also need to be negotiations with traditional owners that also presents an opportunity to diversify pastoral leases. Negotiating Indigenous Land Use Agreements with traditional owners should allow everyone to coexist and benefit from this new, emerging, exciting and game changing opportunity for Western Australia and the world.

We have these exciting and emerging projects, but it is not the state or federal government’s doing; it is the result of technology that is rapidly changing and companies like FFI, Hastings and many, many more. They are moving with the times and they need support and investment from the state government. They need support around legislation that will enable the diversification of pastoral stations and coexistence negotiations that will allow hydrogen infrastructure to be put in place. I am confident that the Minister for Lands understands the importance of this, and we look forward to that legislation coming into this house in due course.

However, we need to ensure that we can have local employment and that we can attract people to come and live in places like Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction. We need the government to assist with land release, which is another one for the Minister for Lands. There is no shortage of land, but there is a shortage of infrastructure to be able to unlock that land to provide water, sewerage and power. Headworks blockages prevent a lot of land being released. The government needs to invest in that to be able to capture the opportunity to have a drive in, drive out or FIFO workforce in regional towns, rather than coming from Perth. We also need workers; we need the government to work out how to move forward to capture workers, including looking overseas, whether for agriculture, hospitality or tourism. We have heard about the low unemployment rate; well, we know why. It is because we have not had any workers coming into the state. In health, how do we get doctors to come in? How can we make it simpler and easier to navigate the red tape to get doctors and nurses into the state of Western Australia? We also need accommodation in places like Exmouth and Kalbarri. That is another one for the Minister for Lands! It is not that simple in such places to put out expressions of interest to get land to build workers’ accommodation. There are headworks costs, and that is where the surplus should be spent—on unlocking those headworks costs so we can build workers’ accommodation in Exmouth and Kalbarri.

This is an exciting time. It is exciting that there is a huge budget surplus, but we need that budget surplus to be reinvested so that we can grow and diversify our economy, particularly in our regions, where we have these exciting, new and emerging industries such as green hydrogen. Members should not be confused about the difference between dirty hydrogen and green hydrogen. That is our future. That is the opportunity we have, and my electorate of North West Central is leading the way in providing these exciting new industries, much like the 1960s when iron ore was first discovered.

**MR Y. MUBARAKAI (Jandakot — Parliamentary Secretary)** [11.29 am]: I will remove my mask and use my allocated time to make my contribution to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 heard. I had hoped that I would not have to use my allocated time to provide feedback

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on the contribution of my good friend the member for North West Central, especially after the member for Wanneroo's contribution. I enjoy the member's company outside this chamber, but it is frustrating to sit here and listen to his contributions. I have been in this place as part of the McGowan government for a few years. This is my sixth budget and I still consider myself a newbie. I am sure that you feel the same, Acting Speaker; I congratulate you on your appointment as Acting Speaker, member for Hillarys. I say this just once in the hope that the member for North West Central will gather my words of advice and start to think about what it really means to represent the people of Western Australia, especially his electorate. He has been here longer than I have and has more experience. He was part of the former Liberal–National government for 10 years. It is clear that the budget today talks about the McGowan government's good fiscal management and how to manage the state's finances responsibly, especially after it was handed an atrocious set of books in 2017. The economy in 2017 was absolutely doomed and the people of Western Australia were not sure where the state was heading.

It is fortunate that the McGowan government has cabinet members who learnt a lot from their experience in opposition. They saw firsthand the Liberal–National government, as the governing body in Parliament, take on an operating surplus during one of the best economic times ever. The global demand for iron ore, especially from China, one of our most trusted trading partners, resulted in heavy investment in our economy. Even on today's economic forecasts, it is important to consider this. I can only imagine what it was like sitting in opposition during that time. When I look at the opposition now, I reflect on how well the McGowan cabinet has worked to improve the set of books it was left with in 2017. When I think about the dynamic, I assure members that it would not have been easy to watch what the federal government was doing to the national economy when we compare it with what is happening in Western Australia under the McGowan government.

The McGowan government has had to address not just the financial mess it was left with, but also deal with one of the most drastic times the world has ever experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic. It had to find new ways to keep Western Australians—families and senior members of the community—safe. It had to find ways to create jobs and to keep jobs safe. The COVID-19 pandemic not only impacted globally on families and resulted in the loss of millions of lives, but caused disruptions in the economies of many countries. Western Australia and the McGowan government, as a government, set an absolute example globally for how to not only manage the state's finances, but also take a step above and beyond its responsibilities to manage the lives of those who trusted the McGowan government to keep them safe day in day out. They include those people who work in frontline services, and we must acknowledge their sacrifices and the work that they have done. We must also look at how well our teachers managed the situation in our schools to look after our kids and help families to deal with this very complex issue. It has not been easy for anyone. Everyone in this place knows someone who has been affected. Now more than ever before, we must be optimistic and aspirational. That is what the 2022–23 appropriation bills talk about.

The McGowan government is talking about the future of the state. To hear opposition members lecture us on economics and fiscal management stretches the elastic too far—seriously! That is coming from me—someone they called a newbie last term and said, “You're not going to be here. See you later, member for Jandakot, member for this or that.” I am not going to say that to you guys. All I want to say is: get your head together. Use the opportunity to come in here to apologise to the people of Western Australia and tell them how sorry you are, one, for wrecking the finances; two, for completely not understanding the fiscal capabilities of running good government; and, three, for BS-ing your way through MAX light rail. Everything that you guys put in the cloud has not been uploaded. It is time that members of the opposition shared their grievances and told us how terrible they were in government. In that way, they can, what we call, work on their balance sheet and get their deficits in alignment with a clean set of books so that they can proceed to be a good opposition. At the moment they definitely lack that capability, in my fair opinion. Again, they are my views.

**Ms S. Winton** interjected.

**Mr Y. MUBARAKAI:** Absolutely, member for Wanneroo. I thought the election result in 2017 was loud and clear, but that bang was even bigger and greater in 2021.

**Ms S.E. Winton:** It wasn't their fault.

**Mr Y. MUBARAKAI:** It definitely was not, especially when we get lessons from them on how to manage the finances!

We are in our third year of consecutive surpluses. We have managed COVID and the world is looking at us and talking about how well the McGowan government managed the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are getting lessons on how to do things better from opposition members who wrecked the economy! We were given the responsibility five years ago to fix their mess, but now we get their advice on how to do things better. The member for North West Central wants us to take him seriously. I do not. But I do take the McGowan government seriously. That is why I want to thank the Premier and the newly appointed Minister for Health, Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, for their efforts in continuing to keep Western Australians safe, particularly the older members of our community. They have done that at the same time as focusing on budget repair, diversification, emerging markets and providing

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Western Australia with a level of good governance to generate one of Western Australia's biggest surpluses while also adding to federal government coffers to assist in its management of the pandemic.

A lot of Australians in different parts of Australia have benefited from the great work of the McGowan government cabinet from its inception in 2017 to now. The 2022–23 budget not only identifies strategies and a road map, but also presents a clear set of books that outline how we are going to address infrastructure, how to look at emerging new technologies, how we are going to build schools, and how are we going to provide the youth of tomorrow with aspirational guidance through our infrastructure in schools, and vocational education and training, and by freezing TAFE fees.

That is another point, member for Roe, about our term in government. They were in government for 10 years.

**Mr J.N. Carey** interjected.

**Mr Y. MUBARAKAI:** The Minister for Housing is right there. The member for Roe is good at listening, according to the Premier. I will give the advice that has been given to the member for Roe. I have a lot of respect for the member for Roe and his collaborative thought processes on what is good advice. I acknowledge his presence in the chamber, but at some point it would be great to hear his views on why for 10 years the former Liberal–National government thought it was a good idea to raise TAFE fees exorbitantly, which has meant that the McGowan government must now address those issues. He knows better than most that TAFEs provide skill sets and opportunities for the next generation. When that training is unaffordable, where do those skill sets come from to make this country and this state a better place for families to live and work in? He comes in here and gives us lessons on fiscal management and calculations about diversifying the economy. It does not make sense. Water rates and utilities—what was that about in the first and second term of government? The average was about 60 per cent, if I am not mistaken. It was a ridiculous figure. What his government did was absolutely shocking especially when, historically, this state had one of its best opportunities. The future looked so good in 2008. It just so happens that the government could not take those opportunities and create long-term investment for the state and prosperity for the people of Western Australia.

I will go back to my thoughts before Parliament rose in November last year. I wanted to get a glimpse into where the state was financially, so on the last day of Parliament in November 2021, I stood and asked the Premier about his outlook and how well he thought we had kept WA safe and strong by creating jobs. I asked him about the prospects for the economy and whether the outlook was fair for Western Australians. If I may indulge, I will identify the clear thoughts of the Premier's feedback on the questions I asked him in Parliament. Six months ago, the Premier said that since the McGowan government arrived in office, it had created 120 000 new jobs. That is a staggering figure. He said that our unemployment rate was the lowest in the nation, in contrast to when we came to government in 2017 and Western Australia had the highest rate of unemployment of all the states. It had the worst set of books, the highest rate of unemployment and exorbitantly high record TAFE fees and utility charges that were a burden on households. The Premier said that WA has a record budget surplus \$5.8 billion and had addressed its credit rating, lifting it to AA+ after losing our AAA rating. Obviously, the outlook was considered positive, having been stable. There is a clear outline from when we started in 2017 to what we achieved up to six months ago. The news is even better from that point—six months ago—to this budget. The figures have continued into 2022. The state's unemployment rate currently stands at 3.4 per cent and our participation rate is at almost 70 per cent. That means that 1.46 million Western Australians are employed. Since the McGowan government came to office, it has created 148 000 jobs. That is a remarkable turnaround.

I am looking at the *Economic and fiscal outlook* and at the pathway we will head into over the next four years. That is a lot of reading material. I will not dwell on that, but I will use the time I have—I wish I had more time—to try to condense my contribution. In talking about the efforts that have led us to being where we are today, I want to take the opportunity to thank and acknowledge the tremendous effort of the previous Minister for Health Hon Roger Cook, the member for Kwinana. During his time as Minister for Health, we endured the beginning of the pandemic and the bad news that followed with the devastating effects it had on this state. It affected families and everyone else. I strongly commend him for his efforts in dealing with the health crisis. It is not something that the state has seen for 100 years. Minister Cook took charge of the situation and had empathy and patience for the opposition, which repeatedly asked ridiculous questions over and again. Minister Cook stood up and regurgitated the same points to members opposite on the importance of the reality of COVID and the devastation it caused.

Minister Cook has taken on a new role as Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, which has a very strong mandate to expand Western Australia's export opportunities into Asia, and particularly to the emerging markets like India, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines. I do not know whether the member for Roe has heard the news, but it was exciting to hear that Minister Cook has just announced a business delegation that will travel to India to engage with that new market. Clearly, that could be a very strong opportunity for Western Australia to get into those emerging markets like India, Indonesia and Vietnam. Over the next decade or two, these emerging economies will definitely need support and a growing amount of resources that a skilled state like Western Australia can provide, especially in the emerging industries like critical minerals.

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On that note, I will share with members in the chamber how Western Australia has performed in the financial year 2020–21, when Western Australia was the world’s number one producer of lithium. The value of that market is almost a trillion dollars, and that number is exploding. Obviously, the price of lithium is at a record high. It has gone up by 415 per cent in the last year. That is how important this critical mineral is.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr Y. MUBARAKAI:** As I said, lithium and critical minerals present new, record opportunities in terms of where they can lead us, and we have a strategy around that. The state has long been investing in this and fully understands how important the diversification of new markets will be for our state, such as batteries and renewables. I am glad to say that we have planned and are ready to meet the expectations of the emerging markets. The delegation that is going to India to look into those opportunities is definitely something that I consider a strategy based on foresight and merit. We should be engaging those markets and looking at them, post-COVID, as an opportunity to reset. They are an additional 20 partners to help diversify our economy and spread the risk associated with the iron ore sector by capitalising on the huge opportunities that the critical minerals industry offers. The trip to India and other emerging countries is an added bonus for this state. Again, that initiative will be headed by the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade.

Last financial year, Western Australia exported 837 million tonnes of iron ore, 42.4 million tonnes of LNG and \$16.6 billion worth of gold. That was the most in the world in all those categories during that financial year. That is how well we did in the midst of the COVID pandemic. COVID hit around March 2020. During that financial year, the whole world suffered not only from COVID, but also economically. However, the McGowan government defended Western Australia very strongly by creating safety for our citizens. The government also kept people’s jobs safe by continuing to support the mining sector and making sure it was not disrupted. Therefore, we could capitalise on that. We have seen that Western Australia contributed \$32 billion to the federal purse in that financial year. That is how much Western Australia tipped into the federal coffers. We not only created three consecutive fiscal surpluses while paying off the debt that was forecast to be \$42 billion under the previous state government, but also paid down the debt by \$14 billion. Try working out the repayments in interest we have saved by reducing the debt by \$14 billion. We can now use that money to make better investments in education and infrastructure and to help those households in Western Australia that are suffering. I will not take any lessons from the opposition when it comes to numbers, statistics, economics, good governance or fiscal management. The evidence is right here. The disgraceful situation that we saw under the previous Liberal–National government is in direct contrast with this united and strong McGowan government, which has not only had the foresight during the pandemic to lower debt by \$14 billion, but also been able to provide an extraordinary \$11.2 billion worth of support to Western Australian families and businesses to make sure that everyone is looked after and that we can keep on track to continue doing what we do best. Western Australia is a state of opportunities, and we are taking on that responsibility.

I forgot to mention that one of the other flaws of the former government is that it failed to fix the GST. That is a very sensitive matter for members on this side of the chamber, along with the Premier, who has been called different things by other states when they have talked about how unfair the GST system is and have said that Western Australia should not be able to get its fair share of GST revenue. That is ridiculous.

That brings me to a letter that was sent to Western Australian families recently by a former Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard. I have to confess that when I read that letter, I thought of the audacity of that former Prime Minister in sending that letter to constituents in Western Australia. He would probably understand the importance of the state of Western Australia as the backbone of the Australian economy. He wrote in his letter that Labor cannot be trusted with fiscal management because it is used to being labelled a mismanager. Hold that thought. Here is a former Liberal Prime Minister of Australia, telling the people of Western Australia that we are bad at fiscal management. When this state has made a contribution to the federal government’s coffers to help support it during the worst crisis that we have faced, and when the current Prime Minister, who is a Liberal, has created a debt worth a trillion dollars, we are getting a lesson from a former Liberal Prime Minister about how badly this state is doing from his perspective! It is staggering. This is an important sentence and I must read it. The former Prime Minister states about the federal budget —

... the most recent Budget has shown the largest turnaround in Australia’s finances in over 70 years.

That is true. He is right. Under the current Prime Minister, this nation has the worst set of books and the worst debt that it has ever incurred. I am sure the former Prime Minister meant to write all that but could not fit it into that sentence. From the way he has written that letter, I am sure he is trying to criticise the current Prime Minister by indicating that residents in Western Australia would be better off supporting an Albanese federal Labor government, because Labor has better policies and better ways of fixing the big sinkhole that has been set up by the Morrison government. Again, lessons learnt, taken and noted, and advice provided. The federal government needs to give Western Australia its fair share of GST. Fix that system so that we will not have to keep repeating why it is important to ensure that this state can continue to do the heavy lifting. We do not need other states to look at taking what

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should duly come back to this state so that we can continue to diversify our economy and manufacturing and invest in new technology and so on and so forth. We should not be kicked in the knee for every good deed this state has done in supporting this nation. I fail to understand the merit in that letter. I know that an Albanese Labor government will make a commitment to fix the GST to enable all states to get a fair GST floor as a minimum base.

I note that time is running short and I have not made my contribution and given my input on my electorate of Jandakot, but I am sure there will be other moments when I will be able to do that. In terms of my thankyou, and my purpose in standing today to speak in this debate, I want to say thank you for my recent appointment as parliamentary secretary to the honourable minister and member for Armadale, Tony Buti. That has been an eye-opener for me. It has been a massive learning curve. I have been privileged and thankful from the day I was elected as the member for Jandakot. Every time I have come into this place over the last five years, it has been a tremendous learning curve, but even more so in the last year being with the cabinet and ministers and trying to understand the new ways in which parliamentarians fit into the broader scheme of things. Parliament is a big machine. It is a massive institution. It comes with a lot of responsibility and purpose. I am very grateful to Minister Buti and his ministerial staffers. They have been very patient, because I am quite passionate in my expressions sometimes, and they have allowed me to take baby steps and have answered my stupid questions. I am most grateful for that support and involvement. I hope to continue to play my part in this place and to make my contribution, in a moral and ethical way, to what this Labor government under Premier Mark McGowan is looking for—prosperity for all Western Australians into the future.

I have been the member for Jandakot for five years, and I am looking forward to the next three. This government's term looks very promising with all the things that are taking place for us in this state. I want to say thank you to you, Speaker, for the time that has been allocated to me in this debate. I also want to say a big thank you to Adam and Bec for being my electorate office team. Without you both, I guess my job would be half complete. You are definitely playing a big part in making my job complete.

On that note, I appreciate and definitely and heartily recommend the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 to this house in the forty-first Parliament.

**MS C.M. TONKIN (Churchlands)** [11.56 am]: I rise today to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022. I am proud to be part of a government that is recognised internationally for its outstanding management of our economy and the state's finances. Such recognition would be laudable in normal times, but our government's standout performance comes in the midst of three international crises: the pandemic; extreme weather events due to climate change; and the economic disruptions being caused by Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine, which has impacted international markets and increased the cost of living. The implications of these crises are reverberating around the world.

The implications are also evident here in Western Australia and a cause for concern among the very thoughtful community members in my electorate of Churchlands. Since my election as the member for Churchlands, I have been working with five community groups whose volunteers are passionate about the issues they are addressing. These include ageing; preventive mental health; traffic congestion and road safety; wetlands and bush habitats; and green jobs. This budget includes initiatives across these areas of focus that will be welcomed by our community.

I am proud to be part of a government that has produced consecutive budgets that have delivered significant operating surpluses that will continue across the forward estimates; that is paying down debt, which will reduce our exposure to the current regime of rising interest rates; and that is investing in our future. This world-class financial management has enabled the delivery of a budget that reflects Labor's core values, to the benefit of the entire community.

This budget has investment in significant economic infrastructure, including Metronet. Incidentally, three railway stations used by Churchlands residents will enable access to the expanded Metronet rail network—Glendalough, West Leederville and Subiaco. This wonderful initiative will directly support our community.

The budget also makes a substantial investment in our health and mental health systems with the investment of \$2.5 billion, which is in addition to the \$3.2 billion that has been invested since the 2021–22 budget. There is increased spending on education and training. Our children, young people and the not so young will be provided with opportunities to learn and develop new skills and take advantage of emerging opportunities in our economy.

This budget builds upon initiatives to facilitate diversification of our economy through investments in economic initiatives and infrastructure. There is substantial support for building stronger communities through boosting spending on services and supports to the most vulnerable in our community, including a new remote communities fund to support the development of remote Aboriginal communities and funding for social housing and homelessness, as well as measures to promote infill development and boost housing supply. These initiatives are in line with core Labor values.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 19 May 2022]

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In addition, this budget directly addresses the implications of the three crises afflicting the world today. It continues to support the community in addressing the pandemic through funding free RATs for distribution throughout the community and providing COVID-related health responses, additional resources for schools and support packages for WA businesses, bringing the total outlay on pandemic-related measures to \$11.2 billion.

Increasing the climate action fund is another feature of the budget. A total amount of \$1.25 billion will be used to address the impact of climate change and protect our environment, including incentives for the uptake of electric vehicles, which will be music to the ears of many in my electorate. The budget addresses the cost of living with measures to reduce costs by reducing the overall basket of charges to households with a decrease in costs of 3.8 per cent, including a \$400 credit on electricity bills, which adds to the \$600 credit from late 2020. We are addressing the pandemic, climate change and the cost of living in addition to all the general features of the budget that reflect core Labor values.

In September this year, I will be attending an international public procurement research workshop in Ljubljana, Slovenia, which will consider public procurement during crises. So much of what we do in government is based around the procurement of goods and services and works that are necessary to support the delivery of services. I have been invited to the workshop because I have not only expertise in this field, but also now a very different perspective and insights into managing the social, economic and environmental implications associated with disruptions because of being a politician. It is also the case that the three crises are very much a part of the concerns of the people in the Churchlands electorate.

COVID has been high on the agenda and the source of much discussion among members of my community. It has disrupted many supply chains, including those for key resources such as iron ore and other minerals, complex manufacturing, construction materials, parts, medical equipment and supplies, food supplies and processing, and household products. By keeping our extractive industries fully operational during the pandemic, our state has become the engine of our national economy. This did not happen by accident; rather, it required careful management by the McGowan government, and we have been able to take advantage of some of the supply chain disruptions around the world as a consequence. Supply chain disruptions have also caused us to double-down on efforts to diversify our economy, and this budget includes a further investment of \$1.3 billion in diversification initiatives.

As we learn to live with COVID in the community, we are experiencing disruptions to our families, work, businesses, education, and social and community interactions. The pandemic has affected so many aspects of our lives that it has, I believe, changed our outlook politically as a community and as families and individuals. So many aspects of life that we have taken for granted are no longer certain. It has challenged our key health and educational systems. The pandemic has caused many people to change direction as they have re-evaluated their lives as a consequence of their experience of the pandemic. What we value has changed as well. How many times have members heard, as I have heard, parents say that they have a much greater respect for teachers and childcare workers? We have much greater respect for cleaners; truck drivers; fly-in fly-out workers; tradies; shelf stackers; shop workers; those who work in food businesses, such as cafes, restaurants and fast-food outlets; fruit and vegetable pickers; and agricultural workers. We have suddenly realised the important role of all these key workers.

Our health and medical workers are acknowledged as heroes, but the pressure on our healthcare system has never been greater. This is a problem across all the states and is, in large measure, the result of policy failures by the federal government. During question time, I sat and listened to members of the opposition asking what the government is doing about ambulance ramping. We are stepping up and addressing the issues, but a lot of the problems stem from federal government policy failures. For example, demand on public hospital emergency departments has increased because of the failure of the commonwealth government to adequately resource general practices. There are significant gap fees and the lack of after-hours services and GPs has driven people to public hospital emergency departments. On any given day, substantial numbers of aged people and people with disability are taking up acute hospital beds and preventing emergency departments from admitting people, which is causing ambulance ramping. This phenomenon is Australia-wide and a direct result of the federal coalition government's underfunding of aged care and National Disability Insurance Scheme packages. With private health insurance increasing to unaffordable levels, increasing numbers of people are opting out of private health in favour of seeking elective surgery through the public system.

The federal coalition government has presided over 10 years of increasingly unaffordable health care. We have had critical staff shortages in our public health system. Western Australia has been dependent on overseas health professionals and that recruitment was disrupted until November last year because of understandable federal government restrictions in response to COVID-19.

We are also dealing with the diversion of our health workers to support COVID-19 testing and the delays associated with the management of infection controls. Our health workers are impacted daily because of the extent of COVID

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in the community, with many furloughed because they have COVID or are caring for family members with COVID. This has impacted St John Ambulance as well.

The pandemic has made apparent the neglect of aged-care delivery by the federal coalition government, and the vulnerability of older people and the appallingly low pay and insecurity of aged-care workers is evident. These issues were comprehensively canvassed by my good colleague the member for Kalamunda during this debate, and this matter will be comprehensively addressed by an Albanese government. This state government is not sitting around whingeing about the policy failures of the federal coalition. It has stepped up through its \$11.2 billion COVID-19 response as well as investments in the health and mental health system—a total of \$5.7 billion in investments since the last budget. This budget also includes measures to take the pressure off emergency departments with provisions to help transition out of acute hospital settings the long-stay elderly and people with disabilities who need more appropriate care.

Climate change is a major source of contention in my community. On the day the budget was handed down, I posted on my Facebook page about the way the budget addresses the priorities for people in our community, including addressing climate change. This sparked a lively debate that gave me the opportunity to highlight that the McGowan government is committed to transitioning the Western Australian economy to net zero by 2050 and is developing a credible pathway to get there, including through sectoral emissions reduction strategies that will identify how to grow our economy and create new jobs through the pursuit of low-cost abatement pathways.

A further \$652 million is allocated in this budget to address climate change and protect the environment, including a \$500 million top-up to the climate action fund, increasing the total investment to \$1.25 billion since the 2021–22 budget. Initiatives in the budget include a further \$30 million for the just transition plan to support communities with the transition from native forestry logging; incentives for the uptake of electric vehicles and recharging infrastructure; increases to the proportion of electricity generated through renewable energy at Rottneest Island; and initiatives to reduce emissions across various sectors. Hand in hand with an Albanese government, the state government will ensure that Australia steps up on a credible path to deal with climate change.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms C.M. TONKIN:** Mr Morrison will live to regret the day he walked into the federal Parliament with a lump of coal. The rise of the teal independents targeting previously safe Liberal seats such as Curtin on a platform of addressing climate change is a direct result of the inaction of the Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison governments. Scott Morrison is toxic in Curtin. He represents the stymieing of action on climate change, and I can guarantee that he will not make any visits to the Curtin electorate during his visit to Perth. It is a measure of the Liberal Party's desperation that it wheeled out former Prime Minister John Howard to support the Liberal camp in Curtin, and apparently all over the state. I received his tone-deaf letter yesterday. There was no mention of climate change, which is clearly the hot issue in Curtin. In fact, I was told that precisely the same letter had been sent to people in other electorates. Mr Howard's letter basically promises more of the same and pointedly states —

Of course the Prime Minister has his critics and that's part of the job.

I am glad there is something that is part of his job.

Curtin has three candidates with a focus on the need to address climate change. Our Labor candidate, Yannick Spencer, is a sustainability expert who has been working with large private sector companies to decarbonise their supply chains. He has a great contribution to make as part of an Albanese government and will make a significant and credible response to the challenge of climate change. Of course, the Greens are there with its consistent call to action, and the *raison d'être* of the teal independent is the frustration in the community with the inaction and the blocking of meaningful climate action by the Morrison government. The Liberal campaign is out of step with the sentiment in our community and that may well cost it the seat of Curtin on Saturday.

People in the Churchlands electorate are deeply concerned about the environment. The wetlands and bush habitat working group is focused on preserving and enhancing the quality of our beautiful lakes, bushlands and coastal areas. The members of this group understand how climate change impacts these natural environments, including the fragile coastal dunes at City Beach and Floreat that are impacted by rising sea levels. I recently sponsored a greening of our community event to highlight the practical hands-on work of our environmental hero volunteer groups—WA Gould League, natural resource management groups, Cambridge Coastcare, ReWild Perth, Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland, Friends of Perry Lakes and Friends of Galup–Lake Monger. On Sunday, I will join the Friends of Galup–Lake Monger to plant sedges at the edge of Lake Monger. We are determined to clean up rubbish and make that environment more wildlife-friendly and beautiful.

Our green jobs working group recognises the opportunities for economic diversification arising from addressing climate change. This group has its sights set on the electrification agenda. I am working with the group to foster

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innovative opportunities to support the uptake of green technologies. This includes promoting electric vehicles and local access to charging infrastructure that I am delighted has received a boost in this budget. I am also working with a range of groups to address opportunities that can diversify our economy in a way that minimises the impact of climate change. For example, I am working with a group that is focused on WA becoming a manufacturing hub for vertical take-off air taxis. I am working with the cybersecurity industry to help refine its messaging and its value proposition to government and to the private sector. We have some amazing opportunities there, and these are green jobs. They are not jobs that cause greenhouse gases.

I am working on an innovation project for which we are surveying local innovators to find out the nature of their innovations, the challenges they perceive and the opportunities to progress their innovations in this state. I am working very closely with the Minister for Innovation and ICT, Hon Stephen Dawson, on this agenda. We sent out a survey to 150 local innovators and have so far received about 70 responses. We will be providing a report that looks at how those innovators can be better supported to progress the work they do. We will also run an innovation round table at the end of this month with Hon Stephen Dawson. We will have about 50 local innovators around the table, discussing the current suite of innovation programs and state innovation policy, looking at the challenges they face and having a discussion with the minister about how to address those challenges. This is a great opportunity for people to participate in the policy development process as the government develops an innovation strategy. Lots of initiatives in our electorate are focused on addressing climate change in a positive way and creating the jobs of the future.

There are also issues in our community around the cost of living. My electorate is fascinating because we have the extremes of wealth and poverty, which makes for a very interesting conversation. The cost of living impacts many households, and the support in this budget of the \$445 million allocated to all households as a \$400 household electricity credit will be very, very welcome. In this budget, there is an overall decrease of 3.8 per cent in household fees and charges, including the household electricity credit. We have also provided free rapid antigen tests, which I know are valued in our community. I have been allocated 2 000 tests. The bulk of the first allocation went to the families of students at Lake Monger Primary School, who because of COVID outbreaks in the classroom were struggling to find enough rapid antigen tests to keep up the testing regime for children who were close contacts and needed to go to school. Lake Monger Primary School powered through about 800 of the first 1 000 RATs that I was allocated.

In my second allocation, we handed out RATs to community groups, including the Salvation Army, Floreat Anglican Church Op Shop and Christ's Pantry in Woodlands, that have contact with people who may benefit from receiving these free tests. These groups have been very grateful to receive these RATs, as have other members of our community in receiving the free RATs that have been sent to households. I have been delivering RATs to people who have called and said that they have run out and they need them, and I will continue to do so.

This government, this budget, reflects Labor values. We have prioritised initiatives that benefit the whole community. We have demonstrated outstanding, world-class financial management in driving our economy in a way that benefits not only our state, but also the country as a whole. We are doing all this in the midst of an international crisis not of our making, but we are responding more effectively than most places in the world and, in this budget, we are putting our money where our mouths are. I commend these bills to the house, and I am proud to be part of this government and part of the initiatives that we are implementing in the state.

**MR H.T. JONES (Darling Range)** [12.25 pm]: I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022. This budget is a fantastic budget and I commend the McGowan government and more recently the Treasurer for providing an outstanding budget. I am quite surprised that I have to stand to talk it up! We have a \$400 electricity credit for every WA household to support Western Australians with the cost of living. We have the biggest investment in the WA public health system, with a further record \$2.5 billion in health and mental health, including \$252 million to improve access to emergency care and to help address systemic causes of ambulance ramping.

I have travelled a fair bit during my working career, primarily for the Navy, all through South-East Asia. I know that the Minister for Police has as well. I have travelled to a lot of places and have perhaps a different perspective from some others in this house and maybe some other Western Australians. I travelled to Manila in 1997 and was aghast at the poverty I saw there. At that time, the homelessness problem in Manila was horrendous. A lot of people were displaced from the Mt Pinatubo eruption in 1991, and they were living on the highway—the main road in Manila—under cardboard. The whole highway was full of people living in terrible conditions. I have also travelled to places like Jakarta, which is the capital city of Indonesia. However, a great number of slums are there. The joy of being in the Navy is that we tend to berth at some of the less attractive berths, so we get to see a different perspective of cities. I have also travelled to Singapore. Singapore is a very rich nation and a great holiday destination; however, it has its fair share of poverty as well. I was proud to be one of the founding members of the first floating Lions Club on HMAS *Westralia*, and we did some work in Singapore to help those who were doing it tough. In Singapore,

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elderly people work at McDonald's, cleaning up the trays, so this gives an indication of what life is like in Singapore for some of those people. Of course, we cannot forget that Ukraine—eastern Ukraine now—is suffering badly. I have not travelled there, but I see on the news that life is miserable there. In February, I read a story on the ABC online news about Etep Rural Hospital in Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea has a real hospital crisis. The hospital is funded from government grants, through intermediary organisations, but no money at all was coming in—zip. The hospital services 100 000 people in the Papua New Guinea highlands, where it is tough to get to a hospital. It had to close. However, the doctors, nurses and administration staff thought that this was not a good state of affairs, so they decided to work anyway, without pay. They had no consumables, no masks and no oxygen, but they kept on going. That is what a crisis looks like. Of course, there are health challenges in any jurisdiction.

I can speak on behalf of nurses. As I mentioned before, both my sisters are nurses and my mum was a nurse. Children do not wake up one day and think, “I want to be a nurse because it's an easy job.” It is a tough job, regardless of the circumstances. It is a high-stakes occupation; it is life and death. There can be good days and bad days. I do not think anyone has any false impression about what they are in for when they sign up to be a nurse or a paramedic—even a doctor. Doctors lives are tough. There are internships. Maybe the life of a general practitioner might be quite good, but they have to go through some rough patches before then.

I was quite surprised that the member for North West Central actually seemed to be quite positive in his speech, but I am not sure that I heard the whole of it. He has blown the wind out of my sails a bit for the next part of my speech! I look at the opposition as the Judean People's Front from the *Life of Brian*, a film from 1979 that I saw as a 13-year-old. I probably watched it a couple of times back then and have never seen it since, but some parts of it resonated and stayed in my mind. For the benefit of *Hansard*, I am talking about the 1979 film the *Life of Brian*. There is a scenario in the film in which the Judean People's Front kidnap Pontius Pilate's wife and want to come up with a list of demands of the Romans or a list of grievances. But they do not get very far, because the people in the crowd point out the good things that the Romans are doing.

“What have the Romans ever done for us?” Health, someone says. The McGowan Labor government is delivering the biggest-ever investment in the WA public health system, as I mentioned before. There is \$1.6 billion for new COVID-19 response and recovery measures to keep WA safe, including \$635 million to secure rapid antigen tests and run the free RAT program. Of course, that is a cost-of-living issue as well. RATs are not cheap; I think it is 40 bucks for a pack of five. If someone is finding it hard to make ends meet and wonders whether they should buy a pack of five RATs or have something to eat or pay a bill, they will not buy RATs. The system in place to try to manage this pandemic will fall down, because people will not test and will therefore not be able to report positive test results.

There is a \$252 million emergency department reform package to improve access to emergency care and to help address the systemic causes of ambulance ramping. There is \$181 million in additional investments in mental health. The government has delivered 342 new beds, with a total of 530 beds to be delivered by the end of the year. There are further initiatives to boost the healthcare workforce, building on the 15.6 per cent increase in the WA health workforce over the past two years.

The budget allocates \$5.9 million for the commencement of site development and forward works for the Byford health hub. That is obviously very important for my community. I was very happy to attend a hackathon on 1 April at Byford Secondary College at which some of the health studies students were asked to workshop how to make the health hub more attractive to young people. There were some great ideas about modifying the working hours and ensuring that there is a diversity of staff at the health hub—diversity of gender, cultural background and disability. They said that staff at the health hub should be non-judgemental, as young people might be dissuaded from presenting to a health facility if they think they will be judged. Teenage pregnancy comes to mind—or sexually transmissible infections. They would also like to see the development of an app so that patients can look at who is working at the health hub and go through and decide with whom they want to make an appointment based upon some basic demographic information. That is quite a good idea, but I am not sure how practical it is. Hopefully, they can push that idea through the East Metropolitan Health Service, which I neglected to say was also there. Joel Gurr was in attendance and wrote down all the ideas.

“What have the Romans ever done for us?” Community safety, I hear someone say. We are using the strong budget position to invest in local initiatives that support safe, strong and fair communities, no matter where people live. An amount of \$11.1 million is going towards the new Armadale courthouse and police complex. I have been in there a couple of times and it is a fantastic looking complex. It sits over Armadale and has a great view. It has the latest and greatest facilities and IT. The complex also enables court officers and the police to work together, as detectives and regional and reactive police elements can all work out of the same building. I note that the detectives are near the top floor—I do not quite know how they got up to the top!

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There is \$14.7 million to create WA's third one-stop family and domestic violence hub in Armadale. This builds on the success of the FDV hubs in Mirrabooka and Kalgoorlie. An additional \$16.4 million will support the extra 950 new police officers being employed over the next four years as part of our work to boost overall numbers by 15 per cent. There is \$408 million of additional funding for housing and homelessness measures and a \$67 million increase for emergency services to keep Western Australians safe. I attended the handover of three general rescue utility vehicles at Kings Park yesterday morning, and I was glad to see that Serpentine–Jarrahdale received its vehicle. There is \$114 million in the budget to boost child protection and support services to help keep WA children safe, as well as \$19.7 million to construct an Aboriginal short-stay accommodation facility in the Perth metropolitan area to help people from the regions.

“What have the Romans ever done for us?” Education, I hear someone say. The McGowan Labor government continues to invest in local schools to ensure that all Western Australian students have the best possible opportunities to learn. We are increasing education funding in the 2022–23 budget, delivering a total of almost \$6 billion for Western Australian schools. In this year's state budget, students throughout WA will benefit from \$595 million of new and upgraded school facilities. This includes funding towards projects in my area, including \$21.5 million for stage 4 of Byford Secondary College, which will include a new STEM classroom and other student accommodation. There will be \$9.6 million spent on upgrades to Roleystone Community College, including a new sports hall, classrooms and a STEM classroom. I note the efforts of the P&C and principal Mark Brookes in bringing that to fruition. There is \$8.5 million for upgrades at Kelmscott Senior High School. It is not in my area, but kids in my area attend Kelmscott Senior High School. A new sports hall will be built and the old sports hall will be modified into a performing arts centre and STEM classroom.

We are also delivering \$54.6 million in support for students with disabilities and additional learning needs across WA. I note that the Special Needs Dental Clinic has also received funding—I cannot remember the amount—to enable it to relocate into a more modern and larger facility that can cater for more people with special needs, including my son, who attends there at least once a year. Across WA, \$42.5 million will be spent on COVID-19 measures in schools, supporting the continuation of enhanced cleaning protocols and maintaining mask, personal protective equipment and RAT supplies. I have seen RATs delivered to schools in my area, including Beenyup Primary School.

There is \$2.5 million to support phonics skills development for year 1 students across WA. My wife is a teacher. She talks about phonics all the time and my eyes roll over, but it is a good thing for kids to be taught.

**Mr P.J. Rundle** interjected.

**Mr H.T. JONES:** I go, “Phonics again!”

There is an additional \$33.8 million in funding to go towards maintenance upgrades to improve public schools.

“What have the Romans ever done for us?” The McGowan Labor government is providing more targeted training opportunities for Western Australians to take up quality jobs. We continue to deliver Lower Fees, Local Skills initiatives and are keeping TAFE fees low through annual fee caps across 210 high-priority courses. TAFE courses are widely sought after by people in my area who are looking to capitalise on the jobs that are happening in infrastructure, and at the Kwinana industrial complex and down at Naval Base. They want to get into industry. Principal Paul Jones at Byford Secondary College has offered an opportunity to the local TAFE to deliver pilot programs at his school to test the appetite for various courses, and I am glad to see that work towards Armadale TAFE is progressing. There is \$14.3 million to support training in WA's in-demand construction industry and an \$11 million boost to the defence industry workforce. I think it is a good thing to take advantage of the proximity of HMAS *Stirling*, RAAF Base Pearce and Campbell Barracks to create jobs and capabilities locally. There is \$5.5 million to help mature age jobseekers and ex-offenders into jobs. The McGowan government also continues to roll out the biggest TAFE capital works program in WA history, with \$216 million committed to delivering state-of-the-art facilities, including high-quality, industry-relevant training across the state.

“What have the Romans ever done for us?” I turn now to roads and Metronet. We are delivering Metronet with a record \$6 billion allocated over the next four years for a further 13 projects that are either planned or underway. The 2022–23 Metronet milestones will include the opening of the Forrestfield–Airport Link, including new stations at the airport, Redcliffe and High Wycombe; the commencement of major construction at Midland station; the Byford rail extension; and the removal of level crossings in Victoria Park. I think the member for Victoria Park touched on that in her speech, talking about the 18-month delay that will be necessary in order to safely complete interruptions, but once it is finished, the people of Byford and surrounds, in particular, will enjoy greater access to cheap public transport and will be able to commute to the city very cheaply.

[Member's time extended.]

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**Mr H.T. JONES:** I acknowledge that the people of Roleystone have been through the turmoil of the Denny Avenue redevelopment, but once that work is complete, they will have the benefit of cheap commuter fares to the city. The Labor government has also made the decision to reintroduce railcar manufacturing at the Bellevue facility in the electorate of Midland. That is great work, and it will bring back highly skilled jobs. The Premier mentioned that people could eat off the floor at that facility! I have been there, and I concur with that assessment. It is not like the old Midland Workshops, which had diesel and mucky boots everywhere; it is a very clean, highly skilled and modern facility.

One of my election commitments to my electorate was a further \$18 million to fund the upgrade of local roads. That will help the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale, which struggles to raise enough revenue to pay for the upkeep of roads, to create safer roads and easier road conditions for local people. There is also \$219 million in the budget for the duplication of Thomas Road from Tonkin Highway to South Western Highway. That is something that has been needed for a long time. I lived on Brookton Highway from 2005 to the end of last year and I used to commute along Thomas Road to Garden Island every working day from 2007, and I could see that it was not really a local road. I did not live in the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale, I lived in the City of Armadale, but I was using that road, and other people coming from the north were also using it to get to work in the Kwinana area. That put a lot of pressure on the SJ shire, so I am glad to see that money is being invested to duplicate that road to make it safer through improved lighting and the separation of vehicles. It is, of course, an east–west transit, so drivers have to deal with sunrises and sunsets, which makes those times of day particularly hazardous when driving along there.

“What have the Romans ever done for us?” We are investing in climate action. The McGowan Labor government is setting up WA for a prosperous, low-carbon future, delivering more funding for initiatives that protect our environment and respond to climate change. There is a \$500 million boost to the climate action fund, taking the total to \$1.25 billion. There is \$22.6 million for new charging infrastructure to expand WA’s vehicle charging network, which I understand will be the longest in the world. There is \$36.5 million to provide 10 000 rebates of \$3 500 to Western Australians who commit to buying electric or hydrogen vehicles, up to a value of \$70 000. We all know that EVs are expensive at the moment. The Leader of the Opposition yesterday talked about comment threads on online news articles; I saw someone comment on my Facebook page that \$3 500 would do nothing for them because they could not afford \$70 000 for a Tesla. However, the important thing is that people who can afford one and are trying to decide between a combustion engine or an EV might be swayed towards an EV if they think, “I’m getting \$3 500 for nothing.” The trickle-down effect of that, if you like, is that people will sell their old car and there will be a better second-hand market for vehicles. The member for Vasse was complaining about the cost of driving electric vehicles and recouping the cost for road maintenance, but I do not think anyone spending \$70 000 is going to worry about a few cents per kilometre.

“What have the Romans ever done for us?” This is a timely subject, because I was going to meet my daughter for a coffee at one o’clock, but she said, “No, Kendrick Lamar tickets are going on sale.” But she added that, because of the anti-scalping legislation, there will hopefully be more tickets available! That is another thing we have done, so I am pretty proud of that. I do not know who he is, though!

I ask the opposition and the Western Australian public to look on the bright side of life. There are difficulties and challenges, such as homelessness, housing and health. There are always things that go wrong with health; people unfortunately get sick. That is an inescapable reality for any health system, but we are in the best shape of any country in the world, and WA is in the best shape of the Australian jurisdictions. I would not want to be anywhere else. I have travelled around Australia with the Navy and lived in various states, and WA is the place to be.

In the time I have available, I would like to quickly raise the decision to discontinue services at seven Activ Foundation industrial sites in WA. My son works at Bentley Activ, so it is a personal issue and I will try to speak without that conflict of interest. I am trying not to get emotional; I do not know why I am. Last week, support workers were called into a meeting. My son had COVID and could not go, so I got an email telling me that in two months’ time the centre would be closing down. My wife and I are well off in comparison with a lot of people, but we will have to spend the next couple of months trying to find something for my son to do during work hours.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent):** I am sorry, member for Darling Range. I was looking forward to you continuing your contribution, but you will have to continue later. I am sorry.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2608.]