

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Amendment to Question

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [3.01 pm]: I had finished my contribution to the debate on the amendment.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Energy) [3.01 pm]: I am disappointed but not surprised by the contributions made by members opposite on this issue. As I have said before, this was an extreme weather event. It was so extreme that Western Power had never suffered such a hit to its infrastructure. The last time we lost a transmission tower was about 35 years ago at Merredin, when we lost a single tower. In this event last month, we lost five towers in a row. Huge transmission towers were crumpled up like tinfoil, which had a major impact on the network.

I have said before that the efforts of those engineers and crews should be recognised. They did an extraordinary job. They got the lights back on in Kalgoorlie in about 30 hours, when the initial estimate was more than a week. They worked miracles. They engineered solutions that were not in their playbook. I cannot emphasise enough their amazing work to restore power as quickly as they did. The other outages in the wheatbelt and in the hills were reconnections with hundreds of poles down, and they took time to reconnect, but that Kalgoorlie solution was extraordinary.

It is easy for members opposite to come in here and capitalise on the misfortune of Western Australians and try to score political points over an extraordinary weather event that had an extraordinary impact on our energy network. It is really easy to come in here and play the blame game and claim that an extraordinary weather event is all the fault of this government. I can tell the member there is no —

Mr R.S. Love: The generator did not start. That was the problem in Kalgoorlie.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: No, I listened in silence to all of you, so I expect the same in return.

No energy utility on the planet is invulnerable. No energy utility on the planet does not suffer an outage from time to time. We suffered an extraordinary hit to the system. I know that many people feel frustrated. We all get frustrated when power goes out. Electricity is such a part of our life. We rely on it. It is something we all need every moment of the day. I understand the frustration. But again, revelling in the misfortune of others and not presenting solutions or answers is a very hollow thing to do.

As I said, an investigation is underway into what happened to the West Kalgoorlie power station and its two generators. The Coordinator of Energy, Western Power, Synergy and the Australian Energy Market Operator will look in detail at what happened there. The Premier has indicated that we will go to market to supply new, reliable, secure and affordable energy to the Kalgoorlie network, as well as to the wider south west interconnected system grid. I also remind members that, at this moment, more than half a million Victorians are without power—again. The situation in Victoria is not dissimilar to what happened to us. An extraordinary weather system, with lightning strikes, severe wind and hail, went through Victoria. Over there, they are looking at being without power for weeks rather than days. All networks face these extreme events from time to time and are tested. The response of Western Power has been incredible, and I again want to recognise its contribution.

It is a bit cheeky for the opposition to come into this place and attack us on energy policy. Let us remind people what the opposition would have done with our energy system. First, it would have sold Western Power. Last month, when I was in contact with Western Power to ask how it could do more to immediately respond, I was in contact with a state-owned government trading enterprise over which we had direct control, that was headquartered in Western Australia and that has Western Australian employees who are committed to restoring power in their home community. If the opposition had sold off Western Power, we would have been dealing with a hedge fund operator in New York. We would have said, “We’ve got a problem down here, folks. Do you mind trying to help us out?” How interested and motivated would the investors in New York—the hedge fund that would have owned Western Power—have been in helping to get the power back on in Kalgoorlie, the goldfields, the wheatbelt or wherever else? Can the opposition answer that question?

Dr D.J. Honey: We did not have a policy to privatise Western Power at the last election.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Is it not the opposition’s policy now?

Dr D.J. Honey: We didn’t have a policy to privatise Western Power.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Oh, the opposition did not have a policy!

Several members interjected.

Dr David Honey; Mr Reece Whitby; Mr Simon Millman; Ms M.J. Hammat (mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary); Mrs Robyn Clarke; Ms Rebecca Stephens; Dr Katrina Stratton; Ms Elizabeth Kelsbie; Ms Lara Dalton

Mr R.R. WHITBY: This was a 2017 policy.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Hang on, member for Cottesloe; this was a 2017 policy. The opposition went quiet last time and thought it would get it through.

Dr D.J. Honey: We made it very clear that Western Power should be kept in public hands.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Is the opposition going to sell off Western Power or not?

Dr D.J. Honey: We made it very clear that Western Power should stay in public hands.

Ms S.E. Winton: You changed your minds!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: The opposition is flip-flopping. I apologise if I am a bit sceptical about anything the member for Cottesloe says because, let us face it, he is not going to be around next time to deliver anyway!

The other thing to remember is that the member for Cottesloe had a plan to stop coal-fired power in Collie in nine and a half months' time. It was to be a 2025 exit. What would have happened without the careful, moderate approach that this government has taken to the transition in Collie? The government's intelligent, informed approach is taking the community along with it. We are seeing massive investment in the Collie community. People are invested in and aware of what is happening. The opposition would have pulled the plug in nine and a half months! We are talking about another half decade away—a gradual transition to 2030 that will give us time to build alternative generation and storage, a lot of which is going into the Collie region. The opposition would have ripped out the plug on the Western Australian economy and plunged this state into perpetual darkness, or at least into extreme, intermittent blackouts. That was the member's plan—to get out of Collie by 2025. In nine and a half months' time, we would have been dealing with a massive tsunami of economic pain and a severe lack of energy. That is what members opposite had proposed for Western Australia, so forgive me for not listening too seriously to their views on the energy system.

One important issue that came up out of this process is the importance of telecommunications when the lights go out. This was raised by many people and the opposition. This issue came up after cyclone Seroja. The member for Moore and others raised this at the time. As members know, the communications network is a federal responsibility. In my former role as emergency services minister, I raised the issue with the federal government at the time of cyclone Seroja. I raised it repeatedly with the two federal emergency management ministers at that time. I am incredibly disappointed that this issue has not been resolved. I raised the issue with the two National Party members who were the emergency management ministers at the time as part of the issues I was facing with cyclone Seroja, and we still do not have a positive telecommunications outcome for the community.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you have had your say. The minister is responding. Do not keep interjecting like that.

Carry on, minister.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I am very heartened, members, to learn that Hon Alannah MacTiernan has been appointed to lead a review by the current federal government into meeting the needs of regional telecommunications. In fact, I had a conversation with Alannah MacTiernan this morning to go through all the telecommunications issues that occurred recently. She was on the ball and setting the agenda for her first meeting. She was very aware of these issues. I am glad that a Western Australian is standing up for this state and will go to the heart of the federal government to deliver on this very important issue. I raised a number of issues.

I was in the hills electorates on the weekend of those power outages, and one of the common comments was, "Look, losing the power at home is bad, but what is worse is the telecommunications breakdown." The member is nodding. It is true. People need telecommunications. They need to be able to phone up. Not knowing what the outage is about and how long it may last and not having information are critical. That is why it is important. People will often say, "Look, we can put up with the power being out. We want it back on straightaway, but I really want to use my phone and find out what is going on." That is a critical and important matter. I will be working with the federal government through Alannah MacTiernan to make progress on that. There is a fundamental responsibility for Telstra under its universal service provisions to deliver that communication. This should not be insurmountable. The science is there. The will needs to be there as well. It will be with Alannah MacTiernan.

No government has done more to build the resilience of our energy network and to face the challenge of climate action. The last Cook government budget committed \$3.8 billion—billion with a "b"—to extra transmission generation and storage. That is an extraordinary figure, but it is money that needs to be spent. I add to that the

\$3 billion committed by the federal government to rewiring the nation in the north of our state. Recently, the Premier announced \$700 million-plus for a new northern line to build resilience into the system and to gather in the renewables that are out there.

The member for Roe made some interesting comments. Part of the member's contribution about the way we handle renewables into the system was actually sensible. The member has a concern that renewables are part of the problem rather than the solution. They are actually a bigger part of the solution. We need that fundamental firming energy, which is currently provided by coal and gas. We have a careful transition plan for coal. Gas will be an important continued firming energy for the system. The importance of renewables is that they help to save us from those outages. When the line went down between Kalgoorlie and the south west interconnected system, the issue was what else we could do at Kalgoorlie. Was there a possibility of more storage out there? Kalgoorlie has great wind resources, which would have helped us out.

Every summer, the growth in Western Australia means that we reach new highs in energy demand. We have a very strong economy and migration to the state, more homes being built and more demand for electricity, people in jobs who are buying more appliances, including air conditioners. Our demand is going up all the time. Renewables and battery storage are helping us cope with that increase. By the end of this year, we will have 700 megawatts of extra battery storage in the system and then a big lot next year as well. Having that battery storage and those renewables means that we will be able to soak up the excess solar in the system from all the solar panels on our roofs and the great wind resources that we have in Western Australia, from the south coast right up to the midwest and Geraldton. We have the best renewable resources on the planet, and we would be fools not to make the most of them. Building windfarms and solar farms and having that storage is absolutely the solution going forward to make a more resilient network.

It is important that we get it right in the regions, too. One or two farm properties at the end of a line could be without power for a long time, because it takes time to find a break—the member for Moore knows what I am talking about. We will have standalone power systems, which we have pioneered in this state. People come from all around the world to look at what Horizon Power and Western Power are doing with standalone power systems. Farmers are waiting in line to sign up to that technology because they know it is more resilient and reliable than a line on some poles that could go down in a storm or a fire. We have challenges, but we are on the right track. Make no mistake about this government's commitment to the great transition to renewable energy. We are facing up to, and are serious about, renewable energy.

This is an issue that the member for Roe talked about. The way the member for Roe can be of assistance here, and the way he can help us to meet the energy needs of the state and, indeed, his own communities, is to make sure that communities accept this change. He can make sure that communities are on board.

Mr P.J. Rundle: That's why local governments and communities are confused, and landholders.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Yes, the member is right. There needs to be important dialogue. Communities need to be informed, and we are certainly committed to that.

Mr P.J. Rundle: But the government is going to leave it to local governments.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: No, not at all. Local governments are part of that community discussion.

Careful planning is needed to ensure that the route of the transmission lines and the placement of other renewable energy facilities do not displace valuable agricultural land or can be done in a way that we get the most out of the renewable opportunities and let farmers do the job they do. It is important that we work together. We need to accept that the future includes windfarms, solar farms and transmission to move those electrons around. We need to work together to ensure that the community is onside, supportive, understanding and informed. We do not want to see the extraordinary, extreme and unfortunate situation happening in the eastern states where the same people who opposed vaccinations and other things during the COVID pandemic now have some sort of pathological opposition to renewable power. That is not the way forward, and I hope the member for Roe works together with me to ensure that we do not get to that very dangerous place.

I think I have spoken enough. This government was faced with an extraordinary situation last month with massive power blackouts that affected 31 000 properties. It was not as great as what is happening now in Victoria, unfortunately, with well over half a million people affected. The way we dealt with it at the time was extraordinary. The way we are continuing to embrace the great transition in terms of investment is extraordinary also. It is a massive commitment and a massive investment and we need to work together as a community.

Let us not be divided about this. The benefits on the other side of the transition are extraordinary. When we have reliable and affordable energy, all things are possible, such as the return of manufacturing. I refer to manufacturing

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this country has not previously seen because energy costs will be low and we will still be able to pay good wages. The possibilities on the other side are amazing. We need to work together to get there.

Division

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

Ayes (6)

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

Noes (45)

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

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [3.25 pm]: I know that we have been here for a day or so, but welcome back and happy new year to all members. Recently, my future circumstance changed, and I thank the Premier and others for their kind words about that. I will talk very briefly about that to say that in relation to my preselection for the seat of Cottesloe, I am disappointed, but I am not devastated. Members who know me will know that I have done lots of interesting things in my life. I will work hard in this Parliament over the next year to do all the things I can to represent my community well and moreover in my shadow areas. Equally, I will do something interesting post-politics when that time comes. I thank members for their kind words.

There is still a considerable time to go before I leave Parliament. During that time, I will do everything I can to represent members of my community on the issues that matter most to them. That is my first responsibility as a member of Parliament and as the member for Cottesloe. Three issues sit above all else for members of my electorate, be they children or adults—not just electors, but the whole community.

The first is the horrendous impact that infill and high-rise development is having and will have on my community and surrounding communities in the western suburbs. The second associated issue with that is the terrible loss of tree canopy not in just my electorate, but across Perth. I will cover these topics in detail. The third issue that relates to infill in my area is traffic congestion—something that seems to be completely ignored in any planning decision made on changes to housing density in my electorate and related areas.

Why is the area concerned about infill and high-rise? It is because the community now knows that it has no say whatsoever through its elected council representatives on planning decisions that occur in their area. Under the Labor government, we have seen a complete gutting of planning laws that govern planning decisions in this state. It is dumbfounding. I am surprised by many backbenchers in this chamber whose areas will be affected by this just as much as the western suburbs. I sit in this place sometimes and see one minister in particular, and a couple of others—not all—who seem to take glee in this issue. It almost seems to be childish class warfare in taking glee in the destruction of amenity in my community and surrounding communities and in the fear and apprehension that many people in those areas have.

Members, everything that is happening in my electorate can happen in yours. I will go through that in a little detail because some electorates will be much more vulnerable to this than others, but their councillors will have no say whatsoever in the planning approvals that are made in their area. Although councillors can be involved in developing a local planning scheme, under the changes the government has put through, local planning schemes have become effectively completely redundant—a complete waste of time. I will explain why I say that.

I am not sure that many members here have any idea about what these new planning laws mean. I have had many discussions with many people. I do not even think that the developers that proposed these laws—that were in fact the catalyst for the government making the change to these laws—understand what they have done. I will go through

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a couple of areas in relation to that. The first is the complete removal of elected councillors from having any say whatsoever on a planning decision made in their community. Before, they could have had input and discussion, but now, all planning approval authority for a local council is delegated to the CEO. When this change was introduced, the Minister for Planning said that one of the justifications for it was that it would remove the possibility of undue influence or corruption of councillors. All that planning approval authority now sits with the CEO of the council. Some members may not have noted in that bill that although there are threshold levels for approval—with \$2 million going to the three joint development assessment panels and \$20 million going to the Western Australian Planning Commission, replacing what was the state development assessment unit under the COVID emergency laws—and trigger levels, the developer can say, “No; I want my development to be considered by the CEO of the shire.” That is one person. It is a formula for corruption if ever there was a formula for corruption. There would be no open discussion by the council. The councillors cannot discuss it. They can have no impact on it. All that authority lies with the CEO of the council.

What does that CEO need to consider? Firstly, they have to consider the local planning scheme. There are no clear words on this, but the law says that the CEO, the JDAP or the SDAU must take due regard of the local planning scheme. They need to consider that. However—here is an enormous “however”—a number of caveats say that they can ignore the local planning scheme. Some of it is sensible stuff. It says that if it is trivial, such as the colour of a doorknob or whatever, a whole development should not be held up for trivial noncompliance with a local planning scheme. But the big caveat is that they can do anything else in relation to that decision if it is in the public interest. As we sit in this chamber, all members know what the ascendant public interest is in Western Australia at the moment: there is nowhere for people to live. There is very little housing to buy and there is almost no rental accommodation, so in every circumstance the public interest is to build something. Therein lies the problem. I said to some colleagues recently that the CEO of the Shire of Peppermint Grove could approve a 20-storey tower on Bindaring Parade or The Esplanade. If the council is aggrieved by that decision or if a neighbour is immediately affected by that decision, they have to go to the Supreme Court. A number of members in this chamber know the law. If a person goes to the Supreme Court and wins their case, and if there is any sophistication to the case, in every likelihood they will be out of pocket by hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is a route that is unavailable to the ordinary citizen. If a developer’s development application gets knocked back, where does the developer go? It can go to the State Administrative Tribunal. A developer that has hundred or even billions of dollars can pay \$200 to go to SAT to appeal, and it can appeal as many times as it likes, which it has. The developers of the Chellingworth site had four bites of the cherry before the go-ahead was given to a development that is larger than the original proposed that was knocked back. Members, this can impact upon every one of you. The developer’s business model is very straightforward. It buys a block of land with a lower accommodation rating upon which it can build only a certain number of dwellings. It then applies for approval to build something with a much larger number of dwellings. That is not available for ordinary citizens because they cannot afford to go through that process. Developers make an enormous uplift in the value of the land that they bought cheaply with a lower dwelling rating.

What do developers want? They want views. That is what sells. That is why we have seen two enormous towers go up in the southern part of Claremont—the Blackburne development. It has been reported to me that the top two apartments on each of those towers sold for \$20 million each. That is \$80 million for just four apartments. That is not doing a lot for housing, but it is doing a lot for the bottom line of Mr Blackburne. Developers want views of the ocean or the river or a park or wooded areas. That means they are coming for Bayswater, Bassendean, Belmont and Mt Lawley. We already know that there are issues in Belmont. Developers are coming for you. Mt Lawley has a beautiful wooded area. Developers are coming for you—and they can quite literally build anything anywhere. The only justification that they need is that it is in the public interest. As I have said, because of the requirement for housing, we know that that justification will always exist.

These laws are not just affecting the western suburbs. Members may take a bit of glee because they think this is class warfare against the western suburbs, but this will affect all their communities. I am not opposed to infill per se. I have said that on a number of occasions in this chamber, and I have spoken about developments. Now that I have mentioned Mr Blackburne’s name, I think the ONE Subiaco development stands out as an excellent development. It is truly transport oriented; it is at the railway station. It is in the town centre and does not impact upon ordinary residents.

I will go to the other end—the apartments being built at the Nedlands Peace Memorial Rose Gardens. This is a World War I memorial, for goodness sake! This massive block of apartments is literally going up in the middle of ordinary suburbia. Regarding the business model, I have spoken to developers who say they are hardly making a penny out of all this. I can tell members who is paying for this. It is not only the people paying enormous prices for the apartments—it can be said that they chose to do so—but also the people with no choice who live next door to those developments paying the cost of the process. I gave an example in Claremont. I have been told by someone who I think is knowledgeable in the area that the blocks around that apartment development have dropped in value

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by around \$2 million. Some people living around there might be well heeled and can perhaps afford that, but most people living in that area—even if members do not have much sympathy for them—have enormous mortgages. They have stretched themselves to the limit to live in a place that they love. Never in their lifetime did they think that they would be looked over, with hundreds of people staring into their backyards, destroying the amenity of their block. The people buying those apartments do not want to buy houses immediately adjacent to those apartments. Yes, some individuals are making a big profit, but all the landowners with mortgages around those developments are having the value destroyed of what is, for most people, the single most important asset they will ever have. The home is typically the stored wealth for most families.

This is not just about the western suburbs. People in my community are terrified about this. The Cottesloe council is going through a new local planning scheme. The state government has prescribed a set of rules around that. Something like one-third of the Town of Cottesloe is looking to be earmarked for high density and infill. If that happens, it will destroy the amenity of the community. Members may not care much about that, but that is people's homes. That is where they raise their families and where I raised my family of six children. It is the place I love, and I do not want to see it destroyed, so I will do everything I can, while I am here and beyond, to make sure we see these egregious planning laws changed.

I want to go to an associated area that I have spoken about, which is the loss of tree canopy. I know that people on the other side of this chamber genuinely care about the environment, and we should care about the whole environment. In the environment in which people live in Perth and Western Australia, no single factor has a greater impact on people's daily lives than the loss of tree canopy. One area mentioned in the Western Australian Local Government Association's *State budget submission 2024–25* is cooler cities and shadier suburbs. WALGA points out in this submission —

Overall canopy cover in Perth is 16%, the lowest of any major Australian city and only 22% of Perth's suburbs have canopy cover above 20%. Between 2011 and 2020 one quarter of Perth's urban canopy has been lost ...

That is 25 per cent. It is a period of 10 years in which 25 per cent of the urban tree canopy was lost. It will not be lost on government members that that did not happen under a Labor government; that occurred under a Liberal government, but that is continuing apace, particularly with these new laws.

I will look at another report. I will table one of these reports because I think every member in this chamber should read it. In the 2019 CSIRO Urban Monitor report titled *Statistical report: the urban forest of Perth and Peel*, the CSIRO goes through a whole range of information. In particular, table 3 lists canopy cover on development lots, and I want to go through some of the suburbs in it. The table summarises the change in tree canopy for land that has been developed in various suburbs of Perth. In Alexander Heights, in 2009 the average tree canopy on those lots was seven per cent; it is now zero. There has been a 94 per cent loss of tree canopy for developed lots in Alexander Heights. In Balcatta, the canopy coverage on blocks before development was five per cent; canopy coverage now is one per cent.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: In 2009, the canopy coverage on Bassendean development lots was 10 per cent; now, it is four per cent—a 63 per cent loss in that community. In 2009, the canopy cover on the lots that were developed in Belmont was eight per cent; now, it is three per cent—almost a 70 per cent loss. Tree canopy on Churchlands lots went from six per cent to three per cent—a 59 per cent drop. Claremont lots went from 12 per cent to five per cent coverage—a 55 per cent loss. Cottesloe lots went from 10 per cent to six per cent—a 45 per cent loss. The lots developed in East Cannington had 12 per cent tree canopy, and those same lots now have one per cent tree canopy. East Victoria Park lots went from 12 per cent to three per cent. I could go on. I am happy to share this with any member. The City of Perth and metropolitan Perth is being clear-felled.

I know that people here spoke passionately on the forestry debate. I do not have a copy here, but a CSIRO study published in 2018, under a previous Minister for Environment, said that 60 000 hectares of tree canopy were lost in a 10-year period. Imagine that! Why is that important? We all love trees. It is important for two reasons. One reason is that the daily maximum temperature that people experience in their suburbs is most affected by tree canopy, which is the single greatest variable factor that controls the daily temperature that people experience in their suburbs. The second reason is that trees in the metropolitan area are a critical food habitat for Carnaby's, Baudin's and forest red-tail black-cockatoos. Members know that they are critically endangered species. During the summertime, when it dries up in the inland, they come to the coast and feed. It is no surprise that the verdant Swan River as it was, and the coastal plain, which metropolitan Perth is built on, are a critical food habitat for those cockatoos. That is increasingly being destroyed. I will seek leave at the end of my speech to lay this paper on the table for the house for the duration of the day. This is a fabulous piece of work and every member in this chamber should read it. It

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was published in *Science of the total environment*. The title of the paper is “Turning down the heat: An enhanced understanding of the relationship between urban vegetation and surface temperature at the city scale”. It is a joint publication between researchers at the University of Western Australia and RMIT University. I will not go through the whole paper; however, I will read part of the abstract. It states —

On average, holding all else equal, an approximate 1 km² increase in shrub (tree) cover within a location reduces surface temperatures by 12 °C (5 °C).

That is the impact that it can have. Of course, the negative is that the removal of that tree canopy increases the temperature by that amount. I want members to look at this heat map of Perth. The researchers have compiled a map of the mean summer land-surface temperatures for the City of Perth. I know members will not see the detail from where they are sitting, but they should have a look at the map. In the blue areas, the mean summer land-surface temperature is 36 degrees—this is across the season. The red areas represent 44 degrees. That is an eight-degree difference. If residents live close to the coast, there may be some impacts, but it does not matter where people live; the temperature is related purely to the tree canopy in the community. Imagine the difference between experiencing a 32-degree day and a 40-degree day. We know that on 42-degree days, there are suburban areas where people experience temperatures of 50 degrees or more.

It is profoundly disturbing. Why do I raise this issue? I raise it because the planning laws that were put through this Parliament last year are allowing a massive acceleration of the denudation of the tree canopy in the City of Perth. What did we see last year? Last year, the Minister for Planning—I will make a couple of positive comments about the Minister for Planning in a little while—wanted to bring in some rules around medium-density housing in the metropolitan area, which included rules around trees. I know the minister is aware of this issue. What happened? Within a few days of those rules being promulgated, the Urban Development Institute of Australia, other industry bodies and big developers lobbied the state government and the state government bailed on that. What has happened now? The minister said, “Yes, I’m going to bring it back in. Oh, we are going to have a review. We are going to have a discussion.” The can is being kicked down the road. It is time to stop kicking the can down the road.

Traffic density is a major issue, but I do not have time to go through that whole issue. There are real solutions to traffic density. We cannot simply jam people into a suburban area and not take any care whatsoever about the capacity of the road that must cope with that population. That is the Western Australian Planning Commission’s job. Some 90 per cent of the population does not catch public transport, and they will not, for a variety of reasons. Therefore, we have a planning system that is completely broken.

All the focus is on a few developers making the big bucks on high-rise towers and infill development. Meanwhile, every person in Western Australia, including in my electorate, is paying the price for it. It is time for us to have a really honest and open discussion. As I indicated earlier when I spoke about some of the numbers, this is a problem for not only this current Labor government. The Liberal–National government has been part of this trend previously. This is something that we on both sides must tell the minister to stop. I do not care about who does what and where. This issue will affect my community and this is the time for us to do something different. How did we get to this position? Both sides of politics have been part of this. The answer is straightforward. Too much public policy planning is being driven by the developers. They are the people who make a profit out of doing that; they are not the people who live with the consequences of the actions that have been taken. Too much planning policy is being driven by those developers. It is a small handful; it is not all developers. However, all developers seem to benefit from it. Nevertheless, their impact on planning is too great. They walk away with a profit, but it is members’ communities that are left to deal with the massive impacts on heat, traffic and amenity from high-rise infill that is being done in an inappropriate way. Property developers are a pervasive and corrosive influence on our political process. Their only focus is on profit. They say that they care about amenity and other things, but it is very clear they do not. The way that they bully and cajole governments and ministers on both sides to pursue their agenda is disgraceful. That is why I am saying now—I will pursue it as strongly as I can—that we should collectively stand together and ban political donations from property developers to political parties. One of the ways property developers influence the political process is by being a major donor to the parties. I have great respect for the Premier. We have known each other for over 14 years and I think the Premier is an intrinsically decent person. I do not know the planning minister as well as I know the Premier, but I believe that he has a genuine passion for good amenity in communities. I am asking the Premier and the Minister for Planning to please stop being subject to the influence of the developers who want them to kick the can down the road on the medium-density codes. Think about the people the Premier and the minister represent and let us make some sensible changes to those planning laws. Yes, we need more houses, but not at the expense of the communities whose environments are being completely destroyed. I will cover a couple of areas outside of that. Members can guess that I am passionate about that subject. I am passionate about it because I love the community I am in, but I also know that it is affecting the whole of metropolitan Perth.

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We had a chance to touch on energy today. I like the Minister for Energy's optimism around the transition to renewable energy, but I am not confident about it. The government can compel an energy transition, but whether we will see reliable and low-cost energy as a result of that transition concerns me greatly. We will have ample opportunity over the 17 remaining sitting weeks this year to talk about that in detail. We cannot sacrifice price, the cost of living and the reliability of the energy supply for an ideology. It is not an ignoble cause. It is a good cause. I do not think anyone in this chamber would disagree with the aspiration, but if it is done in a way that destroys our system, that would be terrible.

The other area being neglected is industrial development. Again, we will have the opportunity to cover this in some detail in the future. I say to the Ministers for Energy, Lands, Hydrogen Industry, and the Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade in particular: please get on and develop the Oakajee estate. The single most important thing they need to do for the future industrial development in Western Australia is develop renewable energy. I wish the government well for the coming year; I genuinely do. What we do here in a day does not matter much, but what we will do here over a decade or two will define the state that we live in. It is important that the ministers do their job well and it is important that the opposition does its job well, which is to make sure the government does its job well. As I say, I wish the government the best for the year and I look forward to vigorously representing my community for the next year.

MRS.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.55 pm]: Although the member for Cottesloe is probably in desperate need of a cup of tea, I hope he remains in the chamber for a couple of minutes, because I propose to say some nice things about him before he goes away. Firstly, I thank the member for his contribution. I find it difficult to disagree with a lot of what he said. As the member well knows, both I, as the member for Mount Lawley, and my community, value the wonderful urban tree canopy that we have. It is an incredibly important amenity that we in Mt Lawley enjoy. It is a view shared by the member for Cottesloe's community and my community. I think the member for Cottesloe raises a good point about traffic and transport infrastructure located next to density and developments.

Secondly, listening to the member make his contribution reminded me of his passionate and firmly held beliefs about a couple of issues. One of the great things is that when he comes in here, even if I do not agree with him—on occasion I do and I often tell him when I do—he knows what he stands for, he sticks to it and he continues to articulate it. I think the opposition benches will keenly feel that loss. I am sad about that, and I am sorry about what has transpired. I am also conscious that the concern the member for Cottesloe articulated about property development is ironic, given the candidate who has been selected. I hope the member takes advantage of the time he has left to continue articulating his views.

I will make a couple of points about what he said that gives me comfort that the former McGowan Labor government and now the Cook Labor government have been conscious about doing what they can to ameliorate the impacts of climate change on the amenity of our suburbs. I have gone well away from my notes here, but I am responding to the very thoughtful contribution of the member for Cottesloe.

I will talk about how desirable it is nowadays for people to live in Western Australia as a result of the McGowan–Cook Labor government's stewardship, the success of our mineral and LNG industries, our extraction industries and the diversification of the economy.

We need more doctors, nurses, teachers and police. We need more people coming to Western Australia to provide those essential services that we all enjoy and rely upon. If we do not tackle the challenge presented in housing, we will not have accommodation for those essential services workers to move to Perth or elsewhere in Western to help contribute to our society and the economy. If we do not have at least some appropriate density contained within the right locations in our suburbs, people will end up moving out into the urban sprawl, and Perth will stretch not from Peel to Yanchep, but from Bunbury to Geraldton. Urban sprawl means that instead of losing habitats in the suburbs, we will lose them on the fringes. We need to be cognisant that this is not a zero-sum game. It is a balancing act, and some legacy suburbs enjoy the great benefit of having an urban canopy, but it may be appropriate for other areas to have medium-density housing closer to public transport; for example, where we are building incredible new transport infrastructure, particularly around Morley, Ellenbrook, the Bayswater railway station, or the Thornlie–Cockburn Link. I take issue with the member's point. I understand how much Perth people love their cars and love driving but we heard in question time from the Minister for Transport that the trial of free public transport promoted greater usage. I think the member agreed that if more people used public transport, it would have a knock-on effect for the people on our roads and improve environmental aspects. In some ways, it can improve social cohesion as well. I do not have any objection to medium-density development around transport infrastructure. In the coming years, I know there will be increased density in North Perth and perhaps stretching up into Mt Lawley. I am anxious about what that will look like with the traffic on Alexander Drive and Charles Street. However, I know that if we continue to invest in public transport in the way that we have been, we can hopefully ameliorate those concerns.

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On preserving and protecting urban habitat zones, I want to mention two fantastic organisations in my electorate, which I have already mentioned in Parliament. They are the Friends of Inglewood Triangle and the Friends of Coolbinia Bushland. Those volunteers put terrific effort into maintaining remnant bushland areas of the old Swan coastal plain. They are terrific contributors to our community. The reason I mentioned those organisations is I am very proud that after the 2017 election, both groups were very vocal in standing up for the protection and preservation of areas like the Beeliar wetlands—although both organisations predated my time as the member for Mount Lawley. We have to be consistent with the approach we take. We have to say that if we are going to protect the environment, we have to tackle urban sprawl. If we are going to protect the environment, we have to encourage public transport. If we going to protect the environment, we have to protect and preserve areas like Beeliar wetlands.

I took the member for Cottesloe’s point on the question of political donations. We in the Labor Party are champions of not letting the perfect be the enemy of the good. Members have already seen that we have taken steps to tackle the influence of money in politics through our electoral reforms. I heard what the member was saying on the corrosive influence that money can have in politics. I thank the member for Cottesloe for his contribution as a member over the time he has been here. I also note that I have been here only long enough to see two members for Cottesloe, but I do not think anyone has mentioned the suburb of Cottesloe quite so often as he has, perhaps with the exception of the member for Armadale. I do not imagine it will be a Labor seat any time soon. The member has been a terrific advocate for Cottesloe. I hope he is not lost to the Liberal Party. I think the member used to be the president of the Liberal Party. He should give some consideration to going back into that role. I think he would make a great president of the Liberal Party in the current circumstances. That is enough! I will probably spend the rest of the year criticising the member. He is going to go and grab a cup of tea! I am conscious of what happened. Politics is a hard game.

Let me get to what I was going to say. I have already taken up seven minutes of my time! There is a spectre stalking the political landscape of Western Australia and it is a spectre about which we all must be concerned. It is the spectre of a horrendous Liberal lie—a lie the Liberal Party continues to perpetrate and perpetuate, much to the disservice of the community of Western Australia. The Liberal Party continues to lay claim to the 2018 GST deal that fundamentally changed the nature of the finances of Western Australia. It does not matter how many times I go over this point. The resolution of the GST issue was entirely a function of the election of the McGowan Labor government. It was not until the election of the McGowan Labor government in 2017 that the federal conservative government even started to contemplate amending the GST. It is hyperbole and disingenuousness of the highest order for the Liberal Party to come in here and say that it was responsible for the resolution of the GST deal. One thing that we need to make absolutely clear in the lead-up to the election in 2025 is that were it not for the election of the WA Labor government, we would still be suffering from the consequences of the GST deal, and the Liberals were the architects of that deal. It was a Liberal Prime Minister who introduced the GST in the first place and the former Liberal Premier Colin Barnett did not do anything to fix it. When Christian Porter was the Treasurer—a Liberal state Treasurer who became a Liberal federal Attorney-General—he actually put into his forward estimates an assumption that had us receiving 70 per cent of the GST, when he knew that he had not negotiated for that resolution. That was part of the reason the former Liberal government left us with the biggest debt we have ever seen in the history of Western Australia. It not only left us with that debt, but it did so in circumstances in which, back in 2013, it had also lost the state’s AAA credit rating. It increased debt and lost the AAA credit rating because it could not manage the finances.

Mr P.J. Rundle: We built hospitals and schools. The list goes on.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: No, because what happened in the meantime is the former government increased land tax three times. The debt went up and taxes went up. It made it more difficult for people —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Member for Roe!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It will be fine. Actually, I am glad the member for Roe is here because he is a great tennis fan and a great advocate for tennis. He would have been as disappointed as me to hear the future Leader of the Opposition call the women’s tennis final the “reserves”. Like me, he would have been dismayed that the person who will be the Leader of the Opposition after the 2025 election thought that the Australian Open tennis final was a reserves match. The member will have to agree with me on that, surely!

Mr P.J. Rundle: I’m not commenting on that!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: No comment—shame, member for Roe! I thought our shared love of tennis might have us on the same page there.

The fact of the matter is that debt was going up, but tax was also going up. Land tax had gone up three times. We had what I call the taxation hypocrites on the other side. We have seen it again. Senator Michaelia Cash was reported in the paper last week saying how terrible the stage 3 tax cut decision by the Albanese federal government is and what a disgrace it is. Unfortunately, she had not checked with her leader, Peter Dutton, when she published that

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op-ed, because the day that op-ed piece was published in *The West Australian*, the federal Leader of the Opposition, Peter Dutton, came out and said, “But we are going to vote for them.”

Ms S.F. McGurk: Keep up, senator!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes; keep up, Senator Cash! We do not know whether they are for or against the stage 3 tax cuts. Another thing we had was members of the Nationals WA coming in here and saying that the McGowan and Cook Labor governments were the beneficiaries of the resources sector and the royalties that have been generated by the high price of iron ore. The Nationals members tell us that they are staunch supporters of the resources industry and that they can be relied upon to protect the resources industry much more than we can because of our nefarious industrial relations agenda. They are banking on the people of Western Australia having short memories, because how can someone who is a supporter of the resources industry propose a tax increase on royalties paid by our iron ore industry of not 20 per cent, not 50 per cent, not 100 per cent, not 1 000 per cent, but a 2 000 per cent tax increase? That was the Brendon Grylls tax plan in the lead-up to the 2017 election. We have not heard anything further about it.

Ms M.J. Davies: That’s not true. You haven’t been listening.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It is through your policy, member for Central Wheatbelt.

Ms M.J. Davies: No, it’s not.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes, Brendon Grylls was proposing an increase in royalties —

Ms M.J. Davies: That’s right. He hasn’t been a member of this chamber since 2017.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Sure, but that was your policy before the 2017 election.

Ms M.J. Davies: That’s right, and we have had two elections.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes.

Ms M.J. Davies: The party has reviewed that policy, and it is on public record in this place and externally that we don’t support it.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Fantastic, so you are abandoning that policy.

Ms M.J. Davies: No, you are about seven years too late!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: No, because the trouble is —

Ms M.J. Davies: Keep up! This is what happens when you spend all your time digging around in history instead of focusing on the future of the state.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: We know —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Mount Lawley, if you could just refocus on your contribution.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I would love to!

One of the reasons we should have regard for history is that what people have done in the past is a good predictor of what they might do in the future. That was highlighted in question time when opposition members desperately tried to walk back the promise they took to the 2017 election to privatise Western Power. They also desperately tried to walk back the promise they took to the 2021 election to shut down the Collie coal-fired power station, and they demonstrated —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: No, there is more money —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Central Wheatbelt, you will get your opportunity.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: The trouble is, we have a situation in which the opposition has done nowhere near enough work to articulate clearly and unambiguously to its community what it will take to the 2025 election. It has left a policy vacuum, so all we can do is speculate on what proposals it might bring forward. Disappointingly, it also does not give us any credit for the work we have done since we were elected in 2017. We hear that from the member

for Central Wheatbelt. I have just commented on the career of the member for Cottesloe and I say the same about the member for Central Wheatbelt. She will be a great loss to the Nationals WA because she is one of its best performers in the Legislative Assembly. It is as if the Chris Judd and the Ben Cousins of the opposition are leaving the Parliament! I do not know who will be left in the chamber who can articulate an argument the way the member for Central Wheatbelt and the member for Cottesloe can. I fear for the calibre of the opposition after the 2025 election.

A member interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, you are not in your seat.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: With the departure of the members for Central Wheatbelt and Cottesloe, who can articulate an argument, the government will not know what issues are important to the Nationals and the Liberal Party. We hear Senator Michaelia Cash talking about an aspect of tax reform that is entirely different from what her leader, Peter Dutton, is doing on tax reform, and we look at the fact that the Liberal Party and the Nationals like to talk about being the parties of lowering taxes.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: We are looking at whether they can effectively articulate a vision for Western Australia. Fortunately for the government, that stands in stark contrast with both our track record of achievement and our plans for the future. Not only have we used the last seven years assiduously, restored the state's finances and credit rating, negotiated a resolution of the GST deal and paid down —

Mr P.J. Rundle: Why wouldn't the Premier table the letter today?

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Why is the member asking me?

We have not only tackled the debt and deficit legacy the previous government left us, but also navigated the community through the COVID pandemic. A preposterous proposition was put by the member for Moore when he suggested that there was some sort of government conspiracy to prevent the live animal export ship from sailing to the Red Sea. Does he not know that there is a conflict in the Middle East? Does he not know that terrorist groups in Yemen are firing rockets at ships traversing the Red Sea? He said that the commonwealth government has some big conspiracy so that animal welfare activists can make their argument because this ship is unable to go through the Red Sea. It is the same as the opposition's argument about us and inflation, and all the rest of it. There is a war in the Ukraine that has had global ramifications, so we are dealing with a number of headwinds to our economic wellbeing. We are dealing with the war in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East. There are challenges throughout the economy that we are dealing with. We are well placed to deal with those challenges because the first thing we did when we got into government in 2017 was to put an emphasis on making sure that we restored the state's finances. That has put us in the position of being able to tackle the challenges that we now face.

The opposition members say that we need more teachers, police and nurses. How would they have paid for them without getting the AAA credit rating back? They would not have been able to do that because they were the ones who lost it. How would they have paid for that without the GST deal that the McGowan Labor government delivered? How would they have achieved that with the mounting levels of debt and deficit? The fact of the matter is that they bled money as a result of not resolving the GST issue in 2013, when the member for Moore was elected to this Parliament, and 2014, when the member for Vasse was elected to this Parliament. The money that Western Australia paid to the eastern states as a result of their neglect and failure to resolve the GST issue was money lost. The money that was lost in increased interest payments on the debt and deficits that they accrued while they were in government between 2008 and 2017 was money that they lost. All the money that we have saved since we have been elected is now available to Treasury to spend on recruiting police, nurses, teachers and doctors to provide services to the community. When they make their promises before the next election, as I am sure they will, the question for the Western Australian community will be: if the opposition is elected to government, where will the money that it is prepared to spend come from? Dollars have been saved for WA taxpayers because of the strong financial management of the WA Labor government, and that now means that we can provide increased pay rises to our public servants. We can spend the money needed to attract workers to provide essential services in Western Australia. We can deliver a \$1 400 electricity credit to WA households facing cost-of-living pressures. We can deliver a two-zone fare cap on public transport so that it is much easier and cheaper for people living in the outer suburbs to get to Perth. We can deliver a regional airline fare cap. We can introduce WA's rent relief program to help financially vulnerable tenants who are at risk of eviction remain in their homes with rental assistance of up to \$5 000. All these things are possible because of the effort and energy that we put into delivering the GST deal, restoring the AAA credit rating and paying down the debt and deficit left to us by the Liberals and Nationals. When they make their election promises, opposition members will not be spending their dollars because they would not

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have had the money available to them. Rather, they will spend the dollars that are back in the pockets of WA taxpayers because of the financial management of the McGowan and Cook Labor governments.

The fantastic achievements of the Minister for Education remind me of another thing that opposition members did not do. The Minister for Education has secured a significant portion of the Gonski funding for every student in Western Australia. That money is paid to Western Australia by the commonwealth government. While the eastern states commentators say that the GST is unfair, the commonwealth government, together with the Western Australian Minister for Education, has negotiated a resolution for more money to go back to WA for the benefit of students in WA schools, which is a terrific result. That is something that Colin Barnett never did when he was the Premier. He was ambivalent about taking money from the feds. On every occasion that the WA government secures funding from the commonwealth to pay for significant infrastructure projects in Western Australia, the honourable Treasurer comes in here and tells everyone about it. She was particularly vocal during the term of the previous conservative commonwealth government because she was so pleased about taking money from a conservative commonwealth government to pay for WA Labor projects.

There is another thing that we do that was missing from the former Liberal–National government, and this goes to the member for Central Wheatbelt’s point. The people of Western Australia will be asked to decide whether they want the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA coalition back in government in 2025. That is the choice they will be faced with. The only thing they can look to is the way the coalition performed between 2008 and 2017 and at what it said over that time. We will stand on our track record from 2017 to 2025; the coalition should stand on its track record from 2008 to 2017 and it should stand by what it has said between 2017 and 2025.

We have been not only saving money for WA taxpayers, but also passing legislation and reforming the way our systems operate. The Minister for Health was confronted with significant ambulance ramping numbers. As a result, after the COVID pandemic, the minister introduced a number of reforms to make our hospital and emergency department systems operate much more efficiently, not through legislation, but by implementing operational reforms that were consulted on, examined and recommended by stakeholders.

The mention of COVID reminds me of something. In his entire contribution, not once did the member for Moore mention the global pandemic that took up so many years of the work of this Parliament and this government. It is disingenuous in the extreme to arrive at a conclusion today by comparing the situations of 2017 and 2024 and not say one word about the COVID pandemic such as how we were able to navigate it and the significant impact it had. The Minister for Housing is confronting the cost of housing situation. Access to construction materials and builders’ labourers is constrained as a result of the COVID pandemic and the global geopolitical pressures that I was talking about. The opposition ignores that to its discredit. It needs to be credible and legitimate, and it needs say to the community, “This is what McGowan and Cook governments did well. These are the things that they have fixed, these are the things that we were not able to do when we were in government and these are the things that we would do differently.” The opposition has not apologised for the legacy it left us or for the policies it put forward that put us into that position.

Because I have spent so much time talking about other things, I will have to pick up this next topic in my contribution to the debate on Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill. It is a big year in Mt Lawley. Goodness me, the three-minute bell has just rung. I will have to talk to members about it some other time.

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes!

It is a big year in Mt Lawley, goodness me! I want to return to a point I made earlier. I thank the Minister for Regional Development for coming to Hyde Park in Mt Lawley. There is a devastating situation of polyphagous borers—I am sorry Hansard; I will have to give the spelling for that! The shot-hole borer has infected trees in Hyde Park and they will have to be chopped down.

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: Was that the agriculture minister?

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes, I mean the Minister for Agriculture and Food. Hon Jackie Jarvis came to Hyde Park with me and the Minister for Planning, Hon John Carey, as the member for Perth. It is a devastating situation. We will lose a number of trees in Hyde Park. Biosecurity features prominently in the electorates of the members for Central Wheatbelt and Roe; it does not feature prominently in Mount Lawley, but the people of Mount Lawley will have a firsthand look at biosecurity when those trees in Hyde Park get chopped down. Hon John Carey and I will have a community forum next Monday night to discuss this issue so that the people who are concerned can talk to us about it.

After we rose at the end of last year, I was very pleased to host members of the Jewish community for Hanukkah before Christmas. I am pleased to advise that the construction of the new Jewish community centre, which will include a Holocaust memorial centre, is proceeding brilliantly in Yokine.

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I was very pleased to go to St Andrews Grammar School in the member for Mirrabooka's electorate for International Greek Language Day. I am sure there will be a couple of Greek speakers in the chamber after the 2025 election. It was great to celebrate International Greek Language Day.

Ms C.M. Tonkin interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: The member for Churchlands has a different view! More strength to you, member for Churchlands!

I was also very pleased to attend, on behalf of the Minister for Mental Health, the launch of Strong Spirit Strong Mind, an Aboriginal mental health program.

During a citizenship ceremony that I attended in January, I was pleased to see Rob Geersen, whom I have mentioned before, recognised as the community citizen of the year by the City of Stirling. I also want to congratulate a couple of my friends; firstly, Hannah Beazley on her elevation to cabinet; secondly, Senator Varun Ghosh on his elevation to the Senate; and, thirdly, my friend Adina Lieblich, who hosted a lunch for people from disadvantaged backgrounds at North Perth Town Hall.

It has been a very busy summer recess, with plenty of work going on in the Mt Lawley community. Because I have used up all my time talking about other matters, I will have to appraise members of that work at the next opportunity. I commend the Premier's Statement and thank members for their attention.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.25 pm]: It is always a tough act to follow the member for Mount Lawley. He provided a really important lesson about the use of time that is very salient to my contribution, as I have given it the subtitle "Seven things I loved about 2023". In the event that I run out of time, people will be able to tell because I will not quite get to the requisite number!

It is Valentine's Day today, so for the purposes of this contribution I thought I would talk about some of the things that I loved about last year. In doing so, I will foreshadow the things that will be front of mind as we go into 2024. I hasten to add that these items are not in either an ascending or a descending order; I found it impossible to rank them, to be honest. I simply say for the purposes of the record that they are like my children; I love them all equally, for their own unique reasons. People can perhaps reflect on what the order might be.

I want to talk about some of the things that were on my mind over the summer recess and that I love about our community and about what this government is doing. The first of those is food. Anyone who knows me will not be surprised that that is on the list. I am incredibly fortunate to represent a community that consistently delivers incredibly delicious traditional food. I have said on other occasions that if anyone wants to try some of the best Vietnamese food in Perth, they need to go to Girrawheen. We have many excellent local food places to try, including Viet Town, which is just off Girrawheen Avenue. Alternatively, off Marangaroo Drive in Girrawheen people will find Trang's Cafe and Noodle House, and Phở Phong, which was recently included on the list of the 100 best restaurants in Perth, so it is indeed a great place to eat. For anyone who is into banh mi, there is an excellent selection in Girrawheen, including at MCQ Vietnamese Rolls at the Mirrabooka shops and Bến Thành at Mirrabooka Village, which has been making banh mi since before it was a cult classic dish or sandwich. Bến Thành has been making authentic fresh rolls for many years. If people are there at the right time, they will see staff use an enormous metal contraption to crush sugar cane into a sweet, delicious, refreshing drink.

There is more to great food in Mirrabooka than just Vietnamese food. I give a special shout-out to Street's Oasis in Girrawheen, which cooks incredible, fresh, flavoursome Thai street food. It is a very small shop—there are only a couple of tables available for people to eat in—but it does extensive deliveries and catering of its incredible, fresh, delicious food. I give the owners a special shout-out because they recently welcomed a baby into their family.

I also wanted to talk about Bec, who runs Sally's Micro Bakery in Girrawheen. People who follow my social media will know that I am a huge fan of Bec's freshly baked sourdough loaves. They have to be ordered basically two weeks in advance, as they are made to order to be picked up on Sunday mornings. People who follow Bec's social media will literally watch her grind wheat on Fridays that will be turned into fresh loaves to be collected on Sunday mornings. It is incredibly fresh bread that is handmade with love. It is fantastic. I am a big fan of Bec and Sally's Micro Bakery in Girrawheen.

For people who like to make their own meals, there is a huge selection of authentic multicultural grocery stores in my electorate. We have two fresh food markets—one is the Mirrabooka Friday Market and the other is the Saturday Swap Meet at Newpark Shopping Centre. When I think about the food of Mirrabooka, it is impossible not to reflect on the incredible home-cooked multicultural food that I get to enjoy all year at the many multicultural events that I am very fortunate to attend. I refer to foods such as mohinga made by the many people who originate from Myanmar, and the incredible variety of foods served at many of the African community events. I have had

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many fabulous experiences with Indian communities and their incredible food. I want to give a special shout-out to the Gujarati seniors who meet in Girrawheen twice a week and always cook amazing fresh food that they then serve and share together. Then there is the Vietnamese food we enjoy so often with the Vietnamese seniors in Koondoola. Nothing tastes better than food made with love, and I am so fortunate to enjoy much of it in Mirrabooka and the surrounding areas.

The second thing that made my list of the top seven things that I loved about last year—this might cause a bit of mirth—is Taylor Swift. Her concerts kick-off this weekend in Australia. There is a lot to love about her in terms of sequins and pop tunes, but I think she also brings some really important lessons, and that is part of the reason I have included her on the list. The first thing that I reflect on that I have learned from being a fan is that you should work hard. One thing about Taylor Swift is that, even though she is perhaps relatively young, she works hard. Her concerts are three hours long, and she performs on stage, singing and dancing, often in the rain and hot weather. She does it night after night. She has been producing music since she was about 15 years old. I think it is a really important reminder that success comes to those who work hard; it is rarely an overnight thing and you should always work hard for the things that you want to achieve.

The second lesson is that you should never forget your base or your fans. Taylor Swift has always put her fans first. She has always worked on having a direct relationship with her fans, and in return they have loved and rewarded her for that commitment to putting fans first. I think that is a really important lesson for people in this place and for us all. You should never forget your base. You should never forget the electorate. You should never forget the people who make it all possible and always keep them at the centre of everything that you do.

The third lesson I take away is that people should know their worth. Taylor Swift has often been underestimated throughout her career, but she has always had a lot of confidence in her own abilities and a clear vision of what she wanted to do—and it has paid off. She is now one of the most successful recording artists of all time. It is always important to remember your worth, build a relationship with your fans and use that to grow your brand. I for one am looking forward to “Swiftmania” descending on Australia, and I will enjoy the spectacle of it, but take some serious lessons away.

The third thing on the list of things I have loved about 2023, and this is very much on my mind as we go into 2024, is our schools. I have talked many times in this place about the incredible work that our schools are doing every day, not just in my community in Mirrabooka, but all around the state. I am incredibly proud of the work of our local schools. Girrawheen Senior High School won an education award for teaching and learning in 2022, underlining the incredible work that they are doing to deliver important education to the kids in my community. Balga Senior High School received a mention on the Triple J Unearthed Indigenous Initiative just a couple of years ago as well. It is about being able to perform and get recognition at a national level. Every day, I am incredibly proud of our students and the things that they are achieving. I am very grateful to all the staff—the teachers; the education assistants, particularly the Aboriginal education officers; and the school leaders—who contribute to that. But school communities are more than the people who work in schools. I take this opportunity to record my thanks to the many parents who are also such an essential part of our school communities, especially those who are part of parents and citizens organisations or our school boards. I thank them for all their work. I also want to acknowledge the fantastic work that some of our community organisations do in working in partnership with our schools, such as the Girrawheen Lions Club, which contributes significant financial resources to many of the schools in my area; 12 Buckets, which I have spoken about previously and which provides volunteers; and EdConnect, which provides volunteers. There are many others as well. The parents, the staff, the community organisations and I all share a passion for providing our young people with opportunities and the best chance to succeed.

I am happy to say that our schools are helping to produce some outstanding community leaders. Education transforms the lives of our young people, and I am inspired every day by the people I meet in and around our schools. I am really pleased that our schools can do even more outstanding work as a result of the good work of this government. We have just signed a new agreement with the federal government that will deliver an additional \$1.6 billion to WA schools. It is an outstanding achievement. Funding will go to the public schools that need it most in the first instance. Although those details are still being determined, I look forward to seeing how this significant boost in school funding will allow our great schools in the Mirrabooka electorate and all around the state to do even more of their good work.

We have also done a lot to improve infrastructure and provide support to students. We are building a new performing arts centre at Balga Senior High School. We have also transformed classrooms into STEM labs at primary schools around the electorate. I made a number of small commitments to help our local schools—things such as class sets of iPads, interactive whiteboards and all-abilities play equipment—to make sure our schools can do even more of their important work. As a government, we have increased the number of school psychologists and introduced career counsellors to provide the wraparound services that will help students succeed. I love our schools and I love

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meeting the students, staff, parents and community members who are part of delivering world-class education. I like visiting schools and seeing the great work that they are doing, and I look forward to doing much more of that in 2024.

The fourth item on the list of things that I loved about 2023 is the Matildas. How good were they? Of course, we all loved the Matildas hysteria that gripped the nation during the FIFA Women's World Cup. It was fantastic to see them play and there were so many outstanding moments. It is impossible to forget the France v Australia penalty shootout and Sam Kerr's goal during the England v Australia match. Another thing I loved about the Matildas was the great lessons that they brought and showed us all. The soccer was great, but the Matildas also showed us something about high-performance teams. Those high-performance teams are never about just a single player. It is always about the strength of the whole team, the determination, the focus and the shared goal. I want to say that it is so good to be part of the WA Labor team in this government, because I think we are a great team. We share experience, strength, determination and focus to succeed, and that is what we will continue to bring in 2024.

I also want to reflect that the standout moment for me in the Women's World Cup, apart from watching the Matildas play, was the way the team inspired young women football players in our community. A standout for me was watching the young women from Balga Senior High School run out onto the pitch as flag-bearers in the Haiti v Denmark game in Perth. They were so excited. I was excited and proud of them. I was also part of the Women's World Cup aspiration days that were held at Balga Senior High School and Safety Bay Senior High School. We brought together 100 young women from neighbouring schools to learn about soccer and teamwork and the mental game that contributes to success.

Our state government is also doing incredible things to support the next generation of Matildas. We are continuing that legacy of building from the grassroots up. We renamed the state football centre the Sam Kerr Football Centre and we have invested \$2.4 million in a grants program to help improve facilities and infrastructure for clubs that participate in the National Premier League women's competition. These commitments will grow the game for young women and girls into the future. I cannot wait to see what our next generation of women soccer players will look like.

The fifth item on the list of things I loved about 2023—this will be an important consideration as we go into 2024—was being a part of a government that delivers. Many members would agree with why I put my hand up to be elected to Parliament: I wanted to make a difference to the lives of everyday people. I wanted to be part of a government that gets things done, makes life better and does what is right for WA. It is such a pleasure to be a part of this Labor government because that is exactly what we are doing. We are getting things done. We are doing what is right for WA. That has been the hallmark of this government since being elected in 2017, and it will continue to be a focus and drive much of the work that we do. I have a great deal to talk about but time will stop me from listing it all, so I will talk about some of the really important things that we have delivered that have made a difference to the people whom I represent in the Mirrabooka community. Members, we have delivered a lot. We have delivered \$1 400 in electricity credits to every household in WA over the past three years. We have delivered free public transport every Sunday for everyone and for school students travelling to and from school Monday to Friday. All they need is a SmartRider. We have delivered a one-off payment of \$500 for the first child and \$250 for subsequent children in care to grandcarers, foster carers and other carers. We have increased the cost-of-living rebate for seniors with a Seniors Card and brought back the \$400 seniors safety and security rebate that was axed by the Liberal–National government.

We are upgrading the North Metropolitan TAFE at Balga with a huge \$47.9 million redevelopment. We have made more than 130 TAFE courses available fee-free. This will help our young people into skilled jobs that will set them up for life. We are building Metronet. It is the largest ever investment in public transport in WA. This transformational project includes 72 kilometres of rail and 23 new stations. It will include the Morley–Ellenbrook line and a new station in Malaga. We have brought rail manufacturing back to WA. We are funding upgrades to important intersections in our community through the black spot program, including the corner of Girrawheen Avenue and Marangaroo Drive. We have delivered land and funding for a Vietnamese community cultural centre to be built in the heart of Girrawheen, and we have rolled out free tampons in high schools and TAFEs around the state. We have done all these things, and we are doing much more besides.

This government is delivering every day. It is delivering infrastructure that will improve our state for generations to come. It is delivering real cost-of-living relief to people and a safety net of support to those who need it most. This government is delivering hope and opportunity to people and their communities. It is transitioning the economy to ensure that we create the jobs of the future. We are strengthening our economy and our communities to make our society fairer. It is a joy to be a part of a government that is experienced and knows how to deliver. Members, can I say that I love it.

[Member's time extended.]

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Ms M.J. HAMMAT: I look forward to doing more of this important work in delivering for our community in 2024. The list of achievements is long, but there is still much work to do, and I know that we are all committed to delivering for the people of Western Australia.

The sixth item that is on my list of things I love is the good people of Mirrabooka, because they are the best. As I said earlier, it is important that our communities, electorates and people remain at the heart of everything we do. I appreciate all the people who turned up at my mobile offices, who stopped to chat when I was doorknocking or phoning and who welcomed me to their sports clubs, seniors groups, many multicultural celebrations and community events. I thank all the people of Mirrabooka for their friendship and support. I also want to thank them for the fact that they can be relied upon, on all occasions, to tell it straight. I appreciate that. Whether they are telling me about what we are doing well or what we need to do better, I really appreciate all the feedback that I receive. I take it all seriously, and I thank people for taking the time to share it with me.

I particularly want to acknowledge Marangaroo local Coral Jebb, who recently passed away at the age of 80. Coral was one of the stalwarts of the Girrawheen Koondoola Senior Citizens Centre. She was a member of that organisation for 10 years and volunteered as the club secretary and social event coordinator. Every time I visited this seniors' group, she was there with a smile and a kind word in the front office, quietly organising the day's events with the other committee members. Sadly, Coral passed away in January shortly after celebrating her eightieth birthday. I take this opportunity to record my thanks for Coral and her service to our community. She is one of the many people in our community who volunteers and quietly goes on with the business of making life better for others without fuss and without actively seeking recognition. It was a great honour to attend Coral's funeral recently and learn more about her life and her early days. I will miss Coral a great deal and I know she will be deeply missed by her large extended family and the members of the Girrawheen–Koondoola seniors' group.

I also want to give a special shout-out today to Bernice Toledo, one of my special constituents. Bernice has today retired from her employment at St John of God Subiaco Hospital after working there continuously for 52 years. Bernice started work there as a 20-year-old, having recently arrived from Burma as a migrant. She was employed by the nuns, who at that time ran the hospital. Now in her seventies, she has decided it is time to retire. Bernice is one the most generous and kind people I know. She has brought those qualities to her patient care at St John of God Subiaco Hospital for 52 years and she continues to bring those qualities to her extensive work in our community. I want to take this opportunity to thank her for her service to our patients and for her work in our community, and to wish her well for a very well-deserved retirement.

These are just two of the wonderful people in the Mirrabooka community who underline the commitment to service, the commitment to community and the open-heartedness that is a wonderful aspect of people who live in Mirrabooka and its surrounding suburbs. I also give a special shout-out to all the volunteers and supporters in the community who, at different times, have turned out to be part of working with me to build a strong and connected community in the electorate. I thank them all for sharing my passion for the community and working so hard to make it better for everyone. In the spirit of Valentine's Day, I say to all the supporters and volunteers that I love them and appreciate them all.

Finally, in the list of things I loved about 2023, I take this opportunity to put on the record once again my thanks and love to my family. We all know that this life can be hard on family and friends; the hours can be long and I am told that politicians can sometimes be difficult to live with. I am not sure that is true, but that is what I am told. I take this opportunity to thank my partner, Matthew, and our sons, Adam and Jeremy, and tell them that I love them very much. Creating memories together and seeing particularly the achievements and successes of our sons gives me so much joy and happiness. I thank them for their support for and tolerance of the life and work that I have chosen to do. I look forward to more adventures with my family as we move into 2024 and towards election time. I am sure there will be many family outings doorknocking and undertaking many other community events, so I take this opportunity to thank all three of them for their love and support and say that I could not do this without them.

I will now bring my comments to a close. I want to wish everyone a very happy Valentine's Day as we work here until seven tonight. I am not sure whether many members will have dinner dates this evening! I hope that people find that this day is full of things that they love, but mostly I want to say how much I am looking forward to 2024. I love being a part of this government. I am so proud of the work that we are doing. It is so great to see the real difference that this government is making in my community of Mirrabooka and all around the state. I look forward to being a part of the Cook Labor government and all the fantastic things that we will achieve and, with that, I will conclude my remarks and wish everyone well for 2024. Thank you.

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [4.49 pm]: I am proud to be part of the Cook Labor government, with a great team of ministers and their supportive staff. Today I rise to reflect on the achievements that have shaped our community in Murray–Wellington under the Cook Labor government. My tenure as a representative has seen

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an unwavering dedication to serve with humility and integrity, striving to fulfil the promises I made to the constituents of my electorate. Under the leadership of the Cook Labor government, we have undertaken a range of commitments across various portfolios, each aimed at improving the lives of Murray–Wellington residents and supporting our communities. I have the incredible support and commitment of members of my community, whose tenacity and spirit has motivated me every step of the way and humbled me throughout this journey.

Ensuring the safety of our roads in Murray–Wellington is not just a matter of concern; it is a fundamental responsibility that touches the lives of every resident. We have faced our fair share of road safety challenges, from hazardous intersections to inadequate infrastructure, all of which have posed significant risk to the wellbeing of our community. Recognising the urgency of addressing these concerns, the Cook Labor government has taken measures to improve road safety across my electorate through initiatives such as the black spot funding program, which has provided \$120 million in safety initiatives on Western Australian roads over the past six years. We have invested in critical safety projects such as Pinjarra Road, Murray River Drive, Readheads Road, White Hill Road and Pinjarra–Williams Road, the Pinjarra bypass to Greenhills. Additionally, the completion of the Binningup Road acceleration lane north and acceleration lane construction along Myalup Beach Road, Preston Beach Road and Forestry Road in Harvey and along Forrest Highway, as part of the \$7.5 million state government commitment for intersection improvements, are a testament to the government’s ongoing efforts to enhance safety for all road users. South Western Highway has seen significant upgrades and improvements, with speed limits adjusted to suit traffic movement. There will be a significant upgrade to the intersection at Willowdale Road and South Western Highway to improve traffic flow and safety for Alcoa workers and road users.

As the Murray–Wellington representative, I have advocated strongly for these initiatives, understanding the importance of road safety in Murray–Wellington. The Pinjarra heavy haulage deviation stands as a critical infrastructure project, vital for the safety and efficiency of our region’s transport network. However, the decision by the federal government to withdraw its funding for the project has dealt a significant blow to its progress. Despite this setback, the Cook Labor government remains steadfast in its commitment to deliver the deviation, recognising its importance in alleviating congestion and improving road safety. That is why we have committed funding to this vital project, with a \$200 million injection on top of the \$50 million already allocated by the state. We are determined to forge ahead with the project to ensure that the needs of our community are met and our region continues to thrive. This initiative aligns seamlessly with public transport, simplifying the lives of Western Australians while promoting healthier and more sustainable modes of travel.

We have just finished our summer of free public transport initiative, which had a massive take-up by the WA public. Across a five-week period, there was a total of 8.3 million SmartRider boardings, a 42 per cent increase on the same time last year. We also saw strong results in regional locations. The strong outcome is part of the reason we have now made public transport free for students to get to and from school, and for the entire community every Sunday. We have also increased public transport services, with 44 extra bus services from Pinjarra to Mandurah and a Saturday service that has assisted our community to get into Mandurah for jobs, training and recreation. A trial of a Waroona shopper bus twice a week has been well received, affording those in Waroona and Carcoola the opportunity to get into Mandurah for appointments and shopping.

Work recently started on the Mandurah Estuary Bridge duplication project, further exemplifying our dedication to improving infrastructure and connectivity. With an investment of around \$110 million, this project will not only enhance safety and reduce congestion by providing an additional two-lane bridge, but also include a four-metre-wide shared path beneath the bridge, providing a critical link for cyclists and pedestrians to the southern areas of Mandurah.

The \$1.35 billion Bunbury Outer Ring Road project represents a monumental effort to address congestion and enhance traffic efficiency. It will span 27 kilometres and feature four lanes of high-standard road. This project will provide safer and more efficient traffic routes for freight, tourists and locals alike, easing congestion and supporting economic growth across the region. This is more great news of secure jobs for the 100 workers who are about to join the Main Roads team in the great southern and south west. The pay is better and the conditions are better with these sustainable local jobs that are being created in regional WA. It also means that country roads will be better serviced into the future.

Education serves as a cornerstone of our society, laying the foundation for individual success and collective prosperity. The Cook Labor government has made significant investments in education, recognising it as a fundamental pillar of our society. For example, Brunswick Junction Primary School received \$30 000 towards upgrades to its canteen. From enhancing school infrastructure to expanding access to quality education, we have embarked on numerous crucial projects to ensure that every child has an opportunity to thrive. Last year, I was immensely pleased to witness the completion and grand opening of Pinjarra Senior High School’s performing arts and gymnasium upgrade, a project I have passionately advocated for over the years. This significant \$11.23 million upgrade represents a milestone achievement for our community, providing essential enhancements to our educational

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infrastructure. The new facilities include state-of-the-art teaching spaces for drama and dance, a green room with storage, a modern sports gymnasium, modern kitchen facilities, change rooms, secure storage areas, and upgraded student and staff amenities. Furthermore, I am proud to highlight the \$15 million commitment from the Cook Labor government to Australind Senior High School that was delivered last year. Another major, successful and crucial project was delivered. This substantial investment added a two-storey classroom wing, further enhancing the school's capacity to deliver quality education to our students. Moreover, our commitment to advancing science, technology and engineering education is evident in our investment in local schools. Recognising the importance of equipping students with the skills to thrive in an increasingly technology-driven world, we have upgraded all science, technology, engineering and mathematics classrooms in Murray–Wellington, providing students with access to innovative learning environments that foster innovation and creativity.

Furthermore, we are proud to support the transition to clean energy in our schools through the schools clean energy technology fund. This initiative has enabled 240 schools, including Brunswick Junction Primary School, Harvey Primary School, Pinjarra Primary School and the WA College of Agriculture in Harvey, to implement clean energy upgrades and reduce their energy costs. By embracing sustainable practices in our schools, we are not only reducing our environmental footprint, but also teaching students the importance of environmental stewardship for generations to come. Last year we also opened South Metropolitan TAFE's training hubs for hospitality, hairdressing and beauty, along with the unveiling of the new hospitality and tourism training centre. This \$16.9 million project stands as a testament to the state government's unparalleled dedication to upgrading TAFE infrastructure across Western Australia, ensuring that our students have access to world-class training facilities that will prepare them for successful careers in these thriving industries. These initiatives exemplify our commitment to fostering excellence in education and empowering our students to reach their full potential.

In addition to our significant investments in TAFE's new facilities and training opportunities, the Cook Labor government's fee-free initiative has played a pivotal role in equipping Western Australians with the skills they need for the jobs of the future. Thousands of individuals have seized the opportunity to kick-start their training at TAFE, with health and care sector courses emerging as particularly popular choices. In 2023 alone, we saw an impressive 2 426 enrolments in the diploma of nursing course, highlighting the demand for quality education in this critical field. By managing WA's finances responsibly, we have been able to offer real cost-of-living support through affordable training, ensuring that all Western Australians have access to the training they need to pursue rewarding careers.

As part of our ongoing commitment to environmental preservation and sustainable outdoor recreation, the Cook Labor government has implemented several initiatives to protect and enhance our natural landscapes. One of the major projects in Murray–Wellington is the Dwellingup adventure trails initiative, which received funding of \$8.4 million from both the state and federal governments. Another \$2.7 million was secured as a part of a Cook Labor government election commitment to invest in new and improved trails and facilities across the town of Dwellingup. Dwellingup was proudly named Australia's top tiny tourism town in the 2023 national tourism awards with Mandurah being named the top tourism town for 2023, making our region one of the best to visit. Completed components of this project include the Lane Poole suspension bridge, the establishment of a 35-kilometre Murray Valley mountain bike trail network along the southern river bank, a 16-kilometre Dwellingup mountain bike trail network around the town site and new canoe launching facilities at Island Pool in Lane Poole Reserve. Additionally, nine kilometres of roads in Lane Poole Reserve have been sealed for year-round vehicle access.

In 2018, the state government also provided \$251 000 to the Shire of Murray through the community sporting and recreation facilities fund for the construction of a skate park and pump track in Dwellingup as part of the town's overall redevelopment plans. Additionally, the Cook Labor government has allocated funding towards the restoration and development of walking trails between the old Lake Clifton town site, Lime Kiln and the old railway station, further enhancing access to our natural wonders. Moreover, in the Harvey region, we have invested \$125 000 in grant funding for the proposal of the Munda Biddi Harvey spur trail as part of the Harvey Region Trails and Adventure Master Plan.

Ensuring access to adequate housing is a fundamental aspect of community wellbeing. I am keenly aware of the pressing need for more housing options in our region. That is why I am pleased to share that progress is underway on vital housing projects across Murray–Wellington. In Dwellingup, the near completion of 12 cottages tailored for independent over-55 individuals marks a significant step forward. These homes, funded in part by the social housing economic recovery package, will offer much-needed support to our vulnerable community members. Additionally, ground has been broken for the construction of stage 3 of the Brunswick River Cottages after the WA Labor government funded stage 1 before my time in Murray–Wellington, and stage 2 was given \$1.6 million in 2018. Stage 3 consists of the construction of 12 independent living units at the Brunswick River Cottages site in Brunswick Junction, further expanding housing options. This initiative not only addresses the shortage of quality housing, but also creates local job opportunities during the construction phase.

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These efforts underscore the Cook Labor government's commitment to bolstering social housing and fostering a stronger, more inclusive community. Only the WA Labor government has undertaken the funding of community housing in Murray–Wellington. By investing in projects that stimulate economic activity and create employment opportunities, we are laying the groundwork for sustainable growth and prosperity in Murray–Wellington. This steadfast dedication to regional prosperity underscores our firm belief in the potential of every corner of our state, driving us to continue our efforts to build healthy thriving communities that offer opportunities and quality of life for all.

Through the regional economic development grants program, the state government is actively investing in initiatives that drive economic growth across regional Western Australia. One notable success story is Spinifex Brewing Co, which received a \$150 000 RED grant to enhance its operations. With this funding, a canning line was introduced at the Food Innovation Precinct and has led to a significant uptick in packaged beer sales, both domestically and in export markets. This includes a new brew especially designed for the Peruvian market called Lima that will be exported this month with exciting expansion plans in Peru.

This success is mirrored by other RED recipients across the region, whose diverse projects are poised to invigorate sectors such as agribusiness, manufacturing and tourism. Another noteworthy achievement is the revitalisation of Jarrahfall Bush Camp, the recipient of a \$170 000 RED grant. This project, which saw the construction of new facilities and renovations to existing ones, has not only expanded the camp's capacity, but has also generated a surge in visitor numbers, benefiting the entire local community.

Other recipients of RED grants have seen a significant investment into their business. To list a few, there is ManukaLife; Capogreco Farms in Waroona; Shift Engineering in Waroona; Forest Edge Cottage, Dwellingup; Miami Bakehouse in Myalup; Pinjarra Bakery; C-Wise in Nambeelup; Dwellingup Trails and Visitor Centre; Eden Towers in the Peel Business Park; Caravan King in Furnissdale; Chaff City in Pinjarra; Exchange Hotel, Pinjarra; Dwellingup Adventures; Jacaranda Hill Farm; Brugan Brewing in Wokalup; Harvey Hemp in Harvey; and Vineyard 28 in Harvey. These success stories underscore the transformative impact of regional economic development grants in driving economic prosperity and opportunity across regional Western Australia.

In recent years, we witnessed the remarkable growth of our state's agrifood and beverage sector, thanks in part to initiatives like the Food Innovation Precinct Western Australia, known as FIPWA, in Nambeelup in the Shire of Murray. A \$45 million investment from the Cook government made it possible for the Shire of Murray to build this cutting-edge facility, which gives the state a platform to increase its agricultural exports and develop new products. With common infrastructure available for industry and researchers alike, the precinct fosters collaboration and drives commercial research and development initiatives. Additionally, the government invested \$12.2 million in fitting out a manufacturing facility, headed by Murdoch University, for canning, packaging and processing innovative food products. The sustainable innovative food technologies centre is open to all of WA's 1 500 food and beverage businesses. Growing the state's local value-added food production is expected to create more than 150 direct jobs in five years and inject more than \$100 million into the economy. The next Australian food icon may come out of FIPWA.

Furthermore, the development of the \$66 million Aryzta baked goods facility exemplifies our commitment to enhancing WA's domestic food-processing capabilities. The Cook Labor government assisted with purchasing the land through DevelopmentWA with a \$1 million grant. This investment not only creates job opportunities but also strengthens our region's economy and positions the state for further growth in the food and beverage manufacturing sectors.

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering economic growth and innovation, the Peel Business Park stands as a beacon of progress and opportunity.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: Thanks to a substantial investment in infrastructure and operational capabilities, this visionary project has already generated nearly 100 jobs and laid the foundation for a thriving business ecosystem. At its core lies the \$33.16 million Bushfire Centre of Excellence, which pioneers Australia's first department-led traditional fire program and embodies our dedication to innovation, solutions and integrating Indigenous knowledge.

An \$8.65 million funding boost, included in the WA Labor government's COVID recovery plan, activates the East Keralup landholding for economic development. The Shire of Murray was awarded the contract to build a three-kilometre access road to the site from Gull Road.

The Cook Labor government has invested in vital community infrastructure projects across the Murray–Wellington electorate. The Ravenswood Community Centre, for instance, received \$1.3 million in funding from the government, and this was supplemented by an additional \$150 000 from project partners that included the Shire of Murray and

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Alcoa. Similarly, Harvey Senior Citizens Centre was given \$610 000 to upgrade its well-used facility. Work has not commenced on this project through the Shire of Harvey; however, completion is projected to be in early 2025.

As our community continues to evolve, it is vital to invest in spaces that bring people together and enhance our quality of life. That is why the Cook Labor government invested \$4.4 million in the Railside Park project in Waroona. Railside Park's completion marks a significant milestone in the Shire of Waroona's town centre revitalisation strategy, and it provides residents and visitors with a vibrant hub for creation and relaxation. The project received additional contributions from Lotterywest and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, and exemplifies the government's commitment to creating inclusive environments for all.

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our communities is paramount, especially in regions prone to bushfires and other emergencies. Fire safety infrastructure plays a critical role in our efforts to protect lives and property. The Cook Labor government's recent investments highlight its unwavering commitment to strengthening fire safety infrastructure across Murray–Wellington and beyond. Projects like the ongoing refurbishment of the Shire of Murray's Pinjarra Fire and Rescue Service's facility, which was funded at \$1.725 million, demonstrate the government's proactive approach to enhancing emergency response capabilities. The Brunswick Junction Fire and Rescue Service received over \$613 000, and a \$50 000 election commitment, to upgrade its fire station. The upgrade included much-needed women's facilities, a storage shed and a training room. Similarly, \$673 000 was provided to fund the extension and upgrade of Waroona Volunteer Fire Service's facility. Funding of \$320 733 for the Preston Beach volunteer bush fire brigade and \$19 150 for the Australind State Emergency Service Unit underscores our dedication to ensuring uninterrupted emergency response services, even in challenging conditions. I give a huge shout-out and thank you to all of our volunteer bush fire brigade volunteers, and to the Fire and Rescue Service for keeping our communities safe. I thank the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Rapid Relief Team Australia for feeding and looking after our volunteer crews during this terrible fire season.

In Murray–Wellington, our love for sports runs deep and I am proud to support this cherished aspect of our community. I have committed to ensuring that every sporting club has the resources it needs to thrive by providing funding and support to organisations across my electorate, including junior, senior and women's clubs. In the Shire of Murray those include: Murray District Rangers Soccer Club, Pinjarra Piranhas swim club, Pinjarra Junior Football Club, the Pinjarra Football Club seniors, Dwellingup Razorbacks Football Club, Pinjarra Cricket Club juniors and seniors, Pinjarra Basketball Association, Furnissdale Tennis Club and Pinjarra Hockey Club.

Shire of Waroona sports clubs that have received funding include: Waroona Amateur Swimming Club, Waroona Cricket Club, Waroona Football Club juniors and seniors, Waroona Netball Club and Waroona Basketball Club. Shire of Harvey sports clubs have also received funding. Those include: Leschenault Cricket Club juniors and seniors, Australind Basketball Association, Harvey Basketball Association, Harvey Netball Association, Harvey Hockey Club, HBL Football Club juniors and seniors, Harvey Bulls Football Club, Harvey Bengier Cricket Club, Brunswick Tennis Club, Australind Tennis Club, Australind Swimming Club, Harvey Hawks Football Club, Australind Soccer Club, HBL Netball Club, Harvey Amateur Swimming Club and the Harvey Tennis Club.

Through my election commitments, I have allocated funding to support the growth and vitality of local sports. A total of 72 sports clubs across the electorate have received this vital funding, with 40 clubs in Peel and 32 in the south west benefiting greatly. An example of this support is the Leschenault Cricket Club, which has been awarded \$100 000 to install a state-of-the-art turf wicket at their oval. That investment will enhance the playing experience for club members and attract more participants and spectators to the sport. It is currently in planning with the Shire of Harvey's sport precinct master plan and it will hopefully be installed by the end of 2024.

In addition, the Leschenault Leisure Centre is embarking on an exciting journey of redevelopment with a substantial investment of \$3 million. The transformation will ensure that our community has access to modern and inclusive recreational facilities for years to come. The Cook Labor government contributed \$449 000 towards the \$1.3 million lighting upgrade at the Brunswick Recreation Ground, which is set to benefit both the Harvey Brunswick Leschenault Football Club and the Brunswick Agricultural Society, which use the facilities. The Pinjarra Cricket Club received \$23 500 to construct a synthetic cricket wicket and three practice nets at Sir Ross McLarty Oval. This initiative will provide valuable resources for aspiring cricketers and contribute to the growth of the sport in our region. The Sir Ross McLarty Oval received \$750 000, which went towards the construction of a new pavilion and the upgrade of oval 4. It significantly enhanced the sporting infrastructure at the Sir Ross McLarty Sports Precinct. Those investments reaffirm our dedication to promoting a vibrant and active community, ensuring that everyone has access to high-quality sports and recreational facilities.

The Cook Labor government allocated a substantial investment of \$2.73 million to continue its commitment to enhancing recreational boating facilities across Western Australia. This initiative underscores our dedication to improving access and amenities for boaters, ensuring they can enjoy our state's pristine waterways safely and

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conveniently. In collaboration with the Shire of Murray, we have secured funding of \$456 786 for the extension of the boat ramp and replacement of one of the timber platforms within the floating jetty at Batavia Quays. Sandy Cove in South Yunderup has also had an upgrade to jetties and playground facilities. Those projects will enhance safety and accommodate the growing demands of recreational boating in the area.

I supported the disability access ramp in Ravenswood as part of my election commitment, with funding of \$50 000, which will benefit members of the Mandurah Over 55s Kayak Club and other residents, promoting inclusivity and accessibility in our recreational facilities. The successfully delivered \$3 million refurbishment of the Australind jetty underscores our commitment to preserving and revitalising our iconic landmarks for the enjoyment of locals and visitors alike.

Community groups are the lifeblood of our towns, and investing in these vital groups is important for their survival. These groups and investments include the Coolup Progress Association, the Pinjarra Possum Girl Guides, the Preston Beach Community Garden, the Preston Beach facility upgrades, the Waroona–Hamel Returned and Services League of Australia, the Waroona Action Group, Murray Youth for Youth, the Murray Music and Drama Club, the No Pup Cleft Behind, K9 Rescue Group, Greener Pastures Sanctuary, River Wren Rescue, Pinjarra Community Garden, Waroona Artists and Makers, Lake Clifton Heron Progress Association, North Dandalup Community Group, Cookernup Community Association, Binningup Community Garden, Binningup Community Association, Brunswick Junction Lions Club, Harvey Aboriginal Corporation, Binningup Surf Life Saving Club, the Myalup Community Association and the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce.

By investing in projects that stimulate the economy and economic activity and create employment opportunities, we are laying the groundwork for sustainable growth and prosperity in Murray–Wellington. This steadfast dedication to regional prosperity underscores our firm belief in the potential of every corner of our state, driving us to continue our efforts to build healthy, thriving communities to provide opportunities and quality of life for all. Western Australia remains the economic powerhouse of this nation, as we have seen in the federal government’s job statistics released earlier this month, and we have a high workforce participation rate, which means more people in work, and the second-lowest inflation rate in the country. Our unemployment rate is below the levels of unemployment before the pandemic. These are strong results, but it is important that we make sure all Western Australians have the support they need. That is why we are delivering cost-of-living relief through our household electricity credits, free public transport for school students and for everyone on Sundays, capped regional airfares and more than 100 free TAFE courses.

As our communities grow and evolve, it becomes crucial to ensure that essential services are readily available and efficiently delivered to meet the needs of the residents. That is why the Cook Labor government has prioritised the provision of vital services ranging from education and infrastructure to public safety to foster a thriving and inclusive environment for all. By swiftly addressing these evolving needs, this government laid the foundation for a resilient and prosperous community in which every individual can flourish and contribute meaningfully to our collective progress.

I finish by thanking my dedicated staff, who run my life. I could not do this without them.

Last but not least, my husband Charlie.

Mrs L.A. Munday: Last but not least?

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: Never least; he is always first. He came to Parliament today and surprised me for Valentine’s Day, so happy Valentine’s Day, baby!

I also want to acknowledge that I have a new grandson. He is about 14 weeks old. His name is Naum, and I am the proudest grandma ever. He is absolutely gorgeous. To my son, Steve, and his partner, Fiona, you have made me the proudest grandma on earth, so thank you very much. I love you all.

MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany) [5.17 pm]: I rise on Valentine’s Day following the member for Murray–Wellington. I do not have as many heartfelt messages to send to my husband, who is back in Albany looking after the kids. I rise today to contribute to the Premier’s Statement. I am delighted to be part of the Cook Labor government. It has been a pleasure to sit in Parliament over the last couple of days and listen to the contributions members have made about their communities and what the Cook Labor government is doing to ensure that we reduce the cost of living. I will not go through all the initiatives that the Labor government has put in place because I think we have heard about many of them. My community knows about them. I know that the free school bus service is very much appreciated my community.

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It is the Noongar season of Bunuru. One of our elders in Albany, Vernice Gillies, acknowledged that some of our community members are getting a bit itchy in the community. It was Birak coming out of January. That is when it was dry and hot and we had a lot of wind.

I would like to give a shout-out to the incredible volunteers in the fire brigade. We have had some significant fires in the Albany electorate at Green Range and Warriup. I give a shout-out to not only the volunteer fireys, but also the other emergency services that contribute to making sure that our communities stay safe. We had an accident out on the fireground, and I wish those community members a good and safe recovery as they get through it.

Obviously it is Valentine's Day, so I would like to give a big shout-out to the beautiful community of Albany and especially to the LGBTIQ+ family that is celebrating pride. I went to the launch of that on Friday night. Their theme this year is "we are family", and we most certainly are. Love is love, and I send all my love to the queer community today and going forward. I look forward to them celebrating diversity and inclusion in a world where love is not always at the forefront for some of those people. I send a shout-out to them, and the volunteers, who have done an absolutely incredible job. We have a jam-packed two weeks of Pride. People come from all over Western Australia, and probably the eastern states, to celebrate Pride in Albany. I look forward to attending some of those functions.

Today is also Sweetheart Day, which is known as Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day. Each year in Australia, one in 100 children are born with congenital heart disease. I hope my nephew is home from school now, as I am grateful that I got to do my contribution at this time of day. My nephew William is a HeartKid. I know how much HeartKids and HeartKids WA supported my sister and her family when William was diagnosed with a hole in his heart when he was only about 10 weeks old. As he lived in regional Western Australia, he had to be flown to Perth with the Royal Flying Doctor Service. My sister and William stayed at Ronald McDonald House. He had the most incredible support at Perth Children's Hospital. Fortunately, as an aunty, I was able to spend quite a lot of time with William. For those who follow my Facebook page, please jump on and have a look at the pictures of me and William when he was a little kid. Unfortunately, my brother-in-law had to have open heart surgery the same time William was in Perth Children's Hospital, so I got to be an aunty staying at Perth Children's Hospital while my sister was supporting her husband. It was an extremely challenging time for our family, but William is thriving. He is my little trooper, and I hope he is having a great day back home. I am sure it is a bit cooler down there than it is here.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the new school student leaders, as well as those kids who did not quite make student leaders; my daughter is one of them. My other nephew is actually one of them. I think some of the schools are really geeing up that school student leader, but all kids and people in our community are leaders in different ways. I think we sometimes put so much pressure on these leaders at a young age, but I encourage all members in our community to continue being leaders in whatever field that is. I proudly wore my Spencer Park school student leader badge to the Spencer Park Primary School graduation last year, which I happened to find in some of my dad's things that were returned to me. I was also a student councillor at Albany Senior High School. I acknowledge the great work they do with their different leaders as they emerge through the school system.

As other members have mentioned, we had the Australia Day citizenship awards. This fantastic day acknowledges some of those members in our community who do not often get recognised. It was fabulous to attend the ceremony and see the diversity of people who were nominated.

I give a shout-out to Denika Favas, whom I have not actually met. She was recognised as a Young Citizen of the Year. She has a volunteer group called Midweek at Mids, which promotes mental health through swims, coffee and conversation. She puts a little sign out and people come along to go for a swim, have a coffee and connect with each other. She has also started an initiative called Roundabout Run Club, and obviously, in Albany, there are enough roundabouts! This group comprises people who do not know each other. They go out running together and then form relationships. Regional areas attract some incredible people to work in our communities and I know Denika has said that for a lot of people her age moving to Albany, it is a great way for them to connect and make different friends. She is also a volunteer at Disabled Surfing Association Great Southern. I also like helping out at Disabled Surfing. Disabled Surfing is this Saturday and we are still looking for volunteers. Anyone in Albany—who I am sure will be watching—please pop along. It is a fantastic morning. The more volunteers we have, the more waves that the participants can get. It is very rewarding to see the smiles on their dials, and waves getting caught, down at Binalup–Middleton Beach.

I give a shout-out to Olivia Roberts, who was our senior citizen of the year. Olivia is a proud Noongar woman who has lived, breathed and worked in our community for a long time, and is a strong, passionate advocate. It was a privilege to stand there when she was awarded senior citizen of the year. She did not really want the award or the

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accolades. She just wanted to get on and make sure we can really build a better community in Albany. Olivia is truly a champion and so are the rest of her family who continue to do incredible work in our community.

Our citizen of the year went to Annette Davis. Annette is very well known in our community in the artistic scene. She has provided many exhibitions and attracted funding through the Perth International Arts Festival Great Southern program. She continues to champion the work of arts culture in Albany.

We had a new award at this year's ceremony. It was awarded in recognition of Annette Knight, one of our former mayors. The inaugural Annette Knight award was presented to Barb Thomas, who is a very well-known local. Barb runs the Albany Community Hospice op shop, which is just up the road from my office. I just sent Barb a birthday card. She is having a significant birthday. I will not tell members what it is because she might like to keep it secret, but she has been around for a very long time. She has been volunteering at the Albany Community Hospice for 24 years. The op shop that she runs up the road from my office raises over \$100 000 annually, which goes back into the Albany hospice. Mayor Greg Stocks made a comment that they had to ring and make sure she did not have a paid position and it was all voluntary. Barb is incredible and I really hope she has a fantastic birthday and keeps doing the amazing work she does for the Albany Community Hospice, which we all love and value. My dad went through the Albany hospice; it is such a fantastic place and is very well respected in the Albany community.

Albany resident Professor Kirsten Auret was presented with an Order of Australia for her palliative care work. She is an amazing asset to the great southern. Minister Buti and I visited the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia. Kirsten was one of his students, so he claims a lot of the fame for her career pathway. She is a professor who runs the Rural Clinical School in Albany. She is really highly regarded and it is an absolute asset to have her in our region. Again, I congratulate Kirsten on her esteemed award.

As many know, I hosted the community cabinet in Albany last week. To say it was full on is an understatement. To say it was overwhelming is an understatement. To say it was amazing—it was. It was fantastic to have not only cabinet but also all my Labor colleagues arrive in Albany so we could really showcase what it has to offer. As we have heard in previous contributions, a lot of members travelled there by a car. They saw how amazing it is coming down, with all the shops along the way. I think we could have done a poll for the best sausage roll and doughnut and the best shop; I can make my own list, actually! With the community cabinet, one of the things I wanted to note—and a community newsletter is going out in a few weeks—is that we did a dual naming project in the City of Albany, which was led with some funding through Lotterywest. We now have about 28 dual-named places in Albany. We now refer to Albany as Albany–Kinjarling and Middleton Beach as Middleton–Binalup. They are now starting to roll off the tongue and people use those names. I think it shows great respect that it was a project led by the Noongar community. It is really lovely that we now have over 28 dual-named locations. We are still working to include more on that list.

For cabinet in Albany, we had three events. We had a great community cabinet with a lot of volunteers on the Sunday afternoon, which was hosted at Retravision Stadium. We then had a business breakfast, which had a real focus on the diversity of small businesses within our community. It was great. Some people tapped me on the shoulder and said, "I've never been to something like this before. What am I doing here?" I said, "It's networking. It's an opportunity for you to meet other small business owners. It's an opportunity to promote the business that you do." The feedback was incredible. Thank you, Three Anchors, which hosted that business breakfast. We also had a lunch with a cross-section of not-for-profit, community organisations at the Albany Entertainment Centre. Again, there was a really good cross-section of people who work for those not-for-profit organisations in the community sector. They had the opportunity to engage with the full cabinet. The feedback I received was overwhelming, and I say thank you to the ministers who worked incredibly hard, and came earlier and stayed later to ensure that it was not just a flying visit. It was a great opportunity to get into the diversity of Albany, make lasting connections and ensure that voices were really heard. The Minister for Local Government hosted a really important lunch for the whole great southern. I appreciate that when we talk about Albany, we also encompass the great southern and those smaller shires further afield, and it is really important that they also have access to the cabinet. The feedback was really fantastic. The conversations that came out of that showed that some of the issues across some of those electorates are very similar.

When the cabinet was in town, we managed to go and have a look at the Albany ring-road. It is an incredible project. It was great to meet and speak to some of the workers who are coming back into the main work from the contract that previously existed. A lot of them are local Albany people who now have permanent employment and are able to really bed themselves in Albany knowing that they have a future job for as long as they want. We made some great connections with the City of Albany. I acknowledge Greg Stocks, the new mayor, who took over from former Mayor Dennis Wellington. Greg has been on the council for a very long time. I look forward to working with the council as we head into the bicentenary for 2026. I think all the cabinet ministers really valued the contribution

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that the City of Albany made. We have some incredible projects in the pipeline to deliver. Those relationships are being forged, and I really look forward to seeing what we will do in 2026.

The Attorney General stayed for an extra day in Albany, and we were able to rebrand and relaunch the Albany Community Legal Centre, which is an extremely important service. I know that a lot of constituents who come through my office use that service, and it is really valued. That service is now called Great Southern Community Legal Services. It will expand its services and delivery, especially up in Katanning and Kojonup. It was really great to see the other organisations that were there to support Great Southern Community Legal Services. They are not isolated. They do not work in silos; they work together collaboratively in the community sector.

Minister Templeman and I popped in to Strawberry Hill farm—one of the oldest farms in Western Australia. I grew up in Albany and when I was a kid, we used to visit Strawberry Hill farm a lot. It is a beautiful, incredible building. There are beautiful gardens, and it was fantastic to have a look at what that has to offer.

Minister Templeman was also able to go down to the North Albany Football Club. Those guys are amazing. It is one of the oldest footy clubs in Albany. The club is currently doing some work after receiving some funding through the community sporting and recreation facilities fund, so the minister was able to check out the new toilets. The club is removing urinals, putting shower screens between showers, and doing all the other fantastic things that our facilities need to ensure that we can forge ahead with women's AFL as well as men's. We have a great women's league happening in Albany at the moment with Mt Barker and Denmark. These facilities and upgrades will make sure that we can have co-educational, co-location of teams. With these facilities, the teams will be able to cope as the sport expands.

A few ministers went through the student accommodation in Albany. This is a unique building that was funded through regional development a few years ago. We now have 48 student accommodation beds. I think that is a testament to the former minister, who really pushed that project as much as she could to ensure that it was not staged. The student accommodation is now full. It is great that people can come from Esperance or further afield, live in affordable student accommodation and either study at university, do an apprenticeship or go to TAFE. I think that, for a regional town, it is incredible that we have that facility right in the heart of Albany.

My list of places we visited goes on. Minister Buti was able to go and see the brand new upgrade of Mount Lockyer Primary School, thanks to a \$16 million investment by the Labor government. That is one of our oldest schools and it has been upgraded. There are now just such fantastic facilities for the kids to be educated in, in a state-of-the-art building. Hon Jackie Jarvis, the Minister for Agriculture and Food, visited Irongate Wagyu beef farm. It was really important to me to have the minister go out there and see what Irongate does: it exports Wagyu beef around the world.

The investment into trade and tourism in the great southern region is something that I am really proud of. We do not want to be Margaret River; we are unique. We export Wagyu beef, oysters, beautiful wine, truffles and free-range lamb. We really are setting the world on fire with the incredible produce that comes from the great southern, so it was fantastic that the minister was able to go out there.

I also went out to The Gap with the Premier and minister to talk about the new enhancements to The Gap. Everyone who has been to Albany has been to The Gap; it is an iconic tourist destination, but there are no toilets, so we will be putting in some toilet blocks. As locals, we actually visit when the weather is really bad, because we love seeing it when it is at its roughest and toughest, whereas when I visited with the Premier and minister, it was an absolutely magic day.

I would like to give a shout-out to the *Albany Advertiser*. During the cabinet visit the *Advertiser* really did follow the ministers and me around on the busy schedule. I would also like to give a shout-out to Laurie Benson, who carried a stepladder and took photos wherever we were, at whatever height and at whatever risk! Laurie, thank you. I was recently chatting to another journalist from the *Advertiser* and I told them, "You're so lucky to have a professional photographer in Albany."

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: I really hope the *Albany Advertiser* continues to employ a photographer because Laurie captures the heart of the great southern through his photography. I am really grateful to the *Albany Advertiser* and Laurie for the coverage we got.

I will quickly acknowledge some of the other announcements we made in Albany last week. Thanks to Minister Winton we announced a \$3.1 million commitment over two years for three new men's behavioural change programs, and Albany is one of the locations. I know that is something that the community will really value, and I look forward to seeing the providers who win the tender to deliver that program. Thanks to Minister Punch, who is also in the chamber, we were able to announce more than \$400 000 for the Albany waterfront precinct, stage 2.

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We have a fair bit of land down there that can be developed, and with that plan I think we can really develop and futureproof the marina, along with other future opportunities for restaurants, hotels or whatever else might be looked at. I know that that project will be very much valued within the Albany community.

We stood at Binalup–Middleton Beach to announce the tender process for an artificial surf reef, which is a project that has been wanted in Albany for many, many years. Even my son said to me this week, “Mum, when’s that reef going to be built?” I said, “Soon!” Hopefully that will start at the end of the year with a \$4.75 million contribution from the state government. That was another great announcement by the minister. Along with the surf club, that project was a bit iffy; it needed some more funding and our state government was able to find some additional funding to make sure that it not only went ahead, but went ahead with the right intent to ensure the safety of swimmers at Binalup–Middleton Beach and in the entire great southern through our emergency response teams. I know the member for Warren–Blackwood, Jane Kelsbie, does some emergency response from Denmark. It is really vital that we get those jet skis in the water as quickly as we can, to ensure that we can protect the wider coastline.

I would like to acknowledge Minister Carey. We visited some of our key housing projects in Albany. We went to a new modular build. The residents—a single mum and her three kids—were notified about its completion this week. It is a fantastic, beautiful house, one that I would be proud to live in. We are changing social housing for the better. Forty-three social housing dwellings have been built in Albany, with a further 39 under construction. I know that the Minister for Housing is doing everything he can to ensure that we build houses. The modular build is fantastic, and I look forward to seeing many more to come.

I have so much more to contribute. It is quite warm in here for a little Albany kid, so I might leave my contribution there! I know that I will be able to make more contributions throughout the year.

I am proud to be a part of this government. I look forward to the next year, which is obviously an election year. Honestly, this is the best job you could possibly have. Representing Albany and regional Western Australia is an absolute privilege. Please know that regional Western Australia is well represented in the Cook Labor government, predominantly by women. We are fierce and powerful, and we will be here in 2025. I commend the Premier’s Statement to the house.

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [5.40 pm]: I have no sweetheart to wish happy Valentines Day to!

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Dr K. STRATTON: Thank you! I will give a shout-out to the two people who wholeheartedly have all my heart—my son, Oliver, and my daughter, Kate. Happy Valentines Day to the people of Western Australia and my community of Nedlands. It is fair to say that the Cook Labor government is showing a lot of love for all of us. I do, of course, rise to add my contribution to the Premier’s Statement. I reflect the sentiments of the member for Albany that it is, indeed, a great privilege to represent our communities and serve as part of the Cook Labor government, a government that responds to the emerging needs of the community as it continues to grow, diversify and transition our economy and ensure that our state and community is safe and inclusive for everyone.

Public education, as I have said many times, is a key reason that many families decide to call the electorate of Nedlands home. Indeed, my folks moved to Nedlands a very long time ago so that we could go to Hollywood Senior High School, and we moved to Nedlands 15 years ago so that our kids could go to Shenton College. The seat of Nedlands is home to seven public primary schools and three public high schools—Shenton College, Bob Hawke College and Perth Modern School. I acknowledge the families that have been impacted by the closure of Loreto Primary School. It often surprised people to learn that there was only one Catholic school in my electorate. The seat of Nedlands is now home to only public schools. I acknowledge the impact that the closure of Loreto Primary School—Loreto Ministries decided to close the school at the end of last year—has had on families. When I was a primary school student, I did ballet classes at that school. Like most schools, it has been an important part of our community and I know its loss is felt by not only the families whose children attended the school, but also the community as a whole.

Last year, I had the privilege of standing with the Premier and the Minister for Education when the second stage of Bob Hawke College officially opened. I was there for the second stage turning of the sod in 2021 so it was great to be there to see the completion of a diverse array of teaching areas, including sensory classrooms for neurodivergent children, a performing arts centre, dance and visual arts studios, music rooms, student services facilities, playing courts, a commercial kitchen, a rooftop garden for senior students and other areas in which students can engage with nature. Bob Hawke College integrates with Subiaco Oval as its students use the oval for their playing fields during school hours. It is a shared facility between the college and the broader community. Stage 2 represents a \$52.9 million investment in public education for the communities of the seats of Nedlands, Perth and Churchlands. The second stage provides a real hub for student talent, creativity, learning and, importantly, wellbeing.

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Speaking of wellbeing, at the opening it was a personal highlight to have a one-on-one tour from the Social Justice Club of the facilities its members had advocated for. Once again, I congratulate this active and values-driven group of students for making their school a safe and inclusive space for all their peers. Its leadership is of course reflective of the culture of the school, which I have always experienced to be inclusive, engaged and active.

It is no surprise that Bob Hawke College was a finalist in the excellence in disability and inclusion award in the WA Education Awards. It is a category that acknowledges schools that demonstrate excellence in meeting the diverse needs of students, parents, families and communities by providing engaging and inclusive learning programs and environments for students with a disability or imputed disability. That commitment of Bob Hawke is reflected in the buildings of the college, its teaching and wellbeing practices and, importantly its culture.

None of these things occur in a vacuum or by accident; they of course occur under great leadership. I acknowledge the principal, John Burke, and his leadership team. I also acknowledge the student councillors, who not only form their own student council but are welcome and active participants on the school board. I also acknowledge the board members as well as the college's P&C, all of whom contribute to the culture and the outcomes of the school.

Before I leave Bob Hawke College, early in 2023, with the member for Perth, Hon John Carey, we celebrated the new greenlight pedestrian crossing on Roberts Road in front of the college, which was an election commitment that we jointly delivered. Bob Hawke College itself was a major election commitment the Labor government made prior to 2017 to provide a new inner-city high school for our community. The college shows how an inner-city school can be both part of its natural environment and its local community, and maximise all the learning and community benefits that being an inner-city educational institution has to offer.

The high-quality public education offered at Shenton College has seen the school continue to grow to a population of almost 3 000 students. In response to that growth, the modular build announced by the Minister for Education in 2023 is now underway. That build will create additional teaching spaces, staff facilities and student hubs. Students will move into that build at the commencement of term 2. As a parent at Shenton College, one of the things I greatly admire and appreciate about it is that no matter a child's pathway, whether it be Australian tertiary admission rank or vocational education and training, they are encouraged, supported and celebrated. Over half of the school's graduating year 12 students have completed a certificate II while at the college and just over 40 per cent have completed a certificate III.

When I was at Hollywood Senior High School it was pretty much the University of Western Australia or bust, so to see the change in approach and culture is really exciting. That is in part because this year my daughter has embarked on her certificate II experience at Shenton College, which will see her engage in active volunteering opportunities and develop her work skills. She will end this year with a certificate II. These experiences will lay the groundwork for her to be a skilled and engaged member of the workforce, now and in the future.

As I have said, our public high schools are very popular, given the high-quality co-ed public education opportunities provided. There is of course a flow-on effect in their popularity for our primary schools, many of which also face growing enrolments and enrolment pressure. To ensure that long-term plans are in place to meet the educational needs of the growing population of young families in my electorate—families seeking, as my folks did, and as my partner and I did, the excellent educational opportunities available in the western suburbs—the government is examining long and short-term solutions that will deliver for local students and families.

I take the opportunity to thank the leadership, the principals, the P&Cs and the boards of all of our local schools who have respectfully engaged in advocacy for the needs of our growing school communities. I also thank the Minister for Education for facilitating an education forum at the end of last year to hear about and respond to some of those pressures and concerns.

As someone who has been a tertiary educator for nearly 20 years, I will say something to all students who are embarking on ATAR this year. I recognise that parents may hate me for saying this—many of my son's friends' parents did not necessarily appreciate me saying it—but I will say it anyway: university is but one pathway. If university is indeed your destination, direct entry from high school is but one pathway and it is not necessarily the best pathway for everyone. Be sure to take care of your mind, body and soul as you get underway at this early stage of year 12. Enjoy those ham and cheese toasties while you can! Although education will change your life—I have certainly engaged in formal education for most of my adult life—it should never come at the expense of your wellbeing. In fact, it should nourish your wellbeing. To repeat the motto of Shenton College, you are more than your marks.

Of course, as of 5 February, school-age children with a SmartRider have been able to ride for free on public transport from Monday to Friday, and will do so until the end of the school year. This is a great cost-of-living initiative from the Cook Labor government. As the parent of a teenager, it will also save me quite a lot of angst, especially the

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kind of Sunday night cry of, “There is no credit left on my SmartRider. What should I do? You’ll have to give me a lift to school tomorrow!” My team and I have been calling locals for the last few weeks to make sure that our community is aware of this initiative. The saving of both money and angst will be greatly appreciated.

One other way in which we have been supporting students for some time is by providing free period products in schools and TAFEs for menstruating students. For a long time—up until 2019—there was a tax on having a period. The GST on period products was removed in that year. The removal of this tax, as well as the provision of free period products, is an acknowledgement that menstruation is a normal part of life and that products should reflect this by being freely available and accessible.

One of the many privileges of being the member for Nedlands is that Nedlands is home to many statewide services—that is, services that serve both metropolitan and regional Western Australia. I want to give a shout-out to a number of those organisations that had some great wins in 2023. Dress for Success, which is based in Subiaco, prepares women for a return to work, helping unemployed and underemployed women to achieve economic independence. Dress for Success provides women with professional attire from donated work clothes, as well as styling and grooming sessions. Importantly, it also provides development tools, such as workshops and mentoring, to help women return to the workforce. It has increased its reach over the last 12 to 18 months by undertaking a number of road trips to regional WA to provide mobile and outreach services. I know that it engaged with the members for Albany and Geraldton, amongst others. Last year, Dress for Success helped one of my friends who was returning to work after a break of many years due to health reasons. Her confidence was shaky at best. She had been living on a disability pension for quite some time, so her finances were really limited. Dress for Success helped her to upskill in preparing for her initial interview—it had been over 15 years since she had done a job interview—and provided her with a gorgeous dress to wear for the occasion. She was successful in securing part-time work. Dress for Success then provided her with a number of outfits for her early weeks at work, which not only gave her confidence but also meant that her first take-home pay in a number of years could go towards supporting her to re-establish her financial independence.

Dress for Success also hit a number of sustainability goals with its circular fashion efforts by not only providing participants with outfits sourced from donations but also holding regular sales in West Leederville. This, of course, keeps clothes out of landfill. All funds raised from the sales go directly to service provision. I encourage everyone to look out for these regular sales in West Leederville, from which I have sourced many of my work clothes. It is no secret that I am a shoe lover, and I was very excited to find a pair of black suede high heels last year.

I also want to give a shout-out to the people of Living Proud, based in West Perth. They promote the wellbeing of the LGBTIQ+ community. They did a lot of work last year ensuring that Pridefest 2023 was accessible for people, including people living with a disability. They ran the Queer & Accessible Project and have really shown themselves to be leaders in making sure that events are accessible. I attended both the Pride fair and parade, and Living Proud was present and engaged, making sure that those events were inclusive and active for all. Living Proud is run by a small team of very committed staff and a lot of volunteers. A lot of our LGBTIQ+ organisations rely heavily on the efforts of volunteers.

I have had the opportunity to present a lot of Lotterywest grants. It is one of the privileges of being the member for an area that is home to statewide services. Two of those grants were to two Lotteries houses that are in my electorate, Oasis Lotteries House in Nedlands and City West Lotteries House in West Perth. Both have had major refurbishments, including the installation of gender-neutral toilets, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and accessible for the service providers and users that call a Lotteries house home. People from those bodies had the pleasure last night of taking the previous federal member for Stirling, a woman well known to many of us, and another social worker who has served in Parliament, Jann McFarlane, to visit Oasis House. Jann was a mover and shaker in the community services sector and was part of the movement that saw the establishment of Lotteries houses in Western Australia and providing accommodation and shared facilities for small not-for-profit organisations to reduce the overhead and red-tape burden for those organisations so that they can get on with their core business of providing community services.

Last year, Lotterywest celebrated its 90-year anniversary. Since its establishment, it has distributed a collective \$17.3 billion in prizes and grants to the Western Australian community. Having come from the community services sector, I know what a significant impact Lotterywest has, not just on the sector, but on the people that we serve. I sometimes tell the story that I am a member of Parliament in part due to Lotterywest. When I was the manager of research and evaluation at Wanslea, I spent a year of my working life securing a Lotterywest grant to research the impact of the caring role of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. At the time, it was the biggest grant that Lotterywest had ever given for research. In undertaking that work, I appreciated that changing things for grandparents raising their grandchildren required to be at the level of legislation, regulation and funding. I have been delighted to be a part of a Cook Labor government that is continuing to provide for grandparent carers, doubling the annual grandcarers support scheme payment in 2021 and providing access for grandparent carers to the training

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foster carers can access. I am also delighted at the announcement by the minister late last year of cost-of-living relief payments to grandcarers of \$500 for the first child in their care and \$250 for each additional child. I thank both the Premier and the minister for these initiatives that not only recognise the really important role that grandparent carers play but has provided them with really important and immediate cost-of-living relief.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr K. STRATTON: I also had the opportunity last year to present Lotterywest grants to the Wildflower Society of Western Australia; Sailability WA; ADHD WA in its new hub in Mt Claremont; the Floreat Toy Library; Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company; and Diabetes WA for a camp for children with type 1 diabetes. When I was a social worker at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, I was lucky enough to go on a couple of those camps. I think it is fair to say that, even having had two babies, I have never been so tired in my life! I also opened the new women's change rooms and building extension at Swanbourne Nedlands Surf Life Saving Club—again, a development only made possible with a Lotterywest grant. I have also seen the ongoing work of TransFolk WA, which, with a Lotterywest grant in 2021, was able to build its system structures and governance to be ready for program funding, which it received in 2022 for a three-year period. Its leadership remain volunteers and although it continues to go from strength to strength offering programs and events through its Trans Youth Space, there is still capacity for it to expand its reach. I thank TransFolk WA and Living Proud, which I talked about earlier, for their ongoing advocacy of a reform agenda.

Just last week, I was at the turning of the first sod for the Perth children's hospice. The hospice will be the first of its kind in Western Australia. It will provide best practice care to children at the end of their lives. Its location is really important. It is based on evidence of the most beneficial and healing location for a service of this nature, so it is on the shores of Swanbourne Beach. It will allow families to be together. It will allow them to access respite in nature. It is well documented by now. I do not really need to repeat that some local government-elected officials had some rather interesting objections to the hospice and made some outrageous comments about the site.

When the local government decided to reject the application for the use of that land, and the state government stepped in to make sure that the hospice would go ahead on that really important and appropriate site, many distressed members of my community approached me because they were concerned about how badly misrepresented we were. Nearly 600 community members signed my open letter in support of the children's hospice, which sent a really clear message to families that the values of my community are about care and compassion and we will welcome them at what is surely the worst time of any family's life.

I acknowledge the leadership of Perth Children's Hospital Foundation, which has raised tens of millions of dollars to build the state-of-the-art, best practice hospice. The generosity of the Western Australian community has also contributed to this outcome. The ambassador families who shared with us their stories at the turning of the sod about what a hospice will mean to their children and to their families made the occasion very meaningful and very moving.

I would like to also give a shout-out to a couple of local heroes. RecyclemanPerth is now the back-to-back winner of the individual Change Maker of the Year Award for Containers for Change. Vik is a young man with Down syndrome and RecyclemanPerth is his microbusiness. He delivers Vik bins to various businesses, sporting clubs and private residences within the community of Nedlands and then, with his support team, he collects the cans and processes them in Shenton Park. Vik also won the Young Community Citizen of the Year award at the City of Nedlands citizenship ceremony just a few weeks ago. I have one of his bins outside my office and it is routinely overfull when he comes to collect it on a Thursday. The community have really engaged in supporting Vik and he has, of course, contributed to the amazing success of Containers for Change in keeping eligible containers out of landfill.

I also want to say a thankyou to a local business, The Little Pantry cafe in Shenton Park. In partnership with Alzheimer's WA, it has participated in offering Nedlands' first memory cafe. When Alzheimer's WA approached me about establishing a memory cafe in the seat of Nedlands because its offices and some of its services are delivered in the electorate, I knew straightaway that I would make an approach to The Little Pantry. I sent a two-line email asking to meet and outlining why I wanted to meet. A week later, when I met the manager, she presented me with a whole plan about how they were going to welcome this memory cafe. It has been running for a couple of months now. The Little Pantry welcomes people living with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, and their carers, and provides with muffins and cakes and a very welcoming and safe place.

Last year we had the Voice to Parliament referendum and the Nedlands for Yes group had over 200 volunteers, many of whom had never participated in any kind of campaign before. I doorknocked one Sunday afternoon with an 80-year-old who had never participated in any kind of political campaign before but felt compelled to take part. I want to give a shout-out to some of the key volunteers in the Nedlands for Yes group. They include Steve Davey, Peter White, Liam Hurley, Ken John, Bronwen English, Henry Logan, Andrew Elliot, Jeremy Mowe, Jules Hutchison, Renee Delieul, Nick Hill and Susannah Morris. We knocked on over 3 000 doors and made even more phone

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calls. Although Nedlands voted yes across eight out of nine booths, we know that that result was not reflected across Australia, and so our group of active, engaged volunteers regrouped to consider how we can contribute that energy and commitment to progressing reconciliation in our own community and beyond. Volunteers are of course the lifeblood of any community. Every year I give a guest lecture to the social work students at Curtin University and the University of Western Australia, and one of the questions I often get is: after 30 years of being a social worker, and after working in this particular role, what gives me hope? I always talk about volunteers because everywhere we go, in every aspect of life, across all generations, volunteers are offering their time and expertise and compassion.

I finish by saying thank you to a wonderful group of volunteers who have been engaged with my office on a regular basis. They have participated in phoning community members, doorknocking, letterboxing and hosting community events, such as our regular open offices and coffee mornings. Again, I thank Jules Hutchison, Leonie Allison, Wendy Wise and Anna Quirk. They are valuable members of team Nedlands, and we appreciate their contribution to our community. They have helped to show our community what it is to be represented by an active, engaged local member, one whose office is clearly open and, after decades, is now disability accessible, and whose values reflect the community—kind, compassionate, educated and engaged. To my staff, Bronwen English, Adam Gilbride and Louise Knox, we would not get the kind of response and engagement that we do without your exemplary commitment and skills and the relationships that you have formed in our community. I have a special thank you to Francesca Nardi-Spencer who has been there since the beginning and whose enthusiasm, initiative and encouragement laid the groundwork for the team that we are today. I am so excited that your intelligence, commitment to social justice, capacity to learn and initiative are being recognised. Western Australia's loss is Victoria's gain.

Yesterday, *The West Australian* reported that there are 63 sitting days for the year. What a great way to start—to hear from the Premier about the vision and energy of the Cook Labor government for Western Australia and to hear from other members about how this vision will be realised in their local communities and for all Western Australia. I am proud and honoured to play my part.

MS E.J. KELSBIE (Warren–Blackwood) [6.08 pm]: I rise today to support the Premier's Statement and to update the chamber on some of the amazing things that are happening in the beautifully diverse electorate of Warren–Blackwood. Do not listen to the naysayers from the opposition. Those who say “don't” cannot and will not. Warren–Blackwood is thriving. The people of the electorate have a strong female voice in Parliament who knows and embraces the values of listening, learning and fighting for what is right for regional WA. The members of the opposition have said it themselves: I am hardworking and I am working hard for the people of my electorate.

Ms L. Dalton: Hear, hear!

Ms E.J. KELSBIE: Yes, I am! I work hard for Warren–Blackwood, and I am proud to be a part of the Cook Labor government that invests in regions.

Let me provide members with a few highlights of regional investment across Warren–Blackwood. Last week, I was in Manjimup with the Minister for Education, Hon Tony Buti, where we caught up with the principal of the Manjimup Senior High School, Ben Lagana; the deputy principal, Jennifer Crawley; the school board chair, Donnette Edwards; the parents and citizens association representative, Sharmain Hort; and the director of education, south west educational regional office, Sue Cuneo. We also met with the Shire of Manjimup's president, Donelle Buegge; and deputy president, Steve Miolin, a former vice principal of the school. Of course, we met with Dr Paul Griffiths who along with Dr Sarah Youngson and Dr Robyn McIntyre is providing a new general practitioner onsite service within the school grounds. All three doctors are from Bridgetown Medical. This is the first time a GP onsite service has been trialled at a school. Providing an onsite health service gives students access to a GP during school hours. An onsite GP will increase the students' accessibility to health care and meet their needs without impacting on time in the classroom. This is a great outcome for not only the students, but also our local south west families.

We were shown around the school grounds and chatted with the school captains, Tessa Edwards and Anne Deas, who spoke highly of the GP onsite service. As a single working parent when my kids were at school, I know how hard it was to sometimes get an appointment for my kids to see their GP, let alone an appointment that fitted in with work, school and sporting commitments et cetera. Having a GP on the school grounds means young people can receive health care at a time convenient to them. Although it had only been a week or two since the onsite service had started, we heard it had been getting a great response.

While in Manjimup, the Minister for Education changed his hat to become the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests. He and I were joined by the Deputy Premier, Hon Rita Saffioti, to meet members of the Macedonian Community of Manjimup to let them know that they had secured a \$250 000 grant through the Office of Multicultural Interests community capital works fund to assist with upgrades to the Macedonian community hall. These will include an outdoor entertainment area ahead of its sixtieth anniversary celebrations next month,

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which I am very much looking forward to attending to help celebrate in the local community. President Vic Grotzitis was pretty pleased to receive a certificate announcing the \$250 000 grant and said that he hopes with this new funding they can continue to maintain their culture as the next generation of Macedonians raise their families in Manjimup. The club's executive team comprises Steve Stoiche, vice president; Maria Vellios, secretary; and Matthew Peos, treasurer. I thank them for their service to the community, as well as previous president Kathy Yovkoff and previous committee member Chris Yovkoff who first invited me to the club to see the facilities and participate in a multicultural celebration last year. It goes without saying, the food was absolutely delicious. It was great to hear how the investment in the hall will help to bring people together and shine a light on celebrating their heritage. The "Back to Manjimup" event is coming up over the March long weekend and, as I said, I will be there at the celebrations to meet even more families and hear about their heritage that has been a huge part of making Manjimup the state's food bowl that it is today.

In 2022, we made a commitment to bring Main Roads Western Australia's maintenance back in house. Last week, the Deputy Premier; Minister for Transport and I visited the new Main Roads depot and offices in Manjimup in the old Department of Education building on Rose Street that has been repurposed. The new offices will accommodate around 20 employees and provide long-term regional employment opportunities for the south west, particularly for those people living in my electorate in Manjimup and its surrounds. It was great to chat to the staff there who now have local permanent jobs. Only a Labor government will ensure that regional roads are a priority and bring regional jobs back in house to Main Roads. We are creating 20 new jobs in Manjimup. Chatting to the newly employed Main Roads area manager, Catherine Mills, and its five new staff including Ron Aitken and Brad Grinter, it was awesome to hear how they transitioned smoothly into local permanent jobs.

Both the south west and great southern are transitioning to an in-house road maintenance model, with 39 road maintenance staff joining the Main Roads team in the great southern. Across the state, this initiative of returning road maintenance jobs in-house will create 660 permanent jobs within Main Roads, with 490 of these in regional WA. The Cook Labor government is doing what is right for regional WA and helping create local, sustainable jobs. The Main Roads team is set to grow, and it will be busy. Warren–Blackwood is vast. It is 24 000 square kilometres and about four-hours wide. I spend a lot of my time on the road. I have travelled close to 160 000 kilometres since being elected in 2021.

Dr A.D. Buti: She travelled non-stop—amazing!

Ms E.J. KELSBIE: I have travelled non-stop, and in my travels I have seen all sorts of driver behaviour—good, bad and otherwise. I will actually get myself a dash cam. Road safety is raised with me, and often. Whether it is highlighting roads that need grading, widening, audible edges, overtaking lanes, hard shoulders, lowering speed limits or getting better lines of sight, from Narrikup to Nornalup, Manjimup to Margaret River and now also Cowaramup, it is an issue that is raised with me often.

We all have our part to play in road safety, but I have been working hard to do what is right for regional WA and fighting so that we get our fair share of investment to help keep our roads safe. The Cook Labor government is investing big in local roads, with a new agreement signed in September last year that will see a record \$1.38 billion invested in local road projects across the state. More than \$1 billion will go towards road safety in regional WA. In 2023–24, almost \$44 million of that investment will go towards local roads in the south west and the great southern. This builds on the state government's regional road safety program, which will see 8 500 kilometres of regional roads upgraded with audible edge lines and shoulder sealing by mid-2024. This is in stark contrast to the previous Liberal–National government that did not prioritise or deliver on investment into regional roads when in power, neglecting to allocate funding to improve and maintain our regional road network.

I am proud to be part of our safer roads program, in which we have committed \$300 000 towards the construction of passing lanes on South Western Highway at Yornup north between Bridgetown and Manjimup. It is one space that gets raised with me constantly. I want to thank Ben from the Blackwood Valley School Bus Service, amongst others, for his strong advocacy and reminding me often that this stretch of road needs road safety attention. I am told, and often, that motorists using the South Western Highway are constantly faced with drivers who increase in speed to dangerously overtake on the other side of the road or are tailgated by impatient drivers. I have experienced that firsthand. After recently raising this issue with the Minister for Transport, I am pleased we have committed to making that stretch of road safer. It does not stop there. Around \$21 million is being invested to deliver four new projects, including 48 kilometres of sealed shoulders and audible edge lines on Muir Highway, another road that I know well and travel often. We are also investing \$1.5 million towards widening seals along the South Western Highway from Vasse Highway to Quininup, \$130 200 towards upgrades on the Balingup–Nannup Road, and \$25 000 towards widening and improving the road geometry of Muirs Road in Manjimup east. I am also proud to have advocated for the Narrikup–Albany Highway roads safety working group. It includes representatives from

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the Narrikup community and the Shire of Plantagenet, and has secured \$200 000 towards widening and realigning side roads along Albany Highway in Narrikup.

In my travels doorknocking and doing calls in Margaret River, the issue of road safety has also been raised, particularly the speed limits along Bussell Highway near Rapids Landing and Brookfield. Representatives from Rapids Landing Primary School have raised this issue with me on numerous occasions, as have many members of the local community. Community feedback pushed for mitigation to help address the huge amount of congestion during school drop-off and pick-up times. They also had general road safety concerns for motorists. Traffic management was a particular concern for the community.

I am pleased to say that after listening to the community, raising the issues with the Minister for Transport and having multiple meetings with Main Roads Western Australia and the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River, I have been able to secure a speed limit reduction from 80 kilometres to 70 kilometres. The change was made just before students went back to school and it has been well received. As ever, there is more to do. While we await the development and second egress road and Rapids Road to John Archibald Drive—which I am seeking updates on—this initiative will assist the enabling of safer drop-off and pick-up, as well as traffic management.

As I have said, as a government we are strong. We have a focus on sustainable and secure jobs for the future. The Cook Labor government made the historic decision to end the commercial scale logging of our south west native forests. On 1 January this year, commercial logging in native forests came to an end. It was not a sustainable industry. However, I hear that folks from the opposition—the Nationals in particular—are keen to bring back whaling. Think about that: it is 2024. Who thinks that is a good idea? Certainly not anyone I have spoken to. If the Nats think bringing back the whaling industry is fair-go, who knows what they want to do with our native forests? I say to keep their grubby mitts off the south west native forests and keep their grimy paws of the whales too.

Although the bulk of people in my electorate have celebrated the decision to end native forest logging in the south west, it has been really tough for others in the community. I totally understand and respect that. That is why I advocated for, and secured, an extra \$30 million for the native forest just transition plan, making the total package \$80 million. There is just over \$19 million allocated for worker transition programs and just over \$27 million for business transition programs. The extra secured \$30 million is for industry and community development programs. We are also investing a record \$350 million to expand Western Australian softwood plantations to support jobs in our state and create a sustainable future timber supply.

Investment into regional WA, jobs, businesses and community organisations is an investment into people's futures. The small business diversification program provides grants of up to \$4 000 to support businesses that were dependent on the commercial native forestry industry to diversify and invest in job creation. Successful businesses in round 1 included Ecofriendly Solutions, Herdigan Transport, Kristoffersson Furniture, South Coast Nature Play and the Nannup Furniture Gallery.

The community small grants fund grants are valued up to \$100 000 and are available to support sustainable projects that aim to stimulate the local economy, support tourism and events and build liveable communities in native forestry regions. I will list a few that were successful. Aerial Adventure Pemberton Pty Ltd has created its first zip lines and swing ropes. It received \$100 000 to assist with the opening of that business. I went there recently with the Minister for Forestry, Hon Jackie Jarvis, who hopped on the zip line and whizzed across the forest and had a great time. I will not be doing that, I can tell members. I bowed out.

Geegeelup Village in Bridgetown also received just under \$80 000 to expand residential aged care housing in Bridgetown. The Manjimup Seventh-day Adventist Church received just under \$70 000 to enable the church to get a bus or van for transportation support for their existing FoodBank of Western Australia pantry service. The Nannup Medical Centre received \$100 000 to upgrade and expand its existing medical centre, which will hopefully also enable visiting allied health professionals and consultants to come to the town. Nannup River Cottages also received \$100 000 for the Jalbarragup shearing shed event space and caravan park; Mary was particularly excited to be advised on the phone by me that she was successful in getting her grant.

Pemberton, as we know, is a cycling mecca, and the Pemberton Cycling Association received \$100 000 to establish a mountain bike trail network in the Pemberton arboretum. It is a beautiful spot. Southern Roasting, one of my favourite coffee spots in Manjimup, got \$100 000 to expand its coffee roasting production. South West Snails—yes, we have a business for snails that people eat—received just under \$100 000. The money will go to expanding the existing edible snail-growing business in Manjimup. That is probably another thing I am not sure I will try, but I may give it a go. I have met the people behind these organisations and businesses. They are excited about the future of the region and the investment opportunities being made available by our government.

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We recently also announced the new industry development grants, which are matched funding grants of up to \$2 million that are made available to support new and expanded industries in the native forest regions to help futureproof regional economies.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms E.J. KELSBIE: I had the absolute pleasure recently of announcing the successful recipients with my good mate Hon Jackie Jarvis, Minister for Forestry, at Bendotti Exporters, also known as WA Chip. Who does not love chips, especially WA chips? I am pretty sure that most members will have scoffed some Manjimup chips in the parliamentary dining room. The chips are from these guys.

Mrs L.A. Munday: A lot!

Ms E.J. KELSBIE: Yes, a lot. Ditto—I have had quite a few myself. The matched funding grant of just over \$1.7 million will go to upgrades to the company's potato processing line. The upgrades will increase water and potato storage for increased production capacity and will reduce operational costs and energy consumption. The grant will also provide more secure, local jobs in Manjimup.

Mikey Cernotta from the Pemberton Honey Co received just over \$500 000. He is a producer and packer of premium uni-floral Western Australian honey, and he will be developing a new processing, packing, tourism and retail space at his Whispering Woods property.

I had great joy in ringing the guys from Floor Co in Northcliffe. They received just over \$600 000 and will launch an industrial resin flooring industry in the native forest region. When I spoke to them, they were pretty excited and a little bit nervous because now they have to crack on and get on with it, so that is amazing.

Newton Orchards received just under \$370 000 and is looking at funding the production of a new cherry variety in an effort to increase production to meet domestic and international demand.

Matched funding of \$2 million went to Peninsula Downs in Warner Glen, in the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River, to establish a state-of-the-art dairy farm with self-sustaining grain and fodder production.

I go back to spuds. Just over \$1 million was given to Coldahold Cold Storage for the construction of additional cool storage capacity. Jackie and I went into it, and it was absolutely fabulous on a hot day. The funding is for advanced cooling and drying systems, warehousing and grading for seed potatoes in Manjimup.

The historic decision to end commercial-scale logging in the south west native forests means millions of hectares of forest will be protected for future generations. We are preserving approximately 400 000 additional hectares of karri, jarrah and wandoo forest. This is an incredible legacy to leave, for not only our kids but also our kids' kids. The impact of climate change on our natural environment cannot be ignored. We are acting to preserve the precious biodiversity of our south west forests so they can be enjoyed for generations.

I would like to talk about some further investment in the regions, something the Cook Labor government takes seriously. We put our money where our mouth is, and I am pretty proud to say that it is something we smash out of the park. We understand that investing in locally driven regional projects helps to create long-term economic growth and job sustainability in our regions. I was pleased to be part of the recent announcement of the regional economic development grants in both the south west and great southern, alongside the Minister for Regional Development, Hon Don Punch. We had the pleasure of flying together, and I am not a great flyer. We were in the great southern with my good friend and colleague Rebecca Stephens, member for Albany. The great southern RED grants, as we call them, were announced at an awesome event hosted at The Dam on Raintree Farm in my hometown of Denmark. The Cannabis Botanical Distillery—which produces low carbon, homegrown hemp spirits—received a \$70 000 RED grant. Owners Chelsea and Matt will use the funding to increase the size of the Cannabis Botanical Distillery's manufacturing floor space from 96 square metres to 546 square metres and manufacturing capacity from 3 500 to 35 000 litres per annum. I congratulate them on the recent arrival of baby Daisy Eve and I send much love.

The Scriven Property Trust's Ocean Beach Health Group allied health centre—or the Scrivenators as the couple are fondly known locally in Denmark—were recipients of \$150 000 for the development of a five-room, multidisciplinary allied health centre in Denmark to provide a shared care model of health care, create sustainable jobs and expand the range of allied health options available locally in my hometown. I drove past the other day and work has already started on the site and I look forward to seeing this project come to fruition.

The Boyup Brook Hotel received just under \$65 000 for an upgrade to its hotel accommodation and kitchen facilities. I met the new owner—it is a great story! He went to Boyup Brook to buy a guitar, and he left having purchased the local pub—true story! It is the Boyup Brook Country Music Festival this weekend and I will be happily presenting the president, Jason Forsyth, with a Lotterywest certificate of \$25 000 to go towards free and accessible

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arts and community activities to build participation and cohesion in Boyup Brook. The Boyup Brook Country Music Festival is the only one of its kind in WA. I acknowledge the volunteers who bring this amazing event together. It is the thirty-seventh festival. They started in 1986 with around 500 participants; they now have about 12 000 visitors to the small town over the three days.

Warren–Blackwood has a rich history that needs to be preserved for future generations to explore. Through the government’s \$1.2 million 2023 heritage grant program, four historic Warren–Blackwood locations received funding to help them preserve their heritage. This included the Freemasons Hotel in Bridgetown, also known as the Freeo, which received \$100 000 to fix its verandah and replace the main roof. It is a great spot and a really good location if you go to the Blues at Bridgetown festival. The Donnelly River Mill and Townsite Precinct received more than \$11 000 for a digital interpretation station. The Boyup Brook Flax Mill received more than \$3 000 for the development and installation of interpretive signage.

I love the ocean. I love swimming in it; I like watching it and I like volunteering to keep people safe at it and in it. I am an active volunteer lifeguard at the Denmark Surf Life Saving Club. I was a previous president of the club for four years and I am aware of the impact climate change and coastal erosion is having on our beachscape. The Denmark community watched as the dunes, foreshore and footpath at Ocean Beach were swallowed up by severe erosion and the consequences of inundation from storm events over recent years.

The Cook Labor government is helping to fund grassroots WA projects to fight coastal erosion, with 37 communities along the WA coastline receiving almost \$3.6 million in coastal erosion grants through the CoastWA program. This includes my own beloved Ocean Beach in Denmark, which has been allocated more than \$1 million to replace the beach’s retaining wall. As our local community knows, this is an important project that will ensure the integrity and viability of one of Denmark’s most precious assets. The funding will address coastal erosion and the consequences of inundation from storm events by supporting local coastal managers to deliver priority implementation actions. Unfortunately, the original 1958 clubhouse is due to be demolished and the beach access closed while the seawall is built and parts of the surf club are redeveloped. However, on the other side of the development will be a futureproofed retaining wall and an accessible beach that the community and visitors alike will be able to celebrate.

Warren–Blackwood is also host to some of the most iconic trails in not only Australia, but also the world. Through the community trail planning grants program some organisations in my electorate received much-needed funding to help maintain these precious trails to ensure that Western Australians and tourists alike can continue to enjoy my magnificent electorate. The Wadandi Track project in the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River received \$25 000 and the Turner Road Trails Network Concept in the Shire of Denmark, which I believe is for mountain biking, got \$25 000. The Shire of Manjimup’s Arboretum Trail Development project in Pemberton, which I spoke about earlier, received the same amount. The Recreational Trailbike Riders Association of Western Australia received \$20 000 for the Manjimup–Perth ride trail. I look forward to seeing these projects come to fruition. I may have a go on some of those trails; I would probably be okay with those.

There is much to talk about, so I will press on. It is an absolute honour to serve as the member for Warren–Blackwood and give a voice to what matters in our diverse region and to work alongside the many community groups, organisations, businesses and volunteers that make our community the special place that it is.

Before I close, I want to pay my respects to a much-loved Denmark identity, character and beloved friend of the arts, Andre Steyl, who passed away earlier this month. Denmark Arts said —

It’s the end of an era, we’ve lost one of the founders of Denmark Arts and a true powerhouse and visionary for the creative arts.

Andre was an integral part of the creation of Denmark Arts Markets and the Brave New Work’s festival, which is now in its thirtieth year, and a range of other ambitious cultural and arts projects, including Movies with Meaning. Andre received an honorary life member award from Denmark Arts in 2022. I wish to acknowledge the amazing legacy that Andre leaves and offer my condolences to not only his family and friends, but also the arts community, which I know will dearly miss him.

I commend the Premier’s Statement to the house.

MS L. DALTON (Geraldton) [6.37 pm]: I rise today to make a contribution to the Premier’s Statement. Firstly, welcome back to my parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the chamber—not that there is anyone there at the moment! Welcome back anyway. I hope that their summer break was filled with family time and relaxing. However, I am going to have to check whether anyone broke any records over the summer. In Geraldton, we are known for and keen on our diversification. Some members may have read that we went from being the windiest city to the world’s hottest. Geraldton is a renewable energy powerhouse by all accounts, with plenty of sun and wind.

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I am feeling good about 2024. I kicked off the year with a detox and am feeling very excited for the year ahead. I am feeling good about the recent announcements in housing, health and education for my electorate. I am feeling good about how many new and refreshed international connections are available through Perth into our state. I am positive about the major capital infrastructure and investments coming into the midwest, and I am excited to be part of a government that has made the cost of living its number one priority.

This government is taking definitive steps to reduce costs when it can. For example, the free student travel program for families in my electorate has achieved incredible savings per week and is a genuine effort to reduce the barriers of getting children to school. During my time as an MP, I have met with a number of principals who have told me that transport is one of the barriers for getting children to school. For many families, the cost of the bus fare is out of reach. They cannot afford it when they have competing priorities such as food and rent. I spoke recently to a single mother of three who had been priced out of her school zone but who can now afford to have all three children catch the bus to and from school, making her life much easier. The Cook Labor government has also paid \$1 400 in electricity credits to every household in WA. As we know, it has kept increases to water and power fees and charges well below inflation, and introduced the WA Rent Relief program, giving tenants at risk of eviction up to \$5 000 in direct rental support, which, speaking to some people from the agencies recently, is an absolutely very welcome initiative. There is a lot of pressure on people at the moment to pay their rent, so this is very well received.

We reintroduced the seniors' safety and security rebate, a program cut by the Liberals, and capped regional airfares, making airfares more affordable for regional WA. I do not fly very often, but when I do, I try to go with the brilliant Nexus Airlines, which provides an alternative service that opens up our state, not just Geraldton–Perth, but from Geraldton to the northern regions as well, through the interregional transport network. Our state government committed \$4 million to support this happening.

We also addressed skill shortages by reducing student debt. We partnered with the Albanese federal government to offer fee-free TAFE courses for 22 000 places. My goodness, what a game-changer this has been for young people and people in my electorate looking to reskill! Fee-free places target areas of skilled shortages, such as early childhood education and care, health care, aged and disability care, technology and digital skills. The continuation of this successful initiative means Western Australians have access to training areas of demand, and employers have access to a skilled workforce also in areas of demand—which is regional WA!

Geraldton and the midwest had an incredible population growth over 2023. Yes, this has put a significant amount of pressure on accommodation, and Geraldton's vacancy rate is yet to tip over one per cent this year. However, not all efforts to reduce the pressure can come from new builds. As Minister Carey has explained before, our government is pulling all levers to reduce the risk of homelessness. The *All paths lead to a home: Western Australia's 10-year strategy on homelessness 2020–2030* has enabled the creation of the Housing First program and the institution of the best global practice through adopting the by-name list, facilitated by the Zero Project. In case members missed it, Geraldton recorded a remarkable milestone achievement in December 2023. Members of the housing improvement team announced that Geraldton has become the second community in Western Australia to achieve a shift reduction. This is defined as a measurable, meaningful reduction of 20 per cent in rough sleeping homelessness for six consecutive months. Congratulations to everyone who was involved in reaching this milestone.

I recently hosted the Premier and Minister Carey in Geraldton for the official opening of AMC Park in Spalding, and recognition of the completion of stage 2 of the Spalding regional renewal project. This \$9.3 million project funded by the state government—led in partnership by the Department of Communities and City of Greater Geraldton—has created new road connections and improved accessibility and connectivity into the suburb. The Spalding regional renewal project also includes the major refurbishment of 26 social homes to extend their useful life, with works underway on a further 14 units, including three that are nearing practical completion. The third and final stage of the project will see refurbishment works completed to 22 social homes—and that is just in one suburb! We have increased social housing stock all across Geraldton with spot purchasing, refurbishments and the installation of modular housing. AMC Park, which adjoins the Mitchell Street Centre, I have to tell members looks absolutely incredible! This project was funded by Lotterywest to the tune of \$1.4 million and has given that community a magnificent recreational space to come together with access to the centre.

I would like to congratulate the City of Greater Geraldton staff who progressed the idea and I want to again recognise and give credit for the work done by the WA Centre for Rural Health for many years: Lenny Papertalk, Dr Charmaine Papertalk Green, Monica Moran and Sandra Thompson and all the WACRH staff who made significant contributions to the community consultation process that helped guide the precinct plan.

The Geraldton community is very proud of these new shared spaces. I have had a mobile office there and spoken with residents. They love the flying fox and new shady gardens. It is an absolutely beautiful space with thoughtful, natural play areas. I am proud to have recently stood beside Roger Cook and the Minister for Housing John Carey, as well as the City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Jerry Clune to cut the ribbon. Jerry, our new mayor, is actually

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quite a funny bloke. As he was addressing the crowd at the park opening, he noted to the Premier, “Roger, when you and I last met, we were both deputies in our positions. Long may the current status reign!” Hear, hear! I am with you, Jerry. I believe with this arrangement that our city and our state will progress at a sustainable rate. I look forward to working with the city on new projects that will grow our share of the Western Australian economy and so we can welcome more people to Geraldton who love our coastal lifestyle and abundance of natural and cultural assets.

While the Premier and Minister Carey were in Geraldton, we also attended the launch of the Aboriginal short-stay accommodation out at Bundiyarra. Groundworks by Geraldton construction company GBSC Yurra have already begun. This \$23.4 million project will create employment for 10 Indigenous construction staff. The finished result will be an accessible and culturally appropriate 44-unit accommodation facility designed to house up to 100 people with 16 single or couple rooms, 14 family rooms, and 14 universally accessible rooms. The short-stay accommodation facility will address the needs for additional accommodation in Geraldton by providing pay-per-stay accommodation for Aboriginal people who visit Geraldton to access services or participate in businesses, educational, cultural or family activities. The contractors have already demonstrated a genuine commitment to employing Indigenous construction staff by holding a workshop recently for potential employees and employment agencies to explain the process, the skills needed and the training provided. I attended the workshop and was really impressed with the great amount of interest shown by all stakeholders.

Geraldton, as well as being the potential renewable energy hub of Australia, is also well-known for its recreational and sporting events. We recently hosted the Country Surf Lifesaving championships, the Athletics Country championships and the Junior Kiteboarding championships. Our climate, facilities, wonderful sporting associations and volunteers, as well as our love of the outdoors makes Geraldton an attractive destination to hold such events. I am proud that our government has committed to the Geraldton cycling network expansion to encourage healthy lifestyles but also supports other wonderful events that bring communities together, like the Fields of Gold Backroads gravel cycling event held in the beautiful Chapman Valley region, which attracts visitors from all over the state. As an avid beachgoer, I am proud of projects that protect our coastline, such as coastal care projects along Sunset Beach, as well as the surveying the west coast zone abalone fisheries, which I advocated for to the minister last year. The Cook Labor government’s investment into regional Western Australia is outstanding. Minister for Regional Development Don Punch visited Geraldton a few weeks ago to unveil the \$3.2 million fisheries research boat. It was built by local boatbuilders Dongara Marine. This is another example of the Cook Labor government’s commitment to and belief in regional manufacturing capabilities, investing in projects that support regional manufacturing help to generate local employment, in this case in the boatbuilding and maintenance industry in the midwest.

Keeping with the coastal theme, I was pleased to join Premier Roger Cook and Minister for Ports David Michael to officially open the new Eastern Breakwater Tourism Jetty in Geraldton recently. Dedicated to tourism, the jetty will assist in unlocking access to the pristine Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park by providing a facility specifically designed for easy boarding and disembarking of passengers from commercial vessels. The Eastern Breakwater Tourism Jetty construction project was successfully delivered by the Mid West Ports Authority. The jetty is designed to accommodate larger commercial vessels of over 25 metres, providing passengers with an enhanced experience, improved access to amenities and closer links to the CBD retail precinct. This is an important piece of infrastructure that will help boost Geraldton’s growing reputation as a tourist drawcard. It is another example of the Cook government’s commitment to the Geraldton community and will broaden the town’s economic base. These pieces of infrastructure are critical to complement the \$10 million investment that our government has made into the Houtman Abrolhos to make it more accessible for tourism.

One of the biggest projects that is closest to my heart and is often raised in this chamber is the expansion and redevelopment of the Geraldton Health Campus. For some context and history, the Geraldton regional hospital as it now stands was built under the Gallop Labor government and opened by the then Premier, Alan Carpenter, in May 2006. It was completely rebuilt as an expanded centre, designed to meet the needs of patients across the midwest region and give them the opportunity to receive treatment closer to home. At the time of its construction, Geraldton was also serviced by the St John of God private hospital. Changes to the services operating at the private hospital as well as changes in the population of greater Geraldton meant that expansion of the hospital was required, but with a change in government, these expansions were never realised. There has been a long history of promises by the Liberal–National government that have never been met. In fact, in a letter to the editor on 4 March 2013, the former member for Geraldton said that the hospital was his top priority, yet nothing ever occurred in the four years following his making that statement. In fact, there was never anything in the budget for the Geraldton Health Campus until we came back into government in 2017.

I am very proud that this Cook Labor government is committed to the redevelopment of the hospital. The first stage of the project has been completed. It included the addition of 400 car bays, a new ambulance entry and a reconfiguration of the main entrance to the hospital. Despite the setbacks within the tender process and the challenges presented

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by the COVID-19 pandemic and cyclone Seroja, we have now been able to announce Multiplex as the successful contractor to undertake the main works of the Geraldton Health Campus redevelopment. It was fabulous to have the Minister for Health in Geraldton last year to make that announcement, tour the hospital and meet the very hardworking staff. Construction of the \$122.7 million redevelopment will include an expanded emergency department, a new intensive care unit co-located with an improved high-dependency unit and an integrated mental health service. Works will commence early this year. This project has been my number one priority since being elected in 2021, so I am thrilled that a tender has been awarded and we are progressing to the next stage of the redevelopment. The redevelopment of the Geraldton Health Campus will provide our community and the broader region with modern facilities and expanded services. I am proud that we are delivering this important project for Geraldton and the midwest and I thank the Minister for Health and the Premier for their commitment to continuing the legacy of past Labor governments—that is, investing in hospitals in Geraldton.

This redevelopment will also provide very important opportunities for clinicians and all health professionals to broaden their skills. I have had a number of opportunities to meet with the staff of the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia and our final year students who are choosing the regions for their final year of study. The Rural Clinical School of WA is doing great work to encourage junior doctors to move regionally, and our hospital redevelopment will enable more junior doctors to do their practical training in Geraldton. The team do a fabulous job in encouraging young students to move to Gero. I was thrilled to meet a young doctor called Fraser and many like him who choose to settle down in the regions, build a family and practice in regional centres.

I regularly visit schools as part of my role as a local member, and I have received great feedback from the community on our continual investment into education—investments such as two science, technology, engineering and mathematics classrooms to be built at both public high schools; virtual power plants at Waggrakine, Champion Bay and Geraldton Senior High School; and, of course, the \$9 million commitment for a special education facility at Waggrakine. Something I am proud to have introduced to our local schools is the Edith Dircksey Cowan achievement award, which has been very warmly welcomed.

Edith Dircksey Cowan was born in Geraldton in 1861 and was elected as the member for West Perth to become the nation's first female member of Parliament. Edith tirelessly championed improved social justice for women and children, so I am very proud to have been able to raise the profile of this locally born trailblazer for the young up-and-coming leaders of our community.

There are so many wonderful things I would like to have the time to say in my contribution on the Premier's Statement, but I will close with this. Something I can acknowledge when meeting various groups, not-for-profits, businesses and industry is that there is a buoyancy and positive vibe in Geraldton. We are aware that our future is bright and that the wellbeing of our community and economic communities are important to this government. Our volunteers are hardworking and care for our community. Our youth take a strong stance on equality and conservation of the environment. Our families speak up to have safe spaces and amenities built and our seniors are involved in lobbying government. Geraldton, the frontier town that I advocate so strongly for and often, is also advocating for itself. It is a town for go-getters and doers, and it is as excited as I am for its present and its future. I commend the Premier's Statement to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Education)**.

House adjourned at 6.56 pm
