

**AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 11 August.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk):** We might have a bit of a hiatus here. Member for Roe, are you speaking?

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** Yes.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** The question is the bill be read a second time. Member for Roe?

The question is the bill be read a second time. All those in favour say aye, against, say no. I believe the ayes have it.

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** Are you talking about the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Yes; we have been for five minutes, member.

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** I thought we were still on the other one. Apologies, Madam Acting Speaker.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Roe.

**MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [10.47 am]:** Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. I apologise.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** We almost got away with it!

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I was very focused on what I was going to say.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Some might say you were not focused at all, but fire away.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** If I can, I would like to say that I am looking forward to speaking on the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I sensed you were a bit reluctant there for a minute.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** No. I am very much looking forward to it, minister, and to hearing the minister regale us later on with his knowledge of the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill and the stories he would like to tell us about his farming background in Narrogin and many other places no doubt; yes, indeed.

Firstly, I would like to point out that we are once again looking at a scenario in which a bill was passed in this place in the previous Parliament. It was discussed many times but I am pleased to see it has now come through the Legislative Council.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member, can I just clarify: are you the lead speaker on the bill?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Yes, I am the lead speaker. On behalf of the opposition, we will support it, but along the way I will point out some things that took place in the other place that I am a little bit disappointed with. The minister has not quite taken on board some of the industry consultation. A fair few concerns have been raised in the other place by the likes of Hon Colin de Grussa and Hon Steve Martin. They pointed out some of the issues that they were concerned with about levies and a variation around the broadacre industry. In the minister's second reading speech, he went through a few issues that relate to the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021 and some of the scenarios that are playing out with the Agricultural Produce Commission.

The first issue is about the compliance and enforcement provisions. As the minister pointed out, the bill contains powers to direct a person to provide information or records, powers to investigate and a penalty for providing false and misleading information. This is to ensure that producers will comply with the act and that all funds collected will be used as intended to support the industry. I do not think that anyone would be opposed to that.

The second point that the minister raised was about key amendments that will allow non-producers to be appointed to committees; this is concerning. On the good side, it will allow people to be brought into the committee for their outside expertise. That is always important when we are dealing with governance. Producer committees may not always contain that expertise and it is important to co-opt outside people onto committees. However, the minister said that this will be subject to producers also being in the majority. That is an important element. The other point he raised is that voting rights on committees will be restricted to producer members only. That is a very important element because, as we know, the producer members are the people with on-ground experience. Hon Colin de Grussa, member for Agricultural Region, has consulted comprehensively with the citrus, egg, strawberry, pomegranate, potato, veggie, wine and avocado industries. He has also spoken to the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association, WAFarmers and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. We know that the Minister for Agriculture and Food in the other place enjoys talking about the blue-on-green wars and she likes to pit the Western Australian Farmers Federation against the PGA.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** This is an interesting history.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 12 August 2021]

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Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Shane Love; Ms Rebecca Stephens; Ms Lara Dalton; Ms E.J. Kelsbie; Ms Jessica Shaw;  
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**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I have noticed that from her responses in the other place. I do not know, minister, whether they are diversionary tactics, but this is an important bill. Its genesis was in 1988, I believe, with the Horticultural Produce Commission Act; it has been around for a long time. Last night when I was doing some preparation for today, it was interesting to read the exchanges made back in May 2000 between Hon Kim Chance and Hon Murray Criddle, who was, of course, a broadacre grain grower from the Geraldton region and very knowledgeable on many forms of agriculture. As we know, a review of the legislation was conducted in 2006 and the issue has taken quite a long time to come back into the mix. I am pleased to see that it has come through the ranks.

The third point that the minister raised in his second reading speech was about providing a mechanism for existing committees to be allocated responsibility for additional produce. My understanding is that we have around 11 of these committees at the moment. That is probably not a bad element. It may be a little over the top to have to keep coming up with new committees all the time. Potentially, we could add another produce element to a current committee.

The fourth element that the minister mentioned was the power of the commission to use weighted voting at a poll for the establishment of a committee. I always worry about weighted voting because it is determined by the proportion of produce a person might produce. A couple of years ago in Esperance, I was at a Co-operative Bulk Handling Group meeting. One of the producers there said to Simon Stead, the current chair of the board of CBH, “I think that to be on the board of the CBH, you should produce a minimum of 20 000 tonnes of grain.” I still remember Simon Stead saying, “If Richard Goyder produces 300 tonnes of oats at his farm in Toodyay, he would still be a suitable board member of CBH.” That comment has always stuck in my mind. I do not think that basing the number of votes a person has on the weight of what they might produce is necessarily a good element. The other issue I have is with leaving it to the commission to make the determination on when such an approach is in the best interests of the relevant agricultural industry. This leaves things a little bit up in the air around weighted voting and the produce amounts. What gives the commission the right to make that determination? That is one element that concerns me and I would like to address that as we move along.

One of the most contentious elements of this bill is the amendment proposed in the 2019 version of this bill to remove the exclusion of broadacre cropping and grazing industries. The second reading speech states —

This would have allowed those industries to be prescribed as agricultural industries under the act and to be able, should they have chosen, to take advantage of the opportunities it offers and create a producers’ committee to service its industry.

It then states that no consensus was reached amongst pastoralists on whether their industry wanted access to the act. It states —

As such, the bill retains the act’s exclusion, with an amendment to clarify that this excludes an industry that concerns livestock enterprises generally conducted on pastoral land.

I suppose we could call it the opt-out provision. The real concern expressed in the other chamber about putting an opt-out provision in regulation was to do with transparency. The minister will know that Hon Colin de Grussa moved an amendment in the other chamber in which he attempted to put that into the legislation. Unfortunately, his amendment was not passed. The Minister for Agriculture and Food said, “That’s no problem. We’ll put it into regulation.” The Western Australian Farmers Federation supports the scenario in which there is capacity for regulations to provide for circumstances in which a charge for services provided by a committee can be waived, refunded or reduced—that is, an opt-out clause. The Western Australian Farmers Federation is supportive of an opt-out provision, but it is not supportive of it not being in the legislation. It is concerned about any regulation, or the proposed regulations, that will be drawn up. It is concerned about transparency. That is probably one of the most disappointing elements of this matter to me. The minister said that she will have regulations drawn up and that people will be able to see them in time and so forth, but we know that it is now very difficult for any regulations to be disallowed. My concern is that this opt-out provision for the agricultural industry is not in the legislation. I certainly applaud the efforts of Hon Colin de Grussa to try to bring in that amendment and to make that happen, but, unfortunately, he was unsuccessful. Of course, as the minister knows, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association is not supportive of any attempt to bring either pastoralists or the currently excluded industries, such as wheat, barley, canola and others, under the provisions of the act. That is probably one of big items for me in this legislation.

I want to go through some matters that Hon Steve Martin brought up during his contribution. I think he made some very good points. As we know, Hon Steve Martin is a farmer from Wickepin. I am a farmer from Katanning. Of course, Hon Darren West likes to point out that he is the only working farmer in Parliament, but I have not heard him say that so much lately since Hon Steve Martin from Wickepin moved into the Legislative Council. Hon Steve Martin is very aware of some of the levies put on many growers. Growers already pay a vast expanse of levies. Hon Steve Martin pointed them out. They include the biosecurity levy, the wild dog levy, the Grains Research and Development Corporation levy and the skeleton weed levy. Every year after delivering our grain to CBH, we get our statement back always listing the skeleton weed levy and the GRDC levy. The list goes on. There is scepticism

among the broadacre element of growers in WA. The minister would know that there are about 4 000 CBH growers. They feel as though they are always picking up the tab for these levies. They are worried that this will create another scenario in which they will be slugged with another levy. That is the element that many growers I have spoken to are worried about. They are worried about a lack of clarity in some ways. It is interesting that that is their response when I speak to people about this.

Hon Steve Martin referred to a long list of levies and it is important to repeat it. He said —

We already pay these levies: wheat, barley, canola and lupins pay 1.02 per cent of the sale value; wool, 1.5 per cent of the sale value; fodder, 50¢ per tonne; cattle export, 0.9523¢ per kilogram; lamb and sheep export, 0.6¢ per head; cattle processing, 60¢ per kilogram; lamb processing, 16¢ per head; sheep processing, 15¢ per head; cattle transaction, \$5 per head; and lamb and sheep transaction, 20¢ per head. For the state ones, cattle, 20¢ on all carcasses; sheep and goats, 15¢ on all carcasses; grains, seeds and hay, 25¢ per tonne on the first sale of grains, 12.5¢ per tonne on the first sale of hay produced in the south west.

The minister can see that there are a number of levies. I know that within Australian Wool Innovation there is always this contention. Every so many years, the CEO of Australian Wool Innovation puts out a poll asking whether growers should pay a two per cent levy on the wool that they send in. A lot of growers, of course, question what that levy would go into. Will it be the old story: Will it go into administration or marketing? Where will it go? We are given three options: one per cent, 1.5 per cent and two per cent. It really creates quite a bit of contention. I know that at the moment the AWI is looking at a two per cent levy. That is what it recommends, of course, and I suspect a lot of growers would vote for a one per cent levy. This element really creates quite a bit of angst among growers out there. We all understand the need to modernise the legislation. From my perspective, the APC does a good job, especially in small industries, such as wine, avocados, bananas and so forth, in which producers' committees explore certain items or elements that growers want to explore within that industry. There are great opportunities for levies to be raised from those particular growers. I can give an example in relation to the broadacre industry. Let us say that the South East Premium Wheat Growers Association wants to do a study on a variety of barley that might be suited to the Esperance region. Growers in the eastern or northern wheatbelt may not be as convinced about that barley's relativity to their area and that causes them angst. Broadacre growers from other parts of the state might not be sure that they want to pay another levy to pay for something that may not suit their particular part of the world. That was well and truly demonstrated through some of the consultation out there.

A lot of important work has gone into the forty-fifth report of the Standing Committee on Legislation about the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2019. The committee was chaired by Hon Dr Sally Talbot and featured Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Colin de Grussa; Hon Dr Steve Thomas, as a substitute member; Hon Nick Goiran; and Hon Simon O'Brien, MLC. I would like to mention a couple of recommendations in the committee report.

Recommendation 1 is that the Minister for Agriculture and Food explain why it is necessary for clause 4(2) of the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill to insert the words "prescribed for the purposes of this definition" into the definition of "agricultural industry" in the Agricultural Produce Commission Act 1988. I think this recommendation has been dealt with in the current bill, but it was important. The minister responded that it allows flexibility and for modern and future industries to be captured without having to amend the act. She pointed out that the likes of truffles would be produce that has not been defined as such, but it then could be included.

Another recommendation is that the minister explain why clause 15(1) of the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill delegates the definition of a "prescribed person" to regulations, rather than prescribing its own definition of that term. The minister's response was that the use of "prescribed" in legislation always means it will be set, but regulations allow for flexibility. As these persons will differ depending on the relevant industry, they are more appropriately dealt with in the regulations. We are not quite as convinced with that explanation regarding the regulations. We believe that some of these elements should have been put into the legislation. Hon Colin de Grussa moved an amendment to have the opt-out clause be transparent and to make sure that it was in the legislation. The Western Australian Farmers Federation is disappointed that that amendment was not successful.

As the minister said in the second reading speech, regulations are tailor-made to suit the different requirements of each producers' committee and industry. For existing committees, this new head power for regulations will allow waiver provisions to be included in the current regulations if producers wish to have this option included. For new committees, the need for a waiver provision will be part of discussions with the Agricultural Produce Commission when producers indicate an interest in establishing a committee.

The final paragraph of the second reading speech stated that the proposed amendments will improve the effectiveness of the APC mechanism for producers currently using it, and make the opportunities it provides available to producers and the broadacre cropping industries. I agree with that to a point, but there are reservations, certainly from the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, about the broadacre element.

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Provisions have been made for the pastoral industry's livestock operations. A question was raised about what will happen if farmers have cattle in the rangelands or pastoral regions and they bring those cattle down to a feedlot in the south west of WA. The minister basically made provision that those cattle will be excluded if they originated from a pastoral area. The PGA was concerned that those farmers would be swept up along with broadacre producers from the general agricultural region when they had originally been given provision that they would be excluded from the situation. Therefore, my understanding is that the minister has made provision that if farmers bring cattle down from the rangelands or wherever, they will be excluded from this legislation, and that was an important element.

Calculations have been done that somewhere between nine and 12 per cent of a producer's income will come out in levies and that is where the real hesitation and nervousness comes through from our broadacre farmers right throughout the grain regions of WA. The crux of the bill is about the inclusion of the broadacre cropping and grazing industries, and it is the most contentious part of the bill, so I will be interested to hear the contributions of others here today.

The APC is very effective when it comes to dealing with smaller industries. We have heard about our different varieties of apple and about our avocado, beekeeping and citrus industries. They fit under the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021 without a problem. Other groups such as the PGA and the WA Grains Group are hesitant. WAFarmers was supportive on the condition of the opt-out clause. Given the loss of that amendment in the other place, I imagine it will now have some hesitancy about the regulations. Other supportive groups include the rangeland goat producers, the black barley industry and the South East Premium Wheat Growers Association. I was impressed with the consultation that Hon Colin de Grussa has had over the last year or two. We have certainly had plenty of briefings in our party room. I know the likes of Bill Ryan from the Agricultural Produce Commission do important work, so from that perspective, we are supportive about the smaller industries being included.

In conclusion, we are concerned, as the PGA certainly was, about the opt-out provision and whether other producers, grain growers especially, will be swept up by this and end up with levies that they were not quite expecting. In a general sense, we are supportive of the bill, but I want to reiterate one key point for the last time: we were hoping, as WAFarmers was, that the opt-out provision could be included as part of the bill. We are not convinced that putting it into regulations is quite the way forward. I will leave my contribution at that.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [11.19 am]: I will make a very brief contribution on the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021, particularly the inclusion of broadacre farmers within the ambit of the Agricultural Produce Commission, and the levy situation. I reiterate what Hon Colin de Grussa and the member for Roe have said about the need for an opt-out clause to be considered and for that to be conditional, I would suspect, on our support for the bill. When this was first mooted as an option to be included for the broadacre agricultural community, the reaction from farmers in my electorate, quite immediately, was to oppose it. In other areas of the state, some grower groups, for instance, have indicated a level of support for the inclusion of broadacre agriculture as a leviable industry under the bill, but that has not been the case in my area. Farmers are already subjected to many other levies. They would also question why this needs to be so broad in its ambit that they cannot simply opt out.

Over the years, the delivery of agricultural research and extension has changed. One way it has changed has been the emergence of self-help groups—grower groups—right across the state, such as West Midlands Group, Liebe Group, Mingenew Irwin Group et cetera in my own area, plus a lot of other smaller groups that are also in the agricultural area. They pride themselves on a degree of independence and relevance. That relevance comes from being relevant enough to have people participate voluntarily. Once that is taken away and the government starts to dole out money that comes from a levy, that drive to be relevant and that positioning at the cutting edge, so that people actually want to be involved, disappears. There is a bit of moral hazard involved. This is one of the reasons that I certainly do not support compulsory levies in this way. It is a little like what we are seeing now with the biosecurity situation; recognised biosecurity groups are proliferating around the state. That system worked well in the pastoral areas where there was a commonality of pest problems and, if you like, a rationale for them to all work together to challenge these issues.

Moving towards the south west, the closer one comes to populated areas, the more difficult it becomes to find common pest problems. It is more difficult to find agreement that everybody wants to contribute towards levies to combat those pests. The way that system operates at the moment shows me that compulsory levies are not necessarily a very good thing. It does not mean that growers should not be contributing to the common good, but it is a problem if they are not able to opt out of a system that is not relevant to their farm business.

That is the situation with the regional biosecurity groups. In my area, I am apparently combating wild pigs. I have never seen a wild pig anywhere near my farm, but I now pay a levy to combat wild pigs. Somewhere very remote from me there might be wild pigs running around! Apparently that is an issue that I am now levied against. I asked the department how many people had actually responded when that rate was first imposed in the area that I am in, the west Midlands. I was told a number—I cannot remember the number offhand—pretty well all of whom opposed

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it, yet the minister decided to impose that rate. Now that system is up and running, I am sure the people who are doing it are well meaning and doing a good job. I am not bagging anyone here; they are doing their thing. It is just not remotely connected to any pest I have on my property, yet I am paying several times this rate. I am not alone in feeling somewhat aggrieved about that situation.

As I say, as one travels further and further towards populated areas, the diversity of pest problems makes it almost impossible to handle it all under one of those management plans that the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act recommends. It is somewhat impractical. It shows that compulsory levies are problematic. In my view, this has effectively become a compulsory levy. Once a group is keen to have a levy, it convinces the minister and it gets done, and other farmers do not have an opt-out clause and are stuck paying yet another fee on top of all the other farm fees. That is the reason that I particularly do not support this bill. I never supported the inclusion of broadacre agriculture in this bill, even when it was discussed in our party room. I know that was not always the view of everybody in that room. Some members felt that it was a good idea. I just do not like the idea and I will not support it.

**MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany)** [11.26 am]: I rise today to speak in support of the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. The purpose of this bill, importantly, is to improve the effectiveness of the APC mechanism for the provision and funding of services by agricultural producers to agricultural producers. This is highly important as they are the voice of their industry. The Agricultural Produce Commission Act already operates effectively to empower producers to grow their industries. It has an established framework that has led to a cooperative relationship between the commission and producers. A review was undertaken to identify several amendments to improve the operation of the act. Currently, 11 producers' committees cover the following industries: avocados; beekeeping; Carnarvon bananas; eggs; pome, citrus and stone fruit; pork; potatoes; strawberries; table grapes; vegetables; and wine.

I would like to highlight some of the beneficial work that producers' committees have already undertaken. In my neighbouring electorate of Warren–Blackwood, research activities resulted in the commercialisation of the Bravo apple, which I first tasted at one of my annual foodie events, Truffle Kerfuffle. This apple variety tells a story just through the crunch and taste of every bite. There were other promotional activities, such as Crunch&Sip in schools. Crunch&Sip is a primary school nutrition program developed to increase the quantity of vegetables, fruits and water being consumed by Western Australian children. It is an easy way for kids to stay healthy and happy. Crunch&Sip is a set time during the school day for students to eat vegetables and fruit, and to drink water, in the classroom. Students bring fruit and veg to school each day for the Crunch&Sip break. This gives students the chance to refuel with fruit and vegetables, which helps to improve physical and mental performance and concentration in the classroom, as well as promoting long-term health.

Government research shows that Australian kids are not eating enough fruit and vegetables. One in 16 eat the recommended daily serves of vegetables and more than seven out of 10 eat the recommended daily serves of fruit. Crunch&Sip helps children to develop regular healthy eating habits. Eating a healthy diet in childhood reduces the risk of becoming overweight or obese. The proportion of children carrying excess weight has more than doubled in the last 30 years, with one in four children now overweight or obese. Being overweight or obese increases our risk of developing chronic diseases later in life, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. As a mum, this is a daily activity in my house to ensure that my kids go to school with a container of fresh fruit and veggies. The current star fruit of the month is pomegranate seeds from Rob and Deb's Pomegranate Hill farm down at Napier. It is certainly not the easiest fruit to tackle in the morning, but knowing the nutritional value, it is worth the mess. I look forward to the summer months when we frequent Nicklup Orchard for a fresh tray of stone fruit.

My electorate of Albany has an abundance of local produce and we love nothing more than foraging for and eating local seasonal produce as much as possible. Albany has some of the best wine and food producers in WA.

Last week, a Western Australian investment and trade commissioner delegation visited the great southern region. On Friday, I welcomed Simon Millman, MLA, parliamentary secretary to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Medical Research; State Development, Jobs and Trade; Science to Albany. We attended a roundtable discussion with the great southern wine exporters. It was an opportunity to hear from many producers from my region. Rob Wignall from the multi-award-winning Wignalls Wines shared his business and family's story with the group. Wignalls Wines was established in 1982 on what was then the outskirts of Albany, only eight kilometres from the Albany CBD. Wignalls Wines is a gold medal winner for pinot and chardonnay. It is continuing to produce outstanding wines and is doing Albany proud.

Next door to Wignalls Winery is Handasyde Strawberries. Owners Neil and Lyn Handasyde grow conventional and organic strawberries and produce a wide range of value-added products. They received regional economic development grant funding for a freeze-dried fruit packing facility to expand their range of value-added products. They continue to value add to their business through their vibrant cafe, which serves all things strawberries, my

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favourite being the Devonshire tea. The cafe has a great playground and facilities for people of all abilities in the Albany community.

Further down the road along the Kalgan River, under new custodians Michelle Gray and Phil Shilcock, is Monty's Leap vineyard and restaurant. They also received regional economic development grant funding to redevelop their cellar door and restaurant. This restaurant is now a popular quality dining attraction for locals and tourists. It is a culinary experience showcasing fresh local produce such as marron, cheese and vegetables.

GP Ayres and Sons has been growing potatoes in Bornholm for three generations and is now the leader in the specialist market of growing seed potatoes. Today, Colin and his son Chris grow more than 100 hectares of seed potatoes a year, with 65 different varieties for the fresh and crisping potato markets. They received a \$200 000 McGowan state government grant towards the purchase of their first Visar optical sorting machine, which uses high-speed cameras to capture photos of the potatoes and direct them to the correct conveyor belt for sorting.

Albany is also fortunate to have two local markets in town at which producers can sell fresh produce direct to customers—the long-running Albany Farmers Market on Saturday mornings and the Boat Shed Markets on Sundays. My kids love a Yard 86 choc milk from the Saturday markets. Members of the Hart family produce the wonderful high-quality Yard 86 milk at their dairy in Redmond. This gently pasteurised milk is bottled on the farm and sold to local cafes and independent retailers, and direct to customers at the Albany Farmers Market, at which they have a very loyal following. Along with their great-tasting full-cream milk, they also produce iced coffee and choc milk and are planning to expand into new milk products in the future. There is something special about food producers getting to know the customers and the customers dealing directly with the producers.

The electorate of Albany has many farmers who are recognising the benefits that regenerative farming has to offer. These benefits include increasing productivity, reducing cost inputs, increasing soil carbon and soil biology, and combating salinity, along with increasing resistance to pests and disease. Mike and Barb Shipley were early adopters of this farming practice for cattle, chicken and egg production in Albany. Their use of a regular short-term intensive grazing system to alleviate parasites and increase pasture quality has resulted in much lower input costs and increased pasture productivity. Although now retired, Mike is still a passionate advocate for regenerative farming.

Col Bowey and Ash Baldwin from Green Range Lamb have developed from scratch a paddock-to-plate production system for their UltraWhite grass-fed lamb. In order to maximise production, they are continuously lambing throughout the year, with their ewes lambing twice every 13 to 14 months. They have been operating for only 18 months and now run 4 000 predominantly UltraWhite breeding ewes on 1 250 hectares.

I was fortunate to meet the Gilmour family from Irongate Wagyu with the Minister for Agriculture and Food. It produces the highest quality Wagyu beef and has also received RED grant funding to create an ecommerce site in multiple languages to help sell its Wagyu beef, which is packed in the great southern, from a base in Singapore.

Regenerative wine producers Irene and Richard Bunn from Bunn Vineyard, and Pam Lincoln and Murray Gomm from Oranje Tractor Wine, are pioneers of the industry. I would like to share the Oranje Tractor story with the house. Across their entire property and lifestyle, they practise many key activities that underpin improving sustainability, such as recycling, composting, revegetation and the use of renewable energy. Murray is very proud of the fact that their typical weekly rubbish output is merely two supermarket bags full—that is from the house and the cellar door kitchen. Everything that can be recycled is; everything else that cannot be is composted or fed to the chickens. On the revegetation front, they have planted many thousands of trees on their 20 acres of land. Some act as a windbreak, others are for future timber and the rest are along the creek line amongst remnant bush. As a result of this planting, they enjoy a lovely display of endemic birds that now have a habitat in which to grow and prosper, and they also know that downstream the creek water quality is benefiting.

Their vineyard is grown organically. This is just one of the ways in which they are trying to minimise their footprint on this planet. Since 2002, they have been able to grow grapes according to organic standards. This means that they do not use superphosphate and other fertilisers that can leach into the waterways. They use only a combination of eco-oil, seaweed extracts, copper and wettable sulphur. Their flock of chickens and guinea fowl are kept happy gobbling pests, so no pesticides are used. In addition, they let the grass grow between the vine rows and underneath the vines, so no herbicides are required. In their goal of crafting unique, terroir-specific wine using practices that care for the earth, most of the work has been done. However, that is not to say that they do not value the excellent winemaking skills of Rob Diletti, who received the Winemaker of the Year Award in 2014 from James Halliday. Rob and his family own another great regional winery, Castle Rock Estate, at which he crafts beautiful wines for themselves and for other small producers such as Oranje Tractor who use his services. His diligent, dedicated and ethical practices help to create great wines that reflect the unique aspects of each location—the terroir—and maintain the region's reputation for wine excellence. A small proportion of Oranje Tractor's wine is made onsite, using as little intervention as possible, and this falls into the natural wine category.

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In keeping with its buy-local philosophy, Oranje Tractor not only utilises local traders for everything possible, but also its grapes are usually hand-picked by local community groups. It is a win-win situation, as the groups get much-needed funds to continue to do the great things they do, and the winery strengthens its connections with the community. A great example of this is the local mountain bike club, which comes out and assists at harvest time. The club receives not only a good donation, but also a small percentage of the sales of the wine. Next time members are at the bottle shop, I encourage them to look for a local bottle of wine, hopefully one that is made in the great southern, but certainly in Western Australia.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** Member, not only is it local, but it is delicious.

**Ms R.S. STEPHENS:** It is delicious—not that I have tasted too many of them!

Bred Co is a micro bakery in Albany run by the passionate duo of Rhiannon Moon and Sam Dawson. Their passion is to create a product with flavour that reflects the quality of the water and the soil that the plant is grown in—bread of the region and for the region. The flour is stone milled onsite from whole grains sourced locally. Stone milling is an important part of making the bread, as it is a gentle process that produces less heat and friction. Sam likes to say that cold flour is good flour, because it preserves much more nutrition and fatty acids in the flour. Rhiannon and Sam are working with regenerative farmers Penny and Dale Goodwin from Goodies Farm in Kendenup in re-establishing a local grain for a local bread. Bred Co also supplies the Northbridge Brewing Company with bread that it uses to brew its beer. It also supplied bread for the Friday night gala dinner at this year's Truffle Kerfuffle, which I proudly delivered for it.

I commend the bill to the house and encourage all members to buy local, buy fresh and support our local growers of Western Australia.

**MS L. DALTON (Geraldton)** [11.38 am]: I rise to speak in support of the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. Any opportunities to strengthen and support our agricultural industries should draw support from the government of the day. The inclusion of the broadacre farming sector in the remit of the Agricultural Produce Commission is something that the peak WA representative body, WAFarmers, has been calling for for well over a decade.

It seems strange to me that broadacre farmers are excluded from accessing the services of the Agricultural Produce Commission. My electorate of Geraldton is surrounded by broadacre farming. The crops of wheat and canola are looking absolutely spectacular this year after the best winter rainfall seen in many, many years. If the farmers who planted those crops want to access services via the Agricultural Produce Commission, they currently find themselves excluded.

Why is that important? It is time for a dive into the work of the Agricultural Produce Commission. The Agricultural Produce Commission Act 1988 provides Western Australian agricultural producers with a legal framework to collect funds to provide for the development and security of growers and producers in the industry sectors. In part, this bill seeks to amend that act of 1988 to include broadacre farming. This will allow broadacre farmers in my electorate and across WA to access the Agricultural Produce Commission to establish a committee if they wish to do so. Services provided by an APC committee include establishing compensation schemes; assisting in developing systems for quality control or pest and disease control; establishing inspection systems for grading, packaging and storage of agricultural produce; formulating schemes to help producers gain accreditation; establishing voluntary crop insurance schemes; developing and providing educational programs; undertaking research; and developing and expanding new markets as well as undertaking market forecasting.

The first of those services, establishing compensation schemes, seems to be particularly relevant for farmers in the midwest in 2021. Imagine if there had been a longstanding broadacre farming committee in place in the wake of cyclone Seroja. Establishing a compensation scheme driven and overseen by producers would have been immensely helpful for an industry hit by a natural disaster the likes of which most districts impacted had never seen before. That is just one on a long list of services available.

The work of the APC has seen the development of new cultivars of fruit like the Bravo apple, a sensation around Australia and the world and a testament to the hard work and innovation of Western Australian primary producers and related industry research and development groups. Could a future APC broadacre farming committee help develop high-yielding wheat varieties that thrive in low-rainfall areas and can tolerate high-saline soils or dry finishes to a season?

Broadacre farmers in the Geraldton port zone have experienced some amazing highs and lows in 2021. As I mentioned earlier, cyclone Seroja completely changed our lives as it smashed into the midwest area in April, with many farmers and families still recovering from its destructive force. But 2021 has also seen the best start to a growing season in many, many years. The outlook for this year's crops is very favourable. Rainfall records have been broken in many places across the agricultural region of WA and some farmers are expecting their best return on investment for decades. The importance of broadacre farming to my electorate is fairly clear to most people. The iconic grain

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silos at Geraldton port spell it out to the world: we are a city with deep connections to broadacre farming. According to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, the area planted to winter crops in Western Australia is forecast to increase by five per cent, to a record high 8.7 million hectares, in 2021–22. That is 87 000 square kilometres of wheat, barley, canola, oats, lupins, peas and other cereal grains, legumes and pulses. To put that into context for members, our growing area in 2021 is larger than the surface area of Austria.

The most recent update on the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development website, last Thursday, 5 August, states —

With an excellent season to date there is potential for a record grain harvest.

As members can imagine, we are all thrilled to hear this!

The Grain Industry Association of Western Australia’s July report online suggests that the Geraldton port zone could see broadacre farmers produce well over three million tonnes of grain this year. It is an amazing result, but we have some of the most innovative and resilient broadacre farmers in the world. So why should they be left out of the APC? Producers are the only people who can form a committee within the framework provided by the APC legislation; these amendments do not seek to force anything upon unwilling participants. Members from the midwest may remember it was not that long ago that summertime meant grain trucks backed up from the port to the old roundabout at the start of North West Coastal Highway. The southern transport corridor was opened on 10 September 2005 by WA Labor Premier Dr Geoff Gallop. We literally redesigned roads and intersections in part to cater for the amount of grain delivered to Geraldton port.

If we, as a state, want to continue to produce some of the very best cereal grains and legumes in the world, we need to enable our broadacre farmers to develop their farming practices, utilise the latest technologies and take advantage of research and development. If this means broadacre farmers want to create an APC committee, why should ageing legislation that is out of step with their industry prevent them? I read the comments of WAFarmers chief executive officer, Trevor Whittington, in a *Farm Weekly* article of 25 June 2021. He was quoted as saying —

... it was good to see that a bill first proposed 14 years ago had finally made it into parliament.

And that —

“Opening up the APC to the broadacre sector is what WAFarmers have called for with the exclusion in the legislation.”

The WAFarmers website states that it represents a membership of over 1 100 farming businesses. If its membership wants to be part of the Agricultural Produce Commission, why should government stand in their way?

WA Labor has invested in key infrastructure to support broadacre farming, like the work done to provide internet services into regional areas. The Digital Farm Grants program—a McGowan Labor government policy—has helped to provide fast broadband services to broadacre farming enterprises in Chapman Valley, the north midlands and across the wheatbelt and agricultural regions of WA. The ability to access fast reliable broadband has enabled farmers to integrate the latest technology and smart farming techniques into their businesses. Just being able to check commodity prices or weather forecasts is crucial to broadacre farming, and the McGowan Labor government continues to invest in solutions for communications in regional areas. The latest round of digital farm grants announced in January this year will help farmers in the shires of Esperance, Kukerin, Koorda, Mt Marshall, Wyalkatchem, Tammin, Quairading, Beverley, Yilgarn, Kulin, Kent, Lake Grace, Dumblebung, Goomalling and Cunderdin access enterprise-grade broadband. If those same farmers decide as a producer group that they want to create a committee through the Agricultural Produce Commission to develop new markets for their grain or get into research and development to improve efficiencies in their farming businesses, out-of-date government legislation should not be what stops them.

Returning to the Geraldton port zone and the crops in the ground, I wish to express my hopes for good finishing conditions for the growing season. I hope all the broadacre farmers in my area of the northern wheatbelt and north midlands have a great year, because after the trauma of Seroja, they deserve it.

And as we prepare for the field day season—the Mingenew Midwest Expo started this week—I hope people have the chance to spend some time catching up with colleagues and friends before the pressure of harvest time arrives. The expo is important to the local community to build and create relationships, to learn about new agricultural technologies and to showcase their bountiful wares. But most importantly the expo is a lot of fun!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Do they still have races?

**Ms L. DALTON:** What races—Mullewa?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** No. They used to have a race; it was a long time ago. When the Mingenew expo was on, they used to also have a race meet there. They obviously don’t. It was some years ago; I was a jockey at the time!

**Ms L. DALTON:** I will find out about that. The honourable member for the Agricultural Region is attending. I will send her a message and ask whether she attended the races as well.



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**Mr D.A. Templeman:** See if there's a horse that needs a jockey. Could always get into the sauna. Sorry! Sorry, member, I apologise.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens):** The member for Geraldton has the call.

**Ms L. DALTON:** Thank you for that. I also hope that they will have the choice to access the —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It was the visuals of me in the sauna.

**Ms L. DALTON:** I am visualising the member in the sauna after a heated race meeting at Mingenew!

I also hope that they will have the choice to access the Agricultural Produce Commission—the APC. As the member for Albany has already stated, there are 11 producers' committees for the following industries: avocado; beekeepers; Carnarvon banana; egg; pome, citrus and stone fruit; pork; potato; strawberry; table grape; vegetable; and wine. In supporting the legislation, I hope that broadacre farmers will access those same services, if they so choose, to gain advantages in their business models to continue to be the best dryland farmers in the world. This amendment bill seeks to do more than include broadacre farming, but for my electorate of Geraldton, this is perhaps the most relevant part of the legislation.

As raised by the member for Roe, the APC runs under a fee-for-service model. Members of APC committees pay fees, and I can understand that farming businesses could be concerned that they will be paying for services they may not want or access. But for farmers who have that concern, I look to the facts. For a committee to be established, the act requires a poll of producers in an industry to determine whether producers are in favour of the proposal. Before the poll can be conducted, the commission must advertise the intention to conduct the poll and invite submissions from affected producers. The Agricultural Produce Commission, with 30 years of experience in forming and supporting producers' committees, has learnt that the vital component of successful producers' committees is the involvement of and support from the producers who will be the beneficiaries of the services the committee provides.

The commission does not move to conduct a poll until there has been extensive consultation with members of the industry concerned. For example, the discussion between the wine industry and the commission covered a span of nearly 10 years. Any prospective broadacre farming committee would take years of negotiation and consultation before it could be established, if producers decided they want to form one. The Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021 will include a method for committees to waive, refund or reduce fees payable by producers. This will be achieved via regulations instead of legislation so that APC committees will be able to craft specific regulations for their producer members, instead of one-size-fits-all legislation being forced onto all committees.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Madam Acting Speaker and the house for the opportunity to speak in favour of this legislation. I hope all members will support this legislation and support a real choice for WA's broadacre farmers, instead of the current legislation, which denies them that choice.

**MS E.J. KELSBIE (Warren–Blackwood) [11.53 am]:** My electorate of Warren–Blackwood within the South West Region is a major food bowl in Western Australia, proudly boasting innovation in agriculture, a robust export market, world-class producers and a diverse and abundant range of produce that keeps us fed, watered and many people employed. I rise today to speak in support of the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021.

This amendment bill has been a long time coming and has had its fair shares of ups and downs to get to this point, with discussion, consultation, and plenty of toing and froing between the different representative bodies as changes, inclusions and omissions were contemplated for the possibilities of updating the act. Thirty-one years ago, the Horticulture Produce Commission Act 1988 established the commission as a statutory authority with the primary function of establishing producers' committees for different industries. These committees are run by producers for producers. The act provides a mechanism for producers to combine their efforts and resources and work together, through their producers' committee, to achieve the agreed goals of their industry.

In 2000, the act was amended to become the Agricultural Produce Commission Act. In 2006, an extensive review of the act was undertaken. The review identified amendments that could improve the operation of the act. The bill proposes to modernise the act; strengthen governance and responsiveness to, and on behalf of, producers' committees; and also remove the exclusion of certain industries from use of the act. It delivers on many of the 2006 recommendations to improve the act.

In the time that I have had the privilege of being the first female member for Warren–Blackwood and the first Labor member for Warren–Blackwood for 32 years, I have met producers, growers and industry bodies, and attended events that celebrate our outstanding produce and producers, such as the Truffle Kerfuffle at Fonty's Pool at Manjimup, where the market hall is a treat for the senses. I have now promised my team I will get better at bringing treats home for us all to share! With all the people I have met and all the farms, shops, markets and events that I visited, there are a few things that stand out. Producers in my patch are passionate people and they are incredibly hospitable. They are passionate about their industries, passionate about their families and family businesses, and passionate about making sure they have

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a strong workforce. They are passionate about potential growth in their industries. They are also passionate about their produce and about where they live. They are hospitable and keen to share knowledge and, occasionally, scones!

I recently stopped near Northcliffe, having been waved down by a farmer, Mat Daubney, to allow his cows to pass. We talked about the election, politics, the farm, the family business, family, the workforce and the industry. Of course, we talked about Northcliffe and the fabulous Northcliffe Hotel and Motel's Cow and Calf Bistro. The cows got to their paddock and I went on my merry way, but not before Mat invited me back for a tour of the Bannister Downs Dairy to find out more about the industry and the business. I look forward to taking up Mat's offer and having dinner at the Cow and Calf Bistro next time I am in Northcliffe.

The producers' committees established within the framework of the commission under the act enable producers and industry to come together to focus on growth in industry, reduce threats to productivity, deal strategically with potential issues, and mitigate risks. As my esteemed colleagues have already mentioned, there are 11 producers' committees from a range of industries; the first was established in 1991 and the most recent was established in 2015. In order of date, the producers' committees are: table grape, which was established in 1991; pome, citrus and stone fruit, established in 1994; avocado, established in 1995; strawberry, also established in 1995; Carnarvon banana, established in 1999; pork, established in 2001; potato, also established in 2001; egg, established in 2002; beekeepers, established in 2003; vegetable, established in 2005; and wine, established in 2015.

Since the establishment of the act, through to the review and now, industries have been using the act to form committees to support and grow their industries. It is worth noting that the option to form a committee remains the choice of industry. This bill does not change that. Creating industry-specific producers' committees enables producers to collaborate and combine their efforts to look strategically at common goals across their industries and to pool resources and achieve agreed outcomes, whether that be developing new markets, increasing production standards, or addressing common threats, such as pests and biosecurity matters. Many agricultural industries have chosen at this stage not to establish a committee under the act and this is demonstrative of their choice. If an industry does, however, want to establish a producers' committee, it is to be noted that it can be a lengthy process. The wine producers' committee was 10 years in the making.

For a committee to be established, producers in the relevant industry are polled to determine whether they are in favour of the proposal. Before a poll is conducted, extensive industry consultation is undertaken to gauge interest and support—or not. Unless 60 per cent of producers vote in favour of a committee being formed, the producers' committee will not be formed. The act is flexible enough to allow a producers' committee to be established for a specific industry in a specific area—it does not have to be across the whole state. There could be a mushroom producers' committee for the great southern and not necessarily the whole state, if that was the need and want of those producers. Producers have many ways to get to market, including at local farmers' markets. In my electorate, farmers' markets are great community events, with direct-to-consumer fresh produce and tasty treats. They are an opportunity to meet the people who grow, make and shape our agriculture industry. In Denmark, the Kwoorabup Community Markets, hosted at the Golden Hill Steiner School, are a drawcard for locals and tourists visiting town, as are the Boyanup Farmers Market, the Manjimup Farmers Market, the Margaret River Farmers' Market and the Bridgetown River Markets. These are often places where people are able to not just get locally grown fresh produce, but also catch up at a community event, stock up and keep up with new, small and large businesses in their own local communities.

The work of producers' committees is broad. Services can include, among other things, research activities, paying compensation, promotional activities, education programs relating to production of produce, developing and expanding markets, accreditation schemes, biosecurity activities and supporting specific needs of industry. When a committee is identified, in consultation with its industry producers, of course, and services to be provided are agreed upon, the committee can propose a fee for service to be collected from producers. As someone who comes from a communications background, I am also excited about the opportunities that will be available for non-producers to be appointed to committees as part of the key amendments to the act. This means that committees will be able to have a blend of producer and non-producer members. Producers will always have the majority on the committee and non-producers will not have voting rights, but it means that committees will be empowered, if they so choose, to have specialist non-producer knowledge and skillsets on their team.

I would like to offer a huge thanks to the producers and farmers across my electorate. Of the food that makes its way to our plates, lunchboxes and picnics, and the wine, juice, beer, cider that we sup over dinner with our friends, much of it will come from Warren–Blackwood. I am telling you! It is likely the avocado in our smashed avo —

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Ms E.J. KELSBIE:** — Minister Templeman, came from my electorate, possibly from West Manjimup Premium Avocados, a paddock-to-plate producer that supplies directly and delivers across Warren–Blackwood via its active Facebook page. The fruit in our kids' lunch boxes probably comes from my electorate too. As we have heard today, Warren–Blackwood is home to the WA apple breeding program; it is where the world-famous Pink Lady and

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 12 August 2021]

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Bravo apples come from, which I know is a favourite of yours, Madam Acting Speaker (Ms R.S. Stephens). The wine we share with friends over dinner is also probably from my electorate—from sustainable wines organically farmed at Voyager Estate in Margaret River, to the beautifully hand-crafted wines at family winery Moombaki Wines in Kentdale. We also have traditional European cider from the Denmark Heritage Cider Company, and boutique beverages from The Cidery in Bridgetown. Our wine list in the dining room is also flush with beverages from my electorate, and the parliamentary wines are also from the region.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Do you know what I got given recently from your electorate?

**Ms E.J. KELSBIE:** Go on, then.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It was a bottle of blackberry nip from somewhere in Denmark. I've been talking about the historic nature of blackberry nip.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** A berry farm perhaps?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It could well have been the Denmark Berry Farm.

**Ms E.J. KELSBIE:** The minister might have to bring some in so we can share it.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I like a bit of blackberry nip.

**Ms E.J. KELSBIE:** I would not mind trying it.

To all the producers in my electorate, I offer a thank you for doing what you do and for doing it passionately and, of course, for being hospitable and willing to share your knowledge and passion for the industry with me as the member for Warren–Blackwood.

I commend this bill to the house and remind all members and their guests to enjoy the Manjimup chips served in the dining room. I invite them to visit my electorate and to try, taste and buy local agricultural produce—it truly is second to none in our state. Thank you

**MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary)** [12.05 pm]: I rise to speak to the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021, although I did not intend to. I attended a very interesting briefing where I am sure I was extremely annoying for the policy advisers because I was incessantly asking questions. The more I got into this bill, the more fascinating I found it and the more relevant I discovered it was to my electorate. It turns out that almost half the committees have my constituents on them from all sorts of industries. I engage with these folk as part of the ordinary course of business as a member and, obviously, the industry organisations that they are part of and the local organisations. But I was not aware that many of my constituents sit on the committees. I was certainly not aware of the capacity the Agricultural Produce Commission has to do its role currently and the enhanced capacity it will have if these changes are successfully shepherded through the house. I will speak briefly to the legislation itself and discuss why it is very important to the community of Swan Hills.

At this point in time, the act provides a mechanism by which producers can choose to establish industry committees. The act empowers producers to direct the growth of their own industries by combining efforts and resources. That is really great. I think it is quite an interesting aspect of the agricultural sector in that producers are able to come together, even when, notionally, they are in competition, to form these organisations and committees when they perceive a mutual interest and can work together and direct their resources. It is absolutely fabulous and lessons can probably be learnt from these types of models right across the economy. There is a real focus in the current act on collaboration, consultation and majority-supported outcomes. The committees can work together to develop new markets, increase production standards and address common threats. It is a very useful act. It obviously creates the Agricultural Produce Commission secretariat, if you like, to support the committees and enable them to provide services. The commission establishes the committees, appoints members to the committees, has advertising requirements, and conducts polls of the industries to see whether they want to form a committee. It can dissolve them—hopefully, that does not happen too often—and provides a heap of services, and directs, coordinates and supervises the funding and expenditure of committees. If members look through the website, as I did, they can see the annual reports there, and there are reporting mechanisms about the activities of each of the committees. It is quite an interesting read.

Other members have noted the committees that exist for avocados, Carnarvon bananas—you would not want to say that too quickly!—beekeepers, eggs, pome, citrus and stone fruit, pork, potatoes, strawberries, table grapes, vegetables and wine. These groups come together to be the voice of their industry, and to identify opportunities and develop strategic plans. Very often, they work with other industry bodies and peak industry organisations to sponsor research projects or marketing activities. These committees are great and do some fabulous work. As I say, they have funded industry bodies to do certain things. They undertake biosecurity activities and basically support the very specific needs of the industry. As industry participants themselves—the committees are constituted by

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producers in the sector—they are well positioned to understand and identify exactly what those needs are. So they are very, very good things.

The Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill will improve the effectiveness of the Agricultural Produce Commission's mechanism for providing funding for services by agricultural producers for agricultural producers. That is a really important point to appreciate. It will do this by strengthening and clarifying governance and compliance frameworks, modernising the language of the act, introducing flexibility in committee numbers and permitting non-producer committee memberships so that specific expertise can be used where advantageous. That is a really interesting part of this bill. In the briefing we spent a bit of time talking about how committee membership needs to be made up of producers, but it is very helpful if people with specific expertise can be co-opted onto the committees—be it with expertise in animal nutrition to improve pork production standards or how to most effectively address biosecurity mechanisms and bugs such as mealy bugs; yes, they exist! It is going to be a really fantastic improvement to be able to draft that expertise onto the committees. Producers can choose to access these mechanisms if they wish. By creating a producers' committee for their industry, producers can combine their efforts and resources and work together for their industry, whether through identifying new industries or new markets, improving production standards or addressing common threats. The bill is very good in that regard.

I want to move on to why it is directly relevant to my electorate. It turns out that my constituents have a real interest in it. I am a metropolitan region member of Parliament. A lot of people think that I represent Ellenbrook, which is a very suburban area—100-square-metre blocks and incredibly dense urban development. I do represent that community and I am very fond of it. About two-thirds of my electors live in Ellenbrook, but what is often unappreciated is that the other 1 380 square kilometres of my electorate encompasses rural and agricultural communities. I have the Swan Valley in my electorate. It extends up through Bullsbrook to Lower Chittering, and then out through Gidgegannup to Morangup and then through the hills. It includes Sawyers Valley, Chidlow, Mt Helena, Brigadoon and Malmalling. Sorry if I have forgotten any of the little townships that I represent, but these townships have, for many years now, often revolved around the agricultural industries that surround them.

It is therefore no surprise to find that many of my constituents are current members in the APC committee structure. For example, Jamie Michael is a member of the Strawberry Producers Committee. He has a strawberry farm in Bullsbrook that has had to pivot its model to a pick-your-own strawberries model; they invite families to pick their own strawberries. There is a lupin factory in the middle of the strawberry farms in Bullsbrook. In fact, I visited that lupin factory with the member for Bicton to talk about exporting and to identify markets for exported agricultural products. Who would have thought that key export industries or agricultural exports would be a very material issue in my electorate? The member for Wanneroo might be interested to know that that committee is actually chaired by a Wanneroo strawberry farm operator. The member has constituents with a real interest in this bill as well. I know that she also has a very agriculturally based electorate in Wanneroo. The strawberry committee comprises members from the seat of the Swan Hills. It has been very focused on marketing the fruit and improving fruit quality; it is doing some great work.

I will move on to the Pork Producers Committee and Peter Spackman from Craig Mostyn Group. Linley Valley Pork has its abattoir facility in Wooroloo in my electorate. I quite frequently visit Linley Valley Pork. Once I was taken through the whole process, which was a real eye-opening experience. I accompanied the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, to the facility. It is very important that we understand where our food comes from. As much as it was a confronting experience to go right the way through the process, it gave me a far deeper appreciation and understanding of the pork production process. Linley Valley Pork goes to great lengths to ensure that its process is as humane as possible, imposing as little stress as possible on the animals. It was a very educational process. Linley Valley Pork and the pork committee are very material to the people of Swan Hills. It has been interesting speaking to Linley Valley Pork about the challenges it has faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am aware that, indeed, the strawberry farmers have had to face some real challenges due to COVID. Looking into these responses is potentially a function that these committees could perform as part of their research program. At the beginning of the COVID pandemic, food supply continuity and ensuring that we had access to food was a real issue. In the abattoir industry in particular, at one point there were concerns about whether the abattoirs could be staffed to keep producing food. Similarly, the strawberry farmers are struggling to get backpackers. In the harvesting season, over 90 per cent of their labour comes from backpackers. With the closing of the borders, they are experiencing some real staffing issues. There are some real challenges there for the pork producers and the strawberry growers.

One of the most significant committees is the Wine Producers' Committee. Garth Cliff is a member of that committee. He has been quite a fierce advocate for the Swan Valley winemakers. The winemakers' committee undertakes two functions that are very relevant to the seat of Swan Hills. Firstly, it sponsors the Perth Hills Vignerons Association's awards. I am representing the Minister for Tourism at that event in the very near future, which I am very —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Which one is that one?

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**Ms J.J. SHAW:** The minister asked me to represent him and I willingly accepted.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Which one is it?

**Ms J.J. SHAW:** The Perth Hills Vignerons Association's wine awards. The minister is very welcome to be my plus one if he likes. It is a great night and the winemakers' committee provides funding for that event. It has also helped the Perth hills winemakers to expand their social media presence and update their websites—some really good work there.

For the Swan Valley wine region, the committee has funded marketing activities in order to promote the Swan Valley as the fabulous wine region that it is. It is in fact Western Australia's oldest wine region, and the only wine region in Australia located in a metropolitan area. I understand that it is one of the only wine regions in a metropolitan area in the world that can be reached along a river. This generates beautiful tourism opportunities into the Swan Valley. I meet with the Swan Valley Winemakers Association frequently and I am always happy to assist it in its big ambitions for creating a premier tourism attraction in the Swan Valley.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms J.J. SHAW:** Probably the most significant committee in terms of representation for the seat of Swan Hills is the Table Grape Producers' Committee. It was the first committee established under the APC act in 1991. It is chaired by a Swan Valley table grape grower and three quarters of its membership is drawn from the Swan Valley. In the Swan Valley, 50 per cent of the grapes grown are table grapes and 50 per cent are wine grapes. We really do have a significant stake in table grape growing. In fact, Western Australia produces five per cent of the nation's table grapes. We really do have a stake in the work of this committee with the committee undertaking marketing, promotion and inspection activities. I want to emphasise one thing that I have been advocating for that is of concern to the grapegrowers, and it could perhaps be a research initiative that the APC might consider; it is the management of rainbow lorikeets. They are a pest that is increasingly threatening the viability of not only the table grape industry, but also the wine industry in my electorate. I thank Kevin Peterson, the president of the Swan Valley grape growers association, for raising this issue. I thank Ray Zannino for hosting me on his property and showing me the extent of the problem. I also thank Councillor David Lucas, who is the Deputy Mayor of the City of Swan. His advocacy on this has been fabulous. We went out to look at the impact that rainbow lorikeets are having in the Swan Valley. The Swan Valley grape growers association has told me that this year there has been a 50 per cent loss of crops when compared with the same time last year on account of the rainbow lorikeet problem. This is despite attempts by grape growers to net vines, use gas guns to scare off birds, employ professional shooters to cull the birds, and to experiment with falconry and drone technology to try to move the birds on from the Swan Valley. They are facing a very significant issue in the Swan Valley.

I am aware of the existence of Operation Rainbow Roost, which is aimed at identifying where these birds are roosting. That is great because it will give us a far more complete picture, but I want to give members an understanding of the extent of the problem. It was probably in the 1960s when the first 10 rainbow lorikeets were released into the wild by, I would say, negligent lorikeet owners. There are now 40 000 of these things in WA. They are very beautiful—there is no two ways about it—but they are destroying our grape industry. They are affecting not only the grape growers in the Swan Valley but the orchardists in the Perth hills, who are seeing their crops being damaged, and I am sure that that is the case across the agricultural regions contained within the metropolitan area. They also threaten a whole range of birds and endemic native Western Australian bird species.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** They are not native, are they?

**Ms J.J. SHAW:** That is right; they are not native, member. They are affecting the red-capped parrot, the western corella, the Australian ringneck and the Carnaby's black-cockatoo, which is an iconic bird in the Perth hills in particular. Rainbow lorikeets spread disease and are aggressive little things. They turf other birds out of their nests and are spreading further and further afield. They will, in a day, roam up to 50 kilometres from home. Their primary nesting sites are on the coast but they go out for the day to the Swan Valley for lunch, which we all love to do. Part of me really does not want to blame them for this—I would normally encourage more of that, but just not from the rainbow lorikeet! It is a significant problem in my electorate.

I have continued to advocate on this issue to the Minister for Agriculture and Food's office. I am aware that there is a real appetite to initiate a pest parrot strategy for Western Australia. I understand that part of that strategy would involve some form of stakeholder consultation process. The objectives of the strategy would be to develop a collaborative framework for managing pest parrots in Western Australia and then identify the roles and responsibilities so stakeholders could address this issue. I have asked the minister's office to keep me updated as that strategy is developed; indeed, I will engage with my constituents who have an interest in this and keep them updated as it progresses, particularly if and when those consultation processes begin.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 12 August 2021]

p2778b-2794a

Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Shane Love; Ms Rebecca Stephens; Ms Lara Dalton; Ms E.J. Kelsbie; Ms Jessica Shaw;  
Ms Sabine Winton

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Probably, in fact I would say ubiquitously among all agricultural industry stakeholders with whom I engage—they are all addressing this significant threat—is the issue of climate change. It is important that we address the issue. The grape growers and winemakers in my area are concerned about access to water in the Swan Valley in the face of a drying climate. Recently, there has been an absolute deluge of rain in the Swan Valley. I was at Upper Reach Winery the other day and I have been watching Laura’s Facebook posts—it is a great winery with beautiful wines—but parts of that vineyard have been completely taken out by flooding in the Swan Valley. They are now trying to repair the trestles and get rid of all the detritus littered throughout the vineyard. Luckily, the vines are dormant at the moment so it has happened at a good time—if there is ever a good time for this stuff to happen—but the rain has significantly affected wine growers. I have no doubt that other grape growers and winemakers in the area have been affected.

Another issue for producers in the Swan Valley is smoke taint. When there are bushfires, as we have had horrifically in Wooroloo, smoke taint in grapes can be an issue. Even hazard-reduction burns can have smoke taint implications on winemakers. I know that issue is front of mind for my constituents. Indeed, how to address smoke taint could be addressed by one of these committees.

Our farmers are on the front line. They are living with the impacts of climate change and it is directly affecting their livelihoods. It goes without saying that it is affecting all of us, but these guys are on the front line. They understand the impacts of climate change in a way that many of us do not. An ever-growing proportion of farmers are embracing the responsibility that they have and the custodianship of the land that they operate on, and want to see serious action on climate change. In fact, driving up Toodyay Road, through my electorate, just before reaching Gidgegannup, on the left-hand side is a big sign at the front of a farm that says, “Farmers for Climate Action”. It absolutely makes my heart sing when I drive past that property and see that sign from a farmer demanding action on climate change.

Indeed, the Farmers for Climate Action webpage shows that it has over 5 000 members and is running a campaign at the moment called “Tell Barnaby Joyce that farmers care about meaningful climate action”. It is running an active social media campaign because Australia’s second biggest climate change sceptical cheerleader, behind Scott Morrison, is out there spreading all sorts of fear and misinformation about the causes and impacts of climate change and, in particular, misinformation about the impacts of climate mitigation. He is scaring communities purely to shore up his own electoral position, and that is shameful. So I am pleased to see leadership in the farming community that is saying, “No. We demand action on climate change.”

Climate change is the issue for which I basically chose to leave my career in the energy sector. I decided, after having had a decade-long career in the energy industry, that we needed to take more direct action on climate change, and the best way of doing that was to get involved in politics. I changed my career for this issue. A couple of years ago, I went to Harvard Kennedy School—in fact, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum was there at the same time; he was in the classroom next door. I took the program on energy and climate change policy there. The first half of the course was on the science of climate change and the second was on policy responses at national, sub-national and local government levels, right around the world. There were all sorts of fascinating people on that course. They included the climate change chief adviser for Number 10 Downing Street, the head of global relations for BP, a representative from the World Wildlife Fund, the Ghanaian environment minister, people from the Californian state government, and health industry advocates. There was even a water supply specialist from the Middle East. Her country was grappling with a lack of water and saying, “Where do we get our water from? We are running out of water.”

I had the great privilege to learn from this amazing group of people, but all of them were saying to me, “What’s wrong with you in Australia?” Everybody who was looking from afar could see that we were disproportionately suffering the effects of climate change and that we were the best positioned to develop responses but that we were being stymied completely from any sort of meaningful debate and leadership at the national level on climate change. I had to keep apologising and say, “Mate, it’s the federal government.” At a state level we are taking this seriously and we understand the challenges.

The awareness in the community of the need to do that has been brought home very clearly with the publication of the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, which specifically discussed Australia and found that we are experiencing widespread rapid climate change not seen for thousands of years and we may warm by four degrees Centigrade or more this century. The report warned of unprecedented increases in climate extremes, such as bushfires, floods and drought. This is the sixth report produced by the IPCC since it was founded in 1988, and it gives a very clear picture of how climate change will play out for us—and the picture is not pretty. Even under a moderate emissions scenario, the global effects of climate change will worsen significantly over the coming years, as identified in this report. Australia, without doubt, is identified in this report as warming. We have warmed, the IPCC has found, by about 1.4 degrees since 1910, and it is driving a significant increase in the intensity and frequency of extremely hot temperatures in Australia as well as a decrease in almost all cold extremes.

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The IPCC had high confidence that recent extreme heat events in Australia were made more likely or severe due to human influence. It identified a range of events, including the summer of 2012–13, known as the “angry summer”, when more than 70 per cent of Australia experienced extreme temperatures. It noted the Brisbane heatwave in 2014, the extreme heat preceding the 2018 Queensland fires and the heat leading into the Black Summer bushfires of 2019–20. My electorate, more than any other in the last year, has experienced the impacts of a drying climate horrifically through the Wooroloo bushfires. It is a material, pressing and ever-present risk to the people in my electorate. We are on the front line of the impacts of climate change. This is no longer an abstract issue; this is affecting our lived experience every summer. This issue confronts my farmers all year round, and we must do something to address it.

The IPCC says that as the planet warms, future heatwaves in Australia will be hotter and last longer, and cold extremes will be less frequent and less intense. The south west of Western Australia, our part of the world, is identified as a globally notable hotspot for drying. This drying is projected to continue as emissions rise and the climate warms. Australia is disproportionately exposed, we in Western Australia are disproportionately exposed, and the most disproportionately exposed part of Western Australia is our home, the south west of Western Australia, and we have to do something about it.

We have to take climate action, and I want to acknowledge the work of the McGowan government, particularly the Minister for Energy and the energy transformation strategy. Moving our energy economy toward a far more sustainable energy model is a wonderful step forward. It makes all sorts of sense not only financially, but also from a carbon mitigation perspective. I want to say what a great initiative that is.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the Minister for Water. The Minister for Water over the last four years brought climate change into pretty much every communication put out by the Water Corporation. This issue stops being something abstract and irrelevant and starts being part of our everyday narrative. This starts to be something we consciously think about every time we turn our tap on. The Minister for Water led that narrative. He was very proactive on climate change, and I would really like to acknowledge him. I also acknowledge Minister Dawson. In the last term of Parliament, Minister Dawson led the development of our climate change policy. There is real leadership at the state government level.

I was very heartened by the recent comments from the Premier as reported in *The West Australian* a couple of days ago. Although the Premier does not want to pre-empt any decisions that the cabinet might take around climate change, he is open to a conversation about legislated targets at a state level and noted that everyone else seems to be able to wrap their heads around the issue and he regrets the lack of leadership at the federal government level. At the end of the day, we need a nationally coordinated approach and we need national leadership. I hope that the IPCC report prompts action on climate change. I want to acknowledge the great work being done by the McGowan Labor government in this space. I look forward to hearing more about it, because it is so important to the electors of Swan Hills, the people of Western Australia and more broadly to the Australian nation.

**MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary)** [12.34 pm]: I, too, rise to make a contribution to the Agricultural Produce Commission Amendment Bill 2021. As many members who have spoken so far know, having done research, this bill has been a long time coming, and I commend the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, for bringing it to this place.

The Horticultural Produce Commission Act 1988 established the Agricultural Produce Commission as a statutory authority, with the primary function of establishing producers’ committees. This act’s long title was amended to become the Agricultural Produce Commission Act in 2000. The amendments now proposed will modernise the act, improving services and responsiveness to agricultural industries that already use, or might in future use, the act. The amendments emerged from a comprehensive review of the act in 2006. That review took place some 15 years ago. The 11 existing Agricultural Produce Commission committees, covering 13 horticultural industries, use the act to provide various services. Over the years, producers’ committees for agricultural produce have allowed and encouraged producers to undertake assessments of their industries, and to work together for individual and creative industry good. There is no doubt that more people and players in the industry want to get involved.

Essentially, we have waited 16 years for this review from back in 2006 to be enacted. A number of ministers have had a go at doing this, and it is not surprising to us on the Labor side that Hon Alannah MacTiernan got it done. In preparation for the speech, I read through the *Hansard* of this bill’s passage through the Legislative Council. I have to say: if we thought the bunch opposite in this chamber were uninspiring, or sometimes I call them incompetent, there is a whole different level going on up there, and I suggest that members read the *Hansard* of the bill’s passage in the other place.

I want to take up something the member for Roe harboured in his speech in expressing his disappointment about the rejection of an amendment in the other place that resulted in not having an opt-out clause for the broadacre cropping industry. I do not propose to be an expert, but it seems to me that we have a bunch of committees at the

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moment that are doing very, very well under the existing act, and the opposition's proposed amendment in the other place to put the opt-out clause into the bill would have impacted on all those committees successfully operating right now. It was the minister's view that it would best be served that that be done by way of regulation. I cannot explain it as well as Hon Alannah MacTiernan does, so I will read from *Hansard* how she explained why she and the government chose to deal by regulations with the issue the opposition keeps raising. She stated —

We are very keen, when possible, to accommodate legitimate concerns that are raised by members, but I simply cannot, as a matter of principle, accept this amendment. In a way, this is a case of the tail wagging the dog.

It is very clear that a number of the most active and successful existing committees —

Various members highlighted those committees, and the member for Swan Hills explained the successful workings of some of those committees. The minister continues —

are very strongly opposed to the introduction of an opt-out clause into their existing provisions. That comes from the producers of vegetables, pome and wine, who between them collect approximately 50 per cent of the total fee-for-service funds. There is no way we are going to introduce an opt-out provision just to accommodate people —

That is the broadacre cropping people —

who are not actually already in the thing.

Therefore, the better way, in the minister's and the government's view, is that those concerns can be dealt with through regulations. That is the bit the member for Roe did not explain properly.

I turn to the opposition's uninspiring approach to this. It has been really inspiring to be in this place to hear so many Labor members representing the regions, particularly the contributions made by the members for Geraldton, Albany and Warren–Blackwood. The lack of interest in this place by the Liberal and National Parties to debate a very important bill has been really disappointing. I would have thought it was an important bill for their constituents, yet, sadly, they are absent.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens):** The member for Wanneroo has the call. Please continue.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

The Liberal and National Parties have to do the work. All we hear in this place is constant excuses about their performance. If it is not COVID, it will be electoral reform. Just turn up, do your homework and do the work. Notwithstanding the member for Roe had a red-hot crack once he realised the bill was on, in the other place it was really quite comical. If I can, I will read from the Minister for Agriculture and Food's contribution in the other place. I think it is at the heart of the problem with the National and Liberal opposition at the moment. The minister said —

I thank members for their input to the debate on the ... Bill ... This is a most interesting debate because it almost distils all the issues and problems that we have in agriculture in Western Australia, not the least of which is the blue on green war, which actually impedes any reasonable progress. I was astounded that members opposite were saying, "This review came down in 2006 and, golly gosh, why are we only now dealing with the recommendations of that review?" We should look to the other side of the house. During the eight and a half years that the now opposition was in government, from 2008 to early 2017, the people who purport to represent the farmers were not able to bring a piece of legislation forward on pastoral reform because its members could not agree. Right out there in the bush, this big fight goes on between the Pastoralists and Graziers Association and the Western Australian Farmers Federation. That big fight between the PGA and WAFF plays out time and again, as it has done here again today.

We came into government after eight and a half years of inaction. Actually, no progress was made during the period of the Liberal–National Party coalition. We saw zero progress.

I think I mentioned last night how many housing ministers there had been. It is also really interesting to look at, as a comparison, how many agriculture ministers the previous Liberal–National government had. From 2008 to 2013, it was Hon Terry Redman, the previous member for Warren–Blackwood. I think he did a reasonable job. From 2013 until 2017, the wheels fell off, and we had Hon Ken Baston for a couple of years. Then the Liberal opposition decided to give the agriculture portfolio to Hon Dean Nalder, albeit for about eight months. After that, the agriculture portfolio went to Hon Mark Lewis, who had it up until the 2017 state election. It shows that the previous Liberal–National government really did not care about agriculture. It did not put any priority on it, but instead it



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actually decimated it. We need to remember what the former government did so that we can actually understand what we inherited back in 2017 and certainly what our current agriculture minister, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, inherited.

Between 2008 and 2017, nearly 600 jobs were lost in the agriculture department—a 35 per cent cut in staff. In the same period, the department’s funding from the state fell 26 per cent. The previous government also built a further 37 per cent cut into its forward estimates. It was a reckless slash-and-burn approach that put the future prosperity of our agricultural industry at risk. We have moved to fix it. All of us in this place recognise that the current agriculture minister has been on a mission to fix it. In the 2019–20 budget, the government delivered a \$131.5 million funding boost for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to deal with the fiscal cliff left by the previous government. It put DPIRD back on a sustainable footing. The minister and this government have worked hard on rebuilding our state’s agricultural research and development capability. There has been a big focus on this in this government since 2017, compared with the previous one.

The ministers that I referred to in the previous Liberal–National government were okay, but let us see what the Liberal–National opposition think about agriculture and who it put in charge. Post the 2017 election, when the Liberals and Nationals sat in opposition after having done such an uninspiring job in eight and a half years in government, the shadow portfolio was given to the member for Geraldton, Ian Blayney. That did not go too well and we are all the better for it! The shadow agriculture portfolio was then given to Hon Jim Chown. I have some wonderful news articles that I could read about him and what some of the industry players thought about his performance in the portfolio! Then we had Hon Dr Steve Thomas—he lasted about nine months—and now, since the re-election of the McGowan government and the second term of the Liberals and Nationals in opposition, Hon Colin de Grussa has taken on the portfolio. It has been a few months but he is still there. So far, the very capable Minister for Agriculture and Food has already seen off three shadow ministers. We will see how that goes!

It is great that I have flushed out all those members, from wherever they were hiding, to come back into the chamber. It would be great if they took some notes and made —

**Mr S.A. Millman:** They came back in to make their own members’ statements. They are staying for members’ statements. They’re not even interested in the debate.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Oh, I see!

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Wanneroo.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** I am sorry; I thought they were coming back to listen to me!

**Mr S.A. Millman:** They’re not interested. They couldn’t care less.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** I should have known better; they are actually not interested in agriculture or representing the regions. Of course they are not interested. They are just coming in here to make their quick 90-second statements and then get out in time for lunch. I get it!

Several members interjected.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Gee, members!

Wanneroo has a long and proud history of agriculture. In terms of European settlement, Wanneroo’s earliest beginnings were in 1852, when the Cockmans made the first permanent settlement in Wanneroo, growing crops close to the lake systems that run along Wanneroo. That is really at the heart of why market gardening was established in Wanneroo. I am very proud of the history of Wanneroo. Members know that I have previously spoken about the Wanneroo Agricultural Society, which has been going since 1909. That society has, very importantly, been supporting growers for 112 years. One of the main things that we all know and love the Wanneroo ag society for is organising and running the Wanneroo Show each year. This will be the 112<sup>th</sup> Wanneroo Show. The Wanneroo Show showcases the produce of Wanneroo. It is important to note for those regional members who have spoken about the contribution of their wonderful regions to agriculture that outside of the Perth Royal Show, the Wanneroo Show is the second-biggest show in our state. I am very proud of that.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** After the Canning Show.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** No. I disagree with the minister,

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** They had 15 000 people last year. The first one was held in 1892.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Minister, I am going to have to take that little challenge on notice!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I’m leaving! There’s a blue coming!

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** The minister does not have an agricultural show down in Mandurah. He only has a crab festival.

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 12 August 2021]

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This year, again, we are looking forward to a successful show. Everyone knows that last year, the planning was very difficult due to COVID.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Last year was the biggest show ever in Canning.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Minister, I was about to say that despite the planning uncertainty, last year Wanneroo had its most successful show in a very, very long time, and we are looking forward to having a huge crowd again this year, not only of Wanneroo locals but also people from throughout the northern suburbs and the metropolitan area, and from regional areas. I encourage all members, whether metropolitan members or regional members, to come and say “Hi” at the biggest tent at the Wanneroo Show, which will be the Labor tent.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2807.]