



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2021

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 13 May 2021

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) took the chair at 10.00 am, read prayers and acknowledged country.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES

Sixty-first Report — Progress report: Supreme Court proceedings and matters of privilege arising in the 40th Parliament — Tabling

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) [10.03 am]: Members, I am directed to present the sixty-first report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges titled *Progress report: Supreme Court proceedings and matters of privilege arising in the 40th Parliament* and I have a statement to make.

On this day two years ago, I was contacted by the then Corruption and Crime Commissioner to arrange a meeting to discuss a process by which the Legislative Council could undertake a parliamentary privilege review of the evidence to be produced to the Corruption and Crime Commission under a notice to produce relating to the parliamentary email accounts of several former members and their staff. Following a month of good faith negotiations and the apparent reaching of an agreement with the commissioner as to a suitable process to be employed, the Legislative Council suddenly found itself sidelined from that process without explanation. Although totally inexplicable behaviour at the time, it is only in recent months and as a result of the legal action instituted by authority of this house that facts have come to light that this was the result of the direct intervention of the Attorney General in the CCC's investigation.

Over the past two years the plain facts in this matter have been obscured and misrepresented in the media, as well as in both the Legislative Council and the other place, and in various correspondence and reports emanating from the CCC. The committee has been restrained in what it has been able to say publicly in deference to the ongoing CCC and police investigations and its own privilege inquiries, and, crucially, during the various legal actions to determine the validity of the CCC notices to produce and defend against the Attorney General's legal action to diminish parliamentary privilege and the powers of the Parliament. Although some investigations are apparently continuing, the CCC has now reported on its investigation on a number of occasions. The Attorney General's legal action is adjourned, and the Supreme Court trial of the Legislative Council's action to determine the validity of the CCC notices to produce has been held and the court's decision was reserved.

The purpose of this report is therefore to use the occasion of the impending change to the membership of the Legislative Council and its committees in the forty-first Parliament to put on the public record a summary of all the facts and the relevant material arising from the interaction between the committee and the CCC over the past two years.

A total of 83 committee meetings were held between June 2019 and May 2021. I would like to thank the members of the committee for their tireless dedication to this matter whilst under immense external pressure. I thank the staff of the committee for their excellent work. I also thank the staff of the committee office and the Parliament's IT unit for assisting the committee at short notice for extended periods. Finally, I would like to thank those members of the Legislative Council of the fortieth Parliament who have supported the committee and, most importantly, supported the institution of the Parliament.

I commend the report to the house.

[See paper [191](#).]

Recommendation 1 — Adoption — Motion

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [10.05 am]: I have three motions without notice, which I will move now in accordance with standing order 190. I move without notice —

That recommendation 1 contained in the sixty-first report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges titled *Progress report: Supreme Court proceedings and matters of privilege arising in the 40th Parliament* be adopted and agreed to.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

Recommendation 2 — Adoption — Motion

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [10.06 am] —without notice: I move —

That recommendation 2 contained in the sixty-first report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges titled *Progress report: Supreme Court proceedings and matters of privilege arising in the 40th Parliament* be adopted and agreed to.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

Recommendation 3 — Adoption — Motion

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [10.06 am] —without notice: I move —

That recommendation 3 contained in the sixty-first report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges titled *Progress report: Supreme Court proceedings and matters of privilege arising in the 40th Parliament* be adopted and agreed to.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

GREYHOUND RACING BAN*Petition*

HON ALISON XAMON (North Metropolitan) [10.06 am]: I present a petition containing 9 526 signatures couched in the following terms.

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned residents of Western Australia are opposed to greyhound racing in Western Australia and call upon the Government to ban greyhound racing.

Greyhound racing is an outdated industry that has been banned in numerous countries and states. The greyhound racing industry is inherently inhumane and incompatible with contemporary animal welfare expectations. The greyhound racing industry is unsustainable and relies on the community to deal with surplus dogs that are overbred to meet racing requirements.

Your petitioners therefore respectfully request the Legislative Council recommends that the Government; bans greyhound racing, allows a 2-year phase out of the industry, assists industry participants in reskilling, rehome every dog, and approve a few breeders to continue as registered breeders for greyhounds as pets only.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper [192](#).]

A similar petition was presented by **Hon Alison Xamon** (1 153 signatures).

[See paper [193](#).]

ELECTORAL REFORM — LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL*Motion*

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [10.08 am] — without notice: I move —

That the Legislative Council —

- (a) notes the commitment of the Premier of Western Australia who repeatedly stated that electoral reform was “not on the agenda” just days prior to the state election;
- (b) notes that immediately following the last election and with total control of the Parliament, the Minister for Electoral Affairs has commenced a flawed inquiry to provide for “electoral equality” for all citizens entitled to vote for the Legislative Council;
- (c) recognises the further disenfranchisement of regional communities that will occur by eroding their representation in the Parliament of Western Australia; and
- (d) calls on all parliamentary parties represented in the Parliament of Western Australia to allow their members to vote in accordance with their conscience and their constituents and not along party lines when considering any legislative proposal for reform.

I rise to present my argument for this very important motion before the Legislative Council today, the last sitting day of the current membership of the Legislative Council before new members are sworn in in a little over a week. I want members to cast their minds back to February 2021. At that time the Labor Party presented its pitch to Western Australians who had not voted for Labor previously. On that day Mark McGowan, the Leader of the Labor Party, posted this on his Facebook page —

Western Australians, this is my promise to you:

If you're thinking about voting for me and WA Labor for the very first time this election, this is my message to you:

You should feel confident in that decision.

My promise is simple – I will lead a sensible, responsible, experienced Government.

We will keep our promises, and properly manage the finances.

And we will always keep WA strong.

On that same day, 21 February, my colleague Hon Darren West shared this post. He said —

If you're considering voting WA Labor for the first time, Mark McGowan makes this commitment to you.

I've known Mark for over 20 years. He keeps his commitments.

He's a great bloke, a great Premier and he'll keep WA strong.

One of the most extraordinary exchanges of the election occurred on 8 March in Albany, where the Premier was under cross-examination by an ABC journalist by the name of Dan Mercer. I want to read into *Hansard* a transcript of an exchange between Mr Mercer and the Premier because it is pertinent to the issues at the election: commitments, integrity and trust. The transcript reads —

Mercer: If Labor is returned next Saturday will you pursue electoral reform in the Upper House?

Premier: It's not on our agenda, I've answered this question many times, it's not on our agenda, we care deeply about country WA and the issues of jobs, health, education, important infrastructure other sorts of things that we will implement.

Mercer: There's a difference between something not being on the agenda and committing not to doing something as Labor did with the gold royalty increase. So will you commit, are you committing?

Premier: Well I'll be clear, I'll be clear again, it's not on our agenda enhanced regional representation will continue and this is just another smoke screen by the Liberals and Nationals. What the Liberals have shown today with their comments is if they don't care about regional WA. If they don't think the Premier of the state shouldn't go to regional WA they don't care about regions.

Mercer: Do you think that Electoral Reform in the Upper House is something that parties ought to take to an election before ever trying to implement it?

Premier: No like I said before it's not on our agenda.

Mercer: So can I take from that the Labor Party isn't going to be doing it?

Premier: It's not on our agenda we support and enhance regional representation.

Mercer: To go back to the question, how significant is electoral reform in the Upper House is it a matter of such importance that a party would need to take it to the voters before trying to implement it do you think?

Premier: As I said it's not on our agenda we support enhanced regional representation.

Mercer: The question is do you think it's a matter that should be taken to voters before being implemented?

Premier: As I said it's not on our agenda, we support enhanced regional representation.

That short exchange occurred in Albany just five sleeps before state election day. I think the Premier said seven times that it was not on his agenda and three times that he supported enhanced regional representation. Fast forward to 30 April when the ministerial expert committee was formed—apparently it was formed on 28 April, two days prior to the media statement—to advise the government on electoral reform. It is interesting for those members who have not been able to turn their minds to this yet to note the terms of reference that have been included. The two things the government has asked that committee to examine and provide are recommendations as to how electoral equality might be achieved for all citizens entitled to vote for the Legislative Council and recommendations for the distribution of preferences in the Legislative Council's proportional representation system. Obviously there is a preamble to those two limbs of the review being put. It is interesting that the Nationals are singled out in the preamble. It mentions that in the Agricultural Region, the Nationals received 22 999 votes and won two seats. Three other references are made to the Greens, the Liberal Party and the Daylight Saving Party. It is interesting that the preamble does not include a reference to the Australian Labor Party. At the last election, in the Mining and Pastoral Region, with which I am sure my good friend Hon Kyle McGinn is quite familiar, the Labor Party won four seats on a vote of 28 002. It is not mentioned in the preamble to these terms of reference that four Labor members were elected on 7 000 votes each, almost half of what it took the Nationals to get elected in the Agricultural Region. However, according to the Attorney General, that is not a matter of significance.

I want to present to the house today just how corrupted and flawed this process is and how the Premier's comments five sleeps out from the election could not be trusted. He was not truthful with the people of Western Australia in the commitments he took to the election. Surely enough, with total control of the state Parliament, Labor is doing exactly what we warned voters at the last election it would do.

I am glad the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Electoral Affairs in this house still believes in preferences. He named me as his fourth-favourite National Party member in the house yesterday, so I am glad he still believes in a preferential system. On the issue of preferences, the Greens brought a bill to this house in the last Parliament called the Electoral Amendment (Ticket Voting and Associated Reforms) Bill 2019. It was to achieve a number of things, but also to deal with voting tickets; an issue that I believe needs addressing. When that legislation was brought on for debate, government members were rushing around to make sure there were enough speakers so that no vote could ever be taken and the bill could not be considered again. As members know, passing private members'

bills in this place is difficult. There are limited opportunities to do so and it has been a long-held tactic of the government to simply talk them out and not let them come to a vote. It has also been usual for governments, once in their term, to introduce a bill to reform the Electoral Act. There has not been an occasion in recent history when this Labor government has not passed an amendment to the Electoral Act. It brought in amendments so late in the term to deliver on election commitments, and did not bring it on for debate after the committee reported, that time elapsed before that bill could be dealt with. Now it has bigger fish to fry as it looks at structural reform for the Legislative Council.

Along with Hon Tjorn Sibma and other members, I have pursued a number of questions in the past two weeks about that ministerial expert committee. It is clear from the answers that have been provided by the parliamentary secretary that this committee has been thrown together very quickly. The government's obfuscation in providing answers to this house is evident. Either it intends not to provide answers, which we will pursue in due course, or it does not know the answers.

It is even more concerning that the government has embarked on a ministerial expert committee without, for example, even knowing how much it will cost. It is quite extraordinary. The simple question I have asked three or four times now is: how much are each of the committee members going to be paid? The government does not know! It either does not know or it will not tell us—unless the parliamentary secretary is going to rise in a minute and provide that information. I suspect in question time today I will get a similar answer to those I have received over the last five sitting days.

I turn to the members of the committee. Hon John Quigley is the Minister for Electoral Affairs. He is our third Minister for Electoral Affairs under the Labor government. There has been a revolving door of Ministers for Electoral Affairs. We went from Minister Johnston to Minister Dawson and now we are at Minister Quigley. Of course, Minister Quigley is saying that this is a very important committee that will be led by eminent Western Australian Malcolm McCusker, AC. He is an eminent Western Australian; I agree with that. But I have asked questions over the last week about a number of the other committee members, to which I have received partial answers. It is very interesting that these committee members have been long-term proponents of structural reform of the Legislative Council. They have for a long time written papers about the need to reform the Legislative Council. I do not think they enter this ministerial expert committee to advise the government without bias. They have very fixed views about what ought to happen, so what is the point of having this charade—this pretend expert advisory committee to inform the government—when the Attorney General already knows what he wants to do? The Attorney General; Minister for Electoral Affairs already knows what he wants to do—the Labor Party just was not brave enough to take it to the last election.

On 20 February 2019, I received a letter—probably along with every other member of this house, if not both houses—from 10 academics, including Associate Professor Martin Drum, Professor John Phillimore and Associate Professor Sarah Murray. Funnily enough, all three of them serve on the government's ministerial expert committee. The letter addressed the need for a number of electoral reforms. The letter of 20 February 2019 presents, first and foremost, an argument that there is a need to reform the way in which members of the Legislative Council are elected. It is quite an extensive letter, over three or four pages, so I am not going to read it into *Hansard*. Does the member want me to table the letter? I seek leave to table the document.

[Leave granted. See paper [194](#).]

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I want to read in my response, at least in part, to this group of academics. I wrote back to say —

I refer to your correspondence of 20 February 2019 and apologise for the delay in my response. As you're aware, The Nationals WA oppose any measure that seeks to diminish regional representation in our State Parliament. It will come as little surprise that The Nationals WA reject your assertion that an equal weighting system for each region in the Legislative Council of Western Australia "fails the democratic fairness test".

It tends to be the case when the debate of one vote one value rears its head, that there are cries of protest from predominantly city-based academics and politicians. These cries are centred on the notion of equality. Yet at the same time there is a clear inequality in dearer fuel prices for country motorists, a lack of public transport and exorbitant regional airfares. Regional people are likely to achieve a lesser education standard and die earlier than their city counterparts.

The impact of proposed electoral reform in the Upper House—such as that presented at a New Zealand conference by the President of the Legislative Council last year—is to dilute country representation.

One vote one value was achieved in the Legislative Assembly with the passage of the *Constitution and Electoral Amendment Bill 2005*. The Bill recognised the need to compensate what are considered to be large districts by a weighting mechanism known as the Large District Allowance. Your proposal provides no detail on whether you believe our electoral system ought to recognise and respond to the challenges of representing regional and remote Western Australia.

Western Australia is unique. My electorate of the Agricultural Region has a land mass comparable to Italy with nearly all of it populated. Yet my slice of country Western Australia is relatively tiny when compared to my upper house colleagues in the Mining and Pastoral Region. Spanning more than two million square kilometres, the total geographic area is more than 2656 times that of the South Metropolitan Region and includes Carnarvon, Kalgoorlie, Eucla and Wyndham.

In April 2005, then Professor Greg Craven, Executive Director of The John Curtin Institute of Public Policy and Professor of Government and Constitutional Law made a fair comment on the *One Vote One Value Bill*:

“I would respectfully argue that, once the Lower House of the Parliament is constituted on a more or less strict One Vote One Value basis, the case for constituting the Upper House differentially as a Chamber where regional interests receive moderately enhanced representation, is strong. This follows from the necessity to ensure that the diversity of interests contained within the State are adequately reflected in Parliament.”

In the same vein, Dr Harry Phillips, Parliamentary Fellow, Adjunct Professor, Edith Cowan University and Curtin University of Technology said in April 2005:

“In Western Australia the interpretations of the Canadian Courts have tended to be used as support for the ‘one vote one value’ argument. However, the Canadian Courts, have given thrust to a broader concept of ‘effective representation’. The latter provides scope for deviation (sometimes substantial) from voter parity. If one sought to do so I think there would be scope to argue that in many settings, other factors (such as geography), have to be considered for effective representation to prevail.”

My letter continues —

It is my view that those living in regional and remote Western Australia have an expectation and a democratic right to be able to reasonably access their Members of Parliament. The proposal advanced by you is incongruent with that expectation and right and would significantly diminish and disadvantage those people from being adequately represented in the State Parliament.

As individuals with expertise in democratic practice, I invite you and your cosignatories to spend some time with my colleagues in their regional constituencies. I think having walked a few days in our shoes will give you a deeper appreciation for the challenge of representing regional and remote Western Australia in a meaningful way. To that end, my Parliamentary National Party colleagues and I invite you to join any or all of us during our electorate travels.

Thank you for considering our views and I look forward to your response. Please don’t hesitate to contact my office should you wish to arrange a visit to the electorate with one of our Members of Parliament.

How many responses do members reckon I got from these 10 academic activists? None—crickets. I did not even get a response. Their response should have been, “Thank you for writing back to our letter. Sorry, we don’t have time to leave the golden triangle to traipse around your electorate for a few days and meet your constituents, because they don’t matter.”

Tabling of Paper

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Can the member table the response he has just read from?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Member, could you identify the document you are quoting from, and then in due course you may be asked to table it.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Mr Deputy President, I confirm that it is a letter from me to Professor John Phillimore, executive director of the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy. I seek leave to table the document.

[Leave granted. See paper [195](#).]

Debate Resumed

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I thank the house for its indulgence. I think it was important that I actually took the time—I do not know how many other members did—to respond to these academic activists and invite them to come and visit my electorate and my colleagues’ electorates, but I did not get a single word back from them. They are not interested.

In question time this week I started to pursue with the parliamentary secretary who these characters are—these experts on this committee. It appears from the answers I have received that they have a bit of background with the government. They might even have a bit of background with the Labor Party, judging by the answers I have received. It would appear some of them have worked for Labor governments, ministers and Deputy Premiers. It all goes to the question: how impartial, how unbiased, is this ministerial expert committee? There is no regional representation on this ministerial expert committee. As far as I am aware, all members live in Perth and have very fixed views, which they have published routinely. The review is being led by the Minister for Electoral Affairs in chief, about whom this house has passed a motion stating it has no confidence in him. He is the one leading this review.

Another limb of my motion is to ask parliamentary parties in this house to be allowed to vote in accordance with their conscience and in the interest of their constituents when considering any legislative proposal for reform. We all know that is not possible in the Labor Party. They are all like lemmings. The Labor lemmings all march to the cliff and jump off, and I doubt anything is going to change any time soon.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Hon Kyle McGinn has been promoted to keep him in line!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Members, there will be an opportunity for members to contribute.

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [10.30 am]: I rise on behalf of the Parliamentary Liberal Party to speak in favour of this motion for a number of reasons. First of all, as Hon Martin Aldridge recounted to the chamber, the Premier on repeated occasions exclaimed that electoral reform was not on the government's agenda. I recall that on the night of the televised debate, journalist Peter Law also put that question to him and was probably left with an unsatisfactory response. Nevertheless, history being what it is, the Labor Party won the election quite comprehensively and moved swiftly to implement electoral reform, as it advised.

I will focus on the terms of reference of the ministerial expert panel's inquiry. If there are three words that should send a chill through the blood, it is the phrase "ministerial expert panel". Hand-picked people will deliver an outcome that is, to some degree, predetermined. But there is a problem of logic with the reform proposed because the government is conflating two very different issues as one. The first is the perversion of outcomes that emanate from group voting tickets. It should come as no surprise to the government that a member who was voted in on 98 votes will be sworn into this place in a couple of weeks. It should come as no surprise to members, because this almost occurred at the last election when a Fluoride Free WA candidate for the East Metropolitan Region potentially got very close on about 1 100 or 1 200 primary votes. The perversions of group voting tickets and preference harvesting and preference whispering were never on the agenda of this government during its previous term, and I often wondered why that would be. I suspect that it is because the centre-right parties, particularly the Liberal Party, fragment. We have people who run under the monikers of Liberals for Climate and Liberal Democrats. If a party were perhaps set up and called itself "Labor for Roe 8" or "Labor for the Retention of Jobs at Fremantle port", Labor probably would have dealt with the perversion of group voting tickets earlier in the piece, but I am a cynic and I am paid to be a cynic to some degree. There is very obviously a conflation here between the amount of regional representation and the kinds of perverse outcomes that emanate as a consequence of preference harvesting, preference whispering and group voting tickets.

With respect to the latter, we have been on the record as saying that we would support reform in that area—quite explicitly so. I cite an op-ed from 13 June 2019 from my friend the Deputy President, titled "Put voters back in charge on poll day". I will table this article after I read out a few quotes. I think this should seize the mind. I think we could get this done pretty quickly if members focus on this dimension. Hon Simon O'Brien wrote —

It's time to give electors a direct say and put an end to registered preference tickets for the WA Legislative Council.

...

We should put the "preference harvesters" and backroom deal-makers out of business.

I do not now hear howls of derision or outrage about these concepts. I think this is what the new Minister for Electoral Affairs wants to accomplish too, if I am to take him at his word. But two years ago Hon Simon O'Brien said —

The McGowan Government should not stand in their way but instead embrace what should be an essential, bipartisan reform.

That is, dispensing with group voting tickets. If Labor brought a bill to this place and read it in next week, we would pass it, but instead it wants to be clever—a little bit too clever by half. We have absolutely nothing but respect for the credentials and the expertise of the members of this panel; I want to be explicit about that. One can admire somebody's academic pedigree, their expertise and commitment to their craft and the integrity of their personal character, but that does not mean that these people come into this process without any preconceived notions or biases. They quite obviously do. The tabling of the letter from 20 February 2019, co-authored by 10 academics who cite four areas of electoral reform, is a clear indication that there is not so much a degree of open mindedness about the outcome of regional reform.

I am also concerned about another aspect of this issue and it is the co-option and perversion of words such as "equality", "one vote, one value" and "malapportionment". These are not objective definitions. They are loaded definitions. I think there is a lack of understanding about equity, and equality as it applies to Western Australians who live outside the metropolitan area, for the reasons Hon Martin Aldridge has indicated. We do not know what the final complexion of what Labor is proposing will be, because I hear all kinds of interesting tales about the models Labor is contemplating. I have heard there will potentially be eight-member metropolitan districts with two regional districts of six apiece—sort of an eight, eight, eight and 12 model. I do not know whether that is on

the agenda. I have heard concepts of a unified statewide model. I think that would be quite dangerous because if we are trying to stop micro-parties with very, very narrow interests being voted in, that is the way to vote them in. I think we can see that happen in New South Wales.

We should say that there should be no diminution or reduction in regional representation in this chamber. Labor has not made that case. Certainly, we should not see an expansion in the number of metropolitan members in this chamber. The state Parliament of Western Australia does not need more metropolitan members in the upper house. Absolutely we need to be explicit about that. There is a compelling element in the motion as put, and it is at paragraph (c). If members are serious about equality, particularly equality of opportunity and representation, I think paragraph (c) of this motion should seize their mind. If members do not think that regional communities are already disenfranchised as it is, I think they need to spend more time in those communities. I am not here to lecture regional members either, Hon Kyle McGinn. I know that Hon Kyle McGinn is a genuine person, but I think that this is where Labor is taking us—blindly. Paragraph (d) of this motion is very interesting. I doubt that it will ever be granted, but I think we should do it just out of morbid curiosity because I would like to see how many of the incoming turkeys vote for Christmas!

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.38 am]: I thank the member for bringing the important issue of voting equality to the floor of this chamber. I have heard some nonsense today, and I am sure we will hear a bit more, about how people in the city or Perth, or however we want to describe it, somehow lack any kind of appreciation or understanding about what happens outside the metropolitan region scheme. My electorate of East Metropolitan Region includes areas such as Jarrahdale, Keysbrook, Bullsbrook and other such places. They are not exactly inner-city, latte-sipping parts of the world. They face a number of the same sorts of issues that other people talk about.

When we talk about the issue of disadvantage, there is absolutely no question that remoteness is a disadvantage, but there are other disadvantages in our society, and, believe it or not, they are held by people living within the metropolitan region. I have heard no-one on the other side mention Aboriginal people, people whose language is other than English, people with disability, aged people or young people. They are all disadvantaged as well, but do any of the opposition propose giving any amount of weighting to their vote?

Hon Tjorn Sibma: Do you?

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Let me finish my argument, member.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Members, I am listening to the parliamentary secretary and so should you.

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The question is: should we give weight to all disadvantage or should we give it to none? We cannot give weight to all disadvantage. We have had a privileged system in this state for a particular element of the population. Let's get to that point. We talk about regional representation as though there is some sense of equality in the system that currently exists. Members will not be surprised that the government is not supporting the motion today.

I now turn to some of the irrefutable facts in the voting for candidates and parties in the Legislative Council at the 2021 election. A vote in Kalgoorlie, which is about 600 kilometres from Perth, is worth 1.4 times more than a vote in Esperance, which is about 700 kilometres from Perth. I hope that when the Nationals WA make a submission to the committee, it addresses that. How do we fix up the inequality that exists between Esperance and Kalgoorlie? Kalgoorlie has a train service that runs to and from Perth. Esperance has no such service, but we do not hear members opposite talk about that.

Hon Diane Evers: Yes, we need more trains!

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Exactly; member, I agree with you.

The vote of an elector in Kalgoorlie, again about 600 kilometres from Perth, is worth 3.48 times more than the vote of an elector in Albany. The opposition's argument about Albany, when the Premier was there, did not even take into account —

Hon Colin Holt interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, let us not have constant interjection.

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The argument did not even take into account that two people between Kalgoorlie —

Hon Colin Holt interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I am not taking interjections.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable member, I do not know what I am going to do with you. Perhaps you did not hear me when I asked you to desist from constant interjections.

Hon Colin Holt: I have been here too long.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Particularly on me. Parliamentary secretary, please, resume—in silence.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Perhaps members do not want to hear these irrefutable facts about the current electoral system for the Legislative Council, hence their constant interruptions. However, I shall continue.

Hon Martin Aldridge referred to an interview that happened in Albany, but he did not refer to the fact that the vote of an Albany voter is almost four times less than that of a vote in Kalgoorlie. They are not interested in those anomalies or anything that will fix up that sort of thing.

I will give an example in my electorate of East Metropolitan Region. Wooroloo, where there was a bushfire not that long ago, is what most people would describe as a country town. It is part of the East Metropolitan Region because it falls within the metropolitan region scheme. A vote in Wooroloo is worth a staggering four times less than a vote in Wundowie, which is 8.9 kilometres down the road. What is the justification for that? There is no justification for that. How do I go to the electors of Wooroloo and say, “I am sorry; the vote of a person in Wundowie is worth four times your vote, but that’s okay, because it suits the National Party and Liberal Party agenda”? A vote in Bindoon is 4.2 times more than a vote in Two Rocks. Let us think about that. Two Rocks is not that much further away from the city. I acknowledge that there is a little difference, but why should a vote there be four times less in vote weighting? I note that Hon Martin Aldridge’s electorate office is in Bindoon.

Hon Martin Aldridge: You should visit.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: My family used to own property in Bindoon, so I am quite familiar with Bindoon and that area. I guess, because the member is labouring under the burden of disadvantage of having his office in Bindoon, that he needs a vote worth four times that of the people in Two Rocks.

Last night, I did a little google search and wondered how long it would take to drive from Parliament House to Bindoon. It was 52 minutes. I then did the same search for one of my towns—I think it was Jarrahdale—and it was about 50 or 56 minutes. The result for Keysbrook was almost the same. But it seems the voters in Bindoon need four times as much say as my electors in Jarrahdale! A vote in Madora Bay is worth 1.84 times more than a vote in Singleton, suburbs that are 4.8 kilometres apart. A vote in Kalbarri is 1.48 times more than a vote in Geraldton. A vote in Northam is 4.34 times more than a vote in Rockingham. We could go on and talk about all the problems within this system and the ridiculous results that it throws up in terms of representation in here. I do not know what other people’s definition of “representative democracy” is, but my view is that this house should reflect the will of the people. That should be a basic tenet of the principles of what we do in here; that is, we should reflect the will of the people as accurately as possible. For many years, members opposite have had the advantage of a system that has not reflected the will of the people.

Hon Martin Aldridge interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The member is addressing the chair.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Thank you, Deputy President. In 2017, we had an anomalous result in which the Greens, for example, had four representatives and the National Party had four representatives. In that case, the Greens vote was twice that of the National Party, but that was okay! There are Greens voters across the state whose vote is worth less, according to the National Party, than the voters for the National Party. But members of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation should be outraged. Its vote was higher than the Greens’ vote and the Nationals’ vote and it got three representatives—later two, of course, but those circumstances are beyond the electoral system’s control.

It is not and should not be a controversial statement that people in this state should be equal before the law and equal when they go to the ballot box. That should be not a controversial statement, but it very much has been.

Hon Pierre Yang interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Pierre Yang, look at what you have started. Members will come to order and listen to the parliamentary secretary.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Of course, we could debate this matter at great length. Unfortunately, the debate is time limited, so I will have to cut short pointing out the anomalies of a system that obviously undermines the legitimacy of what happens in this house.

It is correct that electoral reform was not on the government’s agenda. I do not think anyone could deny that, but there is no plausible way the government could have predicted that the Daylight Saving Party candidate in the Mining and Pastoral Region would be elected on 98 votes. Nobody was predicting that.

Again, the results of this last election have shown that the system, in many respects, is broken. It is not democratic. Who would have expected a candidate to be elected on such a low number of first preference votes when others, such as Hon Alison Xamon received 27 000 votes? Does it not concern opposition members that 27 000 people who supported Hon Alison Xamon in the North Metropolitan Region do not get a representative, but that 98 votes is okay?

The existing group voting ticket system for distribution of preferences, coupled with malapportionment—I am not sure which university Hon Tjorn Sibma went to, but when I studied political science, malapportionment, voting equality and those sorts of things were actually —

Hon Tjorn Sibma: Political science is not a real science.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The parliamentary secretary.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Thank you, Deputy President. When I was at university being taught by esteemed academics like Campbell Sharman, we talked about things like malapportionment in a politically scientific way, and it certainly was not an issue that was loaded in the way that it has been talked about in here. It is loaded only in the sense that it is something that has existed and persisted in our electoral system in Western Australia. We acknowledge there are issues with group ticket voting and we will ask the panel to look at it. Glenn Druery is not exactly the kind of person we want involved in our electoral system.

He is behind some shady dealings. None of us have any real understanding of the way that he works, how he goes about it or the way that he plays groups off against each other. The money he leverages out of these groups to supposedly give them an advantage is something that we should get rid of from our system. I think that will occur over the coming four years. I know that Hon Tjorn Sibma wants us to rush to do that, but that will happen in due course. The next election is not until four years' time, so we will see how that plays out through the expert panel.

To be kind to some of the members opposite who have spoken, they have skirted very close to the line in the way in which they have described the members of the ministerial expert panel. There is no question that they are esteemed members in their fields. Their reputations are unimpeachable. The fact that they have been involved in the Western Australian political system in the past is favourable, because they have experience.

Hon Martin Aldridge interjected.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I think that if I come back to the letter that was referred to —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Members on both sides will cease interjecting.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I received the same letter that Hon Martin Aldridge referred to from which he quoted Professor Harry Phillips. What the member did not mention was that Professor Harry Phillips was a signatory to the letter that was sent to all of us. Harry Phillips agrees—he put his name to this—that there needs to be the kind of reform of the Legislative Council that the signatories described. Let us talk about who these experts are who signed this letter. They are: Associate Professor Martin Drum, University of Notre Dame; Professor Ben Reilly, University of Western Australia; Professor Quentin Beresford, Edith Cowan University; Associate Professor Sarah Murray, University of Western Australia; Honorary Professor Harry Phillips, AM, Edith Cowan University; Dr Ian Cook, Murdoch University; Professor John Phillimore, Curtin University; Professor Kanishka Jayasuriya, Murdoch University; Professor Alan Fenna, Curtin University; Professor Mark Benson, University of Western Australia; Emeritus Professor David Black, AM, Curtin University; and Dr Janice Dudley, Murdoch University.

The problem members opposite have is they say those signatories have a biased view. It is not a biased view to look at how we can improve our democratic institutions and put forward those arguments. It is biased only if members opposite think that they will lose out. The Nationals WA certainly did not lose out after the 2005 reforms. In fact, after 2005, the National Party held the balance of power. It had more members in here than it had ever had. What about now? Currently, the Nationals WA is the official opposition. It is like Chicken Little. The National Party is running around saying that the sky is going to fall in because of electoral reform. Do members know what it will actually do? It will make National Party members get off their butts and do some work in their electorates and make them speak to their members and put forward an agenda that can be supported by the people of Western Australia. Congratulations! We will help them out at the next election by giving them a reason to get out there and better represent their people.

I might end my comments on the man whom the National Party has put number one on the Mining and Pastoral Region ticket. I do not know how the National Party vets its candidates, but when the National Party puts a candidate up for the upper house, given how important National Party members say it is, the National Party might want to get the candidate's views on what the candidate thinks about the upper house in the first place. On Monday, 3 May, Nick "Big Nick" Fardell was asked on ABC Goldfields–Esperance radio about the review into electoral reform. "Big Nick" said that the review does not go far enough because it has ruled out abolishing the Legislative Council.

Several members interjected.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The National Party's number one candidate for the Mining and Pastoral Region wants this place abolished—18 regional members wiped off the map—and members opposite have the temerity to come in here and make accusations about how we deal with regional Western Australia. We have the best Minister for Regional Development there has ever been—the best agriculture minister there has ever been.

Several members interjected.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: We have fantastic regional members.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! One at a time.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I might leave it on that note and say that I will welcome our new regional representatives when they come here. The Labor Party will continue to be the best representatives of regional Western Australians that they have ever had.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan) [10.54 am]: Can I just say that after the last election, the Labor Party, without a shadow of doubt, can stand in front of a camera and say, “We’ve got a mandate.” Unlike any government before, it can say that it has a mandate for pretty much everything except electoral reform. You guys have got absolutely zero credibility on electoral reform—no credibility whatsoever. The Premier went out ad infinitum talking about there being no changes to electoral reform. He said constantly and unambiguously throughout the length and breadth of the state that it was not on his agenda. Members opposite cannot deny that. However, before the ink had even dried on the ministerial documents, the then Attorney General, now also the Minister for Electoral Affairs, wrote an opinion piece less than a month later talking about electoral reform. He wrote —

As WA’s Minister for Electoral Affairs, I last week appointed an expert committee to advise me on how to reform voting for the Council, which is sometimes known as the Upper House, or House of Review.

There are no plans to change the system of voting in the Legislative Assembly, or Lower House, where each member represents a district and those in regional areas are given a weighting so that large electorates can be well served by their MP.

He conveniently forgot about that opinion piece when he was on the radio the other day talking about Esperance and Kalgoorlie. Members opposite have the convenient habit of forgetting about things when it suits them. Look at the extraordinary Corruption and Crime Commission report that was handed down today. The Labor Party did not get its own way with the head of the CCC and so it wants to change the rules. It has now got its own way on representation in regional Western Australia, yet it still wants to change it even further. Why? I say to the parliamentary secretary, for whom I have great respect, that we are not talking about quotas for Aboriginal people et cetera. That is not on the government’s agenda, which the parliamentary secretary mentioned in his response. We are not talking about quotas for Aboriginal people or a certain cohort of the population; we are talking about reforming the Legislative Council to ensure, yet again, that more representatives will be taken out of regional Western Australia. That is what the parliamentary secretary is talking about. Let us not forget that members opposite created the system that we exist under. They created it—no-one else.

Several members interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: They carry on and take the high moral ground that somehow they are Ghandi and Mother Teresa sitting over there and that there are no problems with ambiguity or of the Labor Party contradicting its views. The Labor Party said that it would not do anything about reforming the electoral system. The Minister for Electoral Affairs said one thing and the parliamentary secretary said another. I wish you guys would talk to each other. I do not know what the Minister for Electoral Affairs said to the parliamentary secretary or to the Premier, but, for goodness sake, talk about forks in the road! You guys look like Legoland—you’re all over the place.

What I will say about electoral systems is that we are unique in Australia. We have in Australia a diverse system in this great nation of ours. When the founding fathers created the Constitution in 1901, in their wisdom, they created a bicameral system with the House of Representatives, the lower house—the people’s house—and the upper house, which is known as the Senate. Why do we have the Senate? It is to keep a check and balance on the lower house. Why? It is because the golden triangle of Sydney and Melbourne would otherwise have completely dominated all legislation. The founding fathers said that we would have an upper house with equal representation, so each state was allocated six senators each. The Constitution also has a nexus section so that every time there is an increase in representation in the lower house, there is a corresponding increase in the Senate. Therefore, we now have 12 senators per state. We have 12 senators in Tasmania for half a million people, 12 senators in New South Wales for eight million people and 12 senators in Victoria for almost seven million people. Is that terrible? Of course it is not. Do members know why? It is because it protects the smaller states. The only way the Australian Constitution can be changed is through three processes: it has to pass through both houses of Parliament; it has to get a majority of votes; and it has to get a majority of votes in a majority of the states. Even if the big boys in the golden triangle on the east coast gang up and want something changed, it cannot happen if the smaller states vote against it—and that has happened on numerous occasions. We have had 44 opportunities to change the Constitution in this great nation of ours, and it has changed only eight times. Of course, the referendum to recognise Aboriginal people in the Constitution was a no-brainer. We have also had a referendum to determine the retiring age of judges and those sorts of things. We have referendums about significant issues and when the big boys try to gang up on the smaller states, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia say, “Thanks, guys, but no thanks.”

We have pretty much the same system here in WA with the upper house so that everything is not focused on the city. We have a system in which regional representation has equal representation. How unfair is that? If it is good enough for the Senate, which it is, why are you guys not bleating about the Senate? I have not seen the Labor Party

come out recently and say that it wants to reform the Senate or get rid of the Senate. Do members know why? It is because the Senate ensures that the smaller states are represented. The Senate is there for a very real purpose and it has served us well. It ensures that one party does not have a majority of both houses—that happens very rarely in the Senate—because when one party does get a majority in both houses, they get ahead of themselves. Ask John Howard. He had a thumping majority in 2004 but was wiped out in 2007. When you guys get control of both houses and start bulldozing things through for which you do not have a mandate, such as electoral reform, you should remember that. I would love to know what would have happened at the last election in regional Western Australia if the Premier had said when he was on ABC radio down in Albany, “Oh no, we’re going to get rid of this. You guys can’t have more representation than the city. We’re going to get rid of that.” How many people who voted for you guys in the regions would have done so if they knew that you guys were going to take away their representation? I would love to know what would have happened.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Robin Chapple): I am listening to Hon Peter Collier.

Hon Matthew Swinbourn interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I did not open my mouth once when Hon Matthew Swinbourn was on his feet.

All I am asking is why the Labor Party was not honest with the people of Western Australia. Why was it not honest with regional Western Australia, because it was not? We have a system in Western Australia that offers checks and balances —

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Do you mind, Hon Kyle McGinn?

Our system provides checks and balances. We have a bicameral system. We are unique. I was a minister for almost nine years and I spent an enormous amount of time up in the Pilbara, the Kimberley, the midwest, the south west, the great southern and the eastern goldfields, which is my home town —

Hon Matthew Swinbourn interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Do you mind, Hon Matthew Swinbourn?

I saw the unique challenges that those regions have. Let us ask one of the representatives from the Mining and Pastoral Region, the Agricultural Region or the South West Region if they have it, dare I say it, as easy as say someone like me as a member for North Metropolitan. Goodness gracious, on a bad day it might take me an hour to get from one end of my electorate to the other! Is that not terrible, members for Mining and Pastoral? Fancy it taking me an hour; one would not get from Esperance to Kalgoorlie in that time. What I am saying to you guys is that we have a unique system. If there is a necessity for reform to the electoral system, so be it. I was electoral affairs minister for almost five years. Changes to the electoral system have usually been done, by convention, by consensus with the parties to form some sort of view and bring the public along on the issue. That is not the case with you guys; yet again you have changed the goalposts. Because the government now has a thumping majority in both houses, it does not matter that it went out and told the public of Western Australia, particularly in the regions, “We are basically going to napalm your representation.” All that matters now is that the government is saying, “It is our way or the highway”, which is exactly what it has done with the Corruption and Crime Commission issue. I say to you guys: you do not have a mandate for this. If you want to look at legitimate reform, please do so, but do not say, “We’ve created a committee and the committee will provide evidence.” I have great respect for Malcolm McCusker as well; indeed, I regard him as a friend. What I am saying is that the government already knows what it is going to do. This committee is tokenism. The government already knows what it is going to do and that is why it has given people only a month to comment. If it did not know what it was going to do, it would have given people six months to comment and it would have spoken to members of the opposite parties and the community. As I said when I started, the Labor government now has a thumping majority but it does not have any mandate whatsoever for electoral reform.

Hon Simon O’Brien interjected.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: This is getting complicated. I am going to give the call to the minister. I understand the disappointment on members’ faces but I give the call to the minister to put her response.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [11.04 am]: Thank you, Mr Acting President.

Point of Order

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Mr Acting President, I make the point that the parliamentary secretary has already given the government’s response; you may have been absent on urgent parliamentary business when that happened. The official government response has already been given and I thought you might want to take that into consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Robin Chapple): I have given the call and I am sticking by it.

Debate Resumed

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I am glad to see that members are so enthusiastic to hear my presentation on this motion. I start by saying that the clear undertaking that the Premier gave during the election was that enhanced regional representation will remain. Of course, it is very clear from all that has been said that there is no proposal to change the system in the Legislative Assembly. As members know, there are provisions that allow for very large lower house electorates to apply imputed voters, which enables those electorates to have fewer actual voters. We know that the Nationals WA is a particular beneficiary of that because there are only 11 000 voters in North West Central compared with the 28 000 voters or more in a metropolitan electorate. The Premier was very clear: whatever happens, there will be enhanced regional representation. He has made that very clear. Indeed, by making the commitment that we are not seeking to change the system in the Legislative Assembly, he has honoured that commitment. Members opposite have quoted what the Premier said and I am saying that he is delivering on that. It is true that what he said about the issue more broadly was that electoral reform was not on his agenda. At no point did he say that we are not going to proceed with electoral reform. As has been stated by the parliamentary secretary, some very anomalous results emerged after the election, which means, of course, that there has to be some reform of voting in the upper house; certainly, there has to be reform to deal with preference harvesting. In that context, we decided to look more generally at how this house, the house of review, can reflect the will of the people more closely. Labor Party members in this house are already very proud because the Labor Party already had the greatest regional representation. That will be even more so when the new members come into this chamber on 25 May. I think we will have 10 regional members in this place; indeed, we will have the same number of regional members that the other side has in its total number of members. We are not a party that represents just the wheatbelt; we represent the whole state.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Robin Chapple): Order! This is my last turn in this chair. I do not like shouting across the chamber. I ask members to listen to the member on her feet with some degree of silence. There will obviously be some degree of interjection, but I do not like shouting across the chamber.

Hon Martin Aldridge: Where are the regional members?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: They are certainly not all the ones who live in Como and Wembley or have popped an office on the edge of the metropolitan area. They are not the “MetroNats”! They are people who have had generations in the Kimberley —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: I do not know whether you heard what I just said. This is my last time in the chair and I would like to be able to get out of here with a bit of decorum.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I know that Hon Martin Aldridge is a particular fan of “Big Nick”. I am sure he would have been right behind Big Nick, the perennial candidate. Having lost on several occasions now, Big Nick is finally saying, “A pox on all of you; let’s go.”

The parliamentary secretary made a very important point; perhaps it was made on a level of sophistication that some members were unable to grasp. Hon Matthew Swinbourn was saying that there are many forms of disadvantage in our community. Some of those disadvantages are regional, although I am always very concerned about the way some parties have a business model to talk down life in the regions, even though there are some absolutely glorious things about life in the regions—that sense of community and connection with the land; those things are demeaned when people go out and tell the story that this is a bad life. The point that the parliamentary secretary made, which is quite a powerful point, is that there are all sorts of disadvantage within our community. There are socio-economic and geographic disadvantages, and issues relating to race and historic disadvantage. We cannot deal with all those levels of disadvantage in this place. I think the case has to be made about why, with all those different advantages, we want to focus on one element of disadvantage and make that the focus within this place.

There are some interesting discussions and debates to be had. That is genuinely why we have created an expert committee to advise. This is not an assured outcome. It is clear that the government has a desire to ensure that this house better reflects its community. We do not know at this point, and we certainly do not have a pre-determined view about exactly what that should look like. That is why we have this expert committee.

Members on the other side of the house are pontificating. There used to be a property qualification for people seeking to be voted in as members of this place right up until the late 1960s. It was defended solidly —

Hon Donna Faragher: In the 1960s? Half of us weren’t even born then!

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: This is really instructive for the high-calibre members of the Liberal Party. History only commenced when they were born. Let us forget the rest of it! But not, of course, Hon Peter Collier, because he was reflecting on the Senate. He said let us just be like the Senate. He is on urgent parliamentary business. There was a coming together of the states. There was a referendum in each colony. They were not states; they were colonies—separate self-governing entities. They voted on whether they were prepared to go into the commonwealth. This has never happened. We have never had a vote in the Mining and Pastoral Region, the agricultural sector, the

South West Region or the metropolitan area, saying that we are prepared to come together! We have a completely and utterly different set of circumstances within this state. Those of us who see the role of this place as a house of review want to make sure that we can do our job fairly and properly and represent the people of this state.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [11.15 am]: I rise only briefly so that other members have a chance to speak. I wanted to mention, on behalf of One Nation, that we have had this discussion in the past. We say to the government of the day that it should be very, very careful in looking at any changes to our system. If we look at how Western Australia has performed over many years, the system of this government—both the lower house and the upper house combined—has made WA an exceptional state in Australia, and a part of the Federation. Although I am not happy with Mr Glenn Druery's system, we have to be very careful about making changes. We noticed that prior to the last federal election, changes were made to try to stop that situation. That change seemed to have worked very well, but the jury is still out on that. We need to look at that and see how it works. We must be careful. Where the Labor Party is today is not where it will be in maybe 12 or 20 years' time. If it makes changes based on what is good for it now politically, that will be one of the nightmares that it will face in the future.

I am a leader of a small party that has real trouble getting lower house members elected. That is something that may happen in time, but it is not a reasonable expectation for us to get lower house members elected. Regional members were elected to represent our party and the people of Western Australia; we should remember that 180 000 people voted for One Nation at the election before the last one. We are in different circumstances. We all know the reasons why; I will not go on about that. I congratulate the government for its win. The big thing is that government members must be very careful before they change things.

Members' representation and the way the system is worked out is because of the size of our state. It is a massive state—bigger than most countries in the world. It has particular issues and problems, and consultation needs to occur right around the state. We need upper house members, like the honourable member sitting next to me, doing the miles and representing another view, not just one view, because democracy is not just about numbers.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Honourable members!

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: I listened to members opposite. The government has already had two goes. This is my go. Please give me the respect that I deserve.

Our system worked so well for all those years because it is designed for our state; it is particular for our state. As I said, we need different voices around the table. When we do not have different voices around the table and in this Parliament, we do not know what mistakes we are making because no-one is challenging us and pointing out that a great number of people have a different view from our view; no-one is in here representing them in Parliament. Yes, I am standing up for small parties. I have talked to the Greens on this issue. In many ways, they agree that although change is needed—but as with most things, as I always say—they also say be very careful. This is a very important issue. Why would the Premier not try to highlight this coming into an election? We know the reason why; he did not want it to become an issue because he knows that people would probably not have voted for him if he had come out and said that he was definitely making changes. Those are the facts. That is why he acted the way he acted—we all know that! We can talk about it forever, but that is the truth and if someone has been around long enough, common sense tells them that. As a party, we believe that the system we have now for the upper house, although it is not perfect, gives people throughout this state a chance for their voices to be heard. It gives parties like ours, who make up a substantial number of people in this state, a chance. We do not talk to Glenn Druery to ask his advice to get elected. We actually go about it in the democratic way and we work as hard as we can to earn our stripes. I say to government members: you have the power now; be very careful how you wield that power.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [11.20 am]: Much more will be said about this motion on electoral reform, I am sure. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth, and we have had a preview of that already. Who knows? There might even be pious windbagery in the course of this debate. I want to offer a few observations that might help guide members.

In respect of the panel that has been set up under the chair of the very capable Malcolm McCusker, I do not offer any disrespect and I am sure the panel will look at a multifaceted policy situation in a genuine manner. Given the shortness of time, I will not be putting in a written submission to that panel beyond this submission, which will be that I would like to constructively engage with the panel members. If they would like the benefit of any observations that I may have to make, based on being in the trenches for a heck of a long time, I should be delighted to discuss them, and that might provide some dimensions that might assist the panel members in their deliberations. Over to them if they want take up any of that.

Let me remind members here of the old cliché: there are lies, damned lies and statistics! Let me throw a few around. The other day I gave my farewell speech, which was, alas, for some of you, not the last speech. Did members hear that? It was a farewell speech, but I did not say that it was going to be my last speech! Now, I can get away with that, but I do not think members will let the government get away with that sort of verbal gymnastics in due course. Oh, you are going to enjoy listening to the debate, parliamentary secretary Hon Matthew Swinbourn, and

congratulations on your appointment, too, sir. I mentioned in my farewell speech that in 1993—or whenever it was—we received 45 per cent of the vote in the South Metropolitan Region. The Greens received five per cent of the vote. It was nine to one and the Greens got one member and we got two members. I had no complaints then and I have no complaints now. This is the system that we have to work with. There have been sundry anomalies that people can point to over a period of time. We had a Liberal Democrat—bless him, dear fellow—run successfully in the South Metropolitan Region. That could have taken the vote off the Liberal Party, and it did, but he actually won a seat off the Greens, whereas Labor won our third seat. He actually stopped the Greens from getting in—something for which we are eternally grateful, of course, Hon Aaron Stonehouse.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Robin Chapple): Please direct your remarks to the chair.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will do, sir.

I want to put a couple of the figures and so-called facts into context. During these last four years when I was the Liberal spokesman on electoral matters it has been suggested to me that it is not a disgrace that it takes seven times the number of votes to get me elected as it does for someone in the Mining and Pastoral Region. That is terrible. But I said that I am not complaining about it because the truth of the matter is under the system set up by Labor in 1986 in this place and tweaked by it in tumultuous circumstances that I witnessed as a member in 2003, it was determined that there shall be representation from all regions in Western Australia and it shall be a system of proportional representation to make sure that there is sufficient scope for minor parties to gain representation. Those were the goals that were set out whether we liked it or not. That brings me to the point and my response to the complaints of “there’s seven votes for me and isn’t that terrible and don’t you feel hard done by?” No; I do not! It takes 14.28 per cent of the voters in South Metro to elect me and it takes 14.28 per cent of the voters in Mining and Pastoral to return eminent members such as Hon Kyle McGinn.

Hon Darren West: It only takes 98 in Mining and Pastoral.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It takes 14.28 per cent. Now, please try to understand!

The number of people who are concerned about this who have written to me over the years offering that same view I could count easily on the fingers of one hand. It is not a pressing issue. People in South Metro do not come up to me and say, “Oh, it takes seven of our votes to elect you. It’s a disgrace!” They do not do that! Have a look over the years at the representation in this place. Have a look at the percentage of the statewide vote that the Greens get. I could point out in several Parliaments that it received eight per cent of the vote and about nine per cent of the seats. It is the same for us. It is the same for the Labor Party. It is funny how overall it does tend to work. This issue becomes conflated and confused by those who want to point out that they do not need any change in the Assembly.

In the Assembly in the last Parliament, the Labor Party received about 47 per cent of the primary vote and it received 68 per cent of the seats. There were no complaints from us! That is the system! It is possible if the votes were spread evenly across all demographics, a party could get 50.1 per cent in every one of those seats and that one party could get 100 per cent of the seats. It is technically quite possible. In the recent election, we saw something approaching that. I do not know what the percentage of seats the Labor Party has—it must be getting up around the 90 per cent mark. It certainly received a very big vote, but it did not get 90 per cent of the vote. Do members see what I mean? We can cut equality of representation in a number of ways. We are not grizzling about what happened in the Assembly. It is what it is. The Liberal Party in particular needs to pull its blinking socks up and work out what it stands for! We know that. We members in the upper house believe we know what it stands for, but it is up to the party at large to demonstrate that to the public and then the party will start winning more seats again. It is as simple as that. But to suggest that there is equality in that place of the pure type that some, dare I say it, academics or people for whom the argument is convenient is a nonsense! Does it take the same number of people to elect me—back in the day—as the number of people in the East Metropolitan Region or the North Metropolitan Region? No! There are 15 Assembly districts in South Metro and 14 districts in theirs. Are we complaining? No, because by and large it works itself out.

What I do know is that we have a metropolitan area and there are problems about power being concentrated in the metro area, which is what happens by default because of the way our population is spread with that concentration around the Perth metropolitan area, and it has ever been so. I think all members comprehend the inequities that political expediency visits on that sort of scenario. But it was determined in the past that we needed regional representation and that the place where it should be done is in the upper house where the Mining and Pastoral Region does have a community of interest—ditto for the Agricultural Region and South West Region.

We can have a community of interest and needs and limitations that perhaps does not exist elsewhere. That certainly is not the case in the Legislative Assembly. What I would put to members, again when we are cutting these figures every which way—I have given a number of glaring examples that show that some of the arguments being advanced are a nonsense—is that at the moment the Mining and Pastoral Region, to use that as an example, has six members returned from that vast part of Western Australia. Six! The metropolitan region has 18. Seriously, do we need further imbalance? Those are the sorts of questions members here will have to grapple with, and I wish them luck in doing it.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.

1946 PILBARA STRIKE*Motion*

HON LAURIE GRAHAM (Agricultural) [11.30 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house recognises and celebrates the courage and determination of the Pilbara Aboriginal station workers, who, 75 years ago, took a stand for justice and commenced Australia's longest strike. We acknowledge their actions became an inspiration for a generation of Australians and an important milestone in the march to equality.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to move this motion. It is something I did not expect. Like others who have spoken here today, we thought we had made our valedictory speeches and we were gone.

Hon Simon O'Brien: There's plenty of miles left in you, my friend.

Hon LAURIE GRAHAM: There are not too many—not in these sorts of forums anyway! I think I will go back to my rightful place.

When the opportunity came, I was glad that members of my party gave me the opportunity to move a motion in private members' business today. It is appropriate because the question was asked whether one needed to be alive at the time to talk about these matters. I just happened to be alive when this occurred—I might have been in the cradle, but I was around at that stage.

In 1946, 800 Aboriginal pastoral workers from 27 stations in Western Australia walked off the job. They did it for better pay and conditions. The background and build-up to that strike make it an amazing story. It was the first industrial action by Aboriginal people since colonisation in 1788 and predated the famous Wave Hill strike in the Northern Territory by 20 years. The Pilbara strike lasted until 1949, making it the longest strike in Australia's history. From the 1890s to the 1920s it was common for Aboriginal workers to be paid in rations of food and clothing without receiving any financial remuneration. During the 1920s some workers began to receive minimum wages. The Native Administration Act 1936 legally compelled pastoralists to provide shelter and meet the medical needs of their workers, but sadly that was rarely enforced by government.

Generally, Aboriginal stockmen were housed in corrugated iron humpies. Perhaps one could say that was an improvement on some of the other conditions they lived in if they did not live inside those stations. However, they did not have any sanitation, furniture or cooking facilities. It was illegal for Aboriginal people to leave their place of employment, even if they were not being paid. It was even illegal to pay them wages equal to a white man's wage, which is something I found astounding when reading about the background of the strike. I thought they would at least be paid a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. I was surprised when researching this matter to find out that that was illegal.

In 1942 a secret Aboriginal law meeting was held to discuss a proposed strike, an idea first discussed by white labourer and prospector Don McLeod and Aboriginal people Clancy McKenna, Dooley Bin Bin and elder Peter "Kangushot" Coppin from the Pilbara community. They were instrumental in calling together the 1942 meeting. Two hundred lawmen from 23 Aboriginal groups met on that occasion. After a fair period of negotiation, they decided they would go on strike on 1 May that year. However, because of other factors, including the Second World War, it was decided to hold off on that decision. It was 1 May 1946 before the strike was called. Obviously, the significance of 1 May is that it is the date that shearing season commenced and it would put maximum pressure on the squatters. As I said, the strike was postponed from the original date, and obviously it is now history that it happened a little later.

There were no phones or radios on the stations and Aboriginal workers could not read or write English; therefore, they had to find a way to manage the decision that was made to go on strike, but it had to happen on the same day some years later. The date always had to be 1 May, so they had elaborate calendars, by today's standards, drawn up. Dooley, one of the instigators, was responsible for spreading the word of the strike and setting up a system for the workers to know when 1 May was approaching and when the strike would occur.

The strike began on 1 May 1946, at the beginning of shearing season, when the pastoralists were most vulnerable to the loss of Aboriginal workers. Hundreds of workers left the 20 stations. In those days the work was a lot more manual than it is today. Hundreds of people were employed compared with a handful who would do the same job today. The strike affected 10 000 square kilometres of sheep farming country. They gathered at strike camps outside Port Hedland and Marble Bar, where they would spend much of the following three years. At its height, at least 800 people were on strike. The sheep stations were paralysed without the Aboriginal labour.

In order to survive, the strikers coordinated a collection of bush food and pearl shells and hunted kangaroos and goats to sell the skins. Many Aboriginal people got their first taste of economic independence. However, many Aboriginal strikers were jailed for their participation. Things are very different today. One would have to do something pretty drastic at a strike to be jailed. Some were even put in chains for several days.

In 1949 the stockmen won award rates. Many did not return to the stations and instead earned their own money and found new economic independence. Measured against the workers' initial demands, the three-year strike was not a complete victory, but it was of great historical significance. It provided a powerful example of the Aboriginal

people's resolve to struggle against slave-like conditions. Many similar instances happened over the years. I am from a port background and people saw me as someone who perhaps did not support the strike action of ports. However, I have always believed that it is important that people have the right to democracy and to be able to withdraw their labour if they do not believe the circumstances are right.

It was regular for shipowners to offer workers incentives. From the early days, they would complain all the time about the rate of pay on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. *The Onedin Line* dramatized this time. I would watch the workers, who were paid so much a bag, running up the gangways and falling off. I suppose it was a representation of a time when the concept of strikes and people's right to withdraw their labour was emerging. In later years, shipowners and others were happy to pay exorbitant rates to keep their ships moving. I see a parallel between the maritime industry and the shearers strike 75 years ago. It is ironic that in today's environment people are back at the lower end of the wage scale. No doubt, when unemployment gets to very low levels, perhaps we will see a return to more normal wages for most people.

As a result of that strike, some people were able to save enough money to buy a share in a property, and a number were successfully operated. I know that there is discussion from time to time that some Aboriginal-run stations are run poorly. However, a large number were successful. But they were never really recognised in those early years; they were just seen as pastoral stations.

There were European attacks on, and brutal shootings of, whole family groups of Aboriginal Australians. It is a part of the history of the region. Those things should not have happened. Aboriginal lawmen sought justice and proper wages and working conditions for Aboriginal people under the original Western Australian colonial constitution. On that note, Mr Acting President, I would like to close my remarks to allow others to make a contribution.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [11.41 am]: I am a very enthusiastic supporter of this motion. I first became aware of this strike in the early eighties, when I was working for the commonwealth in Aboriginal employment across the state. At the time I came across, I think, three Don McLeods in the Pilbara and the Kimberley who still had a presence there. I had to try to sort out which Don McLeod was which. Of course, I came to know this incredible story about the walkout at Strelley station and the great Pilbara strike of the 1940s. It really resonated with me because I was a schoolkid at the time of the Gurindji walkout from Wave Hill station. I was an activist in Aboriginal affairs. I was our school representative and can remember going to Gurindji protests. For decades we never ate anything that we knew came from Vestey Brothers. It was truly extraordinary to find out about this action that had preceded that walkout by some 20 years. The more one reads about and understands this story, one has to accept that the conditions that many of these pastoral workers experienced in that region of Western Australia were really akin to slavery. Many workers had no pay. In fact, the majority had no pay. They had some rations. If they were paid, it was an absolute fraction of what was given to white personnel on the station, notwithstanding that they were seen to be people of exceptional skill as stockmen and shearers. In many cases, women had to make themselves available at the will of their white masters, and they were not free to leave those stations.

One of the insights I gained while preparing for this motion is that it was the Aboriginal people who first sought out Don McLeod. He obviously came into the area without a great knowledge of what was going on within the Aboriginal community. But he was a good guy, and when someone was injured, he was prepared to drive them to the hospital in Port Hedland. The Aboriginal community developed a relationship with him and approached him to go down to Perth to find out what their legal rights were. They wanted to know why they could not leave a station that they did not like and go elsewhere. In a way, that then began this journey. The anger that was simmering below the surface and seemingly not generally understood became known and manifested itself in Don McLeod going to Perth and learning about what an extraordinarily bad situation it was. He came back, I think, quite transformed. He worked with the community to work out a strategy to deal with the situation. As Hon Laurie Graham said, it led to the extraordinary law meeting in Skull Springs in 1942. It was a six-week event. It was a law event; it was not just about the workers, but that was an important part of it. People came all the way from Alice Springs and Darwin, including Martu, Nyamal and Niapaili people. Twenty-three language groups came to the meeting. They made the decision to not strike until 1 May 1946 because they wanted the war to be over before they took action. At that meeting they appointed two people as leaders to work with Don McLeod. Dooley Bin Bin was to represent the desert areas and Clancy McKenna was to represent the settled areas. Those two gentlemen became the great leaders of the strike.

The first strike occurred on 1 May 1946. It was only a relatively small group that came out at that time. Pressure was put on the Aboriginal community to rat on Don McLeod and to nominate others to try to incriminate them. The conduct of that Aboriginal community, its steadfastness and loyalty, was absolutely exceptional. Reading some of the stories reminds me of stories from my childhood of what happened with the Irish—the pressure put on people to do in others, and their refusal to do it. The strike led to both Dooley Bin Bin and Clancy McKenna being jailed. They were chained around the neck and given three-months hard labour for their participation in the strike. Five weeks later, after a lot of pressure from the more progressive part of the community, the union movement, the Communist Party of Australia and parts of the Labor Party, they were released by the then justice minister. In the meantime, the strike had grown. Over the next month, workers from, I think, 22 stations walked off. They were

not cowed by what had gone on; they were inspired by the actions and the courage of the first leaders. This went on until 1949. I commend the Seamen's Union of Australia of the time, under the leadership of the great Paddy Troy. The union determined to blackball the wool from pastoralists in the Pilbara. The wool bales then piled high on the docks and the dispute was finally resolved.

One of the beautiful things that I have seen happen over the last four years is a revival of the appreciation of this strike in Pilbara communities. In particular, I am lucky to have been able to acquire some of Mr Gardiner's paintings. He was a boy at the time of the strike and lived in those early camps where they yandied for a living. He has done beautiful artwork. The way he captured those strikers and the whole culture of that is absolutely superb. I have a painting by Owen Biljabu of a Strelley stockman, which is completely stunning and compelling. The younger generation is rediscovering this great history and the strength of people such as Peter Coppin whose son Barry Taylor is still representing this great story today. I want to commend all those people, the Town of Port Hedland and a whole group of organisations, who got together and recreated that event on 1 May this year to celebrate the heroism, the courage and the ingenuity of these people who stood up to get their just entitlement.

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [11.51 am]: I, too, would like to commend Hon Laurie Graham for bringing this very good motion to this house to be discussed here today. I would like to start with a warning to advise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who may be listening or reading this speech in the future that I may mention names of people who have passed on.

I would like to pay my respects to all the people involved in the massive Pilbara strike 75 years ago. As Hon Alannah MacTiernan alluded to, the Maritime Union of Australia, the union that I come from, has a very long history of supporting Aboriginal rights across the country that spans back to the 1800s and the Barcaldine strike in northern Queensland, which led to the formation of the Labor Party. The union called a black ban on wool exports in Queensland whilst the shearers were on strike in Barcaldine. That strike is hugely significant and people should definitely look into it if they want a taste of the history of workers' rights in this country.

I first became engaged in Aboriginal activism in the Northern Territory under the leadership of Thomas Mayor at the MUA. There was a man who had a great history at the MUA in a strike that seems to have been inspired by the 1946 strike—the Gurindji people's Wave Hill walk-off. This man in the MUA, up until his passing, was a massive activist for people who were vulnerable, and his name was Brian Manning. Brian Manning was a wharfie at the time of the Wave Hill walk-off. He would get in his old truck, fill it with supplies, food and water, and drive it out to Wave Hill where the strikers were. Every year, the Wave Hill walk-off is remembered and people who were involved in it are celebrated for what caused a huge change for Aboriginal rights in Australia.

Turning to the 1946 strike, as members have already mentioned, it is amazing to do research and read about the hardships that took place. I read comments that bosses would go around and kick Aboriginal people who were on the ground while they were asleep and say, "Get up. Time to go to work." A total disrespect and slave mentality came out of some of those pastoralists. It astounds me that 800 people got together right across different stations and managed to communicate in a way that they understood. Obviously, literacy and numeracy was an issue in that day and age, and today, but they were able to organise themselves with the tools to understand that withdrawing our labour is the only right we have as human beings in the workforce. I think that right should never be taken away. The opportunity for someone to take a stand by withdrawing their labour is an entitlement we are all given from birth, and that should be respected and protected well into the future. That is exactly what these men and women did. They took the opportunity to line up the strike with 1 May and the start of the shearing season to make full impact. That was a genuine strategy to ensure that when they withdrew their labour, the maximum impact was felt and they got their desired outcome. A massive amount of time would have gone into the communications, which in the Pilbara in the 1940s would have been very difficult. I can only imagine the challenges with the lack of road infrastructure and communication ability. Aboriginal people migrated and moved around. It has been stated that people were locked to stations and they could not leave, but I suggest that people were going between groups and were not on the pastoral stations doing the work, but were acting more as union organisers in that space to ensure that everyone was on target to all go out at the exact same time to get the maximum impact.

I refer to an article I found while doing some research that I think is really interesting. It was published on 15 November 2020 by ABC news and is titled "Remembering the 1946 Pilbara strike, Australia's longest, that paved the way for Indigenous rights". I gave my precursor because I am going to mention someone who passed on. In this story Marshall Smith referred to his cousin, who was 19 years of age and has passed on now, Monty Smith. He went across to Mt Brockman station as a horse-breaker. Mr Marshall said —

"The station manager at the time was a very hard man, an ex-boxer who didn't take any nonsense, and he would boot the Aboriginal workers in their swags to wake up and sometimes he would go as far as whipping them with a stockwhip.

...

"It must have been a fairly serious hiding because my cousin left the Pilbara straight away, walking to Carnarvon where he remained for the rest of his life until he passed on."

He walked from the Pilbara down to Carnarvon; that is such a vast distance to walk. This 19-year-old was subjected to that. I assume that when it says “he left”, he would have run away, rather than being allowed to leave, which is why he went so far—to get away. There are obviously many stories. Don McLeod, Dooley Bin Bin and Clancy McKenna have already been mentioned. They were obviously key parts of this strike. Coordinating the strike and activists going around to get people to agree to withdraw their labour was a first for Western Australia in the Aboriginal rights space. It would be such an interesting conversation to hear today, to see the passion of these people to ensure that Aboriginal people were given better rights and not treated as second-class citizens, as they undoubtedly were treated.

The strike was coordinated and led by Dooley Bin Bin and Clancy McKenna. The strike was most effective in the Pilbara region. Further afield, in Broome and Derby and inland towns, there was a lot of police suppression. The police were able to rally around and force Aboriginal people back to work and out of the strike. I am proud that, as I mentioned earlier, not only were the waterfront workers involved in the Barcaldine strike in the 1800s, but the Seamen’s Union of Australia played a bit of a role in getting the Pilbara strike to end by putting a black ban on wool and taking a stand with Aboriginal people to improve workers’ rights and life in general. I am always proud when I read through the history of the Maritime Union of Australia, which was an amalgamation of many unions—but specifically the Waterside Workers’ Federation and the Seamen’s Union of Australia—that came together in 1993. The Seamen’s Union had a huge record, as I said, for standing up for Aboriginal rights and coordinating pastoral stations and the maritime and export sectors. It was such a sophisticated thing to do. In our day and age, it would be considered to be a secondary boycott, but back then it was clear that it was the only angle that could be used to ensure that other industries got behind Aboriginal workers and stood with them side by side. As I said, that was reflected in the Wave Hill walk-off in which the Gurindji took a stand and in other places.

When I look at the later years after 1946—the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s—I definitely notice many great stories of Aboriginal stockmen, particularly out of Halls Creek and Fitzroy, who were working for pay. I think a definite ode should be played for the 1946 strike.

I will mention quickly, in the 20 seconds that I have left, that across this country there are a lot of situations in which Aboriginal people were treated like this; their wages were not paid and still have not been paid. In Queensland, activists are pushing for and rallying around to get those wages paid to the people who earned them.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [12.01 pm]: I want to make a quick contribution to the motion. I thank Hon Laurie Graham for bringing it to the chamber.

I started working in Aboriginal affairs in 1998—in those days it was called the central desert—and it did not take long for the strikers’ cousins in the western desert to tell me about the 1946 strike. I was educated and raised in Western Australia, but I did not know about this strike. It did not take long for me to find out all about it. It is a part of those Aboriginal people’s DNA. It is about the time in which especially the Mardu and Nyamal and other Indigenous groups worked in the area around Yandeyarra, Strelley and those stations that existed in those days. It was a time when they stood up and found out what it took, I suppose, to be heard.

Members will know that Aboriginal people did not have a vote then; in those days they were still listed under flora and fauna. As previous speakers have said, the treatment that was handed out—not by all, but by a lot of people—was pretty tough. It has become clear to me that the mums, dads, uncles and aunties of Aboriginal elders of today—they are even now starting to grow old—were part of this strike. They are very proud and I see their eyes glisten when they talk about the strike.

When I say it was an eye-opener for me, that is because it is part of a weakness in our education system at the moment. This is part of Western Australia’s history but we do not hear about it in schools. I believe that programs are now available for young children today to find out about this stuff. This was a major event in our state’s history. I know that the Aboriginal people in the Pilbara, in particular, are very proud of this time when they stood up—they stood up and they stood up. It was a long strike. Many people went through tough times to achieve an outcome—that is, to be treated equally and to be paid for the work that they did, and not just in the food and rations that they received beforehand.

Those elders, as I mentioned, are now growing quite old. They are the children of the people who were involved in that strike. They are the people who are leading the way in modern Aboriginal life. They are guiding their families and children to strive for more in their future. I have been involved in discussions with many of those elders, whether it was while I was working in sport and recreation, education and health, or working with mining companies when it came to training and employment, or even when it came to sitting down with them and listening to what they wanted to achieve as a group in this modern world today. It comes back to that 1946 strike. It comes back to the time that they stood up; the time when they mobilised. They were supported by some fantastic unions at the time. I acknowledge the work that the unions did to support them.

It is great that this strike is being celebrated. I would have loved to have been there on 1 May. Working in this place does not always allow us to just flutter around and go where we would like to go. I know how proud a moment it would have been.

As I said before, it was a time when Aboriginal people were lifted up. They realised what they needed to do to compete in the new society in 1946. Aboriginal people have achieved an enormous amount since that time. That has been due to the courage, hard work and steadfastness of their elders who started that movement 75 years ago.

The 1946 strike is famous all around the world. First Nations people in Canada and other Indigenous groups around the world know the story, yet so many people in Western Australia do not. I am very proud to acknowledge that strike of 75 years ago. It was a proud moment for the Aboriginal people of Western Australia, in particular Aboriginal people in the Pilbara.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [12.06 pm]: It is my pleasure, both as the new Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations, but also as a representative of the Mining and Pastoral Region and a member who is based in Port Hedland where this historic rebellion took place in 1946, to rise this afternoon to speak on the motion moved by Hon Laurie Graham. Looking back, this industrial action would have helped shaped Western Australia's history in my books. The strike is widely regarded as having transformed Aboriginal rights in an era in which Aboriginal people were treated as grossly inferior.

At this stage I want to acknowledge the good work of the Town of Port Hedland and the previous commissioner for the Town of Port Hedland, Hon Fred Riebeling, who in April 2020 led debate and got council to endorse the renaming of Leap Park in Hedland to Strike Park. The proposal was sent to the Geographic Names Committee for approval and, as previously mentioned, on 1 May this year, Mayor Peter Carter did the honours of reopening Strike Park in Port Hedland. I also want to acknowledge Mayor Peter Carter for his work in seeing this project through to fruition.

The day the strike started, 1 May 1946, was chosen because of its global significance for workers' rights everywhere—May Day. Almost 1 000 Aboriginal men and women walked off 26 pastoral stations, demanding proper wages and conditions. Before that strike, Aboriginal people were widely employed in Pilbara stations in a variety of roles—as drovers, station hands, gardeners and cleaners. Many believe the pastoral industry owes its early success to this labour. However, Aboriginal employees were rarely paid with money; instead, they received payment in flour, tea, clothes and occasionally meat. Many Aboriginal people were upset at this treatment on what was traditionally their own land and decided enough was enough. Secret meetings were held and a plan was hatched. The walk-off was meticulously planned over four years. It was all done in secret with creative messaging and intelligence sharing between groups on stations covering a huge area encompassing Nullagine, Marble Bar, Port Hedland, Roebourne and Onslow. As most Aboriginal people could not then read or write, they were given calendars, some hidden on the back of jam tins, to mark off the days until the strike.

When the day finally came on 1 May 1946, about 800 Aboriginal people walked off the land and away from their jobs, trudging many kilometres to Port Hedland from wherever they were to join the strike. As has been mentioned, the pastoralists had no idea it was coming, and it shocked them. Hon Colin Tincknell mentioned in his contribution that it was a very long strike. It took until probably 1949, to be honest, for it to be finally fixed. The walk-off completely shut down the wool-growing industry of the Pilbara, which was completely reliant on exploitative Aboriginal labour. As we heard previously, the success of the strike was due to the extraordinary collaboration between a number of people, including Don McLeod, as mentioned previously; Clancy McKenna; Dooley Bin Bin; and Nyamal elder Peter “Kangushot” Coppin, to name just a few. In all, 23 cultural groups of the Pilbara participated in what was an extraordinary demonstration of Aboriginal unity. Although many went back to the stations in 1949 after the station owners promised better conditions and finally paid wages, many never went back and many more remained on strike indefinitely.

I want to acknowledge Hon Kyle McGinn's contribution and his acknowledgement, along with others, of the union movement and its role in assisting the strikers at the time, particularly the Maritime Union of Australia. I understand that Don McLeod was also a delegate of the Australian Workers' Union at the time. Those unions in particular paid a great deal of attention and gave a great deal of support to the strikers. This action started what has become the great tradition of the union movement in supporting Aboriginal political action, which continues to this day.

The Pilbara walk-off was probably the forerunner of a number of celebrated Aboriginal strikes across the country. The Gurindji strike took place when Vincent Lingiari led his countrymen off Lord Vestey's Wave Hill station in the Northern Territory. That action is celebrated in Paul Kelly's song *From Little Things Big Things Grow* and is probably like the unofficial national anthem in this country. That action, too, was supported by the union movement in the Northern Territory and led to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act. Certainly, the strike in the Pilbara signifies the birth of the modern Indigenous rights self-determination movement and should be better known than it is. It is great that we are talking about it in this place today and acknowledging how important that day was for many, many Western Australians and how it set Western Australia on a better journey.

There are two dimensions to the Pilbara strike that are worth reflecting on. First, the Aboriginal groups forged an independent economic base through tin mining before Pilbara's iron ore became Australia's economic powerhouse and, second, it demonstrated what can be achieved with a unified voice.

I want to again acknowledge those who were involved in this action in 1946. It is an important part of Western Australia's history. I also want to again acknowledge the role that the Town of Port Hedland played in

working with the traditional owners of the Pilbara over the past couple of years to make sure that we remember this action for eternity. It is great that Strike Park is a place in Port Hedland that we can visit and remember a time, many, many years ago when things were different and were not right. Although there are some outstanding, ongoing issues from the 1946 strike and the non-payment of Aboriginal pastoral workers at the time, here's hoping that we get those issues fixed over the next few years. Hopefully, those who have not been paid for working on pastoral stations for many, many years will get some restitution. With that, I thank Hon Laurie Graham for bringing this motion to the house today.

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.14 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this motion that Hon Laurie Graham put forward. What a motion it is to end the member's parliamentary career on. It is an important issue that recognises something that unfortunately does not get a lot of attention, unlike some other things. I think it is important that we are speaking on this particular issue in this Parliament today on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Pilbara strike.

I have undying admiration for the bravery of the 800 or so people in the north west who went on strike and for those who supported them walking off the job in support of better working conditions, if we can call them that. We have to remember that these workers were essentially not much more than slaves in the they were treated. They were essentially indentured to their work. They were not paid wages; they were paid by "truck", as they say, for the essentials of life, but they had to go into debt to get the materials they wanted to do the jobs they needed to do. It is appalling to think that in this state in 1946—only 75 years ago—people were labouring under such conditions. That should alarm us all and be a warning to us to not allow this sort of thing to happen again. I cannot imagine what it was like to walk off like they did and to work under the oppressive laws that tied them to the stations that made them essentially chattels for the station owners.

As Western Australians, we can reflect with pride that these Western Australian Aboriginal people did this, but we must also reflect on it as a period of shame for our own past and the part that we played in it. The Labor Party has a part in this. It is a fact that a state Labor government was in power at the time of the walk-off in 1946. It was through the state Labor government that the police force used its oppressive powers against the Aboriginal people and it is through that Labor government that those people were imprisoned for periods of time after taking what we believe is a right for all workers, which is to take industrial action to protest working conditions. A Labor government was in power during that period and we need to own up to that. The Labor Party's industrial and political wings are not always in sync with each other, but the Labor Party can be proud that the industrial wing stood up to the political wing of the Labor Party and pulled it back in line. There was a change of government not very long after the walk-off occurred. I think a conservative government was in power for the remaining time. We must own our history and be up-front about it. Although we can say that we are proud of the Aboriginal people and the unions who were involved in supporting them and of the other civil groups that supported them like the women's temperance union, we must also acknowledge the part that all our predecessors in the political parties played in the oppression of Aboriginal people in this state. We cannot get away from that. I am sorry that that is part of our history, but we must do better and not allow ourselves to fall back into the habits of the people of that time.

It is quite special that the renaming of an existing park to Strike Park gives recognition to that history because parks connect us back to these events of the past. Although the name Strike Park perhaps does not conjure exactly what happened, I hope that it will stimulate conversations and that memorial plaques will be placed up there so that people can learn about this black and white history. When I am up there, I will certainly take time to visit it.

As I said before, I reflect on the Seamen's Union of Australia and the dock workers' union, which were predecessors of the Maritime Union of Australia, and the role they played in supporting Aboriginal people and their rights. A lot of other unions, including a union that represented carpenters, also played a part.

In reflecting on this event, one of the things I thought about was the fact that we often hear the refrain in here that those were different times with different values and we cannot judge what happened at that time according to our values today. What is really important about what happened in 1946 is that people out there were saying that the treatment of Aboriginal people in Western Australia was not good enough—that it was not up to scratch, they needed the same rights as other workers, they needed to be paid a fair day's wage for a fair day's work and all those sorts of things. When we hear the refrain that we cannot judge according to our values, we need to look a bit deeper, because there were voices out there that were pointing the way to a much more correct and proper way of dealing with these things. As I say, I appreciate that. I hope that Aboriginal people in the north west learn that Hon Laurie Graham has moved this motion today, that we are talking about Aboriginal people in this Parliament in a way that they were not talked about in 1946 and that they are aware of our acknowledgement of their struggles. I commend the motion to the house.

Visitors — St Francis Xavier Primary School

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Martin Aldridge): Before I offer the opportunity to the mover of the motion to reply, I welcome the schoolchildren from St Francis Xavier Primary School into the public gallery. Welcome to your Legislative Council.

Debate Resumed

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.21 pm]: Thank you, Mr Acting President. It was a good opportunity for you to acknowledge the staff and students from St Francis Xavier Primary School in that wonderful place of Geraldton in the Agricultural Region. We worked so hard to get the hospital in Geraldton done and all those great things, and it is great to have the students in here today. I hope they enjoy their time in the Legislative Council.

This is a very important motion. As members have touched on, it is a fitting way for Hon Laurie Graham to end his time here. The motion is a bit like Hon Laurie Graham, who does not make a lot of fuss and does not draw a lot of attention to the things that he does. This action and this piece of history are much the same. There are many things in our history that we do not espouse loudly enough, including our cultural history, our Aboriginal history throughout the thousands of years that Aboriginal people have lived on this land in Western Australia, and also our labour history. We have some amazing stories from labour history since colonisation. It would have been particularly difficult to organise a group of Aboriginal people to go on strike on 1 May 1946, which changed the course of labour history in the state forever. It is fitting that we acknowledge the seventy-fifth anniversary of that very important event and the actions of those who were involved, particularly Don McLeod, who was the go-between for the people involved. Those people have all been mentioned and we acknowledge the work of every person who was involved in that action. That action had a profound effect on the future of labour relations, how Aboriginal people were treated and how working people were treated. It was no longer okay to have someone working on a property for no payment and it was no longer okay to treat people as slaves and have them working for free. That would not be tolerated today. That change was made because of the actions of those people on those stations in the Pilbara in 1946. I am very proud to be part of a political organisation that continues the fight for working people and their rights and conditions and to make their lives better, particularly Aboriginal workers across the state. A very significant event occurred 75 years ago and I am particularly pleased that Hon Laurie Graham has brought this motion forward for debate today. I must say that it is disappointing that we did not get a more bipartisan contribution to what is a very important part of Western Australia's history.

The fight continues, members, and as a person who is coming back to this chamber in the next term, I say we will continue to fight for the rights of workers and Aboriginal people across Western Australia. These wins are what keep activists going. We think it is a significant piece of history that is certainly worthy of being brought before the house for debate. It is a fitting way for my very good friend and colleague to finish his parliamentary career. I naturally support the motion.

I acknowledge the wonderful work of Hon Laurie Graham over the last four years. We will miss him around here and we will certainly miss him as a representative of the Agricultural Region, who has helped many people over the last four years. I thank Hon Laurie Graham for moving the motion; we support it wholeheartedly. It is about a very important piece of Western Australian history that needs to be debated from time to time.

HON LAURIE GRAHAM (Agricultural) [12.25 pm] — in reply: I will say a few words in reply. Hon Darren West has managed to embarrass me yet again, this time on the way out the door. That is nothing unusual. I thank Minister MacTiernan for her contribution; she is obviously passionate about this issue. It is an issue close to her heart and it was good to hear her contribution this morning. As a local member in the area, Hon Kyle McGinn was very keen to contribute, as was Hon Colin Tincknell. I was talking to Hon Colin Tincknell about this issue yesterday and he expressed his interest in the future welfare of Aboriginal people. I thank Minister Dawson for giving the government's reply. Last but not least, it is best that I acknowledge the contribution made by my colleague Hon Darren West.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

Resumed from 12 May on the following motion moved by Hon Pierre Yang —

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Honourable Kim Beazley, Companion of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the state of Western Australia and its dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia —

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our most gracious sovereign and thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Before I give the call to Hon Colin Tincknell, I inform members that this will be Hon Colin Tincknell's valedictory speech and remind them of the customs that apply to such.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [12.27 pm]: I rise to give my farewell speech. Like Hon Simon O'Brien, this may not be my last speech, but it is certainly my farewell speech. I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land where we meet, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and I offer my respect to elders both past and present.

When I first stood as a member of this chamber four years ago, I was in equal measure humbled, daunted and honoured at having been chosen by people of the South West Region to be their voice in the Western Australian Parliament. I now know I was right to feel humbled, daunted and honoured. Any person elected to this place who is not all those things is unaware of the great responsibility that rests with them or the work that is expected of them.

In my maiden speech, I pledged to research and inform myself about all the relevant and important issues and debate each piece of legislation before making a decision that I believed would be in the best interests of the people I represented. Unlike most members in this house, my decisions over the past four years were not bound by a party room vote, caucus decisions, loyalty to powerbrokers or fear of preselection repercussions. I count myself lucky to have served in the chamber as the Leader of Pauline Hanson's One Nation in WA and a key member of the crossbench, who was able to hold this government to account over the legislation it brought to this Parliament. Sometimes that account was to insist on amendments to improve legislation; on other occasions, it meant blocking legislation. It was only because of my vote, and that of other crossbench members and my fellow One Nation colleague, that moves by this government to nationalise our crayfishing industry, increase the gold tax, close down the Schools of the Air and regional boarding colleges and fund many community resource centres were defeated in the Legislative Council. If not for the capacity of the Legislative Council to block these moves, regional communities and residents would have been severely affected and further disadvantaged. I want to say that again: if not for the capacity of the Legislative Council to block these moves, regional communities and residents would have been severely affected and further disadvantaged. Unfortunately, I believe that this city-centric government, with its new majority in the chamber, will systematically revive all, if not most, of these defeated policies over the coming four years. It will no doubt cite the old chestnut it is so fond of: "We have a mandate."

My constituents in the south west, and members of the public all over this state, face many ongoing issues that this government has simply turned a blind eye to for four years. Much must be done to improve regional and road safety. As you know, Mr Acting President (Hon Martin Aldridge), I have been a consistent speaker on this issue from the moment I first rose in this place. Roads in WA regions currently have the highest road toll per capita in Australia; and for the wheatbelt, it is the worst in the world. That is not something that I am proud of as a regional member. Although there has been much media focus over the past year on the state of our metropolitan health services, regional health services in WA have been neglected for decades by successive state governments. People living in WA, outside of Perth, have lesser health outcomes and a shorter life expectancy than their city cousins. This is not acceptable, especially considering that the overwhelming bulk of the state's economy is generated from the regions. Earlier today, we had a discussion about our system of voting. People forget that not only the state's economy but also the whole of Australia's economy is so much dependent on the regions of Western Australia.

During my maiden speech, I spoke about the drug and crime problems facing south west towns. It was quite clear to me as a non-politician before how bad it was. Sadly, little has changed. During its 2017 election campaign, the Labor Party pledged to build a standalone rehabilitation facility in the south west. Soon after the election, the McGowan government announced that it would not be building that facility. I hope that the incoming members of the South West Region will take up this fight, not only for the rehab centre, but also for an expanded facility that includes a training centre that engages with local businesses to get young people job ready once they have completed their rehabilitation program. We need to get them job ready so they can correct their previous behaviour and have a future in life.

The south west has many businesses that are not short of ambition, innovation or initiative but the big three hurdles they face are funding for infrastructure, red tape and a lack of accommodation in small towns for employees, especially now. The state government must support, both financially and through the reduction of red tape, the development of value adding and downstream processing for existing primary industry and tourism operators in the region. Substantially increasing the threshold at which small businesses have to pay payroll tax, or even getting rid of it altogether, which would be better, would incentivise expansion in local businesses. Before the last election, I saw many parties talk about doing something about payroll tax. The member to my right, my colleague, raised this in a motion during non-government business, during the first year we were in this house, yet not much has been done and small business is still suffering from the repercussions of that lack of action.

Another big subject that is important to me—once again, I submitted plans to this government on many occasions in my first two years in Parliament—is homelessness. I noticed that a Housing First program is currently running in Geraldton. Two and a half years ago, the government announced that it would get involved in Housing First for homeless people. For people who do not know, Housing First is the only program in the world that has proven to be partially successful in helping homeless people. I acknowledge that it is a very tough issue. However, homelessness has to be tackled. We have record levels of homelessness when we have record income coming into this state but we are doing very little about it. We have made many announcements but we have not yet got on with the job of fixing it. Homelessness in the south west and throughout the state is at heartbreaking levels. This government has no concrete plan to seriously address the growing crisis. As I mentioned, it has made great announcements but we have seen poor delivery. That explains this government at the moment. I hope it improves in this area. Increasing housing stock for social housing in regional towns, stamp duty concessions for downsizing

seniors, which this house overwhelmingly supported but the government has not taken action on, and increasing the first home owner grant for regional houses are all simple and easy measures that this state government, with its unexpected royalty bonanza, could well afford.

Water and security remain the biggest issues facing our rural producers. Poor maintenance of water infrastructure and insufficient growth in dam construction have added to water insecurity all over the state. Then we have the Water Corporation, a so-called not-for-profit entity making a surplus of millions of dollars, which is being returned to the general government revenue coffers. It is hard to believe that that goes on. How many desalinators and many other things could have been purchased for small regional communities with that money?

I also urge members to take the pathway to renewable energy—I say this with all seriousness—at a pace that will not disadvantage the state in the cost of reliability of electricity, for businesses and families, especially those in regional areas. It is a common mantra of many on the left side of politics that we might all have to learn to pay more for green energy. Many families in regions throughout the state cannot afford to pay what they have already been paying, let alone pay more.

As previously mentioned, I and other members of the crossbench and One Nation have had the freedom to vote on legislation in line with what we believe would be in the interests of our constituents. Today, as I look at government members, I would also especially like to remind incoming members of the responsibility they have to their constituents and the purpose of this house, which is to act as a place of review. I implore them to be brave enough—I really do mean that—to vote in the best interests not only of their own constituents, but also the wider community. Look at the big picture. Our state will be poorly served by an upper house that simply ticks the box on behalf of the Premier rather than properly interrogating the legislation before them. My fingers are crossed. Sadly, there is a precedent for what happens to members of the McGowan government who decide to put their conscience before politics. Labor Party retribution is swift for those who do not toe the party line. It is well documented that the first McGowan government was one of the most secretive in the history of this state, despite the constant pledges by Mark McGowan before the 2017 election to deliver a gold standard of transparency and accountability. There is little doubt that the second McGowan government, with a majority in both houses, will be even more secretive. This is something that is quite scary not for me, not for this house, not for the Parliament, but for the people of Western Australia.

I implore the media to step up to the plate, and I really hope it does because we need to hear from people who are brave enough to not only challenge the owners of their media outlets, but also say it the way it is. I recognise that the dominant media player in Western Australia has been acting virtually like a propaganda arm of the government for four years rather than a functional member of the fourth estate. This is very disappointing. Having had an almost two-decade career in the media, I fully understand the business pressures facing media today. Traditional media in this state, as it is around the world, is struggling with change. From a starting position of having a near market monopoly, traditional media failed to see change on the horizon and act as a global industry to innovate and protect its market share. It allowed others to do what it should have done itself. I worry when I see the McGowan government give a single exemption from the state's domestic gas reservation policy to media mogul Kerry Stokes' company Seven Group Holdings, which owns the biggest shareholding of Beach Energy. I have firsthand experience of just what advertising dollars can buy and it is not just column centimetres in a newspaper or advertisement spots on TV. Not only is the potential for abuse clear, but the capacity for scrutiny is very limited. This is a major issue for the people of WA.

Unlike many who come to this place, I am not a career politician. I did not set out to become a politician. I have had a few careers in my working life, including two decades in Aboriginal affairs and, obviously, two decades in the media. But, without doubt, this career as a member of the Legislative Council has been both the least expected and one of the most rewarding. I have many people to thank, and I would like to start with the party. It has been a journey. When I was asked to be the leader of the WA One Nation party four and a half years ago by my federal leader, Pauline Hanson, I said, "My God. What have I got myself into?" I had been involved in the 1998 federal election, which was a long time ago, and the party had been in the wilderness for 16 years. We all know the story of One Nation and Pauline Hanson and there was a good reason why we were in the wilderness. However, the reason I said yes and the reason I ran as a candidate was I had seen the growth in my federal leader. I had seen how she had matured as a politician and what I had seen was very pleasing.

I was also aware that if I took the leadership role for the party, it would mean pressure on my family and all my friends. It was documented in *The West Australian* that one of my best friends at work never realised that I had political beliefs that fell in line with the One Nation party. People thought that was controversial. It is controversial, but when someone really believes in something, they need to put their heart and soul into it and get stuck in. I have done that all my life, and I did it when I took the leadership role for One Nation all those years ago. I thank Pauline for having that trust in me and asking me to take on that role. Sometimes I may have cursed her for giving me that role, because it is tough. It is tough being in the wilderness for 16 years and trying to cobble together a party of a lot of different people. We have a broad church very similar to the Liberal Party, who have lots of different ideas and they do not always agree, but you have to get on with the job and do the best you can. We did that. We had

three members elected to this house. I am very proud of that achievement. As I mentioned, 180 000 people voted for us at that time. I have had meetings with the Premier of the state and I keep reminding him that he is now the Premier for everyone in this state, not just the people who voted for him and his party.

One member of Pauline's national executive is James Ashby, who is a controversial person. I suppose someone cannot help avoid being controversial to some degree when they are involved in our party, because that is the way the media has painted it. However, James Ashby is a very knowledgeable guy and has helped me a great deal and given me some great advice on how to be a leader. He told me quite clearly that if it had been his decision, I would not have got the job. I love that honesty. We became friends instantly after that because I knew I could trust this man. He was honest. He believed that someone else should have got the job. None of those people were elected, so it would not have worked out anyway. I was elected and it did work out, I believe. But that is a one-sided story, as we know.

I also want to thank my colleague, Robin Scott. He has been a wonderful member for the Mining and Pastoral Region and continues to be a wonderful member right up until this last day. I am very proud of what he has achieved in working for the people of WA.

I want to say thank you to the unknown people out there who support One Nation: the party executive, president, treasurer, secretary and all the people who put aside many years of frustration and all the things that they hoped for the party. All of a sudden they found themselves with a few members in Parliament and they really wanted us to perform miracles. I reminded them on a few occasions that I was only the leader of the party, not the Premier of the state, and some of those things were unachievable—not that Robin or I ever gave up trying. To the party executive, thank you. It is a tough job for a small party to get paid-up members, supporters and volunteers. I thank those people. We would not have been here over these last four years without your work and I thank you dearly. I want to thank the parliamentary staff, committee staff and all other staff in this building. These people make it happen and make it work for us members in this house. As a person who never worked for a member before I came into politics or had any political background, it is very daunting to all of a sudden be sitting and standing and speaking in this house. I could not have done it without Nigel and his team and Paul and all the great help from the chamber staff. Their help has been enormous, as has the help from the committee staff.

I was fortunate to serve on some great committees. On the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I sat with four other people from four different parties and I am proud of what we achieved. I am proud of the way that we worked together in a bipartisan approach to hold the government to account, to try to ask the tough questions in the hearings and to achieve a result for the people of WA. I was also asked to be present at the Local Projects, Local Jobs program committee hearings, and I was very happy with the recommendations that we handed out. We need a parliamentary budget office for not only the government or opposition, but also the smaller parties to help us explain our policies before elections and get them costed and presented in the right manner. It would be a plus to this Parliament and would stop the pork-barrelling that has been going on for many years.

I obviously also want to give a big thankyou to my staff. They, like me, were brand new, and I imagine it was the same for Hon Robin Scott. I did not get ex-Liberal, ex-Labor or ex-National Party people to come and work for me. We decided to be true to ourselves, do the hard work and get behind the issues without having any slant. Over the years, an ex-Liberal did join my team, and she has been magnificent. That was thanks to the grace of the Premier, who gave us extra staff. As I know the Greens would also find, when you are on the crossbench, there is so much work to do. Some members get tired of having responsibility for two or three portfolios; crossbenchers can have up to 40 or 50 portfolios! You get used to having to deal with everything and trying to get your head across everything, but those extra staff made the difference. I thank the Premier for that. That set a precedent, which I believe should continue forevermore when crossbenchers are in this house. For my staff in particular, it was a hectic time.

I live in Busselton but I chose to have my office just over the road. I would love to have been a member just for the South West Region, but I found myself to be a member for the Agricultural Region, North Metro, South Metro and East Metro. There was a great responsibility to look after the whole state. One Nation is not just a regional party; we have as many members, followers and voters in the metro area. That is our strength. That is why when things are going well for us, a lot of people, sometimes up to a quarter of a million in this state, vote for us in federal or state elections. We just need to get our act together as we get through this pandemic. I am sure the party will be around for many more years to come.

To my staff Rod and Anthony, who have been there virtually the whole time from day one, I thank you. It has been hectic. There was much to learn for all of us. Your patience, skill and dedication have been much appreciated. I have had many other staff come and go. They have been promoted; they are working for government departments and have gone up a level. I have really enjoyed seeing their development. I thank them all for their support as well.

I wrote in my notes "Madam President", but every time I look up, the Acting President is still there! Mr Acting President, I also want to say thank you to Madam President, who is not in the chamber. To be President of this house is a great honour. It was an even greater honour when she found she had a whole bundle of crossbenchers who were new to the Parliament and she had to remind us of the rules of this place on a regular basis. That has not been easy. There have been many other challenges that have been spoken about in this house; I am not about to talk about them

anymore as they have been well documented. I thank her for the fantastic job she has done and the evenness with which she has distributed chances and opportunities for members to speak. That is a great skill. I am sure she will have a long career in front of her, regardless of the difficulties she has encountered with her own party in recent years.

I also want to mention fellow members of this house. I thank you all. One thing I pride myself on is being fair and even to all people, regardless of whether I agree with them. From having discourse and discussions, you learn and become a better person. You sometimes even change your mind. I have been able to do that. That is the job of a politician—to go out and find the facts, and consult. Our party prides itself on being an expert consulter. We love talking to the people. That is the message that came from our federal leader: get out there and speak to industry, stakeholders, farmers and the public and find out straight from their mouths what they are saying and what needs to be done. We get a lot of requests, as all members do. Sometimes you cannot deliver on behalf of the public because it is not possible. I cannot change the UN from this house, as I have been asked to do many times!

I would also like to say a big thank you to my wonderful family. I have seven or eight more minutes before we break for lunch; I promised Hon Alison Xamon that I would finish my speech before lunch, as she will be the next speaker. I would like to spend a little time just talking about my wonderful family. My family has supported me. I have grown kids and they are now having children of their own. They are buying homes and achieving their career dreams and aspirations. I have always said to them, “Never ever take a backwards step. If you want something, work hard and you can achieve it. You need to educate yourself. You need to learn. Sometimes you just have to go out and do a job you don’t necessarily want to do to pay the bills, until you find the job that you want. You need to just get the job done.” They have done that. Every parent’s dream is to create children who are better role models and people than they are. I believe I have been able to achieve that. I look up to them. Some of them are taller than me, so that is easy to do! When I first came into this house, my youngest daughter had just had a baby, so I had a grandchild, whom I got very much involved with as they live in this state. Now I have another granddaughter and another grandchild on the way, so the family is rapidly growing. I am getting older. I am glad that the grey hair has gone to white. I hope I become a fantastic grandparent to those kids for many years to come. I know I will have a bit more time in the future.

All my life I have lived by one thing: I will not compromise when it comes to what I believe. Of course, those beliefs have built up over many years of learning things. I have conducted myself in a way that is respectful of people, whether or not I agree with them, and nothing will force me to change this approach or my beliefs. If I face criticism for not being politically correct, that does not worry me: I am proud that I stayed true to myself in this house.

I have been involved in many start-ups and ventures throughout my life. I am not afraid of failure. It brings the best out of me. I have faced many great challenges. I have launched newspapers, radio stations and a national sporting code, and virtually relaunched, along with my colleagues, a political party in this state. They have all been major challenges and they have all been tough, but they have brought the best out of me.

I have enjoyed the last four years. They have been easy to enjoy because of the help and assistance I have received from many members in this house. Working in this house on behalf of my constituents has been a privilege, and I am proud of the contribution I have made. I now look forward to new opportunities in the future. I do not know what they will be. I know the skillset I have, but I have had to retrain myself before. I am a believer in change. I am a student of change and I am ready for the next challenge. If there are a whole bundle of things that I need to learn to do the next job or the next career well, that is what I will do. Thank you to everyone here. Mr Acting President, if you could pass on my best wishes to the President. I also thank my party for giving me the opportunity to represent the people of this state. Thank you.

[Applause.]

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Martin Aldridge): Thank you, Hon Colin Tincknell, for your service to the Council, and all the best for your future endeavours.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.00 pm

HON ALISON XAMON (North Metropolitan) [2.02 pm]: Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

I want to begin my valedictory by paying my respects to the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting, the Whadjuk Noongar people. I reflect on the positive decision that was made in this place during this term to ensure that this acknowledgement of country is automatically included every day when we open our proceedings. It was a change that was not made before time, and it is a sombre reflection, I think, that in 2021 we have so very far to go in achieving justice and reconciliation for the First Nations people of this land.

I want to share my gratitude with those First Nations people who over the two terms I have been in this place have worked with and guided me in trying to address so many of those issues that continue to remain unaddressed for our Aboriginal people, the failure of which too often results in tragic consequences; the record number of incarcerations, including our First Nations children in our prisons and the shocking number of resultant deaths in custody; the fact that we still have a horrendous gap in life expectancy for First Nations people compared with other Australians; disproportionate levels of homelessness, of poverty and of children taken into care; the number of Aboriginal people

still denied appropriate disability supports; the lack of mental health services so desperately needed to address the effects of intergenerational trauma; and the devastatingly high rates of First Nations suicides. It is my fervent hope that I will see these injustices addressed in my lifetime and that we will finally achieve treaty.

It would have been my preference not to be giving a valedictory speech at this time. It had been my hope that I would be able to give it in four years' time, although as a Green, I have always gone into every election with my eyes open to the fact that electoral success is in no way guaranteed. On that note, it is simultaneously galling, yet strangely gratifying, to find specifically the loss of my seat, the Green in North Metro, being held out in the media and even by this government as an example of our broken electoral system. Of course it is broken, a fact from which I have never resiled. There are indeed people in this chamber who will continue their term but who achieved far fewer votes than I, and people will enter this chamber with embarrassingly low primaries. I am pleased that I achieved the highest Green vote. But this is the system we have, a system I have attempted to address, albeit unsuccessfully, but more on that in a moment. The one thing I can confirm is that no Green worth their salt enters this Parliament with the idea that they will be carving out a permanent career as a politician, partly because I do not think it is something positive for any Green to aspire to, partly because of the vicariousness of the electoral system as I have just said, but also because of the nature of it being a progressive party. By definition, to be a progressive party means to be consistently at the forefront of pushing for necessary change.

The Greens are not a middle-of-the-road party. We do not sit comfortably with the centrist status quo. Parties of the status quo are the parties that become the party of government. Instead, the Greens are a party that is always seeking to do things better—to seek progress to make the world a better place—because we recognise that it needs to be. It means that at any given time we find ourselves challenging majority views, whether it be recognising the science of climate change when the majority remained in denial; pushing for equal marriage, when the majority claimed that the very fabric of society would collapse if we allowed people who love each other to enter into lifelong union; or currently calling for the banning of greyhound racing, which will eventually happen, by the way—we just do not know how many dogs will suffer and die until it does—just to mention three very diverse examples. Every time the Greens push for progressive, albeit necessary, reform, we find ourselves derided, dismissed and even ridiculed, yet without fail, whether it be five, 10 or 15 years later, the majority end up adopting our positions, even claiming them as their own in a convenient reinvention of history.

I could choose to be frustrated by that or I could choose to feel how I do, which is pleased that the work I do makes a difference—a positive difference—even if at the time I may not see the immediate rewards or even get the recognition for having done the hard yards. My favourite saying is that the arc of history is long but it leans towards justice. That is how I view the work that I have done and I will continue to do over the decades of my life—this one very precious life that I get. I feel that I am on the right side of history and the Greens is the party that is leading that. It means that at any given time, the Greens will not receive the majority vote, even when the majority do end up agreeing with us years later. So as a Greens MP, I have been committed to making the most of the precious and limited time I get in Parliament.

Members, I believe I have made the most of my time here; one of only 36 people in Western Australia at any given time to get a chance to use the forum that is the Legislative Council. I have had the hefty workload to match this intent. In my first term and as the member for the East Metropolitan Region, I was the Greens spokesperson for water, urban bushland, mental health, disability, children and youth, women, the public service, the community sector, electoral affairs, veterans' affairs, volunteering, education and training. I sat on the Standing Committee on Legislation. In conjunction with the Australian Labor Party and the Nationals WA, we killed off the proposed stop-and-search laws. I note that the ALP is toying with the idea of reintroducing something similar now that it is in government.

In my second term, I was the Greens spokesperson for alcohol and other drugs, animal welfare, child protection, community services, consumer protection, corrective services, disability, education, electoral affairs, family and domestic violence, gambling, health, homelessness, industrial relations and worker safety, integrity of government, law and order, mental health, multicultural affairs, public sector, seniors and ageing, sexuality and gender diversity, suicide prevention, training and workforce development, veterans' affairs, volunteering, women and youth.

As people know, I also took on the role of the parliamentary leader, more akin to a Whip as we practise facilitative not directive leadership—it is a good model—and I sat on the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, which oversees the Corruption and Crime Commission, a role I took on absolutely in good faith but it is not a role for the faint-hearted. I was periodically co-opted onto the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges; I was deputy chair of the Select Committee into Elder Abuse, which produced an excellent report; I sat on the Joint Select Committee on Palliative Care in Western Australia; and, of greatest importance to me, I chaired the Select Committee into Alternate Approaches to Reducing Illicit Drug Use and its Effects on the Community. I am very proud of the final report that that committee produced, and I again extend my thanks to those most excellent of committee members. Mark my words: that work is going to stand the test of time, and I urge members who are continuing in this place to ensure that that resource is utilised. We purport to follow the public health advice when dealing with a pandemic, so let us do the same to reduce the harm of illicit drug use to the community, to individuals and to their families.

In the last term of government I was also pleased to co-chair some parliamentary friends' groups, including the Parliamentary Friends for Children, which I co-chaired with Hon Donna Faragher; Lisa Baker, the member for Maylands; and the now Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, Mia Davies. I was particularly pleased to co-chair the Parliamentary Friends of Refugees with the former member for Mirrabooka, Janine Freeman, bringing the lived experience of refugees and asylum seekers directly into this place. I had been looking forward to establishing a parliamentary friends of the senses with Hon Martin Pritchard, combining his interest in working with the deaf community with my passion for working with the blind and vision impaired. I had also been looking forward to establishing the parliamentary friends of research into rare diseases with Hon Matthew Swinbourn for whom, like me, the issue is deeply personal. I am disappointed that I will not be able to proceed with that.

It has been fun hosting events here in Parliament and helping to turn it, very practically, into the people's house. Pride at Parliament is always a big deal and a great joy, although hosting the guide dogs here and giving Guide Dogs WA the opportunity to corner the Premier and present its proposed business case was also a distinct highlight. Knowing that I could assist numerous groups—Aboriginal groups, mental health groups, disability groups, justice reform groups and environmental groups—to access Parliament and to meet with interested members of Parliament on issues of importance always felt like a distinct privilege and opportunity.

I have been a member in this place for eight years, but in that time I have introduced several private members' bills and motions and delivered countless speeches, as members are well aware, and for which I make absolutely no apology. I have scrutinised countless bills, amended many, and have asked literally thousands of questions. A simple perusal of *Hansard* demonstrates that I have done more work than many in this place, even those who have been here for far longer than I have. I know that the Labor government has found me to be a thorn in its side, but I remind it that the previous Liberal–National government felt the same way when I attempted to hold it to account as well. The Greens are not beholden to either side of Parliament. We have our own important agenda to pursue. We have stakeholders to represent and a future to fight for.

As I say, over the course of eight years, I have introduced many bills. I inherited two bills from Greens predecessors. There was the Perth Hills Planning Bill 2010, which I inherited from Hon Giz Watson. That bill sought to establish a planning regime over our unique Perth Hills and would have protected precious ecosystems. I worked on that in conjunction with the group Save Perth Hills for four years. I note that, a decade later, the residents of Perth hills are still fighting to save the Perth hills from inappropriate developments and overdevelopment. I also inherited the Water Services Licensing (Water Conservation Target) Amendment Bill 2008 from Hon Paul Llewellyn, which would have ensured that targets for water conservation would be enshrined in statute. As climate change becomes more entrenched, who knows how helpful that bill would have proven to be?

I introduced the Occupational Safety and Health Amendment Bill 2010, which sought to introduce tougher penalties and responses to OSH breaches. It was this bill that also introduced the offence of industrial manslaughter. I note that at the time I was ridiculed and condemned by members from both sides of the chamber, as well as by industry bodies that felt it would be too great a burden to not have the flexibility to kill their workers. I was told that industrial manslaughter laws were a gross overreaction to workplace deaths. Nevertheless, when I was re-elected, I reintroduced the industrial manslaughter provisions in the form of the Criminal Code Amendment (Industrial Manslaughter) Bill 2017. I knew that harsh penalties for those willing to put profit above workers' lives was no overreaction, and I am pleased that this time the response was different. This time, the issue received the support it was due, and the government introduced its own bill. Too many people had died in the time since I had introduced the first bill, but at least it finally had its day. I put that down as a victory for progressive politics. On a personal level, it felt like important closure for me as a former union official who had been scarred by seeing the fallout for families devastated by completely avoidable workplace deaths, with no justice forthcoming.

The issue of the gender pay gap, on which Western Australia is consistently one of the worst performers in Australia, has burdened women for years. In response to this, in 2011, I introduced the Industrial Relations (Equal Remuneration) Amendment Bill 2011, which would have enabled pay equity cases to be heard by the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Once again, with the issue still very much unresolved, I reintroduced the bill in 2018. To date, pay equity cases still cannot be heard, although undertakings have been given that a future bill to amend the Industrial Relations Act will finally include such provision. These are small victories, and I hope it happens.

The Criminal Code Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2011 sought to introduce a defence to mandatory sentencing for assault on a public officer in situations in which it could be demonstrated that a person was floridly psychotic at the time of committing an offence—in other words, too mentally unwell to even know what they were doing. Clearly, prison is not the appropriate place for such unwell people. My bill was not supported, but in response, prosecutorial guidelines were introduced, ostensibly to avoid such an unjust scenario. It is sad to continue to hear that, despite undertakings to the contrary, these guidelines periodically continue to be ignored and that we continue to simply lock up people who need medical help, not prison. My bill would have been a better solution to the problem.

The Equal Opportunity (LGBTIQ Anti-Discrimination) Amendment Bill 2018 sought to finally remove a number of religious exemptions from the act—exemptions that still allow teachers to be sacked, and children to be expelled, for being LGBTIQ. Other states have already undertaken these reforms—in some instances, more than two decades

ago—but we here in WA have not had the political gumption to address this. Once again, I know that history will be on my side, but I am sad for those within our community whose rights will continue to be trammelled until we get there. I thank those many churches who indicated their support for such changes; by no means do all churches want these laws retained.

I am particularly adamant about the need for reforms along the lines of my Electoral Amendment (Access to Ministers) Bill, first introduced in 2012 and then again in 2017. Paying for access to ministers simply should not be allowed, and I only hope that one day it will become illegal. The average punter finds it unbelievable that such practices can legally continue.

I have wryly observed the fallout following this election and the outrage about the need to reform ticket voting. Well, people, this is where I remind the government that the Electoral Amendment (Ticket Voting and Associated Reforms) Bill 2019 had been sitting there for 18 months. It could have been passed at any time before the election. It looks like it might actually come to pass now. I am wondering: do I chalk that up as another win? It is too late for those who lost their seats due to the ticket rorting, but maybe post-2025 it will finally be addressed.

Finally, I want to mention a bill I drafted in my first term and that I attempted to garner support for from the Barnett government of the day, but that ended up not being introduced: my party status bill. It had long been a source of disquiet that a political party could receive party status only if it had a minimum of five elected members in the Legislative Assembly. This has historically been a problem for the Greens who, whilst having had representation in the Assembly in the past, have historically achieved the minimum five representatives primarily through our representation in the Council—such is the nature of parties whose support is spread throughout Western Australia rather than limited to smaller location-based populations. We are, still, the third largest party by overall vote. I garnered in-principle support from the Leader of the National Party at the time, but it never progressed beyond the Premier, who was uninterested.

I reflect now on the challenges that both the Liberal and National Parties have faced following this election, whereby the arbitrary focus on the Assembly as opposed to entire state representation has posed such a challenge in gaining party status. My point is that the evidence from Western democracies around the world shows that elections are becoming more volatile, not less, and that electoral success comes in swings and roundabouts. The Greens have always understood this. I hope that this ALP government also has the humility to keep this in mind, because electoral tsunamis have the potential to go both ways.

In my first term, amongst my many portfolios I held the water portfolio. This constituted a huge amount of my work, with endless work in what was happening in the Gngangara mound, pushing for improved licensing and the monitoring of sustainable extraction regimes. The health of the Swan River was a big focus, including our drainage systems, nutrient loads and dolphin health, and what was then the emerging industry of fracking within WA. My office became ground zero for the campaign to try to get the detail around what was being proposed and the woefully inadequate regulations surrounding the industry. I moved a motion calling for a moratorium on coal seam gas extraction, which was opposed by both sides. Again, the Greens led the charge and I copped the flack at the time, and I got a fair bit of it. I also moved motions that called for better regulation of the insidious uranium industry and genuine protection of our Bush Forever sites.

There is no question that one of my principal passions remained around the need for improved mental health and suicide prevention services. I have been very public about my personal history, and that of my family, and the life-defining, tragic impact that my father's decision to take his life has had on us. We all bring our personal experiences to some degree to this place and to our work, and I am glad that out of something truly terrible, hopefully my lived experience helped bring a voice to this chamber for so many others. I have always wondered whether my dad would have been proud that I became a member of Parliament; I will never know.

Early on, I called for the establishment of a mental health court, which we now have. I have consistently called for regulation of the mental health sector for counsellors, psychotherapists and social workers. People should simply not be allowed to hold themselves out as mental health professionals without oversight and regulation. I went down the rabbit hole of calling for reform of the way that we deal with those vulnerable people who are mentally impaired accused. The case of Marlon Noble was instrumental in leading me there and from that I continued to meet more and more families who had loved ones with various cognitive and intellectual impairments who were continually failed by the justice system. I note that over the course of the past term, even members in this place, from other parties and including government members, would refer these families through to my office for assistance. I have to say that this was not inappropriate; after all, my office was well across the complexities of the issues these families faced and we had a clear systemic view of the range of issues. But I note that there are no votes in this sort of work. We did it because it remains a huge human rights issue that needs to be addressed. I remain deeply disappointed that I never got to see the desperately needed reform of the Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act. On a related issue, I remain a huge supporter of the establishment of the Disability Justice Centre. I condemn those who ran fear campaigns against its establishment, and I want to be on the record saying that entirely the wrong people are currently running it. I have seen for myself the chasm in reporting between the clinical professionals working with the residents of the centre and the management reports that ultimately end up with the minister. The reports are like chalk and cheese. Simply, it will never succeed as intended until the right people are running the show. But I digress.

I have been consistent in my call for an increase in funding of community-based mental health services, supporting people in the community before they get to a crisis point, ensuring that we are funding our suicide prevention services and that they are also fit for purpose. Members know how much work I have done in this space, as does the sector. I do not think it is any coincidence that after I lost my seat in 2013 I was asked to be president of the Western Australian Association for Mental Health and the inaugural co-lead for the Department of Health's statewide Mental Health Network. I remind members that the 10-year *Western Australian mental health, alcohol and other drug services plan 2015–2025* was borne out of that time. It is devastating that the necessary investment in prevention, early intervention and community-based mental health services that was so carefully quantified has not been realised. The result is the crisis that we now see in our hospitals and emergency departments, which was completely foreseeable. How many lives have been unnecessarily lost in this time? Where is the desperately needed investment in our forensic mental health services as prescribed in the plan, or specialised services for identified population groups such as the culturally and linguistically diverse community, or specialised services for those living with personality disorders, or sufficient funding for eating disorders, or consultant liaison psychiatrists—or pretty much most of the plan?

Being appointed to the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention was an enormous privilege and, amongst so many things, enabled me to finally have established the Australian-first suicide postvention program for children bereaved by suicide, based on the research that I was able to provide and that I had carefully collated over 20 years. I note that independent evaluations of this service have proven it to be highly successful. As I have said before in this place, it needs to be expanded. It currently has waiting lists. It needs to be available for regional Western Australians. It needs to be tailored to Aboriginal communities and developed with those communities. Make sure it keeps getting funded, members. You will be hearing from me if there are any attempts to downgrade this critical and lifesaving service.

I want to acknowledge those brave but heartbroken families who have reached out to me for support, whether it be desperately seeking help for loved ones in crisis, or, after the worst has happened, desperately seeking answers about how their lives have been irreversibly shattered through the suicide of someone who never should have died: people who have battled our health, child protection and education systems; returned veterans who never received the assistance they needed; and elderly people who have given up hope. I have also worked closely with families who have loved ones in prison; sometimes loved ones who have died in prison. I have called for reform of the Coroner's Court and of course we need a massive overhaul of our prison system. Corrective Services has no place trying to deliver health, mental health, or alcohol and other drugs services. I think it is a travesty that this government abandoned the justice health project that began under the previous government, as it was such necessary reform. We need to address the social determinants that lead people to end up in our justice system in the first place. Social reinvestment is a real and demonstrated solution. Yes, I know that it flies in the face of populist and cynical politics, but it transforms communities and individual lives and it is the future approach that we need to address offending behaviours.

One of the extraordinary experiences of being in this role has been the exposure to so many people's complex lives and personal histories. Working with David Templeman, the member for Mandurah, who coordinated the Assembly response while I coordinated the Council response to formally apologise to those women who were forced to adopt their children, was one of the most powerful times of my life—working with people who tried to navigate the gutted Redress WA scheme and the resultant fallout, and working with our forgotten Australians in their quest for justice and closure. In June 2012, through a motion on notice, I formally called for a royal commission into alleged abuse in state institutions. I note that at the time I was accused of overreacting, yet some months later the federal government finally called a royal commission of its own, and the rest is history.

The early days of the call for the National Disability Insurance Scheme were powerful, and by my second term the issue had become whether to join the federal scheme, and then how successful or otherwise the transition would be. I had not known of course just how personal that issue would become, and unfortunately as a parent who has had to navigate the system, I can personally testify about how problematic it has become for so many people, despite being such a hard-fought-for reform. One could almost be left to believe that it has been deliberately set up to deny people the supports they so desperately need. My husband and I are both lawyers. I am a member of Parliament and a spokesperson for disability. In the early days, I was involved in trying to ensure the appropriate incorporation of psychosocial disability support into the system. I have been helping others for years to get outcomes with the NDIS. In short, it is hard to see someone I believe who would be better placed to navigate that system, yet despite having a child with a definitive diagnosis and a serious prognosis, I struggled to make sure my son got the supports that he needs. If that was what it was like for me, I ask members: how must it be for everybody else? We have to fix that. It is not good enough! While we are at it, independent assessments need to be immediately abandoned.

Homelessness has always remained chronically unaddressed, but never more so than now. I have taken a particular interest in addressing the social determinants that are more likely to lead to homelessness—mental health, disability, and family and domestic violence. I am devastated at the unhelpful role that Child Protection too often plays in the process, but at the end of the day we need places for people to live. The fact that there is less social housing than we had four years ago is a disgrace. Housing is a fundamental human right. The need for shelter is not optional; we must do better. Certainly, I have tried to play my part in shining a spotlight on the problem.

I remain an ardent and passionate supporter for a fully funded and free education and training system. I know that for many people private school can feel like the only option when faced with an underfunded and crowded public system. That, members, does not represent real choice, but it means that not all of our children are getting what they need. In particular, I note the needs of students at educational risk, particularly those with autism and students living with mental distress whose needs are so often left unmet. Having said that, I want to acknowledge the hardworking teachers who are doing their absolute best and I want to specifically note the School of Special Educational Needs: Sensory, which does such a terrific job in caring for its students.

I have also, over my two terms, continued to raise issues of animal welfare. If people think we have to choose between advocating for people or advocating for animals, they simply lack ambition. I have most certainly felt capable of doing both. Whether it be calling for essential changes to our farming practices, such as banning sow stalls, ending live animal exports, or banning cruel so-called “entertainment” industries such as greyhound racing, I am happy to be at the forefront of calling for reforms for these sentient creatures. Again, this is an area that I have been very active in for a very long time, starting as a 15-year-old when I first got involved in the anti-vivisection movement, then considered a radical movement, but now completely mainstream. I will never understand how people can turn a blind eye to, yet alone perpetuate, animal cruelty.

Of course underpinning my work throughout this whole time has been the need to address the existential threat that is climate change. It has always been an issue out there. When I first joined the Greens over three decades ago, it was referred to as global warming, and I endured years of being scoffed at and ridiculed, and people telling me that it was not real and just conspiracy thinking. Then in 2007, it apparently became the moral issue of our time—that was correct, by the way—and here we are now, in 2021, when only the most foolish would deny its existence, and yet Australia still has no clear plan to fully address it. We see some progress, such as the expansion of clean energies, albeit far too slowly, but we continue to knock down our forests, our carbon sinks, at record rates, we continue to render entire species extinct, and our emissions continue to skyrocket as we point the finger at anyone other than ourselves to find the solutions.

I am really glad that at least I am in a party that has never asked me to resile from the fight to address climate change. Indeed, it was only a few years ago that my children came to me to thank me for the work the Greens have done to try to address climate change. I had not realised that they had not realised that their mum was on the right side of history on this. It turns out that they had no idea what I did for a job. Although it is personally gratifying to have my work appreciated by my kids, I am devastated that I could not do more to safeguard their futures. I think this is something that the community is now going to take up, and, believe me, it will. Corporate Australia cannot run the show forever.

I am pleased at the work I did in calling for electoral donations reform. My office did much work trying to chase the dollars: the discrepancies between state and federal reporting regimes, thresholds that enable moneys to be hidden, third-party donations and the use of shelf companies to obfuscate trails of donations. It is all there, and it is worthy of a Corruption and Crime Commission-level investigation, but I will not be holding my breath that that will be a priority. The call for the banning of corporate donations will continue. Fossil fuel and mining interests already enjoy disproportionately too much power in this state, as does the gambling industry, and as do developers. At a minimum, we need to follow the lead of other states and ban developer donations. If they can do it, we can do it, too. When I think of the sort of electoral work, as opposed to portfolio work, that dominated much of my time in representing the community, I note that at times there was significant overlap.

The Greens support well-planned density in our suburbs, density which respects green spaces and existing mature trees, heritage, and people’s sense of community. We believe it is possible for density to be done well and done in ways that ensure that not only everyone has a place in which to live, but people can age in place and communities can flourish. But with increasing regularity, we see development applications being approved that are wildly out of kilter with this good planning. I note that the new COVID planning laws seem to have exacerbated this flurry, as has the inexplicable and intractable position of Western Australia in being the only state that refuses to have third-party right of appeal laws in our planning system.

Much of my work during my two terms has been attempting to ensure the preservation of our Bush Forever sites. I have dealt with not only the Urban Bushland Council at a systemic level, but also numerous individual Friends groups, those people who spend their weekends weeding, planting and preserving these precious ecosystems that remain on the Swan coastal plain. I want to thank those people for their tireless efforts.

Finally, my work in this place has had a significant focus on the importance of maintaining the rule of law, the need for the separation of powers, access to justice, and challenging the abuse of power. The rule of law, the separation of powers and procedural fairness is, dangerously, being increasingly treated as an obstacle to a short-term, often politicised outcome, rather than what it is—a cornerstone of our democratic system of government and a critical safeguard to address the potential tyranny of power. Mandatory sentencing is an abomination, and removing the capacity for judicial discretion is something that should be vehemently resisted. The possibility of receiving judgement without the capacity for justice should terrify everyone. People should always have the right to a fair trial, the right to have an impartial decision-maker, the right to be heard, the right to know the allegations against them,

and the right to be able to respond. The punishment, if any, should be proportionate. Those who are not legally responsible for their actions, through mental, cognitive or intellectual impairment, or senility, should be treated with their human rights upheld. Access to justice should not be reserved for only the wealthy. We need to fund Legal Aid and our community legal centres appropriately. We need to expand our diversionary courts. We need model litigant guidelines so that the state cannot inappropriately wield the extraordinary power and endless resources that it holds in order to crush the average citizen and deny them justice.

We need structures that can speak to the abuse of extraordinary powers. Ensuring the centuries-long tradition of the separation of powers must be vigorously upheld, yet recent events have demonstrated how deeply under threat these safeguards are. We need to ensure that the CCC is subject to fearless and apolitical oversight, and that centuries-old principles such as parliamentary privilege, which has ensured that individual citizens can take their concerns to the Parliament without fear of retribution, can be maintained. We need to ensure that our police are both supported when they are doing the right thing, and oversighted and held to account when they are not.

I have no interest in living in a state of fear. I want to live in a state in which I know that when I do the right thing, and when I behave honestly—and I do—I will not be subject to the victimisation of the state and to political retribution, be unfairly maligned, and be denied justice and the right to a peaceful life and personal privacy. When our systems are devoid of the rule of law, and the protections of procedural fairness and the separation of powers are dismantled, it is no longer possible to take comfort in the adage that “As long as you don’t do anything wrong, you will have nothing to fear.” I am an honest citizen, and I live my life with integrity.

I also maintain the right to undertake nonviolent protests and to speak out against wrongdoing when I see it, a right that every citizen should have. I have the right to do that with so many fellow travellers by my side as we continue to call for the progressive change that is needed in this world to ensure our planet and its ecosystems are protected, that our governments are accountable, and that those in our community who are the most vulnerable are protected and supported.

It is with enormous gratitude that I acknowledge and thank the thousands of Greens who have stood with me to achieve those exact outcomes. As I said, I joined the Greens in 1990 as a very young woman. In my time in the party, I have held many of the most senior roles, including being national convener of the Australian Greens and state co-convener of the Greens WA, and have run statewide election campaigns—all for free, all without expectation of payment, and all for the cause.

I have not been alone, with volunteers who have built the party and kept it running—building membership, fundraising and undertaking community campaigns, and, of course, the all-critical election activity. It is our culture of volunteerism that has been the backbone of our party, and I count many Greens members as being amongst my dearest friends. I thank those Greens members who put their names forward to assist me personally in the campaigns in East Metropolitan Region and then North Metropolitan Region and who put their lives on hold completely unpaid.

In terms of the most recent election, I want to thank those who put themselves out there publicly: Benedict, Louis, Elizabeth, Nicholas, Mark, Theresa, Katrina, Greg, Angelo, Isabella, Tamara, Francesca, SP, Matt, Daniel and Sarah as part of “Team North Metro”, and an enormous thankyou for the tireless efforts of Laurel and Steve, who never rested, even when they were stuck in quarantine. You all put your lives on hold and worked your butts off for nothing more than your belief in the party and the hope that we would retain North Metro.

I thank the literally hundreds, if not thousands, of members who have handed out how-to-vote cards, including on the interminable pre-poll, and leafleted, doorknocked, phone-banked, organised forums and staffed stalls. We are very lucky to be such a large party of volunteers. To be clear, a broken electoral system may have denied us our rightful representation, but the party is as strong as ever.

I want to acknowledge my colleagues Hon Robin Chapple, Hon Tim Clifford and Hon Diane Evers. There are only four of us but we well and truly punch above our weight. I want to acknowledge the decades of inspiration and support that I have received from former Senator Jo Vallentine, the practical support I received on being inducted into this place from Hon Giz Watson, and the ongoing friendship and camaraderie I enjoy with my colleague Senator Rachel Siewert. Special thanks to my comrades Hon Tammy Franks in South Australia and Hon David Shoebridge in New South Wales for always being there.

A shout-out to my friend Dr Brad Pettitt, who will have the unenviable job of being the only Greens representative in the forty-first Parliament. Brad and I have known each other since we met as young activists in Friends of East Timor back in 1993. Over the years, we have continued to cross over in numerous campaigns and community groups. Brad was even on the ticket as a support candidate in my successful tilt for Murdoch University guild president over two decades ago! I am sorry that we will not get to be in the chamber together, Brad, but as you know, I am always here to support you.

Like so many others here, I want to pay tribute to my staff, the loyalty, friendship and sheer competence of which is beyond compare. I have been fortunate to have a number of wonderful staff over the years, noting in particular my current electoral staff of Kirsten, Jocasta, Piper and Arran. But I also want to acknowledge Raveen, Tom and especially the lovely Leigh for their work this term. An enormous thankyou also to Tonia, my whips clerk, for her

diligence and intelligence, who has kept the long and unfriendly hours of this place along with the parliamentary team as well as having to track the daily shenanigans of the other place. I particularly need to single out Kirsten and Jocasta who first joined me on 22 May 2009 as my electorate and research officers respectively. They are two people whom I trust completely and totally, a special and so essential part of being able to do this role effectively. I was honoured when, after having lost their jobs when I lost my seat in 2013, both left permanent employment to come back and work with me again when I was re-elected to Parliament in 2017. Jocasta left a permanent public sector job that she was extremely good at. Kirsten, who had moved to NSW and also had a permanent job in the public service, packed up and came back to WA to work with me again. I feel incredibly honoured to be the recipient of such loyalty from two of the finest and most astute minds in the business. Words cannot convey my gratitude to you both for the way that you have both supported and protected me. Thank you.

Over the years, my office has also had an enormous contribution from volunteers, numerous interns and people who have come in to do the hard yards and undertake forensic research into things like donations and mining licences. But a special acknowledgement must be made of the stalwart of our volunteer team Margo Beilby, who many of you will know, and who, even this week, just as she did from the very beginning of the thirty-eighth Parliament, continued to volunteer in my office. Thank you, Mabo—yes, I mean Mabo.

Madam President, I want to acknowledge the courage and integrity that you have demonstrated as the President of this chamber and the deep respect I hold you in. Very simply, you are an excellent President and history will treat you kindly. Thank you for the outstanding job you have undertaken in the face of extraordinarily difficult and trying circumstances. Thank you to the Clerk, Nigel Pratt, and the rest of the team in the chamber for valiantly trying to uphold the important traditions of this place and for all your support. These traditions were originally designed to ensure members of Parliament could best represent their constituencies, and you have been tireless in trying to ensure they are upheld. Thank you to Hansard who have had their work cut out for them in terms of the sheer volume of contributions that I have made in this place—no regrets! Thank you to all the parliamentary staff who do such a superb job and a particular shout-out to Rob Hunter and Tony Paterson. Thank you to the committee staff who frankly, we know, are always the smartest people in the room.

I want to thank those of you here, from across the chamber and the political divide, whom I count as friends—not all of you, I might add, but certainly many of you. Although we may come to this place with different world views, aspirations and experiences, I have been grateful for the considered and thoughtful way in which so many of you have been prepared to engage in genuine debate, to give me a hearing and to allow me to change your mind on a matter, and vice versa; such has been the strength of this chamber to date. I thank those of you who assisted me during some challenging times and empathised with me when I shared some of my personal sadness-es. Most of us work long hours and we are away from our loved ones. It makes a difference when you work alongside people you respect even when we may disagree.

I want to thank my dearest of friends Ali, Taryn and Ramona and those friends who help keep it real—Amanda, Sarah and Heather. I want to thank the SocialJustice.Church crew: Geoff, Alex, Mark, Nathaniel, Kate, Reuben and Daniel. I am eternally grateful for the ongoing love and support I receive from my many friends in the Uniting Church, specifically those from the Uniting Church in the City congregation. I have always been deeply respectful of the Greens as a secular organisation, and I also respect Parliament as a secular institution. But my personal faith and the support that I receive from my church has been a significant source of my personal strength and the conviction to do my work. Caring for creation, challenging corrupt and abusive power structures, caring for those who are deemed lesser or are marginalised and othered is important lifelong work to which I am committed until the day I die.

Thanks to my Mum, Uncle Brian and Auntie Nada for all your love. I also want to thank my gorgeous children. As members of Parliament we work long hours and we work every day. We have evening and weekend functions. Breakfast meetings suck and I try to avoid them, but sometimes we have to do them as well. We are public figures and this can impact on our children. But my gorgeous daughter, Miette, and my beautiful sons, Jackson and Blake, are the absolute lights of my life. It has not been easy juggling motherhood and this job, but they have adapted to the demands amazingly. Blake, my youngest, was only three years of age when I first got elected. All three children have only ever known me being politically active in one way or another. They are fine human beings and I am so proud of them.

Finally, the most enormous thankyou, the biggest thankyou, goes to my husband Luke Edmonds, who is always by my side, has my back, is full of advice—most of it good—and is both emotionally as well as very practically supportive. This is a difficult job to do when you have kids if you do not have a supportive partner. Luke has been politically active by my side since we first met in student politics, a true fellow traveller in progressive politics and my best friend in the whole wide world. Luke, I love you with all my heart, and it must be true because I am saying it in Parliament and I am not allowed to mislead the chamber.

Thank you everyone for what has been an extraordinary experience. I have no intention of coming back but hopefully I made the most of it while I was here and I hope that the world is just that little bit better for my contribution. Thank you.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: Hon Alison Xamon, on behalf of the chamber, we wish you, Luke and your children a wonderful time ahead of you. You have certainly contributed to this chamber and we will miss your regular evening contribution to members' statements. We look forward to finding out who will step up to the plate to replace you for that activity. Good luck to you and thank you very much. Members, we are continuing on with the Address-in-Reply. I remind members that this is the final speech of Hon Adele Farina and we will listen in silence.

HON ADELE FARINA (South West) [2.48 pm]: I wish to begin my valedictory remarks by congratulating the Premier and the entire Labor movement on the 2021 election victory. It is the largest ever win by a single political party in percentage of votes received and in the number of seats gained in each house of Parliament. This unprecedented win brings with it great responsibility for the government and the way government is done. Equally, it represents challenges for Parliament as the principal body of accountability for governments. Parliamentary scrutiny leads to better governance, a factor that helps governments in the long run as much as it helps oppositions.

It is almost 20 years ago that I stood in this place to make my inaugural speech to the Legislative Council. Back then, I was young, enthusiastic and determined to make a difference, not only for the people I represent in the South West Region, but to Parliament itself. In those intervening years I have served five terms, having been re-elected four times, and have served in both government and opposition.

I was first elected in 2001 as part of the Gallop government on a policy to stop logging in old-growth forests. This policy, although generally popular, was very unpopular with the timber communities in the south west that were heavily reliant on the timber industry. It was a time of great uncertainty for timber industry workers, their families and the timber communities. Understandably, they were angry and fearful. In those first few years, I attended many public meetings at which those impacted made their views heard. It was a difficult time. Often, I was the only government member present, which made it very, very tough. Although it would have been easier not to attend, as some suggested, it was my view that the very least I could do was to front up and listen to their concerns. I confess, however, to being grateful to take second chair to the then Minister for Forestry, the late Hon Kim Chance, at the meetings he was able to attend, such was the level of angst at those meetings. I worked together with the minister and in consultation with industry, the Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia, the Australian Workers' Union and impacted communities to deliver packages to assist those impacted by the policy through that very difficult transition period. This work made a significant difference and was the right thing to do.

In another key environmental area, I was pleased a provoking question I posed was instrumental in Premier Gallop's decision not to tap the south west's Yarragadee aquifer to provide water to Perth, which led to the preservation of this most precious resource for the people of the south west.

In government I served as a parliamentary secretary for several ministers over a wide range of portfolios too numerous to list on an occasion such as this. As parliamentary secretary, I managed the passage through this place of a number of government bills. The Gallop and Carpenter governments did not have the majority in this place. The passage of bills required extensive consultation and negotiation with the opposition and the crossbench behind the chair in order to achieve the majority needed to pass the bill. Although at times challenging, participating at this level in the legislative process was a rewarding experience. The process invariably necessitated compromise and amendments to bills. It is my view that the greater level of scrutiny and accommodation required to facilitate passage of a bill when the government does not hold a majority in this place, although very frustrating to governments, generally speaking results in better legislation. It is more reflective of the different views held by the community and competing stakeholder interests. I acknowledge that not everyone will agree with me. I also held the positions of Deputy Chair of Committees and Chair of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and General Purposes. I was a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges and, for a time, the Standing Committee on Legislation, as well as two select committees.

I would like to take a few minutes to comment on my experience on the Select Committee of Privilege on a Matter Arising in the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations. The weight of responsibility on members asked to serve on a committee inquiry into a possible contempt of Parliament by another member, a colleague, is considerable. A finding of contempt of Parliament is a very serious matter. The select committee comprising two opposition members and one government member, namely me, was tasked with investigating several members of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations for making unauthorised disclosures to lobbyists about confidential committee deliberations. The attempt by lobbyists to use the proceedings of the standing committee for an improper purpose had significant implications for the Legislative Council committee system. As noted in the select committee report, the members of the select committee understood that inquiry to be one of the most important and challenging inquiries in the history of the Legislative Council. The inquiry broke new ground in a number of respects, and I encourage members who have not read the report to do so. Of interest, and in stark contrast to the current tensions between the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Legislative Council, is that in that instance the Legislative Council and the CCC, having regard to and respect for the law and primacy of parliamentary privilege, were able to work together effectively. The CCC provided access under strict agreed protocols to extensive audio intercept and surveillance evidence it had gathered. This exceptionally rare circumstance, although presenting a number of challenges for the select committee, provided it with clear evidence of each unauthorised disclosure. In that instance, the CCC accepted that public interest was best served by assisting the Parliament with its privilege inquiry. It did not use

its non-disclosure provisions to refuse Parliament access to audio intercepts and surveillance evidence. It did not seek to interfere with or frustrate parliamentary privilege, nor did it claim that the Parliament had frustrated a CCC investigation. For its part, Parliament showed it could securely manage sensitive evidence, undertake complex investigations and, when warranted by the evidence, find members and others in contempt. This inquiry and all that followed the tabling of the select committee's report was perhaps the most challenging period of my time in this place.

Matters of privilege in this place are now dealt with by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges, which in my view is preferred to the establishment of a three-member select committee. Also, if I may offer a word of advice at this point: unless you have had to inquire into a matter of privilege, especially in relation to a possible breach by a colleague, you cannot really understand the weight of responsibility on members undertaking such an inquiry. Privilege committee reports attract great interest and invariably everyone has an opinion on the inquiry and recommendations. It is important to remember that members of privilege committees serve to the best of their abilities and have the will of the house. They should not become victims for doing the job asked of them. Each member of Parliament in this place and in the other place has a duty to uphold the law of parliamentary privilege and its primacy. Without parliamentary privilege, in particular the immunities and powers it provides members, members would not be able to carry out their duties effectively and without fear of intervention or proceedings of the Parliament being impugned in another place. Any erosion of parliamentary privilege would have a chilling effect on the work of the Parliament and should be resisted.

It is important to note that our democratic system of government comprises three separate independent branches, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, each with its own distinct role and responsibilities. By providing checks and balances, this system of separation of powers is critical to prevent concentration of power. The ethic of mutual respect requires each branch to be cognisant of the powers and responsibilities of the other branches and to act respectfully so as not to traverse or come into conflict with each other. Overreach by one branch risks this delicate balance of power and has the potential to diminish our democratic system of government.

Returning to the opportunities granted to me as a member for the South West Region, I am again grateful to the late Hon Kim Chance, then Minister for Forestry, for appointing me to chair the statutory review of the Forest Products Act. It is a rare opportunity for members to be appointed to lead a statutory review. It was a very interesting process through which I gained significant experience. It also reinforced for me the value of such provisions and legislation, and I went to move a number of those provisions when in opposition. In government, I also chaired a number of committees and working groups for government, including the Busselton Jetty and foreshore refurbishment working group, the Port Geographe working group, the south west freight on rail working group, the Gracetown reference group and the tourism planning task force. All were instrumental in guiding government policy development. As a result of my strong advocacy, the Gallop government committed funding that saw the Busselton Jetty Underwater Observatory realised. Now this is a significant tourist attraction for Busselton and the south west and will be well into the future. Upon learning of the state of repair of the Busselton Jetty, which was so poor that it would need to be closed, I successfully advocated, and against some very strong opposition, for the state government to step up, develop a plan and help fund the refurbishment of the Busselton Jetty foreshore. The Busselton Jetty is the heart of Busselton, and after so much hard work by so many of the community to save the jetty from demolition and their fund-raising efforts over many years, I could not stand by and watch the jetty be lost. Through the working group we developed the 50-years-of-life plan for the jetty that provided a rolling maintenance plan for it to be refurbished in sections over the 50-year period. I persuaded the state government and the then Shire of Busselton to commit funds raised from certain leases on the foreshore, which, together with the Busselton jetty committee contribution of \$1 million a year from its profits, would fund the jetty maintenance plan. At the time the LandCorp plan for redevelopment of the foreshore, which incorporated medium-density residential use, was understandably not well received by the community. Nevertheless, it triggered community discussions and was the catalyst for a new plan which has delivered a superb redevelopment of the foreshore, drawing locals and visitors alike to this beautiful part of our coastline.

Although the credit for funding the first and most significant stage of the Busselton jetty refurbishment rests with the Barnett government, the work of the working group I chaired underpins it and provides for the continued maintenance of the Busselton jetty. Each time I look out at the jetty, I take heart in the knowledge of the small part I played in ensuring the jetty continues as the heart of Busselton well into the future. I also take heart in knowing that the work that led to the reconfiguration of the Port Geographe groyne is underpinned by the work of the Port Geographe working group I chaired. Failure to fill the trap with sand as part of the reconfiguration works means mechanical intervention is needed annually to enable the first winter storms to wash the seagrass caught in the trap out to sea, thus enabling the trap to fill with sand over time. Agreement by the Department of Transport to undertake these mechanical intervention works earlier each year, before the first winter storm, would go a long way to resolving ongoing community angst, and I commend that to the government. Once the trap is filled with sand, such ongoing intervention should no longer be required.

In those early years a personal highlight for me was facilitating the first-ever Labor regional cabinet meeting in Busselton under the Gallop government, especially as the visit was so well received by the community.

In opposition, I served as shadow parliamentary secretary to the Attorney General and Minister for Environment. This provided me with the opportunity to experience the passage of bills through this place from the opposition perspective.

I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges, the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, a Deputy Chair of Committees, and I also held the position of Chair of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review and Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Administration. In the thirty-eighth Parliament, under my chairmanship, the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review completed scrutiny of 40 bills referred to the committee, in addition to a review of its treaty functions. By any standard, this was a mammoth workload. I am proud of the two substantial reports delivered by the Standing Committee on Public Administration into WorkSafe and private property rights and our oversight of statutory office holders.

Serving on the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission was an interesting experience, not only because of its terms of reference but also because it operates under the distinctly different standing orders of the other place. The committee, under the chairmanship of Hon Nick Goiran, did not hold back inquiring into difficult issues. It was forensic in its approach and always able to deliver a consensus report. I learnt a lot during that period.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the importance of the committee system to the Parliament scrutiny role. It provides a last opportunity for the community to be heard on matters that are the subject of committee inquiries and also through the petitions process. Importantly, the examination of bills by scrutiny committees facilitates a higher level of more detailed scrutiny of bills than is possible in Committee of the Whole and in my view results in better legislation. History however shows that when governments control the Legislative Council, fewer bills are referred to scrutiny committees. In furtherance of good governance and better legislation, it has always been my view that all bills should be referred to scrutiny committees before being considered by Committee of the Whole. Now, governments of both political persuasions in Western Australia, however, have resisted such an approach, despite this practice being adopted with positive outcomes in other jurisdictions around the world. Although I hold no expectation this position will change any time soon, I remain hopeful that a future Parliament will see the merit of adopting such a system.

Members may recall that, as a result of the last major review of standing orders, the scrutiny function of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review was restricted. At the time, I, as did others, argued that restriction of the committee's scrutiny function, so that the committee is prevented from bringing errors it identifies in a bill to the attention of the Parliament, would not serve the best interest of the Parliament or the public. At the time it was suggested by some that this restriction would in time be reviewed. This has not occurred to date. I put out the suggestion that with fewer bills likely to be referred, perhaps there is merit in combining the Standing Committee on Legislation and the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review into one standing committee, as was the situation in 2001 when I first came to this place.

Perhaps the greatest highlight for me was the honour bestowed on me by members of this place by their endorsement to the position of Chair of Committees/Deputy President in the thirty-ninth Parliament. I thank members for the opportunity to have served them in this capacity. Each of those responsibilities in government and in opposition brought its own special challenges, but each was an opportunity to grow in my understanding of the nature and complexity of serving in this state on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

As many members will be aware, my electorate office was first established in Busselton in 2001, as I strongly believed upper house members should locate their offices in long-held seats. This was not a view shared by all in the Labor Party, with some holding the view that I should have located my office in Bunbury. After Labor lost the seat of Bunbury and at the request of then Premier Carpenter, I relocated my electorate office to Bunbury to raise Labor's profile to enable Labor to reclaim the seat of Bunbury. My office and I worked tirelessly to this end and I am pleased that through our efforts in a range of areas we were able to provide a strong foundation for Labor to reclaim Bunbury at the 2017 state election by a resounding margin.

It is usual in valedictory speeches for members to list their achievements. Over my 20 years representing the South West Region I have strongly advocated on a wide range of issues and there have been many achievements. While not possible to list them all, there are a few noteworthy highlights. My advocacy for people struggling with alcohol and other drug-related problems and their families, including the need for a residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation centre in the south west was critical in delivery funding for Doors Wide Open, additional funding for the South West Community Alcohol and Drug Service and 33 rehabilitation beds in the south west.

My advocacy for people with mental health problems and the need for more funding for mental health and suicide prevention delivered increased resources; however, much more needs to be done in this space, especially in the area of child and adolescent mental health and prevention. My advocacy for improved health services throughout the south west has delivered a number of improvements, including the new Busselton Hospital, the new Manjimup Hospital, and upgrades to a number of hospitals throughout the south west, including an intensive care unit at the Bunbury Regional Hospital. My advocacy with St John of God when it received government funding for six additional dialysis chairs resulted in these much-needed dialysis chairs being placed in Busselton, instead of being added to the existing dialysis chairs in Bunbury. As a result, people living further south have benefited from shorter travel times to access this vital health service.

My advocacy in support of Jess Bevan, a victim of discrimination for breastfeeding her baby in public, resulted in changes being made to the Equal Opportunity Act, to provide legislative protection for a mother to breastfeed her

child in public. My advocacy in support of Jessica Turner enabled her young daughter to get the medical treatment she needed at Bunbury regional hospital, instead of Perth, and subsequently the support needed so she could be cared for at home and the family united. My advocacy for the people of Withers resulted in funding towards improvement of the parks within Withers, an increased investment by the City of Bunbury towards maintenance in Withers and the development of a Withers strategy. My strong advocacy raised public awareness of suicides by St John Ambulance paramedics and volunteers, along with the strain the volunteer-dependent country service was placing on volunteers and country paramedics. This helped to secure a number of inquiries into St John Ambulance, which resulted in the first-ever WA strategy for country ambulance services. This work is very much ongoing and I regret that I will not be in Parliament to see it completed.

Having advocated for most of the last 20 years for Bussell Highway to be upgraded to a dual-lane highway between Bunbury and Busselton, I am pleased that with the assistance of the federal government, this is now on its way to being delivered.

When I was first elected, leavers week was a free-for-all. Local police and local residents expressed concern about property damage, leavers travelling down to Busselton and Dunsborough with car boots full of alcohol, drug use, assaults and all sorts of antisocial behaviour. The stories of harm experienced by some young people during leavers were shocking. It was clear to me that we needed to act to make leavers safer. My advocacy within government and the Office of Crime Prevention resulted in significant work being done to reduce the harm to young people participating in leavers. This included the introduction of wristbands, the establishment of an alcohol-free entertainment area, a bus service to and from the entertainment area and accommodation sites and the liquor outlets in these towns entering into accords not to sell liquor to under-age leavers. As a result of this effort, leavers week today is very different and much safer than it was back in 2001.

There are many other achievements, but I do not have time to raise them all today. As members will know, it is the many small wins for individual constituents that are often the most satisfying.

As other members have noted, we leave this place with unfinished business. I wish to touch on a few of these matters, as this will be my last opportunity to do so. On 3 November last year, I tabled a letter in this place from Kim Taylor detailing flaws with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation modelling for the southern forests irrigation scheme. I did so following a long sustained debate with local farmers seeking to bring their concerns to the attention of relevant ministers. As members know, Kim Taylor is well respected in the field of water resources management, having worked in senior positions within the WA Water Authority and the Department of Water and for seven years as general manager of the Environmental Protection Authority. On 11 March this year, it was reported in the *Manjimup–Bridgetown Times* that the Minister for Regional Development had announced the engagement of the CSIRO to undertake an independent assessment of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's modelling for the southern forests irrigation scheme. The minister was reported as saying that the announcement of an independent review was long overdue, and I agree with the minister and welcome the decision to proceed with that independent review.

Water management issues in the Warren–Donnelly area, however, are not restricted to the southern forests irrigation scheme. If, as expected, the CSIRO confirms the modelling for the southern forests irrigation scheme is flawed, it will be essential that the CSIRO be engaged to review the *Warren–Donnelly surface water allocation plan*, which is reliant on similar flawed modelling. Also, the allocation plan is being enforced by the department, even though the statutory requirements for its endorsement have not been followed.

Further, the inconsistent decisions by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation on the question of spring rights are not a thing of the past, as the department indicated to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs, as has been reported in its thirty-third report. In a drying climate where competition for water is high, the department's lack of consistency is causing significant angst in Warren–Donnelly. An independent review of the department and its decisions is needed to restore community confidence in the department.

On the issue of spring rights, the department maintains that a watercourse may not be immediately apparent as it does not require a bed or bank, and flow may be intermittent or occasional. This has resulted in some farmers being told that there is a watercourse on their property when clearly there is no visible bed and banks and no visible flow of water at any time of the year. An assessment of the legal authorities in this area does not support the department's position. Understanding the value of a second opinion, I engaged as a consultant a law professor from the University of Western Australia, Professor Alex Gardner, co-author of the book titled *Water Resources Law*, to provide a legal opinion on the question of what constitutes a watercourse under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act. Having regard to the legal decisions and the amendments to the legislation since those decisions, Professor Alex Gardner concluded that "watercourse" under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act does require a channel or a bed and banks. The department's interpretation is clearly incorrect and leaves the government exposed to costly legal action in the event that the department's decisions are challenged in the courts. I implore the government to undertake a review of the department's decisions and the *Warren–Donnelly surface water allocation plan*.

Members will be aware of my disappointment with two recent government decisions. The first being the government's decision to provide less financial assistance to regional taxi operators than was provided to metropolitan taxi

operators, which has financially disadvantaged regional taxi operators. Legislation facilitating the financial assistance package for regional taxi operators was considered by the Parliament as a time-limited COVID bill last year, which restricted scrutiny of the bill. I urge the government to review its decision and extend to regional taxi operators the same financial package provided to metropolitan taxi operators. It is fair and it is the right thing to do.

The second is the government's decision on the alignment of the southern section of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road. The government approved modifications of the route for the northern and middle sections, while refusing to consider a different alignment of the southern section, which dissects the small community of Gelorup. There is much I could say on this matter; however, I will restrict myself to noting that there are sound economic, planning and environmental grounds for realignment of the southern section of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road and it is not too late for the government to reverse its decision. I again ask the government to reconsider its decision on this issue as it is impacting a lot of people who live in Gelorup.

On the issue of disappointments, in my inaugural speech, I talked about my commitment to advocate for a fast train between Perth and Bunbury, and my hope that it would eventually extend further south. It is with great disappointment that despite my best efforts over the last 20 years, a Perth–Bunbury fast train and the benefits it would bring to the south west, has not been realised. Due to its design, the construction of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road will now require the undergrounding of the rail line at the northern interchange between the Bunbury Outer Ring Road and Forrest Highway, thereby significantly increasing construction costs and making the realisation of this project during my lifetime highly unlikely.

In many ways, serving in this place has been my life, but it would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of family and close friends, who were understanding on the many occasions when duty meant I was absent or not as attentive as I should have been. As I said in my inaugural speech, none of this would have been possible without the sacrifices my parents made on my behalf. Never did my parents entertain the idea that one of their children would go to university, much less be elected to Parliament. I would like to thank my parents, whose guidance and support not only helped to make me the person that I am today, but whose support and understanding enabled me to devote so much of my time to Parliament and my constituents. They instilled in me a strong moral compass that has guided me when making tough decisions.

Over the last 20 years, my sister, Paola, has travelled to the south west for almost every election to work all day on a polling booth and on one occasion roped in her eldest son, Michael, to assist. In more recent years, she has been joined by her other sons, Daniel and Christopher, who have worked all day on polling booths. Daniel has also helped me to put together polling booth kits, including cutting metres and metres of bunting. Daniel and Christopher, together with their older brother, Michael, were great sounding boards and often put me straight on what was and was not important to young people and shared their perspectives on a range of current issues. Most importantly, they reminded me to laugh and to, at least occasionally, stop to smell the roses. Their support has been greatly appreciated, as was the fun we had along the way, and I give you a heartfelt thankyou.

Understandably, my nephews, like other members of my family, are disappointed for me that my parliamentary career has been cut short by the decision of others. However, I must put on the record that my nephews are also disappointed to learn that Hon Aaron Stonehouse is leaving Parliament and that his private member's bill to legalise airsoft in Western Australia has lapsed with the prorogation of Parliament! A sentiment shared by all airsoft enthusiasts, I am sure.

Throughout my parliamentary career I have been ably supported by electorate staff, some who were with me for years and others who gained valuable experience and went on to bigger and better opportunities. I thank each one of them for their support and hard work. Some, however, need special mention. Lesley Morris, an experienced electorate officer who worked for Hon Tom Stephens before me and for a number of other members in the north of the state in more recent times, was a critical support in my early years. I had the good fortune of Lesley returning to live in Busselton at about the time I was establishing my electorate office. Lesley ensured everything ran smoothly and played a key role in establishing office procedures. Her knowledge of local issues, electorate experience and interpersonal skills were invaluable, and I owe her a great debt. If Lesley had not returned to live in Broome, I am sure she would have remained my electorate officer through to the end. We remain good friends and catch up whenever she comes home to Busselton.

Ross Bromell, my research officer, together with Rod Clark, my former electorate officer, were a formidable team. This was a particularly busy time, and knowing that Ross and Rod were in the electorate office and more than capable of handling constituent inquiries made it possible for me to get out to other areas of the electorate and to perform my parliamentary secretary duties. I would not have been able to achieve all that I did during those very busy years without their support, and I thank them.

To my current staff, Emily Montgomery and Sophie Elliott: they have been a terrific team. Their concern and attention to resolving constituent inquiries has been exceptional, and I am grateful for their support and hard work. They and their partners have become family. What is not understood by those outside politics is that the party's decision not to preselect me meant that they, too, lost their jobs. The last 12 months have been difficult for all three of us as we have contemplated what next. Decommissioning the office and sorting 20 years of paperwork is a soul-destroying task. We have supported each other through it, and I am deeply thankful to both Emily and Sophie for all their support. I am disappointed, however, that our team has had to part ways sooner than we would have liked. Emily

is expecting her first child, and I wish Emily and her husband Hayden the very best for the impending birth of baby Monty. They will be terrific parents. Sophie has secured a job with Jackie Jarvis and I wish her well. Both Emily and Sophie have bright futures ahead of them and I look forward to seeing where the future takes them.

A special thanks also to Dennekka Sullivan, who has done relief work in my office for many years. Dennekka has been an invaluable support, always willing to do whatever is asked of her. She has also assisted with campaign activities and on polling booths. Dennekka: my sincere thanks for your friendship and support. Since Emily took maternity leave, Jeni Henderson has joined my relief staff. It has been a joy to have Jeni in the office. Jeni and her husband Gus have been good friends and a strong support for many years. A heartfelt thanks to you both.

On an occasion such as this, I must also thank Labor branch members in the South West Region who have given so much of their time to help in a range of campaign activities, and for their support over the last 20 years. I especially thank David Smith and Phil Smith, on whom I have always been able to rely to help me with doorknocking. Your support and advice over the years has been most appreciated, and I thank you both. A special thanks to the Progressive Labor members of Young Labor for the many times they travelled to the south west to assist with various campaign activities and to lower the average age of those of us working on those campaign activities!

I also wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to Wes Hartley and Beverley Biggs for their friendship, support and counsel over the years. They have always been there for me, through the highs and, importantly, the lows. They have worked on polling booths all day, letterboxed, helped on Labor stalls at south west festivals, assisted with large mail-outs to constituents and anything else asked of them. They have also done relief work in the office. Wes and Beverley have always made time to listen and to provide advice over a cup of tea. I could not have done it without you. Thank you.

A special thanks to Hon Bob Pearce, who has mentored me throughout my time as a member of Parliament, and earlier. I am sure he would have preferred someone easier to mentor; I am sorry for that! He was always available at the other end of the phone whenever I needed advice or to vent. I thank you for your good counsel and support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Clerk and all the Legislative Council staff, past and present. You work tirelessly in the background, ensuring that this place runs efficiently and effectively. I thank you for the support and assistance you have provided to me over my time in this place; and to dear Deb, for everything she does and especially her caring nature. My thanks to the talented staff of the Legislative Council committee office and the Legislative Assembly committee office. Your work in ensuring that committee inquiries run smoothly and drafting reports is exceptional. Indeed, I extend my thanks to all the staff of the Parliament, past and present. Each of you, no matter your position, make an important contribution to the operation of the Parliament, and I thank you.

To the members of this place, past and current, it has been a pleasure to serve with each of you. You have listened to me and you have respected my decisions, even when disagreeing with me. Most importantly, you have challenged me. Through this exchange you have helped me to grow as a person and as a member of this place, and I offer you my heartfelt thanks. To those who will continue to serve in the forty-first Parliament, I wish you all the best with the challenges you will face in the years ahead as you continue to serve the people of Western Australia. To those who, like me, have come to the end of their parliamentary careers, you leave this place knowing you have made an important contribution to the governance of our state, and I wish you well in your future endeavours.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to express my disappointment that my party leadership chose to deny me preselection and an ability to continue to represent the people of the South West Region, for whom I have worked tirelessly. That task is now to be assumed by others, and I wish them well.

To the government, now with such a significant and overwhelming majority in both houses, the challenge in this historic period will be to stay humble, to stay focused, and to govern with astute wisdom. This new parliamentary term can be a time of significant legislative achievement, hopefully for the betterment of the people of this great state, that will last long after we all are gone.

The task of being a member of Parliament is a heavy responsibility. As I stated in my inaugural speech, the strength of our democracy lies in the capacity of its elected members to project thoroughly and effectively the views, wishes and aspirations of the people they are elected to represent. I have sought faithfully to acquit this task even when I have, at times, had to challenge my own party colleagues that we could do better.

As I prepare to leave this place, I am reminded that it is 100 years since the first woman was elected to not only this Parliament, but any Parliament in Australia—namely, Dame Edith Cowan. To say that she was unpopular in what was then a male bastion of privilege would be an understatement. Despite being in this place for just a single term, Edith Cowan used her time in Parliament, as one should, to constantly push for change in things that truly mattered. Her efforts made a significant difference, especially for women. I have often drawn strength from Edith Cowan as I have sought to faithfully bring before my colleagues and this Parliament matters of importance to the people of the South West Region and that I believed to be for the good of the people of Western Australia. Such a stance has not always made me popular, but popularity does not in itself result in good governance.

Over the last 20 years throughout the South West Region, I have had the good fortune of meeting many, many truly amazing people who, either through their work, their volunteering, or both, have made the region a better place

to live. They have truly enriched my life and helped me remain focused on what really matters. My only hope is that I have given as much to them and the region as they have given. Many of these people have become good friends, and I look forward to our continuing friendships.

In closing, I wish once more to acknowledge my mother and my late father. Despite arriving with nothing other than a suitcase and a willingness to work hard in order to realise their dreams and aspirations, it was their courage and self-sacrifice that made it possible for me to not only dare to aspire, but also realise my own aspiration to serve the people of Western Australia.

It has been an honour to be a member for the South West Region for these past 20 years. I thank the Labor Party for the opportunity and the electors of the South West Region for the trust they have placed in me. I have always endeavoured to champion the things of importance to you, and I trust I have acquitted that task to your satisfaction. Thank you.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: Hon Adele Farina, my old roommate, I thank you very much for your service to this chamber, your community and the Labor Party.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Colin de Grussa**.

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BILL 2021

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [3.30 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to increase the Treasurer's advance limit for 2020–21 to \$1.439 billion, an increase of \$750 million on the currently approved limit of \$689 million. The Treasurer's advance allows for supplementary funding of annual appropriations for unforeseen and extraordinary events during the financial year, as well as short-term repayable advances to agencies for working capital purposes. The annual Treasurer's advance limit is set automatically by the Financial Management Act 2006 and is calculated as three per cent of the amount appropriated in the previous financial year. For 2020–21, this equates to a Treasurer's advance limit of \$689 million. Under the FMA, if this automatic limit proves insufficient, parliamentary approval for an increased limit must be sought by way of a Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill.

This bill seeks to increase the Treasurer's advance limit by \$750 million to \$1.439 billion as the 2020–21 *Pre-election financial projections statement* forecast that the amount to be drawn against recoverable advances, excesses and new items in 2020–21 is \$786 million, exceeding the \$689 million limit for 2020–21. The main items of expenditure contributing to the \$786 million forecast to be drawn against the Treasurer's advance are COVID-19-related costs for additional spending, reductions in agency own-source revenue, additional cleaning for schools and public transport, the \$500 small business and charity electricity tariff offset, and costs associated with the extension of the commonwealth's HomeBuilder grant scheme. Other expenditure items include a \$100 million contribution for the Perth City Deal, and \$50 million to enable the Department of Justice to meet higher custodial services spending.

Since the release of the *Pre-election financial projections statement*, additional spending has emerged, such as the cost of delivering the WA component of the national COVID-19 vaccination program and the forecast impact of election commitments to be delivered in 2020–21 that will further support the community and invest in the state's economic and social recovery from the pandemic. It is anticipated that increasing the Treasurer's advance by \$750 million will provide sufficient capacity for the government to respond to emerging issues for the remainder of 2020–21, including further potential initiatives that may be required to support businesses and households, and keep our state safe and strong. As authority for the release of excess funding needs to be in place before any such funds can be drawn during the remainder of the 2020–21 financial year, there is an urgent need for this bill to pass through this Parliament as quickly as possible.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and I table the explanatory memorandum.

[See paper [196](#).]

PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Assembly Membership

The Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that for the present session the Parliamentary Services Committee shall consist of the Speaker, and the members for Churchlands, Kalgoorlie, Roe, Victoria Park and Warren–Blackwood.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION*Assembly's Message*

Message from the Legislative Assembly received and read acquainting the Legislative Council that it has agreed to the following resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to agree to a similar resolution —

That for the present Parliament, in accordance with Legislative Assembly standing orders 288–292, a Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission be appointed by the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE*Assembly's Message*

Message from the Legislative Assembly acquainting the Legislative Council that it has agreed to the following resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to agree to a similar resolution —

That for the present Parliament —

- (a) pursuant to section 51 of the Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006, a Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People be appointed by the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council;
- (b) the joint standing committee shall comprise two members appointed by the Legislative Assembly and two members appointed by the Legislative Council;
- (c) it is the function of the joint standing committee to —
 - (i) monitor, review and report to Parliament on the exercise of the functions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People;
 - (ii) examine annual and other reports of the commissioner; and
 - (iii) consult regularly with the commissioner;
- (d) a report of the joint standing committee will be presented to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council by members of the joint standing committee nominated by it for that purpose; and
- (e) the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly relating to standing and select committees will be followed as far as they can be applied.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [3.38 pm]: The opposition is here to help the government and I am starting to feel like Hon Martin Pritchard who I think referred to himself as a filler. I am sure I can assist filling in a little more time for the government until we get to other matters today.

I had the opportunity to commence my remarks on Tuesday, but I did not think I would get this opportunity on the last sitting day before the changeover to recognise all the members who have made valedictory speeches over the last two sitting weeks. I made this remark to some other colleagues during the course of this week that when we did the last changeover—I was even here for the one before, because I came in on a casual vacancy—I do not think I appreciated the valedictories as much as I have this time. Really listening to the insights and even getting to know a little more about people who you have sat next to for, in my case, almost eight years, there are things that you did not know about people, whether it was from their personal or professional life or their service to this house. I would like to thank them one and all for their contributions, no matter how short or how long. They have certainly made a remarkable difference to not just Parliament but also their electorates.

I began my remarks last week by congratulating the Australian Labor Party on its success, and by making some remarks about the election, and also the impact of COVID, both during the election and on the election itself. Other members have already made some remarks about the difficulty of running an election in that COVID environment. I do not think that is unique to Western Australia. We only need to look across Australia during these times and see the similar impact that is occurring in other jurisdictions.

I started by talking about some of the difficulties in understanding the application of some of the COVID restrictions. We did not really see any significant restrictions until the election period itself, when we went into our first period of lockdown, with regional checkpoints, people being confined to their homes unless exempt, and those types of restrictions, which I must say other states and territories certainly encountered well before us.

I made some comments about people's attitudes, and at the time people's fear, and also what I detected as a significant appetite for the government to go hard and to act quickly. I made the observation that I think that in those early days, governments were reluctant to consider things like international border restrictions, let alone interstate border restrictions. The notion of wearing a mask was not recommended. I attended a public hospital today, and the people were all in masks. It is interesting how things have evolved over that period of more than 12 months since this thing called COVID-19 came into existence in the world, and the impact that it has had on us all in different ways, whether they be physical or psychological.

I talked about some of the ways in which governments are responding differently. I made that observation because I thought it is interesting that 12 months ago, there really was no playbook. Little was known about the virus. Twelve months on, there is still a lot more to know about the virus, but we certainly know a lot more than we did 12 months ago, and, indeed, we have a number of different vaccines that are available and other types of response measures as we have learnt more about the virus.

I did find it interesting—I included a reference to this in my initial remarks last week—to see the response of the people of this state when we went into lockdown because of one case of community transmission, whereas, at the very same time, Queensland was coming out of lockdown because it had had only one case of community transmission. Those two states, Queensland and Western Australia, each have a Labor government, so we cannot say that is the Liberal approach and that is the Labor approach. Obviously, there were very different responses to those individual situations.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Member, it is the bit about the detail of the one case and the bit about how long you think it is taking you to detect that one case. It is not just the sheer numerical number. It is actually the full story and the full potential to have infected other people that is the issue at play.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Yes. I understand that every situation will be different. I am just making a comparison—it may be fairly raw—between the two states, and that is why the minister has said that there will be different circumstances in each event. In the last cases of community transmission that we had, the main reason for restricting people's movements or confining people to their home was to allow the contact tracers to catch up and find out where those people had been, who they had been exposed to, and how many close and casual contacts they had had, and to increase the testing capacity to get a good assessment of the situation. Obviously when we had this third event, we did not go into a period of lockdown. We did not have another three-day snap lockdown. We did not have regional borders come up and all those measures that we were becoming used to. The argument was that that was because we were all wearing face masks. If the primary argument for this type of restriction on one's movements is to allow the contact tracing capacity to ramp up and detect, I am not sure how face masks will necessarily assist that end. It may well limit the amount of transmission that occurs, but it certainly does not help improve the ability of our contact tracers to do their job.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Member, it is about the risk. The assessment was made that because everyone was wearing a mask, and there was a relatively short period when that person was out in the community, the risk—every decision is based on making an assessment about what the risk is. So there was a very clear difference at that point, because everyone was wearing a mask. It is not just to give the contact tracers time to catch up. It is making an assessment about what the potential for infection would be.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I am not sure, given they suspect that in one of the recent cases the hotel quarantine worker got the virus from moving someone's luggage, how a mask would necessarily help. As I said earlier, at the start of this whole state of emergency, the government advice was that masks were not necessary because they would not stop a person from getting COVID; they might stop a person from spreading it. I am just making some observations, minister, about how things have changed over the last 12 months and how there are some interstate differences in the response. I guess that in some respects we have been fortunate in that we have not been exposed to the amount of community spread that we have seen in particular in the states of Victoria and New South Wales.

Hon Pierre Yang: Member, would you take an interjection?

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Sure.

Hon Pierre Yang: I would say that it was mainly because of the government's splendid management of the COVID situation so that the community did not get exposed to more cases.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I think they were the ALP talking points during the election, Hon Pierre Yang, of course.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Obviously we spoke powerfully to the community, and the community listened.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: "Keeping us safe and strong" was the Labor message. That was about all it took to the election. It certainly did not take electoral reform to the election. It was all about keeping the state safe and strong. Hon Pierre Yang's interjection is interesting. I want to make it quite clear —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Martin Aldridge is addressing the chair.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Certainly a lot of people are assisting me in being a filler today. I thank them for their encouragement.

There is no-one more than me who wants the government to succeed in the fight and the challenges that we face with COVID-19, but in many respects I believe that we are as a state quite vulnerable to mass community transmission, as we have seen in other states and, indeed, internationally. In that respect, I think we have been very fortunate. I did make some comments on Tuesday about the need for us, while we are in this period, to actually start, as other jurisdictions have done, with some form of credible independent public inquiry into our COVID-19 response and our capability to respond. To be quite honest, our response capability has not been tested to any significant extent in Western Australia. We are still having debates, sadly, about our public health system's ability to manage without COVID-19 in our community. Heaven forbid we should end up with 500 community cases a day; what would that picture look like? This government should have welcomed the invitation of the now Leader of the Opposition in the middle of last year to establish a special inquiry under the Public Sector Management Act to look across the whole system. The government's response was, "We have this report and that report", but they are very specific and report on matters such as the ventilation system in hotel quarantine, but we have not had that whole-of-government or whole-of-system review that outlines our vulnerabilities and what we should do about them. I would have thought that the best opportunity to do that is whilst community spread is absent in Western Australia. I still encourage the government to take up the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition. This is not about any sort of witch-hunt or political pointscore such as happened in other states where inquiries have been established after significant failures in systems. Fortunately, we have not seen that happen in Western Australia, despite the challenges with hotel quarantine or public messaging. We have not had any significant hurdles of the scale of what we have seen happen interstate and internationally.

Given that I thought I would not get this opportunity to speak, I want to spend a little time recognising a number of members of the house who are leaving us today, their last sitting day. Their term does not expire until midnight on the twenty-first of this month, unless I am mistaken, when some new colleagues will join us for the remainder of the forty-first Parliament. I did some quick back-of-the-envelope calculations the other day. Across those members who are retiring and whose last day it is in the house today, some 40 terms have been served, equating to 160 years of service to the Legislative Council. The members range from your good self, Mr Deputy President, having served six terms, to some members who have served a single term. I would like to put on record my thanks to all of them. I have done only two terms, but there are members whom, in my first term, I had very little to do with. Fortunately, in my second term, I have had quite a lot to do with them. Sometimes that happens through committee membership or whether a member is in government or in opposition. I really value some of the relationships and friendships that I have formed with members across politics in this chamber. As some of the valedictory speeches have mentioned today, I am sure that some of those friendships will stand the test of time beyond their membership in this place.

I also want to recognise the service of the President. Madam President is one of those people whom I had very little to do with in my first term, but whom I have really grown to know in my second term. I would like to thank Madam President for her service to this house. I understand that, with the changeover, Madam President will likely become mother of the house after your good self, Mr Deputy President, as father of the house, being the longest, continuously serving member of the chamber who is not a cabinet minister or minister of the Crown. I could not think of anyone better to take on the role that you have played, Mr Deputy President, over the last four years as father of the house. I think Madam President is well suited to continue to support and mentor other members in this chamber.

I want to talk a little about the outcome of the election. Obviously, there is a very significant majority in the other place, if there was not already one previously. That will certainly present great challenges, as other members who have spoken on the Address-in-Reply have said, regarding government accountability and the functioning of Parliament and holding the executive accountable. Having just six members of the opposition in the other place, comprising the Liberal and Nationals WA Parties in alliance, is going to be extremely difficult. I do not envy the position that those members will be in over the next four years.

I want to talk a little about the seat of Geraldton. I spent quite a bit of time in Geraldton at the last election. Obviously, from the National Party's perspective, we held that seat at the time because of the change of membership of Mr Ian Blayney from the Liberal Party to the Nationals. We did not win that seat in our own right and it was our least marginal seat in the Agricultural Region. It is interesting looking at the results of the lower house districts in the Agricultural Region because in every case there was a primary swing to the incumbent National MP, except for Roe, where there was a very small swing against us of 0.1 per cent. In Geraldton, Ian Blayney took our vote, and we had a positive swing of some seven per cent. Obviously, it was not enough to stem the tide. Ian was one of those fellows with whom I had rarely exchanged conversations with during my first term, but I got to know him over the course of the last four years, particularly when working with him on the campaign for Geraldton. He was quite a remarkable local member, having defeated some pretty close contests in his time. I do not think that I have ever helped in a lower house campaign and got the type of feedback on the ground that Ian did. The results of the outcome of the last election speak for themselves, even though he was not successful. I think Hon Martin Pritchard said that he did not particularly like doorknocking; I am not sure who does. Doorknocking in Geraldton for Ian Blayney

was quite a pleasant and positive experience, which is not always the case. I know that other colleagues had similar experiences for different reasons at this election. Ian, having been the member for Geraldton for three terms, epitomised for me what a good, hardworking local member was and should be.

It was interesting spending quite a bit of time in Geraldton at pre-polling as Hon Laurie Graham did. We had many chats while waiting for the voters at the early voting centre in Geraldton. We would see a voter coming to the early voting centre and we would think we know which way they are going to go, whose how-to-vote card they are going to take and whose they are going to say to stick somewhere else, and I must say that in the time I spent in Geraldton, it was very hard to pick. I think that reflected the feedback I got at people's doors when doorknocking for Ian Blayney. I think people felt he was a really decent human being—people from across politics, backgrounds and socio-economic statuses. He was respected amongst his community. I want to put on the record my gratitude for his service to the seat of Geraldton and for the many things that were achieved in his tenure as the member for Geraldton. I wish the new member for Geraldton the best as she picks up the role and delivers for the midwest in the future.

At this point, I would like to recognise that a number of volunteers helped us throughout the Agricultural Region. It is fortunate that we retained in the Agricultural Region our lower house seats of Roe, Moore and Central Wheatbelt and, of course, our two upper house seats, although it was a long couple of weeks to get the result for the sixth and final spot.

Hon Darren West: Never in doubt!

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I am not so sure about that, Hon Darren West! Did the member vote for me?

Hon Darren West: No, I did not, oddly enough!

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I got the member's fourth preference!

It was obviously a very difficult election. I probably spent two out of three days at an early voting centre somewhere. I spoke before about the need to get the Electoral Commissioner in and give him a bit of a grilling over his early voting strategy. I had not seen this before, but it was interesting that we often got our rusted-on voters and swingers, but this time I encountered a third class of voter at the early voting centre and they were the apologists. They were the ones who walked in and said, "I am voting for Mark McGowan. Sorry; I will vote for you next time."

Hon Darren West: That's nothing to apologise for!

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: We will see, Hon Darren West. The government has four years; we will see!

As a result, on my calculations, we saw probably the worst transference result in 20 years for the National Party. What I call "transference" is the number of people who vote for us in the lower house and who then go on to vote either for us or differently in the upper house. We have seen in elections gone by a very high positive transference rate. I was looking at some of the South West Region results in years gone by and transference was 350-odd per cent in our favour. That was also the case in some of the Mining and Pastoral Region trends and cycles gone by, but this election was the worst result in 20 years, which would take us back to, say, the election impact on us of One Nation in 2001.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Member, can I ask a question? Do you think perhaps the Mining and Pastoral Region result may have to do with the calibre of the people in that region?

Hon Colin Holt: The calibre of the voters?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: No, the calibre of the National Party candidates, perhaps people like Hon Jacqui Boydell, who had a lot of support in the electorate, not going again.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I do not want to be drawn whilst a very fulsome review into the election results of the National Party is about to commence, but I will pick up the minister's point about the service of Hon Jacqui Boydell and also Hon Colin Holt, who I think have been exceptional servants of their regions over time. I do not envy the role Hon Colin Holt has played in the South West Region. He was one of those members who put his name on the ticket and was told, "You'll be right; you won't get elected", and 12 years later it is his final day of class, and he did it in a region in which there has not been that historical membership branch structure, that entrenched vote, which, of course, we benefit more from in the Agricultural Region. I certainly appreciate the role that both those members have played. My first term was under the leadership of Hon Colin Holt as Leader of the Nationals WA and my second term was under the leadership of Hon Jacqui Boydell as Leader of the Nationals. I have enormous respect for them as friends and colleagues.

Back to the election. What I want to know is what were the six Labor candidates who did not get elected doing, because if there was ever an election to get the royal flush down in the Legislative Assembly, that was it. I think the Labor Party should launch an inquiry into what those six candidates were up to in not being able to oust the remaining Liberal and National Party members. Fortunately for us —

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Good luck with that, Hon Darren West.

I do not think I have made any individual congratulations. I am trying to find my copy of the seating plan, but because I was not planning on speaking today, I have already packed up to move office. I want to congratulate my good friends Hon Matthew Swinbourn and Hon Kyle McGinn on their elevation to the frontbench. Finally, the Leader of the House has seen some good sense and separated the two because they were not up to anything good sitting together on the backbench of the crossbench. In all sincerity, congratulations. I look forward to engaging with you both in your roles in this place. Hopefully, sometime soon, we will have some legislation to examine.

I also want to congratulate the ministers and the other parliamentary secretaries. Really, not much has changed; they are all still here. They have been reappointed, some with a few different portfolios. Hon Samantha Rowe has picked up some new ones and so has Hon Darren West. I congratulate them all on their reappointments.

I want to talk about the legislative agenda that was outlined in the Governor's speech. I went through the Governor's speech, not for the purposes of raising the agenda in this debate but to see what sort of agenda we would be looking at over the next four years. I will pull from the speech the list of bills or reforms that were mentioned, many of which—I will go through this list and pick up a few of them in more detail—were introduced in the last Parliament but did not progress, either because they were introduced late or perhaps there was not enough time to progress them. Some of them go back a little way. I will work my way through the list in responding to the Address-in-Reply because they were key elements in setting out the government's agenda over the next four years.

The first bill is the Industrial Relation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, which was previously introduced in Parliament on 25 June 2020. The government has committed to reintroduce that bill to enhance the powers of industrial inspectors and workers' representatives. The government has committed to reintroduce the Health Services Amendment Bill, which is a 2019 vintage bill, having been introduced on 30 October 2019 and second read in this place on 15 September 2020. The Wittenoom Closure Bill is, again, a 2019 vintage bill. It was introduced on 21 March 2019 and second read in the Council on 14 August 2019, but it did not pass. Interestingly, we now have mention of the asbestos diseases reforms. I took some interest in that issue following the report on project 106 of the Law Reform Commission. On two occasions in 2019, in February and August, I asked about the progress of reform in this space by the government. This was in my first term. If I am not mistaken, Hon Kate Doust had introduced a private member's bill, which the house considered in the thirty-ninth Parliament. In fact, we may have sent it downstairs, but I cannot recall exactly. I certainly remember going into Committee of the Whole on it. Despite this being a particular interest of the then opposition in the thirty-ninth Parliament, which I think resulted in the referral to the Law Reform Commission, there was not a lot of progress on this issue in the last Parliament. In fact, the Attorney General, in answer to my question on 6 August 2019, said that a detailed proposal was currently under consideration. There was not a lot of movement on that issue, but it was mentioned in the Governor's speech to this place on 29 April.

The government has committed to reintroduce the Public Health Amendment (Safe Access Zones) Bill. That was a 2020-vintage bill introduced in the Council on 24 November 2020 and is going to be brought back onto the agenda. The Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill is also a 2020-vintage bill, first introduced on 24 June 2020. The Labor Party's favourite is the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2018, which was introduced on 2 November 2018 and second read in the Legislative Council on 4 September 2019. That bill was recommitted to in the Governor's address. The Criminal Law (Unlawful Consorting) Bill 2020 was introduced on 20 February 2020. We left that bill in the Committee of the Whole in the Council on 12 November 2020. That was obviously one of the reforms that was not prioritised in the dying days of the last Parliament.

We are about halfway through the list, Mr Deputy President. That takes us to firearms laws. The history of this issue is interesting. I heard Hon Aaron Stonehouse and, probably more so, Hon Rick Mazza, talk about it in their valedictory speeches. We were in government at the time when Hon Rick Mazza moved a disallowance motion with respect to some pretty hefty firearms fees that had been published by regulation at the time. We similarly had some concerns about them. We were told quite confidently they were made on a cost-recovery basis, and so were appropriate. But what pressure is there on the public service to come up with a more economic form of regulation if it can simply recover the cost? That resulted in some negotiations behind the chair at the time with the Attorney General and probably also the Minister for Police.

Hon Colin Holt interjected.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Yes, it was Minister Harvey. That resulted in the Law Reform Commission referral and report. I know that Hon Rick Mazza asked questions about this issue and was more involved in terms of the ministerial working group, but I also asked questions in the last Parliament about the progress of project 105 of the Law Reform Commission. Some 143 recommendations were tabled in the Parliament in November 2016. Obviously, with the change of government following the March 2017 election, I felt it was incumbent on the new government to take up the recommendations in the Law Reform Commission's report. I asked a question of the Minister for Police on 12 September 2017, which was a few months after the government had settled in. I asked —

I refer to Project 105 of the Law Reform Commission which inquired into and reported on the Firearms Act 1973, and I ask:

- (a) is the Government actively considering the 143 recommendations of the report tabled in Parliament in November 2016;

- (b) if yes to (a), does the Government have a timeline for responding to the report's recommendations; and
- (c) if yes to (a), will the government's response be tabled in Parliament?

In previous debates I have referred to the challenge I had in the fortieth Parliament with the then Minister for Police, the member for Midland. As the police spokesperson for the Nationals then, it was very difficult to get serious answers from this minister. In fact, I still have correspondence outstanding with her office that is bordering on months if not years old to which they have not bothered to respond. The answer provided to question on notice 369 on 10 October 2017 states —

- 1. Yes.

So the government was considering it. In response to the question about whether there was a time line for responding to the report, the answer was —

- 2. In due course.

And in answer to the question about tabling a public response, it states —

- 3. There is no requirement to table a response.

The minister was very helpful—as always! The best thing that has happened for firearms reform and these types of issues is that a new police minister has been appointed. I hope that the relationship with him can be more productive than the one we had with the former minister.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 577.]

Sitting suspended from 4.15 to 4.30 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PRISONERS — MEDICARE ACCESS

112. Hon ALISON XAMON to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

- (1) Does the minister intend to advocate for change at the federal level to allow prisoners to access Medicare?
- (2) If yes to (1) —
 - (a) when; and
 - (b) does the minister expect a positive outcome from this advocacy?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The following information has been provided by the Minister for Corrective Services.

- (1)–(3) Section 19(2) of the commonwealth Health Insurance Act 1973 precludes the payment of benefits under Medicare for medical services that are provided by or on behalf of and/or under an arrangement with a government authority. This prevents prisoners from accessing Medicare. The matter of access to Medicare has been raised at previous Corrective Services Ministerial Council meetings. It is expected that this matter will be raised at the upcoming meeting scheduled for July 2021.

RESIDENTIAL LAND — DEVELOPMENT TARGETS

113. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the state government planning for private and public residential development.

- (1) Does the government have a target for the number of residential lots to be developed and brought onto the market annually; and, if so, what is it?
- (2) If no to (1), why not?
- (3) Does the government have a target for the number of houses and apartments that should be developed and brought onto the market annually; and, if so, what is it?
- (4) What is the government's target for the number of public houses and units it intends to provide for the 2021–22, 2022–23, 2023–24 and 2024–25 financial years?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(4) The number of lots brought onto the market annually is delivered by the development industry. The demand for housing and, consequently, the development of residential lots fluctuates from year to year based on economic conditions and demographic factors. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

monitors the land and housing supply pipeline to ensure there is a sufficient stock of land to support anticipated demand for residential lots. As at 31 March 2021, there were more than 60 000 residential lots with conditional subdivision approval in Western Australia and sufficient stocks of land zoned for residential purposes or identified for urban expansion in the Perth and Peel metropolitan area to support growth for over 30 years.

With respect to public housing, those questions should be directed to the Minister for Housing.

IRON ORE ROYALTY REVENUE

114. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Treasurer:

I refer to question without notice 2 asked on 29 April 2021 in which the Treasurer identified that \$5.219 billion of iron ore royalty income had been received in the first half of the 2020–21 financial year.

- (1) With public sector net debt projected to reach \$40.2 billion dollars by 30 June 2024, how long will it take for that net debt to be repaid?
- (2) When will public sector net debt start to be reduced every year and by how much?
- (3) What average growth in gross state product is required to meet this debt repayment time line?
- (4) How much public sector net debt has been paid down since the McGowan government was elected in March 2017?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question.

- (1) The Department of Treasury advises a specific date for the repayment of the current forecast for net debt is not available. The McGowan Labor government has made the hard decision to repair the finances. Prior to COVID-19, net debt was around \$9 billion lower than what was forecast by the previous government. This provided the capacity to respond to COVID-19 with an unprecedented response of more than \$7 billion committed to support households and businesses and the Western Australian economy, as well as a record \$28.9 billion investment in infrastructure. Despite this, Western Australia's economy and finances are amongst the best in the world.
- (2) Prior to COVID-19, Western Australia was the only state with debt decreasing. Net debt declined by \$2.1 billion in 2019–20, for the first time since 2006–07. The McGowan Labor government made the responsible decision to change its focus from repaying debt to supporting households and businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic and our state's economy recovery. In 2023–24, net debt is projected to begin to decline again, and may occur earlier, something the previous Liberal–National government was never able to achieve.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Honourable member, I am struggling to hear myself, and if I cannot hear myself, I am not giving the rest of the answer.

The PRESIDENT: All right. Members, it is our last sitting day for this Parliament. Please listen to this minister in silence.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:

- (3) There is no simple direct relationship between the rate of growth in gross state product and the pace of debt retirement. There are many factors that will determine the capacity and speed of which debt can be repaid.
- (4) See responses to (1) and (2).

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE — THREE SISTERS HILLS

115. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

I refer to question without notice 1320 asked in the Legislative Council on 24 November 2020.

- (1) Given that I personally lodged the site heritage data in late March 2008 on behalf of Vincent Lockyer, who, unfortunately, has passed away, after having surveyed the area on 1 March 2008, and the site form included reference to surface artefacts—also supplied was a CD containing photographs of the artefacts—why did the minister of the day say that there was no knowledge of the surface artefacts?
- (2) Given that The Sisters remains on the other heritage site classification as ID 24950, is The Sisters in a queue to be assessed for registration?
- (3) If yes to (2), what is the expected year that this site will be assessed for registration?
- (4) If no to (2), why not?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. Perhaps this might be his last question in question time, so I wish him the very best if it is.

- (1) I am not in a position to speak on behalf of the minister of the day.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) It is anticipated that the site will be assessed in the 2021–22 financial year.
- (4) Not applicable.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

116. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the proposed south coast marine park and the Department for Biosecurity, Conservation and Attraction's proposal to brief key Esperance-based stakeholders on the status of the project and to seek their views on the draft community engagement strategy.

- (1) What key stakeholders is DBCA proposing to brief, and does this include local members of Parliament?
- (2) If the proposal is not to brief local members of Parliament, why not?
- (3) Has the time line for the establishment of the south coast marine park been revised as a consequence of the altered consultation process?
- (4) Other than the proposed briefings, what level of engagement has occurred between DBCA and key industry groups such as the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council and Recfishwest?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided on behalf of the Minister for Environment.

- (1) The organisations that the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is proposing to brief on the proposed south coast marine park draft community engagement strategy are: Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation; Goldfields–Esperance Development Commission; Shire of Esperance; Esperance Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Gary Johnson Foundation; Australia's Golden Outback; Esperance Deep Sea Angling Club; South East Coast Recreational Fishing Council; Esperance port; Southern Seafood Producers WA; Shire of Ravensthorpe; Shire of Jerramungup; Albany Boating and Offshore Fishing Club; Wagyl Kaip regional organisation; South Coast Cetaceans; Ngadju Native Title Aboriginal Corporation; *Western Angler* magazine—to be confirmed—and Shire of Albany. If the member is seeking a briefing, the Minister for Environment's office is happy to arrange one.
- (2) See (1).
- (3) Yes.
- (4) DBCA has met with the WA Fishing Industry Council and Recfishwest on a number of occasions regarding the proposed south coast marine park, including at a key stakeholder workshop on 2 October 2019 and focus group meetings in Albany and Esperance on 10 to 12 March 2020. In addition, the director general of DBCA chairs a reference group on marine park planning issues that includes WAFIC, Recfishwest, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and Save Our Marine Life, which has met on three occasions since 2020. WAFIC attended only the most recent meeting.

LOTTERYWEST GRANTS — VICTORY LIFE CENTRE

117. Hon PETER COLLIER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the email exchange between Lannie Le-Patterson, senior media adviser in the Premier's office; Holly Wood, senior manager of media and communications at Lotterywest Healthway; and James Mooney, on Thursday, 1 October 2020, and Friday, 2 October 2020, obtained under FOI, which states in part —

We're meeting with this group tomorrow so if this does attract media attention it would likely be over the weekend.

...

When organisations complete their application are there guidelines that they get to review and can we point to the fact they don't meet the guidelines as outlined in the application process as well?

...

Is there somewhere on the website that talks about inclusion and aligning with our values?

Honestly, you could not make up this stuff.

- (1) Was there any information on the Lotterywest website that referred to inclusion and having to align with Lotterywest values when Margaret Court Community Outreach made its application; and, if so, where on the website?
- (2) Does such information referred to in (1) exist now; and, if so, where on the website?
- (3) Did Ms Le-Patterson inform or discuss this issue with the Premier or anyone from the Premier's office once she had received it on 1 October 2020?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Yes; in the assessment criteria for the "Supporting the Most Vulnerable" grant program of the COVID-19 relief fund.
- (2) Yes, as stated in (1), and in the "Community Investment Framework" published on the Lotterywest website.
- (3) As the Premier's office received media inquiries in relation to this matter, with Margaret Court herself issuing a media release, the Premier's senior media adviser discussed the issue with staff.

ABORTION — LIVE BIRTHS

118. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer to question without notice 623 answered on 17 June last year in which the house was advised that the Department of Justice had received recommendations from the Coroner's Court in January 2020 for legislative amendment to the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911 and that these recommendations were yet to be discussed with the Minister for Health.

- (1) Has the Attorney General now discussed the matter with the Minister for Health?
- (2) If yes to (1), when did these discussions take place?
- (3) How many recommendations were received from the coroner?
- (4) What were those recommendations?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(4) The Attorney General has not yet discussed the matter with the full cabinet. Given the Coroner's Court recommendation to amend the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 was prepared for the ultimate deliberation of the cabinet, the Attorney General is not in a position to expand on the recommendation. He can, however, confirm that there was only one recommendation from the Coroner's Court, and the Department of Justice and the Department of Health are working together to progress the matter at a departmental level.

COMMUNITY SERVICES — FUNDING

119. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the minister's answer to question without notice 73 asked on 11 May 2021, in which the minister did not table a list of the eligible community service providers that will have their contracts extended as a result of the government's announcement made on 14 December 2020.

Given the Minister for Mental Health, in answer to question without notice 96, has tabled a list of the 51 service providers that will have their contracts with the Mental Health Commission extended to 30 June 2022, will the minister now provide an equivalent list of service providers that will have their contracts with the Department of Communities extended; and, if not, why not?

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

The joint press statement dated 14 December 2020 titled "McGowan Government delivers funding boost for community services" referred to both funding allocated to enable contract extensions for eligible community service providers and a \$15 million funding boost to support eligible community service providers. As advised in my response to question without notice 73, a total of \$9 million of the funding boost was allocated to the Department of Communities for disbursement across eligible contracts, including family and domestic violence, homelessness, mental health and out-of-home care services. The Department of Communities is also currently in the process of extending its community services contracts that cease on or before 30 September 2021 for at least one year.

Community service providers have not yet been formally advised of their extension time frames or the allocation of funding under the funding boost; this information will be tabled once this has occurred.

FIREARMS — MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP

120. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to the response to my question without notice 15 asked on 4 May 2021 on the Law Reform Commission's firearms reform ministerial working group. The response stated that the McGowan Labor government is committed to progressing firearms reform in Western Australia and will continue to consult with key stakeholders during the reform process.

Is it the minister's intention to retain the firearms reform ministerial working group as a consultative stakeholder to work through the Law Reform Commission's recommendations; and, if not, why not?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Police.

Key stakeholders will be consulted during the reform process.

WASTE LEVY — ADMINISTRATION

121. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the administration of the waste levy in Western Australia.

- (1) What total volume of construction and demolition—C&D—waste originating from the Perth metropolitan area does the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation estimate was generated in the 2019–20 financial year?
- (2) Of that total volume, what proportion does DWER estimate has been —
 - (a) diverted from landfill and managed at a licensed recycling/reprocessing facility;
 - (b) stockpiled; and
 - (c) disposed of in a landfill facility outside of the metropolitan area?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer is provided on behalf of the Minister for Environment.

- (1) Construction and demolition, or C&D, waste generation, calculated as the weight of waste disposed to landfill plus that waste recovered, from the Perth metropolitan region in 2019–20 was 2 190 388 tonnes.
- (2)
 - (a) Eighty-eight per cent of the total C&D waste generated for 2019–20 was recovered. This includes C&D processed materials stockpiled as reported by premises.
 - (b) As at 30 June 2020, there were 680 387 tonnes of processed material and 633 762 tonnes of unprocessed waste reported as stockpiled at premises in the Perth metropolitan area. Stockpile data for 2019–20 may include waste generated in previous years.
 - (c) There has been three per cent.

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — SHAREFARMING AGREEMENTS REVIEW

122. Hon DIANE EVERS to the minister representing the Minister for Forestry:

I refer to the response to question without notice 110, asked on 12 May 2021.

- (1) Who is the independent auditor conducting the audit, when will it be completed and will the results be provided directly to sharefarmers shortly thereafter?
- (2) How does this audit differ from that done by William Buck in 2018, noting the response to question on notice 2619 on 5 December 2019?
- (3) How many sharefarmer agreements and transactions were audited in 2018 and did this include reviewing methodology and calculations against agreements?
- (4) How many sharefarmer agreements and transactions will be reviewed under the current audit?
 - (a) Will this audit include a review of payment methodologies and amounts against the original sharefarmer agreements; and, if not, why not?
- (5) Noting the response to question without notice 110, will agreements with other terms also be audited; and, if not, why not?
- (6) Will the FPC rectify any payments found to be incorrect under the audit shortly after completion; and, if not, why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The Minister for Forestry has provided the following answer.

- (1) PricewaterhouseCoopers is conducting the audit. The audit is scheduled for completion by the end of June 2021. Any issues identified in the audit will be raised directly with the affected sharefarmers concerned.
- (2)–(3) The Forest Products Commission is unable to answer these questions within the time frame given. The minister has undertaken to ensure that the information is provided to the honourable member next week.
- (4) There will be 82 softwood sharefarmer agreements, totalling 193 transactions between the start of 2013 and the end of 2020.
 - (a) Payments are reviewed against the Forest Products Commission sharefarmer payment methodology.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) The Forest Products Commission will address any issues raised by the auditors.

ABORIGINAL CORPORATIONS — GOVERNANCE

123. Hon ROBIN SCOTT to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer to recent reports that Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne was paid almost \$345 000 to provide governance training to the Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation—the corporation recently found to be without a valid board and unable to account for more than \$28 million in spending. This is on top of the allegations of corruption in another Aboriginal group, the Kimberley Land Council, which recently appointed a barrister to carry out an internal investigation.

- (1) Does the Attorney General trust the internal investigation of the Kimberley Land Council or does he intend to carry out an investigation of the Kimberley Land Council himself?
- (2) What is the McGowan government doing to tackle corruption in Aboriginal corporations?
- (3) What is the government's response to allegations that its track record on tackling corruption in Aboriginal corporations is pathetic?

The PRESIDENT: I am going to give the call to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, but I will mention that I think the first part of question, or other parts of it, might impinge on the standing orders in relation to seeking an opinion. Parliamentary secretary, I am not sure what response you have.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I have a response here, Madam President, so I shall give it to the member. I might point out that in his question he spelt “Swinburne” incorrectly to begin with. That is okay; it is a personal thing for me about how “Swinbourn” is spelt, so I encourage people to get it correct!

I thank the member for some notice of the question and I provide the following answer on behalf of the Attorney General.

- (1)–(3) The Attorney General's role in relation to Aboriginal corporations extends only to charitable trusts. The Attorney General is the guardian of the public interest in the enforcement of charities. The role includes a duty to protect property the subject of a charitable trust, or property held for charitable purposes, and to ensure that the trust or charitable purpose is enforced.

The role does not extend to the regulation of corporations formed under the commonwealth Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006. CATSI act corporations, including the Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation, are regulated by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, a federal body. Charitable trusts are not corporations, and not all Aboriginal corporations have charitable trusts. The Attorney General remains committed to reforming the Charitable Trusts Act 1962, and work is being progressed to achieve that end.

MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

124. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

I refer to Legislative Council question without notice 82 on electoral reform.

- (1) The minister's answer suggests that cabinet appointment occurred on Wednesday, 28 April 2021. Did cabinet meet and agree to this appointment on this day?
- (2) Can the minister please table any letters, emails, agreements, contracts or other documents exchanged between the minister, his representative or the government and the ministerial expert committee members in relation to their appointment and the terms of their appointment?
- (3) How many staff have been assigned to support the committee, what agencies have they been provided from and for what term will they be engaged to support the committee?
- (4) What is the agreed hourly or daily cost of each committee member?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide the following answer on behalf of the Minister for Electoral Affairs.

- (1) Cabinet met on Tuesday, 27 April following the long weekend. The terms of appointment commenced on 28 April 2021.
- (2) The information requested cannot be provided in the time available, so I request the member place this part of the question on notice.
- (3) The terms of reference include that executive support is to be provided by the office of the Minister for Electoral Affairs.
- (4) This is currently being determined.

MINISTERIAL OFFICES — STAFFING

125. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Treasurer:

I refer to ministerial office staffing in the Treasurer's office.

- (1) How many vehicles have been allocated to the Treasurer's ministerial office?
- (2) Have any of these vehicles been damaged or incurred damage in any way, been involved in a motor vehicle accident, or incurred a speeding fine or traffic infringement of any description?
- (3) If yes to (2), can the details please be provided?
- (4) Have any staff members, including staff on secondment, been directed, or volunteered, to reimburse a credit card charge on their government credit card?
- (5) If yes to (4), can details please be provided?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet advises the following for the period from 19 March 2021 to 12 May 2021.

- (1) Six.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) One infringement.
- (4) No. There have been nil payments or reimbursements from government credit cards.
- (5) Not applicable.

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY — EXPORTS — CHINA

126. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the catastrophic effect the closure of the Chinese market has had on the western rock lobster industry.

- (1) Has the government undertaken any analysis to quantify the impact of the loss of the Chinese market on the industry; and, if not, why not?
- (2) If yes to (1), has the scope of any such analysis included an assessment of the ongoing financial viability of individual licence holders, the sustainability and overall viability of the industry across a range of product pricing and alternative market scenarios or the impacts on local businesses and regional economies which support the rock lobster industry, or an investigation of financial, regulatory or general industry assistance measures?
- (3) What is the government's response to the Western Rock Lobster Council's request for a waiver of the deferred gross value of production access fees?

Hon KYLE MCGINN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) The government acknowledges the impacts of the China trade disruption on the west coast rock lobster fishery. Preliminary estimates, as evidenced by the prices paid to fishers throughout the season, suggest that the value of the industry could have halved from an annual gross value product of over \$400 million. The government is monitoring the situation, but the full extent of the value reduction resulting from the China market closure will not be known until later this year.

The state government continues to work very closely with the western rock lobster industry to assist the industry to minimise the economic impact of the loss of the Chinese market on fishers, and continues to provide support to assist with market diversification opportunities. Assistance to the industry includes the

initial introduction and enhancement of the back-of-boat sales mechanism, which resulted in significantly more rock lobsters being made available to the local community, restaurants and seafood wholesale and retail outlets at prices comparable with or exceeding the export price paid to fishers.

- (3) The government has not yet responded to this request as it is still under consideration.

BLACK COCKATOOS — SWAN COASTAL PLAIN

127. Hon ALISON XAMON to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the Minister for Forestry's answer to my question without notice 64 asked on 6 May 2021, directing questions regarding the impact on Carnaby's black cockatoos from the Gngangara pines harvesting schedule to the Minister for Environment.

- (1) Will the government commit to refusing to harvest the remaining Gngangara pines until such time as a sufficient amount of native feed has been planted and reached maturity to support the cockatoo population currently relying on these pines?
- (2) If not, why not?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer is provided on behalf of the Minister for Environment.

- (1)–(2) Further to the response from the Minister for Forestry, a number of management activities are in place for Carnaby's cockatoo on the Swan coastal plain. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions works with the recovery team for Carnaby's cockatoo to guide and coordinate conservation efforts. DBCA, in partnership with the WA Museum, non-government organisations including BirdLife Australia and the World Wildlife Fund, research institutions and community volunteers, is implementing actions from the recovery plan for this species to guide ongoing conservation efforts. Recovery efforts include the installation and repair of artificial nest boxes to improve breeding success, measures to reduce vehicle collisions with adult birds, rehabilitating injured cockatoos, protecting habitat, and monitoring and research to understand the movements and requirements of the species.

One action of relevance to the conservation of Carnaby's cockatoo is the carbon for conservation initiative, released as part of the government's COVID-19 economic stimulus and recovery plan. One of the candidate sites identified for the carbon for conservation initiative is the northern Swan coastal plain area, including the areas of harvested pine plantation within the Gngangara state forest. DBCA has recently partnered with the Water Corporation and BirdLife Western Australia to plant 15 000 to 20 000 native plant seedlings in the Gngangara state forest each year over the past five years. This complements DBCA's ongoing annual replanting program within the former pine plantation areas to create habitat for the endangered Carnaby's cockatoo and other native wildlife. DBCA will continue to explore opportunities for such partnerships to return native vegetation to the former pine plantation areas of the Gngangara state forest and create habitat for Carnaby's cockatoo and other native wildlife.

ALCOA — BAUXITE ALCOA HUNTLY MINE

Questions without Notice 29, 83 and 90 — Answer Advice

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [5.01 pm]: I would like to provide answers to Hon Diane Evers's questions without notice 83 and 90, which were asked on 11 May 2021. I seek leave to have them incorporated into *Hansard*. I also seek leave to incorporate into *Hansard* the answer to a question 29 of which notice was given on 4 May.

[Leave granted for the following material to be incorporated.]

Question without notice 29 —

I thank the member for the question. I can provide the following information.

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) and (6) Alcoa has not formally requested an extension. The company is currently undergoing a formal assessment at a public environmental review level under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 for its possible bauxite export. Community consultation is a formal part of the PER process.
- (4) No.
- (5) Not applicable.

Question without notice 83 —

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation advises:

- (1) The bauxite for export is part of Alcoa's overall clearing activity for its bauxite mining operations and is not reported separately.

- (2) This information is not available.
- (3) The Government does not release individual company royalty payments as these are dealt with in confidence between the State and the Company.
- (4) (a)–(b) This information is not available to the Department and the question should be directed to the Ministers responsible for the agencies named in (a) and (b).
- (5) Not applicable.

Question without notice 90 —

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation advises:

- (1) (a)–(b) Bauxite occurs in shallow deposits (pods) and mining areas are determined by the extent of each bauxite deposit.
- (1) (c)–(e) Alcoa carries out flora and fauna studies ahead of mining. These surveys are used to map the site vegetation types and to find declared rare or priority flora, or rare and endangered fauna. Mine plans are modified where appropriate and mining operations are managed to minimise the risk to flora or fauna. Undisturbed areas within mining pods are used as refuge areas for flora and fauna in the company's rehabilitation program.
- (2) Not applicable.

PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — AISHWARYA ASWATH

Question without Notice 62 — Answer Advice

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.02 pm]: I undertook to provide an answer to Hon Michael Mischin's question without notice 62, asked on 6 May 2021. The Attorney General has advised that the answer to that question without notice is as follows.

- (1)–(6) The Attorney General understands the Coroner's Court is taking into account Aishwarya's parents' views when considering whether to hold an inquest. The Attorney General cannot envisage any circumstances in which the Coroner's Court will not hold an inquest.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [5.03 pm]: I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage of today's sitting.

[Leave granted for the member's speech to be continued at a later stage of the sitting.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Colin de Grussa**.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS — FORTIETH PARLIAMENT

Statement by Leader of the House

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.04 pm]: Today marks the last sitting day of the fortieth Parliament. I want to take the opportunity to make some comments. I thank all members and staff in this place for their contributions over the life of the fortieth Parliament. Although members of the public do not necessarily always believe it, it is the case that most of the time we actually agree and get the job done. Each of us hold the same motivations, and we heard all of that reinforced in the valedictory speeches of those who have given them. We are all here because we want to improve our community and we are committed to our community. From time to time, we will disagree on how we achieve a better outcome for our communities, but fundamentally everybody is here for the same reason.

Some are leaving us because they have chosen to move on to the next stage of their careers and to end their parliamentary careers, but for others it is not by choice. Any one of us could find ourselves in that position at any time, either by virtue of the decision of our party or indeed the electorate. My observation over the last two weeks of the sitting period is that some members have found these last two weeks very difficult, while others, I have to say, have looked and sounded quite liberated. I asked members of the government benches to stay in the house for each valedictory speech. I said they ought to treat those who are making their valedictory speeches, no matter how uncomfortable some of them might make us feel, the way we would want to be treated when we do our valedictory speeches; that is, we would want people to listen. I thank members of the government team who have done that. As somebody made the point—I think it was Hon Martin Aldridge—the valedictory speeches have been really quite illuminating for all of us. We have heard some things for the first time about some of the people whom we have worked with for at least four years and some of whom we have worked with for much longer than that.

On behalf of the government, I thank all members who are leaving us and who will not be coming back in the forty-first Parliament for the contribution that they have made. I thank you for your public service. I thank you for the service you have provided the people of Western Australia. To the outgoing members of the Liberal Party, to Hon Simon O'Brien, the father of the house, your experience is a great loss to this Parliament. I am not going to make a comment about each member who is leaving, but I will share this. Hon Simon O'Brien and I served on a select

committee of two. We looked into particular circumstances around Fremantle Cemetery. I have said this before in this place, but Hon Simon O'Brien does not mind the odd quip and the odd word game. I want members to think of every possible poor taste joke that they can about a cemetery and a crematorium—I heard all of them in the course of that select committee inquiry.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I remember you stormed off when I pointed out the incongruity of the sign in the crematorium that said “No smoking in this area”!

Hon SUE ELLERY: And that was one of the better jokes! To you, my friend, all the best for the future.

Hon Michael Mischin is not in the chamber; he is out on urgent parliamentary business. I have had the opportunity to spar with him on a number of occasions when I have been sitting at the table.

To Hon Ken Baston, who served as Whip, that is not an easy job to do.

To Hon Jim Chown, whom I had the opportunity to travel with to China on the infamous Huawei trip, what happens on tour stays on tour is all that I am —

Several members interjected.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Settle down! Dear me, Madam President!

The PRESIDENT: I was with you, I can back you up, Leader of the House.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Indeed, you were.

Several members interjected.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Everyone, calm down. To the outgoing members of the National Party, Hon Colin Holt and Hon Jacqui Boydell, it really has been a pleasure working with you and getting to know you as well. Thank you for your service, too.

To the outgoing members of the crossbench, Hon Rick Mazza, Hon Colin Tincknell, Hon Aaron Stonehouse, Hon Robin Scott and, somewhere, Hon Charles Smith, I wish you all the best for the future as well. Rumour has it that we will see at least one of you, apparently, around the house a bit.

To the Greens, Hon Alison Xamon, Hon Robin Chapple, Hon Tim Clifford and Hon Diane Evers, thank you for your service to Western Australia. Thank you for the issues that you have continued to raise and pursue on behalf of the people of WA as well.

Finally, to the retiring members in the Labor Party, Hon Adele Farina, who I entered Parliament with 20-odd years ago, and Hon Laurie Graham, thank you for serving the party with distinction both inside this chamber and out. I want to place on the record my thanks for your contribution to the party, to your electorates, and to the people of Western Australia. I sincerely wish all the outgoing members the very best for whatever may happen next in their careers and in their lives. Your contribution to this place and to Western Australia has been significant. It is a formidable group of people who are moving on after serving the people of Western Australia in the fortieth Parliament, and many who have served in previous Parliaments before that as well. I wish you well in whatever happens in the next chapter of your life.

Thank you, Madam President.

Members: Hear, hear!

Statement by Leader of the Opposition

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [5.10 pm]: Along with the Leader of the House, I would like to offer my own congratulations and the congratulations of the National–Liberal alliance to all those members who will no longer be with us after today. In particular, in my own party I have obviously had many years of reliance on Hon Michael Mischin’s sage advice on legal matters, and I shall miss that sage advice, but I have no doubt that I will call on it on occasions from here on in.

To Hon Simon O'Brien, I am sure that your humour is shared amongst all of us, not just those on committees. Having been an acting president and having been on committees with you, it has been an absolute pleasure, and I am sure that you will continue to make a humorous contribution to public life outside of this Parliament.

It is interesting that my fellow regional members Hon Jim Chown and Hon Ken Baston will also depart their chairs. It is very difficult to be a regional member, as I am sure other regional members will know, and I am sure that as my good friend Hon Robin Chapple will know, it is hard to be the only member from one’s political party in a region, so it is a great task to represent the collective.

To my good friend Hon Jacqui Boydell, your speech was magnificent and your contribution in the years that I have known you has been great. I intend to keep in contact with Hon Jacqui Boydell, who is not infrequently down in Bunbury and will continue, no doubt, to visit us, and I am sure we will find a range of coffee shops in that area that we can go to and talk.

Hon Colin Holt needs no introduction to Bunbury. It was one of those things where we often saw Hon Colin Holt around the south west, and I am sure that his contribution will also be missed.

To the crossbench and all those members who are departing us, Hon Rick Mazza and Hon Aaron Stonehouse, and my friends from One Nation, Hon Colin Tincknell, whom I got to know just before the last state election when we started talking about what might happen, and Hon Robin Scott, it has been a magnificent four years. Your contribution has been significant in this state. It should always be remembered that in those times when this side of the house managed to get votes over the top of the existing government, it would never have happened if it were not for your support and your contribution. To Hon Aaron Stonehouse, I always felt that there was a place for you over here, and perhaps if you had jumped into the spare seat, we might have been able to save you, but I will be pleased to continue those conversations. Hon Rick Mazza will, I think, retire back down to the south west now and be a constituent, so I will be looking forward to those letters, particularly around firearms licensing going forward. Hon Colin Tincknell and I will no doubt stay in touch. Hon Robin Scott, I will miss your passionate Scottish voice in this chamber. You have been one of the most passionate contributors I have heard, and it has been great to see.

I will definitely miss Hon Alison Xamon. Your contribution has been—I was going to use the word “voluminous”, but it has also been consistent and strong. I will absolutely miss Hon Robin Chapple. For someone who was sometimes on the other extreme of some of these debates, we found an enormous amount of common ground. I shall look forward to seeing you back up north at some point.

Hon Robin Chapple: So long as it is not by the television!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: You will be seeing the next round of advertising campaign very soon, so I am sure you will be looking forward to that. Hon Diane Evers, thank you for your contribution. You have been a passionate supporter around the south west and I have seen you at numerous events.

Hon Laurie Graham, thank you. It has been fun. I remember going on to the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review relating to the ports. We even found some common ground at that point, which is unusual for members from two sides of politics.

I must spend a couple of minutes to speak about my good friend Hon Adele Farina, who, as I said during my contribution to the Address-in-Reply, has made an enormous effort around the south west. For someone on the other side of politics, Hon Adele Farina is the person I have seen in the most places over many years. She has constantly been around the community. She would go to events; I would see her everywhere I went. We did a number of Australia Day ceremonies together, where one of us would give out some part of the award, particularly because in Margaret River they give a coin and flowers. One year I would hand out one part and Hon Adele Farina would hand out the other. We worked as a team many times. I think people underestimate the level of interaction Hon Adele Farina has had throughout the south west. It is very easy to forget members who are not necessarily a loud voice in this chamber but who are a constant voice in their community. It is not always the loudest that counts. I think she should be congratulated for the years that she has contributed, and this will be a poorer place for her not being here.

Finally, Madam President, to you. I did note that in almost every valedictory speech that I listened to—I listened to all of them—you were congratulated for your work in the last four years. It might seem a little bit redundant to say it again, but as someone who has acted in your place on occasion and someone who relied on your advice, I think it behoves this chamber on its final day of the fortieth Parliament to acknowledge your contribution and your work and the magnificent bipartisan way you have approached your job and have helped all members of Parliament, and the steadfast application of the rules for which you have now become as famous as your predecessors. You should be congratulated, Madam President. I am sure that the entirety of the house will join me in saying a profound thankyou for your work over the last four years. We wish your replacement well and hope that they do as much as you have done for the benefit of the state of Western Australia and the Legislative Council.

Hon Nick Goiran: I am sure that you agree with me that Hon Tim Clifford is worthy of a mention.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I am sorry. I missed mentioning Hon Tim Clifford—and we were on a committee together. I saved the best for last!

Hon Tim Clifford, of course. I thought that the statement “What goes on in committee stays in committee” was sage advice. But I think that it might be interesting to mention that when the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs—which really did not do a lot of environmental work over the past four years; it generally dealt with petitions—examined compensation for genetically modified organisms, I had the expectation that Hon Tim Clifford might prove to be an ideologue, shall I say. But he was absolutely open to all sides of the argument. The committee report was delivered unanimously. Hon Tim Clifford does not have to worry about preselection at the moment; he has four years, so everybody can forget that. He obviously took the position that doing the right thing was more important than philosophy. That will stand him in good stead for the next few years. I have every expectation that we will see you, Hon Tim Clifford, in Parliament, or around Parliament, for many years to come in some way, shape or form.

Members: Hear, hear!

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) [5.18 pm]: Members, I rise to make some comments, focusing particularly on the last four years of my term as President. I was certainly honoured at the commencement of the last Parliament to be selected by yourselves, the members of the Legislative Council, to serve as the chamber's Presiding Officer. I know that history was made when you elected me as the first female President of the Legislative Council, and I hope I have served you well. It also has been an honour and a privilege to work with the most professional and skilled employees of the Department of the Legislative Council. Our house team is exceptionally good, and I thank them for their diligence, support and commitment to the members of this place. I acknowledge the Clerk, Mr Nigel Pratt; the Deputy Clerk, Mr Paul Grant; the Usher of the Black Rod, Mr John Seal-Pollard; Clerk Assistant (House), Mr Sam Hastings; Advisory Officer (Procedure), Mr Grant Hitchcock; Parliamentary Officer (Procedure), Mr Chris Hunt; Parliamentary Officer (Procedure), Ms Renae Jewell; the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod, Mr Peter Gale; Parliamentary Officers, Mr Brian Conn, Ms Hayley Brown and Ms Lauren Levia; and the Executive Officer, Office of the Clerk, Ms Rebecca Burton.

I would also like to acknowledge Ms Christine Kain, Clerk Assistant (Committees), and the team at the Legislative Council committee office. During the fortieth Parliament they have worked extremely hard. Not only did they have the eight standing committees to deal with, but also six select committees, which placed considerable pressure on the financial and human resources of the department. Committees met for almost 2 000 hours in the last Parliament, and this does not reflect the many, many hours that the staff worked in preparation for meeting and developing the 123 reports tabled, so I think we can all acknowledge that they are indeed a class act.

The role of the President is much more than just presiding over the chamber. The President also gets to represent the Legislative Council in official dealings with other Parliaments and organisations, plays an important ceremonial role and assumes responsibilities for the administration of the Parliament and of Parliament House. The President is also a member of a whole range of committees that impact on the running and maintenance of the Parliament and ultimately is responsible for the appointment of Legislative Council staff. I must tell members that it is a much more involved role than Barry House ever pitched to me when he sat me down for a chat—much, much more.

As per Westminster traditions, in all these duties the President must serve impartially, treating all members equally, irrespective of rank or political affiliation. The President represents the tradition, prestige and integrity of the Parliament and advocates independence from executive government, the separation of powers, and is also an ambassador for the Parliament. The President's first allegiance must always be to the Parliament, not to the government; to do otherwise would damage the Parliament's independence. I hope that history will judge me as someone who has played with a political straight bat and acted with integrity and the best intentions of the Legislative Council.

There have been a number of challenges when presiding over this last Parliament. The composition of the house has given rise to some very interesting and challenging circumstances. When we started out, we had a record six non-government parties, and this expanded to seven during the term. The increased number of parties represented in the Council prompted the need for clarification regarding unlimited speaking times and a proper interpretation of a lead member of the opposition. Question time was also something that required a little getting used to for some, with, on more than one occasion—not looking at you, Hon Dr Steve Thomas—a behind-the-chair query on why I gave a member the call only once or twice. My response was that each party that wishes to ask a question should be given the opportunity to do so.

I would also like to thank Mr Deputy President, Hon Simon O'Brien, and my Deputy Chairs during the fortieth Parliament, Hon Adele Farina, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Hon Robin Chapple, Hon Laurie Graham, Hon Matthew Swinbourn, Hon Martin Aldridge and, more recently, Hon Dr Sally Talbot. I particularly want to thank Hon Simon O'Brien, who has such a long corporate history and knowledge of this place and will be sorely missed. I thank him very much for his solid support and guidance and sage advice during this last term. I know that both Joy, his wife, and his daughter, Nadika, have a very full and busy agenda lined up for him in his retirement and I wish them all well and good health and happiness into the future.

During this last term, we had to deal with something that I hope we never have to deal with again during our lifetimes—the COVID-19 pandemic. We were an unusual Parliament in that we kept operating during this period and had COVID-19 sitting arrangements that also provided a range of complications for all members in this house. We had modified seating arrangements and new speaking procedures whereby members in unallocated seating had to use a lectern positioned adjacent to the table of the house. We had hygiene practices and social distancing and the minimisation of movement around the chamber. We had changes in the division procedures whereby members did not need to cross the chamber, with those voting with the ayes standing and those voting with the noes sitting. These are to name just a few of the types of situations that we had to deal with. The circumstances that we had before us at the time compelled us to immediately shift to the online world, and many of us developed new vocabularies around Zooming, Webex, WFH—work from home—social distancing, herd immunity, “let's get together on Teams” and, for the first time that I am aware of, face masks in the Legislative Council for members. I know I have done this before, but I would again like to thank all members and staff for their efforts in enabling us to keep sitting and ensuring that the essential work of the Legislative Council continued, both in the chamber and in the committees.

Representing the Legislative Council and the Parliament of WA has been an absolute pleasure. I have been involved in a number of activities in representing the Parliament. One of those is Rotary, and I have particularly enjoyed my involvement with the Rotary Club of Matilda Bay, something that was handed down to me by former President Barry House. Each year, COVID permitting, an event is held here at Parliament House for international students participating in the Rotary youth exchange. It is such a pleasure to welcome to the Parliament students from all over the world, their host families from across the state and their consular representatives. I have been told that for the students it is one of the key highlights of their time in Western Australia, and it is a great opportunity to introduce them to the Westminster system and to our Parliament.

Over the last two years, we have participated in a Curtin University project. This has been another very enjoyable opportunity to promote the Parliament via collaboration with Curtin University's School of Design and the Built Environment. This is the second year the Parliament has been involved in a project whereby the planning, graphics and design students have been required to design a concept for a new public space made available by capping the freeway between the Hay and Malcolm Street Bridges. Hon Barry House would be very pleased with this project. I thank their lecturer, Jake Schapper, for inviting us to participate. I hope this project will continue in the future. The former Speaker, Hon Peter Watson, and I were very keen on things such as that to try to encourage more people to come and visit the people's place through a range of different activities.

I have been really fortunate to represent the Legislative Council in a range of overseas activities. In April 2018, I attended the Commonwealth Women's Forum in London, which was held in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The forum and side meetings provided an opportunity for me to meet a number of people and learn about some issues of interest, such as the United Kingdom Parliament's approach to sexual harassment and bullying, cybersecurity, social media and parliamentary privilege, to name a few. The trip also provided me with an opportunity to engage directly with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and I met with Mr Akbar Khan, the then general secretary of the CPA, and members of the UK branch, CPA UK. Those meetings resulted in a number of things happening here. In December 2019, the Legislative Council hosted the CPA UK regional workshop on the role of parliamentary committees in combating human trafficking and forced labour. I know a number of members from this chamber attended and participated in that forum. In October last year, I was also able to be a panellist, and delivered a paper in conjunction with our Clerk Assistant, Mr Sam Hastings, at the CPA webinar for Speakers and presiding officers of the Commonwealth on the theme of COVID-19 and independent Parliaments. That paper went on to be published in the *European Journal of Law Reform*. I was also involved in filming an introductory video presentation in December last year on the topic of ethics and standards for the new Parliamentary Academy at CPA headquarters.

Another opportunity to represent the Legislative Council overseas arose in mid-June 2019. In March of that year, the Australasian Study of Parliament Group encouraged members to consider presenting a paper at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy's upcoming Conference on Post-Legislative Scrutiny in Asia, which I again did with the assistance of the Clerk Assistant, Mr Sam Hastings. I was pleased that we were chosen to present our paper, which provided an overview of post-legislative scrutiny in Western Australia, in Yangon, Myanmar, and also to be chosen to chair a workshop session. That paper also went on to be published in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Human Rights*. Post-legislative scrutiny is becoming a very important area to be considered by not just this Legislative Council, but also a range of Parliaments around the world, and it is becoming more prominent. I hope that it is something we consider putting more emphasis on as legislators. It is certainly an important area to inquire into to complete the loop on our work as legislators. I look forward to expanding on that issue in my next term.

The trip to Myanmar was very interesting, and it was a great privilege to meet so many very experienced and knowledgeable members of Parliament from that country and others. It is with trepidation that we watch the state of democracy in Myanmar today. I have very deep concerns about the deteriorating situation there and reiterate the United Nations Security Council's comments strongly condemning the use of violence against peaceful protesters and the deaths of hundreds of civilians, including women and children.

In July 2019, I attended a workshop of parliamentary scholars and parliamentarians in Wroxton, Oxfordshire, just outside of London. While in London I took the opportunity to reconnect with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK to learn more about eParliaments and digital engagement with citizens. Who would have known, with COVID advancing, that that would become quite useful!

I also met with the British representative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to learn more about IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament and related matters. As a follow-up to the Myanmar conference, I again met with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy's chief executive, Anthony Smith, to discuss matters in this space. The workshop in Wroxton was interesting and a valuable learning experience. The plenary session addressed sexual harassment and violence against women parliamentarians, and the papers presented covered a number of topics, including delegated legislation, the impact of ministerial codes of conduct and post-legislative scrutiny. A flow-on from my meeting with Westminster Foundation for Democracy chief executive Anthony Smith was my participation in a digital conference the foundation had organised with the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies at the University of London. The theme of the conference was: "Are emergency measures in response to COVID-19 a threat to

democracy? Fact and fiction.” I, along with Sam Hastings, presented a paper titled “Legislative Scrutiny in Times of Emergency: A Case Study of Australian Parliaments”. I would like to acknowledge and thank Sam for his work on this paper and the two papers he worked on, with the other headed “An Overview of Post-Legislative Scrutiny in Western Australia”.

I have had the pleasure of representing the Western Australian Parliament at two Presiding Officers and Clerks Conferences. These conferences provide an invaluable opportunity to meet with presiding officers from all Australian jurisdictions and from New Zealand and the Pacific. At the forty-ninth POC in Wellington, New Zealand, in July 2018 I presented a paper titled “Frontiers of the Wild West: Progress and Possibilities”, and I would like to thank John Seal-Pollard for his assistance in developing this paper. At the fiftieth POC in Brisbane, Queensland, in July 2019, I presented a paper titled “The challenges of managing the Parliamentary precinct without legislation”, and I thank Tina O’Connor for her assistance in developing this paper.

There is also a significant ceremonial aspect to the role of being President, and I have had the pleasure of providing official receptions for a range of visiting dignitaries, delegations, parliamentary officers from other jurisdictions, ambassadors and members of the consular corps, so I have met a number of very remarkable people. A number of schoolchildren from around the state have also visited us here in Parliament. It is an absolute joy. I remember children from the One Arm Point Remote Community School coming into the President’s suite, and that was a really lovely day with those kids.

One of the highlights I want to mention—there are a number—was a visit from the President of Ireland, Mr Michael D Higgins, and Mrs Sabina Higgins in October 2017. You will remember that President Higgins addressed the Legislative Assembly from the floor of the house. It was a significant event, especially for those members of Parliament of Irish heritage. I was indeed fortunate to again meet with the President and Mrs Higgins early last year when on holiday in Dublin, not long before the pandemic hit. On that same visit to Ireland, I was also able to meet the presiding officers of the two houses of the Irish Parliament.

In relation to notable visitors to the Parliament during the last term, one was the visit of the head of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Damascus, His Holiness Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II, and his delegation. I must thank Hon Martin Pritchard for that visit. We were fortunate enough to visit with His Holiness on at least three separate occasions over the last couple of years. There was also the visit of the Chairwoman of the National Assembly of Vietnam, Madam Nguyen, who was the first female to be elected to that position, and her delegation in December 2017. Other notable visits were by members and staff from the Western Cape Provincial Parliament based in Cape Town, South Africa, and the visit of Mr Kenya Akiba, member of the House of Representatives in the Diet, the national legislature of Japan and special adviser to the then Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Shinzo Abe, not to mention visits by very interesting ambassadors, high commissioners and members of the consular corps. Valuable information is exchanged during these visits. A fun fact: who knew that Australia’s second major import from Morocco, behind fertiliser, is women’s clothing, and specifically underwear? You learn all sorts of interesting things when you are meeting people on behalf of the Parliament!

Over the last two years I have participated in the consular corps’ International Women’s Day event, and this year I delivered the keynote address on women in leadership and joined the panel discussion. In 2020, the discussion was on women in diplomacy. These events were moderated by the state director of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. We have been fortunate to have DFAT facilitate two very interesting briefings for members of Parliament. The first was delivered by Her Excellency Ms Harinder Sidhu, the then High Commissioner to India, who spoke about the future of the Australia–India economic relationship and the report *An India economic strategy to 2035: Navigating from potential to delivery* and how Western Australia could benefit. The second briefing was delivered by the then ambassador to Japan, His Excellency Mr Richard Court, AC, who spoke about the Australia–Japan relationship and opportunities for Western Australia to engage more closely with Japan in the future. For those members who attended—I know there were significant numbers on both occasions—I am sure you reaped great benefit from those meetings.

A very interesting part of this role is the administration of Parliament. I have had a very interesting four years working with the former Speaker, Mr Peter Watson, the Clerks and the executive manager of Parliamentary Services, Mr Rob Hunter, in maintaining an oversight of the administration of Parliament and facilities and services affecting members. Sometimes people ask, “What do you do as President? What’s it like?” Sometimes it is like running a hotel. Not every member likes the food they are served or the accommodation they are provided. Sometimes it feels a little bit like *Fawlty Towers*, and sometimes I think this place is just held together by duct tape and good luck!

Something that I had hoped we might have achieved during this last term is parliamentary precinct legislation. I had hoped to see a bill for the control and management of the parliamentary precinct to be enacted while I was President. As a Presiding Officer, a major issue is the management of the grounds of Parliament for order, security and safety. In 2018, discussions commenced with the government to draft a bill for the control and management of the parliamentary precinct. This is still a work in process. Hopefully, the bill will be agreed to at some point by cabinet and introduced in the forty-first Parliament. The grounds are currently managed by the Parliamentary Reserve

Board without any enabling legislation to determine the parliamentary precinct. This hinders not only the day-to-day operations of Parliament, but also the management of security threats. Most Australian jurisdictions have implemented legislation to address this issue. Legislation to define the parliamentary precinct, authorised officers and the powers of authorised officers to give directions to leave or not to enter the parliamentary precinct and to search people in vehicles in certain circumstances would be of great benefit and is required. As I mentioned earlier, I delivered a paper at the fiftieth annual Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference in July 2019 on the challenges of managing the parliamentary precinct without legislation.

In relation to Parliamentary Services, I would again like to recognise Mr Rob Hunter, the executive manager of Parliamentary Services, and his team, including: Ms Patricia Traegde, deputy executive manager, Parliamentary Services, and director member and operational support; and Ms Belinda Corey, director parliamentary information and education. Rob Hunter is, indeed, a great asset to this Parliament. He always goes out of his way to try to accommodate members in this Parliament and make our lives easier and more comfortable. He always finds a way to get things done. If things ever get tough, he continues to have the best attitude. I think Rob is probably one of the most optimistic people I have ever had to deal with. I thank him for his very great work on our behalf and his friendship during my term as President.

I would also like to thank the Building Services team, headed up by Mr Hugh McCaffrey, who always do an amazing job keeping this building up and running and the gardens beautiful and which I think has one of the best office spaces in the converted fountains.

I would like to thank Catering Services, headed by Mr Enno Schijf. Some people in this place say that the real enemy is not the crossbench; it is actually the chefs and the catering team, who are not happy unless you retire from this place at least three clothing sizes greater than when you started!

To the finance team, headed by Ms Elma Ozich, who is currently away on leave, I thank you all for paying the bills and ensuring everyone gets paid and that our books balance. You indeed play a pivotal role in this organisation and are our quiet achievers. I thank you all.

I also thank our Human Resources team, headed up by Ms Tina Hunter. Anyone who has ever worked in HR knows that it is a tough gig. I certainly thank the team for their diligence and for supporting our employees in many ways. I especially note their good work with the health and wellbeing program that has been operating over the last few years, which I know members in this place certainly appreciate and participate in.

I thank the Information Technology team, which is headed up by Mr John Buchanan. It has had an exceptionally wild ride over the last 12 months, getting us up and running in a virtual environment because of COVID, at extremely short notice, I might say, dealing with cybersecurity issues, which cannot be understated as one of the world's greatest risks, and the everyday fast-paced changing world of IT.

I would also like to thank our library and information services headed up by Ms Judy Ballantyne. They certainly know how much I love that library. I love their work. If they had a loyalty program, I would be on the gold tier.

I cannot say enough good words about the Parliamentary Education Office. It does outstanding work in the area of school liaison, outreach, developing fact sheets, conducting public tours and assisting with events and exhibitions. I am continually impressed by its work.

I would like to thank Reporting Services, which includes both the Hansard and broadcasting teams and are headed up by Mr Laurie Mansell. I thank the broadcast team for their ninja-like skills in zooming from one speaker to the next in the chamber and for their assistance in recording various presentations outside the chamber. Their assistance is very much appreciated in filming my contribution to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association presentation on ethics and standards, as mentioned earlier, and my contribution to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Ruby Hutchison Memorial Lecture. For Hansard, I thank you very much for your work in reporting proceedings in both the chamber and committee hearings.

Finally, yet more importantly, my thanks to the security team, which is managed by Mr Tony Paterson. Their work is to provide a secure environment for members, staff and visitors within the parliamentary precinct, and it is much appreciated. I know the challenges that you face, and thank you for your assistance in dealing with the many security incidents over the last four years, including two serious threats to life.

Another significant issue of Parliament is the budget. Prioritising projects is a big challenge, particularly because the Parliament's capital funds are very limited; for example, an air conditioning replacement program might consume more than half the annual budget. Parliament's fundamental role is to hold the executive to account, free from any interference. However, the executive can diminish the separation of powers by controlling the finance of Parliament or by controlling its officers. As the saying goes, the power of the purse is great. Last year, one of the parliamentary research program participants, Ms Madison Colangelo—a very bright young woman, doing a five-year law and arts global politics and policy degree—produced an excellent report on the separation of powers and the independence of the Parliament of Western Australia. It is available in the Parliamentary Library and I recommend it to members for good reading.

With regard to the financial independence of the Parliament, the current model of funding in Western Australia does not provide the Parliament with the resources it requires. In January 2019, the Parliament submitted very strong business cases to the government for funding six major projects. Only one was approved—\$366 000 for remediation works to the eastern roof. Funding to fix the air conditioning, upgrade security, and the courtyard restoration were rejected, as was the request for recurrent funding for security infrastructure maintenance and maintenance of the new fountain accommodation. The Parliament is the pre-eminent public building in Western Australia, or it should be. I quote in part from the Register of Heritage Places —

the place is a symbol of democracy in Western Australia and provides a strong sense of historical continuity in its function. It contributes to the community's sense of identity, providing an important physical and symbolic presence, as the centre of democracy and decision making;

the place is an important and well recognised landmark ...

the well maintained grounds are regarded as a prestigious and symbolic venue for the conduct of important civic ceremonies, as the primary point of contact between the media and parliamentarians, as well as a gathering point for public rallies;

Not receiving adequate funding to preserve and maintain the building or upgrade it to provide all the services needed by a modern, accessible and accountable Parliament can be quite frustrating. Concerns over the condition of the building have been raised for decades regardless of who was in government. Part of the difficulty, regardless of who was in government, is that no political party has made, or will ever be able to make, commitments to fund the Parliament to the level it requires. We do not want to be in the same position as the Palace of Westminster in a few years' time whereby the building is falling apart faster than it can be repaired. The fear that public perception and media scrutiny will say MPs are feathering their own nest is something that I believe can be countered. The patch-and-mend approach is failing, and it is not fair for parliamentary employees who spend far greater time in the building than we members and have to put up with sub-par facilities. I sincerely hope that the current budget submissions are successful in due course. ICT services requires funds to meet the operational requirements for a virtual Parliament, to provide cybersecurity for the operational needs of Parliament and to meet the WA government's digital services policy framework accessibility and inclusivity standard. Additional resources are required to implement the reporting arrangements resulting from the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal determination that came into effect on 14 March. Heritage conservation requires funding to address the challenge of maintaining a safe and appropriate environment in a building that is over 115 years old. The replacement of air conditioners is required to address issues associated with significantly aged infrastructure in order to meet health requirements under OSH legislation for code compliance and to resolve fire and security risks. I hope that those budget applications are successful in due course.

I have been involved with a range of committees in the administration of Parliament and have participated in the policy development, strategic direction and public image of Parliament. The Management Executive Committee makes major decisions in parliamentary administration such as building works, policies, community engagement activities, parliamentary events and education programs and so on. At some point, everything that happens in this place goes before that committee. The committee has to deal with some significant issues that have not always received positive public or media comment. One of those very clear ones that comes to mind is the temporary traffic-calming devices that were positioned in the forecourts. Known as the sewerage pipes, until funds were found for a more permanent solution, the concrete bollards were placed either side of the front steps to thwart vehicles that might be used in a terrorist attack. I must say that I was very pleased to see that those large overgrown flowerpots are now based in the car park up the other end of the property and we now have more appropriate security measures in place in the forecourt.

The Parliamentary Education and Community Relations Committee has done some outstanding work during the last four years, and I want to reference some of that. Its work has included the launch of the new Parliament website; the ramping up of the social media presence at Parliament; the launching of the series *The Key to Your House*, which was broadcast on channel 44 and is available online; the Parliament partnered with North Metropolitan TAFE students to create "The difference between Parliament and Government" and "*You, Me and Democracy*". We increased our community engagement with such things as participation in Perth Heritage Week, the Centenary of Anzac, the promotion of the 100th year of the election of Edith Cowan, and the new taste and tour initiative in the Parliament.

The Parliamentary History Advisory Committee has concentrated on capturing former members' recollections and the major and minor historical events of their time. I want to thank the members who participated on that committee who are no longer involved: Hon Derrick Tomlinson, a former member for East Metropolitan Region; Hon Eric Ripper, a former member for Belmont; Dr Harry Phillips, AM; and Emeritus Professor Dr David Black, AM.

The Parliament House Advisory Committee has undertaken a number of events and projects. We have had three very successful artist-in-residence programs and a number of exhibitions, including *The Year of Living Dangerously*, *Borderless Gandhi presents Mahatma in Colour* and *Time For Heroes*. We have also had a number of art loans; notably, we saw the removal of some longstanding local government art replaced by *PEEK: A Partial View of the*

Murdoch University Art Collection at Parliament House throughout the lower level of the Parliament. I am sure all members enjoyed seeing something different and thought-provoking on the walls. I sincerely hope that the opportunity to have continuing loans from Murdoch University happens into the future.

I have referenced already the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, but I want to mention the twinning arrangements between our Parliament and the Parliament of the Cook Islands whereby we provide support and assistance to that Parliament. It is very important that we continue to support our small CPA branches. Their resources are extremely limited and, in many cases, they are geographically isolated, as is the case with our twin Parliament in the Cook Islands. I would like to recognise the close relationship that the CPA WA branch had with Niki Rattle, who was the Speaker of the Parliament of the Cook Islands, and who recently retired. Earlier this year during the bushfires, she conveyed to the people of Western Australia her thoughts and best wishes, and those of members and staff of the Parliament of the Cook Islands, and I hope you will join with me in wishing her well in her retirement.

There are a few matters affecting members that I want to touch on. The work that the former Speaker and I did in relation to management of electorate offices was interesting and sometimes change can take a while, but I must say it has taken four years of repeated requests and, hopefully, we have finally put in place criminal history record checks—the “fit2work” checks—that electorate staff are now working through. Hopefully, in the next week a new code of conduct for electorate office staff will be signed off and agreed. Also in relation to a code of conduct and ethics training for MPs, further to my statement in the chamber and the email you all would have received in November 2020, I hope the new President will continue to champion the development of a code of conduct for members of the Legislative Council along with ethics training for all members.

I know that much has been said about retiring members and whether it is of your own choice or not. I just want to say thank you to each of those members who will not be continuing on with us into the next Parliament. During this last term, challenging as it was with COVID and other factors, I think every member has risen to the role to which they were elected. In representing their electorates, they have not hesitated to rise to their feet and raise issues of concern to their constituents. Members have worked extremely hard on a variety of committees, sometimes two or more. There have been very rigorous question times, motions and debates, and I think each of you should be proud of your commitment and contribution, not just to this chamber but to your electorates. I wish each of you well in whatever pathway you follow in your future. I thank you very much for the opportunity to have worked with each and every one of you and look forward to seeing you at some point in the future.

I am sure you are looking forward to me finishing this. At the end of this sitting, I certainly invite all members to join us in the Members’ Lounge for a cup of tea or something. I know it is a dreadful thing to get between members and a cup of tea.

In closing, I have a couple more people I want to thank. I want to thank my steward, Deb Kapoor, who has looked after me exceptionally well and I know looks after every person in this chamber with great care. She looks after some members from the other chamber, too, actually, so we always have to watch that they do not seek to steal her away from us. I want to thank my executive officer, Tina O’Connor, who has been a great friend and a great support and has worked diligently to provide a great service to all members in this chamber in her role as my executive officer.

Members, I hope that during my time as President I have demonstrated integrity, impartiality, commitment and diplomacy and have upheld the traditions of this place. On 23 May 2017, when taking the chair, I said —

I am very keen to make sure that we look at ways to make Parliament much more family friendly. I am also very keen, given my passion for all things tech, to investigate ways in which we can incorporate technology into this place in a range of areas, to not only make us more productive, but also open up opportunities for better engagement with our community.

I must say, members, that a silver lining to COVID is that it pushed you all up to the plate and you were compelled to embrace tech like you never had before. I hope sincerely that you continue to do so, to the benefit of your work here and to your communities.

I am very pleased to say that we now have a family room, which was opened up earlier this year for the use of members and parliamentary employees. It may not be the ideal room; it may not be perfect, but it is a start. It is only a small space to begin with, but it means that parents can be with their children in the workplace while managing the demands of their work. I hope in due course a larger room will become available and the facilities will be enhanced. When I started here 20 years ago, my three children were three, six and nine years old. We did not have any of those facilities and it was always a tough gig to try to manage that work–life balance. I hope that by making these changes, as small and incremental as they are at this point, those opportunities will expand and the appropriate supports will be provided for all people who work in this place who have children.

I referenced the silver lining for technology. I also want to say that I am really pleased that at the start of each sitting day we now have an acknowledgement of country, and at our recent opening of the forty-first Parliament we had a welcome to country for the first time on the floor of this house delivered by Dr Richard Walley. I was very, very pleased that we were able to have that on the day, even with COVID restrictions. I think it was a significant change and I hope it is a practice that is continued for each successive opening of the Parliament into the future.

As many have alluded to in their valedictory speeches, the last four years have not been without their challenges, even putting COVID aside. One of those challenges as referenced has been in relation to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges, which I have chaired, which for the last two years has had a very difficult time dealing with the complex matter of privilege, and I tabled a report in relation to that matter today. I will again quote from the former President Hon Clive Griffiths, who said —

... any infringement of the privileges and immunities of this House will be criticised by me, whatever the source of that infringement.

I would again like to thank the members of the committee for their tireless dedication to this matter whilst under immense pressure, the staff of the committee for their excellent work, and those members of the Legislative Council who have supported the committee and, most importantly, supported the institution of the Parliament.

I also want to thank my husband, Bill Johnston; my children Rebekah, Zoe and Liam, and my son-in-law, Liam— not a lot of imagination there! I also want to thank my two very beautiful granddaughters, one of whom was born during my time as President. I acknowledge Kora, who has already explored the kitchens of this place extensively, and Tash, and I look forward to them being regular visitors to this place and hopefully at times using the family room.

I want to acknowledge my fabulous electorate office staff who have worked really hard over the last four years: Greg, Jesvin and Rashelle. I wish all members of the fortieth Parliament all the very best for the future, and to the members of the forty-first Parliament, I look forward to working with you as we continue our very important work in our role in this place as a house of review.

It has been a great privilege to serve and it is with some reluctance that I now vacate the chair. The house is now adjourned.

[Applause.]

House adjourned at 5.55 pm
