



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2021

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 12 May 2021

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) took the chair at 1.00 pm, read prayers and acknowledged country.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE — BIRTHDAY WISHES HON AARON STONEHOUSE — ENGAGEMENT

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) [1.02 pm]: Members, before we begin there are two significant announcements to make, and the first is to wish the Leader of the House a very happy birthday today.

Of the second announcement, I must apologise to Hon Aaron Stonehouse; I was not available to listen in the chamber to his valedictory speech, so I have only become aware of his recent engagement through *Hansard*. I pass on my best wishes to you and your fiancée, and wish you well for your future together.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: It is a significant milestone in anyone's life, I would have thought. Let us move on to other matters less significant.

ABORIGINAL CORPORATIONS — PARLIAMENTARY INVESTIGATION

Petition

HON ROBIN SCOTT (Mining and Pastoral) [1.03 pm]: I present a petition containing 78 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 support the establishment of a Parliamentary Committee to investigate allegations of corruption and mismanagement within aboriginal corporations, including the misuse of moneys and the manipulation of culture to incorrectly or fraudulently claim native title for financial advantage.

We therefore ask Legislative Council to support the establishment of a committee to investigate the issues above.

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

[See paper 184.]

SPEED LIMIT — CHAPMAN ROAD, BERESFORD

Petition

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [1.04 pm]: I present a petition containing 75 signatures couched in the following terms —

PETITION IN RELATION TO THE ALTERATION OF THE SPEED LIMIT OF PART OF CHAPMAN ROAD BERESFORD AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ON CHAPMAN ROAD AT THE INTERSECTION OF CHAPMAN ROAD AND DEAN STREET BERESFORD, WA 6530

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

We the undersigned are in support of changing the speed limit along that portion of Chapman Road Beresford between Cecily Street to the north (Bluff Point) and Phelps Road roundabout (Beresford) to the south from the current speed limit of 60 kilometres per hour to a maximum of 50 kilometres per hour. Currently, the speed and volume of vehicular traffic along this section of Chapman Road poses a safety threat to pedestrians attempting to access the foreshore pathway. Additionally, we request a pedestrian crossing be placed on the corner of Dean Street and Chapman Road Beresford to allow for safe crossing of Chapman Road.

We therefore ask the Legislative Council to recommend support for both the alteration of the speed limit of that part of Chapman Road referred to above and the establishment of a pedestrian crossing on the corner of Chapman Road and Dean Street, Beresford, WA 6530.

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

[See paper 185.]

DAIRY INDUSTRY WORKING GROUP*Statement by Minister for Agriculture and Food*

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [1.05 pm]: Last week, the WA dairy industry working group met for the first time in Busselton, in what marks an important step forward for the long-term sustainability of our dairy sector. Over the past four years, our government has worked closely with the dairy industry to ensure our local farmers can survive and thrive amid ongoing debates on dairy pricing. That work culminated in the Western Australian dairy industry round table in January this year, bringing together farmers and processors to explore how to put the industry on a more sustainable footing. At the round table, we agreed to establish the working group, which includes members from the WAFarmers Dairy Council, Western Dairy, Dairy Australia, WA's major milk processors and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

At last week's meeting, the group agreed on its initial focus, which is to be a five-year WA dairy industry development plan. The WA dairy industry development plan will address a number of issues for the industry, including sustainability and profitability through the supply chain, attracting new dairy farm owners, investing in industry expansion, market development and regenerative agriculture. The plan will be consistent with the national dairy plan. Although DPIRD will provide some support and expertise, the clear intent is for the plan to be developed and implemented by industry. It is vitally important that the industry has full ownership of the plan to support its commitment to the plan's implementation. The first meeting of the working group was an important step forward, with the next meeting scheduled for early June. I look forward to updating Parliament on the progress of the working group and the plan in coming months.

PAPERS TABLED

Papers were tabled and ordered to lie upon the table of the house.

DISALLOWANCE MOTIONS*Notice of Motion*

1. City of Bunbury Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2020.
2. Boxing Contest Rules 2020.
3. Kickboxing Contest Rules 2020.
4. MMA Contest Rules 2019.
5. Muay Thai Contest Rules 2020.

Notices of motion given by **Hon Martin Pritchard**.

SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF GOVERNMENT*Establishment — Motion*

Resumed from 5 May on the following motion moved by Hon Nick Goiran —

- (1) A select committee into the transparency and accountability of government is established.
- (2) The select committee is to —
 - (a) inquire into the partial noncompliance by Hon Sue Ellery with an order of the Council made on 4 November 2020;
 - (b) identify and inquire into other instances of noncompliance during the fortieth Parliament by ministers with laws and conventions pertaining to transparency and accountability, including but not limited to compliance with section 82 of the Financial Management Act 2006;
 - (c) monitor compliance with such laws and conventions for the duration of the forty-first Parliament and inquire into any instances of noncompliance;
 - (d) identify new proposals, initiatives and reforms that may enhance transparency and accountability of ministers and the departments and agencies for which they are responsible; and
 - (e) consider any other relevant matter.
- (3) The select committee shall consist of five members and comprise a majority of non-government members, which is to include at least three members of the official opposition.
- (4) The chair of the select committee shall be a member of the official opposition.
- (5) The select committee shall report from time to time on its progress and table its final report by no later than 28 November 2024.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [1.10 pm]: I conclude my remarks.

HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan) [1.10 pm] — in reply: Madam President, pursuant to standing order 71, I seek leave to withdraw my motion on notice. Briefly, by way of explanation for members, particularly those who were away on urgent parliamentary business, at 8.25 last night, Tuesday, 11 May, the Leader of the House made a statement, which I would encourage all members to become familiar with. The key content of the statement indicates that it is the intention of the government to support the appointment of Hon Peter Collier as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations in the very near future and for me to also be a member of that committee.

Members will be aware that it was always the position of the opposition that in the unique circumstances we find ourselves in, it is not unreasonable for there to be one parliamentary committee that has a non-government majority and an opposition chair. We are very pleased to see that that outcome has been agreed to across the chamber.

Lastly, as I seek leave of the house to withdraw my motion, can I put on the record my thanks to not only my colleagues from the Liberal Party, but also my good friends from the Nationals WA and, in particular, each of the members of the Greens, Pauline Hanson's One Nation, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and, of course, the leader of the Liberal Democrats for their support last week. Without them, what has now been achieved would have been absolutely impossible. I thank each and every one of you.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

EMERGENCY SERVICES — NATURAL DISASTERS

Motion

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [1.12 pm]: I move —

That this house acknowledges the devastating impact that cyclone Seroja and the recent bushfires have had on Western Australian communities and commends our emergency services for putting themselves in danger to protect Western Australians and to ensure the recovery of those communities.

I appreciate the opportunity to move this motion. I know there was a shorter version of the debate in last week's sitting, but I appreciate the opportunity to do this today.

Honourable members might not be aware, but I have my own personal on-the-ground source of information when it comes to disasters, particularly in the midwest area. Of course, a member of this chamber, Hon Martin Aldridge, is also a standing member of the State Emergency Service. From time to time, when he is out performing his functions as a member of the SES, I will receive a photo by way of text, particularly if he is looking after and performing his duties in or around a school. I appreciate that direct on-the-ground advice that he provides me from time to time. I thank him for his service and I thank him for the on-the-ground evidence of the risk and devastation that our SES members and particularly our frontline services have to deal with when these sorts of situations happen.

In my comments, I want to particularly focus on the significant logistical exercise that is involved when we are dealing with the 800 public schools and, on top of that, about another 300 to 400 non-government schools across Western Australia when they are faced with a natural disaster such as cyclone Seroja, or indeed the Wooroloo bushfires, and bushfires before that, as well.

It has been—I hate to use the expression—an unprecedented time in Australia. We went from the bushfires in some of our eastern states at the beginning of last year into COVID-19 and into flood. Of course, from time to time, cyclones in the far north west of Western Australia are not unknown. A cyclone in the area that was hit by cyclone Seroja is, in fact, a very unusual circumstance; nevertheless, the logistical exercise that is required is pretty significant.

I will talk about the particular service that is provided by a whole range of agencies and those people like Hon Martin Aldridge who literally put their lives on the line to protect our communities, but I want to focus my comments on the logistical exercise that applies to schools in particular. Not only is that exercise about keeping students and staff safe, protecting the facilities themselves and then going through the exercise of recovery, but also, very often, schools will be used as a place of gathering for the community during the course of the natural disaster event itself and as a central meeting point in the recovery period. Schools perform a very important role as a central hub, if you like.

Earlier this year, from 6.00 pm on Sunday, 31 January, the Perth, Peel and south west regions commenced a five-day lockdown due to an outbreak of COVID-19. The next morning, on Monday, 1 February, a bushfire emergency warning was effected by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services due to a fast-moving bushfire that started in Wooroloo. By Tuesday, 2 February, the bushfire emergency had spread to the Shires of Chittering and Northam as well as into the City of Swan on the metropolitan edge of Perth. Nineteen public and 18 non-government schools were in the bushfire warning zones of emergency, watch and act, and advice. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, all those schools were, in fact, already closed to students for the first week of term 1. With the significant loss of

many homes and properties in these zones, the threat of schools in these communities being lost was very real. The bushfire situation continued to evolve over the coming days and the Department of Education worked closely with DFES and other agencies to deliver a coordinated and structured response and recovery to the emergency.

The COVID pandemic has taught us many things. One is that schools and particularly school leaders are often looked to by their communities as a central source of truth. Back around this time last year, when we were all still working our way through what the COVID restrictions meant and what the real risk of the virus was, on many occasions I had parents tell me that they turned to their school principals and leaders for advice—that is, trusted advice, as opposed to that swirling around on the interweb and in cyberspace. Parents turned to school principals and leaders for advice during the COVID pandemic, and that is also the case during the kind of natural disasters that we have experienced. School leaders are seen as integral and trusted members of our communities and they are relied on to deliver information to the families they serve to help keep them safe, particularly in times of emergency.

The Department of Education mapped the location of staff and students living in the bushfire zone, many of whom had been affected, and put supports in place to assist those families if they needed it. The department committed that every student who was impacted by the bushfire would be provided with the necessities to attend school the following week, and that included some of the things that Hon Jim Chown referred to in his valedictory speech yesterday about when people are literally left in the clothes that they are wearing at the time the disaster struck.

The department worked to prepare packs, including clothing, shoes, backpacks, stationery, lunchboxes and water bottles. Those packs were delivered and they assisted students who had lost everything so that they could at least continue their education when schools reopened. As the Department of Communities opened evacuation centres in the areas that most impacted families, school psychologists were rostered to work in those centres after hours and across the weekends. The department worked alongside other agencies that were also supporting the families. It also deployed pastoral critical incident response chaplains to these sites for those families who found that of use to them.

One of the important things that occurred was the cross-sectorial approach taken across education. Information was shared with public schools, Catholic Education Western Australia and the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia to ensure that everybody knew what everybody else was doing and that when we could assist each other to implement processes to ensure the safety of staff, that is what we did. Therefore, if people go into the Department of Education over a weekend, for example, when a critical incident is happening, which I have, they will see the director general of Education sitting at the same table as the directors from AISWA, representing independent schools, and Deb Sayce from Catholic Education WA so that everybody is working closely together.

In addition to the actual logistics of the physical circumstances, a unified and cross-sectorial approach to the mental health and wellbeing of staff, students and families was implemented. Short-term and long-term supports were put in place for the recovery of impacted school communities, and a bushfire recovery kit was developed for school psychologists to use within schools. Ensuring that schools were ready to reopen after the COVID-19 lockdown and the threat of the bushfire was a major operation. As soon as the warning for the bushfire was downgraded to “alert”, the team worked with the Department of Finance throughout that weekend to inspect and potentially clean each of the schools to make sure that they were ready for reoccupation. Staff from the Department of Finance were deployed to ensure that classrooms, air-conditioning systems, water tanks, grounds and infrastructure were free from smoke residue and damage. The safety of staff and students who were due back on those school sites on the following Monday was essential and everyone worked tirelessly to achieve that.

During the term 1 school holidays, tropical cyclone Seroja formed over the coast of eastern Indonesia and began to track south east. It began to approach the midwest region of Western Australia, and it was the first cyclone to do that since about March 1999. As we know, the cyclone crossed the WA coast just south of Kalbarri near the town port of Port Gregory at 8.00 pm on Sunday, 11 April as a category 3 cyclone with wind gusts of around about 170 kilometres an hour. Winds of 120 to 140 kilometres an hour were observed in Geraldton, Northampton, Binnu, Chapman Valley and Mingenew. As a side note, I will be visiting the school communities of Kalbarri, Binnu and Northampton as well, I think, on Friday, and I will be dropping into the Geraldton regional office to thank the people there for their work. Destruction of the magnitude caused by that cyclone had not been seen in the area for over 50 years.

The benefits of the strong relationship between the Department of Education and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services began to show. The flow of information between the agencies was swift and critical in enabling the Department of Education to make decisions that would impact the lives of students and their families at 46 public schools that were listed in the WA red alert zone. An incident management team was stood up on 9 April before the cyclone crossed the coast to provide support and assistance to the midwest educational regional office and all the schools that were likely to be impacted. Catholic Education WA and AISWA were invited to participate across that period to receive important information and communicate the status of their schools in the red alert zone. After liaising with the school principal, the Department of Education offered Dongara District High School as a potential location for a DFES staging area; however, in the end, that did not need to be used by DFES. But that offer, I think, is an example of the strength of the critically important relationships formed with those two agencies and, if we add a third, the Department of Finance and, if we add a fourth, all the outstanding community volunteers, who worked really hard to ensure that schools could open for the start of term 2.

All staff, students and community groups were advised that they could not enter their school sites until the red alert had been lifted and all sites had been inspected and approved to reopen. After Seroja crossed the coast and was downgraded to a tropical low, the Department of Education immediately dispatched first responder psychologist support to Kalbarri and engaged the Department of Finance to commence conducting site inspections. The department's participation in the state emergency recovery coordination group ensured consistent messaging and support, which enabled effective and coordinated recovery efforts. Site inspections had to be undertaken in conjunction with school representatives and needed to determine a number of factors including the extent of the damage, actions required to repair the damage and time lines for reopening the school. I think it is important to note that those site inspections had to be undertaken with staff from the schools who themselves had suffered damage to their family home. At the same time that they had lost part or in some cases all of the family home, they were at work assisting to ensure that the school sites could be properly accessed and inspected to be made ready for opening as soon as possible.

Their actions were swift and impressive. The collaboration between Education, Finance and Western Power ensured that as soon as it was humanly possible to restore power, it happened. The goal to restore power to school sites for the start of the term meant that generators were sourced from around the state, and Western Power prioritised delivery to Geraldton for dispersion to schools. In the meantime, the Department of Finance had arranged electricians from across the region to begin preparation work at affected school sites so that the generators could be operational quickly after being installed. At the same time, the Department of Finance had begun tackling all the other issues each of the 46 schools had while providing constant advice to the Department of Education when the schools had been cleared to open.

By Monday, 19 April, the day before term 2 commenced, all but two of the 46 schools had been cleared to reopen. That was a herculean exercise and I want to thank everybody involved in that. The two schools that could not open and remained delivering education in somewhat different circumstances were Kalbarri District High School and Binu Primary School. Our teams in Perth and the midwest began assessing potential locations for the schools to operate temporarily and to ensure continuity of learning for students at Kalbarri. The Kalbarri Allen Centre, a community centre, and the local Kalbarri Anglican Church were cleared as safe and were stood up as temporary schools for the students of Kalbarri. I wish on behalf of the government to express my thanks to the Shire of Kalbarri's president, Craig Simkin, and Reverend David Day of the Kalbarri Anglican Church for their assistance in ensuring that we could access those sites to enable education to continue. The community welcomed regular updates by the midwest director of education. That went a long way to building community confidence that our priority was to provide teaching and learning for the children as soon as it was safe to do so.

The Shire of Northampton was also extremely helpful and generous in offering the use of the Binu town hall for use by the Binu Primary School despite it having no power or water supply. Once again, with the assistance of partners, a generator was installed at Binu, temporary ablution blocks were set up at the Kalbarri Anglican Church and hundreds of bottles of water were delivered to the sites. Through the enormous efforts of the staff of the Department of Education and many others, teaching and learning for all students commenced on Tuesday, 20 April.

Members would have observed during that period daily media releases going out advising which schools were open and who was ready. I think it is important to note that behind those media releases stood people literally working 24 hours a day to make sure that education continued to be covered. While all that work was taking place in the midwest, the incident management team in Perth worked around the clock to ensure that schools had all the physical resources they required to commence teaching and learning. That included, but was not by any means limited to, a shipment of 215 laptops and dongles, all of which had to be powered up and imaged; a shipment of a further 200 laptops and dongles; preparation and delivery of hardcopy teaching packs and resources to eight schools; and the delivery of sporting equipment. One of the key priorities was, and continues to be, the health and wellbeing of staff, students and families. The following human resources were put into the region to assist: pastoral, critical-incident-response chaplains, lead school psychologists, an additional director of education, collegiate principals and a team of flying squad teachers. A team of support staff remains in the midwest assisting schools, as a number of their staff, as one can imagine, have sustained major damage to or have lost their homes.

Kalbarri District High School reopened to staff on Monday, 3 May and to students on Tuesday, 4 May. Multiple teams including tree loppers, builders, electricians, demolition contractors, asbestos specialists and deep cleaners engaged by the Department of Finance worked simultaneously on site to ensure that the school was safe to reopen as soon as possible. Daily updates were provided to the Department of Education, which in turn were provided to me, sometimes twice daily, to keep me informed about the work being carried out on the school site. I am advised by Department of Education staff on the ground that community support was incredible—no job was too big or too hard and there was no resistance to any calls for help. That is from people who have suffered some kind of damage to or the loss of their own homes. Multiple teams from across state and local governments and the private sector working towards the same goal meant that continuity of teaching and learning was maintained for all students in the areas affected by cyclone Seroja.

Binu Primary School remains the only school in the region yet to be cleared to open. The school continues to operate at the town hall, thanks to the generosity of the Shire of Northampton, and I will visit them on Friday. Work is

progressing so that staff and students can get back on site as soon as possible. Community spirit is alive and well in Binnu. Members may be familiar with local concern about the lone pine tree with significant historical importance that was uprooted by the cyclone. After a call from the Department of Education to the state operations centre, a volunteer from the Ajana Binnu Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade has been attending the site daily to water and care for the tree until it can be righted and supported, and hopefully thrive. Every effort is being made to keep that particular historic tree alive.

I am incredibly proud of the efforts of everybody involved in the recovery effort to support students and their families. A huge thankyou to the community organisations, agencies, Army Reserve, volunteers and contractors who prioritised work on and around school sites to ensure that they could open for the start of term 2. I also want to recognise the resilience of and give a shout-out to school leaders, particularly in the affected areas. Their leadership throughout this time has been outstanding and I want to place that on the record, Mr Deputy President.

I want to touch on a couple of other things in my comments, if I may, of a more generic nature. I think we need to take into account the ongoing impact of trauma on the lives of children in particular. Of course, children are not always able to articulate the anxiety that they might carry with them. A significant amount of research has been done on the impact of trauma caused by natural disasters, not the least of which has been driven by some of the most horrific bushfires that this country has experienced. An awful lot of work has been done on this issue. It is clearly recognised that ongoing support and access to resources is needed, particularly for children, long after the event. One cannot assume that because the trauma is not directly expressed or even acted out in the immediate-to-medium term that something as frightening as a cyclone or a bushfire has not had an ongoing impact on children.

The Department of Education is providing additional support to those affected by the bushfires, including increased monitoring by the lead psychologists of the school communities, providing ongoing liaison with key partners to enable a unified approach with YouthCARE chaplaincy services, and applying and reviewing the school recovery kit for the Wooroloo bushfire to address short, medium and long-term needs. The kit includes an individualised school recovery plan developed by the principal in consultation with the school psychologist. It identifies resources, services and targeted programs for staff, students and families to access to minimise the impact of the bushfire. Western Australia has relied heavily on the work done by the Victorian Department of Education and Training following that state's bushfires. That work was put into a Western Australian context and provided to schools as a resource to help them provide support moving forward as well.

I turn to some more generic comments, which I know were touched on briefly during debate last week. I place my thanks on the record for these groups as well. I refer to the bushfires in late January and early February. Department of Education representatives were with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services incident support group on Tuesday, 2 February at four o'clock. They were advised that the Shire of Mundaring and City of Swan would work together in a joint local government property loss working group and would be contacting families who had lost their homes on Wednesday, 3 February. The situation with the fires continued to evolve, and the department continued that work, as each day families had to be advised of their loss. Various forms of financial support from federal and state governments were rolled out to assist those families in their time of need. The property loss working group had to work incredibly hard and members had the really difficult task of telling families about the status of their homes. I want to thank working group members for the work that they did. It was incredibly difficult and heartbreaking for them to have to pass on the news to people who had lost everything they owned.

There are 13 local government areas in receipt of financial assistance as a result of the devastating impact of cyclone Seroja, including emergency assistance for individuals to address their particular personal hardship; support to local governments for the repair and reinstatement of essential public assets; putting in place counter-disaster operations for the protection of the general public to ensure public health and safety generally; and other forms of assistance for small businesses and primary producers. The Department of Communities received in excess of 7 000 applications for emergency financial assistance and deployed additional staff to help process those applications. As at, I think, about three days ago, the state government had issued a total of about \$1.27 million in financial assistance, including nearly 3 000 electronic funds transactions and about 500 debit cards. An additional financial assistance package was announced by the Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services. These programs, in addition to the state commonwealth disaster recovery funding arrangements, are progressing and will assist while the authorities continue the clean-up efforts.

Hundreds of homes and businesses were impacted. Small businesses were impacted and they, too, will be eligible for those payments of \$4 000. A series of questions have been asked about that. Public statements have been made and more details will be made available. We expect that around 200 businesses, for example, within the Shire of Northampton will be eligible to receive that kind of assistance. The state is also working with the commonwealth to develop and activate a range of focused recovery packages to assist in the recovery of the affected regions and communities. Ms Melissa Pexton has been appointed as the State Recovery Controller for that particular event.

The state recovery coordination group has been meeting weekly. Impact statements, which are required under the act, are being developed for the 13 impacted local governments. The town site waste management strategy has been developed for the Northampton and Kalbarri town sites to support the clean-up of asbestos and other waste.

Dealing with asbestos is one of the critical issues after an event, be it bushfire or cyclone in this case. Inspectors remain in affected towns to support the clean-up activities. A dedicated website for tropical cyclone Seroja has been set up on the WA emergency services website to ensure that messages are available and accessible to people who need them. The use of social media, such as Facebook, is also assisting. It is indeed the case that many people rely on Facebook for advice.

In late April, the Department of Communities, DFES and Red Cross began a coordinated roadshow, visiting the affected towns, including Carnamah, Chapman Valley, greater Geraldton, Mingenew, Morawa, Mullewa—those three towns are good Ellery territory—Northampton, Perenjori and Three Springs. There are a few Ellerys in Three Springs as well. Community meetings continue to be held as required. Recovery centres are operating out of Kalbarri, Northampton and Morawa. I know Minister MacTiernan was there on the weekend.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: On the weekend before last, with Kyle McGinn—honourable.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Indeed, the very honourable Kyle McGinn was there as well. I know Mr Whitby has been there four or five times, I think, so far.

Over the duration of the actual incident, about 500 emergency services government employees and volunteers were deployed to the region. Western Australia particularly wants to thank the support provided by about 100 personnel from Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia and the Australian Defence Force. The ADF aircraft supported the transportation of personnel and equipment, but many more other partner organisations were also involved in the delivery of services. The majority of Telstra comms services are now restored, although I am advised that there are still some intermittent outages. Water Corporation advises that water storage is sufficient for current demand. In terms of WA Country Health Service, all hospitals in the affected area are operational although some services remain offline, but immediate and ongoing support is being provided to address emerging mental health impacts across the affected communities. St John of God services remain online.

I touched on the topic of asbestos before. DFES has established an asbestos risk management division. It is being perceived as a significant issue; however, following atmospheric monitoring and analysis, the Department of Health advises that the actual risk is low. Asbestos stabilisation activities were completed on Saturday, 1 May 2021. Contractors have applied suppressant agent solution to the asbestos in Kalbarri and Northampton to prevent the release of fibres and make the sites safe. Air monitoring is continuing and will continue. It will be required until the completion of clean-up activities. Air quality readings remain significantly under the national standard. Targeted communications to address asbestos concerns are being provided to all crews. WorkSafe remain on site and remain a presence in Kalbarri. The asbestos risk management division is continuing with contamination identification, monitoring and management.

I think Hon Alannah MacTiernan will have more to say about this; I am advised that Kalbarri opened for tourists on 6 May. As I said, the district high school reopened on 4 May. The animal welfare and emergency support plan was activated on 17 April. Agriculture, fisheries, tourism and hospitality industries in the region are undoubtedly deeply impacted. The loss of income to industries in the region may well be significant. I do not think it has been properly quantified yet and we will have to measure that.

In addition, the rebuilding process is a significant challenge. Although the construction boom, if I can call it that, is great for jobs and great in many ways, it is proving a challenge in how we proceed at haste with the recovery work as a result of the cyclone. I am advised that more than 97 per cent of homes and businesses now have power restored. That is not very helpful to those who are in that three per cent, but 97 per cent have power restored. I know that power restoration is being worked on as a matter of priority. All the hazards have been managed and made safe. We obviously still have crews on the ground continuing to manage repairs and restorations. I want to thank everybody in those communities who is assisting and making welcome those crews on the ground.

A significant amount of work was done in the immediacy of these two disasters and continues to be done in the recovery and clean-up work in the weeks and months ahead. The stoicism and resilience of the communities are making the job of those who come in to assist that much easier. I want to place on the record my thanks to not only those in the portfolios for which I have responsibility, but also everybody across Western Australia who has offered support in some way, shape or form to those communities most deeply impacted by those two events.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [1.47 pm]: I rise on behalf of the opposition, as the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, to support the motion that is before the house. I thank the Leader of the House for the opportunity, through this motion, to talk once again in our second week of the forty-first Parliament on this very important issue. The Leader of the Government, the Leader of the House, and the opposition leader in his motion last week made very important points. I think this is a matter of significance to our state that we may well need to keep revisiting in the months ahead. I think that the point both leaders have made is that the ongoing wellbeing and health of these communities will require our persistent attention and support for many months and years ahead.

This motion refers to not only cyclone Seroja, but also a number of fires that impacted Western Australian communities over this past season. Obviously, cyclone Seroja has devastated communities through the midwest and parts of the northern wheatbelt and the Gascoyne, and perhaps even other regions. There has been a number of

significant fires, not the least of which was the fire that started in Wooroloo and burnt almost all the way to Bullsbrook this year. Another significant fire event, although without the same losses that we saw with Wooroloo, was the Red Gully fire, which burnt from the eastern side of Brand Highway almost to the coast in a very short time. I would like to talk about all those events in the course of my contribution today.

I thank the Leader of the House for her comments, particularly those about the way in which our schools, and our public schools in particular, have responded to adversity over the last 12 months, initially to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to the disruption that was caused by some of the natural disasters that have been identified in this motion. The school staff, including teachers, administration officers and everybody else who works within our school system, have been able to get our schools back on their feet or find appropriate alternatives to continue to provide excellent educational opportunities for our students in regional areas that have been impacted by natural disasters in particular, noting that not all these events occurred in regional areas. That is a testament to them.

The Leader of the House talked about Binnu. I was there with my colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and other parliamentary colleagues from the other place. We dropped into Binnu and checked out the primary school because we had heard that it had been hit pretty badly. One of the first things we encountered when we walked in over the fence and through the fallen trees was the Lone Pine tree that was leaning at about a 45-degree angle. The significance of that tree at the time was not really known to me until some days later. Off to the side of the school was a quadrangle, the administration block and what was probably the central classroom building with three, four or five classrooms. The roof of that central building had been completely removed. I remember at the time taking a photograph of the Lone Pine tree and sending it to the Minister for Education and Training. As I said, the significance was not known to me at that time. There is a really good story on ABC online news titled “Binnu school’s precious Lone Pine tree faces a battle for survival”, which was posted on 25 April, if members want to check it out. The tree is obviously significant to the community, and it is great to hear the update from the Leader of the House about the effort that is going into trying to preserve it. Upon reading this article, it is clear that the tree is historically quite significant and it is also significantly important to this very small community. Interestingly, the Lone Pine tree is between the built infrastructure of Binnu Primary School—the classrooms—and Murray Criddle oval. Members may recall former member Hon Murray Criddle, who farmed in the Binnu region and was a member of this place for a number of years.

I have had ongoing contact with a number of the communities, as I am sure all members of this place have who represent these regions or who carry ministerial responsibility for different aspects of the government’s response. As I said in my remarks last week, the community’s response to these types of adverse events really encompasses the spirit of Australian communities in the way that they rise and respond to those challenges. However, they cannot do it alone. We were on the streets of Northampton on the Friday after the cyclone event. Cyclone Seroja crossed the coast on the Sunday, so it was a number of days later. The Leader of the House talked about the children. The children’s spirits were being lifted on an almost hourly basis as they saw the Army trucks rumble through the town and more generators plugged in. For members who are not aware, each of the NBN nodes need to be powered to keep the phones and internet going. Rattling away on every kerb corner around the town were terribly cheap, probably Chinese, generators. They were loud, terrible things. After the significant power loss, there was a lot of demand for generators, and everyone grabbed what they could. I think Hon Laurie Graham spoke during a motion last week about Bunnings basically clearing out all the generators from its Perth stores and shipping them up there. Anyone who has owned a cheap generator knows that they rattle. When we got out at Northampton, we could hear the buzz of these non-silenced generators running. As I said last week, once all of that passes, the weeks and months ahead will be just as important, particularly keeping the community together and having consideration for individual circumstances, because a number of people have lost their homes and, as the Leader of the House said, some have lost their livelihoods. That will have quite a long-term impact on the community.

A couple of things that I want to touch on but discussed only briefly last week are the difficulties with communications. The disruption of telecommunications that we have seen during natural disasters is largely a result of the disruption to the power supply. We saw that on the east coast during the fires two years ago and we certainly saw significant power disruption again in Western Australia. I think the Leader of the House said that three per cent of the customers who have lost power are still without power. Obviously, mobile phone and even fixed telecommunication technologies, which I referred to earlier in reference to the NBN, do not function without power. People have a mistaken belief that we should go back to the old copper phone lines because they always work. However, they also require power, and a number of fixed services were affected and disrupted by the power loss. There was also some physical damage and other related network issues. The impact that the loss of telecommunications has on a community is well understood. Governments at the state, federal and even local level need to turn their minds to a greater degree to the impact that the loss of telecommunications has on our ability to respond to a natural disaster. Although this was an extraordinary event, I think this is a really good opportunity for us to take a closer look at the resilience of these networks.

I said in my contribution last week that the Premier and the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner visited Kalbarri on the Tuesday following the cyclone on the Sunday night. The media asked the commissioner about the number of losses and the commissioner said that emergency services had done a rapid damage assessment and had

some of that information but that he did not have access to it because of the telecommunication difficulties. These are the types of things that I think, post-incident, the government needs to turn its mind to. It should look at ways to improve the exercise of the regulatory powers of the commonwealth or of continuing to partner with the telecommunications sector to harden the networks. The government should look at both those options or at other options. There is an increasing expectation that members of the community should be prepared for emergencies, and a key part of that is being able to receive timely information.

On 28 April, the night before the opening of this forty-first Parliament, I was in Parliament having meetings downstairs. As a member of the local volunteer bush fire brigade, I got a text message to turn out to a fire. That is not uncommon at this time of the year. Usually, it is because someone has reported a prescribed burn and it is nothing of any great significance because at this time of the year there is a lot of hazard-reduction burning. I did not pay much attention to this message. I was in Perth and I could not provide assistance in any event. I went downstairs to one of the ground floor meeting rooms. During the meeting I was taking some notes on my computer and I got a message from my office asking me whether I was aware that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services had just issued an emergency warning for Gingin. The next minute I got a text message from my family saying they had just been told to evacuate. At this time of the year, it is unusual to see a fire run so quickly. The fire had started just to the south-west of Gingin and it got into the brook and was burning along the brook into the town site. A similar event had happened in the early 2000s. Interestingly, this event looked quite nasty at the time but fortunately stopped before it really hit town; however, if we had lost power during that event, the mobile site that provides telecommunications to Gingin would have had less than 30 minutes of battery backup. None of those text messages and emergency alerts on social media—all of the ways DFES does its best to tell people that something is coming, so get ready, prepare to defend, go now, or do not go now because it is too late—would have got through if we had lost power. I know that the telecommunications industry as well as government will say that we cannot rely on telecommunication networks in times of emergency. That is true; no technology is 100 per cent efficient. There will always be downtime, but there are things that we need to be doing to make those networks more resilient. Those two examples—a personal example in my community and also the way in which I saw it constrain the response to cyclone Seroja, whereby real-time information from the ground was not available to the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner—indicate that we need to do something better. Even some of my colleagues who were there during the immediate cyclone response did not have communications with Kalbarri for some time. It took them quite a while to re-establish high-frequency radio communications, I think it was, to get some initial reports in from Kalbarri.

There is certainly a lot more to be done. The commonwealth, along with the state, is working in this space to not just expand telecommunications networks, but improve them. Batteries certainly need to be improved. Batteries will provide only short-term backup. Strategies are needed beyond that four to 12 hours, which is normally what they design for battery backup for mobile sites.

There has been a lot of talk about the impact of these events on the community and those affected. As the Leader of the House did, I recognise the significant contribution from not just across this state but across interstate jurisdictions, such as the Defence Force, volunteers and career officers, who came to Western Australia to assist with the fires and also tropical cyclone Seroja. Their contribution was significant. It is also important to reflect on not just their contribution, but also have regard for the mental impact of exposure to those disasters, particularly the Wooroloo bushfire. I remarked to the government Whip in the corridor earlier today that I went to the Wooroloo bushfire on the second day; I was not there on the first day. I got home that night and I was exhausted. I do not think it was a physical exhaustion; it was a mental exhaustion. I have never been to a fire like Wooroloo where it was a rare occasion to find a house still standing and we counted the losses as we drove around. As I said in an earlier contribution, there probably would not be many in this chamber who would not know somebody who was affected directly or indirectly in some way by those disasters this summer. I read an article just in the last week from the SES Volunteers Association of WA. It describes the experience of one of the units that responded to cyclone Seroja. I quote from a newsletter from May 2021 under the heading “Mental Health during cyclone Seroja”—

Well a short report on Mental Health during our deployment to Kalbarri by Robert Palmer, Mundaring Unit.

My team was part of the 1st SES Metro task force after cyclone Seroja hit Kalbarri.

We went in knowing the townspeople would be going through a lot of adjustments both physical and mental, and with this in mind we mentally prepared ourselves to show, empathy and the willingness to do what we must, while keeping a professional distance.

What occurred over the coming days was that we were made to feel as if we were part of the town.

It started on the first day where telecommunications were down and as part of our orders we were to be the modern day pony express and inform as many people about the community meetings and services available, while we were completing storm damage tasks.

We were always welcomed by residents, offered cups of tea, a sandwich and many many hugs. Both my team and other SES Teams were seen stopping and talking to residents, whether it was passing on information or having a chat, while going from job to job.

This seemed to raise the spirits of the residents and reinforced to us why we were there. It was about the people, not about buildings. That professional distance thing was disappearing fast.

Mid week through our deployment the Army turned up to assist in operations, and what was great to see was that they had their Chaplain onsite, wearing the same camo, chatting and talking to the troops.

Now that's dedication to looking after the mental health of the front line.

What seems to have the biggest impact on my team is being told the people of the town appreciated that we did stop and talk, and gave direction on where to find assistance, or just the fact the vehicle windows were down and a friendly wave was given.

Lastly, some of us have ended our deployment or are about to, and we need to keep a watch on each other - it may not be today or tomorrow that this may affect you, but 6 months away. don't bottle it up.

Talk to a family member, your team or a Manager.

If your not comfortable with this there is also the DFES chaplain and the Wellness branch.

Just remember to REACH OUT

Obviously, a number of agencies, both volunteer and career, responded to those natural disasters. They are important words that we also consider the mental health of first responders in these types of events, and also the cumulative effect that it has on first responders over time.

I went to a retirement function; it might have been just last year. Each year a ball is held for firefighters and all those who are retiring that year are recognised. I had known one of the retiring firefighters for a long time. I knew him when I was a volunteer. He used to be a training officer. I then knew him from the career service. I thought at the time that he was probably retiring a bit before his time. I did not want to ask what were the circumstances. Each of the firefighters retiring get to say some words at that dinner if they want to, and most of them do. This fella got up and talked about the impact that being a first responder has on mental health. I thought the way he put it was simple and easy to understand. In talking about post-traumatic stress he said, "It is a bit like a cup. Each of us is a cup. We never quite know how big our cup is and we never know when it is going to fill up, but my cup is full and it is time to leave."

I thought that was a really good way of describing the point that he got to in his career. We often see it. I have seen people who have had a long career of 30 or 40 years, and we think that if they survived that long, they have found a coping mechanism and a way to deal with those challenges, but then there is almost a point of no return. Sometimes people identify that point before it comes and sometimes they do not. I think it will be one of the most significant challenges we face in how we support our volunteer and career first responders in the future. I talked about this during my member's statement last Tuesday, being International Firefighters' Day, saying how mental health will have a greater impact than physical injury into the future. We are only just starting to recognise this, let alone find the best ways to respond to it.

I do not intend to use all my time because I suspect that this motion will have quite a bit of interest from members across the chamber. I wanted to touch on a couple of things before I conclude my remarks. When it comes to the long-term impact of these events, housing will be a significant issue. Last week, I think it was the Leader of the Opposition who said—I have seen some media reports subsequently—that people are making the decision to leave their community, maybe sell their farm or land or what is left of their buildings and use this as a time to relocate. It is the circuit-breaker they need. Obviously for some, returning to their home, their business and their community is maybe all too much, and that is the right decision for them. Housing support, particularly as a result of tropical cyclone Seroja, will be a really important response that the state needs to get right. I am yet to have a briefing with the State Recovery Controller; we are trying to arrange one this week. That will certainly be one of the main agenda items that I want to discuss. After the Wooroloo bushfire, the Minderoo Foundation stepped in and assisted with emergency accommodation pods, which I think were developed out of the east coast bushfires. They are now being deployed right across Australia in response to natural disaster events. There is a real opportunity here, particularly with the amount of funds that have been raised, both through the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund and also through the activation of the disaster recovery funding arrangements that exist between the state and the commonwealth. The government is considering category C activation. I understand that it is busy building the case for a category C decision with the commonwealth. Housing is one of those immediate needs, particularly as we approach winter.

I still do not have clarity on the number of people who have been displaced and the number of homes that are uninhabitable. A number of figures have been mentioned. The Insurance Council of Australia referred to a \$100 million loss, but it could be double that. In almost every report I have seen, the number of losses is slowly trickling up. I believe the house referred to the 13 impact statements that have been developed. The people that I met when I was on the ground up there were not necessarily people who would be calling up to say, "I've lost my house; what can you do for me?" They would have called their insurance assessor, relocated to the shed and got on with seeding the paddocks. It is quite challenging for the government and its agencies to get a full picture of the damage.

It will probably take quite some time to get that picture. Housing is definitely an immediate concern in the impacted areas. I am not just talking about Kalbarri and Northampton; the impacted area pretty much covers the 300 kilometre by 100 kilometre zone that Hon Colin de Grussa talked about.

I was having a conversation with somebody today. In ordinary circumstances, losing a roof might be something that can be rectified in a few months if a tarp is put in place to keep an area dry over winter. In current circumstances, replacing that roof will probably take more than a few months. Often there is significant water damage and other damage that may well mean that the rebuilding is more significant than normal, but there is also a delay due to access to construction contractors and construction materials in the current environment.

The last thing I wanted to talk about relates to the engagement of volunteers after these major responses. It is something that we have never done terribly well. We have this issue with not only attracting volunteers, but also retaining volunteers. In my mind, a big part of that involves listening to them. These types of events usually throw up a range of issues. They are difficult to manage, communications always break down and we can never get catering right. No-one wants to complain about dinner but if the troops are not fed, they probably will not turn up tomorrow. We never seem to quite crack a whole range of logistical things, but giving people the opportunity to talk about it and to provide feedback is so powerful. If I were the incident controller of a fire and had to get feedback and critique from everybody on what I did right and what I did wrong, it would never be a pleasant experience, but it is very important to understand, perhaps, a different perspective from those on the ground and also to give those people an opportunity to give their perspective. I do not know what we call it these days; it used to be called a post-incident analysis, and then it was a major incident review. A number of major incidents have occurred over the last few years. It is still not quite clear to me as a volunteer myself but also to other volunteers and career people how they provide feedback and for that feedback to be heard. That ought to be given greater consideration. I have already started to get some individual feedback from different organisations, volunteer associations and individual volunteers about what worked and what did not work.

The Red Gully fire, which I spoke about earlier, was travelling at about five kilometres an hour, which does not sound like a lot but a fire that is running through bush at five kilometres an hour is a very fast fire. It is obviously not a fast grass fire. Generally, the rule of a grass fire is that it will run as fast as the wind is blowing it. Running through bush at five kilometres an hour is quite fast. The fire shape of the Red Gully fire was very narrow, which indicates the speed with which it was moving.

We seem to have come very far with our ability to use technology. We have countless aircraft hovering around fires these days, with lasers, scanners, forward-looking infrared cameras and line scanners on fixed-wing aircraft. We have all this technology. On the ground, it has improved the intelligence that we have when we are actively fighting that fire. It may well have improved the intelligence that is provided to the incident management team that is making the decisions around the deployment of resources or the objectives to address the response to the fire, but with the intelligence on the ground, I do not think much has happened, despite the fact that we have all this technology in the sky. When I turned up to the Red Gully fire for the start of my shift at four o'clock in the afternoon, I was given a map that was created at six o'clock that morning. I had that same map right through the night. I knew that the fire shape had changed because we were chasing it to the coast. If we can find a mechanism after these types of events to foster a valuable conversation with those people on the ground, whether they are career or volunteer, it does not matter, some of these issues are likely to get greater attention and solutions are likely to be found for them.

As I said before, how we look after and deploy our troops are really important functions. The last thing we want with volunteer management is to send somebody across country out of their area to help out, and then not utilise them efficiently. There are countless stories over time of that occurring. I know it is difficult in these vast escalating emergencies, but it is something that we always need to be conscious of because it comes back to that really important issue of how to retain our volunteer resources that are so critical for Western Australia's ability to respond to emergencies.

I think I have filled the gaps of the issues that I raised last week in non-government business and the notice on motion moved today by the Leader of the House. I want to conclude by saying that the communities that have been impacted by these events should and will remain in my focus. I hope they will have the continuing focus of the government and Parliament, not in a political sense but in the sense that they will need our collective thought and commitment to make sure that in the months and years ahead they are supported by all of us.

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.21 pm]: I am delighted that we are able to debate this motion today by the Leader of the House. We finally got to it and I am really pleased about that because these events have had a massive impact on the Agricultural Region. The aftermath of cyclone Seroja, the two bushfires in the Agricultural Region and the Wooroloo fire that began a few kilometres from the boundary of the Agricultural Region and burnt right through almost to Bullsbrook are worthy of debate and are events that happened during our term of Parliament. I am very pleased to debate them at some length today because there is a lot to say. There have been some amazing exploits, feats and displays of human kindness. Superhuman efforts have been made by many people and emergency services personnel. It has been quite a catastrophic yet community and state building event all at the same time. We can learn a lot from events such as these. We continue to grow

and put procedures and processes in place because, as the poem says, it is a land of drought and flooding rains. From time to time it is also a very harsh country that we live in. With the advent of the increased rate of climate change, this is our future. We are going to live in a time of greater and more intense bushfires, greater and more intense cyclones in places we have not had them before, greater and more intense flooding events, and greater and more intense drought events. We have seen all of those across Australia over a short period of time.

I will begin with cyclone Seroja and a few of the observations as a result of that event. From the outset, I want to say that Kalbarri is now open for business. After the events of 11 April, which was not that long ago, there has been a remarkable effort to get this magnificent tourist town back up on its feet and open for business in a relatively short time. I will go through all the reasons that that has been made possible later in my contribution, but for everybody who has ever wanted to go to Kalbarri, I encourage you to go; they need you now. The community needs you now. Go and look at the gorges and the Kalbarri Skywalk, and spend some time in this beautiful part of the world, because these businesses and communities now need us more than ever. It is timely that we think about those who were affected and have spent the last month or so getting back on their feet, and what people who are not first responders can do. To be honest, I have kept away from some of these communities quite deliberately, because there is not much point going there and getting a photo op—I would only be in the way—but we are there to support those who need us. As members of Parliament we have been able to do a lot behind the scenes, but now something we can do is promote the message that it is time to get back out to our regional communities.

Our emergency services personnel, as I have discussed many times in this house, are outstanding individuals. I acknowledge the contribution made by Hon Martin Aldridge to this sector in the past. Parliament is made up of a diverse group of people and it is really good to have a member of this place who understands what it is like on the ground from that side of the fire hose. I acknowledge, very much appreciate and thank Hon Martin Aldridge for his efforts in helping keep his community safe. I promised last year that I would sign up to our local brigade and I have done that. Hopefully, the brigade stays a functional and working one and that we do not make too many mistakes! It has been good to get involved in our little local bush fire brigade. I think getting around our emergency services personnel is a role many of us in the regional areas could play in a greater capacity. The knowledge that some of these people who have been doing this for a long time have, and their understanding and the way they can apply what they have learnt and teach others is tremendous.

As has been mentioned of the fires, we had fires at Gingin, or Red Gully. The Red Gully fire was the first one in early January. It started on the east side of the Brand Highway and ran through almost to the coast. An area of 10 283 hectares burnt in that fire, with a perimeter of 136 kilometres. Ten thousand hectares sounds like a fair area, but when the fire has a perimeter of 136 kilometres—the circle around that fire that has to be dealt with by our career and volunteer firefighters—that gives us some sense of the scale of what we are up against. Sometimes it can be grassland, sometimes it can be really heavy bush or anything in between. We had 1 300 career and volunteer personnel from across local government; the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; the Department of Fire and Emergency Services; metropolitan and regional based brigades; and units and incident response including aerial resources, five helitaks, an air crane, six fixed-wing water bombers and two large air tankers, one that came over from the eastern states. They completed 522 water drops of just over 1.5 million litres of water on that fire. What a tremendous gathering of human capital, machines and infrastructure to help attack and defeat that fire.

We started with that one. Then on 1 February we had the Wooroloo bushfires, the most damage causing of those three events. Again, over 10 000 hectares were burnt. This time 86 homes were destroyed and many properties were damaged by the effects of that fire. It was quite scary to watch that constantly changing fire map and fire scene. The details of that fire are more heartbreaking because of the loss of property. I am really pleased to say that as a result of all these fires, we did not lose a single life. That is again testament to those who turned up, gave their time and put themselves at risk and in danger to help us make that happen. The fact that we have lost houses, fencing, livestock and a lot of public and private infrastructure and property, and the fact that everyone is still around to tell the tale is testament to those responders. We thank them all very much for that outstanding achievement.

The state government has been able to step up and support communities by providing financial assistance and support in other areas through our various government departments. A small amount of financial assistance is of little comfort to someone who has lost their house, but it is a vehicle that can keep people on their feet until they work out exactly how things are going to look in the aftermath. There are always building insurance companies to deal with, bills and accounts that need to be paid and things that need to be done during that period, and sometimes that small amount of money can make a massive difference to the mental health and wellbeing of those who receive it. I am really proud that the state has been able to step up in such a way.

Relatively recently, on 28 April, there was also a fire in Gingin itself. That was quite a small fire, but it took 65 appliances and 100 personnel across the range of government agencies to deal with it. As Hon Martin Aldridge talked about before, it did not escalate into a large fire, but it had the capacity to be devastating to the community of Gingin. Once the fire got into Gingin Brook and the bush there, it was particularly difficult to manage. Fortunately, the wind and conditions were such that it was able to be contained relatively easily. It burnt out 28.5 hectares, but that was another event that could have been much more devastating had it not been for the early intervention of our emergency services personnel.

That is the range of events that we have seen just this year, in the last few months. Mother Nature has put on quite a spectacular show early in 2021, on top of, as we have heard, the COVID lockdowns and other necessary precautions that the government has had to take to try to manage the pandemic.

Members may be aware that we were not the first jurisdiction impacted by tropical cyclone Seroja. It began in Indonesia and caused a lot of flooding and landslides, damage to properties and loss of life. It then moved down through the warmer tropical waters off the Western Australian coast, merged with another couple of systems up there, and then hooked to the left and came in across Kalbarri at around 7.00 pm on 11 April 2021. At the time of crossing, it was a category 3 cyclone with winds of up to 170 kilometres an hour. The community of Kalbarri recorded 111 millimetres of rain during that event. Not only did members of the community witness and live through the utter devastation that we all saw on television, but also anyone who lost their roof had 111 millimetres of rain come into their house.

The damage was worse on the north and east quadrant of the storm. That was very fortunate for the City of Greater Geraldton, which was on the other side of the cyclone. It fared much better, with much lower velocity winds and much less property damage across that much larger community. Kalbarri has a population of around 1 400 people. As the Minister for Education and Training stated earlier, it has a district high school and other community infrastructure, much of which was damaged by the storm. The cyclone then travelled inland and was particularly devastating in the community of Northampton. It went through the Chapman Valley and then out to communities such as Morawa and Mingenew, through to Perenjori, where it did significant damage, and started to peter out as it left the Agricultural Region and headed out into the bush. It brought some significant rainfall events. As members will be aware, this time of year is very busy for farming communities. We are busy seeding our crops at the moment, and although the rain was welcome, many farm businesses had to manage their day-to-day activities without a house or a shed. Even some of the farm equipment that was in those sheds was damaged as well. In the way that we do best, we buckled down in adversity. We got on with the job, and a lot of the crops in that area are either completely sown or getting very close to being finished. That is a testament to our farmers. Over the last month, we have had to manage the events of cyclone Seroja whilst keeping our businesses afloat and producing export grain for the state, with the dollars and jobs that come with that.

During the cyclone, 1 100 structures were badly damaged and 61 were destroyed. I will talk more about the human impact of that. It also left 31 500 homes and businesses without any power. I will say more about Western Power a bit later in my contribution to this debate. I think the only word to describe Western Power staff and the workers who have been on the job in the aftermath of this cyclone is “magnificent”. They have done an outstanding job to get power back to 97 per cent of homes within a month. As has been mentioned, for the other three per cent, it has been a very long wait. I will go into some detail in a minute about where things are at for those still affected. About 20 per cent of the power network was damaged. Some poles were snapped halfway up, there were wires on the ground for several kilometres along some of the lines where the cross arms had come adrift, and the insulators had come out. It was a terrific storm that had a significant impact on our power network. Many people are much more appreciative of power since they got it back on, I can tell you. It is such an inconvenience when it is out. Those of us who live on farms have backup generators, but, as has been mentioned earlier, the sound of those gets old pretty quick when you are trying to sleep at night with generators running, especially in a town where there could be dozens of them. It has been extraordinary how people have managed since the storm until the power has come back on.

Thirteen local government areas have currently been activated for this event—Carnamah, Chapman Valley, Coorow, Dalwallinu, Dandaragan, Greater Geraldton, Mingenew, Mt Marshall, Morawa, Northampton, Perenjori, Shark Bay and Three Springs—and it is likely that additional local governments will be included as further impacts are felt. On that point, I want to acknowledge the great contribution made over the last few weeks by local governments in the Ag Region, the leadership of those councils and the CEOs, particularly those of Northampton. I do not think it is a great secret that the shire president and the CEO of the Shire of Northampton and I do not always see eye to eye; we have a very different political view of the world, but I give credit where it is due. Both those people have stood up and done an outstanding job in the aftermath of this cyclone. I acknowledge and thank them on behalf of the state government and everyone in their communities for the work they have done. It has been remarkable to watch the local government kick into gear and step up and support their communities in the way that the Shire of Northampton has, and, in turn, all those other local governments as well. I think it has been particularly pleasing to watch, and we see the value of those local governments and the way that they service their communities.

State government is able to provide financial assistance through the disaster recovery funding arrangements in Western Australia. That has been useful for local governments and communities. We also have emergency assistance for individuals to alleviate personal hardship, support for local governments and the state for repair and reinstatement of essential public assets, counter-disaster operations for the protection of the general public, and assistance for small business and primary producers through interest rate subsidies. The Department of Communities has received 7 287 applications for emergency financial assistance and additional staff have been employed to process the applications. The state government has issued a total of \$1.274 million in financial assistance—2 958 electronic fund transfer transactions valued at just over \$1 million and 535 credit cards to the value of around \$200 000. An

additional financial assistance package was announced on Sunday, 9 May by the Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services. The program will provide assistance. The state government and commonwealth disaster recovery funding arrangements are progressing and authorities continue with clean-up efforts.

I encourage insurance companies to work with their policyholders. There has generally been good feedback about the cooperation between policyholders and insurance companies, which has been good to see. No doubt, there will be differences of view from time to time, but I wish those who have insurance and have taken on that responsibility well. I am happy to help in any way that I can in dealing with insurance companies.

The Minister for Education and Training has eloquently outlined the fantastic job that the staff of the Department of Education has done, and to get Kalbarri District High School open again last week, I believe, is a terrific effort. Well done to the regional director of education and everyone in education in the midwest.

Health services, again, had to be conducted in very difficult circumstances. Well done and thank you to all our frontline health service workers. It has been a very challenging year and a bit for you all, and we do appreciate your services. Minister McGurk has been to Geraldton to outline how the state government may be able to help.

Some random act of kindness from members of the public have occurred, like Ricky, the service station owner in Northampton, who chipped in a bit of fuel to everyone's generator for massive drive from the City of Greater Geraldton to get around 80 generators up to Northampton to help people who did not have power. The local service station owner was happy to put in a little bit of fuel to get those generators running. Mike from Kalbarri, out of the goodness of his heart, was running around helping service those generators. People like Nicole Batten stepped up in the leadership of their communities to bring together public meetings to keep the public informed. There are hundreds and hundreds of stories like these. People set up social media pages to help provide assistance, details and information to members of the public. It really has been a tremendous effort and terrific to watch from where we stand. In those times of need and adversity is when the good leadership in our communities comes forward. We have a bit to learn from these events. Every time we go through one, we take away lessons of things that we could do differently. For things that worked really well, we can do again. Things that we might do differently from time to time do come through and we make those changes and learn from those experiences.

I want to take a couple of minutes to single out a few people for thanks. Kevin Kelly and his team from Rainbow Jungle in Kalbarri set up and coordinated the rapid relief food tent that provided food to not only emergency crews, but also residents. The tent not only provided food to the community when it had none, but also served as a meeting place and safe haven on the foreshore that was calming and healing to those who had been through the trauma of the cyclone. Rita Hanson, who runs Rita's refuge, next to the Kalbarri bakery, provided clothing, nappies and formula for babies and other emergency services relief items. The importance of enabling people to put on fresh clothes to escape the dirt and grime for a short time cannot be underestimated. There were so many silent heroes. Everyone stepped up and pulled together. All agency staff including Department of Fire and Emergency Services, State Emergency Service crews, Western Power crews and the Army went above and beyond and should be recognised individually as well as collectively. Nurses, teachers and support staff came to provide services as local staff were dealing with the devastation of losing their homes. DFES messaging at every community meeting was very positive in the face of disaster, and encouraging everyone to be kind was very important to holding the community together.

Shire staff, Mick Starling and Jarrad Dowes, were still working to take debris and household items to the tip for those who have not been able to do it themselves, sometimes after suffering damage to their own properties. Julie Waterson raked the foreshore for weeks. Northampton CEO, Garry Keeffe, worked tirelessly, almost 24/7, in the initial period to help the Northampton community through the aftermath of the cyclone. He was on the street clearing debris and checking on people's safety, working with community members to put short-term solutions in place in the crisis, running community meetings and graciously hosting the Premier and the Prime Minister amongst the devastation and turmoil of the task at hand. Rod O'Bree of Western Independent Foods donated food for emergency services crews in Geraldton in the initial period prior to supermarkets and food outlets reopening and had offered refrigerated trucks at the ready to deploy to Kalbarri, although they were not needed as power was set up for the Kalbarri IGA. Shire CEOs and other staff in the other affected shires also deserve recognition.

Nicole Batten, as I mentioned before, pulled many community meetings together. Volunteers manned the drop-in centre. Local government staff and councillors led the coordination of the response from the point of the crisis. The Country Women's Association members did an amazing job in their biscuit drives, not only to collect and distribute the biscuits, but also to talk to people who had been affected and see how they were going. I think that was a very important role that the CWA members played and I thank them very much for doing that. Thank you to anyone who checked in on neighbours and people across the street, especially the elderly, to make sure that they were okay, and sometimes when they did not have power would run a generator across the fence to help the neighbours next door. Many people are still working hard. We still do not have all the power back on and there is still a massive clean-up to go. Denise Coombes, and Gary Hargrave from Centacare Family Services, worked tirelessly to support people at the evacuation centre. Those evacuation centres became very busy. There was a lot of demand from the community during the aftermath of the cyclone and I thank everybody who gave their time all worked in those evacuation centres as well.

We have some terrific stories to tell about the Western Power crews and staff. It has been a month since the tropical cyclone crossed the WA coast. Crews have been deployed across the midwest wheatbelt to identify hazards, repair and replace damaged infrastructure and restore power. There are still around 794 properties that need to be restored in areas worst affected by the cyclone. To those people, we apologise for the delay, but thank you for your patience and understanding during what has been a really difficult time. All hazards caused by the tropical cyclone have been identified and made safe by Western Power workers. Crews on the ground in Kalbarri, Northampton, Perenjori and surrounds are continuing to manage repairs and restorations. Other crews are completing construction on the backbone lines in the Three Springs area and are commencing the repair and construction of affected spur lines. The Three Springs to Moora transmission line has been restored, and 97 per cent of homes and businesses now have power. The largest ever Western Power repair and recovery operation has been widely supported by local communities, emergency services agencies, local government authorities and WA businesses. Around 20 per cent of our network was damaged. We appreciate the communities' continued understanding of our phased approach to restore power to the greatest number of community members as safely and quickly as possible.

I think it is worth reflecting on that point. Electricity is a very dangerous substance and wherever there is a risk, that risk must be identified, and power must not be restored until that risk has been rectified. I cannot thank our Western Power crews enough for the work that they have done in difficult and dangerous situations because it is truly remarkable to see some of the videos and hear some of the stories that have been circulating about the Western Power crews and how well they have been received in those communities and what support they have had.

We are looking at upgrades and solutions to improve power reliability and quality for communities, including undergrounding in high-density areas and standalone power systems. We are currently contacting owners whose properties might be potential sites for standalone power systems. We are planning to install a thousand of those across the state in the next tranche. We appeal to farmers to not remove damaged poles and wires on their properties. We encourage them to contact Western Power so that we can manage these lines and enable seating to continue. All employees in our recovery effort are following current COVID regulations, which creates another layer of difficulty for these crews, and more information will be coming out daily.

Members, that is all I wanted to say today. It was a great opportunity for us to reflect on what has happened and go back and bore down into those localised stories and acknowledge everyone who helped in any way to get us through this particularly difficult time, through the fires and the cyclone that we have suffered so far in 2021, all while managing the COVID pandemic. I am very proud of our emergency services workers. I am very proud of the support that our state government has been able to give to affected communities. I am very proud of everyone involved in local government. Local governments are service providers, and they have certainly provided terrific services to their communities over the last few months. This motion was a great opportunity. I thank the Leader of the House for bringing on the motion. I also acknowledge Hon Dr Steve Thomas for helping make that happen. It has been a terrific opportunity for us to debate and discuss and to acknowledge and thank everyone who has been a part of the natural disaster events of the last few months.

HON PIERRE YANG (South Metropolitan) [2.48 pm]: I thank Hon Darren West for his contribution on the motion. Like him I would like to thank Hon Sue Ellery, Leader of the House, for this motion. In her motion, the Leader of the House wants to acknowledge the impact of cyclone Seroja and the recent bushfires. Obviously, we know the devastating impact of the Wooroloo bushfires on the local residents and the loss of properties during that period of time when Western Australia was hit by the COVID outbreak and the metropolitan region and the Peel region went into a five-day lockdown.

I also want to acknowledge that there were bushfires earlier in the year in Kwinana and the Agricultural Region. During the past few sitting days, I have talked about how my family's planned visit to Kalbarri could not proceed because of the cyclone in the region. I reiterate my intention to visit that community in due course. In the first part of this year, we, as a community, were dealing with a number of natural disasters. It started with the bushfire in Kwinana. I remember I was travelling down south on Kwinana Freeway and was unable to continue on the freeway because the fire had jumped from one side of the freeway to the median strip. I was diverted onto a different road. I heard about the bushfire on the radio. It was pretty intense for the local community. I received a call from my local State Emergency Service unit asking whether I could assist by bringing in some volunteer bush fire fighters from the Gosnells Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade to replace personnel who had been fighting the fire over the past couple of days.

On that point, I want to acknowledge a few members of this place. I acknowledge Hon Martin Aldridge for his time, as I mentioned last week, as a career firefighter and his contribution to fighting fires over many years as a volunteer firefighter, even while he has been a member of this place. He was deployed during the Wooroloo bushfire. I understand that he was there for two days and saw the devastating impact of the bushfire on that community. I thank the honourable member for his service. I also acknowledge Hon Rick Mazza and Hon Darren West for their volunteering activities in their local bush fire brigades. I am sure Hon Darren West's local unit will thrive and go from strength to strength with him as a member.

Hon Stephen Dawson: They don't know what they are in for!

Hon PIERRE YANG: I know that Hon Darren West is very popular and will rally his local community to join that brigade. More power to Hon Darren West and his local volunteer bush fire brigade.

Hon Darren West: My son's joined too.

Hon PIERRE YANG: That is a great thing. Good on him for volunteering and helping the local community.

Hon Stephen Dawson: At least one out of his household is an adult!

Hon Darren West: He'll be better.

Hon Martin Aldridge: You can drive. He can drag the hose.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I hope Hansard is able to capture these wonderful interjections. I welcome them; thank you very much, members.

I want to touch on the Wooroloo bushfire. When we went into lockdown on 31 January, I was about to go to an event held by the Chung Wah Association for the homeless. I met with the Lord Mayor and a number of councillors. We were waiting for the Premier to make an announcement. The Wooroloo bushfire started the day after we went into lockdown. We, as a community and a state, had to deal with twin natural disasters. The impact on people was significant. The Wooroloo fire started on 1 February. Wooroloo is 45 kilometres north-east of Perth in the Shire of Mundaring. By 2 February, the bushfire had spread to areas of the neighbouring Shire of Chittering, Shire of Northam and City of Swan. The fire was progressively getting worse, and the state government responded. On the first day, there were some reports of houses being destroyed by the bushfire. By the end of the first day, it was reported that seven houses had been destroyed. On the second day, the situation was a lot worse. By the end of the day, some 59 houses had been destroyed. On the third day, 3 February, due to the spread of the bushfire, non-emergency personnel were evacuated from RAAF Base Pearce, although it was not directly threatened. Personnel remained to manage the airbase for bushfire air support. I have been to the base a number of times and I know how important it is to Western Australia. The impact of the bushfire was not restricted to the civilian world; it affected many other areas of our lives as well.

On 4 February, some 500 firefighters were involved in fighting the fire. Hon Martin Aldridge was one of the 500 firefighters involved in that fire. The state government acted swiftly. On that day, the Premier announced emergency grants of \$5 000 for those who had lost their houses and \$2 000 for those whose houses were damaged by the bushfire. Very, very fortunately, the bushfire was brought under control. On the sixth day, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, Darren Klemm, announced that they had been able to contain the bushfire and it had been downgraded. It was a miracle that not one person was seriously hurt or lost their life during the fire. I will repeat those words: we were really, really fortunate that despite the property losses, not one life was lost. It was terrific to learn that.

Members have talked about the aftermath of the Wooroloo bushfire and the need to support communities to rebuild. I acknowledge the Lord Mayor's fundraising effort to support those communities. I understand that \$2 million has been raised. It is great to see that everyone has been chipping in to support the local community. Members will remember that just after lockdown, we participated in the 2021 election. The communities affected by the bushfire were still dealing with the immediate shock of the fires. I had a conversation with the members for Swan Hills and West Swan about the impact on their local communities. I acknowledge their efforts in assisting their local communities in regions affected by the Wooroloo bushfire.

I want to talk about the second part of the motion, which relates to cyclone Seroja. Before I talk about that, I think it is a very timely motion given that Wednesday next week is the annual Wear Orange Wednesday when we acknowledge and thank our emergency services personnel for their contribution. I think it is a timely motion to have the debate today to acknowledge and thank our emergency services volunteers and personnel for their service to our state.

I am going to turn to cyclone Seroja. I want to say that the impact of Seroja is significant. The community of Kalbarri is affected the most as a result of the cyclone. I am pleased to see that the state government is providing assistance through grants of \$4 000 to individuals in that local community, including residents and businesses. I am also pleased to see that State Emergency Service volunteers and bushfire volunteer personnel went to the community to help it recover. I also want to acknowledge the Australian Defence Force for providing assistance to the local community in Kalbarri. When I was serving as an Army Reserve officer, we were involved in the Defence Assistance to the Civil Community initiative, which is part of the Defence Force's service to local communities in aiding state and territory governments. The Defence Force used that initiative in this instance to support the Kalbarri community.

I have a lot to say, but on this occasion I understand my learned friend and dear colleague Hon Alannah MacTiernan would like to make a contribution, so I will conclude my remarks here.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [3.03 pm]: I will speak only briefly as I have spoken on several occasions on the impact of cyclone Seroja and what has been achieved through the extraordinary work of the community and our emergency services.

Today I want to say how pleased I am that we have been able to address the concerns of much of the community after the immediate clean-up and restoration work was done. As I said, we have recognised just how big an impact Seroja had. The sheer geographic extent of its impact extended to an area 700 kilometres long and 150 kilometres wide, which is an area larger than Tasmania. We went through that. I think that was very well canvassed in the last motion that we debated on this matter. I want to reflect. The Leader of the House's detailing of the involvement of the Department of Education and the various school communities was very interesting. I marvel at the sheer centrality of the endeavour and the very, very special challenges that were created for schools. The speed at which the department was able to take alternate courses to ensure that there was minimum disruption to the education of the young people in the region was a truly spectacular effort.

Hon Martin Aldridge talked about a telecommunications problem. It really was an extraordinary issue. I know we were trying to contact the member for Geraldton, Lara Dalton, and it was very hit-and-miss because of the telecommunications situation. Certainly some technical developments are going on in the work that we have been doing in regional telecommunications that I think will be interesting. I know that the member has spoken of furthering the network. Some both high-tech and, interestingly, very low-tech alternatives are being brought into play. I have done some reading on some of the impacts of earthquakes or tornadoes in less developed countries and seen some of the strategies that have been brought to bear on securing telecommunications, principally for that very important work of keeping people informed and allowing people to communicate the level of the problem within their community. I certainly believe that we have to give a lot more thought to having a suite of telecommunications emergency measures that can be brought into play. I think that work will occupy Fire and Emergency Services going forward.

I want to add that, as I said before, Hon Kyle McGinn and I went to Kalbarri on Sunday a week ago. Absolutely the vast majority of the business community there wanted to get that road open. We came back and made our representations. I am really pleased to see just how quickly the government responded, and the road was reopened on Thursday. The reportage I am getting from the community via the development commission is that accommodation is filling up. There are bookings into the future. The retail sector has been reactivated, and there is a sense of optimism arising from that. Of course, another issue that was raised with us was that many of the small businesses did not have access to any of the federal emergency funds, which tend to focus on individuals and people who have lost employment. Someone who is self-employed has no access to those funds, so the Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services' announcement last weekend of \$4 000 grants for residents and particularly for small businesses will go a long way to building the resilience of the community and giving people who have been without income for a number of weeks a pathway forward.

I am very pleased to see how responsive and engaged our government has been. We recognise that when we have emergencies like this, the whole community very much comes together. The big issue that remains is how we accommodate those people in not only Kalbarri, but also the other places where people have lost their homes. It is interesting to see the number of people who remain in housing that has been deemed to be beyond repair. Some people have put up tarpaulins and are operating from those homes. That is not sustainable in the long term. The number one priority of the task force overseeing the response is to find a pathway forward for how we can accommodate people who have lost their homes while they rebuild.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 11 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.

HON ROBIN SCOTT (Mining and Pastoral) [3.11 pm]: I would like to use my valedictory speech to report what I have observed over the last four years in my electorate and also in this chamber. First, I would like to congratulate the government for winning a second term on the back of a very well run campaign. My own campaign, as most will know, was unsuccessful, which has left me sad, disappointed and a little frightened—sad because I was slowly getting the main issues addressed in regional Western Australia. I am not a career politician and I came into this place completely in touch with the views of the common members of the public. Sadly, some members in here seem to have lost touch. I did what I have always done in my career, which is, very simply, to work hard and do what my constituents asked me to do. I was building towards kicking some major goals for regional WA, but now I am sad that I must leave that progress on the table. I am disappointed because of how different things could, and perhaps should, have been. Although the election campaign was well run by the government, I know that the result

would have been different had COVID not come along, even though I think Labor would have won because it left the opposition as simply non-existent. The Liberals, sadly, did not give the voters an alternative. The conservative views are alive and well in this state and this country, but we have no-one to champion the cause and at every opportunity we are being out-yelled and outmanoeuvred by the Twitterati and the biased, degenerate media landscape. On the back of that, I am frightened because I cannot see any green shoots of hope at the minute. I have repeated many times in this chamber that the only reason that I became a politician was to improve the future of WA for my grandkids and for everyone's grandkids. Now that I have seen how this government operates, I am even more frightened than I was coming into Parliament. Let me say to the public—it may come as no surprise—that the welfare of the people of this state comes second to the protection of the political careers of the furniture in here. Only the public has the mechanism to change the situation, if only they cared enough to do so.

Over the last few years, the government has given chickenfeed to regional WA—a few handfuls of grain here and there to try to keep it happy—and now that it has a double majority, the government can kick regional WA while it is down. The discussion of electoral reform is still hanging about, and informed sources have told me that electoral reform is all but a certainty. Let me say to the regional members of this government: You must stop this from happening. You know that regional Western Australia gets a raw deal in this place. You are inside the government and you need to prevent any dilution to reduce regional representation because you know that it is purely politically driven, and regional WA needs you to be better than that.

While I am talking about my electorate, I want to turn to some of the issues in regional WA that continue to go unaddressed. We are still struggling with alcohol abuse. People are now ordering their alcohol through the post. I have said before that we could ban all alcohol orders from being delivered unless it was addressed to a licensed outlet or hotel. All it needs is someone in the government to sign it off. That could be done this afternoon at no real cost to the government, and it would save a lot of misery in regional towns. Antisocial behaviour is still going on and many people are leaving regional towns for the safety of the city. Many are young families frightened for their children who have been threatened at school. These are the people we are trying to encourage to move to regional towns. Until we solve this problem, we will continue to see a decline in the number of people who want to live in regional towns. I have repeatedly asked for facilities that could house children who walk the streets at night because they have no safe place to go, but so far I have had no luck.

The sealing of major access roads is slow. Many of these roads would benefit regional towns greatly. The sealing of Tanami Road would cut distances for deliveries from the eastern states by 1 000 kilometres, making goods cheaper for Kimberley residents.

These are important issues, but they are not the main issue. The main issue underlying so much else is the financial abuse and mismanagement by certain leaders of Aboriginal corporations who today are lining their pockets at the expense of their own people. I have been working on collecting the proof about this mismanagement. The fact that several different Aboriginal groups have made the same allegations was enough for me to sit up and pay attention. I want to put on record that the government needs to investigate these corporations more and stop blindly trusting their report sheets. It was recently reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that the largest Aboriginal corporation in the Kimberley, the Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation, has not had a valid board of directors since 2017. Even worse, it has not been able to account for more than \$28 million. Mr Paul Whyte from the Department of Communities defrauded the taxpayers of \$25 million and it made headlines for weeks, yet this scandal happens with the Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation and it barely gets reported in any Western Australian newspaper. The Kimberley Land Council sacked its CEO, Mr Brian Wilkinson, after he pushed for greater transparency of the council's multimillion-dollar charitable trust. As a member of that region, I can tell members firsthand that the Kimberley Land Council is a crooked organisation that needs a few auditors and investigators to rip right through that place. If we continue to turn the other cheek and allow this behaviour to go on, nothing will change for Aboriginal people. In 2021, for a white person to make a big deal about corruption in any Aboriginal corporation is seen as racist. It is not about race; it is about honesty and transparency. The Aboriginal people suffer most from these financial disasters, and this weak state government and even weaker media outlets do nothing about it.

In the goldfields, one of the main offenders is Mr Kado Muir from Leonora. Mr Muir is chairman of the National Native Title Council. He is a very wealthy man who has his fingers in many government-funded pies. I have been told by many people in the area that he is up to all sorts of tricks. One of his favourite tricks is to create a songline where mining is proposed. This then requires the mining companies to deal directly with him. If members of this government and the previous government cannot see what is going on with this system, they are fools, and they do not deserve to be in this chamber. All they have to do is go and speak to the traditional owners on their next trip to the regions. I do not mean the ones lined up to meet them when they step off the plane; instead, members should just pop in to any community unannounced and get a real feel for the hopelessness, misery and poverty, and at the same time witness the vandalism and destruction that goes on due to a lack of jobs and community neglect. The government listens too much to the Kado Muirs and buys the BS when they say they speak on behalf of their communities.

Just recently, it was reported with joy in *The Kimberley Echo* that 60 foreign workers had arrived in Kununurra to fill places in the severely understaffed hospitality and agricultural sectors. Thousands are unemployed yet here we are celebrating giving jobs to foreigners! The government's new Minister for Aboriginal Affairs said to me in this

chamber that Aboriginal people do not want whitefellas picking jobs for them. I do not want anybody picking a job for me, but the reality is that I must work because that is what society expects. If you give me and all my mates a fortnightly pay packet, guess what? None of us will work; we will go and sit under a tree and have a drink. Mark my words: this problem will get worse until the government changes its policy. Aboriginal empowerment is not working. The last two decades have shown that it does not work. Stop this idealistic dreaming and get to work. Just because your skin is white does not mean you cannot help Aboriginal people with your own hands. Noted Aboriginal leader and politician Nyunggai Warren Mundine commented recently in *The Australian Financial Review*. He said —

So long as training programs aren't linked to job-retention, and while ever bureaucrats make excuses for why the unemployed shouldn't have to work, people will continue to languish on welfare in a nation desperate for workers.

He was dead right.

Tied into the first issue, the second issue that goes unaddressed is the number of young Aboriginal children who are committing suicide in regional communities because of alcohol, drugs and constant, repeated physical and sexual assault. This crime continues today and is very rarely reported in the media. As one Kalgoorlie journo told me, "We don't like to report suicides", yet we have scandals in federal and state politics in which female employees have alleged sexual misconduct and those have made national headlines for weeks. It seems that some scandals can be reported but not others. These children are growing up in an environment in which they see no future. They are given no hope of escaping their short, miserable lives and opt for an easy, quick release from their living hell. I only wish that members of metropolitan seats could see what I have seen in the last four years—maybe then they might be spurred into doing something about this national disgrace. The government housing contract that my business held for many years was conditional. It contained a provision that I would not disclose what I saw and heard in Aboriginal communities and homes. In the end, I handed back that contract as my conscience started to get the better of me. All these problems could be eliminated in time if we took a different approach and allowed development of our resources.

Take Fitzroy Crossing, for example. People in Fitzroy Crossing are screaming out for jobs. Again, nothing is done about expanding the pastoral or agricultural industries. Hundreds of young Aboriginals are destined to a life on welfare, just like their parents. The main requirement to create many new jobs is water. Billions of litres of water flow into the Indian Ocean every year during the wet season, yet not one litre of that water is saved to generate any new jobs or any wealth for the regions. Capturing a little of that floodwater would provide so much more to all the people living in that area of WA. Since 21 December 2020, enough water has flowed into the Indian Ocean to fill Sydney Harbour more than 28 times, yet not one litre is saved to help the people who are existing on welfare in that area. Not one agricultural job has been created and absolutely nothing has been done to enhance the cattle industry. Do yourself a favour, members, and have a read of the discussion paper released by the government in November last year, called *Managing water in the Fitzroy River catchment*. It is the biggest load of amateur left-wing rubbish that you could ever read. It was the result of not one government department but four government departments all collaborating—that tripe was the best they could come up with! It looks like the work experience kid put it together in a couple of hours. The annual waste of water, combined with the government's red and green tape, is absolutely crippling the West Kimberley. Economic and social chaos will only continue until we get smart and start using our resources wisely. The Kimberley meatworks, which is a state-of-the-art facility that employs around 90 people, was closed last Christmas and will not open until March next year because of the lack of cattle. Better fodder production and feedlots in the Fitzroy catchment would assist the viability of this facility. All it needs is better water management.

I have received emails and letters from people who support the Fitzroy River and want to protect it. Many of these have come from suburban Melbourne or the Northern Beaches area of Sydney. Those people would not even be able to point out Fitzroy Crossing on a map! We need a proper plan to sustainably use the natural resources in the Kimberley. I understand that while the traditional owners must have a say in the region's future, they should not have the only say or the final say. It was stated in this chamber that we should not allow a few billionaires to make more money by using the Fitzroy River to expand existing industries or introduce new industries. Without these billionaires, we would not have the thousands of jobs in the mining industry or many hundreds of jobs in the pastoral industry. We need to remember that when these billionaires pass on to the next world, their infrastructure and enterprises will carry on into the future. One great example of that was Mr Lang Hancock.

Regional Western Australia is, and always has been, the financial powerhouse of WA, and for the rest of Australia for that matter. While the miners dig out exhaustible resources, we could be securing our future with a resource that replaces itself every year. We could easily become the food bowl for the rest of the world. As the world population mushrooms and countries struggle to feed their people, we could be the saviour of many starving nations, and at the same time give our traditional owners the opportunity to join the workforce and become members of a regularly organised society. We already have the people who could make it happen; all we need is the right people in the government who want it to happen. To grow our state is no different from starting a business and growing and being successful at that business, as I have been in my business. Unfortunately, I doubt there are many members in this chamber who have run their own show. Most will have been, and always will be, employees, always agreeing and doing what the boss tells them to do. If they do not, they will be cut loose at the next election.

I would really like to know when we will stop using Aboriginal people as political footballs and as excuses for not doing something, turning the other cheek when it is evident that something is severely wrong, and conveniently blaming the federal government when it suits.

The last four years have been the quickest years of my life and also the most exciting as far as work goes. I have been a boss for the last 30-plus years but when I started in this chamber in May 2017, I was back being a first-year apprentice. I saw myself doing an apprenticeship in state politics, which turned out to be very different from what I originally expected. I feel that I had a good relationship with some members—there were a few exceptions. This was not a job for me; it was my way of trying to put something back into regional Western Australia in return for the most wonderful life I have had over the last 51 years.

I look forward to seeing more of my grandchildren when I am finished with politics. I have not seen enough of them over the last four years. I am not sure what my next mission will be, but be assured that I will be doing only what I want to do. I might even go fruit picking or drive a bus or a truck, or even go back to working in the mining industry. Perhaps I will do more fishing down south for a while or even take up golf, which I was never any good at, although I always did enjoy my days out on the golf course. I would always start out with six golf balls of my own. At the end of the day, I would have at least 20 balls that I found in the rough. None of them were my golf balls; they had all disappeared into the ether forever.

I need to thank certain people who got me through the last four years. Without them, I would have floundered. I need to start with Hon Michael Mischin, who helped me so much with the Select Committee into Mining on Pinjin Station, which I chaired. I made a few errors and some people wanted me boiled in oil for my indiscretion. However, thanks to Hon Michael Mischin and Madam President, I lived to fight another day. I also played a part in the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review, of which Hon Michael Mischin was the chair. On my first day on the uniform legislation committee, I thought everyone was speaking a foreign language. They gave me a foolscap notebook to take notes. I could not even pronounce some of the words, let alone spell them, but I decided to use that committee to improve my grammar, my punctuation and my vocabulary. Thank you, Michael, for all your help in improving my English comprehension. He is now a friend, whether he wants to be or not.

I would like to thank my office staff in Kalgoorlie. Ms Kerrie Stones, my electorate officer, kept me up to speed with what was going on in Kalgoorlie–Boulder whenever I was in Perth or elsewhere in the electorate. Kerrie came with much experience as she had worked in the office of Wendy Duncan. I was the one who benefited from her experience. I will worry about all the people who come to my office in Boulder every day for help from Kerrie. It could be for help with Centrelink, health agencies or just with filling in simple government forms or even to get home to Warburton or Tjuntjuntjara. I hope the new guy will take up that role. Ms Chloe Parkes, my research officer, came to my office with no experience in research or politics but her youthful spirit and get-up-and-go attitude guaranteed that she soon became a key player in my team. Both these ladies went above and beyond their duties and never complained when I asked them to work late or to pop into the office when I needed help at the weekend. Thanks, girls. I will not forget the support you gave me and all the times you picked me up and dropped me off at the airport. Mr David Modolo, my electorate officer, travelled everywhere in the electorate with me—from Norseman to Kalumburu and everywhere in between. On some of our flights, we spent three or four hours in the air, with the worst inflight service you could imagine. We could only eat and drink what we brought along, but not once did he complain. Being newly married, he never kicked up when I asked him to bring a suitcase because we were going to the bush for a while. During the flights, we spent much of our time discussing the reasons for the trip. When we landed, I was always full bottle on the issues and where we stood on the issues. David was a great electorate officer for me. He had had a similar role in federal politics, and I was the one who gained from all his experience. He will always be a good friend.

My family know that I was never put on this earth to be a good father or a papa or a brother or even a husband. My role was as a worker and provider. Every job I took on consumed my life. My father told me at the age of 15, “No matter what the job is, someone is paying your wages and you make sure you work hard and deserve those wages.” My sisters—Gillian, my twin, and Sandra, my wee sister—have always told me to slow down and spend more time with the family. This of course fell on deaf ears. I know they are very proud of me but they do not say too much in case I get a big head. I love them very much.

All the politically correct head shrinks will be shocked at this statement because nowadays a father must stay home sometimes and has to cook dinner and do the washing. I would have loved to have done those things; however, it is all too late for me, but I know my family loves me for what I am and I do not care what anyone else thinks. Julia, my fiancée, came into my life nearly 11 years ago, when I spent much of my time on mine sites. We coped well during my time away on mine sites because when I was home, we made up for lost time and always looked forward to holidays and weekends away.

The last four years have not been easy because this job is 24/7; that is, if you want to perform well in your electorate. I normally go home to Scotland every year but I have not been home since starting this job, and holidays here in Australia have been few and far between. To the new members who believe that family comes first, well, you can chuck that theory out the window. To do this job properly will consume every waking minute of your life. Of course you can choose to do only what is necessary, like some polities in here, and still have the freedom of a normal life. It will be your choice.

I now have the opportunity to make up for lost time and, believe me, I will be working hard to make up for lost time for Julia and my family. I should not say “lost time” because nothing has been lost. Every day I went to work, it was to try to accomplish, either in mining or politics. What I hope to lose is the extra five kilograms of blubber that I gained during the last four years, due to good food and lack of exercise!

Last week someone asked me what I would have done if I were ever a minister in state Parliament. My reply was easy. It would be like winning \$50 million on the Lotto—I would make so many people happy.

To Nigel Pratt and all his chamber staff and the people who make this place work, thank you. To Hansard, thank you for the fantastic job you do, sometimes under very difficult conditions.

I want to thank the catering staff for all the delicious meals my visitors and I enjoyed, and of course the gardeners, who make it a pleasure to walk into the building. Thank you to the security people, who kept us safe from many events, which mostly went unnoticed by the pollies. I thank Rob Hunter and his staff, who do so much that is not recognised. To everyone I have forgotten to thank, I apologise.

Well, that is the end, folks. I feel that I can cancel this contract knowing I asked no favours and made no deals to try to secure my job, so I can leave here with my head held high. I would like to leave you with these parting words: may the best you’ve ever seen be the worst you’ll ever see; may the mouse in your pantry never leave with a tear in his eye; may your chimney always smoke till you’re old enough to die; and may you always be just as happy as I wish you now could be. Thank you.

[Applause.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Robin Scott, I am sure the house joins together in wishing you the best for the future. If I may observe from the chair, out in the electorate you might have beaten around the bush, but you have never beaten around the bush while you have been in here. Good luck to you in the future, sir.

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [3.39 pm]: A valedictory speech expressing farewell usually occurs after graduation, so I basically hope that after 16 years in this place I can say that I have graduated. In no particular order I will endeavour to reflect, address the future and provide thanks to the many, including the unsung heroes. A large number of members will be departing this chamber on 21 May, some due to preselection battles, some through genuine retirement and some as a result of the outstanding win by the Labor Party on the election night of 13 March. I also experienced in that time the pangs of being a defeated member, so to those of you leaving not of your own volition, I wish you well. For those of you leaving due to preselection defeats, I offer you my sympathy. Behind closed doors, politics can be a malevolent being. But to all members of this place, retiring or defeated, you have all become my colleagues over the last 20 years.

I had the privilege to work with many of you on many committees, including Hon Nick Goiran on the voluntary assisted dying committee, and others such as Hon Michael Mischin, Hon Jacqui Boydell, Hon Robin Scott and Hon Kyle McGinn on the Pinjin committee. We had some fun on that Pinjin committee. I think my driving skills are remembered by most of the committee, and I think the car cleaners in Kalgoorlie are pleased that I will never be using one of their hire cars ever again! I also made a fundamental mistake when going to Kalgoorlie. I live in the north west—I am used to a fairly hot environment—but when I got to Kalgoorlie I found that they have freezing nights, and I only had my classic bush shirt and a pair of thin trousers. I want to thank Hon Jacqui Boydell, who gave me this marvellous scarf, which I now treasure and is one of my pride and joys. It kept me safe in Kalgoorlie and it has kept me safe ever since.

I want to also at this time talk about the various committees that I have been on. I have been on the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation from the very beginning. I had one moment in which I chucked a wobbly and quit the committee. I did so because this delegated legislation committee is the most benign bipartisan committee. It does not have a political view, yet a number of years ago the two major parties started caucusing in delegated legislation. We had to get the honourable—here we go, the name has gone again.

Hon Martin Pritchard interjected.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: No, it was not him. He was a former President of this place.

Members: Barry House!

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: No, not Barry House. I forget the name, but I will come back to that in a minute. I will let you deal with that shortly.

We had to get an old member of Parliament to come back in and read the riot act to the delegated legislation committee to explain that it did not deal with politics, it just dealt with policy. It has been a great pleasure to be the deputy chairperson of that committee. George Cash! Sorry, that was who I was referring to. Of course, whilst its chairperson is in the Legislative Assembly, it does all its work in the Legislative Council, so that usually meant that I was forever on my feet disallowing motions. I want to thank my colleague Hon Martin Pritchard, who has worked very hard on that committee since I have been on there, and I think we have done pretty well in making sure that regulations, both by government and local government, actually achieve their intended purposes. Also, as

I mentioned, I served on the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, which was very passionate for me, but also quite eye-opening. Even though I was a supporter and proponent of voluntary assisted dying, I discovered things on that committee that I did not know about.

I also acknowledge the many ministerial advisers who I worked with collaboratively over the many years. The one way to get stuff done in this place is not by asking a parliamentary question or even addressing the minister, it is going to their ministerial adviser and having discussions with them. I think I have developed quite a few good friends in that way, and even after have I left Parliament, hopefully I can still contact them from time to time.

It has been an interesting journey so far. It really is a shame to see some of the effects on the democratic process conjured up by Glenn Druery. I say this not because of any sympathies for the losses of my colleagues, but as a bizarre aberration, nae, a manipulation of the electoral system by this vote whisperer. I do not decry the aspirations of a political organisation or individual wishing to enter the maelstrom of politics, but I am critical of the major parties that had before them the ability to stop this gentleman gaming the voting system during the last term of government and failed to do so. Unfortunately, for those entering the Legislative Council representing minor parties who garnered primary votes of less than four per cent, your time here, because of the ALP's absolute majority, will do nothing to further your individual causes, but I do wish you well for the next four years.

To my colleagues in this place, Hon Diane Evers, who I have shared a room with for the past few years; Hon Alison Xamon; and Hon Tim Clifford, I wish you well in the future. It has been an immense pleasure to have worked with you all. You have been and are the champions of progressive politics. A special shout out should also go to our parliamentary support in this place, Tonia. Thank you for your seemingly tireless work. We always knew what we were doing, which was amazing. To my colleague Brad Pettitt, who is entering this place for the first time, I wish you well. You will be the sole representative of a party that looks to the future and not to the past. You carry a heavy burden. Jacques Cousteau often quoted the American First Nations proverb: we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children. This should be your guiding light. You represent more than the people of South Metropolitan Region; you represent in this place a future of humanity. In reflecting on the task ahead for my colleague Brad Pettitt, he carries the weight of the world on his shoulders.

At my age one is surrounded by the repeated passing of many of my peers and friends, and we find ourselves mourning their passing, but in reflecting on all this, I am concerned that humanity has failed to grasp the enormity of the challenges facing future generations. Indeed, I believe we should be more focused on mourning the future. To my colleagues who I have worked with in this place—Lynn MacLaren, Diane Evers, Jim Scott, Chrissy Sharp, Dee Margetts, Giz Watson, Adele Carles, Alison Xamon and Tim Clifford—thank you for your sage words, support and dialogue. Thank you to my old friend Tom Helm, who gave me his preferences in the March 2001 election, which enabled me to enter this place for the first time, and to my daughter, Sara, my then campaign manager who had nothing better to do.

In reference to the comments made by Hon Aaron Stonehouse in his valedictory speech, I want to touch on how I found out I had been elected. At that time, I was working within the Greens organisation and was doing the scrutineering at the central polling place. We were really concerned about whether Giz would be re-elected, so I had my head down and bum up, looking at all the votes and trying to maximise Giz's vote and doing all the things scrutineers do. A gentleman from the Electoral Commission came in to account for the North Metropolitan Region and said, "Mr Chapple, I think you need to come in to Mining and Pastoral. We're just going to pull the lever." I thought that I was never going to get elected, so I wanted to stay where I was. I think it was Justin Harbord, actually. He said, "No, no, you've got to come in." I said, "Why?" Eventually, I went in, and Dee Margetts accompanied me. I was sitting there and we went through to number six, and number six was, "Robin Chapple gets elected." I did not want to be! I was more than happy being a backroom boy, so to speak. But, anyway, I got elected and found myself in here. I also learnt a lot from many of the people who were in here at that time. John Cowdell was one. He gave me a lot of support and advice at that time. Of course, I entered the Legislative Council as a member of the fabulous five, along with Giz Watson, Chrissy Sharp, Jim Scott and Dee Margetts, so we had quite a powerhouse then.

To all of you here, both members and staff, I will remember you all. Although I might remember you, I might not always be able to put a name to the face. I think that will be my legacy in this place: the man who could never remember who he was talking to by name.

At this moment, I would like to acknowledge that all the Presidents I have served under since John Cowdell have all used their appointment to be independent and bipartisan. This clearly extends to the current President, Hon Kate Doust, whom I count as a friend.

There are also those staff members who always provide us with exemplary guidance and assistance, and they deserve my thanks: Nigel Pratt; Paul Grant; Sam Hastings; John Seal-Pollard; Rebecca Burton; Grant Hitchcock; Peter Gale; Renae Jewell; Chris Hunt; Brian Conn, who doubled as the security service provider for those on the Pinjin committee; Lauren Levia; the inimitable Hayley Brown, wherever you are; and also a very, very special person, Deb Kapoor, without whom afternoon tea would be a disaster.

The Hansard team should not be forgotten. They are astounding. They turn our imperfect prose into readable offerings.

The Parliamentary Library team has served my office exceptionally well over the 20 years or so that I have had the pleasure of working in this place. They are phenomenal, and there is nothing they cannot do for you.

I want to quickly turn to a 1989 Senate inquiry that made the point that an active citizen is someone who not only believes in the concept of a democratic society but also is willing and able to translate that belief into action. Currently, young people under the age of 18 are not able to translate their belief in the concept of democracy into action as they are excluded from voting. Given that old fogies like me are making or failing to make decisions that affect their future, I find this unacceptable. Research undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research demonstrates that people as young as 14 have strong opinions on the performance and general characteristics of politicians. People under the age of 18 pay taxes, can marry, can live independently, are assumed to fully understand and be able to comprehend their actions in the criminal justice system, can legally leave school at 15, can make decisions about their health care from the age of 16 and can drive cars; yet, as a community, we do not let them vote. I find that appalling.

In her 2017 speech to this place, the then Governor introduced a few points about the environmental sector. I am not sure whether a couple of things were missed, not by the Governor but by the government. When giving her speech, the Governor rightly identified that —

Western Australia is blessed with some of the world's most beautiful and unique landscapes and biodiversity. A key priority for the Government is to balance the need to provide economically sustainable growth into the future for the next generation, while ensuring future generations will enjoy the same natural wonders as we do today.

Although successive governments have focused on economically sustainable growth, very little has been done to ensure that future generations will enjoy the same natural wonders as we do.

This is my second valedictory speech. In 2005, when I failed to retain the Mining and Pastoral Region seat, we placed a sign on the front door of 1074 Hay Street that read, "Out to lunch; back in 2009." It was a pretty long lunch! There is no such sign this time. I am leaving for good. As members know, I have been diagnosed with asbestosis. My hearing has been diminishing for the last four years—quite clearly, the upside of that is I cannot hear interjections, which is great—and I now have three different pairs of glasses, so retirement was definitely the best option.

Little has changed since 29 May 2001, when I first addressed this house. The guard has changed but the rhetoric remains basically the same. No-one seems prepared to tackle the future crisis confronting the globe and this state. On Thursday, 4 June 2009, I stated in this place that our global commitment to climate change so far had been akin to setting out in response to the *Titanic's* collision with an iceberg and individually polishing each of the *Titanic's* deckchairs prior to attempting to rearrange them on the deck. We are still polishing those deckchairs; the only problem is we are doing it 3.5 kilometres under the surface of the ocean. Nothing has changed. As Abraham Lincoln said, you cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.

In April 2010, as part of the Legislative Council time capsule proposal, I submitted a lengthy parliamentary question to be answered when the capsule is opened. It contains 25 questions dealing with social justice and environmental issues. Only two social justice issues have been addressed since that time. The first question was: on what date did marriage between two persons of the same gender receive full and equal recognition before Australian law? That occurred on 9 December 2017. The second question, on something very dear to my heart, was: on what date did voluntary euthanasia become lawful medical practice in WA? The assent date for that legislation was 19 December 2019. Unfortunately, none of the questions addressing the environment have been answered.

Aboriginal site destruction goes on unabated. I seriously hope that Divina D'Anna, MLA, and incoming MLC Rosetta Sahanna will be given the opportunity to ensure that the government guarantees that the protection of Aboriginal heritage will be in the hands of Aboriginal people and will not, as proposed, reside with ministers into the future, a situation that has continually led to unobstructed annihilation of thousands of sites in the mining provinces.

I now turn to a personal passion of mine, which is the land masses of Murujuga and Pijurru, referred to as the Burrup Peninsula. The state and the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation have agreed on the nomination of this area for World Heritage listing. However, Burrup site 23323, which contains over two million petroglyphs, many dating back 40 000 years, and is probably the most important archaeological and cultural site in Australia, was deregistered by the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee under the former Liberal government and still has not been reinstated. Notwithstanding the World Heritage nomination, the state and industry are still pursuing industrial development on this land mass in the form of Yara Australia's ammonium nitrate explosives plant and its proposed hydrogen plant, which will indirectly increase gas use by Yara; Perdaman's new urea plant; Woodside's gargantuan Burrup Hub expansion; and the Coogee Chemicals, Mitsubishi Corporation and Wesfarmers methanol and—I always get this word wrong—monoethylene glycol petrochemical plant.

As we know, rock art petroglyphs are already being impacted by acid rain, as predicted by Robert Bednarik, the convener of the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations, way back in 2002. From documents provided by Ian MacLeod, the pH on the rock surfaces is now 3.5, whereas the washing rocks pre-industrialisation had a pH of 6.8—a pH of seven is neutral. The pH on the rocks at the moment is like a good white wine; it is affecting the pattern and the microorganisms that make the carvings distinctive.

Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation chief executive, Peter Jeffries, told an inquiry into the destruction of the sacred Juukan Gorge site that the group had no commercial agreements with miners and relied on funding from industry partners. He stated —

“I would also like to put on notice that I stand here today ... that there is a real fear genuine fear that there will be financial repercussions for MAC ... despite our responsibility to manage Murujuga, our ability to do so is increasingly linked to the internal approval processes of our proponents ...

“We have funding applications in process that may become stalled as a result of what I’ll say here today — That is, before the committee —

this is a single, small example of the power mining companies build over Aboriginal corporations.”

Murujuga, whilst having been my passion for many years, also provided me with the awesome opportunity to meet Susan Standen, whom I hold very dear.

I would like to thank Friends of Australian Rock Art, some members of whom are in the President’s gallery today, for its continued fight and for the work that it does in this space.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Greens WA for having continually allowed me to stand as its representative for the Mining and Pastoral Region. I thank all the people who have worked, volunteered and been interns over the last 20 years in our office. Clearly, there are too many to mention, but I am proud that some have gone on to work in this place—believe it or not—or become staffers in the federal arena and also become members of Parliament themselves.

And lastly to my current team—they are up in the President’s gallery waving at me; that is great—Emily Peters, Lewis Downs, Betty Richards and Tiffany Homewood, you have collegially served the team so well. You have been working tirelessly over the last months to extricate us of 20 years of accumulated data, personal effects and paintings et cetera out of the office that I will be leaving at the end of next week. I give you, genuinely, a deeply indebted thank you. Thank you, Madam President, and thank you for your service to this chamber.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: Hon Robin Chapple, I want to acknowledge your contribution and your passion for the issues that you have pursued vigorously over the last 20 years. I certainly, on a personal level, wish you well for your health issues into the future, and I hope that you have a long and prosperous life. We look forward to you staying in touch.

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

VETERINARY PRACTICE BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Hon Alannah MacTiernan (Minister for Agriculture and Food)**, and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [4.04 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill will modernise the regulation of veterinary practice in Western Australia. It is now 60 years since the current act, the Veterinary Surgeons Act, was passed by the WA Parliament. Bringing it into line with current practices in other Australian jurisdictions and the modern-day economy is long overdue.

Veterinary and pet care services make an ever-increasing contribution to the WA economy. Australia has one of the highest proportions of pet ownership in the world. In 2018–19, Australian households spent over \$13 billion on their pets, with veterinary services contributing approximately \$4 billion to the economy.

Veterinary practitioners also play a vital role in providing livestock owners with animal health, welfare and production advice and by investigating, preventing, controlling and treating disease. They are an integral part of programs to detect and respond to significant animal disease incidents in Australia. These activities support and protect our valuable domestic and export markets. The gross value of agricultural production from the WA cattle industry is \$828 million, and from the sheep industry it is \$1.5 billion.

Commensurate with this growing demand for veterinary services, the number of veterinarians in Western Australia has been steadily increasing in recent years, and from 2012 to today it has increased by 34 per cent. The number of veterinary schools in Australia has gone from four to seven in the past decade. A rapidly growing industry requires modern regulation, which this bill will deliver.

The bill will introduce the mutual recognition of veterinarians registered in other jurisdictions. In 2006, a national recognition of veterinarians scheme was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments’ Primary Industries Ministerial Council, and in 2015, the Australian Productivity Commission recommended mutual recognition of veterinarians. The introduction of mutual recognition of veterinarians in the bill will bring Western Australia into

line with the other Australian states and the ACT. Veterinarians registered interstate will be able to practise in Western Australia without Western Australian registration unless, and until, they move their principal place of residence to Western Australia for more than three months.

The bill will also introduce the registration of Western Australian veterinary nurses, making Western Australia the first Australian jurisdiction to do so. This inclusion in the bill is supported by veterinary nurses and the veterinary community as a whole. It will lift the profile of veterinary nurses within the profession and will properly reflect the significant responsibilities that veterinary nurses discharge. Bringing veterinary nurses within the formal legislative framework of the bill will allow the new Veterinary Practice Board to better respond to concerns of unprofessional conduct or impairment relating to veterinary nurses.

There is evidence that veterinarians experience higher than average levels of depression, anxiety, stress and burnout compared with the general population. Contributing factors are said to include long working hours, personnel issues, poor work–life balance and compassion fatigue. The risk of these factors resulting in substance abuse may be increased by access to restricted veterinary drugs, which can detrimentally affect the ability of a veterinarian or a veterinary nurse to practise competently and safely.

The only option available to the current Veterinary Surgeons' Board Western Australia for concerns about mental impairment of veterinarians under the current act is to refer the matter to the State Administrative Tribunal for the matter to be dealt with as a complaint. This can be extremely stressful and can exacerbate the impairment. The bill will enable the new board to deal with these impairments separately from unprofessional conduct matters. As such, the bill will allow a veterinarian or veterinary nurse suffering from an impairment to be dealt with in a more sympathetic and constructive manner. For example, it may be sufficient to impose conditions on registration to permit the veterinarian or veterinary nurse to continue practising while also ensuring competent and safe outcomes.

A finding of impairment under the bill will not on its own attract punitive penalties. This will allow for support for the mental and physical health of veterinarians and veterinary nurses, while simultaneously reducing the risk of negative outcomes for their clients. Importantly, impairment will fall within the provisions of the bill only if it detrimentally affects the veterinary practitioner's ability to practise veterinary medicine or to work as a veterinary nurse. An impairment that does not have this effect will not be dealt with under the bill.

In response to deregulation initiatives in 1995, when national competition policy reforms lifted restrictions on the ownership of veterinary practices, the bill will allow for non-veterinarians to own veterinary practices, bringing WA into line with other Australian jurisdictions, except New South Wales. Consequently, non-veterinarians will be able to own and operate veterinary practices provided a registered veterinarian makes decisions relating to veterinary treatment and care.

The bill will allow the new board to make an immediate action order relating to a veterinarian or a veterinary nurse if it is satisfied that there is an imminent risk of substantial injury or harm to any person, including the veterinarian or veterinary nurse, or to an animal. Immediate action orders will operate in these circumstances to restrict or prohibit veterinarians or veterinary nurses from practising for up to 28 days. Procedural fairness through a show-cause mechanism will be embedded in this process and the board's decision to make an immediate action order will be reviewable by the State Administrative Tribunal. Many Australian jurisdictions have legislated similar provisions, so this aspect will bring Western Australia into line with those jurisdictions.

The bill will return to the new board the power to deal with minor disciplinary matters. The current board lost that power in 2005, when SAT was established. Subsequently, the current board has had to refer all disciplinary matters to SAT. However, a report by the Standing Committee on Legislation in May 2007 concluded that the current board should regain the power to deal with minor disciplinary matters and to impose penalties such as a fine or a reprimand. In response, the bill will introduce a two-tier system of handling unprofessional conduct by veterinarians and veterinary nurses. The lower tier will be dealt with directly by the new board, while more serious conduct matters in the upper tier will be referred to SAT.

Another key feature of the bill is that it will increase membership of the new board from five to eight members. This will allow the inclusion of a veterinary nurse, as they will now be under the jurisdiction of the new board. It will also introduce consumer and legal representatives to ensure a balanced overview of matters before the new board. All members will be appointed by the minister responsible for administering the act. This aligns with veterinary practice legislation in other Australian jurisdictions and with other Western Australian boards, such as the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia and the Architects Board of Western Australia.

I am confident that this bill and the framework it will establish will serve our state well as we meet the challenges of the next 15 to 20 years, and will help the veterinary profession continue to make a significant contribution to the Western Australian economy.

Pursuant to Legislative Council standing order 126(1), I advise that the bill is a uniform legislation bill. Part 2 of the bill gives effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party through powers to implement arrangements with the other jurisdictions relating to the deemed registration of veterinarians in Western Australia.

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

[See paper [186](#).]

Debate adjourned and bill referred to the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review, pursuant to standing orders.

Sitting suspended from 4.14 to 4.30 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

RESIDENTIAL LAND — APPROVALS PROCESS

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

I refer to the state government approvals process for residential land release.

- (1) How many residential lots received final approval in WA for each of the following financial years —
 - (a) 2017–18;
 - (b) 2018–19; and
 - (c) 2019–20?
- (2) How many government agencies or entities are involved in the approvals process for the release of residential land in Western Australia?
- (3) Will the minister table the list of agencies or entities in (2); and, if not, why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)
 - (a) In 2017–18, 11 058 residential lots received final approval.
 - (b) In 2018–19, 10 570 residential lots received final approval.
 - (c) In 2019–20, 8 856 residential lots received final approval.
- (2)–(3) The Western Australian Planning Commission is responsible for making recommendations to the Minister for Planning on the zoning of land for residential development. The WAPC also approves applications for residential subdivision. The process for zoning land for residential development and subdivision approval involves consultation with relevant stakeholders and, depending on the circumstances, typically includes the Environmental Protection Authority; the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation; the Department of Transport; Main Roads Western Australia; Western Power; the Water Corporation; the Department of Education; and local government.

RESIDENTIAL LAND — APPROVALS PROCESS

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

I refer to the state government approvals process for residential land release. What was the average time frame from developer application to final government approval for the creation of residential lots in Western Australia in each of the following financial years —

- (a) 2017–18;
- (b) 2018–19; and
- (c) 2019–20?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (a)–(c) In general, the Western Australian Planning Commission determines freehold, survey-strata or leasehold survey-strata subdivision applications within the 90-day statutory time frame in the Planning and Development Act 2005.

CORONAVIRUS — HOTEL QUARANTINE — STAFF VACCINATIONS

94. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the minister representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the issue of hotel quarantine staff vaccinations.

- (1) Has the minister received any health advice detailing the efficacy of a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine? If yes, please table.
- (2) Does the current health advice for hotel quarantine staff confirm a single dose is effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

- (1) No. The minister has not been provided with formal written health advice.
- (2) Yes. Available real-world data indicates that a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine—AstraZeneca or Pfizer—is effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19 among household contacts.

LOTTERYWEST GRANTS — VICTORY LIFE CENTRE

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

I refer to the Leader of the House’s response to question without notice 72, which did not provide the information requested at the budget estimates hearing on Thursday, 19 November 2020.

- (1) Will the Leader of the House table the memo of 14 October 2020 that sought to update Lotterywest’s and Healthway’s grant-making or funding policies and guidelines to align with the strategic plan, *Our commitment*, and support equality, diversity and inclusion?
- (2) If not, why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

I am advised that yesterday an incomplete answer was provided to question without notice 72, and I apologise to the house for that. The requested advice is included in the memo, which I will now table.

- (1) Yes. I table the attached memo.

[See paper [187](#).]

- (2) Not applicable.

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION — SERVICE PROVIDER FUNDING

96. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Minister for Mental Health:

I refer to the government’s press statement dated 14 December 2020 titled “McGowan Government delivers funding boost for community services” and, specifically, the \$6 million allocated to the Mental Health Commission for disbursement across eligible contracts. Will the minister list the service providers who will have their contracts extended to 30 June 2022 by the Mental Health Commission and a breakdown of the funding allocated to each?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank Hon Donna Faragher for some notice of the question.

The Mental Health Commission will be notifying the eligible service providers of the 51 service agreements for the once-off funding boost within the next month.

I have a list here, Madam President, but I have noticed an error in it so I will check that error and I will provide something at the end of question time. I will provide it to the member behind the chair and I will provide it to the department tomorrow.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Just for clarification, if I may, the minister said “behind the chair”. Does the minister intend to table that document?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I will table the document tomorrow. I will rectify the issue for tomorrow for the chamber, but in the meantime, if I can provide something to the member behind the chair, I will do that.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS — SUPPORT DOG CONTRACT

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

I refer to the parliamentary secretary’s answer on 5 May 2021 to question without notice 35. When asked to table the expert advice received by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to validate that a support dog was the best way of dealing with staff stress, the parliamentary secretary instead tabled a study published in an international journal in 2017.

- (1) Is the parliamentary secretary aware of a report having been commissioned by the ODPP at a cost of \$162 805?
- (2) Why was that report commissioned?
- (3) When was that report commissioned?
- (4) Why did the parliamentary secretary not table that report in response to my question?
- (5) How many recommendations were made in the report?
- (6) Did the report recommend a support dog?
- (7) Will the parliamentary secretary now table the report?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Director of Public Prosecutions advises that the 2015–16 to 2016–17 public sector workforce renewal policy of the Barnett government to harvest 40 per cent of salaries of departing staff meant the ODPP could only replace prosecutors at a significantly lower level of salary and legal skill. This reduced the expertise and number of available prosecutors at the same time the ODPP was experiencing a rapid increase in the complexity and volume of evidentiary material relied upon in prosecutions. The report by the Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health was commissioned in response to concerns about the mental wellbeing of ODPP staff due to workload pressures and exposure to graphic material.
- (3) The report was commissioned on 19 February 2019 and was delivered on 29 July 2019.
- (4) Legislative Council question without notice 35 sought advice validating a support dog in relation to staff stress. The Phoenix Australia report did not have a support dog among its recommendations; however, it cited as further reading on the topic “Dogs in the Workplace: A Review of the Benefits and Potential Challenges” published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. The Director of Public Prosecutions advised that this was one study that the ODPP considered in detail, and it was duly tabled.
- (5) Eleven recommendations were made.
- (6) Please see the answer to (4).
- (7) Given the limited number of staff at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and personal disclosures in the report in relation to mental health, it is plausible that staff may be identifiable. I ask that the member put the question on notice so that these privacy matters can be properly considered.

MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

98. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the government-appointed members of the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform: Mr Malcolm McCusker, QC; Professor John Phillipmore; Professor Sarah Murray; and Associate Professor Martin Drum.

- (1) Have any of the aforementioned persons been employed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet as a staff member to a member of Parliament or as a staff member to a cabinet minister?
- (2) If yes to (1), please identify the person, the position held, the dates of engagement and the member of Parliament or cabinet minister to whom they were assigned.
- (3) I note that the terms of reference for the committee provide for resourcing by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. What resources have or will be provided and what is the cost of those resources?
- (4) Is the Department of the Premier and Cabinet maintaining a conflict-of-interest register for the ministerial expert panel; and, if so, have any conflicts been declared by committee members to date?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

- (1)–(2) Refer to Legislative Council tabled paper 176.
- (3) Corporate administrative resources will be provided as required. However, these costs are yet to be determined and will include the remuneration of committee members, advertising and the compilation and printing of the final report.
- (4) The Department of the Premier and Cabinet is working with the Office of the Minister for Electoral Affairs in supporting the management of any conflicts of interest.

HOUSING — REGIONS — SHORTAGE

99. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the Minister for Regional Development:

I have had reports that some regional areas have such a shortage of accommodation that the regions cannot function. I refer to road crews not being able to temporarily locate to undertake road maintenance, harvest teams being unable to work, regional businesses that can find staff but cannot house them, and professionals such as doctors and teachers having to relocate up to one and a half hours away. Although the more critical aspects of the housing shortage relate to families who are living in cars, couch surfing or living in tents, what is the government doing about the strategy to invest in vibrant regional communities that facilitate investment and community work so that houses become available, given the huge iron ore royalty-driven surpluses?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. Of course we acknowledge that given the way in which our economy has grown over the last six months to a year, we certainly are now seeing housing stress. I think the member would have heard the numbers read out by the Leader of the House earlier about the low level of building approvals that had occurred for a number of years. Obviously, the key is to get more houses into the market. I am pleased to say

that we are seeing a real acceleration in many country areas. Just looking at the member's electorate, for example, in the City of Albany in the last six months compared with the previous six months, we have seen a 200 per cent increase in building approvals from 72 to 219, Busselton has gone from 166 to 362, and Bunbury from 59 to 85. We really are seeing a boom, and we are out there with our \$440 million stimulus package, which includes lots of incentives for people to build. We also have the \$176 million Regional Land Booster package. That is making land available for industrial, commercial and residential purposes in regional areas. We are not necessarily getting full market recovery for that. DevelopmentWA receives funding from the consolidated account to do that. In places like the Pilbara, we are seeing more vacant land sales occur because we have been able to bring the land price down with our \$176 million package. We are seeing land sales increase. We also have the \$200 million North-West Aboriginal Housing Fund. In places like Exmouth and Kalbarri, we have committed to making land available. I understand that my good friend Hon Kyle McGinn will follow up on our election commitment in Exmouth to make land available for special housing for worker accommodation. We are looking at how we can replicate that in towns like Shark Bay. We have a massive targeted maintenance program for regional, social and remote government housing projects. I am told that around 200 homes in the great southern, for example, are going to be upgraded as part of that. We have \$97 million to build new social housing in regional Western Australia and \$141 million to refurbish social housing. A great deal of money has been put in to stimulate the production of new houses and release more land at a cheaper price and invest heavily into social housing.

HOUSING — RENT AND EVICTION MORATORIUM

100. Hon ALISON XAMON to the minister representing the Minister for Commerce:

- (1) Is any specific data being collected to assess the impact of the end of the rent increase and eviction moratorium?
- (2) If yes —
 - (a) what data is being collected;
 - (b) who is collecting it; and
 - (c) would the minister please advise of any findings?
- (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 Commerce.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
 - (a) The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety collects data regarding bond lodgements and disposals, contact centre calls, residential tenancy mandatory conciliation disputes, residential rent relief grants and complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Residential Tenancies Act 1987;
 - (b) the Consumer Protection Division of DMIRS is collecting it; and
 - (c) the information is provided to the minister on an ongoing basis as part of advice on programs and initiatives. This could not be described as “findings”. The member is encouraged to be specific in her request for data.
- (3) Not applicable.

PRESCRIBED BURNING — DOUGLAS HILL 407

101. Hon DIANE EVERS to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

My question is to the Minister for Environment. I refer to clearing by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on the edge of block FRK 406 in the Walpole–Nornalup National Park for prescribed burns in 2021 and 2022.

What is the plan to protect Douglas Hill 407, which is an extremely valuable research block, from being inadvertently burnt, particularly given that the last time a burn was completed in the area, the fire jumped into a small part of block 407 below Sappers Bridge?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I, of course, provide this answer as the minister representing the Minister for Environment because she is indeed in the other place.

The reference to block FRK 406 is not consistent with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' current nomenclature and would require an archive search to confirm the location referred to. Therefore, DBCA is unable to provide a specific response to this question in the time frame available.

During the planning of prescribed burns, a range of strategies are identified to reduce the likelihood of any potential escapes. These strategies include, but are not limited to, upgrading and maintaining burn boundaries, selecting appropriate weather and fuel moisture conditions, and identifying required resources.

LAND TAX ASSISTANCE PACKAGE AND RESIDENTIAL TENANTS GRANTS

102. Hon COLIN HOLT to the minister representing the Minister for Commerce:

I refer to the \$100 million land tax assistance package for commercial landlords and the \$30 million announcement for residential tenants grants, both of which were announced last year.

- (1) Regarding the land tax assistance package for commercial landlords —
 - (a) how many applications have been received and what is the total dollar value of applications received from landlords to date; and
 - (b) how many grant payments have been made and what is the total value of those payments to successful applicants to date?
- (2) Regarding the residential tenants grants —
 - (a) how many applications have been received and what is the total dollar value of applications received from tenants to date; and
 - (b) how many grant payments have been made and what is the total value of those payments to successful applicants to date?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The answer has been provided by the Minister for Commerce.

- (1) This question should be referred to the Minister for Small Business.
- (2) Regarding the residential rent relief grant scheme —
 - (a) as at 12 May 2021, 15 871 applications have been received. It is not possible to calculate the total value of the applications received.
 - (b) As at 12 May 2021, a total of \$11 142 220 has been paid to 7 993 applicants with an additional 4 945 awaiting payment to a further five applicants. There are 2 482 applications pending finalisation of processing. Grant applications remain open.

KALGOORLIE HEALTH CAMPUS — MRI MACHINE

103. Hon ROBIN SCOTT to the minister representing the Minister for Health:

When the government announced in April 2019 that it would construct an MRI suite to service the goldfields, it was estimated that its construction would take 30 months to complete. I note that the minister's 30-month time frame is due to expire in October this year.

- (1) Can the people of the goldfields expect to be able to access MRI services from October?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) How much longer will the minister make the people of the goldfields wait for this vital piece of medical equipment?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

- (1) The MRI suite is expected to be operational by the third quarter of 2021.
- (2)–(3) Not applicable.

MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

104. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

I refer to the minister's hand-picked expert committee on electoral reform.

- (1) Since the election, on how many occasions and via what means has the minister or his office communicated with each of the four members of the committee up to and including 30 April 2021?
- (2) What was the substance of those communications?
- (3) Will the minister table those communications; and, if not, why not?

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)–(3) The minister met with committee members on 1 and 8 April 2021 and has had telephone discussions with each of them. He initially sought their availability in relation to the review, and subsequently consulted them on the terms of reference. The minister also wrote to committee members on 28 April 2021 to confirm their appointment. I table the letters of appointment.

[See paper [188](#).]

FORRESTFIELD–AIRPORT LINK — PROJECT COSTS

105. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Minister for Transport’s admission that the \$1.86 billion Forrestfield–Airport Link will not become operational until the first half of 2022, 18 months after its original scheduled completion date of December 2020.

- (1) What financial contingencies are applied to contracts under the umbrella of the Forrestfield– Airport Link?
- (2) How was the value of these contractual contingencies calculated and applied?
- (3) What is the value of the insurance policy covering the cost of construction and delivery of the Forrestfield–Airport Link?
- (4) With which company or entity is the insurance policy held?
- (5) What does the policy specifically cover in relation to the construction and delivery of the Forrestfield–Airport Link?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(5) The project cost model, including an allocation for contingency, was determined as part of the project definition plan under the former Liberal–National government in 2014. It is noted that the opposition has refused to approve the release of this document to the government. There are a number of insurance companies involved, including lead insurer Zurich Australia. The policy applies to the construction works value of the entire project.

LEGISLATION — STATUTORY REVIEWS

106. Hon ALISON XAMON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer to my question on notice 3366 asked on 3 November 2020 for which I have yet to receive an answer.

- (1) Will the Attorney General please advise which statutory reviews of legislation within his portfolios are currently outstanding?
- (2) On what date were each of these reviews due?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

I seek leave to have the response to questions (1) and (2) incorporated in *Hansard*.

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

Statutory reviews to be carried out, but not necessarily overdue	Review provision in Act	Status
Review of the Coroners Act 1996	To be reviewed as soon as practicable after the expiration of five years from the commencement of the Act and every five years thereafter.	Review nearing completion.
Review of amendments introduced by the Criminal Appeals Amendment (Double Jeopardy) Act 2012	To be reviewed as soon as practicable after the expiration of five years from the commencement of that part of the Act.	Review nearing completion.
Review of the amendments introduced by the Criminal Law Amendment (Home Burglary) and Other Offences) Act 2015	To be reviewed as soon as practicable after the fifth anniversary of the day on which the amendments came into operation.	Review commenced in April 2021
Review of the Domestic Violence Orders (National Recognition) Act 2017	To be reviewed as soon as practicable after the third anniversary of the commencement of the operation of the Act.	Review commenced in January 2021
Review of the amendments introduced by the Guardianship and Administration Amendment (Medical Research) Act 2020	To be reviewed as soon as practicable after the first anniversary that Part 9E came into operation.	Review to commence shortly

Review of the Legal Profession Act 2008	To be reviewed as soon as possible after a period of five years from the date of assent	A Bill to replace the Act will be introduced during the term of this Parliament
Review of amendments introduced into the Restraining Orders Act 1997 by the Restraining Orders and Related Legislation Amendment (Family Violence) Act 2016	To be reviewed as soon as practicable after the second anniversary the Restraining Orders and Related Legislation Amendment (Family Violence) Act 2016 came into operation.	Review commenced in 2019 and is progress
Review of the Sentence Administration Act 2003	To be reviewed soon as is practical after 1 July 2007, and then as soon as practical every five years thereafter.	Review commenced, concurrently with a review of the Sentencing Act 1995
Review of the Sentencing Act 1995	To be reviewed as soon as is practical after 1 July 2007 and then as soon as practical every five years thereafter.	Review commenced, concurrently with a review of the Sentence Administration Act 2003.
Review of the Victims of Crime Act 1994	To be reviewed as soon as is practicable after — (a) 1 January 2010; and (b) the expiry of each five year period after that day.	Review nearing completion.

(3) Not applicable.

CORONAVIRUS — HOTEL QUARANTINE — STAFF

107. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the minister representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the issue of hotel quarantine staff being banned from working second jobs.

- (1) Which agency holds the contracts with companies undertaking hotel quarantine work?
- (2) Which agency is responsible for implementing the signing of statutory declarations by hotel quarantine staff?
- (3) At what stage in their employment at hotel quarantine sites are staff required to sign the statutory declaration?
- (4) What monitoring and reporting processes are in place to ensure that hotel quarantine staff are not working second jobs?

Hon Tjorn Sibma interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

Hon Tjorn Sibma can give the answer if he wants to!

The PRESIDENT: That is ambition, minister.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Hon Tjorn Sibma is trying to take my job!

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

- (1) The Department of Health holds contracts in relation to security and transport services.
- (2) None.
- (3) Staff are required to sign a statutory declaration within seven days of commencing employment and to make a declaration at each pay cycle thereafter.
- (4) The Department of Health receives a statutory declaration from each hotel with each invoice, declaring that a copy of individual statutory declarations and updated declarations at each pay cycle have been received.

WASTE LEVY

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

I refer to my question of 5 May concerning allegations of systemic waste levy avoidance being brought to the attention of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation over the course of the last four years, which I was asked to put on notice due to the level of detail required to answer. I will ask a more specific question.

- (1) Is the minister aware of the substance of a submission made by the Waste and Recycling Industry of Western Australia, particularly that “WRIWA has provided evidence to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and to the Minister for the Environment that levy avoidance in the C&D sector here in WA is largescale, systemic, organized and long standing”?
- (2) If yes to (1), what actions, if any, have been undertaken by the minister and/or the department in recent years in relation to this allegation?

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) Yes.
- (2) The information provided has been the subject of ongoing investigations to determine whether it can be corroborated with admissible evidence to prove that offences have been committed. Although some of the information submitted was unable to be substantiated, it provided additional lines of inquiry and further intelligence for investigators. In order to initiate a prosecution, the admissible evidence must prove beyond reasonable doubt that the particular offences have been commissioned. Securing evidence to the standards expected by the courts remains the subject of active joint investigations.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION — STAFF — NEUTRALITY

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

My question without notice of which some notice has been given is to my favourite parliamentary secretary!

I refer to the policies and procedures applied by the Western Australian Electoral Commission in relation to employees, whether casual or permanent, and political neutrality.

- (1) Will the minister please table any relevant document, procedure, guideline or instruction in relation to the expectation of employees and political neutrality?
- (2) Can a person be engaged by the commission if they were previously employed by a member of Parliament or a cabinet minister, or they are or previously have been a member of a political party?
- (3) Will the minister please table all correspondence between the commission and any other person in relation to the formation or operation of the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform?
- (4) Does the Electoral Commissioner consider the extraordinarily short period of time for public submissions to be suitable, given the significant and complex nature of the review?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank my fourth-favourite Nationals WA member for some notice of the question!

- (1)–(2) Employees of the Western Australian Electoral Commission are expected to complete “Form 1—Declaration by Officer” and comply with the commission’s code of conduct concerning declarations of a conflict of interest. I table a copy of both documents.

[See paper [189](#).]

- (3)–(4) The Western Australian Electoral Commission was not involved in the formation or appointment of the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform nor is it involved in its ongoing operation.

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — SHAREFARMING AGREEMENTS REVIEW

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

I refer to the recent arbitration case regarding payments to sharefarmers by the Forest Products Commission.

- (1) What was the outcome?
- (2) What does the FPC propose to do as a result of the case, and when will this occur?
- (3) Will all sharefarmer payments be recalculated as a result?
- (4) If yes to (3), what is the time frame for this to occur?
- (5) If no to (3), why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. I also commend the member for her interest in share farming and the potential that might have generally for the agricultural sector. The Minister for Forestry has provided the following answer.

- (1) Arbitration proceedings were completed in December 2020 between the Forest Products Commission and an individual share farmer. Pursuant to the Commercial Arbitration Act 2012, details of the arbitration are confidential information.
- (2) The FPC is in the process of independently auditing share farmer payments.
- (3)–(5) The share farm agreement under arbitration had unique terms. The FPC is confident that other share farmer payments have been correctly calculated.

TEEN CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

111. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the government’s commitment to establish teen crisis accommodation in the northern suburbs.

- (1) How many young people will be able to stay at the accommodation facility at any one time?
- (2) In which calendar month is the teen accommodation scheduled to be operational?

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The \$3.4 million for crisis accommodation for teenagers in Perth's northern suburbs was announced by the Premier on 6 January 2021 as part of a new \$58.6 million package to support at-risk youth.

- (1) Six young people will be able to stay at the facility.
- (2) The government will work with Youth Futures WA to deliver this service. An announcement on the development and opening of the new facility will be made in due course.

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION — SERVICE PROVIDER FUNDING*Question without Notice 96 — Answer Advice*

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Mental Health) [5.01 pm]: Earlier in question time, Hon Donna Faragher, who is away from the chamber on urgent parliamentary business, asked me a question. As Minister for Mental Health, I was not in a position to table a list of the service providers at that stage, but I now table that list.

[See paper [190](#).]

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON JACQUI BOYDELL (Mining and Pastoral) [5.01 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I stand to make my valedictory speech in the house today. It has been a massive journey, personally and professionally. It has been an amazing experience. The Nationals WA have been able to deliver for regional Western Australia, and I played a part in that. I will always be very grateful to regional people for their support. As I was preparing for this speech, I thought back and realised that we have been involved in many issues and had so many good times. Sometimes we deal with challenging things, and that is okay; we all expect to be challenged in this place. It is an amazing opportunity to be granted. I can only be thankful for it and I look forward to moving on to serve the people of Western Australia in other areas.

I met with Tony Crook prior to question time. We were having a bit of a laugh about some of the incidents that happened over time. I had forgotten this one. Members will remember that I was involved in Tony Crook's campaign to win the federal seat of O'Connor. We ran that campaign hard. We were all dedicated to it. We were ecstatic at the win that we had. In the weeks following that, obviously, forming government was something that everyone was interested in at that point. What were we going to do, because we really campaigned on sitting independently unless we could deliver for regional Western Australia and sit outside the National Party room, which in some areas of the National Party was not popular, as Hon Colin Holt alluded to in his valedictory speech? We campaigned hard, we believed in what we were doing and there was much interest in where we were going to sit. Journos were ringing left, right and centre. We had state executive meetings every day. It was an exciting time. We were in the meeting room of the state secretariat office when one of our media advisers came in and said, "I think I've made a really big error." We said, "Oh, my God, what is it?" He said that he thought he just hung up on Tony Abbott. He was ringing to try to understand where Tony Crook was going to sit. Our adviser said he really knew he made a mistake when Peta Credlin rang back and said, "I think you've made an error." We really knew we were in the big game then and we were in trouble. He had hung up on Tony Abbott, thinking he was a journo, saying said, "Yeah, righto, mate", and hung up. When Peta Credlin rang back, we knew we were in trouble. That was one of the many moments that we laugh about afterwards. We were saying that that could really be the first chapter of a book. We can reminisce about those things and enjoy talking about it afterwards but at the time it was pretty stressful.

First off, I would like to thank the people of the Mining and Pastoral Region. I have enjoyed their support in the majority and numerous during my time as a member of the Mining and Pastoral Region. I hope I have served my constituents well. I have certainly given it my all.

To my electorate staff, Daiva Gillam and her husband, Mick, and her children, Willie and Matilda; to Kathryn Dart and her husband, Kieran, and their children, Georgia, Maddie and Callum—I simply could not have done my job without you. They have been amazing. They have been great friends to me. Their whole families have been involved in the ups and downs of my political career and the National Party. I wholeheartedly thank them so much. I hope they will not be lost to the people of the Mining and Pastoral Region, particularly the Pilbara, where my office is in Karratha. They are great community members, and the people of Karratha are lucky to have them.

I turn to the staff at Parliament House. There is no other work environment in which we receive the level of support that the staff give members of Parliament—from the committee staff to the staff in this chamber, and all across the building; there are too many of them to mention. Many of them are now friends of mine. I will miss them and that environment. They make every endeavour to ensure that members of Parliament can do their job. The people

of Western Australia are forever indebted to those staff as well because they allow us as members to participate in the legislative process and in the committee system, which has really fantastic outcomes for the people of Western Australia.

I also want to thank the staff in the office of the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Mia Davies, who have worked with me for a long period. I also consider them to be great friends. I will miss the camaraderie and their support and friendship but I am sure I will continue to see them after we are all done here in the Legislative Council. They are really committed to the National Party and its members and it has not always been easy. They have really committed themselves personally and I thank them greatly for it.

To my friends and family at home and across the globe, who I know are watching today, they could not be here, but their undying support for me and their friendship and advice has just been amazing. I am one very lucky person as a result of that. My mum and dad are here. I said to them that I was not going to cry. They have taken that journey again from Carnarvon. It is nine hours from the front gate of the plantation. They have lived and breathed our journey. It has meant a great deal to me and our family. Also to my children, to whom I also promised I would not cry—sorry, Jackson—they have given me unbelievable support on every bit of our journey. None of us members can do it without our family being committed. To my partner, Andrew, I thank you so much for also committing to being with me through that time. I thought I was going to be okay with this, Madam President!

As I contemplated my contribution today, I reflected on the two questions I have been asked the most over my time as a member: how did you ever get involved in politics and why the hell are you still there even though it can be really difficult? I really thought about that in great detail and I have questioned that myself over my journey as well. I have come to the conclusion that the answer to those two questions is actually the same. It was the opportunity to be a champion of change. I wanted to be a champion of change for the Carnarvon community where I live. I wanted to be a champion of change for industry and business, and a champion of change for Western Australia. To take up the opportunity in this place, at the coalface of decision-making, was an incredible experience, but you have to use it while you have it, because you are merely the custodian of it while you are here. To be a success at introducing change and to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves requires a plan, and it requires a vehicle to deliver on that change. For me, that change was the Nationals WA and royalties for regions. I am exceptionally proud of the work we have achieved as a team in the National Party. We started with a small, focused team and we fought every day to deliver on the dream that we saw come to fruition in the policy of royalties for regions. When working 24/7 with people, as I did—with 6.00 am phone calls, speaking to each other at midnight and driving that change because we really believed we were giving regional people an opportunity to be heard in government—you develop really great friendships.

Many times within the National Party we were referred to as the purple circle. I think some people started using that term in a derogatory sense, but I was always proud of it. I was proud to be a member of that purple circle, because it recognised that we were hard at work and we were involved. We were not beige and sitting on the sideline; we were bold and brave. We were unapologetic in our fight to represent regional people and deliver royalties for regions. I am still unapologetic about that. Am I always going to agree with you? No, and I think members of this chamber who worked with me, particularly on committees, will know that. I will listen to your argument. Am I going to be subservient because you think you did me a favour? No. But I will participate in robust discussion and decision-making. I get paid to do that and so does every member in this house. The people of Western Australia deserve that from me, they deserve it from every member of Parliament and they deserve it from the people who are in our political organisations that seek to be in this place. The people of Western Australia also deserve to know that I never took a back step on any issue I deemed was important on their behalf.

One of my final challenges in this place was to call out the toxic bullying culture that exists in political organisations. I made the decision to publicly call that out in November last year. I had been calling it out privately and internally for some time. Australian citizens across our nation are asking us, who are involved in political organisations, to be champions of change in this space. We have to fix the toxic environment and the perception of it. Somehow there has been the idea that this has become the norm in politics. In fact, when I spoke to the media after that speech in November last year, Geoff Hutchison said to me, “Surely this is just the rough and tumble of politics.” No, it is not, and it should never be. Due to a 24/7 media cycle and social media, I think political organisations defend, defend and defend at every opportunity without stopping to take a look in the mirror about what it is we are actually doing, because we do not want to get caught out doing something wrong. That has led to political organisations being so far from where modern Australia is on this issue that there is a growing gap. Every time an issue is raised, particularly by women, about bullying and harassment in politics, modern corporate Australia and our citizens are aghast. How can that happen in the halls of our Parliament? I think members have insight about how that can happen. Political organisations are made up of volunteers. They are ageing structures that cannot survive on political donations and deliver the executive organisation style of corporate modern Australia that the people of Australia think that we are. We are not. Political organisations are the bases of Parliament, because members cannot get here without them; therefore, political organisations need an opportunity to not be reliant on donations, when they can only afford to employ someone working for them out of the goodness of their heart.

We need executive-style change in this space and to me the only way to do that is through electoral reform and public funding. I know that there has been discussion about electoral reform in this space, but the terms of reference of the ministerial expert panel probably do not go to the scope of that. When members have that debate, when they are meeting with the minister and his department, they must raise the issue of public funding. It may not be popular to the public, but in the first instance they do not understand that we all exist on political donations. There can never be any change that is required—we all recognise it—unless there is public funding that allows political organisations to lead in this space. Australians want us to lead in this space. Political organisations need to see this as an opportunity to show leadership, not to defend what it is that they have done or what is going on. Be brave, be bold and create some leadership. The response that I received from people after that speech I gave in November was overwhelmingly positive. People want to see that change.

In the past 12 months we have heard from Australian of the Year Grace Tame, a survivor of child abuse; Brittany Higgins, a former federal government staffer; Emma Husar, a former member of the House of Representatives; Julia Banks, a former member of the House of Representatives; Rachelle Miller, a former chief of staff; and Catherine Marriott, former Western Australian Rural Woman of the Year. These are all powerful, capable women who are calling on us to make change, and we need to respond.

We have come together over this period—for me, since November last year—and have spoken with each other and many other people about the treatment of women involved in politics, and the answer in those conversations is always the same. Women will walk away, we will have less diversity and we will have less capacity for the Parliament to respond, because the Parliament is driven by the political organisations that put people here. Parliaments have often responded to calls for social change. We have done it ourselves in this house. We have seen the passing of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019, rights for same sex marriage, rights for women to vote and rights for Aboriginal people to vote. This is also a social wave that is coming your way, and you need to get in front of it. I ask you to be champions of change in this space for the betterment of the people of Western Australia. I know that, as members of this house, you will take that responsibility seriously, and you will all fulfil your roles and do your bit to be champions of change in this space. That is not easy—change is often resisted—but it is our job to do it, and I look forward to seeing all members take up that challenge and use the vehicle they have, which is this Parliament, to be that champion of change.

Thank you, members, and I wish you all exceptionally well in your futures. To the new members coming in, I wish them the very best, and I hope that they use this house as champions of change. Thank you.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: I would like to thank Hon Jacqui Boyde for her contribution and her strength of character in recent times. I wish her well for the future.

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

CHILDREN BEREAVED BY SUICIDE — POSTVENTION PROGRAM

Statement

HON ALISON XAMON (North Metropolitan) [5.22 pm]: I rise to give my final member statement in this place. I thought hard about what I wanted to say as my final statement. The one thing that really stood out in my mind was that I wanted to put on the record for members, particularly those who are continuing, the importance of ensuring that the program to assist with postvention for children who have been bereaved by suicide, particularly parental and sibling suicide, continues and is expanded in the coming years.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Just a moment. I ask those members in the gallery to be quiet, because I am finding it really difficult to hear the member on her feet. If you would be respectful as you move out of the chamber, that would be appreciated.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Thank you, Madam President. I have been very open with why I have such a keen interest in this—that is, of course, my own lived experience of my father taking his life when I was a child and the impact that subsequently had on both myself and my brother, the resultant mental illness and the issue of living with suicidality. The result of that experience was that about 25 years ago, when I finally started to get onto the road of recovery, I began a process of collating the research on what happens to children in this situation. Part of the reason for that was I needed to try to make sense of what had happened to me and my brother and try to get an understanding of it; also, I wanted to see whether there were things that could happen to improve the lives of children who are affected in such a way.

The statistics on what happens to children who lose a parent, particularly to suicide, are damning. Global research shows that those children are three times more likely to take their own lives later on in life. To make a comparison, someone who loses a parent to homicide is twice as likely to take their own life. Here in Australia, it is deemed that, particularly because of what happens with Aboriginal Australians, it could potentially be as high as seven times more likely for someone to subsequently take their own life. Bereaved siblings are seven times more likely to experience

mental health issues and to go on to experience suicidal ideation. Importantly, these statistics apply regardless of the age of the child who experiences the loss—whether the child is 17 years old, or, interestingly, has not even been born yet. That says something about the specific risk to these children. There is an important quote by Campbell, who says that adult child survivors of suicide are “forever changed by this indescribable and complicated bereavement”.

Suicide postvention within Australia is expanding but is still a relatively new area. It tends to focus very much on immediate crisis following a suicide and on communities, but not so much on looking at the long-term needs of people who are going to need support. That creates particular problems for children, many of whom do not start developing issues until sometimes many years down the track. It also presumes that people have a community around them, and that is often not the case for families who have been bereaved by suicide, who often end up living quite fractured existences outside of their community.

Overall, we are very bad at understanding the nature of children and grief. As a culture, we have a very poor understanding of the way that children grieve. Children grieve differently from adults, but they do not grieve less. One of the most dangerous perceptions is the idea that somehow children grieve half as much as an adult does, whereas, in actual fact, I would say that children grieve twice as much. Children also do not bounce back. That is usually symptomatic of either age or—worse—if children feel that it is not safe for them to demonstrate their grief. They may appear in the first instance to be minimally affected, but in actual fact that is not necessarily the case. Sometimes, the need to be around friends and the like is simply an indication that they do not feel safe at home. It is often aggravated by well-meaning but deeply misguided commentary, with adults saying things such as “You’re the man of the house now”, or children being denied access to often very important grief rituals. Basically, children need permission to grieve, and very often they are denied that. This can be quite significantly exacerbated when that grief is due to suicide. We know that trauma absolutely aggravates the grief process.

We know from the research on children who have been bereaved by suicide that they are often likely to revisit that trauma and grief multiple times throughout their lives. They may experience it at the age of five, but they will experience it again at the age of 10, then at 12, then at 15 as they grow to understand the deep complications in the nature of, in particular, parental suicide. We need to remember that when a parent chooses to take their life, the child will perceive that as their ultimate rejection and abandonment. There are additional complicating elements. There is often a deep-based fear that the other parent will also take their life. Children might be reluctant to reveal distress in case the other parent decides to take their life. What the child learns is that they cannot have trust that parents will stay alive in order to make sure that they are okay. They often feel responsible for the death itself. There is often an enormous amount of stigma around suicide.

They lose their protective factors. The families themselves are often fractured and traumatised, and families can be split apart by recriminations. They can be isolated from their communities, so the usual supports that accompany grief can be deeply compromised. It can be worse if people decide that they do not want to discuss suicide. Worse still, research tells us that children learn that suicide is a response to distress. That can be significantly aggravated by some of the well-meaning but very misguided things that we say to children, such as “Oh, well, Daddy’s in a better place now” or “Daddy’s at peace” or “Daddy’s happy.” That tells children that suicide is a solution to distress. Additional complicating factors are that the child might be blamed for the death, there may be a history of suicide attempts leading up to that death, there might be a history of mental illness and, in some instances, children themselves might experience post-traumatic stress disorder from discovering the body.

The studies also show us that there can be genetic factors in relation to this. What happens in other areas when we know that there is a genetic aggravating factor is that we give more support. If we think about women who are more likely to get breast cancer as a result of genetic factors, we give them more support, not less; yet we do not do the same thing when a suicide has occurred. We also know that trauma can have lifelong impacts on children’s developing brains. When a child loses a parent through suicide, we need to ensure that we intervene early and, importantly, that we intervene often. We have to take the long-term approach to how we are going to do this.

We have a specialised service here in Western Australia. I am happy to say that when I was on the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention, I presented all the research that I had pulled together. As a result, we established a pilot program in this state to enable children in the metropolitan area only to be able to access these services. That has subsequently been independently assessed and found to be an enormous success. It is an important program and one that will help break, hopefully, the intergenerational trauma of suicide. Members, we need to make sure that that program is not only continued, but also extended into the regions.

There are waitlists even in the metropolitan area, and we know that children—in particular Aboriginal children, but also all regional children—who need these services are not getting these supports. This can be life-altering support. This is a really important program. I have been delivering training on this for a number of years; I deliver it for free. It is an area that I have a lot of expertise in. To those members who are staying, I ask that when you look at the budget papers every single year, please make sure that this program continues to be funded and please make sure that you put pressure on to have this program extended. It is very important. It is the first time that we have had something like this in Australia. There has been enormous interest in other states for something similar. It is something

that we should be really proud of. I really urge members to think about making sure that this is a priority particularly at budget time, and that this becomes an ongoing and a permanent part of our landscape, because, hopefully, it will help to break that intergenerational cycle of deep trauma. Thank you.

DR CHRISTINE (CHRISSEY) SHARP

Statement

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [5.33 pm]: I rise tonight for my last speech in here to talk about a former member of this house and a dear friend of mine, Christine Sharp. Chrissy is currently fighting for her life, as she has been fighting for the forest for so many years. I knew she was unwell late last year. After having surgery, she thought that she had an infection. I was sitting in this chamber when I received a text from her saying that she had just had major emergency surgery to remove a tumour that was obstructing her intestines. I responded, in my naive optimism, “So you’re on the mend now?”, not realising the significance of what she had said—that she had cancer. Within a week or so she was told that she had about two months to go, and she went to find a second opinion and a third opinion and they came around to the idea that with significant aggressive treatment, she had a chance of extending her life.

She has undergone two rounds of chemotherapy and received results saying that it looked better and there were no active cancer cells. She had a bit of a respite and not long after that she was told to maybe do another round just in case, but she said that she just could not do it. As many members would know, anybody who has gone through two rounds of chemotherapy does not feel too well after it. Then it all fell apart. Things were not going so well. The doctor convinced her and her family that she really should have chemotherapy, but it turned out to be a kidney issue, which is now being treated. I have not had an update for less than a week. All I can say now to any members who know her or who have heard others speak of her, is that she could use all the love, best wishes, kindness, prayers and anything you can send, because that is what is working for her. She has so many friends and they are all doing everything they can to keep her going.

She told me that the thing that kept her going from the start—this time it could be very difficult—is writing a book on our south west forests. She is not prepared to give up on that yet; she has a lot more to say, and I really hope that she has the chance to do that. As I said, Chrissy is a very dear friend and my number one supporter. I have learnt so much from her. She has been working to protect our south west forests since the 1970s. She did a PhD on politics and ethics at Murdoch University back in the 1970s.

With her husband, Andrew, they established a small tree farm in Balingup. They sell trees from their farm across the state—possibly even interstate—to so many people for revegetation, plantations or for their homes. That has been going quite well. She also co-founded the Golden Valley Tree Park. If any members who have an interest in trees ever travel through Balingup, the Golden Valley Tree Park is based on an old homestead area and it has trees from around the world. It has its eucalypt area as well, but right now, if anybody gets a chance to see it, the autumn leaves are turning. I have seen some beautiful photos recently. I went there recently because Chrissy’s friends had put together a mandala for her to help spread some good tidings. The park is a good thing to see.

Chrissy has also been a member of the Donnybrook–Balingup council. She began with the Greens back in 1989, which is when we got together. She worked on the campaign for Louise Duxbury, who was running for a seat at that time. She has been on the board of the Environmental Protection Authority, where she was a member from 1989 until 1993. She ran for and was elected to the South West Region in 1996 and started in 1997. Chrissy stayed with us for two terms. She told me that when she was elected chair of the Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development during her first term, she was the first female chair of a standing committee. I believe she was also involved in the establishment of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs and chaired that from 2001 until 2005.

I met Chrissy when it was coming up to her time to leave here, and I regret not getting to know her sooner. It was not really until 2016–17 when I was running for the seat that we knew each other well enough that she was so delighted to host my campaign launch at her home in Balingup. It was there that I met one of my future staff members, who was also a recent candidate. She just beamed when she looked at me and I felt that if somebody like her could think that well of me, I must be doing pretty well. Over that time, she tried to pour all her information into me about forests and I try to add that with other things that I could find, but her depth of knowledge is just enormous. It is unbelievable.

In 2018, Chrissy was the joint environmental volunteer of the year. She worked with the Forest Products Commission on the Djarlma plan, with a few of the people on its independent panel, and put that together. She saw that jarrah forests were dying. In 2011, there was a drought in Western Australia, which caused a massive die-off of jarrah forests, but some of them came back. But she saw that and she was looking at the research on it that showed that the watertable dropped up to 18 metres in some of those areas. The research also showed that the volume of rainfall had fallen in that area. We know now that Alcoa is clearing it as quickly as it can to get the bauxite out of it.

I would like to refer to a submission. Chrissy is still very active in this space, and I just hope that we have her around for years to come to continue her work and to mentor me and others. She wrote a submission on the Environmental Protection Amendment Bill that was put forward last year. In her submission she talks about ecological thinning. She has seen these jarrah forests. She knows that in the 1930s the government realised that the forests were growing back too thickly, because jarrah does not self-thin. She found that in the 1930s one of the work programs to get people back to work involved hiring 10 000 men to go into the forest to thin the forest by hand to make it a healthy forest once again. They understood ecological thinning back then. Whereas now, we understand it, but Chrissy is still trying to describe it to Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions staff and environmentalists so that they know what it is and understand it. But the difficulty we face is trust. There just does not seem to be trust within the industry, the environmental movement and government to work out what we can do, and then do it to save that forest.

All I ask is that you think good thoughts and send Chrissy your prayers, your love or whatever. We need to keep her with us. She was in Parliament during the 2001 to 2005 Gallup-led government when old-growth forests were protected. She was working on high conservation value forests then as well. That was a wonderful step. It was fantastic to be able to set aside some of those forests. But right now, our forests are still dying. They are still decreasing in size. I read in the news only today that in the last 20 years—it starts out as a good news story—an area the size of France has been regenerated as native forests around the world. An area the size of France over the last 20 years— isn't that great! The report then went on to say that seven times that amount of forest has been cleared in the same time. An area the size of the United Kingdom was cleared last year. To me, an area the size of the UK is about the same size as the south west and the wheatbelt combined. In Western Australia we are doing our bit to continue that massive clearing. We see it happening all the time and we are not taking responsibility for it. We do that knowing the work that Chrissy and so many others have put in and the science that is showing us what we are doing. I do not want to say, "Let's do this for Chrissy", because I would rather have Chrissy—I need her—but we need the forests as well. Thanks for listening. Send her your love, your prayers. We need to keep her around so she can finish that book.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR — HON NICK GRIFFITHS

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) [5.42 pm]: Before I give the call to Hon Darren West, I am going to acknowledge former President of the Legislative Council Hon Nick Griffiths and his family who have joined us tonight in the President's gallery. I am very pleased to see you back here. I hope you enjoy your time here tonight.

DR CHRISTINE (CHRISSEY) SHARP

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) [5.43 pm]: I also want to make a comment on the speech just given by Hon Diane Evers. There are some of us still in this chamber who worked with Hon Chrissy Sharp from 2001 to 2005. That was my first term in this place and she was Chair of the Environment and Public Affairs Committee that I was on. I will say that I have enormous respect for her work ethic and her commitment to the issues that she is passionate about. It is quite devastating to hear tonight, which I am sure is shared by other members who have known her, she is having to deal with such difficulties with this illness. On behalf of members in this chamber, I ask that you please pass our best wishes back to her and hope that things will be on the up and up for her. Our prayers and our thoughts are indeed with her. Thank you.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Statement

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.43 pm]: I reiterate those words. Please pass on my best wishes. I am sure I speak on behalf of all members in wishing Dr Chrissy Sharp all the best. Our thoughts and prayers are with her, her family and her friends.

Today, 12 May, is International Nurses Day. It is celebrated on 12 May because that was birthdate in 1820 of Florence Nightingale, perhaps the world's most famous nurse. She was an English nurse, social reformer and statistician who founded the key pillars of modern nursing. International Nurses Day assumes great significance amid the horrific coronavirus pandemic. Nurses are the backbone of the hospitals and clinics, and have taken care of millions of COVID-19 patients for months. They put their lives at risk. International Nurses Day is a great opportunity to express our deep gratitude to them. According to the International Council of Nurses, as at 31 December 2020, more than 1.6 million healthcare workers in 34 countries have been infected with COVID-19. The International Council of Nurses' key pillars are: professional practice, regulation and socioeconomic welfare.

Known as the Lady with the Lamp, Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, started work as a nurse in charge of British and Allied soldiers wounded during the Crimean War. Florence Nightingale spent most of her time caring for and comforting the injured, often until late into the night. She was the first to establish formal training for nurses. The first nursing school, the Nightingale Training School for Nurses, was inaugurated in London in

1860. Florence Nightingale was a key figure behind setting up a training school for midwives as well. In 1907, she was the first woman to be awarded the Order of Merit.

Nurses are at the forefront of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Like doctors and other healthcare workers, nurses are continually providing high-quality care, often working without a break. Nurses are often the only health professionals people see in a crisis situation. According to the World Health Organization, nurses account for more than half the world's healthcare workers, yet there is an urgent shortage of nurses worldwide, with 5.9 million nurses needed, especially in low and middle-income countries.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of nurses in Western Australia, particularly those who choose to live and work in regional Western Australia and care for us. My sister is a nurse and I have great respect for the profession. I encourage any young man or woman seeking a career in caring for others to consider taking up nursing as an occupation. Thank you very much to all the nurses across regional WA and the state.

DR CHRISTINE (CHRISSEY) SHARP

Statement

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [5.46 pm]: I was also in this place in 2001 and beyond when Hon Chrissy Sharp joined us. I was shocked to hear from our colleague that she is having to work through a very difficult time in her life and confronting some real challenges. On behalf of the opposition and the Liberal Party, I hope that the honourable member will convey to Chrissy our reassurance that we know that she is a strong person and will confront the issues currently confronting her with the courage that she has always exhibited in the past. If she is open to further encouragement, that she does so with our sincere best wishes and compliments at heart.

House adjourned at 5.47 pm
