



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2021

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 2 June 2021

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 12 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

PAPERS TABLED

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

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Council Membership

Message from Council received and read notifying that the following members have been appointed to the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation: Hon Lorna Harper, Hon James Hayward, Hon Stephen Pratt and Hon Martin Pritchard.

BILLS

Returned

1. COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021.
2. Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2021.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

PLANNING — MEDIUM DENSITY POLICY

Statement by Minister for Planning

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [12.04 pm]: I rise today to update the house on the new medium density policy for Western Australia. Members may be aware that the McGowan government is delivering an unprecedented program of reforms across the planning system. In fact, last Friday, I launched a three-month consultation program on our next phase of reform. We want to go further and push the boundaries in redesigning our planning system to streamline processes and further reduce red tape, to explore reforms that could be mirrored across local government and to modernise how we plan and develop our suburbs, and we want the community to help shape this course of action.

One key reform is finalising a new state planning policy to guide well-designed medium-density development. A draft policy was released for public consultation in late November last year. Over four and a half months, a series of workshops was held with industry representatives, local governments, community members and planning practitioners to collect their views. An online survey also attracted over 220 submissions. Submissions indicated broad support for options to improve design quality in residential developments up to four storeys that will also increase housing diversity and choice. Proposals for increased outdoor living areas in developments of greater density and the retention of tree canopy across our suburbs were also generally supported. Over the next 12 months, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage will undertake a detailed review and analysis of all submissions received, refine and test policy settings, re-engage with key stakeholders and continue feasibility testing.

The department will also consider recent changes to the National Construction Code that may need to be applied to the policy. Some submissions raised concerns with time frames for the proposed implementation and transition program, while others requested additional consultation on key policy provisions. We know the housing industry is under significant pressure at the moment as a result of the record construction activity. We therefore will have a longer transition period to finalise the new policy and implement the new provisions. Good design is all about making sure we have excellence in our design outcomes. We can bring vibrancy, housing affordability, more housing choice and environmental benefits to suburbs across the metropolitan area.

I thank everyone who made a submission or attended a workshop for making time to participate in this process. Consultation with the community and industry is a pivotal part of policy development to ensure we get the settings right to deliver lasting benefits and outcomes. We have also alerted councils that this policy is still in the consultation phase and that the existing policies should be their guiding documents in relation to approvals. The aim will be to have the new policy released in the first half of next year and an implementation date in the second half of next year. This should provide everyone with the opportunity to accommodate the new guidelines.

I apologise for jumping in. Sorry; I thought I was first.

The SPEAKER: That is the natural order of things, but I will give the call to the Attorney General now.

COMMUNITY SERVICE LAW AWARDS*Statement by Attorney General*

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.07 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house of the 2021 winners of the Attorney General's Community Service Law Awards. These awards recognise the exceptional work of a legal practitioner, a not-for-profit organisation and a legal firm that have made a pro bono contribution to benefit the Western Australian community.

Veteran family lawyer Jon Redman won the Individual Award in honour of a long history of pro bono work, dating back to 1982 when he helped establish the Sussex Street Community Law Services. Mr Redman also donates his time as a minister-appointed independent visitor to Bandyup Women's Prison, helping to ensure that the facility operates justly and humanely. The Not-for-Profit Award went to the Pilbara Community Legal Service, which was founded in 1993 and assists people across this vast region, from the main population centres to remote communities. Last year, I introduced a new award that recognises the pro bono work of legal firms to coincide with the new pro bono requirements that apply to all law firms undertaking legal services for the state government. This year, MinterEllison has received the Legal Firm Award for its work with a range of community service providers and not-for-profit organisations, contributing thousands of pro bono hours. It seconds lawyers to community legal centres and ensures that its junior lawyers spend one day a week for six months doing pro bono work. MinterEllison's pro bono services in 2021 are projected to approximately double in hours and value from two years earlier.

This is the fifteenth year that the law awards have been staged and I am pleased to see the continued excellent work being done to help Western Australia's most vulnerable and disadvantaged. I congratulate all the winners and finalists, and I thank them for providing their skills, knowledge and experience to the Western Australian community.

AFL DREAMTIME MATCH*Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation*

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [12.10 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the outstanding response from the Western Australian public in support of the AFL's Dreamtime match between the Richmond Tigers and Essendon Bombers football clubs this Saturday, 5 June. The Dreamtime game is an incredible celebration of Indigenous culture and the extraordinary Indigenous players who make the game great. Western Australia has a rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, one that we can showcase and as Western Australians be proud of on Saturday night. This is a huge opportunity for Western Australians to experience Dreamtime at the best stadium in Australia, Optus Stadium.

The Richmond Tigers and Essendon Bombers share a rich history of remarkable Indigenous talent, including past players like Michael Long, Brownlow medallist Gavin Wanganeen, Michael Mitchell and the great Maurice Rioli Sr. Rioli Sr played 168 spectacular games for one of the greatest West Australian Football League clubs—I would say the greatest WAFL club—South Fremantle, the mighty Bulldogs. Rioli Sr was the first player to win a Simpson Medal in a losing team, in the 1981 grand final against Claremont, and a year later also won the Norm Smith Medal in the losing Richmond team against Carlton.

Western Australia's Indigenous talents are well represented on the current Richmond Tigers roster with two more South Fremantle products in Marlion Pickett and Shai Bolton, as well as the exciting Sydney Stack—no Claremont player there! Essendon's immensely talented Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti played superbly against the West Coast Eagles last week and excitement machine Irving Mosquito, who is unfortunately injured, hails from the remote Halls Creek in our state's far north. Let us get behind the game and get behind our friends in Victoria, and show the country what an incredible show we can put on here in the west.

One of the most significant elements of the Dreamtime fixture is the Long Walk, which will be led by Essendon and AFL legends and Indigenous greats of the game Michael Long and Gavin Wanganeen. The story behind the Long Walk is a truly inspiring one. In 2004, Michael Long walked the 650 kilometres from his home in Melbourne to Canberra to meet the then Prime Minister John Howard in a bid to get Indigenous issues back on the national agenda. This year, the Long Walk will start at Victoria Gardens and proceed over the Matagarup Bridge to Optus Stadium.

The Western Australian public has flocked to purchase tickets for the game, with tickets selling extremely fast since they became available yesterday evening. I am pleased to say that the game is currently sold out; however, there may be a final release of a limited allocation of tickets later in the week. For a fixture not featuring either of the Western Australian AFL teams, this is a fantastic response and further highlights the meaning and significance to the state of an event like this. If there is a final release of tickets, I encourage Western Australians to grab a ticket to the game, if they have not already done so, and be a part of this historic and significant event for the state.

The SPEAKER: Minister, congratulations on the Dreamtime match. However, I think that if I can be an objective Speaker, you can be an objective Minister for Sport and Recreation when it comes to football!

ARTIFICIAL REEF — OCEAN REEF*Statement by Minister for Fisheries*

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [12.13 pm]: On 15 May 2018, the McGowan Labor government announced a \$1 million initiative to install an artificial reef off the north metropolitan coast. Following extensive consultation and environmental approval, this reef is coming to fruition with the final concrete modules installed on Thursday, 20 May. The McGowan government has worked closely with Recfishwest on the location and design of the reef to maximise the benefits to those living in our rapidly expanding northern suburbs. On Thursday, 22 April, I was joined in Fremantle by the member for Joondalup, Emily Hamilton, MLA, to view the reef modules. The member has been an enthusiastic supporter of the reef project.

This new reef is funded through the Recreational Fishing Initiatives Fund, which reinvests 25 per cent of recreational fishing licence revenue into projects benefiting recreational fishing. The new artificial reef will provide a location that can be enjoyed by recreational fishers and, importantly, benefit local businesses connected to recreational fishing and boating by attracting more visitors to the area. The reef is made up of 292 purpose-built reef modules located approximately seven kilometres west of Ocean Reef, at an approximate depth of 27 metres. The project has supported local jobs through its construction, including through the reef's design in Henderson, the pouring of the concrete modules in Jandakot, and the loading and deployment of the modules out of Fremantle. The reef is expected to become home to a range of fish species, including samson fish, silver trevally and pink snapper. It is the seventh purpose-built artificial reef to be installed in Western Australia over the past seven years, with reefs already off Dunsborough, Bunbury, Mandurah, Rottnest Island, Esperance and Exmouth. The state government is committed to creating safe, accessible, sustainable and enjoyable fishing experiences for all Western Australians. I look forward to overseeing the completion of three more new artificial reefs as part of the state government's \$6 million package to support the recreational fishing industry through the WA Recovery Plan.

FAMILY COURT AMENDMENT BILL 2021*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr J.R. Quigley (Attorney General)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Attorney General.

Second Reading

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.16 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 5 December 2018, the commonwealth Family Law Amendment (Family Violence Cross-examination of Parties) Bill 2018 passed both houses of federal Parliament, amending the Family Law Act 1975 to provide better protections for victims of family violence during the cross-examination process in family law proceedings. The new provisions applied to cross-examinations occurring in the commonwealth jurisdiction effective from 10 September 2019. It is the usual custom for Western Australia to amend the state Family Court Act 1997 to mirror any amendments made to the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975. This ensures the same legislative position applies to parents of exnuptial children and people who were in a de facto relationship as applies to married people under the commonwealth legislation. Therefore, this bill will amend the Family Court Act 1997 to also provide protection in relation to the cross-examination of parties who are parents of exnuptial children, or who were in a de facto relationship.

In cases in which there is an allegation of family violence between the parties to a Family Court proceeding, they will be prohibited from directly cross-examining each other in any of the following circumstances: either party has been convicted of, or is charged with, an offence involving family violence, or a threat of violence, to the other party; a family violence restraining order, other than an interim order, applies to both parties; an injunction made under the Family Court Act for the personal protection of either party is directed against the other party; or, if these circumstances do not apply, the court, in its discretion, makes an order that the parties cannot cross-examine each other. The court may make such an order on its own initiative or upon application from either party or an independent children's lawyer.

The cross-examination must be conducted by a legal practitioner if the ban on direct cross-examination applies. In cases in which none of these circumstances applies but an allegation of family violence has been made, the court must ensure that appropriate protections are taken for the alleged victim of the family violence. For example, the court may consider it appropriate to direct that the cross-examination be conducted by way of video or audio link, and/or allow the alleged victim to have a support person with them. The provisions in this bill will apply to both parenting and property hearings.

The Council of Australian Governments' National Summit on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children in October 2016 recommended that a ban should be placed on the personal cross-examination of victims by the perpetrator in family violence and family law proceedings. Allowing victims to be personally cross-examined by the perpetrator or be placed in the situation in which they must cross-examine the perpetrator can be a re-traumatising and highly distressing experience for victims. The measures in this bill aim to reduce this trauma and distress.

A number of other benefits will also stem from this legislation. The cross-examination process is an integral part of having evidence tested in a proceeding and allowing the court to make evidence-based findings. Putting an end to victims being cross-examined by perpetrators will improve their ability to give clear and cogent evidence. Furthermore, the cross-examination of perpetrators by legal practitioners will ensure that their evidence is appropriately tested and therefore more reliable. This, in turn, will enable judicial officers to make more informed decisions and judgements. Being personally cross-examined by a perpetrator may be so daunting that it can lead to some victims prematurely settling their matter on terms that are less favourable to them or are not in the best interest of the children. Their personal safety and care can be put at risk; for example, children may have to spend more time living with a perpetrator of family violence. This bill aims to reduce those situations from occurring. The provisions in this bill will equally apply to perpetrators so that their rights to procedural fairness and a fair hearing will not be unduly impinged. Having a professional legal practitioner to represent them during the cross-examination process should also assist with the better presentation of their case.

Women are usually the victims of family violence. A woman who is subject to family violence is three times more likely to receive a minority share of relationship assets than a woman who is not subject to family violence. These new laws will help to lessen the discrimination against women by encouraging them to be fully involved in presenting their case to the Family Court. Their right to a fair hearing and access to justice will be enhanced.

This bill, through the mandatory requirement to obtain legal representation in certain circumstances, has resource implications. If a party is unrepresented, they will be advised to obtain representation and will be referred to Legal Aid WA, which is administering the commonwealth family violence and cross-examination of parties scheme. In November 2018, the commonwealth government announced the establishment of the scheme to provide \$7 million funding over three years to legal aid commissions across Australia. Legal Aid WA has been receiving funding from the commonwealth to administer the ban on personal cross-examinations for married persons, which commenced under the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 in September 2019. Ongoing funding will also cater for the bans that will be applied under the Western Australian Family Court Act 1997 once this bill is passed.

The commonwealth Attorney-General's Department will be reviewing the cross-examination ban legislation and associated funding after the second anniversary of its commencement, which will be in September of this year. There will have been a considerable hiatus between the commencement of the bans under the commonwealth legislation and those that will apply under this bill. The government did attempt to address this issue earlier in the form of the Family Court Amendment Bill 2019; however, that bill lapsed in the previous Parliament due to other competing priorities.

This bill also contains a number of amendments to section 243 of the Family Court Act so that it will read better, and will insert a new subsection that will allow information to be communicated to state or territory authorities responsible for the welfare of children and as prescribed in regulations for that purpose.

Family violence has a significant impact on individuals, families and the community. In Australia, one in six women and one in 16 men have been subjected, since the age of 15, to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or previous cohabiting partner. The fallout and tragedy of family violence is often played out in the justice system. It is therefore important that the justice system, and, in this case, the Family Court of Western Australia and Legal Aid WA, are appropriately equipped to effectively and compassionately deal with the victims of family violence. This bill will play a part in achieving that aim, and ensure that parties in Western Australia who commence proceedings under the Family Court Act are afforded the same protection as parties who commence proceedings under the Family Law Act in Western Australia, and the rest of Australia.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

RAILWAY (BBI RAIL AUS PTY LTD) AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr R.H. Cook (Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [12.26 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Railway (BBI Rail Aus Pty Ltd) Agreement Amendment Bill 2021 is to ratify amendments to the Railway (BBI Rail Aus Pty Ltd) Agreement Act 2017. This will, firstly, extend the deadline for the submission by BBI Rail Aus Pty Ltd, as the company under the BBI state agreement, of initial proposals for the railway project by a period of 18 months, from the current deadline of 30 September 2020 to 31 March 2022, and provide, at the minister's discretion, a further extension of up to 18 months beyond this date. Secondly, it will expressly provide,

given the extension of the deadline for submission of initial railway project proposals, that force majeure may not be claimed by the company for any reason to justify any future delay in submitting the proposals. Thirdly, it will expressly recognise that the state may enact general legislation that may substitute for, or modify, clauses in the BBI state agreement relating to local participation.

The bill being introduced today is consistent with the government's vision to support the Pilbara mining industry, and with the long-established practice for significant railway infrastructure to be developed under state agreements. As a reminder, the BBI 2017 state agreement was entered into by the state and ratified by Parliament to facilitate the development by the Balla Balla Infrastructure Group of a 165 km heavy haulage railway that will link a number of iron ore deposits, known as the Pilbara iron ore project, to a transshipment port to be constructed at Balla Balla Harbour. The BBI state agreement stipulates that the port be capable of exporting not less than 50 million tonnes of ore per annum.

The BBI state agreement has a term commensurate with the special railway licence to be granted under it—namely, 20 years from the grant date, with provision for two 10-year extensions. Total capital investment for the integrated mine, rail and port project is expected to be in the order of \$5.6 billion, generating 3 300 jobs during construction and 900 jobs once in operation.

Since the BBI state agreement was ratified by Parliament in 2017, the proponents have continued to develop the commercial requirements to deliver an integrated mine, rail and port project, along with meeting many of the obligations contained within the BBI state agreement that concern the construction of the railway. To date, the proponents have achieved the following milestones. They have submitted reports on investigative works under clause 5 of the state BBI state agreement. These are the preparatory works for geological, geophysical, geotechnical, engineering and environmental investigations and studies as well as marketing and finance studies. They have received approval for submissions made under clause 7 for the railway corridor. They have received approval under clause 8 of the state agreement for submissions detailing the area and layout of the railway in the port area. They have received approval under clause 9 of the state agreement for a community development plan. They have received approval under clause 10 of the BBI state agreement for a local industry participation plan. They have formed an incorporated joint venture to enable the Flinders Mines Pilbara iron ore project to be developed and to be the foundation customer for the project under a long-term infrastructure services agreement. The BBI state agreement stipulates that the carriage of ore will be for no less than 20 years and no less than 25 million tonnes per annum from the PIOP. The proponents have also reached all native title and heritage agreements with the Ngarluma, Yindjibarndi and Wintawari Guruma people upon whose lands the integrated mine, rail and port project will be developed. They have negotiated and agreed to agreements with many of the underlying landholders, including pastoralists and mining companies. They have received primary approvals for the integrated project, including environmental approvals under ministerial statements 945, 1006, 1014 and 924; environmental approvals under the commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999; and rail safety accreditation.

Despite the significant progress made to date, recent world events have contributed to delays to the project. The variation agreement will overcome the time constraints within the BBI state agreement for the submission of initial project proposals for the railway, which would otherwise have been required by 30 September 2020. In agreeing to this extension, the McGowan government reinforces its commitment to supporting projects that can deliver growth and economic development to Western Australia, noting the many challenges that we, as a state, have faced in the past year. The variation agreement also contemplates the potential for future general legislation to enhance local participation and procurement. This may apply to the railway project under the BBI state agreement in substitution for or in modification of the existing provisions of the state agreement relating to local participation. This is consistent with the government's policy to maximise local participation and the ongoing work to develop policy and legislation that focuses on the delivery of these outcomes.

Although the integrated project has yet to make a final investment decision, the proponents have commenced engagement with the local community, which has included the establishment of regional offices, a commitment to the early listing of proposed packages of work, and an undertaking that the project's head contractor and tier 1 and tier 2 contractors will be contractually obligated to appoint a local engagement resource. This is to ensure that procurement planning and decisions are made with an understanding of the capability of local industry and, when possible, for those contractors to work with local and Western Australian-based industry to maximise business engagement with the project.

As noted during the ratification of the BBI state agreement in 2017, this railway project and the integrated project will facilitate the delivery of significant positive outcomes for local communities and those businesses servicing the mining and ancillary sectors of the Western Australian economy. The integrated project has the potential to generate significant jobs in both its construction and operation phases, and I would like it acknowledged that it is a project that has had the support of both sides of the house.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2021*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Ms S.F. McGurk (Minister for Child Protection)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [12.35 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021 into the house today. The Children and Community Services Act 2004 provides Western Australia's legislative framework for the protection and care of children, the employment of children, the provision of social services, the provision of financial and other assistance and other matters concerning the wellbeing of children, other individuals, families and communities. Today's bill re-presents the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2019 that lapsed on 7 December last year with the proroguing of the Legislative Council. As then, the bill implements 40 recommendations of the *Statutory review of the Children and Community Services Act 2004* and now implements in full the expansion of mandatory reporter categories of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended to achieve minimum national consistency. This continues the government's progress towards implementing all 310 recommendations of the royal commission's final report that have application in Western Australia.

I acknowledge the work of the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Legislation last year, which inquired into the policy of the 2019 bill and tabled its report on 10 September 2020. The committee heard from a range of stakeholders. We have accepted all but one of the committee's recommended amendments in principle, which have been incorporated into the bill before the house today, making enhancements to this important legislation as it affects children and families in contact with the child protection system. In 2017, the then Department for Child Protection and Family Support reviewed the Children and Community Services Act with the assistance of two committees. The review received 37 written submissions in response to a consultation paper. During the four-month consultation period, regional consultations were held with Aboriginal community members, service providers and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. The recommendations of a department consultation on out-of-home-care legislative reform conducted in 2015 were also considered in the review.

Mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse commenced in Western Australia in January 2009 under part 4 of the Children and Community Services Act. Recommendation 7.3 of the royal commission's final report requires a significant broadening of WA's mandatory reporter groups to achieve minimum national consistency and support early identification and reporting of child sexual abuse. In addition to doctors, nurses, midwives, police officers, teachers and boarding supervisors, the following people will be required to report child sexual abuse to the Department of Communities: early childhood workers, ministers of religion, out-of-home care workers, registered psychologists, school counsellors and youth justice workers. Further, the reporting requirements will be extended to assessors appointed under section 125A of the Children and Community Services Act and to staff of the Department of Communities. There will be a staged approach to expanding the WA scheme to enable a managed rollout of targeted training; different groups will commence as reporters at different times, starting with ministers of religion.

Consistent with the royal commission's recommendation 7.4, there will be no excuse for failing to make a mandatory report because a minister's belief was based on information disclosed to the minister during a religious confession, or because making the report would otherwise be contrary to the tenets of the minister's faith or religion. The royal commission noted that many religious institutions had institutional cultures that discouraged reporting of child sexual abuse, and that mandatory reporting obligations may help persons in religious ministry to overcome cultural, scriptural, hierarchical and other barriers to reporting.

Although I am confident that there is wide community support for this measure, I acknowledge the opposition to these amendments as they apply to religious confession that was presented to the Standing Committee on Legislation last year. For adult survivors who share these concerns, it is important to remember that the duty to report child sexual abuse is to protect children from sexual abuse. The laws are not designed to address historical abuse. The government remains resolute in its commitment to this measure, which makes both the government's and the community's expectations crystal clear—children's right to safety and protection from harm is absolutely paramount.

Planning for stability and continuity in a child's living arrangements and relationships is a priority when a child enters care, whether through reunification with parents or long-term arrangements elsewhere. The amendments to the principles in part 2 of the act reflect the importance of this and implement other recommendations of the review, including that a person, court or tribunal is to observe the principles when performing a function under the act; the relationships a child in care has with family and others of significance to the child should be promoted so far as is consistent with the child's best interests; planning for children's long-term stability should be considered in accordance with an order of preference, as appropriate and in the child's best interest, starting with reunification with the child's parents, long-term care with other members of the child's family, or care with another appropriate

person; that the principle in section 10 concerning children's participation in the decision-making process should be strengthened; and that the principle regarding the participation of family, community or a representative organisation of Aboriginal people in decision-making processes about a child should be strengthened.

In two new principles in section 9, children are acknowledged as valued members of society, as is the need for interpreters or other supports if language barriers or disability mean a person has difficulty understanding or participating in decision-making processes under the act.

As at 30 April this year, 5 349 children aged under 18 years were in the care of the chief executive officer of the department. Fifty-seven per cent of these children were Aboriginal, despite Aboriginal children forming only 6.7 per cent of Western Australia's child population. This is the troubling reality facing Aboriginal families and their communities, and government, despite all the goodwill and efforts undertaken to reduce these disproportionate figures.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse noted that empirical data supports the idea that connection to culture is associated with better emotional, social and physical health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Positive cultural connection can also increase the protective factors available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by helping them to develop their identities and fostering high self-esteem, emotional strength and resilience. Research commissioned by the royal commission also highlighted that positive cultural connection indirectly increases protective factors by supporting the social conditions necessary for all adults in a kinship placement to be available, responsive and protective of children in the community.

The bill introduces a number of interrelated amendments intended to build stronger connection to family, culture and country for Aboriginal children in care, including through working more closely with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to better implement the Aboriginal child placement principle. The amendments to sections 9, 12, 13, 14, 61, 81, 89, new 89A and 143 are particularly relevant. Together they promote implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle in section 12 of the act and a greater understanding of its intent, which, in broad terms, is to maintain a connection with family and culture for Aboriginal children in care. This amendment aligns with recommendation 12.20 of the royal commission and the 2017 Community Services Ministers' commitment to —

... uphold all five domains of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle to recognise the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be raised in their own culture and the importance and value of their family, extended family, kinship networks, culture and community.

The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care—SNAICC—the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, identifies the five cornerstone elements to the principle as prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection.

Section 12(2) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle contains a hierarchy of preferred placements for an Aboriginal child in care. The review noted Western Australia's size and diversity of Aboriginal culture and the importance of keeping Aboriginal children in proximity to their communities whenever possible. This is particularly relevant to better supporting reunification with parents, where appropriate, as well as closer connections to family, culture and country. Some members may recall that the placement hierarchy was amended accordingly in the previous bill.

Responding to feedback received through the legislation committee process that the amendments did not fully align with the placement principle, the bill now reflects that if an Aboriginal child's placement with family, an Aboriginal person in the child's community or an Aboriginal person in close proximity to the community is not possible, then subject to the child's best interests, placement with an Aboriginal person—who may reside anywhere in the state—will be considered on the same level in the hierarchy as placement with a non-Aboriginal person in close proximity to the child's community.

Under section 81, before making a placement arrangement for an Aboriginal child in care, the department must consult to help identify placement options at the higher end of the hierarchy. The bill significantly strengthens these requirements. Consultation must now occur with each of the following: members of the child's Aboriginal family; an Aboriginal representative organisation approved by the CEO for this purpose; and an Aboriginal officer of the department who has relevant knowledge of the child, the child's family or the child's community. It is envisaged that approved Aboriginal representative organisations may be existing Aboriginal community-controlled organisations recognised by the local community, with knowledge of the child, the child's family or the child's community. Enhancements to these amendments reflect the committee's recommendation to clarify their intended operation.

The department's cultural support planning is also being strengthened. Cultural support plans are already prepared in practice for Aboriginal children in care and those from culturally and linguistically diverse—CALD—backgrounds. However, under this bill, cultural support plans will become a legislative requirement and, subject to regulations, the Aboriginal representative organisations previously referred to will be offered the opportunity to participate in cultural support planning for Aboriginal children.

Cultural support plans will also need to be provided to the court as part of the written proposal the department must provide under section 143 when it applies for a protection order, other than a special guardianship order. Written

proposals outline proposed arrangements for the child's wellbeing under the order being sought. Other amendments regarding the content of proposals include requiring an outline of proposed arrangements: for working towards the child's reunification under a protection order—time-limited—or an explanation of why reunification would be contrary to the child's best interests; for promoting, where appropriate, the child's relationships with family or other people significant to the child; and for an Aboriginal or CALD child, the arrangement proposed for placing the child in accordance with the Aboriginal child placement principle or placement guidelines for CALD children.

Amendments to special guardianship orders, or SGOs, continue the theme of maintaining children's identity, cultural connections and family relationships when possible. Special guardians who wish to change the name of a child under an SGO will need to seek permission from the Children's Court. Permission will depend on there being exceptional circumstances and, if the child has sufficient maturity and understanding, the child's consent. In its report to the court about a person's suitability to become a special guardian, the department will have to outline the arrangements proposed for encouraging and supporting the child to develop and maintain contact with the child's family, subject to decisions regarding the child's contact with family. For Aboriginal children or those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, the child's cultural support plan will need to be provided, as well as information on the Aboriginal child placement principle or the guidelines for the placement of a CALD child, and the court may include conditions in the order about matters that could be included in a cultural support plan. Finally, the court will not be able to make an SGO for an Aboriginal child in favour of a sole or joint non-Aboriginal carer or carers without first considering a written report from an Aboriginal person or agency.

I am pleased to report progress on the Aboriginal family-led decision-making pilot that I announced on 10 August 2020 to further strengthen Aboriginal self-determination. Reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care and advancing Aboriginal self-determination are key drivers for the pilot. It brings together the Aboriginal community and key stakeholders to co-design and trial a new approach in partnership with the department. Mirrabooka as the metropolitan site and the midwest-Gascoyne as the regional site have been identified. In addition, the following three cohorts have been identified: families undertaking pre-birth planning with the department to prevent the need for infants coming into care; families involved with intensive family support teams with children at risk of coming into care; and families with children in care who are working to be safely returned home. Aboriginal family-led decision-making is able to operate within the current framework of the act and is consistent with the amendments in this bill. The 2017 review considered that amendments to legislate for Aboriginal family-led decision-making could be re-examined following the implementation and evaluation of family-led decision-making, and the Standing Committee on Legislation shared this view. The bill will require the next review of the act to consider including Aboriginal family-led decision-making in legislation. In addition, the bill will require the next review to consider including a statutory definition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle, including all five elements.

Other amendments in the bill clarify and strengthen the already comprehensive leaving care provisions in the act. Amendments include that a leaving care plan is to become part of a child's care plan once the child turns 15 and children or young people are to be provided with social services that the CEO considers appropriate having regard to their needs, regardless of whether they are specified in the child's last care plan. These changes will better support young people who have been in care, given that evidence shows they are at risk of experiencing poorer life outcomes, including inadequate housing or homelessness, poor education outcomes, long-term unemployment, difficulty with basic life skills, mental health issues, and drug and alcohol use. These amendments will support implementation of the royal commission's recommendation 12.22 that the assistance available to care leavers to safely and successfully transition to independent living and to access general post-care supports should include assistance for those who were sexually abused while in out-of-home care.

The bill will also strengthen provisions regarding the shared responsibility of government agencies for addressing the needs of children who are, or were, in care. Public authorities prescribed in regulations will need to prioritise requests for assistance to children in care and young people who qualify for leaving care assistance until they turn 25, provided doing so is consistent with and does not unduly prejudice their functions. In inserting new part 10A into the act, the bill will increase the powers of authorised officers of the department and industrial inspectors to investigate offences related to the employment of children under part 7 of the act. In addition, authorised officers of the department will be able to exercise those powers in relation to all the offences in the act. The additional powers will be consistent with those provided to licensing officers under the Child Care Services Act 2007, and do not limit the powers provided to industrial inspectors under the Industrial Relations Act 1979.

A number of other amendments will address oversights, clarify provisions or remedy concerns in the operation of the act. This includes providing a defence to a charge of failing to protect a child from harm in circumstances involving the exposure of a child to family violence if the accused can prove that she or he was a victim of that family violence. The bill will amend the grounds for a child being found in need of protection to address situations in which parents are found to be able but unwilling to care for their child. It will limit the court's ability to adjourn proceedings for an interim order—secure care—or the continuation of a secure care arrangement unless there are exceptional reasons for doing so, and then for only two working days. It will also address the legal status of a child following the death of a sole special guardian or joint special guardians.

I am confident the amendments in this bill will support better outcomes for children, families and communities in contact with the child protection system, particularly for Aboriginal people. In closing, I would like again to acknowledge the work carried out under the Children and Community Services Act by Department of Communities frontline child protection workers, which is among the most difficult and challenging in the community. This extends to the tireless work of the foster carers and family carers who care for these vulnerable children, and of service providers in the community services sector and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, who remain united in their drive to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and families in Western Australia.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

DOG AMENDMENT (STOP PUPPY FARMING) BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr J.N. Carey (Minister for Local Government)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Local Government) [12.57 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 today. This bill reaffirms the McGowan government's commitment to reintroduce laws into Western Australia to tackle puppy farming. The McGowan government made a firm commitment to the Western Australian public at the last election to reintroduce the bill after the opposition did not support it in the other place and it lapsed. I know that there is strong public support for the bill and I am privileged every day to meet residents in my electorate who are pet owners and are passionate about animal welfare or who are greyhound owners and are passionate about de-muzzling greyhounds. But other than in the short title of this amendment bill, members will not find the term "puppy farming" used. That is because puppy farming encompasses a wide variety of dog breeding practices that can affect the health and wellbeing of dogs. It is intuitive to connect puppy farming with animal cruelty, especially when we see photos and images of dogs that are barking and pacing, cooped up in cages and looking visibly undernourished. When we have let puppy farming get to this point, the system has already fundamentally failed dogs and it has failed the community. Consumers do not want to support a system whereby a breeder can keep dogs in such poor conditions and then sell dogs with behavioural or health issues before authorities intervene. That is why we are proposing changes to the Dog Act 1976 that will proactively require that people give adequate consideration to the needs of dogs before they breed from them. As a dog owner myself, I am very proud to introduce this bill.

Ethical dog breeding starts from having a plan to breed from a dog. Ethical dog breeding is not about allowing dogs to roam the neighbourhood freely or randomly breeding dogs for sale and abandoning the puppies if the litter cannot be sold.

The bill provides for the introduction of mandatory sterilisation of dogs from two years of age. For the community, this is a law that seeks to prevent unwanted or random dog pregnancies. Dogs that have been registered with their local government at the time the legislation commences will be exempt from this requirement. This exemption recognises that when those people purchased a dog, they would not have had an opportunity to consider the issue of sterilisation before proceeding with the purchase. However, to encourage owners to sterilise their dogs, owners will be able to register their unsterilised dogs only on an annual basis, while owners of sterilised dogs will be able to opt to register their dog every three years or for a lifetime.

The bill also provides an express exemption from mandatory sterilisation for livestock working dogs. This exemption will maximise the pool of dogs that are available to farmers and enable farmers to assess a dog's working abilities, which may not be evident for a number of years. Dogs that have been assessed by a vet as being unsuitable to be sterilised on health and welfare grounds will also be exempt from the requirement to be sterilised. The other exemption from sterilisation will be for those dogs whose owners have applied for and have been granted an approval to breed from their local government. The application process for approval to breed acts as an initial, or one-off, background check for any person who intends to breed from their dog. The purpose of this check is not to stop people from dog breeding. Rather, the system is designed to determine as much as possible and in relation to a district that a person who wishes to breed from their dog is a fit and proper person; has not breached relevant laws, such as the Animal Welfare Act 2002; and has facilities that are suitable for dog breeding. Any person who does not wish to breed but intends to keep their dog unsterilised from two years of age must also make an application. To ensure the system is flexible, the local government can request further information on applications and impose conditions when granting approval. There will also be the potential for ongoing monitoring, as local governments will be able to apply specific criteria in determining whether to cancel a person's approval to breed. Placing these powers with local governments recognises the specific needs and expectations of diverse communities across our state. These powers will be clearly balanced with review mechanisms. The system is designed to be fair, in providing applicants access to the review mechanism, both within the local government and/or through the State Administrative Tribunal.

Although people may choose to buy a dog through a breeder, some prospective dog owners choose to purchase a dog through a pet shop. Late last year, the community was given an insight into the way puppy farmers can use a legitimate business to sell their dogs. Who could forget the case of the boxer dog Strawberry, who was alleged to have been living at an interstate puppy farm? Strawberry was 10 months old when she gave birth to three puppies, and was reportedly sick and denied vet care. Strawberry subsequently died, but two of her puppies were allegedly sold to a Western Australian pet shop. The bill will provide that pet shops with a shopfront can source only stray, abandoned, seized and surrendered dogs and puppies for sale through approved shelters, pounds and rescue organisations. This bill, therefore, will give Western Australians another outlet from which to purchase previously unwanted or abandoned dogs.

The bill also provides for the registration of pet shops, pet shop dog suppliers, as well as dog breeders, in addition to the existing dog registration system. Currently, dog registration information is maintained by local governments. This creates issues in identifying dogs across districts, including dangerous dogs, as well as limiting the potential for information sharing and monitoring. The bill provides for the information from all these registers to be centrally located. The bill will also amend the Cat Act 2011 so that the centralised registration system will include registration information about cats and cat breeders. This tool will facilitate information collection, sharing and monitoring across local government districts and will assist with enforcement.

The system described has been designed to work with inquiring and diligent consumers who care about the welfare of the dogs that they purchase. Consumers should be aware that they could still run the risk of dealing with a puppy farmer if they buy dogs online or interstate, or if they take information provided by sellers without question. Dealing with puppy farmers, who scan the marketplace and adjust their behaviour to exploit opportunities, is an ongoing process. We are serious about taking on puppy farmers. Part of this commitment involves the inclusion of a review clause in the bill so that after five years of operation, we can take a step back and consider whether any improvements need to be made.

The provisions of the bill are ultimately about protecting the welfare of dogs. During a review of the Dog Amendment Act 2013, there was strong public support for the removal of the requirement for pet greyhounds to be muzzled in public places. Accordingly, the bill provides for the removal of the muzzling requirement for pet greyhounds. However, as a safeguard, pet greyhounds in public places will still be required to be on a lead. It is intended that removing the muzzling requirement will encourage more people to consider adopting a retired racing greyhound.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME (BEELIAR WETLANDS) BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 12 May.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [1.08 pm]: I rise to speak on this bill as the lead speaker for the opposition. I indicate at the outset that we are strongly opposed to the bill. I want to go through in some detail the many reasons why this is a completely flawed piece of legislation. In the first place, this bill represents planning vandalism. It ignores road safety concerns in the south metropolitan region of Perth, and I will talk a bit about a terrible accident on South Street that we heard about earlier today. Most importantly, this bill represents environmental hypocrisy. We were told in the second reading speech that the primary reason the bill is being introduced is to protect the environment. I will demonstrate clearly the hypocrisy behind that statement of the minister. If this bill is implemented, we will see a retardation of both imports and the export trade from Western Australia. This bill is the precursor to an utterly irresponsible financial act on the part of the government.

It is a bit sad when the first paragraph of a second reading speech says something that is just not true. In her second reading speech, the minister gave the reason this bill was not passed in the last Parliament, and I quote —

...could not be considered in the upper house due to the actions of delay by the Liberal Party.

What an absolutely untrue statement for the minister to make. The Liberal Party and the National Party did everything that this government asked to progress legislation. This Labor government identified 16 priority bills in the last Parliament. I might say that the minister introducing the previous bill—the puppy farming bill, as it is colloquially termed—also made the same comment. That bill and this bill were not prioritised by the government in the upper house. The Liberal Party and the National Party acceded to every demand this government made about bills that needed to be passed in this Parliament. We did not delay any bills in the upper house at all—none.

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: Really?

Dr D.J. HONEY: Who is making that comment, sorry?

If the member looks at what happened in the last Parliament, she will see that the only bill that was delayed through a long speech was the Human Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 when Hon Nick Goiran spoke —

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: Do you really want to open that gate?

Dr D.J. HONEY: Yes, I do.

Hon Nick Goiran spoke for an extended period on that bill. Why did he do that? He did that because this Labor government said that it had commissioned a \$225 000 report into surrogacy and that the report would be released before that surrogacy bill was discussed in Parliament. What happened as a consequence of that? Grudgingly, the health minister released that report. What did the report reveal? It revealed that the surrogacy bill would discriminate against women. Do members opposite know what their party did in response to that? It left that bill sitting on the table and did not introduce it for further discussion in the upper house.

The Liberal Party and the National Party did everything to facilitate the business of this government, and for the minister to say that this bill was delayed because of delays by the Liberal Party is utterly and totally disingenuous and is not verified by any facts whatsoever.

The minister talked about the significance of the Beeliar wetlands and said that the government will rezone 34 hectares. In the fifth paragraph, the minister outlines what is driving this bill and what is the importance of this bill. She states, in part —

... Roe 8 and the Perth Freight Link, it is our considered view that these reservations are no longer warranted given the environmental values of the wetlands and the government's freight strategy for the future.

Therefore, environmental values are at the centre of why this bill has been introduced into this Parliament.

Further on, the speech refers to the Westport Taskforce report. I will go through that in a little bit of detail and discuss how imperfect that process was as any sort of justification. It was a task force, in fact, acting under direction from the minister. It also belittles the Stephenson plan, an outstanding plan that looked at the long-term needs of freight in Western Australia.

I will talk about what is most concerning about this bill. We heard this in the briefing and I thank the minister for the briefing from her department and her office. The comment was made that parts of this bill will be subsequently incorporated into the metropolitan region scheme amendment. The question was asked: why does the government simply not wait? We are told that the government has an urgent legislative program, yet it is taking up legislative time in this Parliament and in the upper house—we know that at the end of this Parliament, it is likely that some bills will not have gone through—with this bill when, as I understand it, everything the government wants to achieve could be achieved by an amendment to the metropolitan region scheme. I am told that it takes about two years to amend the metropolitan region scheme. Some further questions were asked and it suddenly became clear, to us at least, why that process was not being followed. One of the things that has to be done for a metropolitan region scheme amendment is a traffic impact assessment that asks, “If you make this change, if you cancel this road reserve and convert it into an A-class reserve, what will be the impact on traffic in other affected areas?” That is a question this government does not want answered. By doing it this way, when it comes to the MRS amendment, this road reserve will already have been cancelled and will therefore not need to be considered for that amendment. The opposition knows the truth of any review of the impact of removing this road easement on traffic in the southern corridor. That impact will be a nightmare situation for the many people who have to use that corridor.

The second reading speech read in last time when the bill was first introduced referred to threatening the wetlands, which I will go through and discuss in some detail, and that the bill was about getting on with the job and so on. The minister mentioned that in the short term, the government would deal with some of the traffic chaos by increasing the amount of freight on rail, and I congratulate the minister for that achievement. In Western Australia there is more freight on rail, but I point out just how insignificant that is in terms of the total traffic that rail will take off the roads compared with the total increase we will see.

I refer to the very start of the analysis carried out by Westport. I have with me issue 8 of the *Westport Beacon* dated August 2019, which is an analysis of the various options for the port, titled “Why Fremantle can't handle the long-term freight task alone”. The back page of the report asks, “Would Roe 8 have enabled Fremantle to make the shortlist?” Members, there is a pretty straightforward answer to that question —

Westport did not consider the Roe 8/9 road corridor in our technical studies as the State Government made a firm commitment not to build it at the last State election.

There you go. The task force did not even look at that option, and by doing that, in effect, excluded the option of keeping Fremantle port open in the longer term. That was at the start of the Westport review process.

I will go through this in a little bit of detail for the benefit of new members in this house. When we look at the road easement —

Ms S.E. Winton: Do you want this bill passed?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I suspect the member for Wanneroo considers herself a bit of an environmental warrior, someone who cares about the environment, so she may want to listen to this very carefully, because I think she will be aghast at the impact this bill will have on the environment in Western Australia.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Let me put it his way: if the member is true to her environmental credentials, she will be aghast. If we go to *Westport Beacon* issue 7 —

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: This is only the start of the impact, members. I will go through the corridor and where the easement was established in Beeliar, because the government would like people to think that we would have plunged a road straight through the middle of the wetlands, over all the reeds and nesting habitat, including the turtle nesting areas. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. One of the joys in this place is that I get an hour to take members through the some of the details, and by the end of that time members will be clamouring to go and start protesting outside the minister's office!

Let us look at the options. The justification for this bill is that government will establish the outer harbour at Kwinana.

Mr R.R. Whitby: Aren't you a big supporter of the outer harbour?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I believe that the government's proposal is environmental vandalism in the outer harbour.

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will go through that in detail, because we know, member for Baldvis —

Mr R.R. Whitby interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We know that time moves on. I can tell the minister —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Minister!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very appreciative of it.

If I can tell the member for Baldvis and minister one thing, it is that when I come into this place, I represent the people of Western Australia, not my former employer—as I am sure the minister does!

Let us look at Westport option 1. Many government members will know about this, if any of them have read the environmental studies. I will refer to an excellent 2006 study carried out on the impact of an outer harbour on Cockburn Sound.

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Perhaps if members listened to me, they would be concerned as well. I did some rough calculations on option 1. If we look only at the area that is the land-backed option —

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am concerned that members' constant interjections mean that they do not care about the environment, and we will see the truth of that when we see the outcome of this decision.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Option 1 is a two kilometre by 750 metre land-backed port out into the harbour. Let us not talk about any other associated channels and infrastructure! Members should commit these numbers to memory. It will decimate 150 hectares of Cockburn Sound sea floor and seagrass. Option 4 is not land-backed; it is stuck out into the harbour and is 2.5 kilometres by 250 metres. That will be 62.5 hectares, but that is right in the middle of the seagrass area. Option 5 is 2.1 kilometres by 550 metres; again, it is a little out from the shore, but it is right in the middle of the seagrass area and comprises 115.5 hectares. We can see that anywhere between 60 and 150 hectares of Cockburn Sound will be affected by this decision, at a minimum. This is just for the physical area of the port. At least some members here would know that Cockburn Sound is an extremely delicate marine environment that was under considerable stress back in the 1950s and 1960s; in fact, companies were disposing effluent directly into the harbour, which caused damage. There was considerable effort throughout the 80s and 90s to recover the quality of the harbour and, as I say, I will have a chance to talk about that a little more.

Let us talk about where the Roe 8 and Roe 9 easement was going. The minister and certain people who campaigned against this road would have it that this road would plunge through a pristine part of the Beeliar wetlands, reeds, water, turtle nesting habitat and the like, when nothing could be further from the truth. I encourage members to look at where the easement goes. I bothered to go down and look at the area. What did I see? Roe 8 and Roe 9 was not going through any wet part of that area at all; in fact, it was to go through a highly degraded part that is a raised area between the north and south Beeliar lakes. When we go to where the road was going, do members know what is there? It is a powerline easement with a cleared track underneath it. Let us go 100 metres to the south of that. Do members know what else is going straight through there? It is Hope Road. Hope Road completely intersects the area.

Hope Road is a raised platform road that acts as a dangerous barrier to wildlife, particularly the turtles that breed throughout that area. I asked during the briefing what would happen to that powerline easement and Hope Road. They are both staying there. In fact, the alignment of the Roe 8–Roe 9 extension would have largely been covered by the existing cleared powerline easement. I know there was a frantic effort to plant some plants for the government to try to demonstrate it was something else, but that is the truth of it. Both the powerline easement and Hope Road will continue to exist, regardless of whether this bill is passed.

Let us look at the area that is affected. Members should remember what I said before. Just for the port—although the area is much more extensive—the government is talking about affecting an area of between 60 and 150 hectares in Cockburn Sound, which is an extremely delicate marine environment that is under considerable stress, all for the purpose of saving something less than two hectares in Beelihar. The government is prepared to sacrifice vast areas of Cockburn Sound for the port, which is substantially greater than the area that will be affected in the Beelihar wetlands. I will go through that now.

Bulletin 1230, published in September 2006, is an excellent study on the outer harbour by the Environmental Protection Authority and is titled *Fremantle Ports outer harbour project*. Members should take note of the reference and go and read it. This report refers to a number of things, such as consultation and it makes some references to consultation. It states —

- The Cockburn Sound Management Council (CSMC), in its submission to Fremantle Ports, highlighted the concern that the nature and scale of the development pose a potential for significant and possibly irreversible effects impacts upon the marine environment of Cockburn Sound.

The report goes on to talk about the benthic primary producer habitat, and I think some members here would know the importance of that. We know that Cockburn Sound is a critical breeding ground for pink snapper, amongst other species. That is an important fish generally, but a very important fish for recreational fishers. We know that disruption to that habitat is a significant environmental matter. Members should remember that a primary justification for this easement being obliterated forever is so that Roe 8 and Roe 9 cannot go through and to prevent development forever to protect a couple of hectares of area between the two lakes, an area that is already highly degraded.

I have already indicated that between 60 and 150 hectares of Cockburn Sound will be directly affected by the port construction itself. I will read selectively from page 12 of the bulletin, which states —

From the available information, each of the port options will cause the cumulative loss thresholds set out in the EPA's in Guidance Statement No. 29 to be exceeded for both seagrass and sandy habitat that once supported seagrass.

I will read out what those impacts are. These are not the same options exactly that were considered by the task force but rather the scale of impacts one could expect. Table 1 on page 13 of the bulletin refers to the calculated areas of direct loss of each benthic primary producer habitat. Cockburn Sound is a critical, environmentally important and environmentally sensitive habitat. Any member who is a student of the history of Cockburn Sound will know that that area is in stasis at the moment. A lot of work was done to stop sediments and nutrients going into the sound, and there was some improvement, but there has been no net improvement for some time. Effectively, the area has baselined. The degradation that is there remains and there has been no improvement. I think all members accept that it is an important area. I will go through the four options. The total area in hectares of benthic primary producer habitat that will be affected for the four options is 337.42 hectares, 397.85 hectares—almost 400 hectares—386.78 hectares and 364.2 hectares. That is why I said at the outset that any member who is concerned about the environment, cares about Cockburn Sound and votes for this bill—because you all just follow on like sheep and do what you are told—will be voting for environmental impacts on the sound and pink snapper breeding habitats. Rather than continuing the expansion of the inner harbour, government members will be voting for that destruction to save around two hectares of degraded land that is not actually within the wetland. Government members are seeking to trade off a couple of hectares of highly degraded land that is not wetland for the destruction of around 400 hectares of critical seagrass habitat in Cockburn Sound.

The Roe 8 and 9 project was developed by, and was a priority for, the previous government primarily to take a substantial amount of traffic off the main southern corridors of South Street and Leach Highway; it was not about Fremantle harbour. Those two roads are at capacity. Any members from the southern suburbs —

Mrs L.M. O'Malley: It's called the Perth Freight Link.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Member, it can be called anything—like some of the government's bills. The government seems to have a habit of giving interesting titles to its bills these days.

The primary purpose of that proposed road was to take traffic off South Street and Leach Highway. I will go through that, members. The April 2006 Main Roads Western Australia report titled *Developing transport networks; Delivering safer roads* states, under the heading "Improve road safety", that Roe 8 will reduce —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Did you just say Perth Freight Link? Freight link! Did you read that out? I didn't hear you; could you read that out again?

Dr D.J. HONEY: As I said, minister, I am fascinated by some of the titles of the government's bills.

Mr W.J. Johnston: This is not a bill; this is a road project.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister is a learned man and he likes to read —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister should listen.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr W.J. Johnston: Read it again to me.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will read it to the minister several times. The report states that Roe 8 will take 6 900 trucks off the road. Does the minister know what else it will take off the roads? It will take 74 100 light vehicles off the road. Why?

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is because that —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Read the whole thing—100 000 trucks on Stirling Highway.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I hope that Hansard catches that comment.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The Fremantle tunnel that was part of that project would have removed around 4 700 trucks and 40 300 light vehicles per day off those roads. That was the point of the project.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you for the first time.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The point of the project was to remove light vehicles from those roads. Members can focus on the title of that particular report, but the impact would have been improved safety. This government does not care about improving safety on those two roads. As we saw today, they are dangerous roads that people are scared to use. The ministers on the other side of the chamber can smirk and laugh all they like but the truth is they do not care about safety. What happened on South Street this morning? There was a collision between a truck and a bus that swerved to avoid another vehicle. Dreadfully, and terribly, it has been reported that a student was seriously injured in that accident, with a punctured lung and severe back injuries. That is the problem with that road—people are terrified to use it. People are scared to use South Street and Leach Highway because they have to interact with trucks constantly. They have to interact with thousands of trucks every day, and this minister does not want to take those trucks off those roads.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am fascinated by the minister's ignorance of Roe 8 and Roe 9. The minister has decided to completely spike critical infrastructure for Western Australia by stopping that project but she does not even know the purpose of that road.

Ms R. Saffioti: You're politicising an accident.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will politicise the planning and environmental vandalism that the minister is enacting in this Parliament today. The minister does not care about the safety of road users —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! The Leader of the Liberal Party will get back to the topic, please.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am responding to interjections from the minister, thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Ms R. Saffioti: You're politicising an accident. It's disgusting.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am politicising the minister's wilful disregard for the safety of people who use Leach Highway and South Street.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister! Leader of the Liberal Party, through the chair, please.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker; I certainly will.

This minister does not care about the safety of road users on Leach Highway and South Street. If she did care, she would not be enacting this bill to stop the construction of Roe 8 and 9, because that project would remove the great majority of trucks and around 10 times more light vehicles from those roads and substantially reduce congestion on those roads. That would add to the amenity for everyone who lives in the southern suburbs and needs to travel east to west or west to east on those roads.

I have been through some numbers. If we look at some facts, between 2009 and 2013, 72 per cent of crashes on Leach Highway were rear-end collisions because of congestion on that road. That is almost double the metropolitan average of 43.5 per cent. The metropolitan average of crashes involving heavy vehicles is 5.4 per cent, but on Leach Highway, between Stirling Highway and Kwinana Freeway, the number of crashes in that period that involved heavy vehicles was 11.1 per cent—that is more than twice the metropolitan average. That is because of the high density of heavy vehicles on that road. On Roe Highway between Kwinana Freeway and Willeri Drive, 31 per cent of crashes involved heavy vehicles, and on it goes.

Again, for those members who consider themselves to care about the environment, it was estimated that if the construction of Roe 8 and 9 went through, it would have led to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of somewhere around 450 000 tonnes out to 2031. We also know—this perhaps goes back to the confusion that some members had—that when the outer harbour was originally considered, it was done on the basis that by about 2017, I think it was, or some time around that period, Fremantle harbour would be at capacity. That was why people looked at the outer harbour and said that if we were going to continue to grow container freight, we would need another port. That was the basis of the early comments on that, but what has Fremantle port done? We have seen a considerable extension to the North Mole and the storage area there.

Mrs L.M. O'Malley: Destroying Port Beach!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Member, whatever it did, it is there.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Ms S.E. Winton: You're an embarrassment!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am intrigued by members' objections, but don't be rude, at least!

Ms R. Saffioti: What have you said about me?

Dr D.J. HONEY: You have featured heavily, minister.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr D.J. HONEY: In fact, the port handles about 800 000 what are called 20-foot equivalent units every year, but that port has the capacity to handle at least treble that number of containers.

Ms R. Saffioti: All those extra trucks!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Minister, I have looked at those numbers as well.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr D.J. HONEY: As the minister would know —

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mount Lawley!

Dr D.J. HONEY: What a ruse! I am fascinated by the minister's comment, because the traffic that travels south from the port takes containers to specific clients. The number of containers going down Stirling Highway will not change. Curtin Avenue is definitely not a major freight route, as the minister would know. As the minister would know, Stirling Highway is, and, in fact —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr D.J. HONEY: In fact —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr D.J. HONEY: There is some —

Ms R. Saffiotti interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Dr D.J. HONEY: There is some leakage of traffic. The truck drivers are so frustrated, because it is not only the car drivers who are terrified about traffic on Leach Highway and South Street —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for Transport! Member for Bicton!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Not only are commuters terrified by the traffic density on Stirling Highway and Leach Highway, but also the truck drivers.

Ms R. Saffiotti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for Transport!

Dr D.J. HONEY: As we saw with the accident that happened today, the truck driver had to respond quickly to a vehicle turning out, and that is what truck drivers are terrified about—cars pulling out in front of them, pulling out on them or braking suddenly in front of them. Because it is so hard for some of those truck drivers to get down Leach Highway and South Street alongside the commuters, they will drift north. If it were easier to go east from there, we would see more trucks going east and less demand. It will do nothing to stop container freight travelling on Curtin Avenue and Stirling Highway and servicing the businesses on the north coast.

Ms R. Saffiotti interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister can live in whatever fantasy land she likes, but that is a fact.

Ms R. Saffiotti interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: What we see is a current port —

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister! Member for Mount Lawley! Carry on, Leader of the Liberal Party.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. What we see is a port that could at least treble in capacity —

Ms R. Saffiotti interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for Transport, I call you for the first time.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. What we see is a port that could be doubled in capacity for almost no expenditure and could be trebled in capacity. In fact, we are told that the existing port could go to maybe over 3.2 million TEUs, but instead this government is going to waste billions of dollars on a port that is not required. As we have heard in this chamber day after day, there are real priorities in this state, but clearly this government is not prepared to deal with those priorities.

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mount Lawley!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I tell you what, the member for Mount Lawley should come and wake me up when we are getting over three million containers out of Fremantle port, because when that happens, in all probability, he will not be on this earth, neither will I, and his children may not be either. I hope they live to a ripe old age. The simple truth is that that port has enormous capacity to handle all the required freight trade for many decades. The only constraint on that port is the ability to get freight in and out. The previous Liberal–National government had an excellent plan for that. Let us talk about the interim.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Members, there is a lot of material to cover.

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mount Lawley!

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Kingsley! Members, thank you. Leader of the Liberal Party.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Through the chair.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will need your protection more often. This is clearly a passionate topic for the members opposite.

As I said at the outset of my contribution, the government has done a good job in increasing rail freight; Western Australia leads Australia in the amount of rail container traffic, at a cost, I might say, and that cost is a subsidy of \$50 a container to get it on rail. Nevertheless, I think the minister can rightly be proud that she has put actions in place to take some vehicles off the road and onto rail. The minister's stated aim is to ultimately increase that figure to around 30 per cent. Despite some early success in that area, it appears that increase has flatlined substantially, so there is a question of whether we will get to 30 per cent, but let us have a look at that. Potentially, if the minister meets her own benchmark, around another 10 per cent of freight can go onto rail. Freight at that port is growing at about five per cent per annum. I am not sure whether COVID made a bit of a blip on that number, but that is what it is doing. If we use a conservative figure of three per cent per annum, that means that in the next 10 years, freight through Fremantle port will increase by 36 per cent. What we know from the government's rail strategy is that only 10 per cent of that 36 per cent of freight can use rail, so 26 per cent of that freight will continue to go where it is going now because there is no way that this new harbour can be built in that time.

In fact, I had a meeting with Main Roads Western Australia and there is another issue. The member for Fremantle would know about the concerns about replacing the old Queen Victoria Street traffic bridge and where that traffic will go. To the good credit of the minister, she has taken on the concerns of the electorate and is going to look at what options do not impact on the residents as much as the plan announced by the state government. I had a briefing in the minister's office about that project. Her officers from Main Roads told me that that harbour will be operational until at least 2037, which clearly implies that it will be longer. But what will happen in the meantime? Roe 8 and Roe 9 could be started right now—talk about a shovel-ready project! We have \$1.2 billion of federal money sitting in the coffers. That road could be started right now. Over the next 10 years, we are going to see a 26 per cent increase in freight on the roads. The problems we have now on South Street and Leach Highway will substantially worsen because of this terrible decision by the state government. A number of people have commented on this matter. A couple of years ago, in 2018, there was a great article in PerthNow titled “Gareth Parker: How will future WA judge Labor's Roe 8 call?” He outlined in some detail the shortcomings of cancelling that project. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia also commented at that time on the intention of the government to cancel Roe 8 and 9. Its article titled “Scrapping Roe 8 would set ‘bad precedent’” referred to a number of matters, in particular the importance of that project to Western Australia. It states —

Roe 8, Roe 9 and the greater Perth Freight Link project will provide critical relief from crippling road congestion and boost productivity for businesses across the metropolitan area—time lost in traffic jams is time and money taken away from running a successful business, creating jobs and stimulating the economy.

Members would have seen recently in the press the estimates of just how much congestion is already costing people in Western Australia and how much money it is taking out of, and how much substantial harm it is causing to, our economy. Let us talk about the financial impact of this project. We have heard the government say that this project will cost around \$5 billion. That should have all members quaking in their boots. I will go to another signature project of the government—the Metronet project. This government boasts that it has had its projects costed by Treasury and that the numbers are accurate. What was the estimate for Metronet? I believe that it may have included “Metronet 2.0”, but let us ignore that because “Metronet 2.0” has not seen the light of day.

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I tell members what; they set a low benchmark.

Mr T. Healy interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southern River!

Mr T. Healy interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southern River! I call you for the first and second time.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Let us get to the estimates of this government that has gold-standard transparency. Does the minister remember the estimate for Metronet? She should probably know. It was going to cost \$1.9 billion. What was the figure in the last budget papers? She should not lecture me about estimates of cost. This government has Treasury —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, members. It is almost question time. Let us see whether we can get there in silence; that would be great.

Dr D.J. HONEY: This government has the Treasury bench and we have been told that it has gone through this detailed costing process. What is the latest estimate for Metronet? Come on, have a wild guess, members.

Mr V.A. Catania: It is \$10 billion.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Members may recall that when I came to Parliament and the minister and the Premier were carrying on about the Metronet project and responding, the member for North West Central said, “I believe that the Metronet project is going to cost around \$10 billion.” I think that the government should probably get him into Treasury because —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Dr D.J. HONEY: If we compare \$10 billion with the current estimate, boy is that member close. The current estimate for Metronet is \$7 billion, and that is before the incompetent management of that project delivers even more cost blow-outs. That project has had the largest cost blow-out of any capital project in the history of the state; that is the minister’s record.

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burns Beach!

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister must be a pretty fearsome character in cabinet because she has managed to get that through and now we are hearing that the outer harbour has received \$5 billion. Goodness knows whether that project will cost \$15 billion or \$20 billion, because, quite clearly, this government cannot be trusted on any of the numbers it estimates for projects. This is a multibillion-dollar project that is not required by the community of Western Australia or the state in the foreseeable future. It appears purely to score some minor point for the government to say that it is doing this, which is going to save two hectares of land that actually sits between degraded land, which is a power line easement, and an existing road. This government is going to save that land but waste billions of dollars. This state needs those billions of dollars. The Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister for Health come into this chamber on a daily basis and outline the utter failings of this government in health. We hear lots of stories in this Parliament. We hear that the Minister for Health has tried to get support for more funding. The Minister for Health can tell us whether that is the case. I hope he does get more funding, but clearly he has not been successful in doing that and is having to make the best of the job with what he has got. The Minister for Planning has the ear of the Premier; Treasurer in getting billions of dollars for a project that represents, as I said, the worst of planning vandalism and ignores the road safety concerns of the people who live in the southern part of our metropolitan area. Day in and day out, those people have to travel along Leach Highway and South Street and interact and put up with those large trucks travelling next to them, terrified as they take their kids to school or try to get to work. The truck drivers are sitting on the edge of their seats, literally worried that someone will pull out in front of them, worried that they do not have safe access and worried about having to constantly stop and start along those roads. Something like 18 stops or traffic lights on that road would have been removed. It is environmental hypocrisy. As I said, as much as two hectares of degraded area will be saved, but this will impact over 400 hectares of that critically endangered benthic habitat in Cockburn Sound. That is the plan of members in this place. That is how much they care about the environment. That is the consequence of this decision.

As I have also pointed out, given that we will see an increase in road freight of at least 30 per cent before this project could ever possibly be built, whatever road chaos we have now will be made substantially worse by the government’s decision not to build the road that would deal with that traffic density issue. Instead of doing that, the government is holding its breath and trying to score some little point here, and is going to destroy 400 hectares of benthic habitat in Cockburn Sound. What is the consequence of that? It is going to make it increasingly harder over the next 10 years to get freight in and out of the port of Fremantle. That will put a constraint on trade. As I have said, I recognise the effort of putting freight on rail. But the effort on rail cannot possibly cope. It looks like that has flatlined, so we will see around a 30 per cent increase in traffic in just 10 years. It is very unlikely that the new port can be constructed in that time.

As I point out finally, it is also utterly financially irresponsible. I know we have a big surplus. But I reckon that today, the Minister for Health could put that \$5 billion into helping develop some long-term solutions that we need for the health crisis in this state.

For those reasons, we are strongly opposed to this bill. It is not too late, minister. There is time for the minister to stop this bill and proceed with Roe 8 and 9.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1186.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ELECTIVE SURGERY

173. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the waitlists for elective surgeries. Can the minister confirm that the surgical lists for elective surgeries have been suspended at some hospitals and that some trauma patients are being sent home at others, due to the minister’s mismanagement of the health portfolio; and for how long will this continue?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. I was just wondering whether the member could clarify what she means by a “trauma patient”?

Ms L. Mettam: In clarification, I understand that some patients with broken bones are being sent home from some hospitals—trauma patients are waiting to be sent back because of bed issues.

Mr R.H. COOK: Being sent home with a broken bone does not necessarily mean that the hospital services are not there to treat you. It is another way that they treat. I know that when I fell off my bike when I was attacked by a stationary fence back in 2017 and I went to the emergency department, I was sent home, in the appropriate way, to then come back and have my operation in due course. Therefore, that is not a sign that the hospital system is in any way not functioning properly.

However, it is true to say that our hospital system is under enormous pressure at the moment. Because of that, we are expecting our health service providers to adapt to this situation to ensure that we can get to those patients who are most acute in time according to their need. The level of demand at the moment is unprecedented. Our ED presentations this quarter alone, compared with the same quarter this time last year, really provide a great illustration of that. At the moment, category 1 patients are up four per cent, category 2 are up over 10 per cent, and category 3 are up over six per cent, compared with the first quarter of 2020. We are seeing a significant increase in the number of patients presenting to our emergency departments. That is being mirrored right across the country—EDs are all suffering from an extraordinary increase in both the number of patients and the acuity of those presentations, and from the level of mental health and other acute conditions presenting. That puts a pressure on all our hospital systems. Our system is moving to cope with this unprecedented level of demand by making sure that we can prioritise those patients who need treatment and care most urgently. That includes working with our elective surgery lists to make sure that we have the beds available for those patients presenting to EDs with acute and urgent needs in relation to their care, and that is what we do all the time.

Last night, the Premier and I met with the director general of health to discuss these issues. We agreed with the director general of health that it is important that we reschedule those people who are category 1 and non-urgent category 2 in order to adapt for the urgent patients who are presenting to our EDs. We want to make sure that those who have urgent and acute needs are met with urgent and acute levels of services. That is why we are making these decisions to ensure that our hospital system continues to adapt. Because of the great work of our hospital system, including a \$36 million investment by the McGowan government, we caught up on all those elective surgeries —

Mr P.J. Rundle: You’re 10 000 behind.

Mr R.H. COOK: That is just incorrect, member for Roe, and once again you are undermining your own credibility through your interjections.

Through our \$36 million investment last year, we have caught up on all those people who had their surgeries rescheduled as a result of the COVID pandemic. We will continue to work with those elective surgery lists to ensure that we can get to those people in good and proper time. That includes the fact that we have the same pre-COVID level of operations taking place and the same number of people in terms of over-boundary that we did prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our hospitals are adapting. They are making all the decisions necessary to ensure that we can get to those patients who are presenting to our EDs with urgent and acute conditions. We are continuing to expand our hospital system. That includes an extra 117 beds, 81 of which have already been brought onstream and the rest will be by August this year. We are recruiting extra nurses. We are also doing recruitment drives, both interstate and internationally, to try to make sure that we continue to grow our medical workforce, which is a major constraint in our system at the moment. Our system is under pressure. We expect our health service providers to adapt to that pressure, and they are making the appropriate decisions of rescheduling non-urgent elective surgery in order to make sure that we get to those most urgent and acute patients who are presenting to our EDs.

ELECTIVE SURGERY

174. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. The minister may joke about this, but these are patients who are suffering. Answer the question: when will the suspension on these surgeries end; and can the minister now admit that we have a health crisis in WA?

The SPEAKER: Just before the minister answers, member, you made a statement, and then you asked a supplementary question. I would ask that in future you just ask the supplementary question.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

What we need to do is make sure that we get to those patients who need urgent care for their acute conditions in the clinically required time. That is why we continue to adapt our elective surgery waitlists to ensure that we can get to those patients in critical need. This is what we would expect of any hospital and health system: to make sure that we get to those who are most urgent and in need of care in the first instance, and then get to those others who can wait a short while.

Obviously, we apologise to anyone who has had to have their surgery rescheduled, but this has always been the way of our public health system—adapting to the needs as those needs arise. Our health service providers are doing a great job, and we will continue to make sure that we can get to all those people who need their surgery within the clinically required time to continue to provide great health care for the people of Western Australia.

STATE ECONOMY

175. Mr M. HUGHES to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant investment in creating more jobs for Western Australians and driving the state's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Can the Premier update the house on what today's national account figures reveal about this government's unprecedented efforts in supporting the state's economy, and outline what this has meant for business?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Kalamunda for the question and congratulate him on his very strong result in the state election a couple of months ago.

Throughout the pandemic, our focus has been on keeping Western Australians healthy and ensuring that we have a very strong economy that is creating jobs for our citizens. On both measures we have had some of the best results in Australia and potentially the best results in the world. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian national accounts figures that came out today show that the domestic economy grew by three per cent in the March quarter. That was by far the strongest growth in Australia. It was double the national domestic economy's growth—that is the average of all the states and territories—double the growth in New South Wales, the so-called gold standard, which had 1.5 per cent; double the growth in South Australia and Tasmania; and seven and a half times the growth in Queensland. It also means that the domestic economy in Western Australia is bigger than it was when we came to government, despite the greatest economic shock in 100 years. That is what happens when the government manages the pandemic as we have and also has a plan for economic recovery and jobs.

Our economic activity has been underpinned by strong business investment. In March, business investment grew by 11.5 per cent, which is the largest increase in nine years. It highlights the strong confidence in the Western Australian economy. Business investment now exceeds what it was when we came to government. It is up by more than seven per cent from March 2017.

In the March quarter, dwelling investment grew by 7.3 per cent. That follows the strong building approval figures released recently. The building approval figures released yesterday show Western Australia has recorded the fastest rate of annual growth in building approvals on record, in history, under the measures we put in place to ensure that we kept our dwelling investment and building industry very strong.

I think Western Australians can be very pleased with the efforts they have put in over the course of the last 18 months or so to ensure that our economy is strong and that we once again lead the nation. Of course, just so new members are aware, prior to us coming to office, Western Australia was in the first domestic recession on record. We have turned that around and turned the finances around and now we have the strongest-growing economy in Australia, despite the economic headwinds that this state has been facing.

HOUSING — AVAILABILITY

176. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I refer to the 16 000 households on the waitlist for social housing, the record 120 tenancy hearings listed in the Magistrates Court today and the 197 public housing tenancy termination notices issued since 29 March 2021. Does the Premier share the opinion of Shelter WA, Anglicare WA, Centrecare, Circle Green Community Legal, Foundation Housing, the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia, the Western Australian Council of Social Service, the Western Australian Association for Mental Health and the Financial Counsellors' Association of Western Australia that this warrants a crisis in our housing sector?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I am not sure of the member's use of the English language, but I have a couple of things to report. I just outlined in the last question that we have the strongest investment growth in housing in history. There are more houses and greater housing investment than has been the case at any point in history.

Ms M.J. Davies: There's 16 000 on the waitlist.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member asked me a question. I do not interject on you and then you interject the entire way through my answer.

We have the strongest investment in housing, in history, going on in Western Australia because we put the HomeBuilder grant scheme in place. We also did not put any sort of requirements around it that prevented investors coming into the market. All these investors have come into the market who will provide rental housing for people out there across Western Australia because of the measure we put in place. The issues surrounding housing have largely come about because Australian permanent residents are returning home in record numbers and are seeking

housing. We largely closed down interstate fly-in fly-out. Those people have come from the east to live in Western Australia. Those things have promoted huge demand for residential housing in Western Australia. Neither of those things, in particular the number of returning Australians because of the pandemic, was at all predictable. No-one in the entire world knew that was going to happen, but it happened, so we have to deal with it. What did we do? We put in place measures to deal with it, which have created the biggest housing construction boom we have seen. That will obviously free up properties over time, but I cannot magic up houses from thin air when thousands of Australians are returning and people are coming here from the east in numbers we have not seen before. I cannot magic houses up out of thin air and I think, broadly, most Western Australians understand that.

We have made investments in public housing. We have invested about \$1 billion in public housing and \$100 million a year in homelessness services. The Common Ground facilities are in the pre-construction phase. We are providing additional beds for emergency accommodation in consultation with the City of Perth. That is all happening as we speak. This is a once-in-100-years event. We are coping with it like all states are coping with it, but the measures we have put in place will mean a massive expansion in housing and dwelling capacity that will obviously make a difference over time.

HOUSING — AVAILABILITY

177. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Ten groups form the Housing Emergency Response Group. Why has the Premier failed to respond to a letter dated 6 May sent to him by this group, calling for immediate action and calling the situation we are faced with a crisis; and, when will the government act?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I am unaware of a letter, but I will outline the situation to the Leader of the Opposition again. Some of those groups I have met and seen in the last little while. In any event, I outlined the Common Ground facilities. Obviously, we have set aside support for two of those facilities to be constructed—one in the city and one in Mandurah. There is money for a 100-bed crisis and transitional accommodation facility that the Minister for Housing and Minister for Community Services are working on, and then there is the \$100 million of services that we provide each and every year for homelessness services across the state. That is all ongoing. That is what we are doing. But, as I said —

Ms M.J. Davies: This group said it's not enough, Premier.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will repeat it to the Leader of the Opposition. Did the Leader of the Opposition predict the pandemic and that tens of thousands of Australians would return home? Did she know that was going to happen? Tens of thousands, in fact, hundreds of thousands of people are coming home and not going back overseas. A lot of Australians have lived overseas for decades. They are coming home with no intention of going back overseas because Australia, and particularly Western Australia, is the best and safest place in the world. They are deciding to stay here and they want accommodation, so they are occupying rentals or buying homes. One of the other things we did—I will outline it again—was to work with the companies to close down interstate FIFO. What has that done? It has meant that all those people who work in those industries, particularly mining, have moved to Western Australia, often with their extended family, and are occupying properties here. Is that a bad thing? That is actually a good thing. That is one of the good things that we did last year that will strengthen Western Australia over time.

Mr R.S. Love: It has consequences.

Mr M. McGOWAN: As the member for Moore said, it has consequences. One of the consequences is that it is great for the Western Australian economy. The member may not like it. The tone of the member for Moore's commentary is that he prefers interstate FIFO. That is the tone of his commentary. Obviously, we do not, so we have a different point of view to the Nationals WA. We want these people to come and live here and we are making sure more accommodation and more housing is being built to ensure that they can be accommodated in the long term.

PLAN FOR JOBS

178. Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts in creating local jobs and providing more local content through its unprecedented plan for jobs. Can the minister update the house on how the government's landmark Western Australian Jobs Act and the Western Australian industry participation strategy are supporting local businesses and helping to create more local jobs, including across regional Western Australia?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for Cockburn for the question and acknowledge his lifetime commitment to working Western Australians and their lives.

As the Premier just pointed out, we could not predict the global pandemic and the health consequences associated with that. In addition, there have been economic consequences as a result of the global pandemic, and the McGowan government has made getting Western Australians back into the workplace an absolute priority as we continue to navigate a path out of the global pandemic. The McGowan government's number one priority is jobs for

Western Australians, making sure that we can continue to provide great livelihoods and great lives for working Western Australians in this state. That is a reason why one of our keystone commitments in the election campaign was the *WA Labor plan for jobs*. That plan contains a renewed focus on the creation of employment opportunities for Western Australians, particularly from major government projects and the benefits that come from them. At the core of that initiative was the introduction of the Western Australian Jobs Act 2017 and the Western Australian industry participation strategy, both of which were successfully enacted in the last Parliament. That has meant that, for the first time, legislation and policy covers all forms of government procurement across all government agencies.

When WAIPS came into operation in 2018, the economic and business outcomes that were subsequently unlocked were tracked through the combined use of participation plans and reporting initiatives. I am pleased to say that between October 2018 and March 2021, the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation has received 486 reported projects with a contract value of \$4.1 billion. Those projects contain commitments for over 42 000 WA jobs, including 2 500 apprenticeships and traineeships, and of those jobs, 10 300, or approximately 25 per cent, are in regional Western Australia, including 751 apprenticeships and traineeships. As part of these outcomes, Western Australian content was averaging 91 per cent for all reported contracts. Indeed, many of those projects exceeded that average and were built with 100 per cent local content—324 projects, in fact—which covered 27 482 Western Australian jobs. There is no doubt that WAIPS has been incredibly successful in ensuring that all agencies utilise their procurement strategies to the greatest effect by creating Western Australian jobs.

In 2020, the work of the McGowan government went even further with the enactment of the Western Australian Buy Local policy. This policy heavily emphasises the role of regional small and medium-sized enterprises, and supports them through stronger regional price preference, training and increased access to information regarding future opportunities. The Premier set a target of 3 000 jobs in the regions during the first year of the application of the WA Buy Local policy. I am pleased to report that that target has been exceeded, with over 4 000 jobs recorded by the end of April 2021.

The WA government remains committed to securing more jobs for Western Australians, whether it is through the manufacturing of Metronet railcars, the production of wind farm components or the promotion of the local capability fund that supports Aboriginal businesses. The McGowan Labor government is incredibly proud of its record in and commitment to creating WA jobs. We will continue to make sure that Western Australians benefit most from our great Buy Local policies and our procurement strategies, which are providing a record opportunity for WA businesses not only in the metropolitan area, but also right across regional WA to provide a future for working Western Australians.

WATER PRICES — INCREASES

179. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Water:

I refer to the estimated \$5.1 billion dividend from Water Corporation projected over the forward estimates. How can the minister justify further water price increases on struggling Western Australians, many of whom are currently facing rental increases of between 10 and 20 per cent?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I am happy that the Leader of the Liberal Party asked me that question. The fact that we have kept water price increases to approximately the rate of inflation this year—last year, water prices actually went down—shows how we have gone above and beyond to make sure that families can pay their water bills without undue stress. Compare that with what members opposite did when they were last in government. Between 2009–10 and 2016–17, the former Liberal government increased the price of water bills for families above the rate of inflation every single year, with a 6.7 per cent increase, a 10.8 per cent increase and an 8.5 per cent increase. It just went on every year. In budget after budget, the former Liberal government increased the price of water by above the rate of inflation. In its eight years, water prices went up by 66.8 per cent. What has this government done? Since we came to government, there has been a 13.1 per cent increase, plus the increase that was just announced in this budget, so our record on water price increases is far superior to anything the former government ever did.

Apart from looking at the raw numbers, a better way of dealing with this issue is to look at the number of people who have had their water cut off because they could not pay their bills. Under the former Liberal government, that number increased almost every year. In the last full year that members opposite were in government, when the current Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Water, 2 500 Western Australian families had their water cut off because they could not pay their bills. That is a terrible record. I have raised that in this Parliament time after time. When we came to government, one of the first things I said to the Water Corporation was that it had to deal with this issue differently. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had reduced that number by almost 70 per cent because we were being proactive with those people who were struggling to pay their bills. Families were having their household water cut off when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Water—2 500 families a year. We cut that number by almost 70 per cent. Of course, during the COVID-19 pandemic, no-one had their water restricted for not paying their bills.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Our record on this issue is far superior to what the former Liberal–National government did when the current Leader of the Opposition was principally the Minister for Water. Our record is far superior than the former Liberal government's, to the point that the Financial Counsellors Association of WA has written to me about the way in which we have handled people's water bills, not criticising but complimenting the government on how it has handled this issue.

WATER PRICES — INCREASES

180. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Water:

I have a supplementary question. Given that the state government is expected to receive a \$5 billion surplus windfall, why is it not returning some of that dividend to struggling Western Australian families and continuing to freeze water charges?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I just outlined to the member how in the last budget water prices went backwards. This year, we will be maintaining our election commitment by keeping increases to inflation. Compared with the former Liberal government's record, it is phenomenal that the Leader of the Liberal Party even has the gall to stand up and ask this question. But his supplementary question gives me an opportunity to mention two other ways in which we are assisting people and giving back.

We have introduced an allowance whereby people who are doing home dialysis—the member for Cottesloe might want to pay attention to this—and might otherwise end up with a large water bill get a free allowance of about 180 000 litres of water each year. Because they can do their dialysis at home, it saves the Minister for Health some money in his budget and those people do not end up with a huge water bill for that privilege. We call that Medical Assist. We have extended that program to people who have a family member who suffers from incontinence. If a family member has incontinence, people can end up with huge water bills, for obvious reasons. We have extended the Medical Assist program so that people who have a family member with incontinence do not end up with a huge water bill. The member asked me how we are giving back. They are two examples of programs that we have introduced because we have a very understanding attitude when people are struggling to pay their water bills. That is unlike members opposite, who, with the Leader of the Opposition as Minister for Water, were cutting off water to 2 500 Western Australian families each year because they could not pay their bills. That was under members opposite when they were in government.

ARTS, CULTURE AND EVENTS INDUSTRY — REGIONS

181. Ms E.J. KELSBIE to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting businesses and jobs in WA's arts, culture and events industry, particularly those in regional WA. Can the minister update the house on this government's significant investment in supporting the arts, cultural and events sector across regional WA, and outline what this investment has meant to the local economy and those communities?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I am very pleased to answer that question. Can I congratulate the member for Warren–Blackwood, because she represents a community that is very much swollen with creatives —

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Speaker, I may need some protection here!

As we know, the Margaret River area and all down through the Warren–Blackwood area there is a huge number of people who are very creative in the live music industry, in visual arts, in performing arts, in dance and in writing. There is a very, very strong history of great writers who reside in the Warren–Blackwood area, and I am very pleased to highlight to the house this government's investment in regional arts activity. There will be \$20 million over four years—a record amount in terms of creative programs in regional communities throughout the state. That is, of course, being delivered throughout regional WA to Albany in the great southern, the Kimberley and the Pilbara areas and the goldfields, member for Kalgoorlie—massive opportunities for those people with \$20 million. On top of that, we have an election commitment of \$25 million that will deliver to a range of programs, including, of course, the very popular and very successful regional exhibition touring boost that will allow us to tour to regional areas, particularly regional galleries, a whole range of the state art collection and other local Western Australian visual arts exhibitions. They are great things—sharing the stories of Western Australia through art.

We also, of course, through our regional cultural investment program, have seen a further \$6.42 million in funding that has gone directly very much to artists in residence and artists working within the community sector. That is very, very important. We have not finished there, because—this is very important for the local government sector, Minister for Local Government—we will release a fund in July that will encourage local governments to develop cultural plans. Local governments that have cultural plans are already reaping the benefits of them, particularly in the area of tourism, because those cultural plans consolidate the stories of their local community through the cultural plan

and map out the direction of that community in terms of the suite of creative opportunities on offer to people in the local communities and people who visit the communities. We know that record numbers of Western Australians have been wandering out yonder as part of the tourism campaign. Part of what we want them to do and see when they are wandering out yonder —

Ms R. Saffioti: Like you are!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is right. We want them to experience the suite of cultural opportunities that exist and are created in those areas. In terms of Aboriginal tourism, the Tjina Plan, which was released only a month ago, also focuses on enhancing the Aboriginal suite of tourism opportunities.

As well as that, we have the highly successful Western Australian screen fund that has seen many, many parts of our regional areas in Western Australia showcased on screen. We know that when we film in Albany, as they did for *His for Happiness* or in the Kimberley as they did with *Mystery Road*, for example, those unique Western Australian backdrops add to the appeal for those who seek to visit here when it is safe to do so. Our screen fund and the investment by this government has seen a 50 per cent increase in screen activity in regional WA. On top of that, of course, it is this government, the McGowan government, that has made an announcement to build our own film studios here in Western Australia. This is a \$100 million investment, with a \$20 million incentive fund sitting beside it, that will see our place, Western Australia, showcased to the world. We will be able to make a whole range of films, in production and post-production, filmed here in Western Australia, and share those stories with the world and continue to put this state on the map as not only the safest place on earth, but also one of the most creative places on earth.

PINDAN GROUP — GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS — PROJECT BANK ACCOUNTS

182. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Finance:

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the subcontractor Warren Smith from Gascoyne Plumbing Solutions who has lost \$150 000 from work undertaken through Pindan on behalf of the McGowan Labor government.

I refer to contracts signed between the state government and private contractors and, which, in turn use project bank accounts.

- (1) Is the minister aware that the Commonwealth Bank, owner of Bankwest, has proposed a suspension on all project bank accounts?
- (2) Can he confirm that the majority of project bank accounts are held with Bankwest as a subsidiary of the Commonwealth Bank?
- (3) Is he aware that Bankwest, a subsidiary of the Commonwealth Bank, is attempting to claim money from those project bank accounts connected to Pindan through internal transactions rather than the creditor process.

The SPEAKER: They are very lengthy questions, but I will allow them on this occasion.

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

- (1)–(3) As the member knows, the project bank accounts are dedicated trusts that have been set aside to improve the accountability of payments to subcontractors. They were actually introduced by the previous Liberal–National government in 2016 in the dying days of the Barnett government when it was forced to introduce them through the collapse of the CBD Group. Our government increased the use of them for projects over \$1.5 million.

As far as the current government projects with Pindan go, the Department of Finance has two projects worth over \$1.5 million for which the project bank accounts are being utilised. As the member will also know, it is a very complex area that evolves trust law and commonwealth insolvency law.

Regarding the specifics of the member's question, I do not know the details or the answers to the specific questions he asked about Bankwest and the Commonwealth Bank. Obviously, as has been said to him and others, we have been working overtime to try to see what we can do on this front since the collapse of Pindan. We have to work with the administrator and within the law and that is what we intend doing, and what we will do. We will do everything we possibly can. It is, of course, very distressing for all the subcontractors who are owed money by Pindan being put into administration. Project bank accounts were set up by the Barnett government, which was forced to set them up through the collapse of the CBD Group. They are a method of trying to improve security of payment. Two of our projects are with the Department of Finance. Regarding the specific questions, I will seek an answer for them and provide it for him.

PINDAN GROUP — GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS — PROJECT BANK ACCOUNTS

183. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Finance:

I have a supplementary question. Will the minister commit to legislation such as that of Queensland that will mean subcontractors are not forced to use one bank account for project bank accounts; and, if not, why not?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

Member for North West Central, I will not commit to any question he asks me today that has to go through the cabinet process.

AIRFARES — REGIONS

184. Ms R.S. STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting regional communities through its unprecedented efforts in making regional airfares more affordable.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the additional regional flights recently secured by the McGowan Labor government and how this will support regional communities, regional businesses and regional jobs?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how this builds on this government's record of delivering unprecedented outcomes for the regions?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Albany for that question.

- (1)–(2) Member for Albany, and all members in this place, we are spending a record amount on transport infrastructure in regional WA, whether it is upgrading and improving regional roads or supporting the movement of more freight onto rail and working in partnership with organisations like Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd to support more freight on rail. Of course, it is also about making sure we improve the accessibility and affordability of airfares in regional WA.

In 2017, we undertook a parliamentary inquiry into regional airfares. Since that time, we have implemented a number of initiatives. We have been working with Qantas and Virgin Australia to introduce more affordable residential community fares. In March 2020, we announced \$3 million to support Rex Airlines through the time of the COVID pandemic. We also announced in the 2020–21 budget \$21 million for further assistance for regional airfares; and, of course, we made a clear election commitment for a new regional airfare zone cap, capping the cost of flights at \$199 and \$299, depending on where people live.

I am proud our policy is working. Throughout the COVID pandemic, we have been working with airlines to support new airfares, and also give people greater access to those airfares. Since the 2021 election, we have worked with Northern Star Resources Ltd and Alliance Airlines to launch a trial of a \$199 community airfare between Perth and Kalgoorlie. That represents an additional 2 000 seats per annum into that market at an affordable price. We have worked with BHP and Alliance Airlines to launch reduced \$299 community airfares into Port Hedland and Newman, representing over 15 000 affordable seats per annum. We have also doubled the number of flights into Onslow from three to six flights.

Member for Albany, we are also making sure we can recover flight numbers to pre-pandemic levels. Currently, we have 100 per cent recovery on the Esperance–Monkey Mia route, 83 per cent recovery for Carnarvon, and 78 per cent recovery for Albany, and we continue to work to try to recover all of those flights.

We are very much focused on supporting transport in regional WA. That is unlike the previous coalition government, which did not support spending on regional roads and which shut down rail lines in regional WA.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: After they privatised them, they shut them down! They did nothing on regional airfares for eight and a half years. This government is very much focused on making sure that we have accessible and affordable regional airfares and the supporting transport infrastructure throughout Western Australia but in particular in regional WA.

CHILD PROTECTION — CASEWORKERS — WORKLOAD

185. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the child protection and family support unit at the Department of Communities, which is responsible for children and young people who are in need, in crisis or at risk.

- (1) What is the minister doing to address the situation in which almost 1 000 young, vulnerable and at-risk children are currently on the waitlist to be assigned a child protection case worker?
- (2) Is the minister aware that the town of Narrogin did not have a family support officer for 18 months, placing additional workloads on child protection workers?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

- (1)–(2) It is interesting that the member raises this question, because it got some media two weeks ago. He is a little slow off the mark in picking up the issues of the day.

I am quite proud of the work we do to support the child protection staff in our state. I do not know whether the member was in the chamber, but if he had listened to my second reading speech on the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021, I gave particular credit to and acknowledged the important work that child protection staff do across our state. They do very, very difficult work and the extent of the challenging work they do is often unacknowledged and unrecognised. We have not only acknowledged that in words and by supporting their work, but we have backed that up with additional people on the front line.

Since coming to office in 2017, we have an additional 307 child protection staff in our Department of Communities. More than half of those are frontline staff, and the others are support officers who are helping to assist those staff. That is quite different from what occurred in the previous government, when there was a reduction in the number of frontline staff in its eight and a half years in government—of which the member for Moore was a part.

Through the cost and demand funding model, we work with Treasury to make sure that we understand what the growth in child protection is expected to be, and we make sure we are working in advance of that to have people on the ground to meet that need. In addition, we have put significant new resources into early intervention contracts—for instance, \$30 million into in-home support for Aboriginal organisations working with vulnerable families in the metropolitan area. This \$30 million is significant. For the first time, in March this year, we can say that we have seen an actual decline in the number of children coming into care, both in the total number and in the number of Aboriginal children. They are early figures, but they are reason to be optimistic. I always qualify my reference to those figures by saying that our metric should be that children are safe, not whether they are in care or not. Our objective is to keep those children safe.

We are doing important work in reforming our system to make sure we are involving Aboriginal people in early intervention work and in preventing children from coming into care, but if children do come into care that we connect those children with their extended family and culture. Largely, that work is thanks to the good work of our child protection staff.

The member mentioned a family resource employee in the town of Narrogin. I was concerned to hear about that and I have asked the department to take that up. I understand that vacancy existed because someone was taken off on to other duties, and it is difficult to recruit staff into some of those regional areas. I acknowledge that often this is skilled work and it is not for everybody. In regional areas, in particular, it is challenging to recruit and retain staff doing that important work, but the government is absolutely focused on doing that work.

CHILD PROTECTION — CASEWORKERS — WORKLOAD

186. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Community Services:

I have a supplementary question. I thank the minister very much for that very lengthy answer. What accountability does the minister take for those 1 000 young people who are still at risk?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am sorry if the member found my answer a little lengthy. Perhaps he would have been interested in hearing what I was saying about supporting those children in care and the extra work we are doing, both with community organisations, and Aboriginal organisations in particular, but also in looking at reforming our system to have better outcomes for those children in care.

The number of children who are on the monitored list that the member referred to is nothing new. That is a system that was contemplated in the industrial relations decision —

Mr R.S. Love: It's nothing new, so it's acceptable to you!

Ms S.F. McGURK: Can the member listen to what I am saying? Does he think he could take a minute or two to listen to what I am saying when he asks a question? That is, having a monitored list in our child protection system is nothing new; it was contemplated when the ratio of children in care to child protection workers was first arrived at in the industrial relations system and its decisions, and it is still in place today. I have said to the Community and Public Sector Union—Civil Service Association of WA that if they have concerns about that and they think that system is being manipulated or is not in the spirit of the previous decision, they should go back to the independent umpire and have that matter revisited. They have chosen not to do that.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

187. Ms J.L. HANNS to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting vulnerable children by implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Can the minister update the house on the work underway by the state government in responding to sexual abuse, including how it is supporting the workforce to better understand childhood trauma?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak about this again. Members would have heard a fairly lengthy second reading speech today about amendments to the Children and Community Services Act, including implementing a number of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse relating to mandatory reporting. Once that bill is passed, a range of occupations will be required by law to mandatorily report if they form a belief that a child has been sexually abused. That is significant. There are 310 recommendations

of the royal commission that apply to the Western Australian government. We have committed to implement all of those, and we are making good progress on implementing them. People might also be aware that we give an annual report so that members of the house and the public can see how we are going.

One of the complex pieces of work across government is looking at how we can deal across agencies. It is not just specialist child protection workers who need to understand how we implement this work, because child safety comes before the police, justice, the courts, health and education, as well as local governments and community organisations, like arts or sporting organisations. All those different parts of our society need to understand what child safety means for them.

Research estimates that one in four Australian children will experience abuse or neglect by the age of 10 years. The effects of abuse and neglect on a developing child are well documented. It can have quite significant long-term effects on those individuals and lead to lifelong disadvantage. Last year, I was pleased to present a \$3 million Lotterywest grant to support the establishment of the Pursuit of Excellence in Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect in Western Australia centre. This is a hugely significant centre for Western Australia. It is an innovation partnership between Parkerville Children and Youth Care and the Australian Centre for Child Protection, which is based at the University of South Australia. It will bring together clinical and research specialists from across Australia. One of its first pieces of work will be to look at making sure that we better understand trauma-related behaviours presenting in our schools or our justice systems, which have for far too long failed to see the origins of that behaviour. One of the recommendations of the royal commission is that we better understand how trauma presents so that all the different parts of either the public sector or the different organisations, as I said before, understand what that means. In fact, one of the royal commissioners, Helen Milroy, said —

Developing an understanding of what drives behaviour, rather than labelling the behaviour itself, is a common problem we face when working with young people.

The WA centre has had 300 people go through a training module to identify and understand childhood trauma. In fact, that training will articulate to a university degree qualification. Sixty of those people will then be able to articulate those modules to a higher education qualification. I am pleased that we were able to announce another \$2 million to extend the operations of the WA centre to better understand how we respond to harmful sexual behaviours, which is a prevalent but little understood phenomenon that the royal commission noted. This is really important work to better understand the effects of trauma and abuse, responses to it and hopefully how we can work to prevent it as well.

MENTAL HEALTH — EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

188. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

My question is to the Minister for Health, who is also representing the Minister for Mental Health. I refer to the minister's comments and the Premier's comments about the record level of ambulance ramping and the increasing number of code yellows at our hospitals in which they both reiterated that the situation was being driven by an increase in the number of presentations of mental health patients in emergency departments.

- (1) Where is the evidence to support that claim?
- (2) How significant has been the increase in the number of mental health presentations?
- (3) Can the minister table the evidence?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(3) We have not said that the demand on our emergency departments is entirely down to mental health issues; it is one of the components and it is certainly one of the worrying trends that we have before us. As I said in my last answer, we have had a significant increase in the level of demand in our EDs, including a four per cent increase in category 1s, a 10.1 per cent increase in category 2s and a 6.2 per cent increase in category 3s this quarter compared with the first quarter of 2020. Obviously, that puts the system under significant demand. Mental health is a component of that and that evidence will be available. I am happy to make it available when it becomes public. At this stage, I can certainly assure the member that anecdotally we have been significantly impacted by mental health issues in both our paediatric EDs and our adult EDs.

MENTAL HEALTH — EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

189. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Given this anecdotal increase in demand, why is the state investment in community mental health below the national average?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Member, we now spend over a billion dollars in mental health in Western Australia. It is a record investment and the highest of any government in Western Australia's history. We will continue to make sure that we have that record level of investment. The member would have seen, perhaps through the prism, or the lens, of jealousy, the great

election commitments we made in the last election campaign, which will continue to see growth in that investment. Community mental health continues to be an important part of what we do. The member would have seen the great development of step-up, step-down facilities across Western Australia, whether that is in Bunbury, Albany or Kalgoorlie—we opened that one earlier this year. We have also opened one in Geraldton and we are developing one in Karratha and one in Broome. We also have an election commitment for a new step-up, step-down facility in Port Hedland. We are continuing to make these investments, but we are being impacted by a very high number of incidences of mental health presentations. This is the advice I have received from the department. We will continue to make sure that we support the department as it deals with this unprecedented level of demand.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.

METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME (BEELIAR WETLANDS) BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.56 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021. In doing so, I will say that I listened with some interest to the contribution from the member for Cottesloe who, in his role as shadow Minister for Planning, is the lead speaker on this issue for the opposition alliance.

This bill was initially introduced in the previous Parliament in 2018. It is a fairly simple amendment to the metropolitan region scheme to revoke the road reserve that would have been used for the Roe 8 extension. It was a key election commitment from both sides of politics in 2017. The Labor Party went to the election with the intention of removing Roe 8 from its forward planning. At the same time, there is federal funding of \$1.2 billion still on the table that will not come to Western Australia if this legislation proceeds. That is a very heavy price to pay financially for the legislation to proceed through this house. The Beeliar wetlands is an A-class reserve that sits in a very traffic dense part of our state. At the moment, Leach Highway carries a lot of the load up and down that area.

I will go back in time a little bit to 2014–15, when Infrastructure Australia was doing its brief for the Perth Freight Link and looking at the cost benefits of this particular project. I note that at that stage it was part of a wider project. It is not mentioned here, but it is talking about the Kewdale to Fremantle section. At the same time, we were proposing to build the section from Muchea to Kewdale. There would have been an uninterrupted traffic path from Muchea all the way to the end of Roe 8, and, over time, into Fremantle port. That was the plan, but this particular section of the project from Fremantle port back to Leach Highway and Kewdale was looked at on its own by Infrastructure Australia. The business case in Infrastructure Australia's report outlines that there were very strong links between the project and the state's priorities at that stage. At that stage, Fremantle port was expected to be in operation for the foreseeable future. There was no plan to move from Fremantle. The government has changed that plan and is looking to eventually move the port from Fremantle to a larger expanded harbour in the Cockburn area.

Madam Acting Speaker, I am having trouble hearing myself here, if you do not mind toning the chat down.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Sorry. Members!

Mr D.A. Templeman: We are doing a critique.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is good, but I actually cannot think very clearly when I can hear so much chatter in the chamber. Thank you for your protection, Acting Speaker. I look forward to receiving more protection from you, especially from members who are not actually in their seats when they are talking!

Getting back to the reasons Roe 8 was being looked at, container traffic into the port is very heavy. There is already a very heavy traffic load in that area. Leach Highway is a heavily congested road. The member for Cottesloe seemed to cause some level of outrage by simply pointing out that today there was a very serious traffic accident on Leach Highway. It is not news that there are traffic accidents on Leach Highway. It is a very congested and very busy road. Today a truck, swerving to avoid a pedestrian, hit a bus that was carrying school students. It was a busy time of the day; it was 8.13 this morning. I would imagine that an accident is something of a nightmare for any professional truck driver who is trying to do the right thing. In trying to avoid an accident, the truck driver ended up hitting a bus. I can only imagine the trauma that that poor driver has gone through, not to mention anyone who was injured in the accident. It was reported last week that another horrific accident occurred on Leach Highway. It was a head-on accident that resulted in five people being rushed to hospital and someone, sadly, lost their life. This is a dangerous and very busy road.

When the case was initially put for Roe 8, a note in Infrastructure Australia's "2014–2015 Assessment Brief" stated —

There is currently heavy congestion —

That was in 2014, which was seven years ago. Think of all the growth we have seen in Western Australia in the last seven years. Seven years ago, this is what was said —

There is currently heavy congestion and significant delays to freight journeys with Level of Service below D —

That is an Infrastructure Australia rating —

for many sections of the route. Impacts of this include inefficient freight movements which limits productivity and economic growth, higher than average crash rates involving heavy vehicles and dis-amenity for the nearby community.

These are not my words; this was in Infrastructure Australia's assessment brief. Anyone could find it on the web. It goes on to say —

The Business Case uses quantitative data to assess the problem including historical and projected growth in freight movements at Fremantle Port Inner Harbour, historical growth in heavy vehicle traffic volumes at key locations ... percentage of heavy vehicle crashes along key freight corridors, intersection overall Level of Service, maximum peak period queue lengths, reliability of travel speeds and modelled future traffic volumes. For example, within the PM peak, travel time variability means that more than 80% of trips have travel times greater than 20% more or less than the average for the PM peak.

In the mornings, it is even worse —

The problems are expected to persist and worsen into the future driven by economic and population growth ...

We heard today about the housing shortages that Western Australians are experiencing. There is a lot of growth, especially in the southern areas. Since this assessment was written, another seat has been added to the Parliament of Western Australia, and that seat is in the southern suburbs. We know there is significant growth in those areas.

This assessment was not just about the intermingling of heavy traffic going to the port, although that was part of it; the government is trying to take container traffic off the road by subsidising rail freight. To some extent, that apparently is showing some reductions in effort. From reading this report, it really is saying that the road is busy. It goes on to say that the proposed solution, the building of Roe 8, continues to have economic merit if the outer harbour is developed.

Even if the outer harbour were developed, according to this report, the modelling showed there was economic merit—I suppose that means “benefit”—to develop this route. That showed there was a real benefit for the development of Roe 8, regardless of whether the port is moved. They are not my words; those words are in this report. It is quite a prescient report when I think about the growth, especially in those southern areas, and the addition of another lower house seat. There is significant growth in the southern suburbs. The benefit–cost ratio stated for the project by the proponent at that time was 2.5:1—quite a significant benefit–cost ratio was being thought of at that point.

From my reading of the report, I cannot find an actual final figure for that ratio, but it certainly goes on to say —

After accounting for these factors, —

These include the growth in traffic in that area and acknowledgement that an outer harbour could potentially be built at some point, but not as quickly as it was spoken about here. It was envisaged that at some point there might be a shift to an outer harbour. It says that even so, there is still positive economic merit in building the road. It says —

After accounting for these factors, Infrastructure Australia still has a high degree of confidence that the BCR is greater than 1.0:1 for the project.

In other words, there is a benefit, if members look at the benefit–cost ratio, in developing this road. That is what Infrastructure Australia said way back in 2014–15. The assessment brief was completed in 2015. There is some further clarification about that benefit–cost ratio with a slight reduction at a later stage. It is still a positive project, according to Infrastructure Australia. If anyone is interested in having a look at the “2014–2015 Assessment Brief”, they are more than welcome to do so. Members will then know exactly what was behind the original development of this program.

In the second reading speech given by the minister in this place during the introduction of this bill, I think she acknowledged that there is a problem with freight in that area at the moment, and the government has made a commitment to increase the volume of freight on rail. I think the minister said that the percentage of freight on rail has increased to approximately 20 per cent, which means that 80 per cent is still not going on rail. As the port gets busier and busier, that is going to continue to cause problems.

The minister outlined in her second reading speech that the Westport Taskforce has recommended a new port in Kwinana and work is actively underway to deliver on this recommendation, as is work to plan the road and rail connections to this new port. This development will not require Roe 8 and Roe 9 road reservations; instead, work is underway to plan the Thomas and Anketell Road east–west corridor. The government is not actively looking at Roe 8 and Roe 9, but that does not mean that Roe 8 would not be useful in the development of a good traffic management system around an expanded Kwinana port. Obviously, the government is not looking at Roe 8 because it has made a political decision that that program will not go ahead; therefore, a political decision not to further investigate the value of that Roe 8 reservation would follow. But it would be very interesting to know from the minister whether, theoretically, if it still existed, the Roe 8 proposal would be superior or inferior in providing for the long-term transport needs of the new Kwinana port, as well as the existing Fremantle port. I imagine that use of

the Fremantle port will have to continue for quite some time into the future, certainly for the length of this government and maybe another few into the future. We know that the development of that road would have been of value for the traffic management of that area. We know that Leach Highway is a very dangerous road that has a high traffic accident rate and the local community would benefit if people did not have to travel on such a dangerous road.

I turn to one other issue that I would like the minister to address, and maybe she has at some point in the media or her speech, but I have not seen it. I am unsure why this amendment to the metropolitan region scheme needs an act of Parliament to enable it to occur. Why could this not just be initiated as an amendment to the scheme and the zoning of the area be changed through the normal channels, rather than being done under this legislation? I just wonder why we need an act of Parliament to do that. In fact, does changing the scheme through an act of Parliament mean that a future government might find it simpler, rather than more difficult, to go back to the Roe 8 project, because presumably another act of Parliament could simply override the previous act? I wonder whether the minister could explain that to me, because I am not the planning spokesperson, but it occurs to me that we could have done this through a normal rezoning. Why does it need a specific act of Parliament?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Read the second reading speech!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have read the second reading speech. Is it simply a political statement or does it provide extra protections over those provided by a normal scheme amendment? The second reading speech states that any future zonings would just go through the normal processes. My reading of the second reading speech and the explanatory memorandum is that they would occur as a normal rezoning under the act. I wonder whether the minister could explain that a little bit. I am sorry if my asking a question upsets the Minister for Energy, but I think it is a perfectly valid point to raise for the minister to address. I am sure that she would be happy to do that. I will wrap up my contribution at this point. Hopefully, the minister will be able to address the issues that I have raised.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [3.14 pm]: It is a great privilege once again to add my contribution to legislation that will this time conclude forever the debate in this house on Roe 8. Before I do so, I thought I might correct the record a little off the back of the member for Cottesloe's second reading contribution on the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021. I will begin with comments relating to Roe 9, the second iteration, which was proposed to be a tunnel. As a starting point, it still never reached its planned destination. I think that is a very important point to make. Another point is that it would not have been able to carry placard loads. Placard loads are loads on trucks that carry dangerous goods, for want of a lengthier description.

The second point I would like to make is on the member's comments about "a few random plants" that were popped into the site after we came to government. This is the actual document, which is certainly more than a reference to a few plants popped in randomly. It is the *Rehabilitating Roe 8: Rehabilitation management plan*, a 10-year management plan. I was the chair of the Rehabilitating Roe 8 Working Group on behalf of the Minister for Planning. I will read a little bit of my chair's foreword. This was tabled in 2018.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You don't expect us to read it, do you?

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Of course; yes!

It is with great pleasure that I table the Rehabilitation Management Plan for the Roe 8 Corridor.

The Rehabilitating Roe 8 Working Group, formed in May 2017, has worked with environmental and community engagement consultants to prepare the plan to rehabilitate the 18 hectares of land, which stretches from the Kwinana Freeway, past Bibra Lake to Stock Road.

The 'Rehabilitating Roe 8' project arose out of the community capacity stimulated during opposition to the construction of Roe 8 and the newly elected State Labor Government's commitment to rehabilitation of the cleared areas. Essentially, Rehabilitating Roe 8 aims to restore local native vegetation and fauna habitat to the cleared areas along the proposed Roe 8 alignment ...

This will allow it to be implemented by the appropriate land use manager and shared with the hundreds of people who contributed to its formulation.

Importantly, this 10-year plan gives equal weight to the ecological and community needs of the Corridor.

It has been drafted with input from the general community, the scientific community, various levels of government and community groups, making it a unique collaboration for a once-in-Australia opportunity to rehabilitate cleared land.

I think that pretty much answers the point about "a few random plants".

The third point I make is on the member's attempt to rewrite history. The name of the Roe project kind of gives away its purpose. It was called the Perth Freight Link.

Ms R. Saffioti: It's very cryptic.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: It is very cryptic; it is very confusing, which is perhaps why the member was struggling to grapple with the purpose of the project. I think it is pretty clear in itself.

This is a really good point—the wetlands definition and the area defined within the bill. I hope the member is listening somewhere. This is a really important point to understand. I will read the definition on Wikipedia—good old wiki—which states —

The **Beeliar Wetlands** is a wetland located in the southwest portion of Western Australia. It is made up of two chains of lakes and wetlands that run parallel to the west coast of Western Australia ...

The lakes in this chain are mostly saline and often described as “seasonal” because they often dry up during summer months.

Approximately 13.03 hectares are mapped as conservation category wetland, which is the highest protection of wetlands, and the total area of wetland is 21.34 hectares. The total area of this bill, which includes bush buffers, is 34 hectares.

This is the fifth time I have spoken in the Parliament on this issue. The other four times have been in my inaugural speech after winning the seat of Bicton for the first time in 2017; in my contributions to the second and third reading debates, when the bill was first introduced in 2019; and again in a matter of public interest debate in the same year. I am grateful beyond words to know that with the passage of the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021, this will be the last time that I will do so. This bill will rezone 34 hectares in the MRS from a primary regional roads reserve and urban zone to a parks and recreation reservation. The 34 hectares are a key part of the Roe 8 reserve and are now classified as an A-class reserve offering the area a high degree of protection, but this legislation, when passed, will do so much more. With the passing of the Beeliar wetlands bill in both houses, we will finally be able to honour not only the commitment that we have made in two consecutive elections, but also, more importantly, the commitment of hundreds of women, men and children who have fought for years to protect in perpetuity this place of local, national and international significance. The purpose of this bill is to reserve and zone certain land in the metropolitan region scheme to protect several significant areas of wetland that make up Beeliar Regional Park—that is, the Beeliar wetlands. The intent, however, is much wider and deeper and carries far more significance than the few pages that make up this bill. The passing of the Beeliar wetlands bill 2021 will put an end to Roe 8, thus protecting forever the Beeliar wetlands, and, with that, the communities of my electorate from stage 2 of the previous Liberal–National government’s hopelessly flawed Perth Freight Link.

The metropolitan region scheme is a large planning scheme that applies to the Perth metropolitan area. It includes a scheme text and a set of maps. The scheme text sets out the planning rules that apply to zones and reserves. The zones and reserves, which broadly identify what the land can be used for, are depicted on maps. Zones, maps and reserves are vital for the identification and specification of land and its use, such as those in clause 4 of this bill. The metropolitan region scheme is amended by clause 4(1) reserving the land shaded dark green on the plan as “Parks and Recreation”, and by clause 4(2) zoning the land shaded red brown on the plan as “Urban”. Those who will not support this bill simply cannot move past 1963, the year of adoption of the Hepburn and Stephenson plan from which the MRS was derived. The Hepburn and Stephenson plan would lay out the blueprint for much of the development of Perth and continues as the legal framework of land use through the MRS. My point in raising this historical reference is not to debate the merits or deficiencies of continuing to follow a plan that is more than 60 years old, but to highlight the absurdity of those who, with an almost religious zeal, praise the Hepburn and Stephenson plan as the Holy Bible of Perth and Fremantle road planning. It is a plan that they would have us believe must not be questioned, a plan that is only ever to be challenged by those who they consider to be ignorant or foolhardy. The McGowan government recognises the importance of taking into account the changing needs of our city. We are not stuck in 1960s thinking. I therefore call on the member for Cottesloe and his colleagues to get out there and start campaigning for another crossing point of the Swan River at the northern termination of Stock Road to delivered increased freight traffic movement north through the western suburbs. It is in the plan, so it must be a good idea.

For those who live, recreate and care deeply for the Beeliar wetlands, the area is so very much more than hard lines and shadings on a map; it is an integral part of their lives. This includes Jo Rich, whom I met on the Roe 8 protest lines in the summer before the 2017 state election. Jo is representative of the many hundreds of ordinary people who went to extraordinary lengths throughout that summer, and the decades before, to stop Roe 8. Jo understood the significance of the Beeliar wetlands and the importance of taking action to protect them on both the protest lines at Beeliar and in the battleground seat of Bicton. Sadly, Jo lost her personal battle with cancer recently, so she will not see the passage of this legislation. I am proud to have campaigned beside her through two elections and I thank Jo and all like her for their tireless efforts to protect the Beeliar wetlands. We are finally getting on with the job that we committed to do in 2017, and again in 2021. We will protect those vitally important remnant wetlands. We will ensure that not only is Roe 8 dead, but also the spectre of a future Perth Freight Link is exorcised, and the voters of WA agree.

I am deeply grateful to represent the electorate of Bicton in this house and I am proud to be a member of a government that keeps its word. I stand in this house today in no small part because of the rejection not once, but twice by the voters of Bicton and beyond, of the disastrous, divisive and notably incomplete road project known as the Perth Freight Link. With its origins in the Beeliar wetlands, Roe 8 would lead to Roe 9, which in turn would lead to the destruction of many homes and businesses in my community. This would later be proposed to move to other communities adjacent to mine as Roe 9 morphed from a road to a tunnel, yet all the while never actually reaching the port of Fremantle.

The potential impact of the Perth Freight Link influenced and changed the course of many lives, including mine, and was a major factor in my decision to stand up for my communities, initially as ward councillor at the City of Melville representing the suburbs of Melville, Willagee and Palmyra, and on to my role here as the member for Bicton. It changed the lives of the people in Moody Glen, Palmyra, when in early 2014 their homes were targeted as part of the Perth Freight Link. Local families, including the Smirkes, Irvings, Hoffmans and others, were told that their homes would be acquired to make way for a freight freeway. It is important to note that their homes were not part of a road reserve and they were not gazetted for any future road change. Their homes were and, thanks to the McGowan government, continue to be their forever homes in happy family streets that have formed close-knit communities. They were the homes in which families looked on, first in confusion and later in horror and anger, as letters arrived from a heartless Barnett-led Liberal–National government telling them that their homes would be compulsorily acquired. I recall these families expressing their lack of understanding to me of what the seemingly benign and sanitised term “compulsory acquisition” meant. These letters advised the Smirkes, Irvings, Hoffmans and many others in my local community that the life they had chosen, the life that they had known, would end with their homes being purchased by the government and that those homes were to be destroyed in favour of a road that would end around two kilometres short of its destination. It was a road to nowhere that would be built where much-loved family homes once stood. I recall vividly in the midst of this shock the young daughter of one these families attempting to reassure her mum with an eight-year-old’s optimism that maybe everyone in their much-loved street of Moody Glen could all move together to a new street. In the years that followed the announcement of Roe 9, the plans morphed into a tunnel, thereby shifting the dangers from Moody Glen, Palmyra, and surrounds to other communities, but that made it no more acceptable or sensible. Shifting this road project from one community to another was not then, nor will it ever be, an acceptable or sensible solution.

I am always horrified by the ease at which opposition members dismissed the clearing of around 40 hectares of banksia woodland and bush habitats prior to the 2017 election. On becoming the chair of the Rehabilitating Roe 8 Working Group after coming to government, I was confronted by the many impacts of the loss of the large, old established trees and banksia woodlands destroyed during that dreadful summer. Vital habitat for the endangered Carnaby’s black cockatoo, red-tailed black-cockatoos and other birdlife was immediately lost as the bulldozers moved through. Habitat loss saw these majestic birds migrate into Bicton to strip the Cape Lilac trees to avoid starvation.

The human impact of the communities near the cleared site of Roe 8 must not be underestimated either. I acknowledge the work of those communities in healing the deep emotional scars of that time. I am angry beyond words at the arrogance and disrespect shown for people and place by opposition members who speak against this bill. I pity them for the utter lack of humanity shown in their contributions. I thank those members who raised the issue of the safety and health impacts of trucks on our roads. It is an incredibly important consideration.

The movement of freight efficiently and safely around the state to our ports is a priority of this government. As the member for Bicton, I will keep working towards a time when freight movement ceases on our local roads altogether. Our commitment to the Westport Taskforce’s recommendation for a new port in Kwinana will be an important catalyst. I reject entirely the member for Cottesloe’s assertion that the building of a new road will somehow magically make another road safer.

In the short term, we are delivering on our commitment to increase the volume of freight on rail. The percentage of freight on rail has increased under the McGowan government to approximately 20 per cent, and we will continue to work to increase this percentage even further. We are also working with industry to provide additional train paths for container freight and facilitating the development of intermodal terminals. The intermodal network plan will provide for new and existing precincts to transfer freight efficiently from road to rail, further improving rail’s competitiveness.

We are a trading state, and we need to make sure that we can facilitate strong trade growth into the future. The Westport Taskforce’s recommendation for a new port in Kwinana will ensure that we have this strong future. As part of this, the work to plan the road and rail connections to this new port east–west via Anketell Road and Thomas Road is well underway and does not require the Roe 8 road reservation.

As to health, it is clear that a future port in Kwinana is the safest option for the communities of the electorate of Bicton. In my submission to a City of Melville electors meeting in 2014, I referred to the impact of heavy vehicle emissions on the health of some of the most vulnerable in our community.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mrs L.M. O’MALLEY: I said that there are 32 primary schools, nine secondary schools, three tertiary schools and 26 day care centres located along the routes of the Perth Freight Link, being stage 1, Roe 8, and the stage 2 options that were put forward. These 70 places of education and early childhood care are located within two kilometres of the Roe 8–Roe 9 routes. Several are within 50 metres of the edge of the road reserve. One day care centre in Bibra Lake is at ground zero—on the very edge of the road reserve.

I said also that diesel engine exhaust was declared by the World Health Organization to be a group 1 carcinogen, meaning there is no safe level of exposure for humans. Diesel particulates are found in diesel exhausts. They have the ability to cause disease and death, and they disperse well beyond the point of origin. In an Environment Protection

Authority Victoria health bulletin published in 2002, diesel particulates were defined as “microscopic particles found in diesel exhaust which are less than one-fifth the thickness of a human hair and are small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs, where they can contribute to a range of health problems”. The elderly and people with emphysema, asthma, and chronic heart and lung disease are especially sensitive to fine-particle pollution. The still-developing lungs of children places them also at a particularly high risk. Most notably, diesel particulates are constant in the environment. The so-called free-flowing freeway that the Perth Freight Link was touted to be would have done nothing to diminish their prevalence. The only way to reduce diesel particulates in the atmosphere is to reduce the number of trucks, or to use an alternate fuel source such as hydrocarbon or electric power. Roe 8 will not achieve this, and I acknowledge and congratulate the Minister for Transport on her commitment to freight on rail and to progressing plans for the new port in Kwinana, because that is the only way to truly protect the safety and health of the communities of the electorate of Bicton and right along the current freight route.

Protection and preservation of native wildlife is just as important. I am always alarmed when I hear opposition members attempt to portray the building of a super highway above a wetland as being somehow beneficial in this respect. I suspect that those members who will speak of the supposed increased protection of wildlife by the removal of Hope Road, Bibra Lake, are ignorant of the existence of two very important facilities on Hope Road, being the Wetlands Centre Cockburn and the Native Animal Rehabilitation Centre, or Native ARC, two facilities that would be lost to Roe 8. I strongly suggest that opposition members familiarise themselves with the area and the assets within it.

To those opposition members who speak of vandalism, they know firsthand about vandalism by a belligerent and arrogant former Liberal–National Premier in the face of certain defeat at the 2017 state election. To commence the clearing of the Beeliar wetlands was environmental vandalism of the highest degree, designed to inflict the most pain to the local community and those who had fought to stop this wanton destruction. By beginning the clearing at the wetland’s end, there can be no doubt of its vandalistic intent.

It is appalling that the opposition attempts to present a convincing argument that building a road through a natural landscape will not have a detrimental impact and will actually enhance it. The absurdity of such a claim appears to be entirely lost on opposition members. Seriously, when have humans ever improved on nature? Never. In the history of human existence, our impact has only ever been detrimental. Yes, we can offset and we can minimise our impact, but to claim that any infrastructure build, particularly one such as this, will improve on nature is ludicrous. It is an absurd proposition.

I also note that opposition members have expressed bewilderment at the McGowan government’s commitment to the protection of the Beeliar wetlands and to a future of sustainable, long-term freight solutions. It is possible that they may be unfamiliar with the concept of honouring a commitment. The Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021 is the culmination of this governments commitment to protect the Beeliar wetlands, homes and businesses from an unnecessary and nonsensical road project. This government is committed to a long-term, sensible approach to freight movements now and into the future. That includes planning for a new port in Kwinana; progressing the development of intermodal terminals; progressing long-term, sustainable, well-paid skilled jobs; increasing freight on rail; and creating greater efficiencies on the current road network, like the necessary upgrades to the High Street–Stirling Highway intersection.

We know that the Perth Freight Link, which would have begun at Roe 8, is not the answer to future freight movements. I personally made a promise to the people of my electorate, as we did as a government, to stop the Perth Freight Link, protect the Beeliar wetlands, and get the balance right between protection of the environment, homes and human health, and future freight needs. Additionally, a new port in Kwinana will unlock an exciting future for North Fremantle and provide a more certain future for the Sandtrax, Port and Leighton beaches, which are important to the people of Bicton as our closest beaches, and to the primary stakeholders, Port Beach Polar Bears, Beached Whales, Fremantle Surf Life Saving Club and Coast Port Beach. I also acknowledge the future opportunities for the area, which will connect the waves to the wetlands along the Cockburn community corridor.

I thank the minister for bringing this bill forward again, and I commend it to the house.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.36 pm]: I am very proud to rise again in this forty-first Parliament to speak on a bill that I very proudly was able to speak on in the last Parliament. I certainly endorse the bill, and for those playing at home, I will be voting in favour of the bill.

The Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021 is, as the member for Bicton said, the culmination of several election promises. The last time this bill was debated, there was opposition from those in the naughty corner of the opposition Liberal benches, because they did not want us to keep our promise from the 2017 election, and they blocked the bill. They stopped the bill from progressing through the democratic halls of the Parliament. They filibustered in this chamber.

Dr D.J. Honey: We debated it.

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member for Cottesloe and the other opposition members at the time did a horrendous job of delaying every bill and stopping its progress. We are delivering on our election commitments.

There are many arguments here about planning and about the environment. I want to talk about families. This bill will stop the Liberal Party from making Roe Highway a toll road. Members should be aware that the Liberal Party's plan to pay for the Roe Highway extension was to make Roe Highway a toll road.

Dr D.J. Honey: That's not true.

Mr T.J. HEALY: It is correct. I will quote the member for Riverton in a moment. He discussed that it was designed to be a toll road for freight trucks and cars. The thin edge of the wedge was that the first phase of the toll road was going to be for trucks. I guarantee members that if the Liberal Party had won in 2017, by now it would be talking about the thin edge of the wedge. After it introduced the first toll road in Western Australia, it would have brought in and started the conversation and started testing the waters about extending the toll road to all the families in my electorate. I have to tell the member Cottesloe, the Leader of the Liberal Party—he wears the badge in that regard—Southern River says no to your toll road. Canning Vale says no to your toll road. Huntingdale and Gosnells say no to your toll road. We all say no to your toll road. The families in my electorate cannot afford \$5 or \$7 a go.

I recall the Liberal Party's shambolic press conference in March 2021 during the election campaign. It was the second election at which the Liberal Party pushed this toll road, and it campaigned in every single electorate. I am not sure why it made this such a huge part of its 2021 election campaign. There were fliers in letterboxes in my electorate and everywhere. The Liberal Party made it the showpiece of its election campaign. The Liberal Party said the same thing: it is not a toll road. How much did the Liberal Party allocate for this project at its shambolic press conference? It was about \$100 million. For the *Hansard* record, the Leader of the Liberal Party is nodding. The Liberal Party was going to get \$1.2 billion from the federal government. If the Liberal Party had been elected, the state government was going to contribute only \$100 million. We often ask: where does the rest of the money come from?

I understand the press conference was at the end of a pretty crazy period. Like I said, the former Liberal member for Churchlands threw his hands up in disgust. He walked away. The Leader of the Liberal Party was a bit confused. There were a lot of numbers. I appreciate the member has a PhD, but it is not a PhD in maths. It was a complicated press conference. I have to tell the member that it certainly helped my election because a number of people were on the fence and were not sure about what to do and in the last dying days of the election the Liberal Party press conference certainly showed which was the safe party and who could be trusted for road infrastructure and a number of things. Members, remember we have stopped the toll road. This bill and its passage through this house and the upper house will not allow the toll road to be proceeded with by a desperate and angry government in the future.

Members should be aware that there was no plan for Roe 9 or 10. By the way, I love Roe Highway. I use it every day. I still remember when Roe 7 was extended to the edge of my electorate. It is a brilliant road. It connects Midland, Forrestfield, Kalamunda and my community. We are building train stations along its route. It is what I use to get to the airport—when I get to go to the airport! When I go to and from home and Parliament I use the freeway and Roe Highway. It is a brilliant piece of road infrastructure.

Dr A.D. Buti: I see you going past me.

Mr T.J. HEALY: At the speed limit, of course, member for Armadale.

Dr A.D. Buti: I am usually a bit slow.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I usually drive past the member for Armadale because he is still jogging in! He sees my car as it goes past.

If the Liberal–National government had been re-elected in 2017, it would have had a mandate to extend Roe Highway. That election was about a decision on Roe Highway, and what happened? The Liberal Party lost it, of course. I have *Hansard* here of former member for Riverton Mike Nahan saying that the Liberals knew three months before the election that they would lose the election, but they still started the project. Knowing that the 2017 election was a mandate—an election about whether or not to continue Roe 8 under the Liberals as a toll road—it still started work. Of the scorched-earth policy and the burnt contracts, we said that this contract would not continue. Do not start work. There were court cases. It was all very clear. There was all this naysaying and headshaking and words that were said by the Liberals and the Nats in the previous Parliament, and in this one, about, “How dare you tear up contracts that were signed and sorted”, but that was not the case at all. The people had a chance to give their verdict.

I admit that in 2008, when the previous government was elected, the former member for Riverton Dr Mike Nahan promised Roe 8. It had a mandate to do it in 2008, but it never got around to it. In 2013 it ran on it but it still did not get around to doing it. Because of those delays, the Liberal Party waited eight years, and in the dying days of its government, when a former Premier wanted his name on something, it decided to quickly move ahead with the Roe Highway toll road. There was never a confirmation or a promise to say that the toll road extension was for only this part. If someone was going to drive from Midland to Fremantle on this future fairyland Roe Highway, would there be several toll roads? Would people be required to pay only once when they go on it? Would it be like Westfield Carousel Shopping Centre and people would have two hours? People get free parking for an hour. It would not matter if people went on it twice or three times. I have to use that road two times a day at least. The families in my electorate have to use it multiple times. It was abhorrent. At least this bill helps us to say no to that.

If the members of the Liberal and National Parties had been elected, their plan at the 2008 election was to build Roe 8 and it would have progressed with that. However, Roe 8 and 9 were not funded or costed. I always love to hear the fully funded and fully costed arguments. It was not organised. There was no plan. Let us say Roe 8 would have taken three or four years to build. Roe 9 was unfunded, unplanned and unapproved. Potentially, it would have taken another five years. Even at this most recent election we still did not know whether it would be a bridge over or a tunnel under the river, so Roe 10 would have taken another five years. We are talking about 15 years. Personally, I love Roe Highway. If the Liberal Party had said it would not make it a toll road and it would do it all at once, putting any environmental factors aside, I think the community would have spoken very differently. There has been a ringing endorsement of the views on that. There have been two elections on that matter, but again the Liberal Party knew it was going to lose and it still started the work.

Mr W.J. Johnston: There was traffic modelling tabled by the Minister for Transport, Hon Dean Nalder, that showed that 300 trucks a day would go north through Cottesloe on Stirling Highway if you built Roe 8.

Dr D.J. Honey: There is more than that now.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, that is additional trucks—300 extra trucks a day. That is a million trucks a year through the electorate of Cottesloe if you built Roe 8.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I certainly agree with the member for Cannington and I endorse that because I quoted that in my speech on this matter on 25 June 2019. I quote the article from *WAtoday* that I quoted a few years ago, because the numbers were all just fudged. There was no planning and no prep. I will quote from *Hansard* of 2019 when I quoted the *WAtoday* article —

“Documents suggest ‘figures fudged —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I know this is about numbers so I will speak slowly for the member for Cottesloe. The article was titled —

“Documents suggest ‘figures fudged in Roe 8 rush job’”.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Member for Southern River, speak, please.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I invite the interjections, Acting Speaker, but thank you for the protection. I quoted the article —

Major discrepancies between Roe 8’s environmental report and its business case have raised concerns that the project is a rush job based on massaged figures that would hang WA taxpayers out to dry.

Email and document exchanges between Main Roads WA and the federal Department of Infrastructure, made publicly available ..., cast doubt over the design and economic viability of the road.

...

“A key part of the viability of this project ... will be its capacity to maximise tolling revenue,” ...

I thank the member for Cannington for referring to the previous *Hansard* debates in the place. I would like to refer to the previous *Hansard* debates. Let me speak for those who cannot speak. Let me echo and invoke the spirits of the former Liberal Party members for Churchlands, Geraldton, Darling Range, Scarborough, Bateman and Riverton, when they spoke and predicted what this Parliament would look like if they wanted to deliver on the Roe 8 election promises from 2017 and what would happen if they took them to the 2021 election.

Members, first of all, I will call upon the words of my good friend the former Liberal member for Nedlands, Bill Marmion, a former Minister for Transport and former Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. Again I will be quoting from *Hansard* of Tuesday, 25 June 2019 and the second reading debate on the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2018. The former member for Riverton said —

The government said that this decision is popular. Well, we will see about that. This will be the most crucial issue in the south metropolitan area at the next election.

There was not one Liberal Party seat left in the south metropolitan area after the election. The former member for Riverton continues —

... it will be an albatross around the government’s neck.

That is, the government’s views on Roe 8. He continues —

As a party, we will resist this bill to the hilt. We will resist this bill to the hilt in this house in the second reading ... and ... We will mobilise the community.

I thank the former member for Riverton for mobilising the community.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: What was it—20 per cent?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The former member for Riverton not only lost his seat, but also returned the Labor heartland of Riverton to the Labor Party. I thank him for that.

The former member for Riverton went on to say —

Do members know what is going to happen? The member for Jandakot will not be the member for Jandakot after 2021 ...

After a 19.2 per cent swing to the member for Jandakot, Labor now holds that seat by 71.2 per cent of the two-party preferred vote.

The former member for Riverton continued —

If we take into consideration the freight charge, the state will virtually get Roe 8 and 9 for free. It would not have to put down any additional money because any additional money would be paid off ...

That is where the member for Cottesloe's numbers went wrong. The former member for Riverton estimated that about \$350 million would be raised by those toll roads and that it would come from families. It probably would not have come from families in the member for Cottesloe's electorate, but it would have come from families in my electorate.

I have quoted what the former member for Riverton said and we are joined by the wonderful Labor member for Riverton, Dr Jags Krishnan. I will now quote what the former member for Nedlands said —

I am looking forward to members opposite explaining to me why we should not build Roe 8 and 9.

He then said —

I cannot see why anyone who lives in Fremantle, Bicton, Willagee and Cockburn would not strongly support the Roe 8 and 9 project.

In Fremantle, the Liberal Party's primary vote was so low that the result was a two-party preferred vote between Labor and the Greens. There was a swing to Labor of 11.9 per cent in the seat of Bicton, 9.5 per cent in the seat of Willagee and 12 per cent in the seat of Cockburn. Of course, we won Nedlands, as I said.

I would now like to thank the former Liberal member for Bateman for his contribution and service to this chamber. He said in this debate on 25 June 2019 —

The federal member for Tangney has been vociferous about the benefits of Roe 8 and Roe 9. He undertook an analysis of his community and commissioned a poll.

We commissioned a poll too—on 13 March 2021. The fact is that the community did not support the former member for Bateman, who said —

In the City of Melville, 66 per cent supported the construction of Roe 8 ...

He said —

We want the facts out in the community so people can clearly understand the benefits of Roe 8 ...

In the seat of Bateman there was a 14.5 per cent swing to Labor—56.7 per cent held. Dean Nalder, the former member for Bateman, did not even compete in the 2021 election and refused to run against the member for Bicton in the previous election by jumping to the seat of Bateman. The communities of Bicton and Bateman found him and rewarded the Liberal Party by not returning the Liberal Party to that seat in 2021. I welcome the Labor member for Bateman to the chamber.

I will now quote what the former member for Scarborough said in that debate. She said —

... the member for Riverton knows that Roe 8 and Roe 9 is a significant issue for people in his electorate and in the adjacent electorates ...

Overwhelmingly, the constituency of South Metro wants this project to go ahead.

I disagree. Every south metro seat is now held by Labor. They did not endorse the Liberal plan. There was a 16 per cent swing to Labor in Scarborough. The electorate of Scarborough is now held by Labor with a 60 per cent two-party preferred vote. That seat was taken from the former Minister for Transport and former Leader of the Liberal Party. I welcome the Labor member for Scarborough to the chamber.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr T.J. HEALY: I go further. I thank Liza Harvey for her service. She said —

It was only after the election chaos had died down —

That is, the 2017 election chaos —

that we, as the opposition, started to be contacted by people in that south metropolitan corridor ...

She went on —

There was a lot of voter regret in those south metropolitan areas. As the opposition, we intend to fully capitalise on that voter regret. The people in the south metro area want this project.

I would like to quote what the member for Cottesloe said in his contribution to the 25 June 2019 debate. He said —

We have a government that thinks some things have to be stuck to—that not building Roe 8 is an election commitment it has to stick to—but others are not so important. The government has put its foot on the throat of the Western Australian economy ... The government is sticking to something that will be overwhelmingly unpopular in the community. Our prospects —

In 2021 —

in the southern suburbs are looking brighter and brighter.

The former member for Dawesville interjected on the member for Cottesloe, who replied —

My member opposite here is a keen student of all of this ... he will go through in detail the seats we will be looking at picking up.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member for Cottesloe was arrogant back then to say, “We’re going to pick up seats.” The member for Cottesloe finishes by saying —

I encourage members to go onto the Liberal Party website occasionally. There is some fantastic information there for members.

I am not sure whether he was being a bit dodgy on that part, because I do not know whether there is much information on the Liberal and National Parties’ websites.

I would like to thank the member for Vasse for her contribution, who said —

It is a longstanding commitment of the Liberal Party and has been a number one issue for the seats of Jandakot, Riverton and Bateman.

It is. I thank her for all her work in ensuring one of the largest swings towards the Labor Party in the seat of Vasse.

I now refer to the contribution of the former member for Churchlands. I say thanks once again to my former high school teacher, Mr L’Estrange. In that debate he said —

The people in government members’ electorates will have an option at the next election to hold the government accountable ...

He also said —

The outcome that the government is trying to achieve today will be tested at the 2021 election. We will ... —

The Liberal Party —

make this a key aspect of our commitments at the next election. The people in the seats of those ministers and members will hold them to account ...

I welcome the new member for Churchlands to the chamber, after a 12.5 per cent swing to Labor at the election. We won the seat of Churchlands by 408 votes and I endorse the choice the members of that community made.

I now thank the former member for South Perth, who also made a contribution to the 2019 debate. I thank Hon John McGrath for his service to this house. He is a very honourable man and he made a great contribution in this area. He said —

... I think it will become a big election issue in that area at the next election.

I certainly endorse what he said and welcome the new member for South Perth, with a 17.3 per cent swing to Labor. I acknowledge that we were able to build the “John McGrath Manning Road on-ramp” with some of the money that was saved on some of the Roe Highway shovel-ready projects. I am sure that the former member for South Perth would be happy with that.

The former member for Dawesville also commented in the debate. He said —

Of all Liberals in Parliament in 2017, I believe the member for Riverton had one of the smallest swings against him. I would largely say that is because he knows his area best and the impacts something like Roe 8 and Roe 9 would have had on his seat.

The swing against him at the election was much smaller than the swing against any other Liberal member. He continues —

If there was such a mandate for somewhere like the seat of Bicton ... we would have seen the flow-on results of that in the seat of Riverton.

We saw that flow-on in the seats of Riverton and Bateman in the 2021 election. Riverton had an amazing swing. I endorse what was started in 2017 and finished in 2021. The former member for Dawesville, Zak Kirkup said —

If we look at the result in Darling Range ... that seat would be ours by a greater majority.

He then said of the federal election —

We see that all the booths through the Roe 8 and Roe 9 suburbs, had a swing towards the Liberal Party ...

He also said, interestingly enough —

... the federal member for Tangney campaigned on the basis that he would see the Roe 8 and Roe 9 projects funded and people voted in favour of him with an increased majority —

Therefore, we can assume from the federal election that Bateman and Riverton have sent the same message to us in this chamber just now. Again, I thank the former member for Dawesville for his service and I congratulate and welcome the Labor member for Dawesville with a 14 per cent swing to Labor, holding a 63 per cent two-party preferred vote. The former member for Dawesville said further on —

I suggest that when a federal member prosecutes this case together with an outstanding state member ... and people vote for the Liberal Party with a number higher than the average across the rest of the seats, that shows endorsement for the project proceeding.

Ergo, with that endorsement from the last two state elections, I think we should perhaps listen. It might be the first time that I recommend people listen to the former Liberal member for Dawesville when he said —

I suspect that will be the crux of the problem when it comes to the member for Bicton's seat in 628 days' time. I think that is the problem she will have ...

I thank the former member for Darling Range for her service and welcome the Labor member for Darling Range into this chamber. She spoke in this chamber —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern River, it is four o'clock.

Mr D.R. Michael: It is almost.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Keep going.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am sure you will interrupt me when the time comes, Acting Speaker.

The member for Darling Range said that Ben Morton puts material in letterboxes, does telephone canvassing and puts out a position. He says loud and proud, "I support Roe 8 and 9 and 61.5 per cent of voters in Tangney voted for the project." Among the seats in Tangney, in the seat of Jandakot we got 71 per cent at this election; Bicton, 65 per cent; Cannington, in which there is a bit of Tangney, 80 per cent; Bateman, 56 per cent; Riverton, 59 per cent; Victoria Park's new part, 77 per cent; and Southern River, 83.1 per cent.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

IRON ORE ROYALTIES — COMMUNITY DIVIDEND

Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [4.02 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for failing to deliver a community dividend from record iron ore royalties collected on behalf of the people of Western Australia leading to failures in health, child care, mental health, child protection, disability services and housing, and an increase in household fees and charges.

Before I go to the substantive part of my contribution, I want to recap some of the answers we got in question time today, because a number of questions were asked on very serious matters of the Premier, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Water and the Minister for Child Protection. There are 1 000 children unallocated in the child protection system to workers—vulnerable children in our systems.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Excuse me, members.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Quiet—a dull roar, maybe!

In answer to a question around record ramping and mental health presentations, the Minister for Health spoke about spending record amounts. Once again, we see elective surgery pushed out. Really, the Premier and the minister were trying to outline that they were taking a sensible and pragmatic approach to the situation. However, they have been forced to cancel those elective surgeries because of their own mismanagement. That translates into people living in discomfort and in pain, unable to take care of their families or participate in work. In many cases, they now have to live with that for months, maybe another year, until the system is back to capacity and we can see it return to a degree of normality.

As he always does, the Minister for Water chose to reflect on the previous government and its record rather than providing advice on why he was not looking at trying to reduce the significant dividend paid by the Water

Corporation to prop up the government's bottom line—not that it needs it at the moment; it has a significant amount sitting in the kitty—and relieve some of the pressures on household fees and charges. Very arrogantly, I thought, he outlined a response that actually did not pay attention to the question, which was: what is the government doing to address the structural issues in that government trading enterprise to allow us to say that we should be rethinking how that dividend is paid? If it is a cash cow for government, it does not matter whether it is this side or the other side; everyone is addicted to it. In times like this when families are under pressure, we should be looking at ways to reduce that dividend take to improve the accessibility and affordability of those basic set fees and charges.

I found the Premier's response to me about the housing issues quite distressing. I referred to people and organisations of eminence in our community who deal with some of the most vulnerable people in our community. I asked about the fact that 10 of them had written to the Premier as part of the Housing Emergency Response Group seeking his support for a number of areas that they feel would make a real difference in reducing homelessness and the pressures on our housing and homelessness issues that we are dealing with across the community. They are Mark Glasson of Anglicare WA; the director of Centrecare; the chief executive officer of Circle Green Community Legal; the executive officer of the Financial Counsellors' Association; the chief executive officer of Foundation Housing; the chief executive officer of the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia; the chief executive officer of Shelter WA; the CEO of the Western Australian Association for Mental Health; and the CEO of the Western Australian Council of Social Service. All of them together in one letter to the Premier on 6 May were asking for a response from this government—a joined-up response across government—to respond to the challenges they see.

But the Premier did not provide a response about whether he would go back to that group, given it has raised with him these most important matters. He just pointed to the fact that the strong financial management of this state government had placed it in a good position to be able to respond to some of those challenges. This is a crisis that needs urgent action. These bushfires are emerging in all portfolios.

On the other side of the ledger, this state government has access to a growing pile of dollars that have been gifted to it by the iron ore sector and as a result of the GST deal struck by the federal Liberal–National government to ensure that our state gets its fair share and to ensure that we can look after the exact issues I have just raised. Having gone through those questions during question time, which are not insignificant, we can only conclude that this is a government that has its head in the sand when it comes to some of these challenges.

The Premier came into this house yesterday and gave himself a pat on the back, as the new Treasurer, for this government's management and made a very bold claim that he was leading one of the best performing subnational governments in the world. That is a lofty title to add to his list of achievements. He does this while sitting on an enormous pile of dollars gifted to the government by record iron ore royalties collected and the GST returns that are flowing into this state, while bushfires burn in nearly every portfolio across the cabinet. It is great to play up to the backbenchers during question time and answer a Dorothy Dix question. But I warn members in this place that it is folly to believe our own spin. It is nice to play it up in here, but when those comments translate back to the groups raising these concerns, and back to the people impacted because they cannot put a roof over their head or pay their bills, that kind of arrogance does not play that well in the community.

Members in this chamber expect a degree of theatre to play out. The Premier stands and gives himself a pat on the back about financial management, for the surplus and for the state of Western Australia's books, but while this enormous operating surplus is sitting with Treasury, the government is missing the chance to pay a community dividend. Our community cannot miss the opportunity to benefit from, I would think, a once-in-a-lifetime mining boom. This boom is very different from the one that we went through in 2006 to 2007–08; that was a construction boom. It was a boom driven by a significant number of people moving to Western Australia as there were major projects underway. Our government, the Liberal–National government at the time, had to manage that population increase without the benefit of the GST deal and with very low iron ore prices. The Premier can crow all he likes about the surplus and suggest that it is a result of good management, but let us be clear: this government has benefited enormously from the gift that has been provided by record iron ore prices, a strong GST deal that was secured from the Liberal–National coalition federally, and billions of dollars of funding from the commonwealth that has flowed through for road projects across our state. That is cold comfort for those who have to foot a \$99 increase in household fees and charges; they will need to find that additional \$99 in their household budget. As evidenced by the letter from Shelter WA and those 10 organisations, many people simply do not have even a dollar to keep a roof over their heads. They are not going to be able to give the Premier the accolades that he came into this house looking for when he said that the government has managed to keep increases at an all-time low, because \$99 for someone who does not have a home and cannot afford to pay their bills is simply beyond their reach—and the Premier is sitting on top of a pile of cash!

We are living in extraordinary times. I touched earlier on the boom we had at the beginning of the term of the previous Liberal–National government; it was a boom of a different sort. Construction was driving an enormous number of people to Western Australia; the number we were talking about at the time was equivalent to the entire population of Tasmania moving to Western Australia in one go! The flowthrough of that to government was that it had been able to house people and provide water and power, which required investment in significant essential services. We did all of that. We had to ensure we were paying teachers, nurses, child protection officers and other public servants who were being drawn out of the public service to high-paying jobs in the mining sector. We were under

pressure to do that so we could have teachers in front of classrooms. We were very successful at that, but it put enormous pressure on our state budget, because we did not have the GST flowing back into Western Australia at that time, and we certainly did not have the royalty flow that this government is enjoying. In the context of financial management, when we reflect on what the eight years of the Liberal–National government actually delivered, that part of the equation regularly gets left out. We were supporting rapid population growth, with people coming from all over Australia to cash in on what was a remarkable opportunity for many people and, at the same time, we were investing in our state. We built Fiona Stanley Hospital and Perth Children’s Hospital. We made the biggest investment in regional health in history. That comes directly from those involved in delivering that program. There were investments in hospitals and nursing posts, and upgrades to telehealth and aged-care facilities. A raft of that was going on at the same time that we were building facilities at major tertiary hospitals in the Perth metropolitan area.

We were also transforming communities all over the state. That transformation was not limited to what we heard the Minister for Transport talking about today or the program we talked about yesterday, which was the Perth City Deal. Again, that was quoted out of context, because that is what people do in this place when they want to put their side of the story, but let me provide members with the other side of the story. We have never been opposed to investment in Perth city nor of bringing dollars in from the commonwealth to support the growth of universities, public transport and things that can make our community a better place to live, work and invest. What we have always been opposed to is not seeing a commensurate spend in regional Western Australia from this government. When we saw that sign-up to the Perth City Deal we quite rightly said, “All right, if you make that investment in Perth with universities, public transport, new museums and a raft of other things, we are very supportive of that, but what about investing in our universities and tertiary education in, and having a plan for, our regional cities so they can continue to grow? How do we take some pressure off population growth and on our public transport system in the Perth metropolitan area so that we can spread that growth and opportunity around our state?” We do not see that. We have never been critical of the Perth City Deal in the sense that we do not support it; we are critical of the fact that there does not seem to be the same effort on a statewide program to grow our entire state.

It is really important to note that when we were in government, we dealt with massive population growth, we invested in regional Western Australia and we invested in tertiary hospitals and regional health. We built the Perth Stadium, which is now a piece of infrastructure that we rely on as a showcase for sport.

Mr V.A. Catania: And Perth Arena.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes, the Perth Arena; the member is correct. Perth Stadium this weekend will play host to the Dreamtime round, which is typically held in Melbourne. Our hearts go out to those in lockdown in Victoria, but their loss is our gain. We will play host to Michael Long and the Long Walk in advance of that. We will go to Perth Stadium, and it will be an amazing event.

Mr V.A. Catania: Back then the Labor opposition criticised the stadium.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am very aware of that, member, because I sat on the government frontbench and took the questions from the then shadow sports minister and transport minister every day.

Mr V.A. Catania: The Premier couldn’t wait to open it!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Correct, yes. That has been an amazing legacy over a significant period of time, and has generated wealth for our state. They are lasting legacies for our state and will continue to be.

When we reflect on that time, we did all of that without the GST deal and without the record royalty rates that we see today. There is a legacy in this state as a result of that last boom, albeit a construction boom. Let there be no doubt that it created some challenges, and we would never walk away from that. But we made these investments. There was also the expansion of the Ord irrigation district. We made a major investment push to try to expand irrigated agriculture across the state to create new jobs and diversify our state’s economy. We looked at undergrounding power and services to cyclone-proof some of the areas of the state that were under continued pressure. We provided a significant amount of funding for public housing. We refurbished a raft of Government Regional Officers’ Housing, which gets raised with us again and again. They have had no love since that first flush of funding that we put through in the early days of the previous Liberal–National alliance government. These are the things that allowed us to attract and retain public servants at a time when it was very difficult to do that. We were also able to say to the private sector that we were investing, so please come forth and invest your own dollars. That was the plan from a whole-of-state perspective.

We raise this in the house today because again and again we see missed opportunities. This government is sitting on a significant operating surplus. It can still make the right decision—it is not too late. However, the first test of the Premier as Treasurer has been the announcement of an increase in fees and charges, and I think the public quite rightly would be angry to see that increase of \$99 a year. The government has another chance to get it right ahead of the state budget and to make sure it is investing in the state and leaving a dividend as a result of this unique period in time. That is what the opposition and I are urging this government to consider. The reason we are asking for this is that we see bushfires in every portfolio, but we also see opportunities to create jobs and to set up legacies for the future. That is what members are driven by when they come to this place: to leave the state in a better place than when we arrived in this house. We all work together and have that common purpose as members of Parliament.

The revenue flow to this government in the nine months to 31 March is up by \$3.678 billion compared with the same period last year. Propped up by a \$2.1 billion increase in royalties income, the operating surplus is still projected to sit at around \$3.1 billion. There has been an increase in transfer duty income. It is up by about \$376 million. An extra \$145 million in landholder duty has been collected. There is \$85 million extra in their kitty due to an increase in transactions on new and used vehicles. There is so much demand for cars that anyone looking for a Prado at the moment could probably sell their second-hand one for more than they bought it new. Of course, the government gets a benefit from those transactions. The government is awash with funds, Madam Acting Speaker, yet there is a rise in household fees and charges of \$99 for the average household, with a 1.6 per cent increase in electricity, water and vehicle charges. We hear again and again of the challenges faced by so many in our communities. The services that support our most vulnerable communities are at capacity and stretched to breaking point. Where is that social dividend? Where is the dividend for our community in Western Australia? I struggle to understand how this is not a priority for the government, and why when we ask questions in the house about this, they are pushed aside.

It is hard to stomach that massive budget surplus when we have a hospital system in crisis. I know that the shadow Minister for Health will attend to that. There seems to be a continued focus, particularly from the Minister for Transport, on hard infrastructure spend. Governments of both persuasions are to some degree guilty of that. There really needs to be a concerted effort to invest in soft infrastructure—the care economy that can provide jobs for so many people. This government will be judged if it fails to support our nurses, clinical staff, child protection workers and the most vulnerable in our system, whether that is people in aged care, disability services or child care. There is opportunity in all parts of the state to make sure that we are using part of this boom to set ourselves up better for the future. The government can still make these decisions; the budget is still being framed for September.

The government cannot come into this house and crow about the state's financial position. One of the best performing subnational governments in the world is sitting on a pile of money gifted to it by the iron ore sector and GST returns while there are bushfires in every portfolio. Challenges are being raised by not only the opposition, but also people working in these sectors and in the private sector. People are pointing out that they face significant challenges. I will let the shadow health minister canvass the health crisis. Today I asked the Premier about the housing crisis. I want to put on the record, to make sure that people understand it, a very thoughtful letter from Shelter WA and 10 different organisations. The letter reads —

We write to you as CEOs from the Housing Emergency Response Group, to convey our acute concern with the housing crisis, which has been made more pronounced as a result of the ending of the moratorium on evictions and rent increases ...

The housing system has been in crisis for some time. There are now almost 16,000 households on the social housing waitlist. The availability and affordability of private rentals is at a historic low. The recent Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot showed that there was just one property available for rent for a low-income family in the whole of WA.

...

The Housing Emergency Response Group wish to convey, in the strongest of terms, that

- 1. The emerging housing crisis demands a whole of government response.**
- 2. The immediate priority must be:**
 - a. Supporting people (financially) to remain in their rental homes; and**
 - b. Ensuring people who have had to leave their rental home are not exiting into homelessness.**

In a question I asked the Premier I mentioned that we had a record number of people potentially facing eviction in front of the Magistrates Court today. That information comes directly from organisations that provide advocacy for the people impacted. I think it was around 147 people on one day. That is just appalling in a state that is awash with cash. The letter goes on to say —

- 3. Services are seeing increasing levels of requests from people who cannot pay their rent and/or are being evicted and cannot find an affordable home.**
- 4. There is acute concern for the welfare of children and women living in a family and domestic violence situation which they cannot escape.**
- 5. The current situation is placing an increasing number of renters and renter households, including children, at greater risk of mental ill health effects.**
- 6. Services have significant concern about the ongoing mental health impact on staff responding to an overwhelming increase in demand and who are unable to provide housing options for people who are presenting with acute levels of stress, and a sense of hopelessness; and**
- 7. An urgent government response is needed to prevent a new wave of homelessness, housing insecurity, and increased mental health issues, due to the stress placed on individuals and families not being able to find a place to live.**

The letter then outlines four priority areas that they are calling on the government to focus on. They wrote to the Premier on 6 May and asked for his urgent response, but they have not received a response yet. I understand that the Premier is a busy man, but there is a Minister for Housing and I am sure that cabinet meets on a regular basis. This is not an insignificant group of organisations that have written to the Premier seeking attention and I think they deserve a response sooner rather than later. Given that we have raised this issue in this house, we would very much like to know how the government plans to respond so we can have confidence that some of the boom-time dollars will be spent to give relief to the many people who are under pressure.

The second issue I want to talk about again goes to homelessness—that is, the supporting housing models that are regularly talked about. I note that the Premier pointed out a number of facilities that have been developed in the Perth metropolitan area. During the election campaign, the Nationals WA put forward a proposal that we need an expansion in the amount of housing for homeless youth in Albany in particular. I think we could go into every community and make a case for that. Certainly, from my perspective, we focused on two things in Albany. One was a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility in Albany. The great southern is the only region in Australia without a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility. I would think that, given we are seeing increasing pressure in our emergency departments in the health sector, we would be making sure that we are investing at the community end by supporting people to overcome addiction and the challenges they face. Equally, when we talk about addressing mental health issues, if we invest more at the community end to support people to remain in their homes, then pressure is relieved at the other end, when people end up in the emergency department, which is the most expensive part of our health system. That is one of the calls that we made. The government could easily respond to that and ensure that the people of Albany and the great southern are able to access a long-called-for and much-needed facility. It would be widely supported.

Mr R.S. Love: I bet the member for Albany would support it.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am sure she would.

We have not been able to see any money in the state budget as yet and no planning is underway by government, despite a business case being put forward. Whether that business case or another is pursued, work has certainly been done at a community level to pursue that facility. Again, this is a real challenge. We are talking about pressures in the hospital system, but if the government invests at the other end, at the community level, it will prevent people ending up at the acute end of the health system. We ask that some of the big pile of dollars sitting in the Premier's back pocket as a result of iron ore royalties is allocated towards providing support for very worthy projects like that facility and others that were not made a priority at the last election. Norman House is another facility in Albany. I want to talk about that place a bit. I visited Norman House a number of times during the election campaign. I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Roe accompanied me on occasion. The facility could add to the number of beds available. It was quite distressing to listen to the workers and the board members. The Albany Youth Support Association and the owner of Norman House worked with Advance Housing to provide housing for youth at risk of becoming homeless. We are dealing with complex individuals. Prior to the election, we were told that the current facility, Young House, is constantly at capacity and there is a waitlist of up to 10 people wanting a roof over their heads. This is just in Albany. Demand spiked by almost 140 per cent in 2020, obviously as a result of the COVID pandemic, employment challenges and the rest. As recently as 2020, youth seeking crisis accommodation had to sleep at the Young Street lodge in their swags, given the shortage of available beds. We need to do better. These are young people in our communities who deserve to be given a chance. They cannot get themselves back on their feet if they do not have housing or a roof over their heads. Supported housing for these youths is incredibly important. I have experience of this in my own electorate, and I will come to it at the end of my speech if I have time. That youth accommodation, that transitional housing, allows young people the space to have a stable life, which means they can seek employment, get themselves back on their feet and become productive members of the community. Without that support mechanism, they absolutely cannot. We have seen a serious increase in the number of street-present people in regional centres, much like we have seen in the Perth metropolitan area, and I think that is an amazing tragedy. We should be doing more. That would be a great dividend as a result of this boom—a great investment. I would say that every member in every electorate will have seen an increase in street-present people and homelessness in their communities. I certainly have. It is something that the government, with the significant amount of funds at its fingertips, needs to turn its mind to.

Another thing I was proud of going into the election was that in our travels across Western Australia we met with a number of women's centres. They all had challenges in dealing with the resourcing available to them. Some members' electorates already have these women's facilities in their communities. I know there is one in Port Hedland. The member for Kalgoorlie would be very familiar with the one in Kalgoorlie. They are facilities where people can walk in. They deal with women's health, women's wellbeing, family and childcare services, and domestic violence outreach. They are like a signpost to a safe place to provide access to additional services. At some facilities in our communities there was not even the ability to roster on a doctor. There was no opportunity to put people in front of medical services. From our perspective, we saw this as a priority area that this government could attend to in the formation of its budget. Our consultations with the sector revealed that there was an acute funding shortage across five existing community-based women's centres. They are currently located in Tom Price, Geraldton,

Kalgoorlie, South Hedland and Bunbury. Many services have high waitlists, and there continues to be higher unmet demand across WA. These facilities essentially provide all services under one roof—GPs, social workers, cancer care workers, lactation consultants, health professionals, domestic violence outreach and psychology. They are absolutely strapped. They are the centres that exist. There was a strong case for the expansion of that model beyond those five centres so those services could be provided in the Peel, the Kimberley, Albany, Onslow and Newman, where there is not that footprint currently. Evidence clearly shows that women achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes where there is a strong and well-resourced women's health service. It is very challenging talking to the operators of these organisations who do everything to work on the smell of an oily rag. They said that an additional \$15 million, or even \$2.4 million over two years, just in the short term, would address some of the challenges they saw emerging as a result of the COVID pandemic. That could then go into a long-term sustainable process by which it could be expanded. It is just another suggestion. I think it would be a wonderful legacy to ensure that we are looking after women, children and families in our communities right across the state. It would be an admirable thing to add to the list of focuses as part of the dividend from this mining boom that we leave our community.

The last thing I want to touch on is child protection and an issue that is very concerning to us, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised it today in a question. I refer to the 1 000 children who have currently not been allocated a care support worker. We met representatives of the Community and Public Sector Union—Civil Service Association of WA, and this is something they raised with us. The information they provided was very concerning. Words like “chronically under-resourced” should set alarm bells ringing when referring to the organisation that supports the most vulnerable children in our state. Union information states —

As at 5 March 2021 and 3 April 2021, approximately 1000 Children or Young People across Western Australia were without a case worker and placed on the (NLO list) otherwise referred to as the Unallocated List. The number has remained unacceptably high for several months. The department's own Critical Priorities Report identifies that key tasks are not being completed within its own parameters.

If that is the case, we are failing at least 1 000 children. That is 1 000 children whom we are currently not providing a caseworker to. There are key performance indicators that the department is required to meet when someone is referred to it. The case needs to be actioned within a certain number of days. The union says the department is not meeting those key performance indicators. As a direct result of the workload pressures, staff cannot be retained. There is a high level of staff turnover because there is a high level of burnout. That is completely understandable, given the issues staff deal with on a daily basis. One district has had up to 50 staff resign in 12 months and is currently 25 FTE short on funded positions. How in a state with the amount of money that we have as a result of a once-in-a-lifetime boom are we failing so badly to support the most vulnerable children and families in our communities? These are staff on the front line who need to be supported so that those children can grow up and become productive members of our community. It is an absolute tragedy.

These are the things we expect to see as part of the dividend for our community. The government is framing its budget ahead of September and we would love to see those things addressed. They can leave a lasting legacy in communities. The human capital in our state is probably our best asset. If we are failing to invest in that because we are continually focused on big infrastructure projects that the government can see, touch and point to at election time, we are failing as policymakers and people who have been charged with looking after our state and its future.

I received an email from Share and Care Community Services in my own electorate, saying that it has been hosting a suicide bereavement service out of its own funds. It has not been able to get funding from the state government. The organisation has been managing that service from its own funds for a couple of years because it understands just how important it is. I previously raised this with the Minister for Community Services and was told no funding was available to provide that support. As of today, the organisation has said it can no longer run that program itself and will need to refer all cases that come to it to existing providers, and I can tell members that those providers in our communities are at capacity already. The organisation has been trying to fund the program and match funding against state and commonwealth funds to continue to expand and address unmet need in our community, but it is unable to do that any longer. As a result, programs such as the suicide bereavement service that the organisation is trying to deliver will no longer exist and people will be referred to other agencies.

The Avon Community Services homelessness house program is another that I have raised with the Department of Communities and the Minister for Community Services on a regular basis. Again, I have heard much talk about investment in the metropolitan area to expand youth homelessness supported living. Northam has a facility that did its absolute best to bring itself back from the brink to provide supported living for the homeless in the wheatbelt. There is nowhere else for them to go. I am not talking about just Northam, but the entire wheatbelt, so right down into the member for Roe's electorate and up into the member for Moore's electorate. It has been unable to source that funding and, as a consequence, now no longer provides 24-hour coverage. That means it is unable to provide that service to the kids and young adults who have pretty complex needs and require support and stability. We are seeing kids and young adults slip through the cracks in Northam. The facility has done a remarkable job of trying to secure funding, but to no avail. Because the wheatbelt has such small population centres spread across big areas, it is often overlooked in the delivery of some of these programs. The members for Moore and Roe would probably agree that we just do not seem to get to the top of the list for programs such as that because it is challenging to deliver them

across small facilities, but that does not mean that we should not try. When we have organisations that have a model with a demonstrated outcome and have made a real difference in those young people's lives as they have gone through the program and gained employment and found their own homes, I cannot understand why we are not doing more to provide that support.

The final area for me is the Northam police and community youth centre. Every member has had a PCYC in their electorate. We should give them all a significant amount more money.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I don't. My dad used to be part of it.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have one in Northam and that is in my electorate. It is an amazing asset.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Wasn't there one in Merredin?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That does an outreach program. It does an enormous amount with very little funding.

If we can find the ability to provide support workers, they can fill in the gaps in our communities for those kids who do not fall into the mainstream programs and who we cannot provide support to. I refer to that human capital. If we are not using some of the wealth of our state to drive change in some of those outcomes, we are failing and this government will be measured against that. I have heard many members deliver their first speech and talk about the importance of that human capital in their communities and how much we are all engaged with those non-government organisations and people on the front line. I urge everyone to make sure that we do not blow this boom. If they have influence in this space as part of the government and access to influencing the outcome of how the upcoming budget is framed, there must be a community dividend. We cannot get to the end of this four years and this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, with the dollars we have sitting in the budget, and miss out on resolving some of these challenges. There will no doubt be more as the impacts of COVID-19 stretch out across the state.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What is the current situation with the Northam PCYC?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Let me tell the minister; I have a letter here somewhere.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Does it still run the boxing there?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes, there is some of that. This letter that was provided to me states —

Northam PCYC relies on grant funding to run all our programs. There is no spare funding to add to what we are doing at present.

As WA PCYC applies for funding at a state level, Northam and the Wheatbelt often are not considered the highest priority.

I think governments tend to provide it to the PCYC overarching body and then it is allocated. It continues —

Other regions in Western Australia are in greater need. We find the Wheatbelt is a forgotten region.

Northam PCYC (and the Wheatbelt) would benefit greatly from a Driving Program for Youth to obtain their driver's licence.

I know that issue is shared across all regional electorates. It is incredibly difficult if young people do not have the resources and support from their family to allow them to get their licence. People have to have a car when they live in regional Western Australia. It is virtually impossible to get employment otherwise.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I think we should stick to the old system when it was run out of high schools. That is still one of the best.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am happy to look at any options to provide support to allow our young people to access their driver's licence. There is no funding for school and holiday activities. Anxiety increases for kids who do not have a stable home life when they approach school holidays and they miss out on the structure that school provides them such as food in their belly and the ability to engage with people who are interested in progressing their future. They do not have any funding to do that. As I said before, minister, the wheatbelt is often seen as a difficult area to service. It is not a new notion. As a local member, I want to keep putting on the record these issues in the context of this debate.

Mr D.A. Templeman: My old high school is doing well, isn't it?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The minister's high school is doing very well. It had its 100th birthday the other day. The minister was there and he spoke.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is doing a wonderful job. However, I am going to sit down and let some of our other members have a go. I am happy to talk to the minister about Northam any day of the week—it is a wonderful place to live—but I will let our other members get their concerns on the record. I am happy to listen to the minister after the break.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.45 pm]: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker; I was caught slightly unawares. I support this motion on the iron ore royalties community dividend. I am often fascinated by answers from the other side on questions about the cost of living. We heard today from the Minister

for Water. He thought he was going to be pretty smart and give a serve to this side and criticise the excellent former Minister for Water, the Leader of the Opposition, over the changes that had to be made at that time. The Minister for Water knows the truth about a range of utilities, particularly power. Decisions were made back in the Carpenter government days—it may have been a little after that—to fix power charges, for example, to just hold them. Those charges were frozen for a considerable period. When the coalition government came to office, it was faced with the prospect of a massive difference between the cost of those services and the amount being recovered, which was a major threat to the budget. I might say, at the time the Labor Party was critical of it, as it is even now. We heard the Minister for Water today criticising the former minister and this side. Did the Labor Party come in and reduce those charges? Did it take them back? It said that those charges were excessive and were too high. Did it unwind them and set them back?

Ms M.J. Davies: No.

Dr D.J. HONEY: As the Leader of the Opposition says, no, it did not; in fact, it left them right where they were. The government was happy to receive those dividends when it came to power. Of course, in the last term of this government we had progressive massive increases in government revenue, principally from two sources. The first source of revenue it gained was from the outstanding work done by our federal members of Parliament in achieving the GST fix for Western Australia. I find it disingenuous of the Premier and, as he is now, Treasurer, and the former Treasurer to claim that they had any role whatsoever in the GST fix, because I know the truth of that. I spoke to Hon Mathias Cormann, a remarkable individual and now head of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development—he has done the best out of politics of anyone I know—who said it was his proudest achievement as a Western Australian to get that GST fix. That is how it was done. Senator Dean Smith ran a marvellous campaign within the coalition to get focus on this and Hon Mathias Cormann, former finance minister for the federal government, got that fix for Western Australia, which is delivering now a dividend of billions of dollars. It was a coalition government, a Liberal–National government in Canberra, that delivered that fix for Western Australia.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Acting Speaker, please. I attended the Liberal Party of Australia Federal Council last weekend. Can I tell members what a fantastic affair it was? I could repeat parts of the Prime Minister’s speech if the member wishes because it was rousing and certainly encouraging for everyone there. Our Liberal–National Party coalition colleagues were there as well and a rousing good time was had by all. I was able to put a motion to the council, which was a commitment to continue that arrangement. Despite the backgrounding that the other side likes to carry on with, there was a unanimous vote from every state for that commitment, because they know the importance of supporting Western Australia. I will be fascinated to hear the government continue its backgrounding on that particular topic.

I will get back onto the main subject, Acting Speaker, which I am sure you are keen for me to do. The other part of the fix was, as we all know, the other major source of revenue—the spectacular increase in the iron ore price. We know that in the last few years of the Barnett-led coalition government, the price of iron ore went down to around \$US40 a tonne. In fact, it got a bit lower at one stage. Members opposite should know, or probably may know, that the revenue that the state government gets from iron ore is five per cent of the set price, if you like, for iron ore. We are now looking at an iron ore price of around \$US200 a tonne, or five times more. That means that the government’s revenue from iron ore is now five times higher than it was previously. That is the source of that revenue. Given the great concern of the now Minister for Water, and I am sure the current Minister for Energy and other ministers, when the coalition was increasing charges, now is the time for government to use that windfall to wind back some of these fees and charges, and certainly not to increase them. The Minister for Water may have missed the first part, but I will repeat it for him.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister is not allowed to speak from that seat.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Acting Speaker, the Minister for Water has been in this house long enough. I know that he is quite droning when he speaks, but he is speaking from the wrong seat in the chamber.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Sit down. Continue.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I have a point of order again. He should be called and thrown out of this chamber for yelling when out of his seat.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Thank you, minister. Member for Cottesloe.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. I am grateful for your protection.

This is an opportunity for the Minister for Water and the Minister for Energy to reset this and to provide some dividend back to the people of Western Australia. The people of Western Australia need that dividend. Whatever we get out of Labor, it is spin. By my reckoning, Labor Party members have something like 110 journalists employed in their various offices.

Mr V.A. Catania: And as members of Parliament.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I welcome a diversity of background in members of Parliament. I think that is very important. I recognise that in this house, some ex-journalists make an excellent contribution to this Parliament and will continue to do so. But in those offices, we have something like 110 journalists, and we get the spin. Let us look at the first part of the spin. We have the press release from Hon Mark McGowan, MLA, Premier; Treasurer et cetera, with his numerous portfolios. It states that the cost to government of keeping down the cost-of-living increases will be \$377 million. There we go. The government is reaching into its pocket and giving away money, but we all know that the government does not have any money. We all know that the government gets its money from taxpayers and from people who pay these exorbitant utility bills. In fact, it is not going to cost the government. The government is simply going to tax households \$377 million less than with its previous excessive cost-of-living increases.

The next bit of spin that we get out of this press release is that it states —

From July 1, 2021, the household basket of fees and charges will rise by 1.6 per cent, below the projected Consumer Price Index of 1.75 per cent in 2021–22.

This is the budgeted increase in inflation. Of course, if we look at the numbers for inflation, we see that inflation for Western Australia is projected at only 1.4 per cent for 2021–22. In fact, the 1.75 per cent figure that is being used as the estimate of the consumer price index is the figure that was included in the budget papers, which were generated over a year ago. We know that even on the government's own figures, this rise in household fees and charges will be above the rate of inflation. Looking a bit further into the Premier's press release, it is really interesting. It states —

There will be no increase in Transperth or Transwa fares ...

I do believe that there will not be any increase in those fares, but think about the equity of that decision. Members here may not be aware of the cost of public transport to the taxpayers of Western Australia. The subsidy for public transport is over \$1 billion a year. In fact, in cash terms, the average subsidy per journey is \$6. If we include the capital cost of the public transport system, the average subsidy per journey is \$14. That means that 75 per cent of the cost of public transport already is subsidised. We are told that fixing public transport fares will save a household in Dawesville up to \$3 000 a year, but that is regardless of the person's income, so that will include the local millionaire who catches the train. I can tell members that a surprising number of local millionaires catch the train. They enjoy the taxpayer subsidising their transport. They would get that subsidy. But I can tell members that the lady in East Perth whom we visited last year, who was living with her four children in a tent, would not get that, because she did not catch public transport.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Boasting about a supposed reduction in fees, when it is just a shotgun approach —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: For goodness sake!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have little enough time, minister.

Point of Order

Ms L. METTAM: Acting Speaker —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: A point of order is in progress, and the minister is continuing to talk.

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

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much Acting Speaker.

We have a shotgun approach in terms of that particular policy. It was just a quick thought bubble to garner some support in the election. The truth is that a millionaire will benefit from that as much as anyone who is disadvantaged.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: If there is one person who needs to focus on people who suffer, it is the Minister for Community Services. The only member of the government to suffer a vote that went backwards in this last state election was the minister. Does the minister know why? It was because her electorate was disgusted by the way the homelessness crisis was handled in Fremantle. What did we see from this government? We saw a government literally spiriting away homeless people in the middle of the night. What a disgrace!

The press release states that motor vehicle charges will rise by a total of three per cent, double the rate of inflation. What we see in this press release is a great deal of spin from the government. It goes on even further and has the Premier saying —

“Limiting increases to household fees and charges has only been possible due to my Government’s strong and sensible financial management.

Here is a measure of strong and sensible financial management in this government: remember the \$300 million that the government invested in reducing the number of public servants? This government was going to reduce the number of public servants by 3 000, spending \$300 million in redundancies and severance payments. What in fact happened? The government spent the \$300 million—\$300 million that we could desperately use in the health system now—and the number of public service jobs went up by 7 000. We have a gap of 10 000—10 000 more jobs than the government said it would have when it spent that \$300 million. As I have said before in this place, we have reliable evidence that a good number of those public servants took the statutory six-month break and came back into the same or an equivalent job. They just received a massive boost to pay off their mortgages, so it was certainly very good for those people.

Mr V.A. Catania: I remember perhaps a member of Parliament who changed one’s criteria to be able to get a payout.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am not going down that path, but I thank the member for his good intention in raising that matter.

We can look at other responsible fiscal management by this government. As I had the opportunity to mention earlier today in another debate, Metronet was going to cost just shy of \$2 billion. That was the costed, budgeted estimate that had been through rigorous scrutiny by the Labor Party, because we know we can trust it on cost estimates! That project was going to cost \$2 billion. In the latest budget paper estimate, it is \$7 billion —

Mr V.A. Catania: Ten!

Dr D.J. HONEY: As the member for North West Central said—I think we need to change his name to Nostradamus!—this project will cost \$10 billion. We know that. The member knew that; he has excellent foresight. It is a \$5 billion cost blowout—imagine that. It has blown out two and a half times on a \$2 billion project. Perhaps we can see why this government needs to increase fees and charges by more than inflation; it is to make up for monumental financial blunders like this. That is the largest cost blowout in the history of this state.

I will look at what the government did for cost-of-living charges in the previous term. These numbers come straight out of the budget papers. Electricity charges increased by \$223 for the average household. That was a 14.4 per cent increase in electricity charges over that period. Water charges went up \$166 for the average household. That is an 8.6 per cent increase in charges over that period. Over that four-year period, inflation was five per cent, so the electricity charge increases were almost three times inflation and the water charge increases were almost twice inflation. That is an \$850 increase per household over that period. These are not our numbers; they come straight out of the budget papers. We can look at the other side of it and the agencies in which these charges are increasing. The government has enjoyed massive windfalls from the excellently delivered Liberal–National fix to the GST malapportionment that was occurring before the Morrison government repaired it.

Mr D.R. Michael: Do you support fixing malapportionment generally?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I certainly support us having an increased share of GST and putting in a floor of 75¢ in the dollar, member. I am a very strong supporter of that.

If we look at the actual income of government agencies, I think it might surprise members to know just how much money the government is making out of utilities.

[Member’s time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: These are services to the community—water, electricity, sewerage and the like—that most people in this place would consider basic services that should be delivered at cost. They should not be used to tax households. We should not be taxing households with these fees and charges. The government should be delivering these services at cost. I do not think government, through these charges, should necessarily be taking money out of consolidated revenue to support them. I think it is fair that there is a reasonable user-pays system. With all these systems, we have a safety net so that those people who are in most need can get some support. That was done when we were in government, and the current government has done it as well. If we look at page 238 of the 2020–21 *Economic and fiscal outlook*, we see that over the four years of the current budget and the forward estimates, the total dividend to government from the Water Corporation will be \$5.1 billion. Metropolitan water users will be paying \$5.1 billion more than the cost of delivering that service. That will be paid by Western Australian households. We have a million households in the metropolitan area, so members can do the sums. It is a \$5 000 tax per household for the critical services of water delivery and sewerage connections to houses.

Mr V.A. Catania: It is also a tax on regional WA because regional towns pay eight times the cost paid by metropolitan households, just to give you an example.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, member. I am grateful, as always, for your learned interjections.

I will look at the electricity corporations. It is a pea-and-thimble trick. The net dividend of electricity corporations to government over that same period will be \$1.88 billion—almost \$2 billion. In fact, if we look at all the revenue from public corporations across all the agencies over that four years, the net dividend to government will be \$10.12 billion. That is the net dividend from government agencies and that is why we on this side are so concerned about the impact of the increased charges on households. It is in the context that I do not think I have ever known or ever seen more visibly the suffering of people who are struggling to make ends meet. I have never known a period in which families have been forced out of their homes by massive increases in rental costs—10 to 20 per cent increases in rental costs. House prices are going through the roof, so ordinary families cannot afford to buy a house. They have to rent and they cannot even rent. I have never known a period like this in my lifetime. Families who have gone into rental accommodation or are struggling in their houses are being hit with increases in fees for their utilities and services that are significantly above inflation. Our contention is that this is an opportunity for the government to put a stop to this. For some considerable time, no government has enjoyed a surplus anywhere near the surplus we are enjoying now. It is a time for the government to make some structural reform. When the Labor Party was last in opposition and there were very modest budget surpluses of \$100 million or \$200 million, its members were very forthright in their comments. I will quote an article from 24 May 2017 that includes comments from Hon Ben Wyatt and Hon Mark McGowan. The article reads —

“After many years of brutal price rises, more working families are struggling with the rising costs of living in Western Australia than ever before,” then Opposition leader Mark McGowan said.

“WA Labor has spoken to people who are sacrificing their heating during winter so that they can pay their utility bills, while others are going to bed once it becomes dark so they don’t have to use electricity or heating.”

The article talks at length about the hardship, but what did the Labor Party do in government? The very same Premier and very same minister, over the next four years, increased electricity prices by 14.4 per cent and water charges to the average household by 8.6 per cent. That was two to three times the inflation rate. That is the context of it. They were bleeding hearts when they were in opposition, but they are not so keen to step up to the plate now.

The Premier made things very clear and he enunciated his strategy for the campaign during his victory speech at the last election. He pointed out that he is fiscally prudent—that is his mantra—and the government is going to have a big surplus to prove how fiscally prudent it is. I have already pointed out how this government has been profligate with taxpayers’ money. If it were not for the fact that we had those windfalls, we could be in a good deal of trouble given that the government has spent \$300 million to increase the public service by 10 000 over its budget numbers. It has spent over \$5 billion above the forecast for the Metronet project. This has a real impact on the community.

An article in *The West Australian* online dated Sunday, 9 May, states —

WA housing crisis: Singles applying for tiny houses intended as short-term accommodation for homeless

It refers to tiny, little container-sized boxes. This is the position that people are in—they are having to consider tiny, little container-sized boxes for accommodation because they cannot get any other accommodation. These are the people that the government will hit with increased fees and charges.

An article on 7News.com.au on 8 April this year states —

Fears Perth in danger of becoming ‘tent city’ due to rising rents and housing shortage

The article goes on to explain the issues.

We have heard stories, and I am sure that members on the other side have heard the same stories, of people going out and buying the cheapest car that they can possibly buy and getting it registered so that they can live in it because they could not afford to rent the house that they were in. They have children and they are registering a car so they can live in the car. We know that when people are living in vehicles, they get moved on, so it has to be registered so they can move that vehicle around and not attract the eye of the local parking authorities.

Mr P. Lilburne interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: These are the people who will be hit with these increased charges, member. If I were sitting on that member’s side of the house, I would be pretty ashamed of that because those members have been in government for four years. They have had four years to deal with this, and I heard what the Premier had to say today, but the truth is that we raised this issue two years ago. Our former shadow Minister for Housing, Mr Tony Krsticevic, raised this issue constantly. The Premier had a tent city —

Mr P. Lilburne interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: This was before COVID hit, member. Maybe the member could listen and learn. Before the COVID pandemic, we had a tent city in Rockingham for two years.

Mr P. Lilburne interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, I would ask you to desist from interjecting, please.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Speaker.

We had a tent city in the Premier's own area for two years and—thank you for reminding me, member for Carine—the former member for Carine pointed this out to the Premier. I think it took two years before the Premier actually went to visit it. That is how little he cared about something in his own electorate. Regardless of whether he is the Premier, and now the Treasurer, he is a local member. When any of us on this side hear that people are suffering hardship, we go and visit them. We go and sort out the problem. But we had a Premier who was too proud to do that.

I refer to an article on ABC online news on 30 May, which is very recent, titled “Housing rental ‘crisis’ entrenching West Australian tenants in ‘cycle of poverty’”. It is a dreadfully sad story of a lady who has lost her job and she now has nowhere to go. Again, she is a person, as well as everyone else, that the government is hitting with these increased charges.

We know that we will not see these iron ore prices forever, but, equally, the government has a golden opportunity to make structural reform. It was never intended that utilities would become massive cash cows for the government. We looked at the total across the forward estimates and it is over \$10 billion. Face it; it adds up to the government imposing a \$10 billion tax on families in this state. This is an opportunity for the government to progressively wean itself off—clearly, it would have to happen over a period of time—those higher fees and charges. We do have a massive dividend.

Sometimes I hear people on the left of politics talking about the need to tax businesses more and to reduce costs and taxes on ordinary people. Here is your golden opportunity, members. Use this windfall that the government enjoys now, and we expect it will enjoy for a period of time, to make the structural changes and reforms to freeze fees and charges in this state. Do not spin that the government is doing it for less than inflation, when it is in fact quoting an inflation figure that is simply wrong and is something that was developed in a budget paper over a year ago. The fact is that those fees and charges are significantly above the cost of inflation and there is no excuse for this government to increase them at all.

This government is sitting on a \$5 billion surplus. The Treasurer; Premier and members could use that surplus as a dividend to reward the people of Western Australia and to give those people who are struggling a little bit more dignity and allow them the opportunity to have a little more money in their pockets so they can cope. They would be less likely to be thrown out of their house because they cannot afford the increasing rentals, and they could live with dignity in their own house and afford a good quality of life.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.16 pm]: I rise to speak to this excellent motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition —

That his house condemns the McGowan Labor government for failing to deliver a community dividend from record iron ore royalties collected on behalf of the people of Western Australia, leading to failures in health, child care, mental health, child protection, disability services and housing, and an increase in household fees and charges.

The Leader of the Opposition outlined the case as to why the McGowan government has failed and why it should be condemned for that failure. The motion uses a very interesting choice of words: “community dividend”. What is the dividend to the people of Western Australia from this massive explosion of wealth that we have seen with the record iron ore prices and subsequent record iron ore royalties? We have in fact seen cost pressures applied to the average and ordinary people of Western Australia to the point that people who may have felt quite comfortable in their community and in their environment are now facing real hardship. As we know, and as we heard from the member for Cottesloe, the government has taken the approach to capitalise on the steep increases to costs that it brought to families over the last number of years, which are added to further cost increases in the forthcoming year, even though the government is aware that many people are already severely affected by increasing costs, especially in housing, and the associated hardship that that brings. It does not only affect people seeking a house; there are many ways that people are impacted by this.

The Department of Communities is charged with helping those people who are most in need. It is in charge of the housing portfolio and other important areas of service, such as providing for actions against perpetrators of family and domestic violence. Often in doing that, it employs contractors. One of the key roles that it should have filled, and where it is most at fault, is the situation in Narrogin where there was no caseworker for 18 months. The Minister for Community Services said today that she had taken action and was addressing that, but for that to have actually continued for 18 months is a disgrace.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister's answer today went into a long list of things that she is spending money on, but it seemed that the minister had no touch with what is actually going on. There are a thousand young people who are vulnerable and at risk.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, I suggest that you show some respect as well.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister's department is charged with their care and protection, but it is letting them down. In the member for Roe's electorate, the Shire of Narrogin is a sizable community and it is the centre of a considerable number of smaller communities, yet the department has allowed the situation with the caseworker to happen. The minister referred to interactions with the media. We did not rush up here with something we heard in the media that day. There was a discussion with the union that represents workers in this industry as well.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The Minister for Child Protection keeps interjecting on the member for Moore. She has an opportunity to get up after the member for Moore and reply to what the member for Moore has said.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, that is not a point of order; it is a point of view. It seems that you think you should be in the chair to give advice rather than me. I will say this though: minister, it is clear that the member on his feet does not want to take interjections. There are opportunities for other members to participate, and if they do not agree with what the member on his feet is saying, they have that opportunity later.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

People who are at risk are being neglected and left behind in the boom. A further example of that is the homelessness situation. Today, the member for Central Wheatbelt, the Leader of the Opposition, asked a question of the Premier about the situation for homeless people. In his reply, the Premier said that pressures have been brought about by the return of expats from overseas because of the COVID pandemic and a change in the practice of fly-in fly-out, which has led to interstate workers being asked to reside in Western Australia. It is quite interesting because for a long time, we have been asking for FIFO workers to be resident in Western Australia—indeed, sometimes near the place of their employment—and to bring their families with them. We would never discourage that or consider it a negative, but the Premier seemed to be saying that somehow that is a problem when it is an opportunity. It is not an opportunity for the government to just throw its hands in the air and say, "It's too hard. We're going to suffer a homelessness crisis for quite some time." In fact, as I recall, the Premier said, "I can't magic houses up out of thin air." No, he cannot magic houses up out of thin air. The Premier criticised the grammar and language used by the member for Central Wheatbelt, but I do not think his use of language is appropriate there. We are not asking to magic houses out of thin air; rather, we are asking the government to put in place the types of programs that will address the very real issue of homelessness. Just this morning before I drove down Beaufort Street in Highgate, I read an article in *The West Australian* about fears of a new tent city on the horizon on Beaufort Street. The article contains a picture of many people sleeping rough on the footpath. I assume they come together for a sense of protection rather than being out there on their own. This is in the City of Perth, a city that is experiencing something of an economic boom, in a state that is awash with cash, yet while driving to Parliament today, I drove past that. That is a crisis, a disgrace and it has been going on for some time. There have been homelessness issues in Perth for the entire time that Labor has been in government but it has done very little to address it.

The member for Cottesloe pointed out that people in the Premier's electorate were living rough in the bush, a situation that was highlighted by the former member for Carine. In fact, the former member for Carine and I discussed the prospect of taking down second-hand caravans to those people, but because of liability issues, we decided that we could not do it. We were prepared to do it. We were prepared to do something for those people, whereas the Premier did nothing; he did not even go and visit those people, which is an indication of the callous disregard he has for those people suffering from homelessness at the moment. The government is sitting on a bucketload of money but is doing nothing to help these people. I admit that it takes time to build houses, but there must be other ways to source accommodation for these people. The government cannot provide everybody with a double-brick, three-bedroom house overnight but there are other ways to provide accommodation so that rangers do not have to move them on. We know that there are more temporary ways to safely accommodate these people so that they are not living in their car and driving from one place to another. I know that some people think that is a good idea when they are on holiday, but it is not a great idea for those who are trying to raise a family because living in a car means that they have nowhere to wash their children or cook their food. That is a shocking indictment on a rich and wealthy economy and a government that is presiding over that economy when that is allowed to occur.

We need to focus on ensuring that people have housing. It does not necessarily have to be the normal type of home that we have become used to, but in a crisis like this, we need to consider other ways of accommodating people in the short term while we go ahead and build the necessary homes. It is quite interesting that when governments of all persuasions have looked to invest in the community —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: There is no quorum. We are not sure why the bells are ringing.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The bells are ringing for some people.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. We will go back to how we were and hear further from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There are organisations to assist those types of people, not government organisations necessarily, but those that work with government and lobby on behalf of people who have hit more unfortunate times. Before the interruption with the quorum that was not a quorum, I was talking about the way that governments often concentrate on the need to build infrastructure. We need roads, hospitals, schools and houses, but we also need social infrastructure to provide for people's wellbeing. We know that there are people who have mental health issues being supported in the community. We have already discussed child care and family and domestic violence and the needs in those areas. I live in an electorate in which people often have to drive somewhere to access any sort of human services—outreach is very limited. It seems to me that when we think about infrastructure, we concentrate on those built things but we do not concentrate on the social infrastructure that makes many people's lives more replete and assists in ensuring that all children have a good foundation, get a good go in life, have a good education and have the opportunity to take their place. It is often harder to get politicians to take these types of investments seriously because there is no ribbon to cut and there is no big building they can look to and say, "I helped to build that stadium", or, "I helped to get that bridge underway." How much more rewarding would it be to say, "I helped to ensure that that generation of children got a decent education and that we live in a society in which everyone can access services that middle-class people who live in the middle of Perth take for granted"?

As a regional MP, I know that many people have to drive to services. I am not talking just about country towns that are hundreds of kilometres away from Perth; it can even be difficult to access a decent level of care and services in the outer metropolitan areas of Perth. Interestingly, many of the jobs in the care economy are filled by women, who are often the hardest hit when there are threats to employment and changes in hospitality and those sorts of areas. It would be a very far-sighted government that made the decision to directly invest in the future of the population in a way that addressed both the employment and care needs of its citizens.

We have seen royal commissions into aged care and there is currently a royal commission into people with disability. There is employment stress in the aged-care and disability sectors because people are overworked and underpaid. The people who are suffering are not only those who work in those roles, but also those who need these services. If we want to address the situation in aged care and the disability sector, we need more people working in those areas. Some of those matters are federal responsibilities and some are state responsibilities. We know that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to what might work for each population or region. We need an investment by government to ensure that there is sufficient human service delivery to the communities that we all serve.

I have had in my office for some time a publication put out by Anglicare; it is a little dated. It relates to investing in the care economy. It includes a little bit about the care economy and what it means. Nationwide, the amount of money that is spent on the care economy—looking after others—is about \$762 billion. That is an awfully large sector of the economy. It employs around 20 per cent of the Australian workforce.

When people face situations like those we see at the moment, including mental health stress, possible homelessness, falling victim to increased prices and an increased demand on services that make it hard to see a doctor or be admitted to hospital, we know that we probably need to invest more in the care economy generally, whether that be in health, aged care, disability services, care for young people who are experiencing family issues or care for women, especially those in domestic violence situations. We know there would be a huge dividend if we invested more in those things. We know that governments do not like doing it because it is hard to see an immediate result. Quite often, the dividends may occur in 15 or 20 years' time. In time, we might see fewer Aboriginal youth in care or fewer people moving into the justice system if we invested a little more in those people before they got to that point. I would really like to see more endeavour from the government to understand the true cost of doing nothing in those areas, the true cost of underinvestment in those areas and the true cost of lost opportunity.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: I would like to see the government make a very serious effort to get to the bottom of the opportunities that exist in those areas.

In the last Parliament, I sat on the Education and Health Standing Committee. In that committee, we saw the disparity, I guess, between opportunity and service delivery to people right throughout the state. We looked at the living conditions, for instance, of people in remote communities. We looked at education opportunities for people right around the state. We looked at the delivery of health services. We saw the stark difference, the disparity, that exists between the haves and the have-nots in our state. Regardless of political hue, I do not think anybody in this chamber would believe that there is any case for a child in a particular community, whether that be a remote community or an inner-city community, to have less opportunity than a child in another area. We all want everybody to at least have an equal start in getting a decent education and living in a decent home environment. If people suffer from a disability, they should receive the necessary care. We need to ensure that older people in the community receive care. In doing so, we will provide employment opportunities for many other people; they may benefit from having an employment option. Quite often, people who are a bit older may be able to get part-time work in the care economy.

Many people have life skills that would be well suited, with a little training, to situations in which people need care and supervision. It is not something that the Parliament spends enough time considering. How can we do things better to ensure that lives are better throughout the whole community?

I return to the Anglicare document and another interesting statistic. It states —

- Investment in the care economy generates more total employment, including indirect employment than investment in construction, especially for women and almost as much employment for men.

There is an opportunity to look beyond building freeways and schools et cetera, not that they are not important. We need schools, but we also need decent staff and we need kids to show up—we need their families to ensure that the kids go to school. It is not good enough to just have the schools; we have to invest in all those other things that wrap around that to make it work. If we look at investment in a particular built asset, whether it is a school, a hospital or a community resource centre, it is an investment in social capital. They are all investments in social capital. To make them work, we need to invest in the services that may be provided from them and into the communities that will benefit from them.

According to this document—I have no reason to doubt it; I do not think Anglicare would say anything that it could not defend —

- Every \$1m the government spends on education would create 10.6 direct jobs for women and 4.3 direct jobs for men, compared to every \$1m spent on construction which creates around 0.2 jobs for women and 1 job for a man.

Those multipliers that Anglicare quoted are significant in terms of the effect on the female workforce, which traditionally is most represented in the care economy. Education not only creates more jobs for women than men, but also probably matches the needs that we see in the community at the moment and were highlighted in the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, which highlights the failings of this government in providing a social dividend for the community and making sure that everybody in Western Australia shares in this boom. It is all very well for people who live near an area where there is going to be a significant capital investment; it is all very well for the Treasurer who is sitting on a bucketful of cash, making his job easy; but it is not all very well for those who live in an area that is distressed because the rents are going through the roof and there is no help for them. If someone is living in a car with two or three kids, more or less camping out because they do not have a home, the boom is not being spread around for them.

We would like the government to ensure that everyone in Western Australia shares in the dividends that are flowing from wealth that belongs to all the people of Western Australia, and not just a bunch of mining companies. We want all the people of Western Australia to be able to share in this. We find it ironic that a Labor government ignores the needs of the most vulnerable in the community. It is really quite ironic that although the government is composed of many union people and people who have come from community backgrounds and who in their past lives exhibited some degree of concern for these matters, on coming in here they are only interested in making the books balance and promising a new hockey ground or a new flash building of some sort. In the case of Collie, I believe the government is still planting petunias down the streets. What is it doing to address the very real distress of people in some parts of the state? What is it doing to ensure that every kid in this state has a decent start in life and is not one of the many thousands of at-risk children in the care of the Minister for Child Protection's department or in one of the towns where there are no caseworkers to look after them? In some towns, caseworkers are actually taking kids home to their own houses at night because there is nowhere else to take them. That is a disgrace and it needs to change. The government needs to invest the money that is flowing into the coffers back into a social and community dividend for the rest of Western Australia.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [5.41 pm]: I join the other members of the opposition in support of the Leader of the Opposition's motion —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for failing to deliver a community dividend from record iron ore royalties collected on behalf of the people of Western Australia leading to failures in health, childcare, mental health, child protection, disability services and housing, and an increase in household fees and charges.

I will touch on the health portfolio at the conclusion of my speech, but I want to start with some issues that are very pertinent in the electorate of Vasse and are reflected right across Western Australia. These issues are highlighted in the very important portfolio of mental health.

I recently had the privilege of joining 160 community members from the greater Busselton area for a walk in support of the program Shine a Light on Mental Health. It was led by the Man Walk Busselton, which is a group of gents who meet every fortnight to talk about mental health issues. It was also supported by people from the Blue Tree Project and Lifeline Australia. Many people gathered together on a wet Sunday in support of a community that is hurting at the moment after a number of youth suicides in the region in recent times. This obviously has a dramatic impact on a local community; it sends ripples through the community.

One of the organisers of the walk is Jon Eddy. He is a great mental health advocate in our community. He lost his son Alex in 2019. At the time he was told that over that 12-month period, 30 other youths across the south west had also taken their own lives. That is a quite astonishing figure. These statistics are very difficult to obtain, and we understand the reasons for that, but they are also certainly very difficult to comprehend.

Issues around mental health are reflected right across Western Australia, and it is a particular issue in regional WA. We recently held a forum with a number of community members and some really concerning statistics and feedback came out of that. We often hear about issues around acute care, and that issue is certainly alive and well here; for example, in the Busselton emergency department, the wait for a mental health bed can be often three to six days. We have heard of people staying in the emergency department for three to six days, waiting for mental health bed. That is obviously an unacceptable situation.

With regard to youth mental health beds, I understand that there are 15 at Fiona Stanley Hospital, 15 at Bentley Hospital and 15 at Perth Children's Hospital. These are very real concerns. With the support of the local community, we pushed for a psychiatric liaison nurse, who is now present at Busselton Health Campus. That is certainly a worthy investment in the hospital to ensure that there is a different culture of response, but there is a capacity issue there as well.

I met with stakeholders and advocates in the mental health community at our stakeholder meeting, and one of the most obvious and glaring issues is what is referred to as the "missing middle"—that is, the gap between the hospital and the home. There is a need to provide essential community-based support so that people who are vulnerable and feeling mentally unwell can have someone to talk to. There is a need for that level of support before things get too serious.

Unfortunately, since this government came to office in 2017, there have been some cruel cuts in that area. There have been cuts to Lamp Inc, a mental health service in Busselton. It provides funding for independent accommodation for homeless people. There have also been cuts to the GP down south organisation, which provided a three-tier program that supports youth with mental health issues in the Warren–Blackwood region. I will go through that. The former member for Warren–Blackwood made a grievance in this place either last year or the year before about the cruel cuts to this program. The program undertakes three things. As part of the first tier, awareness-raising exercises are held in classrooms and with large group cohorts of students. Tier two focuses on prevention and involves the presentation of workshops with local schools. The third tier of the program develops linkages between schools, practitioners and one-on-one counselling. It is a very worthy program and was well received in the Warren–Blackwood area. It was also successful in the Peel region and still continues there. I understand it was introduced in the Peel region in response to a spate of suicides there. The concern being raised with me is not only about the funding being cut in Warren–Blackwood, but also the need to invest in programs such as this in our schools to support the youth, who certainly need it. We know that if mental health support is provided early on, there is greater resilience in later life. According to the Telethon Kids Institute, 50 per cent of mental health disorders have already begun by 15 years of age and that increases to 75 per cent at 25 years of age. Suicide is the leading cause of death for young people in WA. This program has had runs on the board. As I said, it has been successful in the Peel region. It is a program we would like to see reinstated in schools in not only the Warren–Blackwood region, but also the Vasse region. In the Vasse electorate I am hearing from school nurses who are under significant pressure. They told me that their job has not been just about putting band-aids on grazed knees; it is about providing an important level of support. Many are burnt out. They are taking on a significant workload. They are under enormous pressure. There is a need for additional psychological support in schools.

As I stated, there is also a very good need for community support. It is a win–win for government, because community support groups—whether it is Lamp, GP down south or Radiance South West, which provides perinatal support—provide great bang for the buck for the government. They often provide voluntary hours. Radiance provides perinatal support to women in the south west region. It largely fundraises to provide this level of support. It has had a 50 per cent increase in referrals already this year, after five months. It is also locally connected. It knows its local community and it gets fantastic results. Western Australia's mental health community support budget is just 5.1 per cent of the mental health budget, which is less than the national average of nearly 6.5 per cent. There is a lack of investment in mental health prevention, with just \$4 million in new funds committed during the election campaign. The government has also not committed to any targets in this area.

Almost four per cent of the people presenting to an emergency department in WA—EDs have been a big focus over the last few weeks in this place—do so for a mental health issue, but 16.5 per cent are readmitted to an acute specialised mental health bed within 28 days of discharge. Our target is less than 12 per cent. They are the most recent figures I have from the Western Australian Association for Mental Health. That is an extraordinary figure that illustrates the revolving door we are seeing with mental health presentations. It is certainly important to invest in our hospitals and emergency departments. We know they are currently buckling under pressure, not because of any great trend, but because the system is under-resourced and simply cannot cope with the lack of investment and capacity. It is also clear that we need to invest in community mental health programs and to look at a greater level of investment in mental health prevention. Our communities are relying on us to do that. That is the overwhelming feedback I am hearing from the community. That also touches on housing. The pressure on our schools is also quite significant.

I do not have a huge amount of time, so I will touch on the other areas of the portfolios I represent that relate to this motion, and one of those is disability services. We know that federally the National Disability Insurance Scheme supports over 48 000 people, and there are over 411 000 people with a disability in WA. Payments to the National Disability Insurance Scheme are expected to continue to grow. WA has seen a \$4.3 billion investment in this area. Although the federal government clearly has a role to play and the NDIS at least makes a lot of sense on paper, there have been some significant issues. It is fair to say that the previous government was working towards a more localised model and the previous Premier had made a decision to go ahead with that. In fact, the more localised WA NDIS My Way model was trialled in the lower south west region. The Capes region had the benefit of localised decision-making. It was somewhat disappointing that with the change of government, we saw the decision to go ahead with the national framework, which meant decisions about individuals here in WA and their support programs under the NDIS were instead made in Geelong. As I said, the principles of the NDIS certainly have merit. It is disappointing that we saw the shift to the more national Geelong model with the change of government, but going forward, the fact that the Disability Services Commission has effectively been dissolved within a mega-department is concerning. People with disabilities and their families are some of the most marginalised in our society. They are certainly very vulnerable.

I understand that a functional review into the role of disability services in the Department of Communities has been completed. It was in fact done some time ago. Some comments were made recently by the member for East Metropolitan Region in the other house, Hon Peter Collier. He had asked the Minister for Disability Services about the status of the functional review. I quote Mr Collier —

I have asked time and again about this functional review. In response to a question yesterday, the Minister for Disability Services said in part —

... the functional review of disability services was commissioned by government to inform decision-making on the type and level of residual disability services to be administered by the state once all eligible participants had transitioned to the commonwealth-administered National Disability Insurance Scheme. The review informed government's decisions as part of the 2020–21 budget.

According to the response I got from the minister yesterday, the review is finished. I repeat —

The review informed government's decisions ...

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L. METTAM: The Minister for Disability Services stated in his response that it was finalised as part of the budget process. What we know, and what is clear, is that the review has been finalised. There is a lot of anticipation from the disability sector about what that review will inform this sector. Although the National Disability Insurance Scheme provides funding to the individual, there is a gap and an opportunity to provide a greater level of support for families. There is a role for the state office of Disability Services to support families and workplaces and to provide that local level of support that is needed. There is no doubt that what was the Disability Services Commission was very much supported. It was introduced by former Liberal Premier Richard Court and it had great support from the disability services sector. It is disappointing to see that it has lost its strength and ability to support families in this way. That is what we would like to see, coupled with a level of investment in the disability services sector as well.

Unfortunately, at this stage little funding is attached to the state disability strategy. It would be good to see the disability strategy backed up with significant investment. We have heard a range of concerns from the community about a system that is currently in crisis. There are issues around the decision-making and some of those challenges that are part of the NDIS scheme, but an opportunity exists for the state to provide a level of support at the local and state level through the state government as well. In a region such as Vasse, which I represent, the situation has gone backwards. Not only did this government not take up the opportunity to invest in a more localised model for NDIS, but also we have seen the Disability Services Commission effectively dissolved within a mega-department. We know that the government is sitting on a strategy that it has not invested in and also a functional review that was done last year that it has yet to make transparent to the people in this sector.

I will touch briefly on the health portfolio, which I have already spoken about in this place. I understand other members want to speak also. But again today we saw what a shambles this portfolio, which should be a priority for any state government, has been under this government's watch. Some elective surgery was suspended today. The waitlist has blown out by 50 per cent under this government's watch. We have record levels of ambulance ramping, which in some cases has tripled under this government, despite promises when it was in opposition to address and arrest these concerns. When the Labor Party was in opposition it called the Liberal government's health statistics a horror show. What we are seeing now is simply shocking. There are no more excuses. The reasons given have ranged from ambulance cleaning and mental health presentations, to COVID-19, when there was no community spread. The government needs to accept that we do have a crisis in our health system and to urgently address this crisis instead of opening up 117 beds in the short term. We need to see more than that. Our motion is all about the fact that this government has a capacity to show some heart to the vulnerable in our community. I have touched on those who are vulnerable at emergency departments. I have touched on those in the disability sector who have been let down by the decisions of the McGowan Labor government. In the mental health space across this state, including

in regional communities, people are hurting from a government that is not just ignoring them, but has also made the audacious move to cut their funding. That is a very cruel move from the McGowan Labor government. I will leave my comments there.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [6.04 pm]: I am keen to address some of the issues that have been raised because it is easy for people from the other side to sit there and say there are all these things that we need to do; that we need to just pour more money into what they describe at every turn as a crisis. However, what is more difficult is to apply good policy, a good evidence-based approach and some thought and collaboration, which they failed to do in the eight and a half years they were in government to address some of our difficult social issues. No-one denies we have those issues: as a state we are not alone in having people who are homeless, children in our child protection system who are victims of domestic violence, people with mental health challenges, or people with disabilities who need support. We are not alone in that at all. The challenge is getting the best sorts of responses and making sure we spend taxpayers' dollars responsibly and, as I said, doing that in collaboration.

Before I address some of those important social issues, I want to correct the member for Cottesloe when he talked about my vote in Fremantle going down and that I was the only MP on our side whose vote went down. If that is the understanding of members opposite about their voting system, it is no wonder they tanked so badly in the last state election. In fact, what happened is that my primary vote went up by six per cent, but because the Liberals did so badly, the two-party preferred vote is now between Labor and the Greens rather than Labor and the Liberal Party. Members opposite did so badly that it actually made me look bad too. I do not really appreciate that. The fact that the member for Cottesloe is so poor at reading the results is quite telling. I know he lives in a very privileged part of the state in Cottesloe but every now and again he might want to look a bit further afield. In my case, he just has to look over the Swan River and he might see that things are a little different there. I just wanted to correct the record. Across the state, nearly 10 per cent of the Liberal Party's primary vote went down anyway. The number of members sitting over there speaks for itself.

I will work through a number of issues. The member for Moore talked about the case in Narrogin and said that the union had advocated to him and the Leader of the Opposition that there were no child protection workers in Narrogin. That is not the case. I do not know whether he misunderstood them; I hope that was the case, otherwise he was misrepresenting the facts. What they do not have in Narrogin, because of a vacancy, is a family support officer. That is a level 1 person who takes people to appointments if contact visits and the like are required. It means we are not relying on skilled workers and highly paid workers to do some of the legal work that is required. It is true that because the person who was occupying the family support officer position was off doing other duties—I think perhaps related to COVID, although I could be wrong—that position had been vacant and they had not been able to fill it. As I said in question time, I am sorry if I bored members a little, because one of the things I was saying was that I was aware of those circumstances and I had asked the district to address it. In fact, the district had only realised recently, when the union raised it formally, that it was something that people were concerned about. In any case, it is not good. I understand that it is tough work that is done in the regions and throughout the whole child protection workforce. I do not want to underestimate the indebtedness on behalf of the state government. I thank the whole Western Australian community for the work they do and I want them to feel supported.

There are challenges because there are vacancies in the system. It is skilled and qualified work, and it is tough work. As a result, we have vacancies, particularly in regional areas, and we are working to address that. I want to send the message, particularly to our child protection workforce and to the Western Australian public, that it is not the case that there are no child protection workers in Narrogin. That is inaccurate. That is why I was interjecting while the member for Moore was on his feet.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I have just explained why you were inaccurate and you seem to have just woken up. I was saying you were wrong. You were giving me a quizzical look similar to my dog, Doug.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am sitting here; I am not seeking to be attacked. Why is the minister —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Member for Moore, it is not a point of order; however, I will ask the minister to continue her comments on the topic at hand.

Debate Resumed

Ms S.F. McGURK: I apologise to the member for Moore. He was giving me a quizzical look not unlike the one that my dog, Doug, gives me sometimes. With a turn of his head and a quizzical look, I thought he had not been listening to me. There are child protection workers in the Narrogin office doing good work and they are supported. In fact, what I said in question time is that since coming to office in 2017, we have increased the child protection workforce by 307 staff. More than half of those, 158 of them, are frontline staff. There are support workers as well, which is the other half.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr D.R. Michael: Pipe down, mate!

Ms S.F. McGURK: Thank you to whoever is asking the member to pipe down. I could not agree more.

We are spending money, we are putting more people on the front line and it is starting to show some good dividends. The number of children in the child protection system has gone down. Early figures in the March quarter show that for the first time total number of children in care and the total number of Aboriginal children in care has gone down. That is not the only metric we need to use, but it is a sign of the work that we are doing by providing significant new money to early intervention and engaging in important partnerships with the community sector. We are also trying to support the workforce itself. They do fantastic work and we are very indebted to them. That is evidence of the sort of work that we are doing that is partly about putting the resources in and also supporting additional staff and extra dollars along with applying innovation and evidence-based approaches. That is the sort of approach we are also taking across in our work with vulnerable families.

I hope the member was listening to the amendments to the act. We went through that in the previous Parliament and I know that the member for Moore led the debate from his side on that. Those amendments have had some changes and have been updated, so I look forward to debating that here. I have also announced an Aboriginal family-led decision-making pilot. Those pilots will be in Geraldton, the Gascoyne and the midwest. I had a very positive meeting up there with some of the Aboriginal-controlled organisations as well as the district staff in the Department of Communities who are really keen to work in partnership to make sure that they can get some good results for those local families who need our best efforts. I also mentioned in question time the \$30 million in funding for early intervention support in Aboriginal-controlled organisations. We are working to provide some dedicated assistance to families that are at risk of coming into the child protection system. Again, the early work that has been done by organisations such as the Wungening Aboriginal Corporation and its consortium are showing some very good results, particularly with reunification and early intervention. That is heartening.

The Department of Communities has also implemented a specialist child protection unit. We committed to that last year and we are starting to do that work to make sure that it will look at best practice across other jurisdictions not only in our region in Australia, but also around the world. It will look at what the evidence shows are the best ways to support vulnerable families and our First Nations people to genuinely devolve some of the decision-making and control over making sure that women and children are safe, and that the perpetrators are held to account. There will be genuine change to and ownership of some of that work. I know this is not easy work. We are trying to reform big systems. The specialist child protection unit is a good opportunity for us to look at doing some of that using innovation and research and with the support of implementing good professional practice in the department and our community services sector. We are looking at ways we can better support our foster carers, for instance. We have so many foster carers around the state who do amazing and difficult work. Although I hear a lot of good stories, at times they feel they do not get the support that they need. I do everything I can to make sure that they feel heard and that we work with the districts and our community partners to address their concerns.

I was really pleased with some of our election commitments that will be life changing for many people in the child protection system, particularly the commitment around what is called Homestretch. That is a \$37.2 million commitment to make sure that children in the child protection system will be supported formally from the ages of 18 to 21. We have been doing a trial of Homestretch in partnership with Anglicare that is due to report later this year. We have made a financial commitment to make sure that children at 18 years who are in the child protection system do not have their support artificially pulled away. In the act now there is an ability for those young people to ask for support and they are given some services, including some links in with some professional support, but not the practical support of having foster carer payments reimbursed and not to the same level of support that Homestretch will commit to. It is a significant investment and one that the government, which I am very proud to be part of, was prepared to make.

Another election commitment we made is to grandcarers. We committed that a re-elected Labor government would triple the cash payment for the average grandcarer family. Many people in this house have a relationship with some of the grandcarer advocates, if not individual grandcarer families, in their electorate. We know how difficult it is for those families. Aunts and uncles and the like, but often grandparents who did not realise that in their later years they would be dealing with bringing up in some cases babies, toddlers or young children, or, what is worse, teenagers, are having to manage and navigate the life of a teenager while they are in their senior years. Often they have the trauma and difficulty of managing their own children who are the reason their grandchildren have come into their care. Their children may have mental health issues or be incarcerated or they might have died. There are a lot of reasons that people either do not want or are not able to go into the formal child protection system. They are not given the same sort of support that the formal child protection system affords foster carers and formal kinship carers; nevertheless, they need support. We hear that, we understand their requirements and in the new member for Nedlands, Katrina Stratton, we have someone whose research specialty and work before coming into this place was supporting grandcarers. I know she is very aware of the situation and is a passionate advocate of the cause, as are other members of this place, including the members for Kingsley, Wanneroo, Joondalup and Mandurah. I see the member for Geraldton nodding her head. They have all had strong, longstanding relationships with grandcarers and representative organisations in their electorates.

Under the proposed scheme, we will give grandcarers or kinship carers payments transitional to an annual means tested payment as an equal \$1 000 payment for each child. This represents a significant increase for the one-off payment for the first child, which is currently \$400. The average family at the moment receives a \$650 payment, comprising \$400 for the first child and \$250 for each child after that. It is a significant increase. The average two-person-grandparent family will get \$2 000. That is on top of the one-off payment of \$500 or more that we gave those families during the COVID-19 pandemic and the \$600 000 that we gave to Wanslea Family Services to deliver a suite of programs and services to grandcarers, including in-home support, mentoring, and peer networking and tutoring for children.

I also want to talk about the early childhood sector because many opposition members spoke about the lack of assistance to regional areas. The member for Central Wheatbelt is aware of the organisation Regional Early Education and Development and the good work that it has done. In fact, it began under the previous Liberal–National government and we have supported it to its fruition. The early childhood education and care work was done with the regional community childcare development fund. In 2018, we gave \$811 000 to that program for the creation of a central agency that employs appropriately qualified staff. There was then a transition to over 20 single-entity services that follow a similar model to community-based child care. We now have 22 locations throughout the wheatbelt region that provide early childhood education and care. That would not have been the case previously. It is a really innovative model and it has been very successful. I would particularly like to acknowledge Helen Creed, the chairperson of the REED board, but many people throughout those communities have done great work to help establish and then support this model. It has received funding from the government but the idea is that it will eventually be self-sustaining. I know that created some angst for people in those communities as they transitioned to the new model but, as I said, 22 locations in the wheatbelt now have access to early childhood education and care services that many of them would not have had without support from the REED model doing the hard yards under this government. It is a great model.

I will also briefly talk about Target 120. Target 120 is a McGowan government election commitment from 2017. In 2018–19, we delivered on that commitment with \$20.4 million. Target 120 is being implemented across 11 metropolitan and regional sites where we have either a Department of Communities officer or an Aboriginal-controlled organisation that is employed to work with young people who are aged between 10 and 15 years. Since its fruition, it has supported 90 clients and there are currently 51 active participants. The spin-off from that has been that 317 family members, including siblings, are also being supported as part of the program. The significance of Target 120 as an early intervention justice program is that 50 per cent of the young people engaged in it have had no further police contact since joining the program. That is not to be underestimated. For these young people, all the analysis and criminogenic factors indicated they would almost certainly increase their interactions with the youth justice system and, tragically, probably end up in detention. We know that once they are in detention, it is very difficult for young people to see alternatives. To have 50 per cent of those young people who joined the program have no further police contact is significant.

Target 120 connects at-risk young people with services that meet their individual needs while supporting their whole family. It is clearly creating better outcomes for participants and their families, including fewer contacts with police and improved school attendance rates. Target 120 has also helped to create safer communities and more connection to communities by addressing factors that increase a young person's likelihood of offending and antisocial behaviour including substance abuse, domestic violence, trauma, mental health issues and poor attendance at school. I think the program should get a lot more attention because of the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the youth justice and adult corrections system. Two-thirds of people involved in Target 120 are Aboriginal. A number of these sites are across regional areas, so I hope members are listening. They are working very proactively with some of the most at-risk families. It has been a really positive program that I am proud to have implemented. The analytics that sit behind the program are also significant. We can start to track not only the expected poor life outcomes of these young people who are risk on their current path, but also the poor social and personal outcomes. Sending them into the justice system is also an expensive model that has poor individual outcomes. We hope to demonstrate through Target 120 that this is not only improving their life and social outcomes, but also is money well spent. It is a cost-effective model as well. We are doing the work to analyse the data analytics that underpin Target 120.

I also want to briefly address the disability issues raised by the member for Vasse. She said that she was disappointed that the National Disability Insurance Scheme was not delivering for a number of people in the disability system. I did not once hear her call on the federal government to produce a better outcome with the NDIS—not once. All her comments were about the state government. All her comments on disability outcomes were that the state government has to produce more and has to duplicate the federal system that we pay for. I think that is the sort of narrowmindedness and myopic approach to social services that people see through. They understand that her criticisms and her understanding of how we deliver better outcomes does not take into account the federal government's responsibility when we opted to move into the NDIS system. I know that the current Minister for Disability Services understands that well. He is the perfect minister to be tackling this area. He has a solid background in social services, he is connected to his own community and I know that he will be a great representative and will advocate to the federal government for the needs of community members, including people with disabilities in regional areas.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Water) [6.27 pm]: I rise to make a few comments about the water portfolio, given that the member for Cottesloe had a bit of a crack during question time and then, for some reason, had another go during this debate at how the —

Dr D.J. Honey: You've had time to regret the error of your way, minister!

Mr D.J. KELLY: Yes, that is right.

The member for Cottesloe had another crack at the way we have handled this issue, so I want to go through this in a bit more detail. The previous Liberal–National government was ruthless in the way it dealt with water pricing during the eight and a half years it was a government. As I said in question time, each year it handed down increases in water fees in excess of inflation. It had four water ministers in eight years, which shows how little regard it had for the portfolio. Each year, it increased the price of water by more than the rate of inflation. In its second year, the increase was 10.8 per cent. That was followed by increases of 8.5 per cent, 6.6 per cent, 5.2 per cent, 4.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent, for a total increase in water prices of 66 per cent. The absolute gall of members—I will not say members opposite, I will say members in the corner!—to criticise us for increasing water prices for the next financial year by the rate of inflation, or under two per cent, is extraordinary. Given the opposition's history in this matter, it really is quite extraordinary. In the last budget, water prices actually went down, which is absolutely unheard of. For opposition members to come in here and criticise us just shows how out of touch they are. It is a case of crocodile tears from those in the corner when it comes to households.

As I mentioned in question time, the opposition ramped up water prices and we saw a steep increase in the number of families who had their water reduced to a trickle because they could not pay their bills. I raised that in this chamber time and again. The former Minister for Water, the current Leader of the Opposition, did nothing about it. Annually, 2 500 families were getting their water cut off because they could not pay their bills. Over 50 weeks of the year, about 10 families each working day were having their water cut off because they could not pay their bills. When we came to government and I became the Minister for Water, one of the first things that I said to the Water Corporation was that it had to deal with that differently. For the Water Corporation, it was a change of culture because its staff had literally been told that if people did not respond to bills, the way to attract their attention was to cut off their water. People then had to do something; they would ring the Water Corporation and then there might be a discussion about the alternatives people had, as far as hardship payments and the like, to clear their debts.

I told the Water Corporation that I wanted it to come up with a better way and to be more proactive so that people could still pay their bills and the Water Corporation did not have to go through the brutality of cutting off a family's water. The member for Cottesloe, might want to listen to this. I had the financial counselling organisation in my electorate talk to me about just how humiliating it is for families to suddenly not have a normal water supply and not be able to wash the kids' clothes for school or bath the children—all those things that a family goes through when they have their water reduced to a trickle because they cannot pay their bills. None of that humiliation or hardship had any impact on the former government. There was a steep increase in the number of families who had to put up with that. Despite having raised the issue with the former government multiple times in this house, those four water ministers, and the last water minister in particular, did nothing about it.

When I raised the issue with the Water Corporation, it was not long before it came up with another approach. It went out and interviewed customers experiencing hardship to find out what the issues were, why they were finding it difficult to pay their bills and how the Water Corporation could deal with it differently. The Water Corporation actually went out and talked to people and learnt a lot. It came up with a whole bunch of different practices. When the Water Corporation could see that people were having difficulty paying their bills, it proactively tried to contact them before the bill got to almost a point of no return. By being proactive, it was able to significantly reduce the number of households for whom, as a last resort, water was cut off. Within a relatively short period of time, prior to the COVID pandemic, we reduced the number of people for whom the last resort was utilised from 2 500 a year to below 800. That is almost a 70 per cent reduction.

I have two interesting things to say about that. The staff at the Water Corporation have said to me that going through the process of talking to their hardship customers and putting in place a whole bunch of new procedures was the best thing they have done in their working life. They found it really rewarding, because they now understand their customers better and are able to help people in advance of their bill situation getting to the point of no return. First, it was really rewarding for Water Corporation staff. Second, the chair of the Water Corporation told me the other day that the Water Corporation now spends less on debt recovery than it did when it took the hard approach of cutting off people's water. It is not an inexpensive process. It had to send a technician out to cut the water off. It had to deal with the angry, upset customer on the phone. It had to try to resolve the issue. It then had to send a technician back out to turn the water back on, and there is a fee involved in doing that.

The Water Corporation now spends less on debt enforcement for hardship customers by taking a more sensible and compassionate approach than it did when it took a hardline approach. Therefore, it is better for the customers, it is better for the staff and it is financially better for the Water Corporation. Now, how hard is that? It just took

a government that was sincere about dealing with hardship customers rather than the crocodile tears that we have seen from the members in the corner today. Those members really did not care when they were in government, and they still really do not care. On this side, we do care.

I mentioned two programs that were introduced as a result of the conversations Water Corporation staff had with hardship customers. The staff came back and said that there were a bunch of customers who get into hardship because home dialysis treatment and incontinence issues lead to huge water bills, and that we should do something for those two groups of customers. We tackled the dialysis issue first. I think there are about a hundred customers who are doing home dialysis and who receive a special water allowance of 30 000 litres for every bimonthly bill. That is free water so that they can have home dialysis and not end up with a huge water bill. We also expanded the medical assist program so that if people have an incontinence issue, they now also get a reduced bill. We announced that in the last six months. I did not dream up either of those things; they came about because the Water Corporation actually went out and talked to its staff.

Another program is called Start Over. Water Corporation found that it had customers who might have, for example, a leak that they did not know about and whose bills all of a sudden went through the roof. Because they are on modest incomes, they are not in a position to clear that one bill. They can go on paying their regular bills each month, but they are never in a position to clear that big debt. Therefore, we put in place Start Over. Essentially, that means that if a person has a one-off debt that they cannot clear and they can show that they were a good payer for two years, we will clear that historical debt. The alternative is that we cut off people's water or take them to court over a one-off historical debt, for which the enforcement probably costs more than the debt itself. It is not a financial win for the corporation to behave like that. It is financially better for the corporation to get people back onto regular bill payments and to write off the old debt, and it really is more humane for someone who is in hardship, so that is another thing that we did.

We can suspend bill payments under the Time Assist program. If something goes wrong—for example, someone is made redundant, is temporarily out of work or has an injury that interrupts their income—they can suspend their payments. That is another thing that we introduced to assist customers. We have done a whole range of things. People are still paying their bills, but we are not cutting off their water, which is an unpleasant and harsh thing to do, but under the previous government, it was almost like the first resort. People in the corner should hang their heads in shame for allowing that situation to continue for as long as it did. It stopped only because there was a change of government.

Regarding the dividends that we return to the people of Western Australia, one of the areas in which the Water Corporation is different under this government compared with how it was under the previous Liberal–National government is that it is tackling climate change. Those members who have carried on may have heard me speak about this before, but for the information of new members, under the previous government, government agencies such as the Water Corporation were not allowed to use the term “climate change” in their documentation. They could refer to the changing climate or the drying climate, but they could not talk about climate change because the previous government —

Ms M.J. Davies: What a load of rubbish.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am glad that the previous Minister for Water is listening. She was pretending not to listen to all the other stuff about hardship —

Ms M.J. Davies: I am trying to not listen, but your voice penetrates.

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is what your eardrum is for; sound is meant to penetrate.

The previous government would not let agencies talk about climate change. I have not heard that from just the Water Corporation or single public servants; I have heard that from multiple agencies and multiple public servants. They said, “If we put up briefing notes that talked about climate change, they got sent back and we had to rewrite them.” We are dealing with climate change in the water portfolio in a way that the previous government never did and that is largely because the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA are governed by climate sceptics. There are people who do not believe that climate change is true. I know that he is not in Parliament, but he still holds a position of spiritual high regard in the Liberal Party. I am talking about Wilson Tuckey, a former federal Liberal member, and I heard him on 6PR today. Apparently, he has a regular spot on 6PR—Wilson Tuckey of all people! He gets to talk on 6PR about things that bug him. This morning he talked about being irritated by the Water Corporation's advertising. “Millsy” said, “They are talking about encouraging people to switch their sprinklers off and save water. Isn't that a good thing?” Millsy asked him some probing questions. Wilson Tuckey said—this is what it boiled down to—“I really don't like them talking about climate change.” I could tell that he was really annoyed that the Water Corporation's advertisements now mention climate change. Is that not typical of opposition members in the corner? They really do not believe that it is an issue. At the federal level, they have got their head in the sand and in our state Parliament, they never did a thing. What was the climate change strategy in the Water Corporation portfolio when members opposite were in government? They never talked about it, they never acknowledged it and they did nothing about it. The last two water ministers were National Party ministers. Their heartland —

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: I refer to standing order 94, which states that a member's speech must be relevant to the question under discussion. It might be an interesting general topic, but it bears no relationship —

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Yes, Leader of the House.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Mr Acting Speaker, I am still standing. The Leader of the House cannot stand while I am standing.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It is not a point of order.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is a point of order. Under standing order 94, a member's speech must be relevant to the question under discussion.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the House! There is no point of order, but I ask the minister to make sure that he comes back to the topic of the motion.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.T. Punch: It's a very intelligent contribution that the minister is making.

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is right. I thank the member the Bunbury for his interjection; I will take that!

As I understand, this motion is about the government not delivering a dividend to the people of Western Australia. One of the dividends that we are delivering is taking action on climate change. In the wheatbelt and the great southern, which could be described as the National Party heartland, even though more people in the Agricultural Region of the upper house voted for the Labor Party at the last election than they did the National Party by quite a long stretch, we have done more to deal with climate change impacts than the previous Liberal–National government ever did. We have had 12 water deficiency declarations, the most on record. We have spent over \$3 million on carting water to farmers in the wheatbelt. We have funded 37 community water projects—I hope this is getting through, Leader of the Opposition—worth over \$1.5 million to increase the size of those projects so that farmers have somewhere else to get non-potable water when their on-farm water supplies are depleted. We have pursued that program and spent that money since we have been in government in a way that you never did. The only program for farmers in that region that you have supported is subsidies for individual farmers.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I never understood —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Get up and say something! Get up and say something, if you want, Leader of the Opposition. I am glad you are listening.

The individual subsidies that you have sought for individual farmers: it was of some surprise to me to find out that one of the reasons you were so wedded to that program is that the member for Roe was actually an applicant for that program. He stood to financially gain from that program.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister is referring to a matter that was the subject of deliberation by the former Speaker, who found that the member for Roe acted without malice and was cleared of any implication of wrongdoing by the previous Speaker. I ask the minister to reflect on that before he tries to besmirch the member any further.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Minister for Water, you might want to consider revisiting your comments.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.J. KELLY: Mr Acting Speaker, I am just stating the facts; I am not putting any implications on the member for Roe that he breached the standing orders. I am not making that allegation at all. I am simply stating the fact that in his championing of that program, he was a financial beneficiary. I understand that he has withdrawn his application for that program, which he is entitled to do.

We have spent money in the wheatbelt and the great southern to improve the water supply for farmers in need in a way that members opposite absolutely never did. We put forward a \$7.3 million program to improve 70 dams in the wheatbelt and the great southern. We put forward \$3.65 million of state money and we have asked the commonwealth to kick in the other half through its National Water Grid program. That is a program that so far, I have not heard members opposite support, and we have not secured federal funding. If they care about a dividend and dealing with climate change for farmers, it would be nice to hear members in the corner support that program.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [6.48 pm]: I would like to take this opportunity in the last 10 or 15 minutes to run through some of my concerns. I certainly support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for failing to deliver a community dividend from record iron ore royalties collected on behalf of the people of Western Australia leading to failures in health, child care, mental health, child protection, disability services and housing, and an increase in household fees and charges.

This motion relates to the social dividend. It has been quite interesting to listen to some of the arguments. Members on this side of the house are trying to translate what is happening out in the community; that is what this is all about.

The people of WA voted in the Labor government; we all understand that. As the member for Moore said, we would have thought, in general terms, that a Labor left socialist-type government would be interested in social and community issues concerning their constituents. It is quite concerning to me that the people of Western Australia are sitting back and saying, “We voted in the Premier, he kept us safe, he kept us strong.” I saw the Labor candidate at the Esperance polling booth many times, only a metre in front of me, telling people to vote for Mark McGowan, “He’s keeping you strong.” I said to him, “What about voting for me?” He was a candidate. What about voting for me?

Mr D.A. Templeman: He did very well. Brad did a good job.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: He did. Bradley did very well. Anyway, I survived to fight another day, minister.

The concern is that the people of WA voted the Premier in and now they are sitting back and saying, “With a \$5 billion surplus, we have all these social issues.” The Leader of the Opposition is exactly right: the people of WA are looking for the social dividend. We have these concerns. The shadow Minister for Health raises these health concerns every day. Today we asked a question about category 3 surgery. The Minister for Health almost laughed it off. We have seen an increase in the number of category 2 and 3 surgeries that are on hold. It has gone from 19 000 surgeries up to 29 000. The shadow Minister for Health asked a question today and the health minister thought it was some sort of joke. I do not think it is a joke for all those category 3 patients who are out there waiting for surgery. I was quite disappointed to see that today.

Education is my shadow portfolio, member for Mandurah, and I have some real concerns. As I said last week, if we happen to run across Hon Darren West and some of his cohort in the general electorate, we might be able to pick up some sort of package or grant. I have one for him—Esperance Senior High School. It is a fantastic school. Its results for a regional senior high school are among the best in the state. That has been well recognised for over 20 years. The week before last, I was with Pene Pariagh, the P&C and the board, walking around this school. It was quite upsetting to see the state of the infrastructure there. We have a real opportunity to look at these types of infrastructure while the government has this \$5 billion surplus. The thing that probably upset me the most was the dark and dingy canteen. I could not imagine what it is like in the middle of winter. Those students come up with such great results, and basically two-thirds of the school needs bulldozing. We are looking at a 1960s school. Today I saw another press release headed “McGowan Government building better schools in Perth’s south”. That is fantastic. The member for Baldvis was at Ridge View Secondary College today. The media release states —

Stage 2 of construction includes a new performing arts theatre and associated learning areas for drama, dance, music, visual arts and media; two new classroom blocks; a cafe for teaching purposes; and additional student services offices.

I am pleased for the students and the families of Baldvis, but, to be honest, the students and families of Esperance deserve something better. I hope the minister will be advocating for that because I certainly will be. I will be reminding Hon Darren West, Hon Shelley Payne and the like that Esperance is in their electorate and they need to look after that school. I want to point out that it is not just about Perth schools.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I think you’ll find that the new members down that way will be very good representatives.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: They do a fantastic job under difficult conditions.

I also want to talk about Hedland Senior High School. I believe nothing would have happened there were it not for the National Party going to Port Hedland a year or two ago under the leadership of the now Leader of the Opposition. I had a look at the high school and I came back and asked a question of the Premier about the state of that school, where about two-thirds of the children at that school cannot access any shade in the Port Hedland heat at recess or lunch. I said to the principal that there would be some heat coming from the government when I asked this question. He said, “No, you go for your life! I am nearly retired now. If they retire me early for allowing you to ask this question, well, so be it!”

Mr D.A. Templeman: I think he’s still there!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The member for Pilbara is nowhere to be found. Finally, we got it on the front page of the *North West Telegraph* and, funnily enough, it appeared on the front page of *The West Australian*. Now, when we finally got some funding for Hedland Senior High School, unfortunately, Pindan was doing the job!

The children and the families involved with Hedland Senior High School really need the minister's support. I really look forward to that. This has been on the radar. Now that we have had the unfortunate situation with Pindan, the government needs to step up to the plate.

We also have issues with the likes of asbestos around the region. This is a real scenario, member for Central Wheatbelt, out there at the college in Merredin. I have been to several briefings over time and we are working through that issue.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Which college?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is K-12 at Merredin College, which certainly has excellent staff and is a good scenario for that town. This is the time, when the government has a \$5 billion surplus coming up, to start replacing infrastructure. So many of our senior high schools and primary schools around the regions and in places like Churchlands use transportable buildings, and there is asbestos in different places. The government has a massive dividend coming up and a massive surplus, so this is the time to look at these issues. I wanted to refresh the minister's memory on that.

Another issue came up in my electorate in the last few weeks. I was out at the Munglinup Primary School. Munglinup is a small town, but we had about a hundred people turn up to a public meeting. That school only has a small number of students, but its numbers will increase by 40 to 50 per cent over the next few years. What is happening? The school bus service is cutting back school buses. This is another issue. We seem to have spot fires starting everywhere. We do not have equity with our children getting equitable access to education. This was flagged by the ABC in Esperance after the meeting at Munglinup. There is also an issue with telecommunications, but the inequity of school bus services was of real concern.

I want to move quickly to a scenario with housing over the last four years. This government loves referring to the previous Liberal-National government. Labor has been in government for nearly four and a half years and it is time it took responsibility, because it cannot spend the next four years, as it has spent the last four years, blaming the previous government.

Dr D.J. Honey: They could!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I know that, and they probably will from the way they are going. At some stage, member for Cottesloe, they have to take responsibility.

We have a Premier who stood up today in question time and said, "More houses than ever! The state's going fantastically!" But he has failed to mention the thousand-odd social housing houses that were disposed of over the last four years of his government. There are any number of towns in my electorate and in the electorates of all regional members here that just do not have housing. When Nyabing gets a new principal at the school, people say, "Oh, sorry. We can't find a house for you." For new police in Wagin it is the same. The Minister for Police tells us that there will be 950 new police officers over the next four years, but they will have nowhere to live. These are the issues that the government has to address over the next three and a half years.

Another thing relating to the social dividend that really upsets me is our magistrate shortages. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned today the real concerns we have about the shortage of magistrates in our court system. By the way, today I congratulated the member for Baldivis on his better half being appointed as a new magistrate. That is great news for the system in WA, but I think it is something that this government needs to address urgently, because we are having difficulties with a number of cases.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

**COVID-19 RESPONSE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) BILL 2021**

Assent

Message from the Deputy of the Governor received and read notifying assent to the bill.

House adjourned at 7.01 pm
