



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTIETH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2019

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 23 October 2019

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) took the chair at 12.00 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

PAPERS TABLED

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

SUNSMART CAMPAIGN

Statement by Minister for Health

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [12.03 pm]: The SunSmart campaign has been boosted with the announcement of a \$390 000 contribution to continue the partnership between Healthway and Surf Life Saving WA for the next three years. The McGowan government, through Healthway, provided the grant to help continue the delivery of the important SunSmart safety education campaign at a range of surf sports events and activities. The partnership provides the opportunity for nippers, athletes, surf lifesavers and people attending surf lifesaving events to learn how to be SunSmart or to remind them of the importance of sun safety. The Surf Life Saving WA and Healthway partnership will also support sun safety practices at a local club level by providing sun safety education and sunscreen, and supporting clubs to run SunSmart events.

Two in three Australians develop skin cancer before the age of 70, and reducing sun exposure in childhood and adolescence can greatly reduce the chance of developing skin cancer later in life. The new funding package also includes supporting the WA Surf League series for the first time to continue spreading the message about the importance of being SunSmart. The Surf Life Saving WA season program includes events for nipper and senior competitors, including the SunSmart WA Surf Life Saving Championships. The first event, the SunSmart WA Endurance Championships, kicks off on Saturday, 26 October, at Sorrento Beach.

As we approach the warmest part of the year, we should all be reminded of the dangers associated with excessive sun exposure. Please remember to stay safe in the sun by slipping on sun protective clothing that covers as much of your body as possible; slapping on SPF 30 or higher broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, at least 20 minutes before sun exposure; slapping on a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face, neck and ears; seeking shade —

The SPEAKER: Attorney General! You just walked past the minister.

Mr R.H. COOK: — and sliding on sunglasses.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Local Government) [12.05 pm]: Last weekend, local government elections were held across the state. Local governments, of course, play an important role in the delivery of services and the creation of engaged and connected communities. I would like to acknowledge those longstanding mayors and shire presidents who retired at the election on the weekend, including Mayor Henry Zelones, Armadale; Councillor Victoria Brown, Esperance; Councillor Onida Truran, Yilgarn; Councillor Lyn Baker, Corrigin; Mayor Sue Doherty, South Perth; Mayor Trevor Vaughan, Victoria Park; Councillor Eileen O'Connell, Nungarin; Shire President Karl Brandenburg, Carnarvon; Councillor Peter Monagle, former president of Harvey shire and long-term elected member; Councillor Pam Townsend, Augusta–Margaret River; Councillor Sam Collard, Gingin; and Councillor Colin Egerton–Warburton, Cranbrook. I pay tribute also to the work of those elected members who were not returned last Saturday and congratulate the incoming newly elected members from across the state in their respective local governments. These newly elected councillors will be the first group to take part in universal training, a key part of the reforms passed by Parliament earlier this year.

According to projected WA Electoral Commission figures, voter turnout was around 28.5 per cent—lower than in 2017, but in line with the results for 2013 and 2015. This low rate of participation is very disappointing. There is work to be done to raise the profile of local government in the broader community. There are many good news stories in local government but not enough people know what is happening. For example, the Local Government Policy Awards for Children, Health and Environment highlight the outstanding work being done at the local government level to improve children's health, a very, very important issue for local communities. I encourage local governments to get out there and tell their stories because it is only through fostering a relationship with the community that the community will realise the importance of what is being done and of local government in broader terms.

Phase 2 of the local government reforms is underway, and it will address elections and look to implement ways to increase voter participation. The next phase of local government reforms will focus on connecting communities and building trust, and a simplified, streamlined approach for local government as well as shared prosperity and sustainable development.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA LIQUOR INDUSTRY AWARDS

Statement by Minister for Racing and Gaming

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [12.08 pm]: Today I would like to congratulate the many winners of the twenty-fifth Lion Beer Western Australia Liquor Industry Awards and thank the sponsors for an amazing and enjoyable night. Last Friday, along with quite a few of my parliamentary colleagues, I attended the Lion Beer Awards at Crown to hear the stories of the award winners, who were among some excellent nominees in the various award categories. I do want to mention the winners briefly, who have obviously worked so hard in predominantly small Western Australian businesses to reach this achievement. Congratulations to Liquor Stores Association of WA life member inductee Laurie Hurley, who indeed has character in abundance, as well as a large supportive family. Laurie has obviously affected many in the industry and provided positive guidance over many years. Congratulations to Damien Morgan of Brown-Forman; Corey Wilson of Samuel Smith & Son; Scott Ellis of Coopers Premium Beverages; Lion Beer Australia; Aiden Sivic, Young Retailer of the Year; Deb O'Connor of Witchy Liquor; and Vikrant Sharma of John's Food & Liquor.

I offer a very special congratulations and thank you to Lou Spagnolo, who took away the Quiet Achiever Award on the night. I believe Lou was the only person in the room who was surprised by the award, as everyone knows how hard he has worked on his own business endeavours, his support for others in the industry and his time as chair of the Liquor Stores Association of WA board. Lou truly is a quiet achiever. He goes about his business for the industry without fuss and without needing praise. I am glad he received that award on Friday night.

I also extend my thanks to Peter Peck, chief executive officer of the LSAWA, who has worked tirelessly with my office, as well as my fellow parliamentarians to make our liquor laws as good and effective as they can be for those on the other side of them.

The awards night was absolutely delightful, but the highlight is always hearing the stories of those in small local business who have fought very hard to keep their businesses on track and to support their local community. These people have struggled through tough times, but truly love the work they do.

I was honoured to be asked to speak on the night and to present the final award to Vikrant Sharma in honour of Peter Basioli, who lost his life in the Bali bombings. I take this opportunity to pay my respects to Mr Basioli and his family. I hope to present more awards to deserving winners next year.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

Statement by Minister for Child Protection

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [12.10 pm]: I rise to inform the house of actions that the Department of Communities is taking to improve working with children checks. The working with children check is an important part of our system to keep children in our community safe. I am pleased to report that several improvements have been made since the 2014 Auditor General report recommendations, and that seven of the eight recommendations have been fully or partly implemented.

Since the 2014 audit, the Department of Communities has reduced processing time for applications without a criminal record from 20 days to four days. Better integration with the Western Australia Police Force and a more risk-based approach means that, overall, applications are being processed 52 per cent more quickly than they were in 2014. The average number of days to finalise an application of a person with a criminal record has been reduced, from 39 days in 2013–14 to 24 days in 2018–19. The level of continual monitoring of cardholders has also improved due to improved matching of applicants between the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission—previously CrimTrac—and the working with children check screening unit's information system. This has reduced the number of cardholders who cannot be automatically monitored.

The Department of Communities is also assessing cardholders who have new offences more quickly. In the 2014 audit, 25 per cent of reassessments took more than four months. This has been reduced to just three per cent. The department's continued commitment to child safety is demonstrated in its approach to address the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommendations. Furthermore, I am pleased that WA is the first jurisdiction to provide negative notice information to a centralised database, which was established to enable the sharing of working with children check decisions with all jurisdictions across the country. This will alert other jurisdictions when a person who has been prohibited from being in child-related work in WA applies for a working with children card in another part of the country. The Department of Communities is committed to continuously improving and strengthening its systems that protect children and has taken prompt action to address the most recent audit findings and implement the five recommendations from this recent audit.

RAILWAY (METRONET) AMENDMENT BILL 2019*Second Reading*

Resumed from 22 October.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills) [12.13 pm]: I am very pleased this afternoon to rise to contribute to the second reading debate on the Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2019. It is a great day for the community of Ellenbrook. This legislation implements the authority for the construction of the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line. It represents the delivery of a key election commitment, delivering thousands of jobs for the railway construction, and thousands of jobs into the town of Ellenbrook and the entire surrounding community. It is a wonderful day. This legislation provides for the delivery of the 21-kilometre rail line from Ellenbrook to Bayswater station. There will be a number of stations along the way, including Ellenbrook station in the town centre. I went to the train station site with the Minister for Transport, the Premier and the members for Bassendean, Morley and Maylands, and unveiled a fabulous billboard. It is great to see it coming to fruition. There will also be stations at Whiteman Park, Bennett Springs, Malaga, Noranda, Morley and Bayswater. The whole trip will take about 30 minutes. It is going to be great. This project is very good because we are delivering on an election commitment, bringing rail manufacturing back to Midland, and delivering it in a financially responsible way—and without selling Western Power. This project ticks many boxes for my electorate and the state of Western Australia. It is a great thing.

I was not here for a portion of the debate last night because I had to drive along the fabulous NorthLink to a school assembly in Bullsbrook. I was listening to the debate as I drove along NorthLink and, frankly, I was a little confused at some of the debate that I heard, so I read *Hansard* this morning. In her contribution, the member for Vasse said that very little had been achieved in this signature policy.

Ms L. Mettam: What've you done?

Ms J.J. SHAW: I will talk the member through it. Wait, member for Vasse; you might learn a thing or two. I listened all the way —

Ms L. Mettam: A business case?

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I am enjoying this.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Listen and you might learn something. Listen up.

I recall the Minister for Transport saying that when she came into office, she went scrabbling around looking through the cupboards for the tens of millions of dollars' worth of work that the Barnett government allegedly did on the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line. I have images of Mr Kannis and the member scrabbling around through the cupboards, looking to see what they could find—any sort of planning or delivery for the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line. There was nothing—not a jot. This government started from scratch. This is an extraordinary achievement.

Ms L. Mettam: What've you got?

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, do you want to last until question time?

Ms J.J. SHAW: The member for Vasse obviously has not been listening. She has not been doing the work in opposition, but that is what she has to do. I will take the member through it. The people of Ellenbrook are well aware of what is going on. I am very happy to talk members opposite through it and enlighten them. It is either that they are not listening or that they do not understand what they are hearing. That is really concerning in an opposition. Members opposite did not deliver any rail to speak of—all they did was eight kilometres—whereas we reopened the Fremantle line, delivered the Mandurah line, and delivered the Joondalup line. Members opposite might want to listen up because they might hear a thing or two.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, you had an opportunity to talk on this bill. Do not stop somebody who has the courage to get up and talk about it now. Member for Swan Hills.

Ms J.J. SHAW: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I do not know what is worse—whether they are not doing the work, or whether, when the work we are doing is presented to them, they do not understand what is going on, but the people of Ellenbrook understand and know what the government is delivering for them. For the benefit of those opposite, we are progressing the project from scratch in a methodological, sequential, logical, purposeful and thorough way. We are designing and delivering the project on the best possible information. We are not just scrabbling around in desperation for some sort of weak policy announcement and a few drawings that masquerade as election commitments. I will come to that. I will let members opposite know what we have been getting on with. There are a heap of transformational projects in the Ellenbrook area that will complement and progress the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line.

First of all, straight out of the blocks in April 2017, pretty much as soon as we were elected, the Minister for Transport announced the new Lord Street project—a seven-kilometre dual carriageway that will link Ellenbrook. The preliminary earthworks for the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line were done as part of that project while the crews

were still in motion. It is absolutely fantastic stuff. It is rocking the world of the people in Ellenbrook. In August, the minister and I were at the bus depot in Ellenbrook to announce a new east–west bus service that would link Ellenbrook to Whitfords while we deliver the train project to make sure that people have an alternative way of accessing rail. I have a press release from September 2017 titled “Metronet well on the way with major funding injection”. The government allocated \$1.34 billion in the 2017–18 budget towards the Metronet stage 1 priority projects, including \$22.1 million allocated for detailed planning and design work of the Morley–Ellenbrook line and the Byford rail extension. We were off and racing. Work began from an absolute dead start, by the party that knows rail and knows how to design, deliver and construct these projects. A press release from 26 October 2017 was headed, “McGowan Government Progresses Ellenbrook Metronet”, and it outlined how the government was forging ahead with the Morley–Ellenbrook line planning and how a tender had been released for Metronet concept planning, following the submission of business cases for the Yanchep rail extension and the Thornlie–Cockburn Link. This was for planning and engineering services—a vital part of delivering any sort of project and something that those opposite obviously have no idea about.

A very exciting part of the project happened in January when we sought public feedback on the Morley–Ellenbrook line as part of the planning process. We engaged the community of Ellenbrook and asked them what they wanted—what sorts of facilities and links they needed. Surveying the community and undertaking a public consultation process helped us to undertake options analyses. This work complemented the technical feasibility work that was going on around the preferred alignment, the preliminary site investigations, the land use plans, the high-level concept design, and the grade separations and stations. We were doing the work and making progress.

As part of the community engagement process, we held a fantastic public forum at which there was standing room only. Hundreds of people turned up. We broadcast it online and people were tuning in and listening to what the minister had to say. As I say, a survey was undertaken and there were more than 2 000 responses. In my community, 86 per cent of respondents said that they thought the project was important to their suburb, and 70 per cent said it was important to them personally. The top three reasons were that they recognised it would give them easier access, it was a way of saving money, and that there would be fewer parking hassles. They wanted green spaces and increased availability of public transport. They wanted to tie this into their community. They wanted good connections throughout the community to the train station. It was a great exercise, and one that has certainly informed the way that this government has gone on to plan and deliver this project.

We then put the Bayswater station upgrade out for community consultation in April 2018. That project obviously caters for the Morley–Ellenbrook line and is another significant step forward for the project. In April 2019, more tenders were awarded for engineering and planning for the Morley–Ellenbrook line. It was really exciting to have a look at the options analysis and design work, and develop a robust business case. It is so important to do that work when delivering these large-scale infrastructure projects. Metronet has produced a really interesting document about the planning work. It makes the point that a project of this size takes time. Given that we commenced from a standing start, the Metronet team has had to put a lot of time in to get this project up, and I congratulate them for their efforts. They have been doing geotechnical investigations, environmental assessments, noise and vibration assessments, traffic access modelling, economic analysis, and population use and forecasting exercises. The result of that work will be a detailed business case that will be submitted for a final investment decision to be made.

These processes involve the analysis of 100 potential options, narrowed down to 30 options with a lot of different modes of transport and alignments. That was further narrowed down to 14 options. There was a long list, filtered down, to get the best solution possible for the people of Ellenbrook. It has involved community consultation and the engagement of a whole heap of experts in the field. While that has been going on, we have not been sitting idle. We have got cracking on the station site. It is great that we have removed the telecommunications tower at the train station site. That has cleared the space for the station to be delivered and has also facilitated the finalisation of the Ellenbrook town centre. That is absolutely fantastic. We had been waiting on that.

I was thrilled in April 2018 to see that the federal Liberal government had finally been spooked enough to go out there; it had had an epiphany. Maybe it was behind the cabinet that it allegedly held all the planning documents in! It went out the back and found the transport gods and realised that it needed to get on board with the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line. It committed, kicking and screaming, to \$500 million. Full credit to the Minister for Transport for her lobbying to bring the Liberals around and make them see sense. That was an absolutely extraordinary effort.

In the 2018 budget there was further action on the project and further funding. There was a \$750 million allocation for Metronet projects under development, including the Morley–Ellenbrook line, to continue that planning work and to also commence the upgrading of the Bayswater train station. That is absolutely fantastic. Again, in Henley Brook in October 2018, we were still getting on with things—rezoning to make sure that the Ellenbrook line could come through. Then in February 2019, Infrastructure Australia recognised the project in its priority list for the first time. What a fantastic achievement. Again, that represents the hard work the minister and her team put into this through their liaison with Infrastructure Australia. In April 2019 we announced the widening of Tonkin Highway for the Morley–Ellenbrook railway line project. That fantastic initiative perfectly complements NorthLink WA. There was a bit of a bottleneck there, so this was an essential project for the people of Ellenbrook.

In August 2019 the planning process really started to deliver results and come to fruition. We went out there to the train station site to announce the final route for the Morley–Ellenbrook line and the stations associated with it. It was a really exciting day and I have had so many people contacting my electorate office about that announcement in particular. It is great. I want to contrast that with the previous government. We are getting on with the job and delivering; compare the pair, right? I want to commend the member for Southern River for his speech last night. He stole a lot of my thunder, but I will say I read and listened to his speech with quite some enjoyment. He is a showman and he has obviously really done his homework on this. I will not go over a lot of what he said, but I want to tell the people of Ellenbrook what they could have had after the 2017 election, had they re-elected the people who clearly have no idea what it takes to develop, design and deliver a transport project.

I remember the 2008 election; I was working on the member for Maylands' election campaign, and this was a key part of the Carpenter government's election commitments. I remember sitting there at the bowls club as the results came in, feeling so disappointed for the people of Ellenbrook in the seat of Swan Hills, where I have lived for 13 years. I was living in Swan Hills then, and I was so disappointed for those people because they were not going to get their train station, even though the then Premier had matched the commitment. Members opposite probably heard yesterday the press releases that were handed out by the former member for Swan Hills, Frank Alban, including one headed, "Liberals Will Build Rail Line to Ellenbrook". That was a \$850 million commitment that he made. Even in a TV interview at the time, Premier Barnett said, "We agree that's the next logical extension of our rail system."

Then, just six weeks after the Barnett government was elected and the Premier was sworn in, it emerged that the Public Transport Authority had axed the route definition that would have enabled the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line. That was a broken promise six weeks after the Premier was sworn in. The member for Southern River, in his speech last night, revealed that as late as 7 May 2009 the budget documents had shown —

The Liberal Party's mid-year review document ... December 2008—stated that the construction of the Ellenbrook rail line will commence in this term of government.

It provided for construction to commence in 2010–11. We know for a fact that there was no intention within government to deliver the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line, even while those statements were being made. The Premier then changed his tune and claimed to the media that he had only promised to have a look at it.

I have some absolutely awesome articles here. One is headed, "Bus-ted: How Ellenbrook Train Line Derailed". It states —

Colin Barnett's on-again, off-again, Ellenbrook railway ... was hurtling toward oblivion just six weeks after the Premier was sworn in, documents reveal.

That is a compelling read. If anyone wants an overview of the history of this project, I suggest they get onto it. Another article is headed, "Minister Softened Up on Ellenbrook Railway". Again, it says that the transport minister at the time was going soft on the Morley–Ellenbrook railway line promise. Then in the 2011 election costings—which, again, the member for Southern River referred to last night—it was stated, on 26 May 2011 —

A Liberal Government will provide \$53 million over the next four years toward the construction of a new rail line to Ellenbrook ...

That was a broken promise. Then there was the infamous promise on Metro Area Express light rail, which I know is very close to the heart of the Acting Speaker (Ms J.M. Freeman)—the Yanchep extension. Then it promised a bus lane for the people of Ellenbrook—the fastest growing area in Western Australia. In the Ellenbrook area alone, there are now over 50 000 people. The former government broke promises on Metro Area Express light rail and Yanchep and Ellenbrook rail, and it even broke the promise of a bus lane. It cannot be trusted with public transport. It cannot be trusted to deliver on its commitments.

In 2013, taking us all for mugs, it promised the Ellenbrook railway line again. It promised another bus. Some pictures were drawn. It then admitted that it got the sums wrong—what was \$50 million was actually costed by Treasury to be \$110 million—and there was absolutely no funding whatsoever provided in the forward estimates for a bus, a train, or anything. When the current Premier, then in opposition, raised the fact with former Premier Barnett that there was no provision for any form of transport infrastructure in the forward estimates, the former Premier interjected with, "They should have voted for Natasha Cheung!" That was outrageous.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.J. SHAW: The people of Brabham, Dayton, Whiteman Park and Ellenbrook voted for the Minister for Transport. What the Liberal Party did was outrageous, spiteful, petty and divisive. It just goes to show that the Liberals have absolutely no genuine commitment to the people of my electorate, Swan Hills, and the people of West Swan. It had the temerity to punish a community purely for seeing through its false promises.

I have some more articles here from 2013 about Ellenbrook rail, including "Ellenbrook railway line to wait ...", as Colin Barnett breaks his promises again. I know the member for Southern River also got his hands on this article, "Liam Bartlett: WA railroad again over public transport". The member for Southern River quoted from it; I will not do that, but it tells an incredible story. I would, again, strongly encourage people to look at it.

Then we come to 2016. I have a certain fondness for Frank Alban, the former member for Swan Hills. He ran a clean campaign. He was very gentlemanly and I think he had the very best interests of the community at heart. Unfortunately, he could not rely on his party to come through for him or the people of Swan Hills when it came to transport. Seeing the horrific traffic congestion, he was begging for something. An article titled “MP in new Ellenbrook transport plea” stated that Swan Hills’ Liberal MLA, Frank Alban, wanted the abandoned bus rapid transit system back on the agenda. His plea was described as the latest chapter in a protracted saga. Poor old Frank; he was begging for it.

In May, he obviously got a little bit of a concession from his colleagues because they reheated the bus lane idea again, and in July they issued a tender. Then, in another blow to the poor people of Swan Hills, it clearly stated that it did not see a need for Ellenbrook rail for 30 years. I was in candidate forums with Frank where people were giving him a really hard time about the fact that the Ellenbrook railway line promise kept being broken, and I could see the exasperation on his face. In one forum he said how he really thought Ellenbrook needed a railway line but he could not get it through the Liberal Party. That tells members everything they need to know about the Liberal Party and its views on a railway line solution for the people of Ellenbrook.

As I say, compare and contrast. Compare the pair. We are getting on with it and we are delivering it. But I am concerned about noises coming from those opposite. As I was driving down from the Bullsbrook last night, I tuned into the debate of some of the speeches and then I was in the chamber at the very end of the evening, listening to a couple of speeches and I can tell members that it does not bode well. What it tells me is that leopards do not change their spots. Opposition members may say that they have gone to the back cupboards and had an epiphany, but it is not true. They are not behind rail. They do not understand it, they do not support the people of Ellenbrook, they never have and they never will.

When this government secured the commitment from the federal Liberal government for Ellenbrook rail, the Leader of the Opposition said it was irrelevant. What she thought about the project was that it was irrelevant. It is absolutely shameful. I think the people of Ellenbrook are irrelevant to the Liberals; it has neglected them for such a long time. Last night the member for Vasse questioned why she had not seen business cases. Clearly, she has not been listening, because the minister has gone to extreme pains to explain that the business-case process is currently under development. Listen, member for Vasse; you may actually learn something.

All the modelling and business-case work is being done at the moment. Unlike the Liberal members who made off-the-cuff, spurious commitments of \$50 million for bus lanes that, within hours, ended up costing \$110 million, with some pretty drawings, we are actually doing the work. We are doing the work and developing the business case. Maybe if the member for Vasse went out into the real world and actually worked on construction projects, and if the member’s party had any lived experience in delivering rail, that member might have some credibility in this space, but she absolutely does not. She should listen to the transport minister, who does. The transport minister has explained the process, and I would suggest that the member for Vasse listen up. I then had to listen to the member for Vasse’s shameless scaremongering—I would go so far as to suggest perhaps even moving into misleading territory—on Whiteman Park. Perhaps that member was just not listening again or she is unable to comprehend the answers that the minister has given her during question time. Again, stop scaremongering, stop putting the foot on the hose and get behind this project. The opposition needs to its senses and realise that the people of Ellenbrook want rail. You guys have been a roadblock for long enough. Get out of the way and let this project happen. It is absolutely outrageous.

As I was driving down NorthLink, back from Bullsbrook, in the middle of the night, I was listening to all sorts of speeches. Before I talk about the one I heard that I thought was particularly amusing, I read the member for Bateman’s uncorrected transcript this morning, so I will not directly quote from it but will paraphrase from some notes that I made. The member for Bateman—the alleged finance whiz that he is—demanded a financing structure. He would realise that in the early stages of a business case or project development, the complex financing structure is not developed, because we need to know how much money we are going to need to spend and the time frames in which that money needs to be delivered as the project progresses through its various stages before we can put a financing structure together. It is very, very concerning that the member for Bateman, who is supposedly the finance whiz of the Liberal Party, is unable to comprehend that and that the member for Vasse has been manifestly incapable of demonstrating that she understands it.

I come now, finally, to the scariest of all the speeches that I heard last night, delivered by “the mortician”, the member for Cottesloe. It sent chills down my spine. First, it demonstrated that he manifestly just does not get it. He really does not get public transport. The Liberals missed such a great opportunity to draft a great young woman into the Parliament, but, at some point that has to happen, right? He delivered mortician-like, dead-pan commentaries on subsidies per journey and subsidies per route on each railway line. It was an incredibly narrow-minded commentary on and assessment of public transport. The Liberals just do not get it.

People who drive a long way, like my people in Ellenbrook, gain considerable social benefit and cost savings in saved commuter time. There is the petrol saving alone, when the cost of petrol is up in the mid-\$1.60s. We cannot apply a very narrow, very superficial, hysterical and scaremongering approach to an analysis of a project of this magnitude. There needs to be a well-rounded, comprehensive and complete understanding of public transport to debate

appropriately a project of this magnitude. Liberal members keep demonstrating that they just do not have that ability. Then, again, we heard chief fearmongering on Whiteman Park and the breathtaking hypocrisy of Liberal members bringing Roe 8 into the argument, without even thinking about the need for that project to bulldoze through the pristine Beeliar wetlands. It is absolutely mind-bogglingly inept. I wait with bated breath to hear the other Liberal Party members' contributions on this particular project. I am looking forward to it.

As the minister takes the house through this legislation during the consideration in detail stage and in her third reading speech, Liberal Party members really should listen up. They should have been listening up for the past two years, because if they had listened, they would understand what we are doing; they would understand what we have been up to in trying to deliver this project and they might have learned something. They might also realise that the people of Ellenbrook are on to them. We are not interested in their hysteria, false promises and abject lack of delivery capability on projects like rail and road transport. This is a great day for my community; we cannot wait for the train. I am so proud of this project. We are delivering Labor's flagship Metronet commitment and railway manufacturing back to eastern suburbs communities at the Midland railway workshops. Eighty-seven per cent of kids from Ellenbrook will go on to TAFE. Jobs are now coming for those kids, delivered by this Labor government. We will deliver thousands of jobs in construction and in the building sector as those town centres are completed and ongoing jobs in cafes, restaurants and the civic facilities and institutions that will come into the town centres associated with the delivery of this project. We are doing it in a financially responsible way, which you guys demonstrated to the whole nation and world that they could not do in a financially responsible way; in fact, they are the shame of the Liberal Party with their economic wrecking. They got their sums wrong on so many other projects. We are doing this project in a financially responsible way without selling Western Power. Members should congratulate the Minister for Transport for her efforts in bringing this project before the Parliament. I cannot wait to get on the first train, and you guys should hang your heads in shame.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands — Deputy Speaker) [12.42 pm]: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): It is all right, Deputy Speaker is fine!

Ms L.L. BAKER: Madam Acting Speaker, thank you.

Very few people would be surprised that I want to speak on the Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2019; it has been a long time coming. I have been listening —

Mr J.E. McGrath: Will the new train line run past a Dan Murphy's?

Ms L.L. BAKER: It certainly will not in my electorate, but I understand the member for South Perth has a couple coming in his electorate. The member should have been a little more vocal in standing in front of them, I suspect. I must catch up with the member on that subject. While the member raised the subject, I am very, very proud to say that we do not have a Dan Murphy's in Maylands. In fact, the rail line will run straight past what was going to be the site of a very large, 1 200 square metre, outlet for cheap alcohol, but a number of factors came to bear to help us prevent that, mainly my community's steadfast opposition to it. Although we did not have a lot of money to back up our campaign, we had a lot of passion. Of course, member for South Perth, when the government changed and we moved on the liquor reforms, we saw some really significant ways we could help the community's deep concern around the proliferation of large destination liquor outlets. This issue is not quite on the subject of the Metronet bill, but I thank the member for raising it. I did mean to talk to the member about that at some point.

This legislation has been a long time coming for me and I want to start by echoing some of my compatriots' comments made last night. There were some interesting perspectives; there often is in this house. Each of us brings our own set of concerns and experience to the table and we often raise different issues, which is refreshing. Otherwise, we could be completely bored for the half-hour that we all speak. My issue is that I remember very clearly when the Barnett government first started to talk about the Forrestfield–Airport Link and what a remarkable project that would be. Indeed, I think we all thought it was a fantastic idea and I am sure that if Labor had won the 2008 election, we too would have built it. It was a fantastic idea and we sat in this chamber and listened with great interest to the plans to develop the Forrestfield–Airport Link. I remember having a heated debate in Parliament, led by the now Minister for Transport, about the fact that it should probably be named the “Bayswater–Airport Link” rather than the Forrestfield–Airport Link. I do not mean to offend the member for Forrestfield, but given the rail line starts in Bayswater and ends near the airport, we thought that made more sense.

Mr S.J. Price: That's one way of looking at it.

Ms L.L. BAKER: That seemed to be a clearer description of what we were building underground. When the project started and it became obvious to me that Bayswater was going to be a fairly important link in the government of the day's plans around the FAL, we started to ask questions about what the hell would happen at Bayswater. It did not take many questions to find out that nothing was planned for Bayswater. That was deeply surprising and concerning to my community and very alarming to me, because when the trains start coming out of the tunnel to join the Midland line just before the Bayswater station, the first glimpse of Perth above ground many tourists coming from the airport will see will be Bayswater station. There was nothing inherently sinister about the Bayswater train centre, but it did reflect Doodlakine rail siding in about 1963.

We started the conversation with the government of the day by saying that it really could not just ignore Bayswater. We argued that point for quite a long time and it was met by various emotions. First, complete rejection of the notion that anything should happen at Bayswater because all the trains were going to just zoom past Bayswater train station. Then, incredulity that we kept pursuing the issue. With an increasing sense of alarm, we realised that absolutely no money was allocated in the budget to deal with any kind of upgrade of Bayswater except for—I will admit that this was absolutely essential—a disabled access plan. We absolutely needed that. It was small picture thinking really. I suppose that is a bit representative of the way in which the opposition now goes about considering and talking about public transport. I think everyone in this house would agree that Metronet is an amazingly innovative and visionary project. Metronet went a long way to convincing the Western Australian community that Labor still knows how to do it; we still know how to build railways. We might have been out of government for nearly nine years but, by goodness, we spent a lot of time planning what we wanted to do the minute the tables turned. When they did turn in 2016, we were ready with a plan for what to do in my electorate and with what will be the second biggest transport hub in the state when it is completed.

In the lead-up to deciding how to undertake work on Bayswater train station, we needed to ask people what they wanted. Again, it was pretty refreshing, considering in the previous eight years, no-one had spoken to anyone in Bayswater about what we needed to do at the Bayswater train centre. Certainly, no-one had spoken to my community to find out what it valued about the precinct, what it valued about living in Bayswater, having a train line running through its heritage precinct, what it really wanted to keep, and what it died in a ditch over, really. In November 2015, the now Minister for Transport and I had spent some time discussing that an ideal opportunity would be to start by having a focus group, a plenary session, with my community. I advertised that we would hold a forum in November at The RISE, which is a big community facility in my electorate that takes about 300 or 400 people. I have quite a bit of experience in community consultation planning, so that was not a problem for me. I called up a few people and we started to put a proposal together about how that night would be run. We put it out over social media, and I think we ran an ad in the local papers as well. I am not sure what the now minister thought she was going to get on that night, but I know she was as delighted as I was when she walked up the stairs and found over 200 people sitting in The RISE.

Ms R. Saffioti: It was the first and the biggest.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Yes, it was huge.

I suppose the reason so many people attended was partly the fact that both the Minister for Transport and myself had been talking about this in WA Parliament and in public for a very long time. We had acknowledged how Bayswater had been overlooked, and we had pointed to the fact that we needed to do some major planning work in this area, with the Forrestfield–Airport Link coming in. At that stage Metronet was just a vision that the party had, and we had not quite shaped it into a publicly released policy. We certainly knew that we wanted to do some major work in the public transport area for the future of this city. When over 200 people gathered together we asked them a range of questions about what they thought the city wanted, what they thought Bayswater should look like and what they thought should be the best way forward in public transport to retain both the heritage and character of our little village, but also bring some major development into the area. From that forum we got some plans and took them forward—I might talk about some of them in a bit more detail later—but it is safe to say that the summation of it is that Bayswater is an older, very traditional and heritage suburb. It has some high-value heritage architecture sites in it, and it is really close to the river. I have spoken in this place many times about the charm of this precinct and about its proximity to the river, and with Riverside Gardens quite close and the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary alongside Riverside Gardens, it is also a bit of a tourist mecca for environmental tourism.

The challenge for us was what to do with Bayswater when the Forrestfield–Airport Link came above ground at Bayswater, but then as this incredible vision started to emerge around Metronet, the planning started to happen in earnest and we came more towards the 2016 election, things started to coalesce. With the help of my party I was able to go out to my community and talk about a big picture for the future of this part of my electorate. I want to remind members about what we promised in that 2016 election campaign, obviously starting with the promise to build the Morley–Ellenbrook line and a new station at Morley. We got a couple of extra stations than Morley; we have done pretty well, really. We have batted above our weight again and have some impressive changes coming. Labor committed to prioritising Bayswater for redevelopment. Whether that would be through working with the local government and it leading the project, or whether it would be a different way of pushing the redevelopment ahead through a redevelopment authority or a new model around how to plan this and move it forward, we were still working out the detail of that. But, as members would know, we have announced that we now have redevelopment authority jurisdiction over this site, and that will be worked out over the next 12 months and we will know more about how that will work in a few months' time.

Ahead of the 2017 election, Labor committed to keep the Meltham and Mt Lawley train stations open. Some members in this house would not even know that that was even mooted at any point in time, but it was.

Ms J.J. Shaw: I remember!

Ms L.L. BAKER: Thank you.

We had to do quite a bit of campaigning on that subject. They are not big train stations. As a girl I used to catch the bus from Darlington to Midland, and then the train from Midland to Mt Lawley on the Midland train line, jump off at Mt Lawley and walk to Perth College and then back in the evening on the way home. Mt Lawley does not have a huge number of passengers, but it is a very important link on the line. The Meltham train station is a bit of a similar creature. It is quite small and it does not have a huge number of people getting on and off the trains there at the moment. That is partly a function of the fact that we need to do more work in getting people onto trains, and that is part of this plan. Indeed, at the very heart of Metronet is the concept that we need to realise the vision for future growth centred around train stations, which leads to higher public transport use, shorter journeys and better access to jobs. The previous speaker, the member for Swan Hills, covered that very well as it applies to her electorate. That sentence about the vision around Metronet, about access to jobs and shorter journeys and getting more people onto trains is at the heart of my electorate, too. We are seeing people in the community, particularly urbanites, understand more comprehensively that public transport will be the way of the future, and it will simply not be sustainable to drive a car from Mundaring, Chittering, or wherever, in to a job in Perth, or even Bassendean or Bayswater. The cost of transport, the time involved, congestion on the roads, pollution and all those kind of things are going to come to play, and it will simply not be sustainable.

In other cities people are rewarded if they bring more than one person in their car with them into the city, and indeed, they cannot come if they are just driving on their own; they have to have more than themselves in the car. There are other benefits to be had. Bigger, more petrol-guzzling cars, cost more to register and whatnot in other countries. There are many ways to try to change cultural norms around this. I must admit that I grew up in Perth, Australia, so for me I have always just jumped in the car and whizzed in. When I was a kid I would jump in the car and pick up my mate on the way to a nightclub in Perth and we would drive back home again that evening, or worse still, hitch. I will not go into that; that is probably a thing of the past now. We are moving away from the notion of being able to do these long drives with the cost of petrol, so public transport is the way of the future, and I think my community is slowly coming to understand how vital that is and what a vital link Bayswater will be in that chain.

I want to remind members that Labor's other commitment was specifically to upgrade the train station at Bayswater. I have a three-dimensional model plan in my office, and thousands of people come in the door and demand to see the three-dimensional model! I am exaggerating slightly—there were a few, though. The 3D model was taken all around Bayswater. It was a bit of a celebrity, shown in various spots around my community. Many people like myself are deeply challenged when it comes to understanding two-dimensional diagrams that show how the train station will look, so the three-dimensional one was really great. I was able to put in trucks and pretend that they were getting stuck under the old bridge and do all sorts of things when I had the three-dimensional model, but do not tell the Metronet team because I was not meant to take the plastic off the top, which I did to get the trucks in. It worked quite well and everybody was giggling about it.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: The other thing we promised going into the 2016 election was to fix level crossings around the state. The really critical one in my electorate is the rail crossing at Caledonian Avenue. I want to talk a little bit about what is happening at the moment with the work on that crossing. We have let my community know that, although it will be challenging to do the work that is required on Caledonian Avenue, we have costed a whole range of options. We will talk to my community about them so that they understand exactly the options we looked at. They included suggestions to go over and underneath the railway line—so rail and over and under solutions. They also included closing and redirecting roads. It is a pretty tight spot, but it was not when we first started the discussion. The big building on the block that housed what everyone in Maylands knew as Ross's Discounts and Salvage is now being developed into an apartment block complex. Work on that has only just started, but a second stage will go right up to the road on the other side of the crossing. Had that land been vacant we would have had the potential to do something there, but, unfortunately, the apartment complex is three-quarters of the way to being finished and we cannot use that land. There were all sorts of difficulties about putting in over and under crossings at that site. We have asked my community what they think is important and I am waiting on that feedback. But, in all honesty, it is hard to see how those who live in the area would be happy to have trains zooming past, cars travelling over the top and bridges over the top of them. The best option may be to close the Caledonian Avenue crossover. That is something we have been talking about for a long time. That is one option, but we cannot do nothing.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: You can't sink the rail there?

Ms L.L. BAKER: No.

Ms R. Saffioti: You'd disconnect the entire community.

Ms L.L. BAKER: If we were to sink the rail, we would have to start 500 metres away and about 30 houses would have to go, basically.

Mr W.R. Marmion: What about ramp-downs?

Ms L.L. BAKER: There is not enough room for the right gradient; it would be like jumping off a side of Everest. The space is too tight to do a lot of work. I now know more about these issues than I ever anticipated. However,

for the sake of my residents living around the Caledonian Avenue crossover, it is very clear on paper that it will be best to close the crossover and make major changes to the traffic flow around the area so that people can get on and off Caledonian Avenue and Whatley Crescent without missing Caledonian Avenue.

I had a really interesting talk with the local ratepayers association about this matter last week. Before I spoke to them, I had some trepidation, because as soon as you start to talk about closing things, people want to start to throw books, tins and coffee. Actually, they said it was a good idea and that we should probably do that. I am now waiting to see what the broader community who live in the area think, but it seems as though there is a real appetite for it. We are in discussion with the City of Bayswater at the moment on how we will put that model together, and on the right future as well. That is definitely a part of this.

I am really, really proud to say that we have ticked-off on all five commitments that the Labor Party made going into the 2016 election. Still to come is the sixth commitment for the \$50 million rebuild of John Forrest Secondary College. We have bought extra land to establish wetlands at Riverside Gardens near the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary. That is a big tick. The people of Maylands did not see much infrastructure or development in their area for a very long time—not until Labor got elected in 2016. People recognise and acknowledge that.

I am looking forward to what the future holds. Bayswater is the centre of my universe at the moment—I apologise to Maylands and Inglewood; they are running second best at the moment because this is such a big project and we need to focus all our attention and resources on it to get it right.

I will outline some other concerns. My community is also really interested in parking, and I have been hassling people about that. I should say hello to Owen, who is in the Speaker's gallery listening to this debate. Owen and I have become very close over the past 12 months while this has been developing. I think he has a close friendship with someone in my office who plays hockey and I am sure that there have been a lot of conversations about Metronet in the hockey coaching arena. Owen has been truly amazing and has helped a psychologist understand a set of engineering drawings. It has not been easy; it has been very challenging. Anthony is also doing some amazing work, running the broad Metronet project. I thank Natasha and the communications team. What a joy they are to work with. They do not get it right every time, but, by gosh, they get it right nearly every time, and when they do not get it right, I ring them and it is right again before I put the phone down. I am really impressed with their responsiveness, flexibility and agility on these issues. We do not always get to the answer that everybody wants, but their response has been really impressive.

Obviously, my community is worried about height and density and what the buildings will look like. That is all coming. The community has been involved and at my door all the way through this. I will give an example of how the community has influenced just a small but major part of this project. There is a whopping great big kurrajong tree and rose garden in the park near the train station. When major projects are done, people might think that it is dorky to complain about what will happen to a rose garden and kurrajong tree. But these are things that really matter to people in their neighbourhoods—they really, really resonate with people—and if we get it right, it goes a long way towards the project's credibility in the long term. The Metronet team was very quick to work with the City of Bayswater to relocate the rosebushes. They have been moved a short way down the road. It was really important to do that. I know it sounds weird, but when they dug into it—pardon the pun—they found people's ashes had been put on the rosebushes and there were some really historic stories about the garden. When we found out that people's loved ones were fertilising the rosebushes, we made sure that the process was carried out in the right way. That happened. The Metronet team did a great job and the rosebushes were planted into a new home.

Then there is the kurrajong tree. The community committee, which had been set up to work on this matter with the City of Bayswater and the Metronet team, wanted to know whether the kurrajong tree could be saved. It is a big tree. It has really great stature and is beautiful. The community wants to keep it. An arborist was called in to look at it and came up with a plan to move it. That was the easy part. If members think getting a boab tree from the Northern Territory to Kings Park was difficult, they should know that more people have been involved in moving this kurrajong tree. There have been opinions about where it should go and how it should get there. It is going to the Bert Wright Park on King William Street, towards Guildford Road. Its new home is quite beautiful and is right on the side of the park. It is going to be moving in with lots of new friends, so the community is very happy. It is quite small by comparison. There will be a major moving ceremony, so if members reckon that AC/DC is going to be big in Fremantle, wait for the kurrajong tree move—it is going to be bigger! If I can get a good artist to play on the back of a truck while we move that tree, I am so doing it!

Mr D.R. Michael: The member for Mandurah will probably do it!

Ms L.L. BAKER: Yes.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They can always have John Williamson with *Rip Rip Woodchip!*

Ms L.L. BAKER: I am hoping Hansard did not catch that. I do not think it is the kind of thing my community needs to hear from the Minister for Local Government! Slap that man quickly, in a very non-aggressive fashion!

I will finish off by saying that we recently announced the Metronet east redevelopment area, which is basically a signal to the community that we take this incredibly seriously and that we are very, very certain that we need to

make the right decisions and keep this moving forward. The Minister for Transport and the Metronet team have had to deliver against some pressing time lines. I am going to draw through it with highlighters to get the attention of all concerned in this redevelopment on things like ongoing place activation. We have some fantastic local groups such as the Bayswater Historical Society, which has a fantastic vision for some sleepers—some wood that was saved from the old Seventh Avenue Bridge can be used as a really fabulous art piece along King William Street. The society will need a bit of funding to help with that. We will be continuing street festivals throughout the construction phase. It is really important that people in my community go along and feel part of this construction, rather than stand back and have it done for them. Not everybody will love what is happening, because it is going to change Bayswater fundamentally and forever, and I have never, ever shied away from telling people that, but at the end of the day it is going to be a remarkable place to live and work. I am incredibly proud to have been the member through the last election, when this came to fruition, and I very much look forward to helping the Western Australian McGowan Labor government put all these pieces in place in time and on budget, as we suspect we will be able to.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Local Government) [1.11 pm]: I am very pleased to be able to make a contribution to the debate on this very important legislation. Like only a couple of people in this house who were elected at the 2001 election, I am very acutely aware of the importance of the Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2019, given that it was the Gallop government that, of course, introduced the legislation that saw the long-awaited train line to Mandurah come to fruition. It was very, very good to see that legislation. I cannot help but think, in listening to some of the contributions from members on the other side, that there are *deja vu* moments. I loved the mortician reference in the contribution of the member for Swan Hills. There was a wonderful depiction of the approach by the member for Cottesloe in his contribution. His contribution was mirrored by the members for Vasse and Dawesville. The member for Dawesville is starting to remind me more and more of Michael Portillo, who is a Conservative former Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think.

Dr A.D. Buti: I don't know if he was the chancellor, but he was a senior minister.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: He was a senior minister of a Conservative government in the United Kingdom who now spends his time travelling the world on great railways with his *Bradshaw's Handbook*, which dates back 150 years. He wears his very dapper clothes —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: I'm with you so far!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: — his three-piece vest and his clothing. I like Michael Portillo; he is actually very good.

Mr W.R. Marmion: He is a lot older than the member for Dawesville!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: He is. But when the member for Dawesville made his comments, he constantly interjected about people like the federal member for Pearce: "What about us? Don't forget us. We thought of it first. We did this. It was all our policy. It was all everything we want to do! Wah, wah, wah!" The problem is that history shows it as though we were holding up Bradshaw's guide to Western Australian railway history. History shows that it ain't on your side, son! History is not on the member for Dawesville's side. We only have to look at what has happened to the railways in the member for Roe's electorate—the tier 3 rail lines, which saw their demise under a Liberal–National government. The member for Roe did nothing about the demise of that railway system. He is supposedly representing people in the regions, yet he sat by and did nothing while that tier 3 rail infrastructure deteriorated and was jettisoned. When Bradshaw's guide looks at the history of tier 3 rail in Western Australia, it will clearly show that it was destroyed by the Barnett–National Party government during the period 2008 to 2017.

Dr A.D. Buti: Royalties for regions didn't help, did it?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No! It will probably read, "Despite a lot of experience and money that was available at the time, they failed to act." That is what it will say. History will show that for a number of rail projects and, indeed, rail lines in Western Australia, the other side is very poorly represented. It was quite right of the member for Southern River to highlight in his excellent speech—it was one of the best speeches I have heard here—and give a great account of what has happened in terms of rail history, particularly with the metropolitan rail system in the Perth metropolitan area, stretching down, of course, to the regional city of Mandurah. In the member for Southern River's absolutely accurate account, we heard that every time there has been a proposed expansion of the rail system in Western Australia, particularly more recently in the metropolitan area, someone has been standing against it. Who was that? Who has been putting up the impediments? Who has been constantly changing their mind? We know that is a classic case with the Ellenbrook proposal. It is the Liberal Party and the National Party. Those two parties have a history of opposing rail infrastructure. The National Party does not want it to happen in the metropolitan area. I am sorry, but people live in the metropolitan area and, in my view, they have a right to access public transport. Indeed, when people like me from the regions come to Perth, they utilise our public transport system, as they should. That system is not just for people who happen to live in the metropolitan area; it is a system that is utilised by and available to all people of Western Australia, and those who live outside the metropolitan area can access it when they are visiting. That is logical. This sort of country–city divide that the National Party continues to articulate is absolutely built on fallacy, because it could not even save the tier 3 rail line when it was

in power. It was closed, shut down, and now the National Party complains and says that the regional roads in Western Australia are suffering, and why do we not do something about it. Why did the National Party not do something about the tier 3 lines when it had the chance? It was a little lily in the cabinet. No wonder some of the National Party representatives in the cabinet would advocate an exit from the cabinet room: “We don’t want to be part of this!” What a pathetic thing for the National Party to do. We do not have our own Bradshaw’s guide—I might write one! I think it is time to write a new guide.

Ms R. Saffioti: The Templeman guide!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Templeman guide to railway history in Western Australia. It would read very clearly that it is Labor in government that delivers rail. It is Labor in opposition that advocates for it; it is Labor, when returned to government, that delivers on its rail promises. I want to highlight to members the legislation that we have before us, which relates to the Ellenbrook line issue. When we look at the Mandurah rail line, let us put aside from the Templeman guide to railway history that it was a Labor government that reopened the Fremantle line, which had been closed by members opposite. A former conservative government was brought down ultimately not only by Labor coming to power in the early 1980s, but also by a very strong Independent member for Subiaco, the late Tom Dadour. Tom Dadour of course badgered the then Premier, Charles Court, about the decision to close the Fremantle rail; indeed, he not only railed against that decision, but also became an Independent. That lack of foresight has been epitomised in the contribution to this debate by the member for Cottesloe. Had the member for Cottesloe worn a cardigan during his speech, he would have especially epitomised the 1950s conservative look with regard to such projects. A man who in his previous life worked in very important industries is suddenly concerned about a whole range of flora and fauna. He read out a list. He has suddenly found his inner environmental concerns, purely for convenience.

We also need to remind the Parliament—because history is important; history does repeat itself—that Labor keeps building railway lines. We keep expanding them. The Lawrence Labor government electrified the entire metropolitan rail system, and extended it through to the then burgeoning northern suburbs, which have continued to grow rapidly. That is why the Ellenbrook line becomes important, the Byford line becomes important, the connectivity on the Thornlie–Cockburn line becomes important, the airport line to Bayswater becomes important, and the northern line to Two Rocks becomes important. It is about connecting people. It is about connecting communities to economic opportunities. This is what it is about.

Why are members opposite so dumb? They do not get it. They never have got it. History shows that they never have got it. That is why we do not believe the member for Dawesville, the member for Vasse, the member for Cottesloe and any others who are out there when they talk about rail. *Bradshaw’s Handbook* shows clearly that they have not delivered. We know with regard to commitments to the Ellenbrook community for the Ellenbrook line that it is their turn to be connected. It is a well-deserved turn. It is the turn of all those communities along that proposed line to be connected. It is the turn of the people in Two Rocks and Yanchep, and the communities further north of where the rail line currently finishes near Currabine, to be connected.

It was also our turn in Mandurah. I remember very well that the people who were sitting on the other side of this place and who are no longer here put the same old arguments as the 1950s cardigan-wearing member for Cottesloe. They said things like, “It’s too early. It will never happen. You’re way too early. There are not enough people there.” They told us that no-one lived in Mandurah; there were only cows. This is real stuff. It is in *Hansard*. Go and look at it, member for Dawesville. They said it. The people of Mandurah said, “Wait a second.” Back then, we had a population of nearly 70 000. They said, “It’s our turn.” It was only the Labor Party and the Labor government that committed to the railway line to Mandurah. The member for Dawesville said, “No; wait, wait, wait. In 1999, we put some legislation through.” But the Liberals do not ever follow up on anything. In the dying days of the Court government—as that government came to an end—of course it was desperate. Government members said, “We’ll throw that in there, because it will look as though we’re going to do something.” They did not do it. I still remember the lead-up to 2005 and 2007, and when the Mandurah rail line was finally opened on 23 December 2007—it was one of the best days in my community. I think about 20 000 people turned up at the railway station to welcome the first train from the city. The late Dudley Tuckey and his wife were there. The then mayor, Keith Holmes, was there, celebrating a commitment and a delivery. The same thing will happen for the people of Ellenbrook. They endorse this. Get it! Understand it! They endorse this proposal. They understand what railway lines do for communities and economies, for participation, and for connecting people to where they want to work, study and visit. Our railway system in Western Australia, particularly in the metropolitan area, is one of the best in the world—it is. The Metronet project will connect it all together. It makes a difference to communities. It makes a difference to people’s lives.

To give an example, seniors in my electorate can get on the Mandurah train and visit their families in Perth. They can visit the city. They can connect with their community. That is fantastic. I have one piece of advice: do not go to Mandurah station at five minutes to nine in the morning, because that is when all the seniors are waiting for the first train for which they can get a seniors’ concession. There is a huge crowd. I have done this a couple of times. I have said many times, “Don’t get the train with the seniors’ concession!” They are all there, waiting for the train.

They love it. They are the biggest endorsers of our train system, and they use it regularly and effectively. They are great advocates for it. Members on the other side should get on board, for goodness sake, rather than try to put spikes in the rail. That is what they always do. They hate the fact that people love rail.

I cannot believe that the member for Cottesloe would denigrate the people of Western Australia and their understanding of the economics of rail by saying, “It’s very expensive. It’s very highly subsidised. I’m very concerned about that, and my people in the western suburbs are very concerned about that, even though my party closed the railway line that went through the western suburbs to Fremantle.”

Dr A.D. Buti: They wanted to sell the land.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They wanted to sell it, yes. He said, “I’m very concerned about that. I’m also very concerned about the potoroo, and I’m very concerned about Whiteman Park.”

Ms S.E. Winton: And the birds.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, and the birds. He said, “I’m very concerned about that”. Member for Cottesloe, you are off the track, son! The member for Cottesloe is like one of those one-way spurs to nowhere! Even the people in the western suburbs do not support him on this. They understand the economics of getting people out of cars and onto bikes and cycleways, and onto public transport. They understand it. They get it. The people in his electorate are very intelligent people, but the member for Cottesloe denigrated them in his speech. He also denigrated all the other people in Western Australia. He thinks they all believe it is too expensive. He forgets about all the benefits that a railway line extension brings to the Western Australian public, to the environment, and to the social and economic development of communities. It is time for the Ellenbrook rail line.

I used to have a great time in Parliament with this member. I used to call him “Duffy”. Was it the member for West Swan?

Ms R. Saffioti: Swan Hills.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Swan Hills, yes—I used to call him “Duffy”. That is because he reminded me of the character in *F Troop* called Duffy. But I got it wrong. It was not Duffy whom I was referring to; it was Private Dobbs. For those who remember *F Troop*, he was the one who used to play the bugle. He would start to play the bugle and an arrow would fly in and strike him in the mouth. He also had a hat. He was always frustrated by the captain, because the captain kept changing his mind. That sounds very similar to Colin Barnett and the former transport ministers—there were a couple of them—in the previous government. They kept changing their mind, “Humph, we might get a little station over there in Ellenbrook.” They then said, “No, we won’t. We’ll get a little bus, a dedicated bus service, that’s what we’ll get.” Poor old Duffy was putting his train hat on, and then he was taking his train hat off, and saying, “Oh, captain, I don’t know what you’re telling me! Is it a train? Is it a bus? Is it a Scalextric set? What is it?” That is how Duffy would act. To his credit, I used to get on really well with him.

Ms R. Saffioti: He’s a nice guy.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: “Frankie”—he was good. The trouble for “Frankie” was that he kept playing the line that was being pushed by his transport ministers and the Premier of the day: “Don’t worry; stick with us Frankie; stick with us Duffy. There he is. We’ll be right; you’ll be fine. We’ll get to there. Everything is good. Oh, yes. Maybe we are not going to build a rail line to Ellenbrook but we’ll have a bus. It’ll be a good bus; it’ll be a magnificent bus, don’t you worry about that.” They kept changing. Poor old Duffy was taking his hat off and putting it back on. Poor old Duffy. He did not know where he was.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: He was probably thrown under the bus. Do not take this the wrong way. In her discourse—only in discourse—the member for Vasse reminded me of the character from *Little Britain*, Vicky Pollard, who said, “We support it. Yeah but, oh but no, but yeah, but no, but. You didn’t; we also think but; yeah, but; oh, no but. Yeah, but, no but.” This is how she was in her conversation in her dialogue. The Liberal Party was all over the place. The National Party is all over the place because it loves destroying railway lines, closing them down or blowing them up. The member for Roe would be there, with his little sticks of dynamite and the member for Geraldton behind him saying “duck”! And off it goes. Everything has blown through the roof. “Now we’ll put all the trucks on the road; that’s the way to go; that’s what we want. Oh, yes; that’s a good idea. That is what we will do.” Members opposite have no history. The Brabham’s guide to the railway history of WA will always show this.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Bradshaw’s.

Ms R. Saffioti: Bradshaw’s.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Bradshaw’s.

Dr A.D. Buti: Get an extension.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, I will have an extension, please.

[Members time extended.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Thank you, member for Armadale; you are on a roll, son!

Mr T.J. Healy interjected

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Hello folks in the gallery who have just joined us.

Ms R. Saffioti: It's not always like this.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: This is not a normal discourse, but this Ellenbrook line bill is very important.

But as *Bradshaw's Handbook* would show, history shows that the WA Labor Party in government delivers railway lines. Several members: Hear, hear!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The WA Labor Party in opposition advocates and commits to policy to deliver railway lines, and on election they happen. The Liberal Party and National Party close railway lines, blow some of them up and indeed make all sorts of excuses why they should not happen and that is why the people of Ellenbrook and the people of —

Ms R. Saffioti: Brabham.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: — Brabham, yes—the people of Yanchep and the people of Byford will get a railway line under a WA Labor government. Under members opposite, because they have already told us, they will reallocate money back to Roe 8 and 9 if they are successful. What will that mean for Metronet and the railway lines we are proposing? They will be gone; they will be dead; they will be cut; slashed and blown up. History repeats.

What needs to happen is very clear. Support this Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill and get it through the upper house. Let us get the Ellenbrook railway line built because the people there deserve it. It is their turn just as it was the turn of the people of Mandurah and is the turn of the people of Byford and the people further up in the northern suburbs and the people who need to be connected from Cockburn to Thornlie. It will happen under a WA Labor government.

MRS A.K. HAYDEN (Darling Range) [1.34 pm]: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. I want to start by congratulating the member for Mandurah for an outstanding performance. I wonder whether he is auditioning for the upcoming *AC/DC Highway to Hell* event! I think he would make a great Angus. If he wants to do it, he will get my support. However, I have to say that this whole debate —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I know everyone is eager to have their say during my speech but I am trying to be a bit complimentary at the beginning, if I may. This whole debate has shown the true talent of members on the other side; that is, they are able to act, deliver some amazing lines and make up history as they see fit and embellish any stories. Because as we all know, one never lets the truth —

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Wanneroo, you sit in this chair and you know darn well that you are being unparliamentary and disorderly.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. At the beginning, I was congratulating the member for Mandurah for his outstanding performance. I will fully endorse and support him, as I believe everyone on this side will if he wants to be part of the upcoming *Highway to Hell* event. Other members can also play a role because their acting ability and skills were completely on display during this whole debate. Swan Hills was screaming to the Tina Turner tune. She did that very, very well. And Southern River—mate, you will only ever get in the chorus line because I do not think you will ever be a front-liner.

We have heard some amazing comments. I want to start by just confirming the position of the Liberal opposition as put by our shadow Minister for Transport, the member for Vasse, that we are fully supportive of the train line to Ellenbrook and of this bill to enable it to finally happen. I say “finally happen” because members have gone through the history of the Ellenbrook rail line. It has been a one-sided history lesson, so I thought I might add another side to the history lesson because, as we all know, there are three sides to every story. Hopefully, voters will get the Labor side and our side and decide the truth for themselves in the middle. I will tell them right now, the real truth was in 2008 when the Ellenbrook railway line was promised by then Premier Alan Carpenter. That was the first promise for the Ellenbrook rail line.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Yes, as the member for Southern River said, I said the people of Ellenbrook were not expecting a railway line. They were not. The population was brand new.

Mr T.J. Healy: Didn't match the promise?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern River!

Mr T.J. Healy interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern River!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can I finish my speech; you have given yours!

Mr T.J. Healy interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern River!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: In 2008, Alan Carpenter came out to Ellenbrook and promised a train line to Ellenbrook. As most oppositions do, the Liberal Party said that if the government is promising this, we will match the promise and said that if the Premier thinks there is a need for an Ellenbrook train line, obviously, the Premier would have done his research—assessed it and done the feasibility study before making a promise of this magnitude. We came along and matched the promise of the then Premier, who we have to admit was in his dying days of that campaign. That would have been the longest, slowest, most painful campaign the Labor Party has ever experienced. It was an election that he called way too early during the Olympics. We do not mess with Western Australians and their sport, as the Premier found out. That, obviously, delivered the then government a massive loss at that election. However, the Premier announced it and the opposition matched that promise.

What happened after the dust had settled from the election win? As I think the member for Swan Hills suggested earlier, the minister went looking for paperwork. Just like that, the new Liberal–National government went looking for paperwork after the 2008 election and found that there was no feasibility study, no costing, not even a scribble on the back of an envelope for a rail line to Ellenbrook. The Premier of the day went out with a commitment to build a massive project without even a scribble on the back of an envelope for a plan on how to deliver.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Acting Speaker, this side listened in silence to the insults from the Leader of the House and since the member for Darling Range has been standing up, we have heard a constant stream of comments from the member for Southern River and other members in this place, including the minister. I believe it is completely inappropriate and I ask you to get them to cease.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): There is no point of order, but I would counsel members who seem to be a little intemperate in their consistent interjections. Tone it down, please.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. I love the respect your position holds in this place.

As I said, there was not even a scribble on the back of an envelope for this major plan to Ellenbrook, so, as any responsible incoming government would do, we did a feasibility study. That feasibility study was done by October 2009. The election was in 2008 and by October 2009 a feasibility study had been completed and publicised. The study looked at two routes—an eastern route and a western route. The eastern route went down Lord Street to Bassendean. The western route went down Reid Highway and Tonkin Highway to Bayswater, which is roughly the government's plan for the Ellenbrook rail line. At the time of that feasibility study, it estimated that by 2031 only 1 400 people would be using the eastern route and only 2 000 would be using the western route. At the time, in 2009, 8 000 people were using the Joondalup line. We had a line that had 8 000 passengers and were looking at building a line that was not going to attract anywhere near that number—it would only attract up to 2 000 by 2031, 20 years later—so the responsible thing to do, which was in the feasibility study, was to say that the line was not viable right now. We decided to put it on hold, not to do it then, and to wait until it was viable. We all know that public transport runs at a loss. To invest in a train line that would attract only an estimated 2 000 people by 2031 would have been an irresponsible decision.

The real issues for the people of Ellenbrook were also noted at the time, which were roads. There was only one entry and exit point into and out of Ellenbrook at that time. A truck rolled over at the roundabout, which made everyone in Ellenbrook hostages for hours until the chemical spill could be cleaned up and the truck removed. Another entry and exit road was far more important to the people of Ellenbrook, and was delivered under the Liberal government. Drumpellier Drive was created and opened, and a set of traffic lights was later put in at the intersection. Another major issue for the people of Ellenbrook was congestion on Gngalara Road and Lord Street and out to West Swan Road and Beechboro Road. It was an absolute nightmare to get in and out of Ellenbrook. A train was not required at the time; better roads were required. That is why this government took the money and instead of putting it into a project that would look after 2 000 people by 2031, put it into looking after every resident in Ellenbrook and its surrounds by dualling Gngalara Road, and putting a roundabout at the intersection of West Swan Road and Gngalara Road. Our government put lights at the intersection of Reid Highway and Lord Street and at the intersection of Beechboro Road and Gngalara Road. Money went into improving the roads, which I can tell members, every

Ellenbrook resident was extremely happy with. We worked well with the City of Swan and delivered the major road infrastructure that was required. To say that the rail line was dead was simply local politics—people jumping on soap boxes and trying to make a name for themselves in opposition.

We also delivered extra bus services that enabled people to get out of Ellenbrook to Bassendean, where they could catch the train to Midland or the city. There is also a bus that could take them to the Galleria. I can also tell members that not all people in Ellenbrook wanted to go into the city. A lot of them worked in Midland, so they wanted to go there. A lot of people wanted to get to Joondalup, so a train line going just to the city would not have provided them with the transport options they required. A bus service was able to do that far more quickly—immediately, instead of having to wait for a train line to be built—and take them to multiple destinations. That is what the previous Liberal government invested in and why we won the election in 2013. People did not turn against the Liberal government —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: If you had been here earlier, you may have learnt something.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mr T. Healy interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern River, you are called to order.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: As I was saying before Tina Turner joined in, we then had —

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr T.J. HEALY: I ask the member to withdraw the comment. She called her Tina Turner. The member for Darling Range called the member for Swan Hills Tina Turner. I ask her to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): I am sorry. I did not hear that over the yelling.

Ms J.J. Shaw: I'll own it!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I would, too.

Debate Resumed

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: As I was saying, we delivered those roads —

Mr T.J. Healy: Lied!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Excuse me. Grow up.

Mr D.J. Kelly: You know what you did!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Yes. I know exactly what we did. We delivered roads for Ellenbrook. We also started all the work on the NorthLink.

Mr T. Healy interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern River, that is two. Thank you.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: We also started all the work on the NorthLink project, which all the Labor members are now pretending was theirs. The NorthLink project which includes the road from Perth to Darwin, the Swan Valley bypass and all the different names it has had in its past is a fantastic piece of infrastructure which is delivering more road access for Ellenbrook and beyond and enabling space for the train line to come.

I go to broken promises. In 2008 the Labor government committed to a train line. The member for West Swan champed on that for years. I think it was in 2013 that a small toy train was delivered to everyone's mailbox, saying that she would deliver a train to Ellenbrook. I think that is the closest they will get from this minister—a toy train.

Ms J.J. Shaw: So you don't support the project?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: You were not here earlier and did not listen earlier, so stop interrupting.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: In 2008 Labor promised and on 9 February 2017 it promised that construction on the Metronet Morley–Ellenbrook line would commence in 2019. Where are we now, members? We are near the end of October 2019. I do not see any construction that has been started on the Ellenbrook train line.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Not one thing started!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Sit down, member. Member for Swan Hills, the member has already said that she is not inviting interjections from you. It might be difficult to tolerate, but can you at least respect this house. I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

From February 2017 there is a picture of, I have to say, a very trim looking Mr McGowan standing in front of a train saying that he will deliver the construction of the Morley–Ellenbrook line to commence in 2019. I have a screenshot from the Western Australian government website for Metronet earlier in 2019. It is not there now; it has disappeared. We know why it has disappeared. It said that the project target is that in 2022, potential Morley–Ellenbrook line construction will start in Bayswater. The election commitment was made in 2017 that Labor would do the Ellenbrook line and it would be its number one priority. We then heard that construction would start in 2019. Do not hold your breath, members, because that is nearly gone. Then we heard that Morley–Ellenbrook line construction would potentially start in Bayswater in 2022. My understanding of “potential” is that it may happen or it may not happen, if the government wants it to happen, it can dust it off again and talk about it at the next election and keep champing on because it has no new ideas. Here we go. It is our priority. It is going to start in 2019, and then, potentially, in 2022. Minister, my question about this bill is: when will the people of Ellenbrook actually be able to board a train in Ellenbrook—not potentially board it or when does the minister want to pretend that she will do it; when will they actually be able to board a train in Ellenbrook?

My fear is that this is how the government has treated the Ellenbrook rail line. I know that the minister has a personal commitment to this line. I know she does. I know she means every word about wanting to deliver this. She is hanging her hat on the Ellenbrook train line. She has worked hard to make sure she is in the position to make it happen, so I congratulate her for that; I honestly do. But my fear is that if this is how her favourite project is being treated, what will happen to the other projects? That leads me to Byford rail: I feel that Byford rail is going to be another Ellenbrook rail problem. In 2016, we had a loud and proud promise by the Labor Party’s then candidate for Darling Range, saying that his number one priority was to deliver the rail line to Byford.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The Labor Party’s candidate’s number one priority was to deliver the Byford rail line, just as the minister’s number one priority is to deliver the Ellenbrook train line. But then, sadly, what do we see? We see the Byford extension identified through the Australian government’s Infrastructure Australia website. We must remember that Infrastructure Australia works with the state government, and the state government goes hat in hand to ask for assistance and support for major projects. Therefore, I find it very cute when the government has a go at Hon Christian Porter, the member for Pearce, who wants to deliver the Ellenbrook train line, yet, at the same time, the state government asks the federal government for money to deliver the Ellenbrook train line. That is how it works. On the Australian government’s Building our Future web page, under the Byford extension project description, we read that the final business case is expected to be completed in late 2018 and construction from 2020–23.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The WA Labor government takes information to the Australian government to get access to funds—which is its job—and says that the actual final business case for the Byford rail will be completed in 2018. We are now in October 2019, and the business case has not been completed. The WA Labor Metronet website states that it will commence in 2021, whereas it is out at 2023 on Infrastructure Australia’s website. The Byford rail extension media release from the minister herself states that the government has successful funding from the Liberal federal government; she acknowledges funding from that. But then it says that phase 2 involves further business case development, exploring potential station locations and land opportunities. Here we are at September 2019 when the minister said phase 2 of developing the business case had not even started, yet the Australian Liberal government had the understanding that the business case would be finished in 2018. Members can see my concerns. Ellenbrook, the number one priority for this minister, is not being delivered, as the government promised, in 2017. It potentially, maybe, could be there in 2022. The Labor Party’s then candidate, who became its member, said that Byford rail was his number one priority, with the minister saying that we would have a business case by 2018, but she said in September 2019 that the government had not even started the second phase of the business case. Therefore, I have a real concern that all we see from this government is talk. We see no real action on delivering one piece of rail line for the people of Western Australia.

Mr T. Healy interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The Forrestfield rail line was started —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern River!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: — under the Liberal–National government, and the only project that this government is even working on is the one that was started under the previous government. For all its promises for Metronet—all its promises and talk of how many jobs it will create—I want to know when these will happen. I think the people of Western Australia want to know when. When will the people of Ellenbrook be able to board a train? When will the jobs be delivered to actually build this train line? Byford rail was meant to be a number one priority for the Labor Party’s then member for Darling Range, but it has now been pushed out to the government’s last priority for Metronet, as was put out in one statement. When will the people of Western Australia, Ellenbrook and Byford actually see the delivery of a train line?

As I said, my fear is that Byford and all other stations will be another Ellenbrook rail line story, with the minister using it as a soapbox opportunity to get up and keep dusting off the same old policies. We have not seen anything new whatsoever from this government. We have seen no new work, no new jobs and no new construction started on any of these Metronet projects. As I said, I would appreciate having an understanding from the minister to let people in Ellenbrook know when they will have a completed station and when they can actually hop on a train.

I would also be very interested to know what the Town of Bassendean thought about the change of route going to Bayswater. Back in the day when it was being discussed, the Town of Bassendean was quite excited about the opportunities it was to bring to them—that is, having people from Ellenbrook come to the Bassendean station and hopefully get a bit more foot traffic to support its businesses and community. I would be interested to know whether the Town of Bassendean was consulted and how it felt about the change.

I am also a bit concerned about the impact it will have on the Midland line. I welcome the announcement of relocating a new train station for Midland. As members know, I advocated for that, and I am pleased that the government is doing that. It makes absolutely perfect sense to have a train station aligned to the new hospital in Midland. That is fantastic news. But I am concerned about whether there will be a reduction in running times on Midland train lines. The Midland station is a very popular station, with everyone coming from the hills through to the Midland train station. Also, I know that the local shops around there rely on that traffic to the train station, so with that additional line coming into Bayswater, will there be an impact on the Midland train line? Can the minister explain what that impact will be? Is there any truth in the rumours buffering around that there could be a reduction in running times for the Midland train line?

Those are my main concerns that the minister can quite easily answer in her second reading reply. But, as I said at the beginning of my speech, we on this side support the Ellenbrook train line. We support getting this bill through as quickly as possible so the minister can get on to try to turn that potential, maybe, could be, do not know moment of when the station will be delivered to a date, whether it is in 2022 or beyond.

My other fear is that I think most people need to realise that 2021 is the year of the state election. Obviously, the government does not have a plan to deliver any station prior to the next election —

Mr T. Healy interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I am trying.

Ms J.J. Shaw: You are trying.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I am appeasing your member, if you do not mind, member for Swan Hills. You might want to just close it.

We are trying to make sure that the people of Western Australia understand that they will not see a new track before the next state election and that the government will be going to 2021 promising the same things it promised in 2017 and 2008. It needs to be made extremely clear to the people of Western Australian that there will be no new Metronet whatsoever under this government before the next election. It would be greatly appreciated if the government could provide some clarity around the “maybe” and “what if” potential delivery date for the Ellenbrook train line.

I also want to quickly refer to the cost of the Byford train line. The government costs the Byford train line at \$291 million. The federal government costing from Infrastructure Australia is \$481 million. That is a big difference. I am concerned about the Byford rail line. The government has not finished its business case study; it promised it would be finished by the end of 2018. It does not even have the costings correct; in fact, its costings are down by half. The government has costings for only 50 per cent of the project and not the full amount.

I close by thanking the federal member for Canning, Andrew Hastie, for the \$240 million —

Several members interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Government members congratulate the federal Liberal government when they get money, but they need to realise that local federal members deliver that funding and they cannot take from one and slap the other! They need to understand that.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 8222.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**STATE ECONOMY — STAMP DUTY REBATE****928. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's announcement today regarding some stamp duty relief on apartments. Can the Premier confirm that today's stimulus measure is a clear admission that his government's economic mismanagement has damaged the economy, and in particular the housing sector, and that struggling Western Australians are worse off under this government?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

What a pathetic question! Under this government, we have unemployment going down; we have more than 50 000 more people in work; we have secured more support from the federal government than any government in history; we secured a GST deal, with a floor for Western Australia; we have got a surplus back; we got a credit rating upgrade; and we are the only state or territory government in Australia with debt tracking downwards. Using our good financial management, we are able to make important announcements like this today, and the Liberal Party whinges. Under the previous government, the state was in recession and there was record debt and record deficits. Had we continued on the previous government's trend of 6.5 per cent expenditure growth each year, our state would be heading towards nearly \$70 billion worth of debt. We have cut many billions of dollars from the former government's debt trajectory. We announce an important stamp duty initiative to get activity back into the multistorey construction market and the Liberal Party comes in here and whinges. When the Liberal Party was in government, it put up land tax three times, cancelled payroll tax cuts and stamp duty cuts, put up fees and charges by a record amount—80 per cent for water and 80 per cent for electricity—at the same time as driving up debt by levels that had never before been seen in this state, and lost the AAA credit rating, yet Liberal members come in here and complain about our government. What a pathetic question!

STATE ECONOMY — STAMP DUTY REBATE**929. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Can the Premier confirm that the \$50 000 stamp duty changes includes rebates to foreign investors, and that this highlights that the government's foreign investor tax was a complete failure and did substantial damage to the housing sector?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I do not think the Leader of the Opposition understands what we have announced. I think that is very clear from her question, Mr Speaker. It is a 75 per cent reduction in transfer duty, which will apply to both stamp duty and the foreign housing surcharge. That is what it is. It is capped at \$50 000. It does not matter how many properties a person purchases or the value of the property—a person is eligible. However, it is capped at \$50 000. Clearly, the Leader of the Opposition does not understand it. I urge the Leader of the Opposition to speak to the shadow Treasurer sitting next to her; he may understand it a bit more. The foreign buyers surcharge is common in Australian states. We brought in something that is the same as in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is right; it has been put up in other states. It is designed to ensure that a contribution is made to Western Australia by foreign property purchasers for all the train lines, water and infrastructure that Western Australians have provided, and because Western Australia is a low sovereign risk investment destination. A contribution is made. Liberal and Labor governments in other states have done it, because we are low sovereign risk and a contribution should be made towards all those services and all that infrastructure provided by the taxpayers of Western Australia over all those years. That is what it is designed to do. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to roll that back, she should take that policy to the election. I today heard the shadow Treasurer announce that it was his policy to roll that back. I think foreign property speculators should make a contribution to the state. That is our policy! As the Treasurer said today, the receipts from the foreign property surcharge are tracking as expected. I am sure the Treasurer will outline more about that later today.

We face a difficult national relationship with one of the major investors in Australia, which is China. That influences a range of things. I was advised the other day about some of the influences that that is having on a whole range of areas of economic activity across Australia. It influences investment. All I would say, particularly in the light of Mr Hastie's dash off to China —

A government member interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, it is odd. In any event, I urge our federal government to get relations with China back on an even keel. I urge the Prime Minister to do that; I think he should get relations back on an even keel. That will help with all these relationships, and particularly these investment relationships.

STATE ECONOMY — STAMP DUTY REBATE

930. Mr J.N. CAREY to the Premier:

I also wish to refer to the sensational announcement this morning for a 75 per cent stamp duty rebate on apartments purchased off the plan.

- (1) When can Western Australians take advantage of this offer?
- (2) What does this mean for both Perth city and the Western Australian economy as a whole?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Perth.

- (1)–(2) The answer is that investors who purchase off the plan can take advantage of this initiative as of today. I made the announcement today with the Minister for Planning and the Treasurer. We were joined by Sandra Brewer from the Property Council of Australia, John Gelavis from the Master Builders Association, Cath Hart from the Housing Industry Association and Tanya Steinbeck from the Urban Development Institute of Australia. They were all very pleased with the announcement. It is a targeted announcement that is designed to create jobs, using our good financial management.

We will be introducing a 75 per cent rebate on stamp duty for buyers who sign preconstruction contracts to purchase new residential units. As I outlined before, it is capped at \$50 000 for people who buy apartments off the plan for the next two years. People can take advantage of this today. It can save them up to \$50 000 if they want to buy an apartment to invest and rent out or to live in. It is designed to address the stamp duty imbalance between house and land packages and apartments. Sandra Brewer commented today that an inherent unfairness has been in place for a long time between house and land packages, for which people pay stamp duty only on the land, and apartments, for which people pay stamp duty on the entire value. It is an inherent unfairness that is being addressed by this measure.

It is designed to boost confidence in the construction market, create greater infill development, stimulate the sector and create jobs. It builds on our Keystart loan book changes made earlier this year, when we increased the income limits for eligibility, and the \$394 million social and affordable housing package that was announced in the budget to provide more dwellings around the Metronet network. I want to quote what Cath Hart from the Housing Industry Association had to say today. She said —

Today's announcement by @MarkMcGowanMP ... will mean a swift boost for building activity. This is great for local jobs & will give industry the confidence to retain and train more workers.

This is great news for housing and the construction industry. It shows that when we have a government that can manage the finances properly, get the state back to surplus and get state debt tracking down, we can do important targeted initiatives to create jobs, and that is exactly what this is doing.

REGIONAL MIGRATION STATUS

931. Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE to the Premier:

I refer to the article titled "Premier's foreigner backflip" published in *The Weekend West* on 19 October 2019, in which he acknowledged that a regional classification for Perth would improve the state's capacity to attract international students. When will the Premier reinstate Perth's regional migration status and remove the foreign buyer tax to help grow jobs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I do not know whether the member listened, but I think I just answered his question in relation to the foreign housing surcharge. I will answer again, because the member clearly did not hear. The fact of the matter is that for over nearly 200 years the people of Western Australia have provided water, power, roads, rail and all sorts of infrastructure throughout our community. Our view is, as is every other mainland state as far as I understand it, that there is a surcharge for foreign property purchases to assist with the provision of that infrastructure and to pay for that infrastructure that has been provided. If a person buys a property here, they are the beneficiary of it. Also, because we are a very low sovereign risk destination, probably the lowest sovereign risk destination in the world, people pay a small premium for that. The foreign buyer surcharge will stay in place. Today we have announced a two-year nuancing of it for construction projects off-the-plan, which will ensure locals and international purchasers alike are the beneficiaries of our good financial management. That is that one.

In relation to the other issue, I think last week, or sometime recently, I said to the house that the state government is working cooperatively with the federal government, in particular Senator Mathias Cormann, in relation to those issues. It is complex because the federal government has changed a range of visa categories and the rules around them, particularly the abolition of 457s. This has made the issue perhaps less complex. Also, Western Australia does not have regional universities, unlike Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, and recent changes by the

federal government to regional classification has made it more difficult for Western Australia. Therefore, we are working cooperatively with the federal government on this issue. I have been happy with the way that those discussions have progressed and hopefully I will have more to say about that in the future.

REGIONAL MIGRATION STATUS

932. Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. I will be glad to hear about something in the future. Does the Premier concede that for every month he delays reversing the regional migration status decision the state economy suffers?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Since we have been in office, more than 50 000 jobs have been created. The previous government's term of office drove the state into the only recession in history. As I said before, it drove debt above \$40 billion. It had spend tracking on average each year at 6.7 per cent. As the Treasurer outlined last week, in the previous government's first two years in office, spend went up 26 per cent. In our first two years in office it went up 4.5 per cent. The previous government blew the finances, drove the state into recession, put up land tax three times, lost the credit rating, had investors and business up in arms with its management of the state's economy and its cavalier use of state finances, and members opposite come in here as though none of that ever happened. We finally have a government in Western Australia with grownups in charge, and members opposite complain like a group of naughty schoolkids. They are a group of naughty schoolkids who do not deserve to come back into office. All their announcements today are not worth the paper they are written on, because we saw its record when it was in office. The people of Western Australia should understand that if the Liberals and Nationals come back to office in this state, it will be bad for the state's economy and it will be bad for the state's finances, because its record is there and it has never owned up to it.

STATE ECONOMY — STAMP DUTY REBATE

933. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Treasurer:

I refer to the suite of announcements from the McGowan Labor government over the past few weeks, namely, the school maintenance blitz, the hospital maintenance blitz, the halving of TAFE fees and today's announcement of a 75 per cent stamp duty rebate on off-the-plan apartments.

- (1) How has the McGowan government been able to afford these measures to stimulate the state economy?
- (2) What does this show about the priorities of the McGowan Labor government?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

I thank the member for Burns Beach for that very good question.

- (1)–(2) I recall when I sat on the other side of the house watching that first term of the former government—as the Premier said—increasing spend by 26 per cent in the first two years. I often made the case that the former Liberal–National government was trying to take up the economic and fiscal capacity of future governments, and that is exactly what it did. When I became Treasurer and the economy was in recession and revenues were being written down, my great worry was there would be some form of global economic negative outcome that would impact us. The state did not have the balance sheet to respond, because the Liberal–National government consumed both the largest operating deficits on record and the largest level of net debt on record. Thankfully, for the first couple of years of this government, we have kept expense growth low and we have focused on priorities around economic growth. What does that mean? It means that we can respond when circumstances require it. That is exactly what we have been doing of late, both in the maintenance spend around hospitals and schools, and in halving TAFE fees. I remind the house that when the Leader of the Opposition was training minister, she increased those fees by over 500 per cent. The Leader of the Opposition can laugh, but people all over Western Australia could not afford to get the training and skills that they needed to get a job when we returned to economic growth, as we have now. This is why the Labor Party always understands the value of employment—getting a job or increasing the hours in which one works. That is why the immediate response of the panic merchants and the economic neophytes on the Liberal side of this house is: spend, spend, spend! They never thought about where to spend, or what the outcome of that spend is, and that is why today's announcement is so important and why it has been so well received, because it is targeted around generating activity in an area that needs some focus. It also goes to ensure that we can fix up a historic bias towards house and land packages to encourage infill housing. People with skin in the game, who know what they are talking about, such as Paul Blackburne, today said —

“The Government's reduction in stamp duty will absolutely help buyers to make that decision to purchase off the plan and downsize, upsize or invest,” he said.

“It is one of the most significant initiatives for WA's economy in 20 years.

Mr Blackburne knows that the Leader of the Opposition wants to introduce legislation to get rid of infill, to change what we have been doing in infill now for quite some time. Mr Blackburne knows that that is incredibly damaging to the economy, and incredibly damaging to jobs in Western Australia. That is why when we focus

on sensible economic and fiscal management, when we return to a surplus position, when we have debt tracking down, we get the things that the previous government did not. What is that? A surplus economic growth, credit rating upgrades and jobs being created. That is the focus of this government. This decision today is another very good, very targeted announcement that will generate activity, generate jobs and create a much better future for Western Australians than one that we inherited, left to us by the Liberal–National government.

FIREFIGHTING — TRUCKS AND APPLIANCES — TENDERING CONTRACTS

934. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to tenders and contracts awarded for the construction and maintenance of firefighting vehicles in WA's regional areas.

- (1) Why are some portions of contracts awarded to companies from the eastern states when there are reliable and competent companies in WA that can deliver to the highest standard?
- (2) Why has the minister's department taken three years to award a contract in light class vehicles, in the process requiring tender applicants to agree to keep their tender bids valid over this period?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

I thank the member for that question.

- (1)–(2) The question presumes that those contracts have gone to eastern states companies; that is just not true. There has not been an announcement on the 44 heavy bush firefighting appliances or the light firefighting vehicle. It will be up to the bushfire brigades to choose another vehicle, which will either be what they call an ultralight or a slightly heavier light firefighting vehicle, that will be introduced to the fleet. That contract has not been put out yet either.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Building Management and Works, and the Department of Finance are organising those contracts—not me. I have no role to play, and nor should I, in determining the outcome of those contracts, but I assure the member that they have not been issued yet. He and everyone else will know about it once they are issued.

FIREFIGHTING — TRUCKS AND APPLIANCES — TENDERING CONTRACTS

935. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I have a supplementary question. We are three years down the track, so can the minister assure those servicing our firefighting sector that future opportunities will be sourced from our state so that others do not suffer the fate of businesses in my electorate that have been forced to make redundancies or, worse, to close as a result of contracts going east?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

When I became the Minister for Emergency Services, the development of tenders for two of those contracts was still on foot, and they were two years' old then and had not been resolved. We have been working to resolve them as quickly as we possibly can with the proviso that we would like to see all vehicles manufactured in Western Australia. Bearing in mind all the obligations that we are under, we would like all those vehicles to be manufactured in Western Australia. I assure the member that as soon as those contracts are announced, he will know exactly who has got them.

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY — REFORMS

936. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

I refer to the McGowan government's tremendous efforts to promote the hospitality industry of Western Australia, particularly by removing hurdles to obtain liquor licences. Can the minister please outline to the house the results so far of the significant reform made under the Liquor Control Amendment Act 2018?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for Mount Lawley for the question. He is renowned as a great champion of small business. I have been with him in his electorate and met small businesses. I have experienced their support of him firsthand. It is doubtless that he has a reputation for his knowledge of the importance of having a lively, thriving, vibrant hospitality sector in his electorate. In fact, I think he may even be building a reputation similar to Mick Murray in the metro area when it comes to supporting the hospitality outlets in Perth!

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There is no-one in Western Australia with a more solid reputation for supporting hospitality outlets than Mick Murray.

I am happy to report that when we passed those liquor reforms, they were the most substantial since the last liquor reforms by a WA Labor government, under the now Premier, way back in 2007. The reforms last year have had a significant impact. We have made it easier by removing some of the burden on small businesses, the hospitality sector and tourism outlets as a consequence of coming up with new ideas and enacting some of the findings of a statutory review that was done by the previous government, which started way back in 2012, was delivered in

2013 and on which nothing happened until we took office. It is really gratifying to see the outcome. Since we changed the law, a total of 177 licences have been granted without the requirement of a public interest assessment. That is 177 small businesses that have not had to go through the onerous process that invariably draws people out of the woodwork to make spurious claims. Seventy-four restaurants and 22 small bars are included in that number. That is a great outcome. Forty-eight ongoing hours extended trading permits have been issued that are now up to 10 years—double the length of time they were under the previous government and the previous regime. Forty restaurant licences have been issued without a meal permit—licences for servicing liquor without a meal. There was a permit requirement before we changed the law. That has been removed. We have removed some of those onerous obligations around delivering good service and creating a vibrant, attractive small business and hospitality sector that supports our tourism industry. It is great to see our initiatives result in benefits to small businesses across the state. The McGowan government is the friend of small business. We are not the ones who put up land tax on three occasions over eight and a half years. We are not the ones who massively increased household costs, which have a flow-on effect on small business. We are the ones who listen to small business and help them build visitor numbers to the state and make it easier to operate hospitality outlets right across the state.

FOODBANK WA

937. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Premier:

I refer to an article in *The West Australian* of 13 October titled “Foodbank WA says number of hungry West Australians rose 20 per cent in the last 12 months”. Can the Premier confirm that his failure to deliver on full-time jobs and the massive cost-of-living hikes are the major underlying causes for the spike in struggling Western Australians needing help?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Since it has been in office, the government has delivered over 50 000 new jobs, unemployment has gone down and we now have the third-lowest unemployment rate in the country. When we came to office, Western Australia had the worst unemployment rate in the country. I do not understand the member’s argument considering the unemployment rate has significantly improved since he was in office. In recent days we announced a range of initiatives to improve the number of people who are employed in Western Australia. In the last few weeks we have been using our good financial management to put people to work in Western Australia. It is a pity you did not do that. It is a pity you made a mess of it, and you know you made a mess of it. The interesting thing about this is you all know. You know that over eight and a half years you sent debt and deficits sky-rocketing to levels never, ever seen before in Western Australia and, actually, until that point in time, never ever seen before in Australia. That is what you did. This government is now turning it around, and has successfully turned it around, but the member comes in here and complains.

We have the utmost sympathy, empathy and support for people doing it tough. That is why in the state budget we put up fees and charges at the lowest rate in 13 years. That is why we reinstated funding to financial counsellors and increased funding for the hardship utility grant scheme. That is why we increased the energy assistance payment. We are doing these initiatives all over Western Australia to improve the situation for Western Australians using the good financial management of this government and this cabinet.

FOODBANK WA

938. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Will the Premier immediately commit to provide Foodbank WA with additional funding to the deal with the surge in struggling Western Australians who require help to feed their families?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I have visited and met with Foodbank a number of times. I know that the Treasurer does the same. It could well be in the Treasurer’s or the member for Belmont’s electorate. We work with them regularly. Obviously, if it has requests, we will consider them. If it comes forward with a request for us, we will consider it. But, as far as I am aware, no request has been made by Foodbank, but if it does we will consider it.

LITHIUM INDUSTRY

939. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

My question is to the very astute Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

I refer to the continuing expansion of the lithium industry in Western Australia. Can the minister explain to the house how the McGowan Labor government is providing investment certainty to Western Australia’s lithium industry and how this provides greater opportunities to create jobs and further develop downstream processing in our state?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

What an excellent question. One of the great things about our future battery industry is that much of it is happening outside Perth. The member for Bunbury is one of those who enjoys the growth in employment in our battery industry with Albemarle’s decision, with the support of the Premier, to invest in Kemerton to create one of the world’s largest lithium hydroxide plants. This year, we are looking forward to the first production of

lithium hydroxide from the Tianqi plant in Kwinana. This, together with other investment by Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile and Wesfarmers, will see within five years, Western Australia become the single largest source outside China of lithium hydroxide—that is processed material—which will give Western Australia a unique and strong position in the future battery industry as batteries replace internal combustion engines across the world in automotive production. The government works very closely with the industry to make sure that we are listening to its needs. Again, I highlight a decision we made, which is to change the basis of the royalty on lithium hydroxide. Lithium hydroxide and lithium carbonate would have been subject to a royalty of five per cent if we had taken no action. This would have put the royalty rate on processed lithium at an uncompetitive rate compared with the case in other jurisdictions and would have been an impediment to support future investment in the processing of lithium material in Western Australia. With the support of cabinet, we have set the royalty rate as a feedstock rate, which means that whether the spodumene that comes out of the concentrators at mines is exported or used for domestic use, the royalty will be applied in exactly the same way. Let me make it clear: had we left the royalty regime in the way that it had been left to us, there would have been effectively a disincentive to process spodumene in Australia. In fact, there would have been incentive to send the spodumene outside Australia to be processed overseas.

Our battery industry strategy is working. I report to the house that there has been an 83 per cent increase in employment since the last year of the former government just in the mining of battery materials. In 2016, there were 6 320 people employed in mining battery materials. This year, there are 11 590. That is an extra 5 000 jobs just in the mining industry. Of course, there are even more jobs in the processing. Downstream processing of battery materials did not happen until the Labor government came into power, and now we are moving to be the dominant player outside China in this industry. We are very keen to support further chemical processing of battery materials in Western Australia, and I want to congratulate BHP's Nickel West for its investment in nickel sulphate and cobalt sulphate capacity. That is new capacity and new chemicals being processed here in Western Australia that takes us another step down the pathway of this important industry.

I also want to let members know that there is now 7.5 megawatt hours in battery storage across Western Australia from state government initiatives, which shows that we are advancing not only at the beginning of the value chain, but also in the implementation of using batteries and systems. Western Australia is now recognised as a world-leading jurisdiction in the application of batteries into electrical systems, and people are literally coming from all around the world to learn about how to do that here in Western Australia. This is a good news story because the McGowan government is working with industry to support these important investments.

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER INDUSTRY — ROUNDTABLE EVENT

940. Mr I.C. BLAYNEY to the Minister for Fisheries:

The rock lobster industry has expressed concerns to me that the minister has stifled communication with relevant representative groups regarding ongoing and unresolved issues affecting fishers. Will the minister participate in a Western Australian Fishing Industry Council–convened cross-industry roundtable event and address issues, including the lack of long-term licence security and delays in passing on the \$195 000 in levy funds raised last year?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for the question. As the member knows, there were some disagreements with the industry on how we would progress in developing a domestic lobster supply—something that I think most Western Australians would have seen as a very good thing. The government has put that plan to one side. Since then, we have been continuing to hold discussions with the western rock lobster industry as per normal. The department of fisheries has continued to meet regularly with the industry. Just last week, the department held its usual industry meetings in Fremantle and Geraldton. A range of the industry's issues that the member just talked about were discussed. I continue to meet with the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, the peak body that represents all commercial fishers in this state. From my perspective, it is business as usual. There has been no request from WAFIC to convene the meeting that the member has referred to. We are happy to talk to the industry and continue to talk to the industry on a whole range of issues, and we remain willing to do so.

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER INDUSTRY — ROUNDTABLE EVENT

941. Mr I.C. BLAYNEY to the Minister for Fisheries:

I have a supplementary question. When will the minister start working constructively with an industry that is worth more than half a billion dollars to Western Australia's economy and is particularly important in the regions?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

Just a fortnight ago, we announced some changes to the charter sector and got rid of some of the red tape in the industry that prevents it from capitalising on the available tourist market, or the potential tourist market that would be available if it could better access western rock lobster. As a result of those changes, the Tourism Council Western Australia estimates that hundreds of additional jobs will be created in that sector, many in regional Western Australia. We are always looking for initiatives to better capitalise on the potential from western rock lobster. As the member knows, over 95 per cent of the catch currently goes to China. That is a good thing—it is

a great export product—but people in the regions tell me that if more domestic lobster were available here in Western Australia, it would create more jobs in the regions. That is why local governments almost unanimously between here and Geraldton want to see more local lobsters. If the member for Geraldton wants more local jobs here in WA from this resource, he should start to look at this issue with an open mind.

STATE ECONOMY — STAMP DUTY REBATE

942. Ms A. SANDERSON to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the announcement today on stamp duty rebates. Can the minister advise the house what additional initiatives the state government is taking to support the residential housing and building sectors, and is the minister aware of any other policies?

Mr P.C. TINLEY replied:

I thank the member for the question. What a great day for the property industry, and what a great day for collaborative government—when a government actually goes out and talks to the industry, and when a government actually understands what it is going through at the enterprise level and at the peak body of the collective level. People in that industry come to us, our doors are open and we listen—no-one more so than the Treasurer of this state, who was listening to the property industry and went beavering away for a long period with his agency to produce what I think is one of the greatest single strokes that will underscore the opportunities available to Western Australians to get into home ownership. It also doubles down on the idea that this government is very serious about thoughtful density in this state, with a \$4.5 billion urban rail investment led by the Minister for Transport. The 75 per cent stamp duty rebate is a particularly good moment for me as the Minister for Housing. As members know from me speaking many times in this place, the Department of Communities' Housing Authority is a participant in the marketplace as well. We work and partner with the private sector, and we are acutely aware of the challenges around multilevel residential and off-the-plan sales that are so important to underpinning the finance and financial structures of those projects.

We are also very keen to see the \$394 million worth of Metronet housing and jobs package roll out. The Pier Street development in the member for Perth's electorate will now have a much, much faster development pathway. This 27-storey development, with 184 apartments, will provide a classic opportunity for densification around the transport-oriented development of the Perth CBD. It will contain 27 social accommodation units and 27 affordable accommodation units.

I refer to the stamp duty rebate that was announced today. Just for members' benefit, an apartment in that particular development that sells for \$450 000 would previously have had a duty of \$3 800. Today, it will have a duty of \$900. That is a tremendous outcome for affordability. That is a tremendous outcome for those people in Western Australia who want to have the option of densified living in the CBD around the transport-oriented developments that this government is really pushing hard on.

One of the things that the member mentioned in the question was whether there are alternative proposals. I think the only alternative proposals that we have heard around the property sector are the other side carping on about a glass half empty. This economy is finally getting off its knees after eight years of the former government's profligate spending, after eight years of indolence, after eight years of its ignorance and closed-door approach to industry, and after eight years of over eight per cent expense growth. We have now come to the final point at which we are slowly, but surely, doing the hard work—as the Treasurer has done in this particular announcement—to reorientate this economy to take advantage of the opportunities of its natural endowment, both in the ground and in the enterprise of the working people of Western Australia. We are looking forward to the one moment when the Leader of the Opposition comes into this place and actually apologises for those eight and a half years in which she participated, and apologises for the sort of off-the-cuff announcements that she is wont to make—uncosted, unfunded, and no idea.

CAMERON SYME — MEETING

943. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Minister for Tourism:

Will the minister please provide a reason why he refuses to meet with Mr Cameron Syme from Limeburners Distillery; and when should Mr Syme expect to receive a formal response from the minister to his request to meet?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I met Cameron down in Albany a while ago. I am not aware of any request by him to meet with me now. If he wants to meet with me, of course I will meet with him. I am actually notoriously easy to get a meeting with. I do not know too many people in the industry who have had any difficulty meeting with me.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: If Cameron wants to bring along some of his special product, I would happily let him sample it in front of me. I would not, of course, suggest that he does that as a means of getting to see me! I am happy to see him. I am sorry, but I do not know, member. What I would say, through *Hansard*, to Mr Syme and the rest of Western Australia is that if they want to get access to see the Minister for Tourism, the last person they would want to talk to is the member for Darling Range.

CAMERON SYME — MEETING

944. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Minister for Tourism:

I have a supplementary question. Mr Syme has come to me because he has emailed the minister and has not had a response. Is it true —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I want to hear the supplementary question. Start again.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Thank you. Minister —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

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

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I will not be bullied.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! The member for Darling Range is asking a supplementary question. I do not want to hear any interjections, please.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Is it true that both the minister and Tourism WA told Mr Syme that they do not support his type of business, nor consider international distilleries to be tourism operators?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Look, a wild guess: no. I cannot fathom where this question has come from. I have no idea about it. I get a lot of emails in my ministerial office, as do all ministers, so invariably someone has not been able to contact me. In the case of Mr Syme, what I can say is that he has my chief of staff's business card, with his personal mobile number, so I am sure that if he wants to get in touch, he can. Otherwise, he can just ring the front desk, and they will arrange a meeting.

This is an extraordinary line of questioning. As I said earlier, the member for Darling Range is not my secretary or my receptionist. It would be a ridiculous proposal that anyone who wished to have a meeting with me would contact the member for Darling Range. The member for Darling Range is the last person who is going to get people any access to the Minister for Tourism. I am easy to catch. I am easy to talk to. I am easy to meet with. Yesterday, I was at an Australian Tourism Export Council meeting. I met its committee at the annual general meeting. I presented some awards to some outstanding tourism operators. I am constantly attending tourism functions. I was at the Liquor Stores Association of Western Australia awards on Friday night. I will be at the Australian Hotels Association awards on a Monday in the not-too-distant future in a black tie. I am all over the state, meeting tourism operators. The suggestion that I am in any way difficult to contact and somehow precious about being contacted by anybody in the tourism or hospitality sector is laughable. I do not think anyone in Western Australia would believe that.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.

RAILWAY (METRONET) AMENDMENT BILL 2019*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MRS A.K. HAYDEN (Darling Range) [2.46 pm]: Mr Speaker, I will just wind up my —

Several members interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: By popular demand, I will continue!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I want to hear the wind-down, please.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The wind-up!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I know that members on the other side love interacting with me. I enjoy it; that is part of the game in this place. I welcome it at any time.

However, what I was saying in closing—to allow the member for Perth to go next—is that thanks to our federal Liberal members of Parliament, this government has received a record amount of infrastructure funding for the Ellenbrook train line and the Metronet program, through to the Tonkin Highway extension and many other road projects.

The SPEAKER: Members, if you want to have a meeting, have it outside, please.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I find it quite hilarious to hear members opposite congratulate themselves on their working relationship with members of the federal Liberal government and say that they are best buddies and they welcome their money —

The SPEAKER: Members, if you want to have a meeting, go outside. I want to hear this, please.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: — but, in the same conversation, they turn around and attack the hardworking local federal members of Parliament who helped them to get that funding. On that note, for the Ellenbrook train line, I would like to put on the record my gratitude to the hardworking member for Pearce, Hon Christian Porter. He has done an outstanding amount of work to make sure that money was available for the Ellenbrook train line. He also did a lot of work in making sure we got the GST share that the state desperately needed. I also thank Hon Ken Wyatt, the member for Hasluck, for the amount of money that he was able to obtain for the Tonkin Highway gap funding, and Andrew Hastie, the member for Canning, for the work he has done to achieve the money for the Byford rail line. I only hope that the minister will now put that great working relationship with the federal Liberal government into action. The government needs to allocate the money, get the costings correct and come clean with the public about when it expects the Ellenbrook train line to be completed and when Ellenbrook residents will be able to step onto a train. We also need to know when we can expect the business case to be finalised and to be told a construction date and a realistic delivery date for the Byford rail line.

On that note, like everyone on this side, we welcome the Ellenbrook rail line on behalf of all the residents of Ellenbrook and the businesses in between for the benefits it will bring. We support the bill.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.50 pm]: It is my pleasure to speak to the Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2019. I wish to highlight three areas, but I would first like to talk about the incredible value of public transport to Western Australia. I am proud to belong to a political party that has a long history —

The SPEAKER: Attorney General!

Mr J.N. CAREY: I am proud to be part of a political party that has had a long history with and commitment to public transport in Western Australia. Many members have referred to our history. However, I again refer to the reopening of the Fremantle line, the creation of the Joondalup line, the building of the Mandurah line and now, of course, Metronet and the Ellenbrook line. I have to say that as a party, certainly in terms of values, we understand that public transport is absolutely critical to the social and economic development of communities. In fact, public transport is a great equaliser. It creates equality of opportunity. I refer to the “Australia: State of the Environment 2016” report, which states —

Access to transport remains a critical social equity consideration, particularly for the outer suburbs of Australia’s cities and most parts of regional Australia. These areas generally have an undersupply of transport services (especially public transport) and of local employment options ...

The same report noted the following —

The type of transport used is directly influenced by location within urban centres: Inner cities have experienced improved public transport frequency and increases in cycling, whereas households on the edges of Australian cities still rely on cars and long commutes to access work.

I use both those points to reaffirm why public transport is such an equaliser.

As the member for Perth, who represents the capital city and inner-city areas, some of my constituents may be perplexed about why I champion Metronet. It is very clear that my inner-city communities and electorates enjoy significant benefits from public transport investment. That is in part due to greater density. It makes sense that where there are more people, there is a greater demand for public transport, and, accordingly, that is provided. That has been the difficulty for the outer suburbs. As we have seen with the member for Cottesloe, who clearly has philosophical issues with investment in public transport —

Mr P.C. Tinley: And public housing.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I am being nice. The argument is that because there is no population there or population growth is not sufficient, we should not invest in public transport. Effectively, it becomes a chicken-and-egg argument. Based on the arguments put forward by the member for Cottesloe, would we ever invest in public transport in outer-metropolitan areas? If we want a truly connected, liveable Perth, we have to understand that that is about not just my community and my electorate, but also the liveability of and services to the outer-metropolitan areas. A healthy, socially connected city is one in which all areas of Perth are serviced by public transport. That is why I am a strong advocate for Metron—for Metron—for Metronet.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I just spit it out, then; I am sorry. I am feeling a bit tired today. My apologies.

The SPEAKER: Say it again, member for Perth, with conviction!

Mr J.N. CAREY: Metronet.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr J.N. CAREY: That will go on the record; thank you very much!

A key part of our plan that does not get a lot of attention and is not highlighted but is something that I, as the parliamentary secretary, and the minister are deeply passionate about is the very clear integration of our plan with transit-oriented development. We are not just rolling out Metronet; a very strong suite of planning policies is coming out that will smartly and cleverly integrate good planning outcomes with the development of rail. I come back to the point that the member for Cottesloe simply missed, given his 1950s way of thinking; that is, the Labor government is developing rail lines, but also, as part of that, we are ensuring that we maximise the opportunity for transit-oriented development at every station. Studies from San Francisco and other cities around the world show that when transit-oriented development is encouraged, there is greater use of public transport. Creating high-density hubs, so that people can easily access stations, is deeply critical to making sure that public transport systems are successful. It makes sense to have high density close to stations, so that people can walk to them easily. There is general consensus that when urban planning is maximised within an 800-metre radius of public transport, that has clear benefits.

I am deeply proud that this policy is at the forefront of Metronet and has been pushed by our planning and transport minister. That development is happening within the Midland, Bayswater and Forrestfield station precincts. As we know, we will ensure that we maximise the opportunity for density in the Metronet east redevelopment area. In doing so, we will maximise choice and access to public transport, nearby jobs, shops, retail and so forth for residents. The government is engaging in public consultation on how those precincts will look and feel. This is backed by the new policy guidelines that we have introduced. Design WA is about ensuring that density is done well—that we design apartments in these railway station precincts that have natural light, ventilation and good open-plan design and landscaping. This will create liveable buildings for not only those people who live within them but also nearby neighbours. We have come out with a precinct policy design approach so that buildings are liveable and designed well. We will then look at the whole design of the precinct: how the buildings will interrelate, the open space requirements and street interaction. We are addressing these critical questions as part of our precinct design policy. We often hear the debate about density. It is very clear that some members of the opposition are not briefed or informed about the significant reforms we are making in planning and the way we are guiding better density and doing density well.

I also want to talk about the question and challenge of deciding the best route. When a route or an alignment is being chosen, there will always be debate about the choice of stations and route alignment. The New South Wales government is now subject to that debate about its Metro West line. There has been fierce debate, as recently as this week, about the location of stations and so forth. I have to say that we now have a clear plan. We have consulted and have a clear alignment of the routes and now we are delivering on that. I say this sincerely: we compare that with the route and the process for MAX light rail. I was the Mayor of Vincent and we grappled seriously with MAX light rail. We took it seriously as a proposal. We engaged with the state government at the time, which was a Liberal state government, and focused on how we could ensure transit-oriented development in North Perth, because North Perth was to receive a station. In fact, property owners and local businesses all engaged in that and took it very seriously, because we genuinely wanted to maximise the outcomes for economic development for the town centre.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Member for Perth, so did the people of Mirrabooka.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I am very sure they did.

I make the point that once a route was selected, as the Mayor of Vincent, we backed it. We said that if that was the route, we would work to it and maximise its potential. I have to say that it is still deeply saddening and disappointing for the North Perth community that all that investment, goodwill, belief and work done with the previous state government was lost. The potential for it to become an incredible node was lost forever. Once an alignment has been decided and there is a plan—that is what we are doing—it should be stuck to and delivered. We have learnt from past mistakes and failures from the MAX light rail development. I am not having a cheap shot at the opposition. I am showing that there was a significant investment by property owners and the community and a belief in that. Even if I was seen as a Labor Mayor of Vincent, I sought to work constructively with the Liberal state government. All that potential for North Perth was lost. I will give an example from my local community. The North Perth Coles, which some people love and some people hate, would have been redeveloped as a major new potential hub of activity. When MAX light rail stopped, all those plans and ideas went out the door. In fact, I think that the loss of MAX light rail has probably stalled a true redevelopment of the town centre by perhaps 20 to 30 years. That demonstrates that our approach to Metronet and transit-oriented development is critical and that we are doing it as a coherent plan.

Talking about alignment, I want to talk about Whiteman Park. I was out for the government on the day when the Whiteman Park scare campaign was launched by the opposition and the member for Vasse. It is disappointing that we have seen this from the opposition. It says it supports the line, but it does many things to attack it publicly. It says it supports it, but it attacks it here and there. It is a constant range of attacks. The complete hypocrisy of the opposition on this issue was pointed out and all the media reported it on the day, because it had released a plan for Whiteman Park—the five-year strategic plan for Whiteman Park—on 1 February 2017 by the Minister for Planning at the time that included a cemetery. In fact, it was listed in the media statement and reported in the local media.

I will get to the Save Whiteman Park group because that is an interesting group. The member for Vasse showed shock and horror and cried crocodile tears, but, in fact, her own political party had proposed a cemetery.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: It is a cemetery. The facts are there, member for Vasse. It cannot be denied. She should check the media statement. I know that she does not like to read a lot.

The reality is that it was deep hypocrisy. There was a proposal for a cemetery in the same location. It is interesting that on the day of the media activity, Rod Henderson, who is a councillor —

Ms L. Mettam: Re-elected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: Re-elected—good luck to him! He was one of the major instigators behind this campaign. It is funny how it was coordinated with the local government election. There is no relation there at all! Up popped the Save Whiteman Park Facebook page. Trying to work out who organised that page was a mystery. It starred the member for Vasse; there is a nice video there. If members look at a recent post, they will realise that it is run by Rod Henderson himself. It states —

Last night I gave notice of the following at the City of Swan Council meeting. There's a map of the proposed alignment in a post below. Are you angry about this? Say so and please share to your friends.

Notice of Motion for the next Ordinary Meeting of Council

Motion—Cr Rod Henderson, Swan Valley/ ... Ward

He is clearly running this Facebook page. I do not know whether it is with the member for Vasse. Who knows? He is a failed Liberal Party candidate.

Here is the media statement with the Whiteman Park site chosen for the future cemetery, member for Vasse. I know she does not like to read, but she might like to read it.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.N. CAREY: He was a failed Liberal candidate at the last state election, who lost by an 18 per cent swing to the member for West Swan. It was an 18 per cent swing! That is not just a smashing; that is a total wipe-out! What a mystery it is that the Save Whiteman Park page stars the member for Vasse and is run by a councillor who is a failed Liberal candidate and is now spearheading a campaign to save Whiteman Park. It is very interesting that the member for Vasse is working so closely with this councillor. This is the same councillor who does not believe in climate change. An article by Josh Zimmerman, a great reporter from *The West Australian*, states that Councillor Rod Henderson branded it a con that had been “totally dispelled”. It states that he had —

... falsely claimed both NASA and the CSIRO had “changed their mind” about human involvement in climate change.

Instead, he laid blame for global concern about rising temperatures and sea levels at the feet of former US vice-president Al Gore and his “inconvenient lie” documentary.

“(Gore)” has made hundreds of millions of dollars out of a game that frankly has been totally dispelled—totally dispelled councillors,” ...

Ms E. Hamilton: “Nanu nanu”!

Mr J.N. CAREY: You beat me to it!

It continues —

“NASA have even changed their mind because there is no pot of money for it there anymore. That is what it is all about. (It's) the same with our own scientific body in Australia.

“If you could show me a dot of change, and I mean a dot ... they don't exist and they're not real and we've been conned by movements that are saying these things are real.”

It is interesting that *The West Australian* noted that both NASA and the CSIRO have said that they still believe in climate change. The member for Vasse is campaigning with the “nanu nanu” brigade and starring on a Facebook page with a climate change denier. That says a lot about her politics. She will do or say anything to stop this line.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): Member for Perth, sit! Thank you. Members, just keep a lid on it. Member for Vasse and member for Dawesville, you have had your say; it is time to listen to others.

Mr J.N. CAREY: What we are seeing is the member for Vasse working with a tinpot crowd of climate change deniers and starring on their Facebook page. She is working with a climate change denier who has actually said that the CSIRO no longer believes in climate change. That is extraordinary stuff. I look forward to him running at the next state election, maybe along with Lily Chen, one of the Liberal Party's other star candidates. She could come back and run as a climate change denier who was also now arguing against the Ellenbrook line and Whiteman Park, and we have the member for Vasse in there with that “nanu nanu” crowd. The point that I take from this is that the

opposition has never truly committed to public transport or rail in Western Australia. It clearly demonstrates the lengths at which the member for Vasse will associate with anyone—desperate—looking for any cracks at all to try to stop this railway line. To hang with a climate change denier is just embarrassing for her. It is deeply embarrassing for her. Even the member for Carine believes in climate change. He does; he has told me. The member for Carine believes in climate change. I believe that the member for Dawesville believes in climate change.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Yeah, absolutely.

Mr J.N. CAREY: He does! That is great to hear.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Progressive!

Mr J.N. CAREY: Aggressive!

What I wanted to demonstrate clearly is that we are seeing an orchestrated campaign by a councillor, for whatever purposes, whether it was local government re-election or a particular aspiration to again run for the Liberals at the next election. He should declare, “I’m denying climate change”, and put that as one of his key slogans. I am sure he will be endorsed by the evangelical wing of the Liberal Party, which is, effectively, all of them now.

I am sure that what I am demonstrating right here —

Several members interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: We know who pulls yours! Nick Goiran is there with his strings. He has his little puppets. There are the little puppets, Nick Goiran! This here is the member for Carine and that is Nick Goiran. It is a bit like a dance. Nick Goiran pulls the strings! We all know him.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Perth, please sit down.

Point of Order

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Relevance? I think we need to get back to the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): There is no point of order. The member will get on with his contribution to the second reading of the bill.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.N. CAREY: I just want to say, and I will end on this, that we are seeing the opposition take every public opportunity, despite what it says, to can, to attack and to try to stop this project. Ultimately, this is a philosophical difference between Labor and Liberal. We understand that public transport is about access to jobs, health, education and the community. It is a great equaliser. We believe in public transport because it is a critical investment. Whereas, what we have seen, like in the member for Cottesloe’s attacks, is that the Liberals do not in fact have a genuine commitment to, or investment in, public transport, probably because many of them do not actually use it. Therefore, I am proud to be part of a state Labor government that, again, is delivering rail to the outer metropolitan area.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [3.14 pm]: It is my pleasure to speak in support of the Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2019. I would like to begin by congratulating the Minister for Transport for bringing this bill to the house. It is fantastic to see Labor’s continued support of public transport.

Metronet is an absolutely transformative public transport initiative and, once again, proves, for the record, Labor’s commitment to public transport, generating jobs, improving environmental outcomes and, of course, importantly, improving accessibility and liveability in all our communities. I am also particularly excited that Metronet is well underway in my community of Belmont.

The purpose of this bill is to authorise the construction of the rail line from Bayswater station to Ellenbrook. Progress of this bill is very important to the people of Ellenbrook, as many members have also spoken about, and, of course, to the surrounds of Ellenbrook, as these residents have waited since the election commitment to construct a rail connection was first made by the Barnett government in 2008. It was a commitment repeatedly made but never delivered. This project represents a major step forward for Perth public transport infrastructure that residents who, back in 1992, flocked to the new suburb of Ellenbrook were expecting from the time the suburb was first developed. This billion-dollar Morley–Ellenbrook line will begin on the Midland line and proceed north east from the redeveloped Bayswater station to Ellenbrook, stopping at Whiteman Park, Malaga, Noranda and Morley along the way.

The development of the line will open the north east suburbs of Perth and finally link the now considerable area of Ellenbrook and surrounds to the Perth CBD via major public transport infrastructure. The growth that will flow from this rail line will be felt by all areas along this line, and it will be fantastic to see this important component of Metronet finally come to fruition. Importantly, this 21-kilometre line will halve the travel time for those using public transport from Ellenbrook into the city. This saving of travel time for residents will make a major difference to their lives. The line will create thousands of local jobs during its construction. This project is proof of our government’s commitment to busting congestion on our roads by expanding the vital Metronet public transport network, which will prepare Perth and surrounds for the expected growth in WA into the next century.

This futureproofing commitment is so important to the growth of Perth as a city, particularly for the north-east suburbs, which have seen huge growth over the last 30 years. In 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics named Ellenbrook one of the fastest growing areas in WA, with the largest population growth. According to the City of Swan, 36 000 people now reside in Ellenbrook. This puts Ellenbrook in the same league as Mandurah, Rockingham, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury—all major centres outside of Perth and all serviced by rail. Of the residents who live in Ellenbrook, 70 per cent work in Ellenbrook and 30 per cent are below 15 years of age. Therefore, members can imagine the need to increase employment opportunities and the wider prospects for young people growing up in this area as they proceed into adulthood.

I am really excited for the residents of Ellenbrook and the surrounding areas. This rail line is going to make a real difference to their lives by, importantly, opening up employment opportunities outside of their area, and finally providing them with that important connection they need to the Perth CBD. As mentioned, it will also provide greater opportunity to those in suburbs along the way serviced by the line—Morley, Noranda, Malaga and Whiteman Park.

This project has further justified the major redevelopment of Bayswater station, soon to be a major stop on the Forrestfield–Airport Link. On PerthNow of 8 April 2018, the multimillion-dollar overhaul of Bayswater station, which is the biggest since it was built in 1896, was hailed as a major step forward for Bayswater. It will instigate a renewal of, and major development in, the Bayswater town centre itself, and it will be the first view above ground that Perth Airport patrons will have after coming from the underground Forrestfield–Airport Link tunnel. What a great introduction to Perth this will be.

The Morley–Ellenbrook Line is a major step forward for Perth. I am proud to support the passage of this legislation and commend the bill to the house.

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [3.19 pm]: I have followed this project with interest because I am a bit of a rail nut; I like trains. We see only the odd freight train where I come from. We used to have a train that took people from Geraldton to Perth and back again but, unfortunately, it was withdrawn in the 1970s.

From my recollection, what the member for Darling Range said is correct: we did a Me Too on this line in 2008. When we looked at the project, we saw there really was no business case. That was very similar to a project I was involved with in Geraldton for a 339-kilovolt powerline. The Carpenter government said it would build the powerline for \$300 million, but when the Liberal Party got into government, Western Power said it would be \$700 million. That meant we had to go back and re-examine the whole proposal. As it was, we built the first stage of the project to Three Springs, which cost \$440 million and was the biggest Western Power investment for 20 years. What the member said sort of rings true.

I remember in 2009 or 2010 talking to a couple of people in Transperth—the name of the body that runs the trains escapes me.

Mr D.R. Michael: It's the MTT.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: It is not the MTT; give me a break!

I was told fewer people would use this rail line in a day than get on at Cockburn Central, and it is quite a long distance. I am interested to see the rail line built and I look forward to seeing it operate. I am interested to see how many people will use it, because the real proof of the line's viability—I do not think anyone has any idea of how viable it will be—will not be really clear until it is up and running. Members might be surprised, but I have spent a bit of time around Ellenbrook; it is an interesting area. It is quite an attractive place to live.

Ms J.J. Shaw: You're welcome.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I would not go that far. The farmer in me says that one should build where there is nice soil. I know the sort of soil that is at Ellenbrook, and it is not that flash.

As a side issue, I recently shifted house in Perth. I had to get a slightly bigger property. My number one criterion for where I bought my house was that it had to have close proximity to a railway line. I now live in Maylands and use public transport every morning. I come to Parliament on the train every day and I am yet to see another member at any of the stations I go to, including all our great supporters of public transport.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Show us your SmartRider!

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I will pull it out and show it to the member.

As I said, it is one thing for members to say that they support public transport; it is another thing to get on the sardine can at eight o'clock in the morning and stand up.

Ms A. Sanderson: Oh, good for you.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: It is good; I enjoy it. It is a great way to travel. It takes nine minutes to get from Maylands into the Perth central station. It takes about 20 minutes to walk to Parliament.

Members might be a bit surprised about this, but after the former government was re-elected in 2013, I think we should have borrowed money and built the entire metro rail system. We should have borrowed the money over

30 years so we would know exactly what the repayments would be, because one thing I cannot understand about the way government runs its finances is how it effectively puts everything on the overdraft and then pays it off. For things like this, and the example I have used of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, a government should borrow money over 50 years and pay it off slowly, so it knows exactly what its commitments are and does not get the blowout in debt that comes from putting everything onto the overdraft, if you like.

I look forward to having a ride on the Ellenbrook rail line. I do not think I can live out there. I am quite excited to see that we are going back to building railcars in Western Australia. I would like to know, which no doubt we will find out sooner or later, how much they cost compared with those that came from Queensland.

Mr K. Michel interjected.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: We could build cars, aeroplanes, nuclear reactors or anything here, because our people are clever enough to do these things, but taxpayers have to pay for it. If those railcars cost twice as much as we could buy them from Queensland, it is our taxpayers who will have to find the money to pay for them. I would appreciate it if the government could tell us how much it will cost per railcar to build them here versus in Queensland, Victoria or somewhere else.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [3.25 pm] — in reply: I thank the member for Geraldton for that unexpected but kind of interesting contribution that posed a few questions. I will start with his questions. I thank members for their contributions to the debate. I must say that I really enjoyed this debate; not that I do not enjoy every debate. It stirred a lot of memories from my term in government. I will go through the history of this legislation.

First, I want to acknowledge some of the points made by the member for Geraldton. The member referred to Maylands station. The good thing is that under our proposal there will be more trains per hour at Maylands station. With Metronet, more trains will be on that line and there will be greater capacity for people in that inner-eastern corridor. The member also asked about the cost of railcars. I cannot provide all the information today, but when we finalise the contract, we will provide those statistics.

I want to make the point that because there was no long-term commitment to purchase or construct railcars, we were purchasing small numbers of railcars in an ad hoc fashion. As a result, we were paying a premium price. When I was in opposition, I took the time to analyse the cost per railcar to purchase extra railcars for small additions to the network. I compared the costs. I looked at a Public Transport Authority document on the cost per railcar and then sought some information from over east, particularly in Victoria, which has a local content or local manufacturing policy. I realised that we were paying a lot more per railcar than Victoria, where there is a local manufacturing or local content requirement. The reason for that is that industry and companies need long-term contracts and long-term certainty. I like industry policy and microeconomic policy; I think we can really change the economics of an economy by looking at some key levers. All those students of industry policy, from when governments used to do industry policy, would know that there are some key requirements to get industry or parts of the economy going. One requirement is long-term security for the private sector—the contractor—and that is why when we announced our commitment, we announced the commitment for the Metronet expansion. When we came into government, we saw that we could add the A-series railcar replacement to the Metronet expansion. Internally, we worked our hearts out to prove to Treasury that a bigger and longer-term contract would deliver benefits for taxpayers over the longer term. We did a lot of work on identifying the railcars required for the expansion through Metronet, which we knew about, and the railcars we needed for the A-series replacement. We then looked at the state's maintenance needs and combined that into a contract to take to the market. I always strongly believed that we would get a better deal per railcar than we had on those we had been purchasing. I will be able to confirm that in a bit more detail when we make the final announcement on the contract.

As I have said about that part of the industry, I saw that we had the three key components we needed to make sure that the industry would be successful: a long-term contract for a relatively large volume compared with other states, assistance and training—we have made announcements about our Metronet trade training centre—and of course infrastructure, which is why we are providing the factory—the shed—for manufacturing and assembly in Bellevue. That addresses that part. What was the other key one? The member raised three key points.

Ms L. Mettam: The numbers?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The numbers. A full feasibility study was not undertaken on the Ellenbrook rail line.

Ms A. Sanderson: It was an election commitment.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. We can go through this history again. I lived it and breathed it every day on my two terms in opposition. There was a commitment. Many refute the fact that there was an election commitment to build that rail line. I remember it very well. I always remember the day—I will go through this—when I said that the Liberal Party made a commitment to build the Ellenbrook rail line. The Premier of the day said, “No, we didn't make a commitment.” I always remember that day, which was the last straw, when he went on morning radio—I think it was with Hutchison, if he was on morning radio at that time. The former Premier said, “We never made a commitment to build the Ellenbrook rail line.” The member for Dawesville is nodding. I am not saying he was the cause of it,

but he was probably watching it unfold. The former Premier said, “We didn’t make a commitment to build the rail line.” Meanwhile, I had the flyer. I will always remember the person who sent me that flyer. I thank that person every day. He sent me the Frank Alban flyer that states, “We will build the Ellenbrook rail line.” It was something that was fed back to us too. We knew there was a commitment. This was the last straw. I will not go into the internal machinations of the party at the time, but I was not a key spokesperson for the opposition; I would say that I was not a key spokesperson whatsoever. I did not have a big role in the opposition at the time, but I was very frustrated by this and, to be honest, I was told to leave it alone. I was so frustrated that the Premier was on radio saying, “We never made a commitment” that I took it upon myself to go directly to the media and say, “Here it is. Here’s all the information. Here’s the pamphlet. Here’s the election costing. Here’s the midyear review document.”

Ms A. Sanderson: We don’t condone that.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We do not condone that! But history judges me well on this one, and history will not judge others well on this one. It was finally written and confirmed that there was an election commitment. From that point on, the Liberal Party tried to get out of it; that was all it tried to do. There was all this stuff about doing a pre-feasibility study that did not stack up. The Liberal Party should have just come out and made very clear what it was doing, but it did not. The former Premier tried to say that there was no election commitment. Then he said that it was a second-term commitment, and he just went on and on and left, I hate to say, little Frankie out there, trying to take everybody on. It did not work.

I know the history; everyone knows the history. People can stand up and say who they think is responsible for the Ellenbrook rail line, but I think we knew from day one who is responsible for the Ellenbrook rail line. I want to say that our commitment to the Ellenbrook rail line has been clear from day one. We committed to it in 2008 and in 2013, and we lost those elections. The idea that we could somehow deliver a rail line from opposition is not quite correct. To all those who stand up and say that somehow we did not deliver a rail line between 2008 and 2017, I say that there is a clear reason for that: we were in opposition. When we won government, we did everything possible to get this project underway as soon as possible. The pre-feasibility study was not correct on the 2 000 patronage figure. It was said that the 2 000 patronage figure was a reason that it did not happen, but if the member for Geraldton looks at the pre-feasibility report, he will see that that is not technically correct. It was one number in a document, but it was not the number that the previous government needed to use. They are the three points.

The member for Darling Range stood up. As I said, the opposition has found this a bit tricky to handle. Is anyone a fan of *The Lord of the Rings*? It was like Gollum and that ring. Sometimes Ellenbrook rail is good, but sometimes Ellenbrook rail is bad. People did not quite know who they were as they headed towards Mordor. The opposition does not really know where it is landing on this. The route is bad, but Porter is good for doing all the work. If he did all the work, why did he do a route that the opposition does not like? Then the member for Cottesloe undermined public transport in general. The idea that people do not associate WA Labor with Ellenbrook is completely false, because we have been the biggest supporters of this project and we are delivering this project.

I want to go through some comments. The member for Darling Range was a member for the East Metropolitan Region for, I think, eight and a half years. That encompassed both Ellenbrook and Byford. A key point to note is that even though that member was the member representing the area of Byford for eight and a half years, that member never mentioned the Byford rail line during that time. She went out there and said that people did not want the Ellenbrook rail line.

Mrs A.K. Hayden: They wanted roads.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will go through the roads, too.

When the member for Darling Range was in the upper house, she stated —

The idea of a rail line to Ellenbrook was not even a thought for many residents of Ellenbrook ... However, I want to inform fellow members of the real transport issues that have been affecting the residents of Ellenbrook for many, many years.

In 2012, she said —

I can stand here hand on heart and report to the house that the people of Ellenbrook are intelligent beings. If the cost and patronage were explained to them with all the facts ... they, too, would come up with the same scenario ...

...

A rigid rail line will not and cannot cater for these demands. The Ellenbrook community has different needs, and flexibility is required. That is why an enhanced bus service was the preferred option ...

She never spoke about Byford. When it comes to roads, the only reason Gngangara Road was widened is that we campaigned very effectively for many years. We committed to it, and a contribution was matched by the then government. Those road projects and NorthLink WA were supported all along by Labor, both federal and state. It was actually the federal Labor Party that put in the initial funds for the start of the NorthLink project, which is the three overpasses through Morley Drive, Collier Road at Noranda, and Benara Road. There is no history of support

from the other side. The member then mentioned Midland station. We have been in power for two and a half years. We are going through the Infrastructure Australia process and the federal environmental processes, which I might outline soon, and she asks: where is everything? We are delivering to the people. I look at Midland rail station. When we announced our commitment in 2016, the member for Darling Range, the local member of Parliament at the time, criticised the opposition's Midland train station redevelopment, announcing it as a copycat policy because the previous government had been working on it since 2010. Ms Hayden said that in 2010, the relocation of a new Midland train station was identified by the then government, yet for the next seven years, nothing happened. That is a clear history of non-delivery.

I want to go through the issues to do with the legislation. Interestingly, unlike for roads, we need enabling legislation for every rail line. This is the enabling legislation for the Ellenbrook railway line. But for projects like NorthLink, there was no legislation; we used the existing Public Works Act.

NorthLink goes right through my electorate and from day one I was an advocate and a supporter of it. If members go through the records, they will find that I have never said anything in relation to it. We tried to address local access issues in Bennett Springs when we won government and because of the nature of the project one key issue was that the Bennett Springs community did not have good or easy access to Tonkin and Reid Highways. That is the nature of the project. There were some issues to do with Lightning Park, which we were able to address with the help of the member for Morley. When we won government, we worked to try to address some of the access issues, and we did that. But I never, ever opposed it. I actually supported it; I was an advocate.

The key thing about NorthLink is that it goes through Whiteman Park. The construction of NorthLink, in a sense, excises 182 hectares of Whiteman Park and actually divides Whiteman Park into two parts, to the west and to the east. It has bipartisan support. Many people on the Liberal side of politics, however, are concerned about a rail line going through 12 hectares of Marshall Road lands—I will go through the history of that in a minute. They are the ones trying to claim credit for NorthLink. I do not understand how they can do that. We have already seen absolute hypocrisy in comments about the Beeliar wetlands.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am going to say this, member for Vasse: you made a tactical and strategic error going out on the Whiteman Park issue, because it made the Liberal Party once again oppose the Ellenbrook rail line. She has spurred a councillor into action. That councillor now has a motion before the local council, which would, if adopted—it is the Liberal Party's view of the world—delay the Ellenbrook railway line for another four to five years.

Ms L. Mettam: Rubbish! What spin!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is what has happened, member for Vasse.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Vasse.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: She has strategically, yet again, put herself and the Liberal Party on the wrong side of this debate.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): Member for Vasse, I call you for the first time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: She got sucked into it. The other thing was the misleading nature of it. The member for Vasse took the media to a children's playground and said that the playground would be torn up by the Ellenbrook rail line. The rail line is nowhere near the children's playground. She made a tactical and naive error. In a sense I am glad that the Liberal Party has yet again underestimated the public support for the Ellenbrook rail line. Through the council, the member for Vasse, the Liberal Party and the Liberal members of that council are lining up against the Ellenbrook rail line. They are lining up for delays.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is what you have done.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Member for Wanneroo, a motion will go to council next week that says that a different route should be adopted. I will tell members what that means. The member for Vasse will have to tell all those people that their houses will be demolished because she is now backing that councillor who wants the Reid Highway route. All those new homes—how many will need to be demolished because she is backing a change in the route by aligning herself with that member?

As I said, the Liberal Party has come in here and tried to say that somehow it is the creator of the Ellenbrook rail line. It tweeted that the Liberal Party is the only party that has ever backed the Ellenbrook rail line—you really think people are stupid—and then it went out and campaigned against it. That was a tactical and stupid error. Look at us in relation to rail projects and road projects: we absolutely supported the Forrestfield–Airport Link.

Ms L. Mettam: No, you didn't; you criticised it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Vasse.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When did I criticise it?

Ms L. Mettam: I referred to it in my speech in 2013; during the election campaign.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Me? In 2013?

Ms L. Mettam: I am talking about WA Labor; you did criticise it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am talking about me. Go find where I criticised it.

Ms L. Mettam: Now you're getting —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Well, I am the minister!

I am not talking about what the former member for Vasse said about things. I am not going to sit here and talk about former transport ministers, because I could go on forever.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Minister!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But I will go through what the member for Vasse has done. She has aligned herself with the opponents of the Ellenbrook rail line. That is what she has done.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Vasse.

Ms S.E. Winton: Bad move.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is a bad move. It is a tactical error, because out there, again, everyone knows there is only one party that can deliver it.

The Leader of the Opposition has also been saying that there are some projects that they are going to cut to build Roe 8. What Metronet projects are they? The member for Darling Range thinks Byford is important. Is that the one they want to cut? All their reports say that we do not need it for 20 or 30 years. That is what the former government said about Byford.

The member for Vasse made a tactical error in lining up with the Liberal opponents of the Ellenbrook rail line. She stood there and discredited herself with the media. As we know, when in opposition there are only so many times that you can lead the media to a stupid stunt. That was a stupid stunt which, as I said, will backfire in the community, and it already has.

A week later I was out there cycling with some constituents, experiencing the new Drumpellier Drive cycleway with the member for Gosnells.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, that is enough.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Do members know what they all said? They said, “Why do they oppose building a rail line to Whiteman Park?” I said that I did not know. I said, “Look, it’s the Liberal Party. They’re opposed to the rail line.” It was a tactical error to align with someone who has opposed the rail line from day one. Now a Liberal councillor is saying that he has a better route even though the Liberal Party opposed it for 11 years. It actually campaigned against it. Now it is saying that it has a better route.

In the meantime, everyone is running around trying to claim credit for NorthLink. It went through without a metropolitan region scheme reservation, which we now have to fix. Excising 182 hectares will basically cut the park in half. Someone has talked about water quality issues—the member for Cottesloe. Where do members think NorthLink goes? What priority water mound will NorthLink go on? Any student of this issue over many years understands that NorthLink was rerouted in around 2014. The original route of NorthLink, the Perth–Darwin Highway, was Tonkin Highway. Then it was to basically turn right on Reid Highway and then head up the Lord Street corridor.

The planning was done. Again, I thought it was a good outcome. I never opposed it. But there was a new route and that went through Whiteman Park. I supported that as the more direct route seemed like a more efficient path to link it with Muchea. That was all done without any change in the reservation and people applauded it. The Liberal Party applauded it and tried to claim as much credit for it as possible. I will go through the history of the Marshall Road lands in a minute, but when they came up with the new route through what was classified as a priority water mound, they realised that the Department of Water had reclassified it and that, as a result, the Department of Water allowed that to be done. Again, those are the basic facts. I would have thought that the opposition would have done its research.

Let us go through the Whiteman Park issue. It goes through the Marshall Road lands, identified in 2017’s strategic plan as degraded lands to be used for other purposes and not for parks and recreation—sporting complexes and also a cemetery.

When we came to government, I stopped the cemetery. That is what happened. That was in the article. In 2016, it was announced that the cemetery was going to be on those lands. Where was the “Save Whiteman Park” group then? They were in council supporting a cemetery; that is what they were doing. We stopped that because I knew the route that we took to the election was a reasonable route to take. The member for Vasse went on television and tweeted and said that the route we announced in this legislation was different from what we took to the election. That is completely false.

Mr T.J. Healy: Did she say sorry?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No; in fact, she stood up in this place yesterday—members opposite cannot remember what they said yesterday, let alone a month ago—and said, “The route you have outlined in this bill is the route you took to the election”, even though she said the exact opposite in the media.

Ms L. Mettam: No, I didn’t.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, you did. I have the tweet and the picture—I will hold it up in a minute—in which the member said that we lied about the route during the election, which is completely false. During the election, we took the media on a bus ride to outline the route that we were taking. We took the media on a bus ride and showed them the exact route. It was on the news that night. It was everywhere. Then she says that we never took that route to the election. Everyone in that area knows that was the route we took to the election!

Ms L. Mettam: You did not take the excise of Whiteman Park for rail and urban development to the election.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What are we doing today? Are we doing urban development there? The member went out and said that this is all going to be housing development. We are building a rail line—that is what we are doing—and the member has set herself to oppose it.

Let us go through the Marshall Road lands area. Again, I like doing my research. I have always heard the stories about the Marshall Road lands. First, I went to the previous government’s strategic plan, just to see whether I got it right when I saw it back in 2017. Again, I surveyed the public about the cemetery. People said they did not want a cemetery; that is fine, and that is why I did not support the cemetery. People said they wanted sporting complexes and other sorts of uses. That is why I never ruled out a sporting complex in that area, because it seems like a good use. There is ongoing dialogue between the Department of Sport and Recreation, the City of Swan and my Metronet team whereby we are looking at two options for a major sporting complex in that area, so we are doing that. As I said, this area was always identified as a different area-type from the true Whiteman Park.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Is that why you’re trying to force Tennis West out to Ellenbrook, about 40 or 50 minutes away from the central location?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am not trying to force Tennis West anywhere.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P.J. Rundle: That is what we are hearing: “I do not want to go out to Ellenbrook; I want to stay in a central location.”

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Roe.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Maybe the member should have worked that out when the previous government built the stadium, as much as I like cleaning up all the loose ends that were left when the stadium was built. I am not trying to force anyone anywhere; I am trying to build a rail line. But if they end up moving it, we are going to have really good connections with rail lines.

The whole issue of what was and was not Whiteman Park started in 1977, when improvement plan 8 basically identified the recreation area of Whiteman Park. It is actually quite fascinating and interesting. It identified the recreation area of Whiteman Park but then identified what it classified as improvement plan 8. Future urban development in relation to the Whiteman Park expansion was proposed under improvement plan 8. Therefore, back in 1977, it identified this land for future government requirements. That was when the land was purchased. There were a number of different purchasers. Can I say, I absolutely commend the Whiteman family and their contribution to that area. They contributed a lot of farm machinery and other machinery in particular that is displayed in the museum. Lew Whiteman in particular is still one of the great contributors of farm machinery. The Whiteman family made a key contribution back then. There was also a transfer of funds for the purchase of land along Marshall Road. That was from a number of families—the Whitemans, the Marshalls, and a compulsory acquisition from another family who did not want to sell at the time. That was under improvement plan 77. That is an interesting note. As I said, the state purchased the land—I will not disclose the amount of money—for a substantial sum in 1977. Other land was purchased such as the Marshall land, Whiteman land, and, as I said, some compulsory acquisition for improvement plan 8. The Marshall Road lands were identified in improvement plan 8 for future government requirements. In 2000, the Court government approved a Whiteman Park strategic plan that proposed to increase the park, but exclude Marshall Road for urban development. It was described as degraded land at the southern end of the park and not essential for future conversation needs. That is the history of that area.

All that being said, we just want to build a rail line. We are proposing a rail line through that area. People have asked—I will go to the motion that is going to the local council—why we could not have done it along the Reid Highway. There are a couple of reasons. The design of NorthLink WA did not facilitate a right turn at the Tonkin–Reid intersection, and to re-dig that completely would cost hundreds of millions of dollars. The curvature required for that rail line to turn right would have impacted significantly on new family homes in the area. The Marshall Road alignment also serves a bigger catchment, which helps with the benefit–cost ratio and the business case. It facilitates not only the Malaga station, which services the Malaga employment district, but also the entire Ballajura area and the west side of Alexander Drive. If one is heading from north to south, there is Lansdale, Alexander Heights and Girrawheen. As I have said, this plan was created by a group of engineers and planning experts. On all the indications, this made the right alignment.

Again, what we are doing is building a rail line. The scaremongering and claims are about something that we are not committing to do in this bill and we are not doing. It is the Liberal Party, which, again, in history, has put itself on the wrong side of the debate. As I said, the Liberal Party is now seen as an opponent of the Ellenbrook rail line in that area. That was a quick snapshot of some of the history.

As I said, I acknowledge the role of Lew Whiteman. We are improving that park. As soon as we were elected, I committed to the Pia’s Place nature playground, which is a beautiful all-access playground—a truly wonderful place that is being built. We see the concept of a train station servicing Whiteman Park as an incredible asset into the future. We believe it is the Kings Park of the north. We are also working with the volunteer groups on linking their train line to our train station—imagine that! We are working with the volunteers, and I know that the volunteer groups are really excited by this—a train station servicing Whiteman Park, one of our key tourism destinations, and acknowledging the rich history in that entire area.

Other claims were made that night on television, such as that the public would lose access to the area that we are putting a rail line through. The public does not have access to this area. There is just wrong claim after wrong claim. As I said, this is a bill to build a rail line. In relation to the future uses of that area, our focus is on a sporting complex. The local government is a key part of this. We believe that whole corridor needs a new regional sporting complex. With the growth of Ellenbrook, and the pressure on Kingsway to the west, a future sporting complex would be a good thing for the entire area. That is a key point that I wanted to go through.

I think I have addressed the comments made by the member for Darling Range and the member for Geraldton. I now want to reflect on some other comments that have been made. I will start with the member for Cottesloe.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That’s when everything went wrong.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is when it really deteriorated. The member for Cottesloe devalued public transport to a significant degree. I think the issue with public transport is that people always look at the subsidy for travel. They do not look at what would happen if the rail line had not been built. They do not look at, for example, how many more lanes on the freeway would need to be built if we did not have that major rail line, the maintenance costs for the roads, and the road trauma that might occur. All these things feed into that.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

HOUSING SECTOR

Motion

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [4.01 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for plunging the housing sector into its longest and deepest crisis, and calls on the Premier to immediately backflip on his ill-conceived foreign buyers tax and migration changes.

It looks as though, 24 hours later, we are finally getting some action on this issue.

I will start by painting a picture about the housing situation in Western Australia. Up until this time, the government has been inferencing that it all looks rosy in Western Australia. The CoreLogic chart shows that for the last 62 months, house prices in Western Australia have declined. That is the longest decline in house prices on record. I do not think we need to look much further than that.

It is also interesting to note, as we have highlighted in the last week, that this state still has record levels of utility disconnections. Households are struggling to meet their day-to-day needs and requirements. In the 12 months to the end of June 2019, there were 21 700 utility disconnections. The number of electricity disconnections has gone up over 100 per cent in three years. In the last two years, there has been a 36 per cent growth in the number of utility disconnections.

Today, the Premier spruiked that under his government, we have had the lowest increases in utility charges in 13 years. He forgets the pain that he created in the first two years of government, and the fact that any increase that is imposed has a compounding effect. If the increases had been five per cent, five per cent and five per cent,

they would have been lower than they were during the past three years, even though they have been the lowest in 13 years. The government likes to go back to the past. As I mentioned last week, it is focused on going back 10 or 11 years. The people of Western Australia are calling out for action on the way forward. The government is not looking at the present and what it needs to do to help the households of Western Australia.

In addition to the fact that housing prices have gone down for 62 consecutive months, there are record levels of mortgage stress. Over 140 000 households in Western Australia are under mortgage stress. I was advised last week by the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia that 18 per cent of mortgages are in negative equity. That is approaching one in five properties. To add to that, the number of mortgage defaults in Western Australia is double the national average. In some suburbs, the number of mortgage defaults is approaching 4.5 per cent or five per cent of properties, or nearly one in 20. If that is not a serious issue in this state, I do not know what is.

However, all we are getting from this government is a lot of tinkering at the edges. The government does not understand that in order to lay the proper foundations to correct this situation, it needs to address the state of the domestic economy. In the last 12 months, state final demand has contracted another 1.1 per cent. The Premier spruiked employment and talked about how 50 000 jobs have been created. He did not mention that 59 per cent of those jobs were in the public sector. That is not a sign of a healthy economy. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has pointed out where those jobs were created in Western Australia. We know that includes the federal government and the National Disability Insurance Scheme and so forth. The public sector makes up 14 per cent of all the jobs in Western Australia. Therefore, when the Premier spruiks that the government is doing a fantastic job, because 59 per cent of all the jobs created in the last two years have been in the public sector, he fails to acknowledge that something is very wrong in the private sector and in industry, which is where the real economy lies. The Premier also fails to acknowledge that 75 per cent of those jobs are part time. Over the last couple of months, the number of full-time jobs has fallen. There are some serious underlying concerns about the domestic economy.

From our perspective, if the government wants to deal with the housing crisis, it needs to do more than just tinker at the edges, as we saw with today's announcement. It needs to package it. I have no problem with the government establishing a stimulus package. I have no problem with stamp duty relief and all sorts of different things. However, that can work only if it is part of an overall package that deals with the underlying economic issues that confront this state.

I want to lay this out. The government has not understood the consequences of its policy decisions. This government has made three particularly bad policy decisions that have had adverse consequences in Western Australia. I will go through those. However, I first want to go back a step. I touched on one of these elements last week. At a broader economic level, there is an interesting dynamic in Australia. The financial system was deregulated back in the early 1980s. That made finance more accessible to people. Over the ensuing decades, the lending standards and loan-equity ratios were lowered to make it easier for people to borrow money. That increased demand in the property market and brought forward future asset growth. For the last 30 years since the early 1990s, there has been a declining interest rate environment. That increased demand in the property sector and continued to push up asset values. People are now in the situation that they have maxed out on how much they can borrow—they cannot continue to borrow more money. That is causing stagnation in the property sector in Western Australia. Over the last five years, asset values in the residential property sector have declined. A fundamental challenge in our economy is our over-reliance on the housing sector. The people of Australia—not just Western Australia—base their wealth on the asset value of their home. It is a challenge. We need to stop the decline in property values. In order to do that, we need to look at the broader economic challenges that we are confronted with and put in place measures to address them.

In addition to what I call the household debt broader macro-economic challenge, our economy is facing technology disruption. That is changing people's buying patterns. We are seeing people move to online buying, which is having adverse consequences for retail and is posing an interesting challenge for our economy both domestically and across Australia. A third one that is starting to become more prevalent around the world is the potential for environmental disruption and how governments grasp the challenges of creating a more sustainable environment with a burgeoning global population growth and all the challenges it brings not to damage the economy and people's livelihoods while we go through the change to a more sustainable future. They are three broader macro-economic challenges that we as a state face. If we couple those challenges with what has occurred in Western Australia at the same time, we had a perfect storm in 2015–16 when we saw the collapse of iron ore prices. That could happen again; it is part of the economic risk for Western Australia. We all know what happened with the collapse of iron ore prices to below \$US40 a tonne compared with where they are today at around \$US83 a tonne, coupled with the lag effect in the GST whereby we were receiving only 30¢ in the dollar. That scenario, coupled with the end of the construction boom and the move to production, particularly for gas producers in Western Australia, provided quite a unique set of circumstances. As I said in this chamber last week, my view is that the fault of the government at the time, which I was a part of, is that we did not respond to those challenges quickly enough and we were punished at the election for it. People were worried about the future of their job. That, coupled with the broader macro-economic challenges, led to a state in which people were worried about their jobs and their future. They punished the former government for not doing enough.

However, what did this government do? It increased electricity prices by around 19 per cent right off the bat in its first two years. We know that had more of an adverse impact on those who could least afford it. We know from briefings provided to the Treasurer that increases for single-home pensioners were the equivalent of greater than 30 per cent. We know that electricity price increases for 20 000 small businesses were greater than 40 per cent. It was not uniform pain felt throughout; it was higher in areas where those businesses and households were struggling to meet those increases.

For me, the first policy flaw from this government that has impacted on households, which ultimately impacts on the housing industry, is that it increased household charges by \$850 over the first three years of government. It can claim whatever it likes about the last increase being the lowest in 13 years but it is irrelevant to the people struggling to meet their bills given the pain that was created in the first two years, and that pain is what has crippled people. It has thrown people under a bus. This is a government that has not cared about or responded appropriately to the concerns in the community.

The second area that I feel has been ill-conceived and has caused a problem is the change the government made on day one to the regional migration status. What is fascinating about these migration changes is that it was the Premier's first act. I have a copy of the letter he sent in March 2017 requesting that the federal government change the migration status of Perth to that of a mainstream city away from that of a regional city. I have always said this decision was purely politically motivated. It was not economically motivated. It is fascinating to pull the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures on net overseas migration into Western Australia. It did not reduce the rate; it pretty much flatlined, although it increased a bit. There has not been a reduction in the number of people moving from overseas to live in Western Australia. The number is the same. However, as I have said before, it impacted on the international student market. We have seen the international student market share drop from 7.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent. To 30 June 2019, the international student market was the fourth largest contributor to the Australian economy at \$37.7 billion. If our market share has dropped from 7.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent, the two per cent reduction equates to \$750 million out of the state's domestic economy. It has been stripped out, yet the change to regional migration did not stop the number of people coming into Western Australia from overseas. It is the same number of people, yet it killed the international student market. The Premier has written sneaky little letters trying to change the migration status for just the education sector. The ABS statistics show that the decline in the number of overseas migrants due to bringing in this policy is non-existent. It was irrelevant.

May I add that if we consider the population share of international students, which should be the focus of the government, we are talking about an additional \$1.8 billion a year into our domestic economy. If we want to talk about real jobs, we get them from supporting industry. The international student market is the fourth largest industry in Australia and the government has hurt it. In every other state in Australia the rate is growing, yet in Western Australia it has been in decline. That is a failure of this government's policy. It has adversely impacted on the fourth largest industry in Australia. We can see where those students flowed to. They flowed to South Australia and Tasmania. Look at the results in their economies. The median house price in Western Australia is now lower than that of Tasmania. Perth's median house price is lower than that of Hobart where it is \$483 000. In Perth it is \$480 000. Only six years ago—I thought it was ridiculous at the other end—our median house price was higher than that of Sydney. I thought that was wrong. I did not think that was right and I did not think it was sustainable. Now our median price is at the other end of the spectrum and is lower than that of Hobart. What is that about? If something is not going wrong in the Western Australian economy, surely that highlights that it is. That is ridiculous for an economy as strong and good as Western Australia's should be with its level of exports. I would think that our median house price should be a lot stronger than Hobart's median house price.

I am calling on the government to start considering these things and understand the implications of its policy decisions and reverse some of them to boost the economy. However, what we have seen today is some tinkering around the edges on a rebate policy that looks like a complex way of backflipping on the foreign buyers tax. If I heard correctly what the Premier said today, the 75 per cent applies to not only stamp duty, but also the foreign buyers tax in a combined total of \$50 000. If someone from overseas wants to buy a half million dollar apartment in Western Australia, they will get a 75 per cent rebate on not only the foreign buyers tax, but also the stamp duty. This is where what we hear from the Treasurer is confusing. During question time he interjected across the chamber and said the tax was on track to deliver \$120 million over four years. I look forward to seeing that. I wonder how much the government is giving away. It introduced a foreign buyers tax to make foreign purchasers pay additional tax to Western Australia, but it has opened up a rebate for the next two years that looks as though it will be greater than the present foreign buyers tax. I would like to hear the Treasurer explain that. The government not only introduced a foreign buyers tax, but is also giving a rebate to foreign buyers that is greater than the tax.

That is how it certainly appears—unless they buy a multimillion dollar ones and go beyond the \$50 000. If they get a stock-standard apartment, it looks like the rebate will be greater than the foreign buyers' tax. I look forward to hearing an explanation from the Treasurer if he wishes to get to his feet today.

I have talked about the migration changes and the foreign buyers' tax. It is important that the government understands where the domestic economy is and what is required to fix it. We are seeing what seems like crisis management—tinkering around the edges and throwing ideas into a melting pot. Today's policy looks like it was just a thought

bubble that has been thrown in. I would be interested to know whether the site the government chose to make the announcement—an apartment block that has already been constructed—will be eligible for the stamp duty rebate. I have a sense that given the apartments have already been constructed and they are not off the plan, the apartments where the Labor government made this great announcement will not be eligible for the stamp duty rebate. That raises interesting questions for the government: What will it do with the stock that is there? What will the consequences be for the existing stock of apartments that are either under construction or have been constructed? I understand that about 2 640-odd apartments fall into that bracket. They are either under construction or already constructed. If the government is bringing in a rebate for new apartments off the plan, what will the consequences be for those apartments that will not have access to it and are unsold? What are the consequences? I think the government has a duty to explain why it is picking a winner in one area when people have been building apartments in good faith but have not sold them yet so will not get the same level of rebate. Will that not flood the market more and depress the prices of existing apartments? Will that not adversely impact those people who have committed to those things in advance and now will not get the benefit that someone who creates a development off-plan will get? I think they are interesting questions and I would like the government to respond to them. We are experiencing the longest decline in housing values we have ever seen in Western Australia. The government has put policies in place, in addition to the broader economic challenges the state was facing, that have had an adverse impact on the housing sector and also the retail sector.

Last year, both the mining and agricultural sectors did exceptionally well. I think agriculture is finding it a bit tougher this year. Historically, our domestic economy would have done okay as a result. Because of what is happening in the mining sector and the agricultural sector, the rest of Western Australia's domestic economy would have done okay. It is critical for the government to understand the broader economic challenges that confront the people of Western Australia to ensure that the policy decisions it makes are the right ones for Western Australia, but they got it wrong. The government needs to first acknowledge it, and then address it. It cannot just throw stimulus into the market and hope everything else will be sorted out. That is what we are seeing. We are seeing bits of stimulus—a couple of capital works projects here and there and some tinkering around the edges with a rebate on stamp duty, which I have now become a bit confused about. I believe that the government needs to ensure that it addresses the state's fundamental economic questions at the same time it introduces stimulus. Otherwise, those stimulus packages might create a facade for a period, but we will have the same problem in two years' time that we have today. That is the challenge for this government. It might be able to spark some interest that makes it look like things are on the improve, but it might be what is termed in industry as a dead cat bounce—a pickup that eventually falls away again. That is something that this government needs to be careful of and we will be monitoring all the way through. It is not acceptable for the government to throw money at particular areas without addressing the underlying fundamental economic challenges of Western Australia. I believe this government needs to address that.

For that reason, we have called on the government to reverse its foreign buyers' tax, and I wrote to the paper today expressing that. Even though the government has tried to deal with that in a funny way without acknowledging that it is backflipping, I think it needs to come clean and put a moratorium on it. It would have been far simpler to put a moratorium on it until the market recovers. I am not against the principle. I believe that after what they experienced, it was important for New South Wales and Victoria to have a lever to slow those markets down. Hopefully, we will have a similar problem one day and the market will be too hot so the government can dial it up. At this point, as I said in the chamber when the Treasurer introduced the foreign buyers' legislation, this was the wrong timing. I do not disagree in principle, but this is the wrong timing. I was accused of putting the interests of foreign buyers ahead of those of Western Australians. What we are seeing now through the policy actions of this government is an acknowledgement that it got it wrong and there have been adverse implications for the people of Western Australia. I was not championing the cause of foreign buyers over Western Australians. I was championing the cause of Western Australian households, because I understood the consequences of the policy the government was undertaking. If members of the government look at *Hansard*, they will see I pointed it out to them, but they ignored it. We now have a high level of mortgage stress, negative equity, utility disconnections and mortgage defaults, and a government that has been found wanting. We are seeing a couple of dollops of money being thrown at a stimulus package in particular areas—picking winners, which I think has inherent risks—without addressing the underlying fundamental concerns.

Some of those broader economic issues are not the fault of the federal government or the state government, but it is important to have an understanding of them. The current government's lack of understanding has surprised me. I expected more from this government and from this Treasurer, so that has been somewhat disappointing. I think the people of Western Australia have every right to be extremely concerned. The people of Western Australia are financially worse off as a result of this government. When we look at their homes—their primary asset of wealth—they have declined, or the discretionary expenditure income they have because of the increase in household charges that is way above wage growth, they are financially worse off. Looking at income and assets, Western Australians are financially worse off under this government. The government needs to be more acutely aware of that because many people are hurting. We will continue to push this theme of what damage this government has done to households, housing prices and the housing sector in Western Australia. We will continue to hold it to account. If

it continues to crisis manage it and do random acts without addressing the underlying economic challenges, we will raise those concerns. As I have said, I am concerned that in two years, when the stimulus package ends, if the underlying fundamentals have not changed, we will be back to where we are today. The government needs to put some of its windfall gains in the right areas to underpin the state's domestic economy.

I will address the financial aspect, because I was asked today by the media whether the economy or a surplus is more important. I said that the reality is that it is both, but it is a balance. The government has been fortunate in receiving these windfall gains, yet it has not balanced it and has not addressed the underlying economic issues. It has been lucky with the revenue stream that has come through, and I will address that for a short while. The government likes to claim how good a fiscal manager it is, when in fact in the 2018–19 budget it claimed that expense growth would be 0.9 per cent; it ended up being 2.1 per cent. I have never seen a Treasurer claim kudos for something when he has actually blown the budget, as we saw when the annual report came out. The annual report showed that it was actually a little lower than what the government said it was going to be in the last budget, yet it claimed that as coming in under budget. I found it quite amusing that the government would try to do that. The expense budget was 0.9 per cent, but it actually delivered 2.1 per cent.

It is on the revenue side that the Premier and the Treasurer have been extremely fortunate. Let us look at that and break it down. In the annual report there was an underspend of capital by \$1 billion, yet we have a domestic situation in which we need that investment to help the domestic economy, and the government has not been undertaking that. That is of concern. On the royalties side, the Treasurer lifted the forecast in this year's budget by \$10 a tonne to \$73.50. That is expected to add more than \$800 million to the budget. But if we look at the first three months of this financial year, in July the average price was more than \$US120; that month alone provided \$300 million in additional royalties, over and above the budget. If we look at the first three months, it is around \$500 million in additional revenue. I know there is volatility and that we need to take it over a longer period of time before we commit to spending it; I get all of that. But that is one area where we have windfall gains coming into the Treasury coffers.

Looking at other areas, this is a government that promised to stop privatisation. Arguments were mounted by some ministers when they were in opposition that a government should never sell assets that generate income, yet we have had the sale of Landgate for \$1.4 billion. The government promised to stop privatisation; I am not sure what excuse it can make for selling something when it promised to stop it. Whatever criticisms it may level at the former government, it was very transparent about its intentions in an election. We took Western Power to the election. This is the government that promised to stop privatisation—members opposite may laugh as much as they like—and then went on one of the biggest selling sprees this state has ever seen.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Who sold Landgate?

Mr D.C. NALDER: Members opposite now want to say that it is not selling, it is commercialisation of an income stream. That is the big difference! It was not selling all of Western Power, but when it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it generally is a duck. The government has gone on one of the largest privatisation sprees that this state has ever seen, whichever way we want to look at it. It sold off the Albany wind farm and the Greenough solar farm, and it sold the Warradarge wind farm project to a private equity firm. I do not care how we look at it; the government realised \$140 million in the annual report for Synergy. If the government has an extra \$140 million, I do not know what else it is. Perhaps these people like to give it to the government for nothing.

The point is that the government has received \$1.4 billion from the sale of Landgate. The government has said that it is going to utilise those funds for the National Redress Scheme. Interestingly, there is only \$153 million in the budget for the National Redress Scheme, yet the Premier is claiming that it is going to be \$640 million to \$650 million. I know that this could take 10 years, so it is beyond the forward estimates et cetera, but that is still \$750 million from the sale of Landgate that is unallocated. That, to me, is a windfall. It is unallocated. When I talk about the \$500 million in additional iron ore royalties above the budget and the \$750 million from Landgate, I take out the National Redress Scheme; I accept that that is the intent, and that that is where it is going, but there is still \$750 million that is unallocated.

The third element is interesting. The government now claims all the credit for the GST fix. I remember the comments made by members opposite when in opposition about the GST. This year alone, the GST top-up is \$814 million; next year it will be \$1.824 billion, and the following year \$1.9 billion. Those are top-ups, before it becomes normalised. This is in addition to the GST pool. These are windfall gains. The government likes to try to rewrite history and has tried to create a narrative about inheriting a \$40 billion debt, using the end of the forward estimates of the previous government. The end of those forward estimates did not include a recovery in iron ore prices and did not include the GST being fixed. If the government is going to include those forward estimates in the debt, increase the last term of government by an additional four years, and attribute that debt to the former government, it needs to include the GST fix and the additional iron ore royalties. If it is going to compare apples with apples with regard to the debt position, it needs to look at what the forecasts were for iron ore and for the GST, and compare the difference. If it is going to do that, we are going to have to deduct those things, and then we will see what the government has done with debt.

We know that the government is continuing to grow debt and we know it has understated the expenses in its budget. We know that some of the government's election commitments, like the upgrades to Joondalup Health Campus and Osborne Park Hospital, are missing from the budget, and we know that there are no operating expenses for Metronet in the budget, yet the Premier likes to spruik that we are the only state in Australia in which debt is going down. Well, hang on: we are missing some of the basic principles of putting in where the money is going to be spent.

This government has not been open and transparent with its budgeting processes and has not been very smart in its application and understanding of the consequences of the policy decisions that it has implemented. We therefore call on the government to immediately address the foreign buyer tax in a proper manner—not turn around and potentially give some of these foreign buyers more than what the foreign buyer tax would have generated back in special rebates. We have gone from “We need to tax these people” to “We need to incentivise them to come here in the first place”. That seems ridiculous. I would really like to hear from the Treasurer on that issue and get some clarity around it. We call on the government to immediately reverse the regional migration status. It is a poor policy decision and the people of Western Australia have paid as a result. They are financially worse off, and that needs to be addressed.

With that, I call on the government to not just throw isolated messages out there; we need to see a full plan that embraces what is going on in the domestic economy so that the people of Western Australia can have some reassurance that the government understands what they are going through and that it has processes in place to address that and create sustainable jobs for the future of Western Australia.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition) [4.37 pm]: I also rise to contribute to this motion —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for plunging the housing sector into its longest and deepest crisis, and calls on the Premier to immediately backflip on his ill-conceived foreign buyers tax and migration changes.

The member for Bateman has articulated a very good case for this motion, but I intend to add some comments to what has already been presented to the chamber. We, along with the rest of the community, are getting pretty tired of some of the responses from this government whenever any criticism is made about the consequences of the decisions it has made. Every time we raise issues about the economic situation in Western Australia, the status of the housing market and the status of international student numbers—all of these matters—all the Labor government does is point the finger back and go back nearly three years to the last term of the Barnett Liberal–National government to try to find a cause and blame for every single thing. We have seen this in this chamber a number of times. I would suggest we saw it at its worst when the Minister for Corrective Services went back to a decision made in 2013 by the then Minister for Corrective Services to change the status of a prisoner's flight risk, and he tried to lay the blame on the former minister for the prisoner escaping from custody six years later, on the current minister's watch. The responses that we get from this government are absolutely ludicrous. It is pretty clear to us, it is pretty clear to industry and it is pretty clear to every sector that we are engaging with, which is all of them at the moment, that the decisions that Mark McGowan has made as the Labor Premier of this state have caused the situation that we now find ourselves in. It has nothing to do with the position that the government inherited. It has everything to do with the deliberate decisions that it made in response to pressures put on it by the union movement that controls it. That is very clear.

When we look at the stimulus package that the government announced today, we see that \$15 million will be spent over two years on stamp duty relief for a housing market that is in crisis. This stimulus package will do nothing for first home owners. It will do nothing to support the build of single homes. It will not provide a stimulus for bricklayers, carpenters, plasterers and landscapers—all those tradies who have suffered as a result of this housing crisis that we find ourselves in. We have experienced the lowest number of construction starts since records began. That is where we find ourselves. When we look at the data since 1984, which is when the ABS first started collecting the data, we see that we have had the lowest number of building approvals ever on record. That is a damning indictment on the performance of this government. We have seen housing prices collapse by nearly 10 per cent over the past year. A total of 125 000 households have been driven into negative equity, and 141 500 householders are mortgage stressed. Western Australia, which has about 10 per cent of the country's population, has 26.5 per cent of the country's worst mortgage stress suburbs. Those are the facts. That is where we find ourselves in Western Australia.

What has this government done? When in opposition, it claimed that every single problem that householders were experiencing could be blamed on the Barnett government. Apparently, it is still the former government's fault, and the decisions made by this government have done nothing to add to that. We are arguing that the decisions that this government has made since coming to power have added significantly to the stress and the problems that we are now seeing in the Western Australian economy. We know that if there are savage increases to fees and charges, and electricity and water prices are increased, that has a flow-on effect on local council rates. If the cost of car registrations increases, along with the cost of public transport, all those pressures go into the basket that a lot of our family households have as they try to manage their budgets. The average increases of \$850 that have been put on families cannot be borne. That is why we have the levels of mortgage stress that people are experiencing. That is why families are going to Foodbank. That is why families are going on to payment plans for the first time so

that they can pay their electricity bills. That is why householders are uncertain about the future and unwilling to make spending decisions that could help stimulate the economy. It is because of the decisions of this government. It came into a housing market that was already stressed and added a new tax—a foreign buyers tax of seven per cent.

The very first thing that this Premier did when he got into power was write to the Prime Minister and say, “Take Western Australia out of the regional sponsored migration scheme because our union mates are telling us that those foreigners are taking our jobs.” Guess what? Those foreigners were taking up training positions. For every one of those students, we were getting family visitation three to five times a year. Families were coming here, spending money and boosting our economy, using a tourism product, talking about Western Australia and telling their friends how fantastic Western Australia is and why people should come to Perth to study. The money that was flowing through all our educational sectors, including TAFEs, private training providers and universities, is not there now because in taking Western Australia out of the regional sponsored migration scheme, this government said to international students, “The door is shut; go elsewhere. Just in case you were thinking that you might like to come to Western Australia and give it a go, notwithstanding that we are going to take your money and not let you bed down those skills or take up a job or have any other opportunity in WA, we’re going to add another insult to injury just to make sure you don’t choose to come to Western Australia. We’re going to add a seven per cent foreign buyers tax, so if you did want to come here and invest, buy a property, and bring your three children here to go through one of our fantastic universities, TAFEs or private training providers, why would you do that? If you bought a house for, say, \$500 000, you’d pay \$35 000 more just because you’re a foreign buyer who saw an opportunity to educate your children in Western Australia.”

The government responded to this, with pressure from the opposition and various sectors, including the international student market. The training market in Western Australia has just about collapsed. I put to members that that is why this government has said that it will reduce TAFE fees. It has done that because the international students are not coming here. They are going to South Australia, Hobart or Victoria—anywhere but here—because we have shut the door in their face. We are calling on the government to reverse that decision. I believe that the Premier has written to the Prime Minister, tail between his legs, saying, “Prime Minister, please put us back in the regional sponsored migration scheme. We’ve cut our training providers off at the knees, and they cannot get students to come to our state. Our tourism figures have been affected by it. Please put us back into the scheme.” We applaud that backflip. We applaud every backflip that this government has made because every single one of them has been as a result of the government making a stupid decision that has had a really dramatic impact. Education seems to be one of the areas that the Labor government is determined to cobble at the knees. It has done this by shutting Moora Residential College; deciding to close Schools of the Air, a decision on which it backflipped, thank goodness; shutting Lockridge farm school; and shutting the door on international students. I do not know why the Labor government is behaving so badly, throwing grenades into the education sector.

When it comes to the solution to the problem, we heard the announcement today. I do not know whether this announcement went to cabinet. It seems to me that if 17 brains were sitting around a cabinet table and a proposal like this was put forward, maybe one individual around that cabinet table would say, “Hang on a minute; are we going to cause unacceptable market interference here and cause more problems in the housing sector to add to the woes that we have already created?” I would think that maybe one person around the cabinet table would do that. I question whether it went before cabinet, but I make the assumption that it probably did. Perhaps no-one sitting around the cabinet table had the intelligence and the foresight to work out the consequences of this decision. When we look at how this proposal works—perhaps the Treasurer can get up and provide an explanation if he believes we are wrong—we understand that there will be a 75 per cent discount on stamp duty, plus the foreign buyers’ tax, up to a maximum of \$50 000, as a rebate. However, that is for apartments that will be pre-sold from plans. It excludes apartment complexes that are currently under construction and apartment complexes that have been substantially completed and there is still stock that cannot be sold.

I have some figures from Urbis. When we look at the active project development status for the quarter to the end of June 2019 in completed apartment towers and apartment developments in Perth, 1 377 apartments had not been sold. I suggest to members that these figures probably have not shifted much since June 2019. These apartments have had their titles issued and strata schemes are in place. There are people living in some of them, but there are 1 377 apartments in constructed finished apartment buildings that have not been sold.

Mr D.C. Nalder: But they are new.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: They are brand-new. These are new constructions. Buyers of these apartments, which have a varying range of values, are now substantially disadvantaged. If I were a downsizer who was thinking of moving from a four-by-two house into an apartment, I would be delaying that decision to buy off the plan because, provided that apartment that I have purchased is built within the next 36 months, I would get a massive stamp duty concession. What does that do to all the apartments in these completed buildings that cannot be sold at the moment? There is no demand for them. It is a stranded asset, as the member for Bateman says. I do not know what will happen when the banks start to look at some of the equity that might be tied up.

Mr W.R. Marmion: It will be a fire sale.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That is right, member for Nedlands. That is one of the problems that we have immediately discovered by interrogating this policy. The active project status is the number of projects under construction. This is where it gets a bit frightening, because of the 2 939 apartments under construction, 1 008 apartments are yet to be sold. The buyers of those 1 008 apartments that have not been sold, in buildings under construction, will not be able to access the stamp duty concession. That leaves us with 2 400 apartments, or thereabouts, that are sitting in the marketplace unable to be sold that will now not be eligible to receive a stamp duty concession should they be sold. That then brings us to the pre-sales. These apartments are not under construction, but people can buy off the plan. The government has targeted this program and it is up to the Treasurer to explain why. We have 1 519 units in developments that are subject to pre-sales at the moment. Of those, 373 apartments have been sold, so it is too late for them because the stamp duty concession is not available, and 729 apartments in the project pipeline are available for sale. The buyers of these apartments would be able to access the stamp duty concession. Immediately within the same building, we will have two apartments side by side that, on the plan, are ostensibly the same, but one will cost an owner substantially more than the other because of the stamp duty concession. Do members see what I mean about market interference here and the problem that this policy decision has created?

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: When we drill down a bit deeper and ask what this means, we can see find that a downsizer might be sitting on a property that has escalated in value. A Western Australian resident downsizing from a four-by-two worth \$750 000 or \$800 000, for example, who buys an apartment off the plan for \$620 000 will be charged \$23 465 in stamp duty. But under this government's policy, they will get back a rebate of \$17 568. This is where it gets really interesting. Third, fourth or fifth generation self-funded retirees will get a rebate of \$17 568. How much do members think foreign investors will get back for buying off the exact same plan for the same \$620 000 apartment? A foreign buyer would be subject to \$66 865 worth of stamp duty and foreign investor tax, but they can receive a rebate of \$50 000. For a foreign buyer, there is no better time to put down a deposit on an apartment from off the plan in Western Australia because they will get \$50 000 in their pocket courtesy of this government, whereas a Western Australian resident or a self-funded employee, who is also putting up with the extra \$850 worth of fees and charges that this government has robbed from them since being in office for two years, will get \$17 568.

Dr D.J. Honey: Keep the foreigners out by paying them more money!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Exactly. We are fans of lifting the foreign buyers tax—absolutely. But do not do it at the expense of Western Australian investors. Foreign buyers should not be getting a bigger stamp duty rebate from the government than someone who has lived in Australia all their life, paid their rates and taxes and propped up the government's finances. The Treasurer needs to explain how this is fair and equitable. The fact sheet that has been put out on this scheme shows that this is exactly the case: a foreign investor and purchaser can get the maximum rebate of \$50 000. Perhaps this will incentivise off-the-plan sales and pre-sales of apartments that are not yet constructed. They might never get constructed because 60 per cent to 70 per cent of pre-sales is required for a project to commence within the next three years. How is that encouraging the economic stimulus that is needed in 2018–19 when we are providing a stamp duty relief for pre-purchase from the plans in 2019 for an apartment that may not start construction for three years, in 2022? What about the tradies who are working on the projects under construction who are not to be able to access the concessions? I just do not understand why the government has taken this approach. The only thing that I can suggest is that it did not sit down with the industry and ask industry how this would work, in effect.

The second possibility is that the government is stubbornly refusing to accept that its decision to introduce the seven per cent foreign buyers tax when the market was in free-fall was a very poor decision indeed. Perhaps this is some kind of remedy to backflip on the seven per cent foreign investor tax by stealth. Perhaps the government is hiding that it is trying to attract foreign investors back into our market by disguising it in this stamp duty relief scheme instead of just doing what it should do, which is to reverse the decision to introduce the foreign buyers tax at a time when we need demand in our market. If we introduce a tax, it suppresses demand. Everyone knows that. That is why other states brought in the foreign buyers tax. They had overheated markets because of the interest from foreign buyers. They introduced a tax to slow down the market and take the heat out of it. What did we do in Western Australia? We took a market that was in free-fall and had dampened and seen property prices spiralling downwards, and we introduced a tax on the way down just to ensure that we stuck another couple of nails into the coffin. The property sector suffered the hardest hit that it could suffer by virtue of very, very poor policymaking on behalf of this Labor government.

Perhaps the Treasurer can explain whether we have this wrong, but that is what we have taken from the fact sheets. That is why we cannot understand the decisions he has made. To repeat the way that we have read this: a Western Australian self-funded retiree who decides to downsize and buy an apartment off the plan for \$620 000 will be eligible for a stamp duty rebate of just \$17 568. We would welcome foreign buyers from Malaysia, Indonesia or any of those countries—make no mistake, we need the demand in our property market—but would we make the decision to lure those buyers in by giving them a \$50 000 stamp duty relief package, when my mum and dad, who might be downsizing, can only get \$17 568? A few people might be seeking citizenship in other countries so

that they can take advantage of this grand scheme. It seems to me that it is policy on the run. The optics of this look very bad for the government. A delegation of the heads of the various different groups representing the property sector in Western Australia went begging to the government last week with a suite of requests: reverse the foreign buyers tax, put Western Australia back into the regional sponsored migration scheme and provide some stamp duty relief to create some demand and impetus for movement in the property market. The government realised that this has never happened before, with five groups coming together to tell it how badly its decisions have affected this market, so it had better do something. It has dreamt up this scheme that will unfairly benefit foreign buyers, which seems bizarre.

Not only will it benefit foreign buyers, it will disadvantage people who have been sitting on the apartment stock. I see it in my electorate of Scarborough. A lot of apartments have come out of the ground as a result of the Barnett Liberal government's investment in Scarborough. The Barnett government invested in Scarborough and gave the foreshore the facelift it had been needing for well over 40 years. As a result of that, and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority taking over responsibility for planning in the area, we have seen record investment in Scarborough, and record numbers of apartments coming out of the ground. However, for the developers who stuck their necks out and said they had confidence in Western Australia and were going to build apartments, all the apartments currently under construction that have unsold stock will not benefit one skerrick from the stamp duty package.

It is up to the Treasurer to explain why the government has taken these decisions, and to explain to the community why a Western Australian buyer and a foreign buyer will get significant differentials on the stamp duty relief package that the Treasurer says will stimulate the economy. It is up to the Treasurer and Labor Premier Mark McGowan to explain to the housing sector what is coming next. They have said no to migration and to international students, so where are these people going to come from? Where will we get the population we need to start to push our economy along? This government has no answers. That is why this government has panicked and tried to provide a stimulus package after seven quarters of negative growth—a contracting economy for seven quarters. The government promised the community it was going to fix things, and it has failed dismally. Just last month 6 000 jobs were lost. Electricity, water, car registration, public transport and household fees and charges have been jacked up through the roof, by \$850. House prices are off by 10 per cent. We see 80 000 people out of work, and 140 000 people looking for more work so that they can pay the fees and charges that this government introduced. That is the situation we find ourselves in: a domestic economy that has been in recession and has contracted 1.1 per cent in the past year. This \$30 million stamp duty relief package is not predicated on even one apartment being constructed, until after a three-year time lag. I do not know how that is actually going to help the economy in 2019. It is up to the Treasurer to explain.

I am going to sit down. I know a number of members on my side want to get up and speak to this motion, because the government's response to this issue is going to have a ripple effect. It has distorted the market and created different playing fields in the apartment market, and that will have ramifications for all of those poor investors who are sitting on that stock that they have been unable to sell, because this government shut the door on international tourism and the regional sponsored migration scheme, saying that Western Australia does not want their business. It is closed for business. Now the government has to come up with a way to attract that investment back.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer) [5.05 pm]: I rise to respond to the motion, and the contradictory arguments raised by the opposition. The shadow Treasurer, the member for Bateman, after demanding for years that I intervene in the market because of negative equity, is now complaining that apparently we are flooding the market. The Leader of the Opposition was slightly incoherent, but made the point that the government is unfairly benefiting foreign buyers, and yet she wants us to abolish the foreign buyers surcharge completely. The opposition is accusing me of benefiting foreign buyers, but then wants to give foreign buyers an even bigger benefit. If the opposition wants to have a debate in here, it should at least have a coherent position.

The problem for members opposite is that every time I am asked to intervene in the market—the speech given by the member for Bateman is basically identical to last week's, and the Leader of the Opposition's contribution was to complain about making sure her family had access to housing—at every point along the way they complain about market intervention. Every time a tax lever is pulled, there will be a consequence. I am commanded, day in, day out, to increase the first home buyers grant, but what about the first home buyers who did not get the grant? That was not referenced when the opposition was worrying about these decisions. The problem is that members opposite complain about negative equity and falling house prices, and yet every lever they demand I pull will increase stimulus in the market. That is the fundamental contradiction in the opposition's position.

The Leader of the Opposition started off by saying that she is sick of hearing about the former government's record. I bet she is. As Deputy Premier in that government, I have no doubt she is horribly embarrassed by the former government's record, but I will spend some time on that. First, I will make the point about what is being paid. Foreign buyers will continue to pay more than Western Australians. The motion states —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor Government for plunging the housing sector into its longest and deepest crisis, and calls on the Premier to immediately backflip on his ill-conceived foreign buyers tax and migration changes.

The opposition wants me and the government to backflip for the benefit of foreign buyers, but not for the benefit of Western Australians. That is why we have made this decision—so that Western Australians get the chance to get a rebate on their stamp duty. The position of the opposition on this motion is just to give foreign buyers that benefit. I do not accept that for a minute, but I make the point that I will stand by the position.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member for Bateman can laugh, but that is the reality. He is complaining about falling property prices, yet he wants me to inject more supply into the market, and then he complains about flooding the market. This is the contradiction that we have. I think that the policy position that we have struck, which has every sector of industry supporting it, after quite lengthy consultation with industry bodies, ensures that Western Australians also get the vast majority of the benefit of those stamp duty rebates.

At least the shadow Treasurer started off with something correct: 62 months of declining house prices. I want to reflect on that for a minute, because the vast majority of the period in which property prices have been declining was in the term of the former government.

I still cannot recall at any point—in fact, I have done searches of *Hansard*—either the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Bateman referencing negative equity while they sat on this side of the house. Indeed, they discovered state final demand once they transitioned from this side of the house to the other, despite the fact that at no point during the second term of the former government did the domestic economy grow. Yet now, apparently, that is what they are worried about.

Mr D.C. Nalder: You do realise that you've been in government for 31 months now.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, and I get that the member does not like his record, but I will reflect on it for a moment, because he was talking about the foreign buyers surcharge. I am not sure whether he is for it or agin it at the moment, because the Leader of the Opposition seems to be for it more than agin it. One thing that was not referenced is that there is no such thing as a starting point, when everything starts afresh. People inherit the circumstances that they have. I inherited an economy in decline. It was the first time it had happened on record—the Liberal–National recession of 2016–17. I want to remind the house of what the domestic economy was doing under the former government. At that time, it was declining at two per cent, four per cent and seven per cent. Never before had we had that profile of domestic economic decline. The former government made the decision to introduce into that three rounds of land tax increases. I want to reflect on that for a moment because I note that that was not referenced by the Leader of the Opposition, who was Deputy Premier at the time. I want to highlight the impact that that had. At a time when the domestic economy was declining at just over two per cent, private dwelling building approvals were growing at a healthy pace, but the former government introduced the first land tax increase. It moderated significantly as a result, unsurprisingly. In 2014, when the domestic economy was contracting at nearly five per cent, the member for Bateman and the member for Scarborough introduced their second land tax increase, and almost immediately there was a 10 per cent decline in private dwelling building approvals. When the domestic economy was contracting at seven per cent, they introduced the single largest increase in land tax certainly in the last 30 years in Western Australia. As a result, that destroyed private dwelling building approvals, and we still have not recovered properly from that. The market then plummeted by 24 per cent in nine months. That is what the former government did.

When a government comes into an environment in which the property price has peaked—as it did in 2014—and is declining, unsurprisingly, it takes time to slow that down, but it has been slowed down. The Reserve Bank of Australia deputy governor recently made the point that mortgage arrears generally follow—there is a lag—poor economic data. We had the Liberal government recession of 2016–17 and that is why we had that impact. The former government had smashed the property sector with those incredible land tax increases and, at the same time in 2014, had made the decision to intervene in the market to reduce the support that the state provided first home buyers. At the time, a first home buyer could buy a property up to the value of \$500 000 that was exempt from stamp duty. The former government reduced that value to \$430 000. It took about \$200 million out of support for first home buyers. The former government did that in 2014 when the domestic economy was in its second year of contraction. Unsurprisingly, in the next year, the contraction was even larger.

As the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition has made clear in this place, that was the intent of the policy—to make housing more affordable. It worked! Housing has been declining since that time; there is no doubt about that. I do not think anybody would argue that the property market has not been going through tough times since 2014; indeed, the vast majority of the fall in the median house price happened under the former government. It has still been falling, but the majority of the negative equity issue was certainly created during the term of the former Liberal–National government. That can be seen in the quite interesting data on mortgage arrears and repossessions. The Supreme Court data on repossessions—that is when a bank takes a house back from a defaulting borrower—shows that it peaked under the former government at 812 civil property possession applications. Then, of course, there were the three land tax increases. The Minister for Housing will like this. In 2013–14, there were 812 repossessions. After the three land tax increases in two years, that spiked to 1 250 repossessions. Unsurprisingly, it had an impact.

Since that time, there has been a slight increase of about four per cent, but that damage really occurred on the back of the land tax increases. With the 30-day arrears, which is another sign of mortgage stress—I think it has been ventilated in this place before—during the term of the former government, particularly in its last couple of years after 2014, the number of 30-day arrears increased by 93 per cent. It has increased by 34 per cent since then, but the point I am making is that the damage was done under the former government. We came to government after a lot of damage had been done to the housing sector by the former government, and it has taken some time to address. That is why we are keen on two things in particular—economic growth and job creation. The one sure thing that will bring back confidence in investment, including in the retail space, is when Western Australians feel that they can get a job or increase their hours. Both of those are going the right way. By way of an aside, I know that the member for Bateman likes to complain about public sector jobs, but he keeps using the data that incorporates local government and federal government job creation. I suggest that he look at the better data of salary growth, which is currently less than one per cent. Never before has salary growth been under one per cent. That is the real indicator. He complains that the data says that 50 per cent of jobs are being created by the public sector. If he uses exactly the same methodology, he will find that in the entire last term of the former government, 100 per cent of jobs that were created were created in the public sector. This is the scenario that we are facing. The leadership of the opposition had its fingers all over the destruction of the WA economy.

I am uncertain about the arguments that are now being articulated by members of the opposition about the foreign buyers surcharge. They are either for it or against it. I am not entirely certain. They do not like the policy that we announced today on the stamp duty rebate. They do not like it because, as the Leader of the Opposition said—I wrote it down—it unfairly benefits foreign buyers, yet at the same time she wants me to abolish the foreign buyers surcharge. The surcharge is tracking as we expected. Over the forward estimates, we expect about \$94 million to be raised from the foreign buyers surcharge. For the quarter to September, we expected \$4.8 million and we are currently at \$4.5 million, so we are tracking pretty much as we expected. I want to quote a couple of points made by the Reserve Bank in particular, but also by ACIL Allen Consulting. Western Australia has a very small percentage of foreign buyers of residential property, but the point I made today, and I accept, is that often in larger apartment complexes, they make up a large percentage of particularly off-plan sales, which are necessary to get a development underway. That is one of the reasons we made today's decision and announcement. I quote the 2017 report by ACIL Allen commissioned by the Property Council of Australia —

... the amount that foreign buyers add to prices is minor and may actually be better described as rounding error.

... But overall, the notion that foreign investors add to dwelling prices is unfounded.

I think that should deal with one side of the argument being raised by the opposition. But then, of course, there is the motivation. What is it that drives foreign buyers to purchase in Australia? Is it the price point or is it the fact that they want to own property in Australia? The reason that we have had a low percentage of foreign buyers in Perth and Western Australia is because the vast majority have bought on the east coast. Assistant Governor of the Reserve Bank, Michelle Bullock, said it depends very much on why people are purchasing. She said that some foreign investors purchase houses here so that their child can live here and go to university while others do so because they want a residence that is a bit of a safe haven. I think some of the experience overseas, particularly in Canada, is that they have found it very difficult to dissuade investment by taxes, because there are other motivations. That can be confirmed by our data now because we are, as I just said, tracking exactly as we expected before the foreign buyers surcharge was applied. What does that mean? It means that it is not having an impact on the decision of foreigners to buy, bearing in mind the other point that needs to be made that all the other states that have a surcharge have a higher surcharge than Western Australia and most of them, not all of them, also have an ongoing land tax liability to be paid for by that foreigner. We do not have that. That is not seeing a distortion and surely, therefore, if it is cheaper in WA, that is where people go. We are not seeing that either. Other motivations are at play with foreign buyers. That is the reality and, as I said, our data shows that stamp duty collections from foreigners are tracking exactly as we predicted—well, basically exactly as we predicted—prior to implementing the foreign buyers surcharge, and that highlights that it is not having a distortionary impact. But, as I said, to get away from those larger apartment complexes, I fully accept that foreigners often have a bigger percentage of those and that is one of the reasons we pulled the lever that we did today.

Another point made by the Leader of the Opposition is that clearly we did not consult industry. I will read the responses of some of those in industry. Interestingly, and unsurprisingly, I have a fair few reactions from industry groups. An article from today's Communitynews website—I will provide a copy to Hansard in a minute—contains all the responses, which is very useful. It states —

Reiwa president Damian Collins said it was a significant win for property buyers and addressed this imbalance.

He is referring to the imbalance between when people purchase a house and land package versus an apartment. He said —

“By reducing the tax for off-the-plan sales, not only will it help the government to meet its target of 47 per cent of new dwellings in infill locations, but will help increase the speed of transition from apartment sales to actual construction activity,” ...

By way of an aside, the Leader of the Opposition made the point—I wrote it down because I was surprised she said it—that the measure “does nothing for first home buyers and does nothing for the plasterers and the tradies.” It does everything for them because it stimulates construction activity. That is the entire point that Damian Collins noted that we are trying to achieve. The article continues —

MBA WA executive director John Gelavis said the tax break would remove a major obstacle for buyers and promote multi-storey apartment construction.

Which is exactly what we want to do. To quote Mr Gelavis —

“This is a smart move to relieve the ongoing difficulties in the state’s building industry,” ...

...

“Stamp duty has been a big cost for people buying off-the-plan apartments until now, which was a drag on multi-storey apartment construction and therefore on infill development in WA.

“The WA government’s new stamp duty rebates will help to revive residential construction, which means —

I wonder what this is —

more jobs for local tradies, opportunities for apprentices and trainees and a boost for the wider economy.”

The article continues —

UDIA WA chief executive Tanya Steinbeck said the announcement was another step toward turning the market around.

I quote Ms Steinbeck —

“With immediate implementation, we are expecting to see a positive reaction from the market given the generous and potentially multiple rebates on offer,” ...

“This opens the door for seniors looking to right-size into a more appropriate dwelling, and will support the state government’s infill agenda.

“With a two-year time period for the rebate, this provides a much-needed injection of activity to stimulate jobs growth in the construction sector and the flow on impacts of that to the broader economy will be positive.”

I will finish with the fourth of the four peak bodies in the property sector. The article states —

HIA WA executive director Cath Hart said the market was facing some of the toughest conditions in living memory and was pleased the Government understood the challenge industry was facing and had responded with today’s announcement.

I quote Ms Hart —

“This will mean a swift boost for building activity which will be great for local jobs and give industry the confidence to retain and train more workers,”

“With more than 120 000 people employed in construction in WA, the positive impact of this initiative will be felt across the entire —

The “entire”, Minister for Housing —

home building supply chain.”

It is not only those who build the properties who will benefit, but also those who fit them out. I quoted Mr Paul Blackburne during question time today and I will quote him again because he has real skin in the game when it comes to this issue. The article continues —

WA apartment developer Paul Blackburne also endorsed the decision, saying a similar reduction in Victoria’s played a significant role in reviving the economy ...

I will quote Mr Blackburne —

“The government’s reduction in stamp duty will absolutely help buyers to make that decision to purchase off the plan and downsize, upsize or invest,” ...

“It is one of the most significant initiatives for WA’s economy in 20 years.

“Stamp duty is a major inhibitor to economic growth.

I put to bed any suggestion that there was no consultation or coordination with industry. We listened to it very closely and very clearly and the point is that the government’s measure has been very well received by everybody expect, of course, the member for Bateman and the Leader of the Opposition.

A fair point was made by one opposition member about distortion; do we therefore distort the apartments that are built or under construction? The member for Bateman said that it was interesting that we did today's media event at a site that would not attract the rebate. He was quite correct, but why was the developer so excited to be there? It was because, unsurprisingly, like most large property developers, it has a lot of projects in the pipeline. It can see the value of this in getting more work up and more apartments sold in the early stages to get activity happening around properties that it holds. Indeed, today I think Sterling Property Group, which is developing the property in South Perth—nearly all the apartments have sold with only six remaining, and it is fully confident that it will sell those—is very excited because it has other properties that it wants to develop. Every time we pull a lever in tax—this should not educate anybody—whether it payroll, stamp duty or whatever, it will have an impact on reactions, which is the entire point of why we pull levers around taxation. I fully expect some complaints from those who are trying to sell existing stock. But, as I said, by and large this will generate activity up-front and what we are trying to ensure, similar to the Keystart decision, is that those tradies have work to do. What we are seeing, particularly with the established property market, is that it is now in balance. The number of property transactions is increasing. We are also seeing duty collections stabilise, which is a good sign that the established market has at least stabilised and, similarly, housing and finance commitments are increasing. Hopefully, that continues because that is a good sign. But certainly the rental market is also very much in balance. As I said before about our Keystart decision, we do not want to be caught short in that we do not have the labour to meet the demand when it comes on.

Going back to some of the points that have been made, I think I dealt with the broader economic issues that were raised about state final demand. I know that members opposite do not like it when I reflect upon their time in government, but that is the reality. It takes time to turn a contracting economy around. Our June quarter economic growth is the strongest in the nation, and I hope it stays that way, but that is certainly a very good sign about where we are heading.

A question was put about why the period was three years. The existing process is that when someone buys off the plan, they effectively have up to three years to pay the stamp duty on the construction of the apartment complex. We will have some flexibility there, because some larger apartment complexes might take longer than three years to complete from the time the off-the-plan contract is executed. We want to ensure that there is that flexibility so the rebates will still apply and people are still entitled to them. To satisfy the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Bateman, we are committed to the foreign buyers surcharge, because we think it is fair that foreign nationals buying property in Western Australia contribute to infrastructure they benefit from. I think that is a good thing, and I am surprised the shadow Treasurer has already announced that the Liberal Party will get rid of it. I suspect it will be a big part of the election campaign, and I intend to make it so, because I think foreigners should contribute. If any Australians go to any of the top five nations whose nationals invest in residential property in Western Australia, they either cannot buy residential property at all or will pay something similar, usually more. In fact, in some countries, they cannot own property outright; they have to own it with a national of that country. Because the Leader of the Opposition is worried that we are unfairly benefiting foreign buyers, I want to make a point about this. At all price points, foreign buyers will pay significantly more stamp duty than Western Australians. The reason that we did not do what the opposition is demanding in the motion and focus the benefit just on foreign nationals is that I wanted Western Australians also to get a benefit. I will give an example. If a foreign buyer buys an apartment off the plan at \$500 000, with the rebate they will pay \$13 200 in duty, and a Western Australian will pay \$4 400. At a \$750 000 price point, a foreign national will pay \$30 240 with the rebate and a Western Australian will pay \$7 400. We are still requiring foreign nationals to pay more duty, as I said, to contribute to the infrastructure they benefit from. Of course, the vast majority of the benefit is going to Western Australians, which is counter to the motion that was moved today by the opposition, which wants the benefit to go only to foreign nationals. I do not think that is fair. That is why we will oppose this motion furiously. I make this point: I look forward to the next election, because I want the foreign buyers surcharge to be a key part of that election campaign—that is, the fact that the opposition will abolish it and, if I can quote the Leader of the Opposition, “unfairly benefit foreign buyers as a result”.

Dr D.J. Honey: That was not what she said. It is a misquote.

Mr B.S. WYATT: No, it is not. I wrote it down. I quoted it. You were not here, member for Cottesloe, so go back to your little snooze up the back there. Go back to your snooze, member for Cottesloe, because you were snoozing up the back there, and I do not want to get in the way of your doze up the back.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you!

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr D.J. HONEY: The Treasurer is misleading the house in claiming that I was snoozing on this side of the house.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: No; this is serious. This is a serious matter. That is a misquote, and the Treasurer should withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms S.E. Winton): Member for Cottesloe, that is not a point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member for Bateman raised an interesting point on the issue of how we as a nation—I think that is the point he was making—have found ourselves where we are, going through the 1980s and 1990s. He made the point that people cannot keep borrowing more. One of the reasons for that, as we found out from the royal commission, is the activity of banks ensuring that more and more borrowing was fed into that market. I dare say that that is probably the way the member for Bateman made his living for some time when he was with the ANZ Bank. The member for Bateman complained that our median house price is now lower than that of Tassie, but he also complained that during the boom it was higher than that of Sydney. It is crystal clear that those increases in the lead-up to 2014 were not going to be sustained. No-one could have thought for a minute that they could buy a property and have those sorts of increases happening in perpetuity, and so a correction was coming. The correction in WA has been longer than I think anyone expected. There is no doubt about that. Since 2014, things have been declining. Sixty per cent of that decline happened while the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Bateman sat on this side of the house as Deputy Premier and Minister for Finance, but they did not complain when they sat on this side of the house. We are doing what we can, with a range of different levers to pull. Keystart is an important one, because it marries demand with an ability to get finance. Today's announcement about stamp duty removes a major impediment, but also does something that we are trying to achieve in Perth and Western Australia, which is to increase housing density—not just any density, but useful, well-designed density. I think that will come as a result of this. Another question was put to me about why the period is two years, and the answer is that we want to stimulate the economy. We want to get decisions made now. After two years, we are expecting population growth to get back to the long-run average, which will hopefully therefore create its own momentum as per the normal property price cycle.

I think I have dealt with all the issues raised by the opposition, but I want to make this point: industry is on board. We have spoken and consulted with industry. I suspect that we are not going to give the peak bodies everything they want, but that is the nature of the game we are all in. We are trying to be targeted by ensuring that we focus Western Australian funds in the best way that we can. Interestingly, by way of an aside, I wrote down as well that the Leader of the Opposition made the point that the training market has just about collapsed. That will happen when fees are increased by 500 per cent. It drives people away from the training sector. Another decision we have made is to halve fees for a range of select courses for skills for which there are emerging shortages. The opposition cannot have it both ways. It cannot complain about negative equity and mortgage stress and then want me to pull levers that bring on more supply if it cannot be married with demand. That is what the opposition is trying to get me to do.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member for Bateman complained—I wrote it down because I was surprised—that we were going to flood the market. He complained that we were going to flood the market.

Mr D.C. Nalder: When did I say that?

Mr B.S. WYATT: He said it. When he gets his blue, he will see it. This is the problem. There is no coherent economic or fiscal argument coming from the opposition. There is no coherent argument.

Mr D.C. Nalder: There are 2 600 apartments that are ineligible for the rebate.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Okay; now the member for Bateman is complaining about flooding. While he has been sitting there, he has changed the position he has been articulating for two years. He has complained uphill and down dale about the property sector, demanding more supply come into it, and then when a lever is pulled, he says that it will flood the market. This is the problem. His economic thoughts are incoherent, which is why I suspect the finances ended up where they were and the economy ended up where it was when I became —

Mr D.C. Nalder: You're a disgrace. You're embarrassing yourself.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am not, actually.

Mr D.C. Nalder: What you are demonstrating is a lack of economic understanding.

Mr B.S. WYATT: A lack of economic understanding? Let me just reflect on this for a minute. I want to take that interjection—"lack of economic understanding". There has been only one political party in Western Australia, and that is the Liberal Party of Western Australia, that through its own buffoonery, with a stubbornness and lack of capacity to plan both physically and economically, has ended up, after riding through the biggest revenue increases in the state's history, leaving government with the largest operating deficit on record—nothing but projected operating deficits; \$6 billion of operating deficits and net debt on its way to \$40 billion. Who would have thought? I am not going to cop any form of economic or fiscal analysis from the buffoons who now sit in opposition. They drove the economy to our only recession, and it takes time to get out of that. We are out of that. We are no longer in a recession. We are now creating jobs. That is why we see —

Mr D.C. Nalder: Tell the households out there that. You go and tell the ones you have disconnected from Synergy that we are not in a recession anymore. Go and tell them that there are price increases.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Dean, Dean!

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have a point of order.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Member for Bateman.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms S.E. Winton): Yes, thank you, Treasurer.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.S. WYATT: Member for Bateman, stop it! Member for Bateman, relax. The reality is that his record on this is very bad. He cannot just glide by by getting to his feet and saying, “We did not react quickly enough when we were in government.” I am sorry, I am not going to let him get away with that. His record is appalling. He says, “Say that to households.” I have not heard an apology about the fact that the Liberal government lost jobs in Western Australia during an entire four-year period. Not one net job did the previous government create over a four-year period—not one, and the member wonders why households are under pressure. When the previous government was taking jobs from Western Australians, it increased power bills by 90 per cent and water charges by a similar amount. During the time when the previous government was stripping jobs out of the economy, it was also doing that. I am sorry if that stings, but that is the reality. The Liberal Party came to government like drunken sailors and spent unsustainably. Despite the fact that revenue was increasing at rates that we had never seen before, it spent unsustainably and left the state vulnerable to the downturn. Everyone knew there was going to be a downturn; it was just a matter of when. But the previous government did not care; it just kept spending. Then the downturn came, and we ended up with this scenario.

When I became Treasurer, I was terrified that we would find ourselves in a global downturn with the balance sheet that I inherited—\$6 billion in operating deficits, writing down revenue at the time, and an economy that was shrinking. I remind members again that it was an economy that was shrinking at a time when exports were growing. That is what the previous government did to the domestic economy. It tanked it in a way that no-one had ever seen before. The previous government’s land tax increases were also a big part of that.

We are coming through a very tricky time in the state’s economic history, but thankfully it is now being managed by sensible heads. That is the reality, and that is why people have so much more confidence in this government than they did in the previous government. I understand that that stings, member for Bateman, but the reality is there for all to see. One day the member for Bateman might get the chance to be Treasurer, and hopefully he will learn a few things before he does because, ultimately, I do not want to see a future Treasurer having to deal with the same issues that I had to deal with in the first 12 months after we came to government. It was an incredibly worrying time. The state was incredibly vulnerable to global downturn because we did not have a balance sheet strong enough to deal with that. That is the truth, and that is why we spend so much time focusing on returning to surplus. Josh Frydenberg is correct on that. A surplus position allows us to respond to changing global circumstances, and they are changing. The IMF highlights that the economy will grow again across the next few years, but global growth is slow, and that has an impact on us here in Western Australia—make no mistake.

I think I have dealt with these matters. The opposition cannot continue to run incoherent arguments, as it has tonight, and expect to be taken seriously. I dealt with the issues around how the rebate will operate and why we think it is a good thing. I get that the opposition does not support it; so be it. It will be Robinson Crusoe on that. I also put on the record the issue around foreign buyers. That is important, because it is now clear that the dire impact on foreign buyers that the member for Bateman claimed is certainly not the case. I will not be supporting this motion, which seeks to provide foreign buyers with a benefit over Western Australians. There is no way any Labor MP would support that. Every decision we have made in requiring foreign nationals to invest in Western Australia through that surcharge is a decision we stand by. We think it is a good thing, because it is exactly what they demand of us when we invest in their countries to get the advantage of what will be generational development of infrastructure. That is why the vast majority of the benefit from our decision today will go to Western Australians and not to foreigners, as the opposition is demanding. As a result we will, of course, be opposing this motion.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [5.43 pm]: What is unsustainable is the whingeing and complaining of the Treasurer, the Premier and the government of Western Australia. What is also unsustainable is the name-calling from members opposite. Calling the opposition “buffoons” is something that is heard in this chamber, but the reality is that the government is actually treating the public of Western Australia as though it thinks they are buffoons, and they are not. They are very astute and they are very aware of the government’s mismanagement of the Western Australian economy, and that is why the McGowan Labor government has plunged the housing sector into crisis. That is why we, as the opposition, have brought forward this motion today to let the house and the people of Western Australia know that we are doing our best to hold this lazy government to account for its mismanagement of the economy and for its appalling handling of the housing sector.

The performance report card of the McGowan Labor government is not going to be written by the Premier’s spin doctors. The government would like to think that its report card will be written by its own spin doctors, and it rolls out media release after media release of spin on a daily basis, but the bottom line is that the people of WA will write that report card and make a decision on the second Saturday in March, 2021. The way the government is

tracking at the moment means that its eight and a half years in opposition and its three budgets in government have done nothing to support the people of Western Australia and to show them that it is serious about how it handles the economy of Western Australia, in Perth and in the regions.

Let us look at some of the notes that have appeared in the media or have been provided to us or that we have uncovered through our own research. We can form our own report card, because this is the report card that the people of Western Australia are looking at. For example, they know that debt is now 25 per cent higher than it was when the Labor Party was elected. They know that. The government talks about debt reduction, but it is not actually reducing debt. They know that there is an employment crisis and they know that in April 2017 unemployment was at 5.8 per cent, and in August this year it was still 5.8 per cent. The government goes on and on, telling us about how it has created 52 000 jobs or whatever, but the problem is that it probably threw away about 80 000-odd jobs. It created 52 000 and is claiming that as a win. The government is not growing jobs on a net basis throughout the economy; it is just moving statistics around, claiming victory, and hoping that the spin will work.

We know that the government has effectively created a family tax by increasing fees and charges, year on year, over three budgets. At the same time, it tells us in this place that the former government increased fees and charges on the people of WA at too high a rate. The government did not come in and reduce them; it came in and doubled down on them, added to them, compounded them, and kept adding to them, all the while continuing to blame us. That, again, is complaining and whingeing and not taking responsibility for what it is doing. It is not taking responsibility for how it plunged households into crisis, which had an impact on the housing sector more broadly. The government is not accepting that, under its watch, house prices have continued to fall. They are 20 per cent lower than what they were at their peak in 2014, and they are continuing to slide. The government is not accepting that construction work in Western Australia has fallen for six or seven consecutive quarters; it is ignoring that. As the shadow Treasurer pointed out, it is not accepting that in 2018–19, more than 21 000 residential electricity customers were disconnected for not paying their bills—a 36 per cent increase from when the Labor Party took government.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No it isn't.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Those are the notes we have been given.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It's not true.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister can get up and correct us then and tell the people. There was a 15 per cent increase on last year; those are the notes I have.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Well, you're wrong.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Synergy's disconnection rate increased by five per cent and Horizon Power's by 87 per cent. This is the advice we are getting, so if the minister is telling me that is wrong, great. He can get to his feet and correct it.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Sit down and I will!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: We will be happy to listen to him!

We have heard that there are more than 30 000 residential electricity customers on hardship programs and that more than 12 000 residential customers are repaying debt, not including customers on hardship programs. We know that more than one in six Western Australian mortgage holders owe more than the value of their home. That is approximately 125 000 households in negative equity. It goes on. More than 144 000 households are under mortgage stress, which is almost one in five homes.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: There we go again. The Minister for Energy blames the federal government. That is all members over there can do. They act like an opposition. They do not take any responsibility for the macroeconomic indicators that they have a handle on in the economy of Western Australia. All the government does is blame the feds when things go wrong, take their money when they offer it, and then claim victory on an infrastructure spend that had nothing to do with the state government. Let us face it, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy knows perfectly well that the government had an iron ore royalty revenue stream that the former government did not have. He knows exactly what it was from 2013 onwards, leading into the 2017 election. He knows perfectly well that once the federal Liberal government achieved the GST floor, which we had all been pushing for for some time, the state government would be able to return the books to operating surpluses with those types of windfalls. The minister also knew perfectly well that in a national wages market, where wages growth was down to under one and a half per cent, the government would be able to ensure that it was kept at that level. Let us face it, the government got lucky with some key economic drivers that had nothing to do with its planning. The only thing that had anything to do with its planning, it has ruined—that is, the domestic housing market of Western Australia. That is what this motion is all about. It is about the government's inability to work the right levers to get the right result.

The government continuously blames others, as though it is in opposition, which has resulted in unemployment not moving while it has been in government. As I said, we also have 14 per cent youth unemployment. The

CommSec July 2019 report had us last or second last on all key economic indicators, or performances. In economic growth, we were last; retail, second last; equipment investment, second last; unemployment, second last; construction, second last; housing finance, second last; and dwelling starts, second last. The only thing we came first in was the area that had the biggest falls in housing value. That is the only thing we won. We were the biggest losers in housing value falls. That is hardly a report card worth crowing about. The result is that the government failed the people of Perth in three budgets and in eight and a half years of preparation and it has crashed the housing market. It is putting an increasing number of people out of a home. We debated that last week, I think, member for Carine, when we looked at the homeless. Forty per cent of over 23 000 people who presented to specialist homeless services were deemed homeless. One in five homeless people in WA are aged between 25 and 34. Most of these homeless people are located in Labor electorates. What has the government been doing about it? The Premier came under a fair bit of pressure from the member for Carine. It took him until July to finally visit the people in that camp. There was no big song and dance show. He slipped in quietly, ticked the box and slipped back.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member can cover that later today. We know that a large number of people are homeless and that an increasing number of people are probably borderline homeless, being propped up through couch surfing and family members looking after them by putting them in a spare room. They are not coming up in the statistics. If the government does not get its housing sector right by getting the economy right and if it does not grow jobs properly, it will not get these people into work so they can afford to pay their own rent and look after themselves. The government is letting everybody down.

What is the government's response to this appalling report card? Metronet is the response. That is it. As I have said before, the government needs more than a train line to Ellenbrook in its kit bag to get the economy of Western Australia off the ground. After eight and a half years of opposition and three budgets, the only thing the Labor Party has got is the Ellenbrook train line. That is it. Where is that train line, by the way? Where are the jobs being created by it? When will construction start? The debate from this side of the chamber related to the bill. We were asking when the construction of the train line will commence. We heard the member for Darling Range say that it is proposed to start. I think she read that from one of the government's media releases that has since been taken off the website. It got rid of that. It is now proposed to start.

The shadow Treasurer decided that he had had enough of the government's incompetence. What did he do? He put out a blueprint to give it a hand. It was published in today's paper. No doubt, all government members had a read of it because their kneejerk reaction was to quickly throw out a policy, which was torn apart by the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Treasurer today. That is the response. It has a half-baked plan, which does not address the concerns that we are talking about. But the government will try to dominate the media cycle of the day with that half-baked plan and try to push something out with all its spin doctors. We know that it employed as many as it could find out there; it loaded up the Premier's office and the ministers' offices with them all so that the minute it needed to flood the media with its spin, it could get something out in a hurry. No doubt there will be a fair bit on the news tonight relating to the government's plan to reduce stamp duty by 75 per cent for off-the-plan apartment builds. No doubt that will get out there. But the people out there in the suburbs who are really hurting—the people who are struggling to pay their mortgages because of the housing crisis, the people who are in negative equity—will not watch that news. They are probably out working on their second job, trying to get by to pay their mortgage, if they can get a job. Come 2021, a lot of the people out there will be those tradies—the small business tradie who has his own ute with his business name on the side. A lot of those tradies do not work on these big apartment builds. They are not part of those contracting chains. They work in the suburbs on the renovations and the houses out there. They will not be too interested in what the government has just announced because it will not help them. We all know, as well as the government, that those small business tradies were the biggest group of swinging voters at the last election. If the government chooses to ignore them, it does so at its own peril.

The issues we have now are that the tradies are not being looked after—the houses they own are going into negative equity, they are under mortgage stress—and the government is not able to grow the number of jobs. The shadow Treasurer put out a blueprint this morning, and I will go through some of those points in a moment. The poor old tradies out there are doing it tough. I say to government members, let us not forget—maybe we would like them to forget this but, in any case, we do not—that eight of its seats sit on less than three per cent. Eleven of its seats sit on less than six per cent. If the government continues to ignore the economy of Western Australia, it may well be a first-term government. We will continue to prosecute the case for proper economic management all the way to the second Saturday in March 2021. The starter's gun from us was put out today by the shadow Treasurer. He has had enough. We will start putting out some policy early. He put out a policy about a moratorium on the foreign buyers tax to try to get international students to come here, to try to bolster the university sector in Western Australia. We are losing those students by the hundreds to other cities around Australia because of that tax and because of the regional migration status debacle, which is another thing the shadow Treasurer said the government needed to reverse, as we have all been saying. He also said that we would provide stamp duty reforms, such as relief for people downsizing. That is eminently sensible. He said that we would commit to payroll tax reform, no doubt in line with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia's request. He also said that we would bring

forward capital works projects because they really matter. Things that are going to happen into the future will not help the economy now, and now is when it needs support. The shadow Treasurer went through all of those in a fair bit of detail and it got the ball rolling. Thankfully, the government took some notice.

The report card that we want to see in Western Australia is a report card that we are reading about in Tasmania, of all places. I got hold of a document written by the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania that says —

Buoyant economic conditions, a booming tourism market, growing tertiary student numbers, and our attraction as a lifestyle destination has seen unprecedented property demand and growth in property values.

Would that not be outstanding? That was Tasmania.

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The Minister for Housing has to ask the question: why does our report card not look like that? What is wrong with Rottneest Island—the jewel in our metropolitan crown for tourism? We know that the Minister for Tourism loves selfies with quokkas and getting tennis players and all sorts of people out there for that. We saw all that. What about the south west, the Margaret River region, down that way? What about Esperance? It has beautiful beaches with kangaroos hopping along them. People love that stuff. What about the beautiful city of Perth on the Swan River and everything the former government did to revitalise the city and make it vibrant? What has the minister done about that? What about our idyllic beaches? Nobody can tell me that Tasmanian beaches are better than Western Australian beaches. Surely not!

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: What about our attractions in the north, and of course something that Tasmania could never compete with: our beautiful Mediterranean climate in the south west and our wonderful climate in the north? Tasmania does not have that. Tasmania would be lucky to get one week of warm weather a year, yet its report card is absolutely caning us. All we get from the mob opposite is complaints and whingeing; calling us buffoons. It is name-calling and whingeing—that is it; that is all they have.

Dr D.J. Honey: A mature debate!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: A mature debate! The government has allowed Western Australia to be trumped by Tasmania. It does not seem to have any answers to match its performance, yet one of the biggest resource states in the world is here in Western Australia. The government is mismanaging the economy. It is a real shame because some of the issues that have been found in the media are not being taken seriously enough by the government. An article put out by the Reserve Bank of Australia, titled "Housing Loan Arrears—Insights From Western Australia", states —

The housing loan arrears rate in Western Australia (WA) has ... more than double the national rate ...

That is this year. It goes on —

Given the difficult economic environment, housing prices in WA have fallen by 20 per cent since their peak in 2014. Investors in housing have also faced falling rental income and for some time the highest vacancy rates in nearly 30 years.

I refer to an article by Elizabeth Redman that was published on domain.com titled "Where home borrowers are keeping up with mortgage repayments—and falling behind". That is mostly happening in McGowan Labor government members' electorates. That is where that is all happening. The Labor Party is letting down its own supporter base.

On 13 August this year, an article that appeared on WAtoday stated —

Commonwealth Bank said 72 per cent of its customers in negative equity were from WA or Queensland, WAtoday understands more than half of those were from WA.

The figures reflect a June report from ratings agency Standard & Poor's that found the amount of WA households behind on their mortgage payments had increased by 3.1 per cent in just one month between March and April.

...

"The other thing too is if you're not getting pay rises you're not feeling as confident about whether you go and get a bigger property, which does also feed back into that property cycle."

The government's media release today, its spin—no doubt a minister will want to appear on the news tonight—is not addressing that. It is just its smokescreen to try to cover over the shadow Treasurer's attempt to provide an economic blueprint to get the Western Australian economy back on track. The government basically ignored it.

An article written by Kim MacDonald titled "Property's sad returns" appeared in *The West Australian* in July. It stated —

WA has the highest proportion of properties selling at a loss anywhere in the country, with homes losing up to \$115,000 on their previous purchase price.

I used figures like that when I started this speech today and the Minister for Energy said that they were wrong. It sounds to me as though there are hundreds of reports like this. It goes to show that the government has created its own little government bubble. Government members are only interested in listening to each other. They are not even listening to the people in their own electorates. They are the people who are hurting the most in this housing crisis. In fact, they are ignoring people from their own electorates, who are in a housing crisis, in favour of supporting apartment builds which, as the Leader of the Opposition said, will not start for three years. How will that support the people in their electorates?

I will refer to another article. The property sector provided the government with a six-point plan to boost the sector. A lot of people from the property sector congratulated the government today on its media announcement. Why would they not? They have not heard anything else from the government in three years! In three budgets, all they have heard is pain and no gain. The government finally acquiesced, in a kneejerk reaction to our shadow Treasurer, and came up with something for the sector to be happy about. But do not think it stops there. Do not think, “That’s enough, we’ll walk away now. We are going to help apartment builds in three years’ time.” People who buy off the plan will be able to get some stamp duty relief up to the value of \$50 000. The government is not going to stop there because it knows perfectly well that a large property sector group, particularly the one that deals with builders and tradies, is fully aware that not all their members work on apartment buildings. The government has to do something to support the economy of Perth and Western Australia, particularly our regional centres in addition to Perth. It has to look after those economies by working out infrastructure, building programs that can support economic growth and be a capital investment for the state into the future, like the last government did under Colin Barnett. Members opposite go on about, “He was a terrible economic manager”, but they all love Perth Stadium. They see the benefits of Elizabeth Quay. They loved cutting the ribbon at Perth Children’s Hospital. They love the Gateway road project that the previous government built, and the list goes on and on. They love all that infrastructure that will be used by Western Australians for up to 100 years. They love all that stuff, but what have members opposite built at a time when we need to be injecting investment into the economy to help people get jobs? What has this government built? Nothing. It has cut ribbons.

Mr J.E. McGrath: They are big ribbon cutters.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: They are big ribbon cutters. They talk about a Metronet that nobody has seen. No-one has seen one job for Metronet—not one job. The Minister for Transport has been cutting ribbons and the Premier has been making announcements. There are kneejerk reactions to policy as a result of some sound and well thought through advice from the shadow Treasurer, but the government does nothing. At the same time, hundreds of people are homeless, people are struggling with their mortgages and people are going into negative equity. The Tasmanian report card is embarrassing us. It is quite remarkable. I can see why government members are so glum.

Mr A. Krsticevic: Only the Northern Territory is doing worse than us.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Correct. The Northern Territory is doing worse than us and the Labor Party gave it the Inpex project! This government has fallen into the trap of being complacent, literally since the day it was elected. It decided all it needed to do was cut ribbons on Liberal government projects for four years, promise that Metronet will solve all of the economic woes of Western Australia—not do anything about it—and then use that to get re-elected in 2021. For all those members who are sitting on less than three per cent, the economy is what matters.

Dr D.J. Honey: They think they’re going to run a four-year-old election campaign.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Correct. The Western Australian economy is what matters. That swinging voter group, that tradie group, is not loyal to any political party and it is not going to take this government’s spin. Swinging voters will simply rock up on polling day and think, “Do you know what? I’m no better off than when I voted in you mob. You’ve done nothing to help me in my industry or my sector to get ahead. I’m going to do a protest vote and vote against you.” A large number of people will do that. A large number of people will also think, “Do you know what? We have a new, refreshed and reinvigorated Liberal team.” We have taken our time in opposition to carefully think things through and refocused our strategic plan to build on the former Liberal government’s achievements to continue to expand Perth and Western Australian’s regional centres, with our Nationals WA colleagues and friends. We are going to give people the hope that they will have a better future, because under this government they do not have any hope of that. The government knows that and that is why it is getting nervous. No doubt, the Premier will be getting nervous, too, because there are some aspirational people on the government side of the chamber. They are starting to see what the polls are doing and thinking, “Hang on a second; I was going to make my move after we won the 2021 election, but that move might be a bit late. I might become the Leader of the Opposition.” I would not be surprised if the vote counters on the other side of the chamber were not thinking long and hard about just how well their wonderful saviour, Premier McGowan, is faring with the Western Australian community. The two tests the Premier has had in front of the WA public have not gone too well. The Darling Range by-election test was an abject failure. The government failed to understand what mattered to people. What mattered was all the stuff we have talked about today: the mismanagement of the economy, falling house prices, increasing fees and charges, and the lack of job creation. What happened? There was a 9.3 per cent swing against the government in Darling Range.

The next big test was when Premier McGowan's face was everywhere with Bill Shorten's big red bus—Labor is the saviour with Premier McGowan. He was everywhere; it was his campaign. How did that go? It was a fail. As I said before, people in the swinging voter group, which is increasing in Western Australia, make their decision to vote on how they are faring in the economy the government is managing. In Western Australia, we had a bigger Liberal vote per head of population than anywhere in Australia. That must scare a lot of the aspirational politicians on the other side of the chamber who are really keen to get that top job and maybe move back into the Premier's residence at Hale House. The government must be pretty worried, because the people of WA have sent it very clear messages and the Premier is unable to cut through with his responses. He has been unable to turn around the Western Australian economy and grow jobs in the state, and that will hurt the government. The longer the government keeps hurting households and continues to ignore the housing crisis Western Australians are under, the closer the opposition is to winning government.

MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine) [6.13 pm]: I also rise to contribute to the opposition motion that states —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for plunging the housing sector into its longest and deepest crisis, and calls on the Premier to immediately backflip on his ill-conceived foreign buyers tax and migration changes.

We know that this Premier and this government are experts at backflipping because they have done it so often. If we look at today's announcement on stamp duty, we see that it is another government backflip. I will talk about that in a bit, but before I get to that, I want to mention this government's continued dysfunction since the election. We have heard many times in not only this Parliament, but also the community that the Labor Party had a plan to win government but no plan to govern. That has been a consistent theme. It is a theme you can hang your hat on with this government; it does not have a plan. The government is running along the bottom, scraping up things as it goes, and seeing what ideas it can get up and running. Once the government identifies those ideas are not working and sees the consequences of its decisions, it reverses very quickly. Not long ago on Channel 7, we saw the Labor Party guru Brian Burke talking about the ability of government members and the quality of ministers. Let me tell members that he did not give them a very high rating. We know that he was the Premier's mentor in his early days before the Labor Party did not have anything to do with him. I am sure he still has great contacts with the party, and he is a good judge of Labor members' ability because he knows their backgrounds.

We saw recently the dysfunction at the last Labor state conference. The Labor Party is not interested in trying to manage the economy or help struggling Western Australians. People know that. They did not need to see the party's dysfunction and infighting at that conference, because every day they live with the pain and suffering caused by the decisions made by this government and, more importantly, the decisions it is not making. Members on this side of the chamber go out and talk to people in business, mums and dads and homeless people. That is something government members would never dare to do. We know the Premier, Minister for Community Services and others do not have time for homeless people. They have great rhetoric and say the words that need to be said, but their actions and their hearts are not in this space.

One of the false promises the Labor Party made when it came into government was about gold-standard transparency. That is something we have not seen once. The Auditor General from time to time reports on ministers answering questions or not answering questions when they should have. We know from our freedom of information requests that information is difficult to obtain. During question time, there is no point bothering to ask questions on behalf of the people of Western Australia because of the government's disdain and lack of honesty in its answers. I had a perfect example of that today. I asked the Premier about giving Foodbank some additional funding because half a million Western Australians miss at least one meal a week and a lot more miss more than that. In the first part of his answer, he did not even answer the question; he went on about all this other stuff that had nothing to do with Foodbank or people going hungry. When I asked a supplementary question, he said, "But they haven't asked me for money." That is actually not true, and I am getting information on that as I speak. Foodbank has asked for help. I cannot imagine organisations like Foodbank, the Salvation Army or Good Sammy's, with the way people have been suffering in the last two years and seven months, just sitting there and saying, "We're not going to ask the government for money or help." Please, to even suggest that the Premier answered my question is an absolute joke. I do not think anyone believed the Premier's answer to that question at all. It just goes to show how disingenuous the Premier is.

We talk about the revenue streams that have been flowing to this government. Members have already talked about the massive amounts of money that are coming to this state—billions of dollars in iron ore royalties, the GST fix, the redirection of \$1.2 billion in Roe 8 funding and the federal election funding. It is not like this government has not had any money to stimulate the economy or the opportunity to boost people's wages or housing activity so that it is more affordable for people to get into a house. Instead, we have gone the other way. It is not getting better. We no longer hear people saying, "The great Australian dream is to own your own home." Reading the newspapers and hearing the commentary on television and radio, all we see and hear is about mortgage stress. We hear about negative equity. We hear about people not being able to afford to eat or put food on the table and the growing number of disconnections. Every single time a new statistic comes out, it shows worse and worse data and that more and more people are struggling and suffering. One has to wonder what this government is doing. It has come up with a \$1.3 billion budget surplus, which is a lot of money. While the government is busy putting money in the

bank, people out there do not have a place to live. They do not have a home. They do not have food to eat. The hospitals are clogged up. People do not have anywhere to go. There is a lot of pain and suffering out there and it is not as though the state government does not have the capacity to show some compassion and innovation.

The Leader of the Opposition and I were talking to Foundation Housing not that long ago and it had some great ideas about what could be done, but it said that the government is not interested or listening. Whoever we speak to gives the same message that the government is not listening. It is not responding. It is ignoring them. The government seems to have a consistent theme in many different sectors. I know that the Minister for Tourism said that his door is open, but does the minister know what? I think his door is the only one that is open. The rest are shut. I cannot comment because I do not know whether the minister's door really is open, but I will take his word for it. A lot of other doors are closed really hard. There is no way people are walking in those doors. We know that with the current state of the Labor Party, the Premier's door is closed to a lot of union members as well—the backbone of the Labor Party. They are not allowed anywhere near those doors either. Not only ordinary mums and dads and small businesses are suffering; everybody is finding it difficult to get access.

Let us not forget why we found ourselves in this situation. When the Premier was elected, the first thing he said back in April 2017 was about the great depression that Western Australia was facing. He is obviously Nostradamus! He could foresee the havoc his government would create for Western Australia and that a great depression was coming. It was not here when he got elected, but it was on its way. If we talk to the people of Western Australia and ask what they think and whether they remember the Great Depression, they say that they do not, but they heard it was pretty hard. Guess what? It is pretty hard right now.

We look at the pressure we have been putting on the government. We spoke about backflips with the gold tax, the nationalisation of the rock lobster industry and education. Now we have another backflip here, which relates to our motion that we moved yesterday. We have been putting pressure on the government, as has the industry, on the foreign buyers tax and stimulating the housing market. That pressure has been coming from everybody. The government up to this point has not been listening. What we have here today is, basically, another backflip. I know that the Treasurer said, "Oh, we want to support Western Australians ahead of foreign buyers", but do members know what this is today? It is another backflip on the foreign buyers tax.

Before I elaborate on that, what did our shadow Treasurer have printed in the paper today? He gave the Premier a blueprint. This is interesting because the Treasurer did not portray it in this way, but the shadow Treasurer said let us put a moratorium on the foreign buyers tax. He did not say to get rid of it. He said, "Let us put a moratorium on it and put it on hold until the housing sector picks up and then at some time we can review that." Of course, this announcement today helps foreign buyers, so it significantly reduces the cost for a foreign buyer to buy into the market. Of course, the foreign buyers have the same competitive advantage as a local buyer. The Premier has not come out and said that we will give Western Australians a bit of a leg-up and an advantage over foreign buyers. He said that we will give everyone the same carrot. The foreign buyers and the locals get the same reduction. There is no discrimination between the two and they can compete against each other. One interesting point to make there is that no preference has been given to Western Australians who want to buy a home or an apartment off the plans and foreign buyers still have that ability, albeit they are now paying a lot less. In some respects, that backflip is in line with what the opposition was calling for in terms of allowing the market to improve.

Building in the housing sector is at a record low. When we talk to people, they say that it is the worst it has ever been. They say to me that they have been in business for 40 years and it has never been this bad. People say that they almost do not want to be in business. We need to listen to what people are telling us and try to ensure that we pull the right levers to try to improve the state of the housing sector so that people do not end up homeless. We know that many, many people out there are on the verge of homelessness. To be honest, some of them probably already are homeless, but they do not know it, because they have negative equity, they cannot keep up with their mortgage payments, they cannot put food on the table, they are getting second and third jobs to try to keep their heads above water, but in reality it is a long way back. In some cases, it would probably be better for them to stop all that, cash it in, draw a line in the sand and start afresh from day one, and they would be further ahead than trying to struggle to maintain the situation they are in at the moment.

It is interesting how the government praised itself many times when it reinstated financial counsellors. Of course it did. It knew how bad they were going to make it for everybody! It needs financial counsellors just to put food on the table, let alone survive. They have made a disaster of things. The renewal of the contracts for the financial counselling service is done on a yearly basis, so there is no genuine commitment from the government to give it secure funding. People who work in this sector have come to me and said that they do not know whether their contract will be renewed in three months. Staff do not know whether they will have a job or they should be looking for another job. The people who work in that financial counselling sector are stressed because they do not know whether they will have a job tomorrow. We need some certainty and to say to those people that we will support the sector for the next three to five years or whatever it might be. We need security around that. How can they help other people when they are under stress themselves? If government members spoke to people, they would find out that is the truth. It is not hard to say that we are going to make a commitment into the future. There is not enough of that happening.

We know about the regional migration scheme. It was absolutely stupid of the government to get rid of that when it first got elected. There are so many decisions that this government has made without thinking about the consequences. It thinks about the headline in the paper tomorrow. It will be a great headline one day in the paper; in the 24-hour news cycle, members have used up three minutes and are proud of themselves. Let us not think about the consequences and the impacts downstream and how that will impact on our economy and the thousands of millions of dollars that will be taken out of the economy by not having foreign students here and the tourism associated with that, less investment in housing. The whole regional migration scheme is another absolute disaster. The government is obviously trying to backflip on that as well. The one consistent thing we will find is that by the time we get to the next election, there will be a good chance the government will have backflipped on everything it has introduced along the way. For the things it has not backflipped on, the electorate will judge it very harshly. I have no doubt about that. Plenty of members better start looking for a job now. For a start, there are not any jobs out there to get—unless they want to go to the regions. I think Kalgoorlie has a few jobs going. There are a lot of jobs in the regions, but when the government talks about creating jobs, a lot of the jobs are part-time jobs.

People are underemployed. If someone is underemployed, they are not about to buy a house. I think the Treasurer was saying the other day that the rate of youth unemployment is no longer 18 per cent; it is down to 16 per cent. That is pretty high for youth unemployment—16 per cent. They are our future and the people who would traditionally be looking to buy their first home. The government got rid of the first home owner grant as well. It is now available only for people who build a house rather than those who buy an existing house. The government has pulled so many levers that have discouraged people from buying a house and created so much uncertainty out there. People do not know where the economy is heading, they do not know where the government is heading and they do not know what the next opportunities are. All they know is that there are a lot of slogans and spin out there. At a grassroots level, people know that slogans and spin will not pay the mortgage or the bills, and it will not put food on the table. I do not know how members of this Parliament can be living in such a bubble. It is a real bubble. Sometimes I hear some of the debates and the things people say and I think, “You’re obviously not talking to anybody out there.” The other thing is that people are not reading what members in here are saying. That is unfortunate, because if they were, I can tell members one thing: members opposite would definitely be voted out at the next election—100 per cent. The other day, when we raised the suspension of standing orders motion about increasing funding in homelessness, the member for Midland said, “Is that the most important thing you can bring to this Parliament? Is that really it? You had a two-week break and all you could think of was people dying, people committing suicide, people having mental health issues, people who are struggling and have been on the streets for years?”

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: She said, “That’s not an important issue. How dare you bring that to Parliament, and how dare you want to suspend standing orders.” I could not believe it. My jaw dropped when I heard the response from the government. I am sure the jaws of members on the other side dropped as well when that statement was made. The government does not care about the most vulnerable people in Western Australia. We see that clearly, whether it is in Fremantle, Perth, Mandurah or Rockingham. Interestingly enough, we would think the government would care about people in its own electorates. Let us put aside caring about people and being a human being who cares and has feelings for those around us who are suffering and struggling. The Minister for Community Services walks over these people in Fremantle and says, “It’s not that bad”. Seriously? It is not that bad? That is the response from the Minister for Community Services. The Premier refuses to have anything to do with them and the member for Midland says, “That’s the best thing you can bring to Parliament?” The rest of the state is in real trouble if that is the attitude of the Premier and ministers in this government. I find that hard to believe.

I find it amazing that nobody in the Labor Party stands up and says, “You know what; I’ve had enough of this. You cannot keep doing this. You have to do more in this space.” I am sure that there are members on that side who care about this, but maybe they are not allowed to say anything. Maybe they have been gagged. Maybe their preselections have been threatened. I have no doubt that they have been spoken to and been given platitudes such as, “Don’t worry; we’ll get around to it. We’re working on a 10-year strategy.” That is the latest I have heard. The 10-year strategy for getting the homeless into housing, as the Premier indicated in question time the other day, was meant to come out a couple of times already so far, but the latest I heard was that it will come out in November. The Premier said in question time that maybe it will come out next year. Two years and seven months into this government and it is coming up with a strategy to help homeless people. By the time the third year comes, the strategy might be out, and then of course we will need to implement the strategy. We need money; we need all the other things that go around that. Will it take another 10 years on top of the three it has already taken just to put the strategy out there? I do not think so, and the sector knows that the government is not serious in this space. In 2018, the sector came up with a strategy. There were 120 organisations, which included the government, the not-for-profit sector and the business sector. They all came together—all that collective intelligence, energy and enthusiasm—and they developed a strategy. I said that this is what we need to happen right now. Of course, the government just threw it in the bin and said that it was not interested in that strategy and would rather spend three years developing its own. In the meantime, it lets people out there suffer.

Funnily enough, when I looked at the Labor Party platforms in 2015 and 2017 on homelessness, I saw that the platform in 2017 said that the government wants to make it a priority to make people aware of homelessness. It has definitely done that! People would never be more aware than they are now. They are sleeping in the streets and in shopfronts; they are all over the place. The government has achieved its objective; I just did not think that was the way it was going to achieve it—by making sure that the numbers went totally out of control and that it was so obviously in people’s faces that they could not ignore the problem. They now know that homelessness is a serious issue, albeit that the people we see sleeping rough on the streets only just scratches the surface. The census in 2016 showed that some 9 000 people fall into that category. I am sure a lot more than that are homeless, not to mention the ones who have housing negative equity. I was reading an article in which a lady was reported to have said that she recently sold her home for roughly the same price that she bought it for in 2011. I cannot remember the figures off the top of my head, but I remember it was 2011 and she got roughly the same, but she was quite happy with that. She thought that was pretty good. She said that she was happy that she sold it for what she bought it for, even though that is eight years of deflation and all the other bits and pieces that go along the way. A lot of people out there are thinking of selling their homes, but they are scared to get a real estate agent to tell them what their house is worth, because they would rather not know how bad the situation is. It is better if they are not told and they will struggle to pay their way and get through it. What is the government doing to help them along the way? We already know the answer. It is a lot of spin, smoke and mirrors—nothing substantial.

What are Western Australians now doing? This happens a lot around the world. This is an interesting article from *The West Australian* of 23 September 2019 titled “West Aussies turn to lotto luck for cash”. That is what happens; people buy lotto tickets. They think, “You know what? Things are so bad, I have my last few dollars, I’m going to buy a lotto ticket and hopefully I’ll be lucky enough to win some money and get myself out of this problem.” We know that gambling does not achieve that. Gambling just puts people in a worse position than they started in. There is no success in gambling. The article states —

West Australians looking for easy dollars in a slumping economy have spent a record amount on lottery tickets from State based agency Lotterywest.

Lotterywest’s annual report ... 2018–19 were \$985 million, up 15 per cent on the previous year.

We know that it goes up, and that is because the more desperate people are, the more they spend on trying to buy their way out of that situation. Interestingly enough, of that \$985 million spent, only \$282 million went back to Lotterywest. There was \$700-odd million that never found its way back to Western Australia. It went to the central pool and part of it was paid out in winnings to people in other states. Of that \$985 million, not much of it made it back to the Western Australian economy, only \$282 million and whatever the winnings were—I think about \$50 million. Just over \$300-odd million came back out of \$985 million.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Surely we get only a percentage of what Western Australians spend.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: No; that is what we spent. We spent \$985 million and we got back \$282 million. That is our cut. We sent \$985 million to the eastern states. They gave us back \$282 million and kept the rest.

Mr W.R. Marmion: What about the prize money?

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Not much prize money came back to Western Australia out of that \$700 million. Most of it went to the eastern states.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: No, not last year. I have not got those figures with me, but we did not do that well last year; I think it was only about \$50 million in total.

We know how bad things are in the housing sector. I go back to the “Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity” document. It is a very thin document. It is like the WA “Plan for Jobs”. That was a very thick document when the government initially produced it, but it was a thick document with lots of blank pages intentionally left blank, and there were a lot of pages with photos on it, so when we took out the content, the words, it became very thin. If we took the substantive part of it out, it had nothing in it. We know about the WA jobs plan, which was basically a worthless document. We have not seen it since, have we? It is gone. It is weird. Who has brought it out? I tried to look for my copy the other day and I could not find it. Everyone has lost it. I was very upset about that, because I had done a good analysis on that in the break-up of it. We then had that famous Western Australian Jobs Bill 2017, and the hoo-ha around that—that it will save the economy and the government is creating jobs. We have mentioned it many times. When I talk to people in the community about the WA jobs bill, I show them that little section that defines “local” as Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, the rest of Australia and New Zealand, and they ask, “What is going on there? I thought it was about WA jobs.” That, again, is the smoke and mirrors of the Labor Party. It is not there to tell the truth; it is there to tell its version of the truth, which will not help ordinary people. It will help only the Labor Party in the 24-hour news cycle, in trying to pretend that it cares about what is happening. Members opposite all know that it is true. They cannot keep lying. There must be people struggling out there in

their electorates, because they represent predominantly electorates where people are struggling. Unfortunately, we all do now—every single one of us. It used to be that certain electorates were struggling, but now every single electorate is struggling. Everybody is finding it difficult. I was reading the other day about mortgage stress, and the seat of Curtin was at the top of the list in struggling through mortgage stress. People have extended themselves, but the market has come back, and the jobs and the wages have fallen back, and now even they are struggling. It is happening everywhere. If we are hearing it, and we know that there are big problems out there, I do not understand why government members do not. It confuses me no end.

Every time the figures come out for building approvals, they are going down. Councils need to be doing better in that department, because the processes through the councils are quite complicated. Now that the local government elections are over, I hope that the people who have been elected can understand the pain and suffering out there that people are going through, and that it is their job, as elected officials, to try to make sure that their organisations are streamlined, efficient and making things easier for people out there. I know plenty of developers who are trying to do projects and get jobs off the ground, and everything is being put in their way, to make it as difficult as possible. Things are being slowed down by government departments and bureaucracies, and the developers are asking why nobody wants to create jobs by building shopping centres and apartment buildings. I talk to people about all the red tape, the green tape and all the other complications.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Nimbyism.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Nimbyism—I was reading about another group that has been formed called “Yes in my backyard”, or yimbyism. It is in the eastern states, in Brisbane. It is called “Yes in my backyard”, and I think it is opening up a branch in Western Australia. It wants to be a group of people who are there to say yes; not just to the vocal minorities, but they want to be the vocal majority—the yes people. That is impressive. I have not done any follow-up on them yet, but I have put them on my list.

Let us not talk about the national debt helpline. That is an organisation that is employing people. It needs people on the phones to answer all the calls from all the people who are ringing to say they have problems. That is a growing figure. We know that tens of thousands of people are struggling financially in Western Australia, even though the government has invested in these financial counsellors. It obviously has not put enough of them out there, because it did not realise how badly it was going to destroy the economy.

Cost of living pressures are unbelievable. We all know that electricity went up 10.9 per cent on the supply charge, so people could not even turn the electricity off if they could not afford to pay it. The government is trying to squeeze every cent out of every single person who cannot afford to live and, of course, we know that the hardship grants have been cut. The government has slaughtered the support for people who are suffering, and made it so much harder for them to get help and financial assistance. The government does not care; it just says, “Blame the former government; it’s all their fault.” I am sure that by the time the next election comes that will not be washing. It is not washing now, actually. People are not blaming the former government; they are saying that the present government has been in power for nearly three years, so what is it doing?

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee — Minister for Housing) [6.43 pm]: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to address this motion. I do not for a second intend to indulge in the kind of debate that the opposition has brought to this chamber which, by and large, has been quite facile in its construction and its intent. Members opposite have done what a lot of oppositions sometimes do. In the absence of actual research, they just suddenly wave their hands around and say this is bad and that is bad, and make up facts and stories. It reminds me of the constant conversations in this place when members opposite talk about things like Roe 8. It is a fact-free zone, as I have said in this place before; they just make it up. They say there will be 10 000 jobs, it will save the planet and cure cancer with Roe 9. Members opposite can say whatever they like, and the same thing happens. It has become characteristic of debate from the opposition that very few people on that side want to engage in the content of the debate, and enlarge the knowledge of the chamber about the actual consequences of what has been happening, what we inherited and what we are attempting to do to return this state to something that normalises and creates a future that the people of Western Australia can believe in.

I will use the short time I have in this piece of business before the house to talk about some of those facts and some of the parts. Firstly, I would not mind talking about history, and then I want to address some of the points made by some of those opposite. One of the things we know from the previous government’s history—I use this to set the preamble for we are doing—and one of the things that has been talked about by the Treasurer, the Premier and everybody else addressing economic matters before this house, is that we had to first arrest the fall. We had to arrest the decline and the complete distortion of the economy of Western Australia. The member for Carine, for example, has suddenly discovered homeless people.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I challenge the member to search his own *Hansard* and count how many times he sees “Krsticevic” “Carine” and “homelessness” in the time of the previous government. Did he ever get to his feet when

he was on this side of the chamber and talk about homelessness? He suddenly discovered the great unwashed that he did not want to have anything to do with in his leafy green western-side electorate, and he has no answer to it. His answer is simply to ambulance chase and profit off the misery of people who are fundamentally challenged.

Mr A. Krsticevic: We're going to help those people.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: What was the document the member could not find? The jobs package?

Mr A. Krsticevic: The government's jobs plan.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes; the member said it was a bit thin. I wrote a note here. The member said that, once the pictures and the words are taken out of it, it became really thin. He took the words out of it? I cannot believe it. We are here to talk about housing, an area that I have been talking about for eight and a half years in opposition, and I am very proud to be the Minister for Housing on this side of the house, with the opportunity to address some of the challenges we inherited.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The member for Dawesville might laugh, but let us talk about job approval. Let us just talk about some facts. I said that I do not want to indulge —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, just a second. Member for Carine, can you not interject consistently, please? Minister, if you want to take an interjection, the member for Carine can ask. That is all okay, but I just do not want yelling across the chamber.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have moved on from homelessness, and infatuation with something I have just discovered. I want to talk about housing approvals. We talk about some of the lowest housing approvals on record, which is something of a trend. One of the things that it is really important to talk about is that we cannot take a point in time and say, as the Treasurer said, that everything before that point never existed, and everything thereafter is new again. The shadow Treasurer talked about plunging housing approvals. That is the inflection point at which a downward trend starts, but we really must address the problem and the facts. I am going to show this little graph, which shows WA's lowest approvals on record, and the trend line. As the Leader of the Opposition said, records were started in 1983, which it says there, and then it goes along here, and these are the facts. I am going to table this at the end of my speech, just for the benefit of members to assess my source and make up their own minds. This high point here in housing approvals was in 2013, under the previous government. There were 3 500 approvals in that year. Down here, when we inherited the problems we have, there were 1 600 approvals. Under the previous government's watch, housing approvals plummeted. They began at 3 500 and got down to 1 600. How and why did that happen? It was because the former government did not create one job in its second term. It did not control expenses growth. Expenses growth in this state in the first term of the previous government was 10 per cent and in its second term was 6.1 per cent. It is these sorts of things that we were harnessed with when we came into office. Members cannot ignore those facts. Things take time. Like a big flywheel they take a little bit of time to work around.

In its fading years the Barnett government realised that there was a real problem on its watch and suddenly ran out and gave first home owners a boost of \$5 000. I am really grateful that the Treasury analysis identified this problem when we came into government. Straightaway we had to fundamentally adjust to the fact that that had distorted the market. Who knew it would distort the market? The previous government estimated the boost would increase the number of first home buyers seeking to either build or purchase a new home by 650, at a cost to the budget of around \$45 million. Do not forget that this happened when the former government suddenly realised that it had been asleep at the wheel and had missed the decline; it missed the top of the curve and did not expect things to go so badly. However, of the 650 additional first home buyers, only 380 were expected to respond directly to the \$5 000 boost by switching from buying an established home—this was about new home construction—for which they would not receive a first home owner grant. The remaining 270 were expected to bring forward their decision to buy or build a new home from a future year into 2017. That was the year we took over government. Furthermore, it was forecast that 7 686 first home buyers would have purchased new homes anyway in 2017. As a consequence, the effective cost to the state for each additional new home that was built or purchased as a direct result of the boost was forecast to be around \$120 000. Overall, around 4 500 boost payments were made up to June 2017. It is also estimated that only 200 new homes were built as a direct result of the \$5 000 boost to the first home owner grant; the other 4 300 recipients of the additional \$5 000 payment had intended to purchase or build a new home anyway. They did not need the boost. They were already committed.

This was the sort of kneejerk response that we got from the previous government. It would run out and spend. What we get from this government, though, is not as the member for Churchlands wanted it to be in his commentary to this house. He wanted us to believe that we just suddenly made it up as a result of an op-ed in today's paper. We actually came up with this after months of planning and modelling by Treasury in a well thought out, well-crafted and well-constructed approach. As a result, we now have a genuine movement that will allow demand to take the place of falling sales which, by the way, if members had noticed, is a national phenomenon.

The member for Churchlands also made a statement—I hope he will retract it by interjection—and had a crack at Metronet. He said that there had been no jobs from Metronet, over and above the fact that people are still working on the tunnelling machine that the former government started and over above that fact that track is being laid by, I can only assume, ghosts!

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: They were projects already commenced by the former government.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I agree completely. I accept the interjection.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: I was referring directly to your Ellenbrook line.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I do not know that the member was because he did not make that —

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: I just told you what I said!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I will accept the interjection, but let me tell the member about the jobs that Metronet has created.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: They're the ones that we started.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Let me tell the member about the jobs that Metronet has created, not the least of which is the \$394 million that this government invested in the Metronet social and affordable housing and jobs package—my responsibility. I am very proud of it.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: What houses have been built?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Let me tell the member.

According to the July 2019 program update, which I will provide to Hansard and table as required—remember this is social housing; do not forget that that is one thing we said we would be very focused on—we said we would build 320. As of July 2019, we hit 22 per cent of that target. For new social housing dwellings, 70 have been constructed out of the 320 that were committed to. Of the target of 400 affordable new homes or dwellings—I put that in the broader context—we have built 163. We hit 41 per cent of the target. These things are happening because of the direct action of the government of Western Australia.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: What has that got to do with Metronet?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: They are all done, member, because it says “METRONET Social and Affordable Housing and Jobs Package”.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Just because you put “Metronet” in your heading, it doesn't have anything to do with your policy.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: If the member would just let me finish. We did not go down to Hale Road, Churchlands, to build it there; we went on to the Metronet lines.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: So the existing rail lines?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes. Why would we do that? We did that because this government is singularly committed to something that the former government would not take on. It gave lip-service to the idea of 47 per cent urban infill and left it up to local government. We have seen the complete destruction of some suburbs because the former government allowed for battlexing across the board, which created thermal sinks and parking lots in cul-de-sacs. It did not create genuine communities. These dwellings are actually on the urban rail line. This government is committed to providing thoughtful densification around high frequency public corridors and nodes. I will go on.

We said that we would build 233 dwellings designed to a liveable housing silver standard—that is, independent aged living—and we have built 108. That is a 46 per cent achievement.

These are Treasury figures and are well established multiples of construction, which Treasury has accepted under previous governments. Treasury projected that 2 378 jobs would be created; we have created 529 jobs, achieving 22 per cent of the target. The economic activity target, as we said, was \$765 million. We achieved \$144.78 million in economic activity, or 19 per cent of the target. The sales revenue, because the Housing Authority, as I have said many times, is a marketplace agency of government that works with the private sector to create outcomes in cross-subsidised models, projected \$120 million worth of sales. We have hit 73 per cent of that target—\$87 million. There is the evidence in this chart of housing approvals, and so on, which we talked about here and which we inherited. We inherited so much of the fiscal collapse of this state and we had to do something about it. That takes time. We are starting to see some of the things that are needed in the economy. We only have to look at the article in this morning's paper—the Minister for Regional Development will be putting out a media release if members want to wait for the shorter version—which talks about the Pilbara property market being on the move. That is not surprising. It is in direct response to the \$84 billion worth of confidence, if you like, that has been invested into the state by the resource sector to do the sorts of things that it does and does so well in the north west. We are seeing significant double-digit growth in both valuations and pricing. I am very fortunate and happy to have that sort of activity because when we start to put in place urban renewal programs in some of those towns, we will be able to renovate, move and update the stock to a standard or typology that the community wants.

Another matter worth talking about because it is so topical today is something that the opposition gives lip-service to—that is, the way the industry has responded to the stamp duty rebate. We are accused that this is just spin or a knee-jerk reaction. We cannot have it both ways. Frankly, that is no way to treat industry bodies that have been around a long time—national bodies that focus on the sorts of things that are representative of their industry. The housing construction industry is very important to our state. We are responding to that by listening and understanding the issues that face the industry. We also know that if we do not provide certain support, problems will only get worse and the trend line that we inherited will continue, which, quite frankly, is unsustainable. This government, in good conscience, cannot do that. We look forward to the opposition fleshing out the ideas that were identified in this morning's paper by the shadow Treasurer. We would love to see how the opposition will cost and fund those ideas and what it is going to sell. The Leader of the Opposition has already said that she will not sell Western Power or do any of those sorts of things. But she will put in a toll road. Maybe we put a toll on everything. I look forward to hearing how the opposition will fund what it thinks it needs to do to improve the parlous fiscal state of WA.

The final point I make is that the stamp duty arrangements that we have put in place are very well thought through and are creating the right sorts of savings, and the industry will be very quick to respond.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

POLICE — VEHICLE COLLISIONS

5484. Mr P.A. Katsambanis to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

I refer to police vehicles, and I ask:

- (a) For each of the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 year to date, how many police vehicles were damaged in collisions where the driver of the police vehicle was not at fault for the damage caused;
- (b) In each instance what was the approximate cost of repairs to the police vehicle; and
- (c) In each instance how many police officers were injured?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

The Western Australian Police Force advise:

- (a)

2015	301
2016	294
2017	402
2018	414
2019 YTD*	298 [* to 26 September 2019]
- (b) The WA Police Force considers that an unreasonable amount of time and resources would be required to collate and process a response, and this is not considered an effective use of police resources.
- (c)

2015	11
2016	21
2017	20
2018	24
2019 YTD*	19 [* to 26 September 2019]

ENERGY — ELECTRICITY SUPPLY — WALPOLE

5502. Mr D.T. Redman to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Industrial Relations:

I refer to Walpole's power supply, and commitments given to monitor power supply to the region, and ask:

- (a) Can the Minister confirm the nature of the data monitoring commitments given during the Walpole community public meeting held earlier this year;
- (b) Will the Minister release information from data loggers that presumably monitor power outages;
- (c) Since monitoring has been in place, how many times has Western Power's service not met the minimum service license requirements as established by the Economic Regulation Authority;
- (d) What planning and provisions has Western Power put in place for the coming summer holiday season, to cater for the likely high numbers of holiday makers to the region; and
- (e) Will the Minister consider a stand alone diesel generator located in Walpole as a precaution over the summer season, to support essential and emergency services?

Mr W.J. Johnston replied:

- (a) During the Walpole community meeting, Western Power committed to monitoring network loads in the area.
- (b) Western Power has a comprehensive system in place to monitor outages on its network. Outage information for the Walpole feeder (feeder ID "ALB520") for outages that have occurred in the period May to August 2019 is attached. Western Power has provided the information in a similar format to that provided in response to Parliamentary Question 5116. [See tabled paper no 2957.]
- (c) Early in 2019 the Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) approved Access Arrangement 4 (AA4) which applies to Western Power for the period 2017 to 2022. The following response is provided in the context of AA4. An Access Arrangement is not a licence requirement but a requirement under the Electricity Networks Access Code 2004. As part of AA4, Service Standard Benchmarks (SSB) are set by the ERA which include, among other things, measures of reliability of supply. The Distribution SSBs apply on a whole-of-network basis and not on an individual feeder basis.

The SSBs for feeders classified as “Rural Long” (greater than 200km in length) are as follows:

System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI)

System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI)

The feeder to Walpole originates from the Albany zone substation and is classified as “Rural Long”. The performance of this feeder in the twelve months ending August 2019 is shown in the table below. For comparison purposes, the AA4 SSBs for all “Rural Long” feeders are also shown.

Service Standard Benchmark	AA4 Benchmark set by ERA for all “Rural Long” feeders	Actual performance for Walpole feeder (ALB520)
SAIDI (minutes)	848.3	796
SAIFI (interruptions)	5.7	7.25

Reliability of supply measures are also included in the Electricity Industry (Network Quality and Reliability of Supply) Code 2005 (NQRS Code). While licence requirements of the NQRS Code are overseen by the ERA, they are not established by the ERA. The graphs show the System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) and System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI), respectively. SAIDI indicates the total number of minutes, on average, that a customer on a distribution network is without electricity in a year. SAIFI indicates the average number of times a customer’s electricity supply is interrupted per year.

- (d) As mentioned in the response provided earlier this year to Parliamentary Question 5116, Western Power had completed and planned a number of actions as a result of the outages over the 2019 Easter/School Holiday period. The actions have all been completed as follows:

one of the distribution transformers in the Peaceful Bay area has been replaced with a larger unit;

low voltage fuses have been upgraded and loads balanced at various locations in the Peaceful Bay area; and

the setting on a high voltage recloser has been increased and settings on other reclosers have been reviewed.

The above actions are expected to improve the reliability of supply to Walpole, Peaceful Bay and surrounding districts and mitigate the risk of outages occurring again in circumstances similar to those over the 2019 Easter/School Holiday period. Further work to reinforce a part of the low voltage network at Peaceful Bay is proposed and Western Power is endeavouring to complete it prior to the coming summer holiday season.

- (e) Decision on technical developments of the network are the responsibility of the Board and management of Western Power.

