



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 12 October 2023

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 9.00 am, acknowledged country and read prayers.

PAPERS TABLED

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

HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

Statement by Attorney General

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [9.02 am]: I am delighted to inform the house about an innovative new health justice partnership between Legal Aid Western Australia and the East Metropolitan Health Service that was officially launched at Royal Perth Hospital earlier this week. When people are in hospital, it is often unexpected and patients are at their most vulnerable. This new partnership will help alleviate some of the associated pressures regarding legal matters. The HJP allows Legal Aid WA lawyers to speak directly with and assist inpatients at both Royal Perth Hospital and Bentley Health Service to provide them with legal advice and assistance. The lawyers attend the hospitals once a week to provide free legal advice to inpatients who have been referred to them via an internal process administered by the hospital caregivers. The lawyers are able to assist with legal matters that affect vulnerable patients, including debts, tenancy, National Disability Insurance Scheme appeals, mortgage stress, guardianship and administration, and Centrelink debts and eligibility issues.

The genesis of the idea goes back to 2013 when Legal Aid WA learned of similar health justice partnerships operating in other parts of the country achieving excellent outcomes for patients. A growing body of evidence was showing that groups of people are vulnerable to intersecting legal and health problems, but are unlikely to turn to legal services for solutions. After looking into whether the model could be used in Western Australia, it was discovered that the Health Services Act 2016 enabled only health services to operate out of public health facilities in WA. Although the Cook government set about introducing an amendment to the act, Legal Aid continued to engage with hospitals, including at Royal Perth and Bentley, and used the time to negotiate and draft a memorandum of understanding that was ready to be executed as soon as the amendment passed earlier this year.

By partnering with health services and hospitals in the metropolitan area, people now have access to help for their legal problems when and where they need it. HJPs provide integrated health and legal care for individual clients and enable health and legal practitioners and services to provide more holistic person-centred care. More broadly, HJPs improve the health and wellbeing of communities. I commend Legal Aid Western Australia and our health services for this innovative program and I congratulate Legal Aid WA and the East Metropolitan Health Service on officially launching this important service.

MULTICULTURAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [9.06 am]: I am pleased to present to the house the *Western Australian multicultural policy framework: Implementation update (June 2023)*. As members are aware, the Western Australian multicultural policy framework was launched in 2020 to support our Labor government's vision of an inclusive and harmonious society. The framework builds on the principles of the *WA charter of multiculturalism*—civic values, fairness, equality and participation. These principles ensure that we are responding to the needs of all Western Australians regardless of country of origin or cultural background so that they can participate equitably in all aspects of our civic, cultural, social and economic life. The framework seeks to support this through three policy priority areas: harmonious and inclusive communities; culturally responsive policies, programs and services; and economic, social, cultural and civic participation.

I am proud to advise that 64 state government agencies, with support from the Office of Multicultural Interests, have now committed to implementing the framework by developing and actioning their multicultural plans. We have already seen our public sector agencies commit to 1 449 actions over the last financial year, addressing the three policy priorities. An increased focus has been placed on developing the cultural competency of public sector employees from frontline workers to executive leadership teams. Inclusive recruitment strategies have led to positive results in the diversification of the public sector workforce. Agencies have taken greater steps to acknowledge and celebrate cultural diversity both internally and with external stakeholders. Actions have included raising awareness of racial discrimination and unconscious bias and the promotion of intercultural understanding. There has also been a greater push towards identifying gaps in services and programs through reviews of current policies and processes, along with better application of culturally and linguistically diverse data standards. This first implementation report is encouraging but areas still need to be addressed. Areas of focus are improving the

accessibility of our services to ensure we can better reach and respond to the needs of our culturally diverse communities, and a greater effort to ensure equitable representation of people from CALD backgrounds at senior levels and on decision-making bodies.

The continued commitment and support for the full implementation of the WAMPF is essential to addressing these issues, but I am confident that we have a great foundation on which to build.

I now table a copy of the *Western Australian multicultural policy framework: Implementation update (June 2023)*, which is available on the OMI website.

[See paper [2428](#).]

SOCIAL HOUSING — INCOME ELIGIBILITY LIMITS

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [9.09 am]: I rise to update the house on the Cook government's commitment to providing safe and secure housing for our state's most vulnerable people. For the second time this year, we are increasing the income eligibility limits for social housing. The revisions will directly benefit both single-income and dual-income households, ensuring that individuals who rely solely on commonwealth statutory benefits without additional income sources will continue to meet the criteria for social housing assistance.

Specifically, the adjustments will result in a \$16 increase for single-income households and a \$21 increase for dual-income households, and are directly aligned with the upcoming 3.2 per cent increase in statutory commonwealth payments, including the single age, disability support and services pensions, along with the carer payment, that took effect from September 20 this year. It ensures that we can continue to support those receiving commonwealth payments, including those eligible for the aged and disability pension who may experience changes in income support rates.

The changes apply to both public housing and community housing when public housing income eligibility limits apply. I emphasise that this marks the fourth time that we have increased social housing eligibility limits since taking office. This track record highlights our commitment to ensuring that the most vulnerable members of the community have access to housing that is not only affordable but also sustainable. That is in stark contrast with the eight years under the previous Liberal–National government when social housing income eligibility limits remained stagnant; they were not increased. The Cook government remains committed to increasing the supply of housing across Western Australia, and as minister I will always explore every option available to do so.

HOUSING SUPPORT INDUSTRY — TRAINING

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [9.11 am]: The Cook government is taking steps to enhance training opportunities in the housing support industry by attracting new professionals to the field and upskilling existing workers. Housing support staff often work with vulnerable individuals facing homelessness, mental health challenges, domestic violence, financial stress or community disengagement. The certificate IV in housing empowers them to better support those individuals and aims to improve industry outcomes by enhancing asset management and tenant experiences. By offering the certificate at a reduced fee through the state government's Lower Fees, Local Skills program, training will become more accessible, especially for smaller regional providers and Aboriginal community housing organisations. The Lower Fees, Local Skills program reduces course fees by up to 72 per cent for 160 priority courses, many of which support the community services sector. This initiative is the result of a collaboration between Shelter WA, North Metropolitan TAFE, Community Skills WA, the Department of Training and Workforce Development, the Department of Communities and community housing organisations.

North Metropolitan TAFE will commence delivering the course in term 4 of 2023 to an initial cohort of over 40 existing workers. North Metro TAFE plans to adapt the course to meet local needs and offer customised work-based training across the state, including in regional Western Australia. Industry participants can nominate existing employees for the training by contacting Community Skills WA. The initiative represents the importance of workforce development in the housing sector and supports the delivery of safe and stable homes to Western Australia's most vulnerable individuals.

KEYSTART — APP

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [9.13 am]: I rise to update the house on an important announcement for all Keystart customers. Keystart is a low-deposit transitional lender supporting those with low deposits to get into a home sooner, and then refinance when the loan holder can do so. Keystart has launched its own app to support loan holders and it is available on the App Store and Google Play. It is all about giving home owners more control and understanding over their loans. It will make managing finances and the journey toward home ownership easier. Keystart is unique to the market in that it is not designed to have customers for the life of the loan. It wants them to transition to another lender when appropriate to do so, which is why the app provides an

important feature called an equity estimator. The equity estimator tells Keystart loan holders how much of their home they actually own and the percentage of equity they have in their property, keeping them informed of their transition towards refinancing.

What makes Keystart unique is that it helps many Western Australians get into their homes with lower deposits—sometimes as low as two per cent—and it does not require them to pay lenders' mortgage insurance. It has saved home owners tens of thousands of dollars, making the dream of affordable home ownership a reality. The new Keystart app is another step in our goal to make home ownership achievable for even more Western Australians and is putting the power back in the customer's hand. It is about providing a tool to help them make the best decisions on their home loan journey. As the Minister for Housing, I am strongly committed to supporting as many Western Australians into a home as possible, and I look forward to the Keystart app playing a role in empowering people on their path to home ownership.

ROCKINGHAM LAKES REGIONAL PARK — CAPE PERON A-CLASS RESERVE

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [9.15 am]: I rise to inform the house that the Cook Labor government has delivered on its commitment to protect 120 hectares of Cape Peron at Rockingham Lakes Regional Park through the creation of a new A-class reserve. I recently had the opportunity to join the member for Rockingham, who is in the chamber with us today, and parks and wildlife staff at Cape Peron to mark the official registration of the new park tenure. Cape Peron is well known for its protected beaches, limestone cliffs and panoramic views. It is well loved and highly valued by the community as a coastal park in an urban setting with significant environmental and heritage values. It supports a range of recreational activities with a network of scenic coastal pathways and nature viewing opportunities and is home to several clubs and community uses. The coastal area is also popular for fishing and snorkelling, and attracts more than 600 000 visits per annum. The member for Rockingham is often one of those visitors; she loves to recreate on Cape Peron when she has the time, as do other people in Rockingham.

The *Perth and Peel* 3.5 million land use planning and infrastructure frameworks identified 15 areas that required further detailed planning to determine whether any change to current land use or zonings was appropriate. A working group of stakeholders, supported by a community reference group, was established to determine the future use of Cape Peron. The working group made nine recommendations for Cape Peron, which were informed by extensive consultation. The four main concerns were protecting and enhancing environmental values, including creating an A-class reserve; better public access with improved amenities and facilities; recognition of Aboriginal and historic heritage and providing greater certainty about land tenure and land uses.

Much of the new A-class reserve directly adjoins Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, which allows integrated and seamless management of the marine and terrestrial protected areas. Additional areas may be added following future land use planning by government agencies and the City of Rockingham. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions will continue to manage the A-class reserve with consideration for the higher levels of protection that it is now afforded. I thank the former and current Ministers for Lands and Planning for their collaboration in securing this very important outcome for Rockingham and the region.

WAGE THEFT

Statement by Minister for Industrial Relations

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Industrial Relations) [9.18 am]: I wish to inform the house that in 2022–23, almost \$670 000 in unpaid wages and other entitlements was recovered by industrial inspectors on behalf of Western Australian workers. Industrial inspectors in the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety have statutory responsibility for enforcing state employment laws. In the last financial year, they recovered \$670 000 for 144 employees by conciliating and investigating complaints, as well as undertaking proactive audits in high-risk industries. Cafes and restaurants accounted for the largest percentage of wage underpayments, followed by retail shops and hairdressing establishments. Over 68 per cent of all moneys recovered were for unpaid long service leave, with the largest single amount recovered being \$45 500. Many employers fail to understand their long service leave obligations, especially when they purchase a business and thereupon become responsible for employees' long service leave.

As identified by the 2019 inquiry into wage theft in Western Australia conducted by Mr Tony Beech, industrial inspectors play a pivotal role in the fight against wage theft. Although most employers strive to do the right thing, there is a percentage who deliberately underpay their workers. Such businesses have no qualms about exploiting vulnerable employees and gaining an unfair competitive advantage over law-abiding businesses.

Wage theft business models are typically complex and multifaceted, but they are often characterised by certain behaviours. Failing to keep employment records is one such behaviour. Obstructing industrial inspectors in the performance of their functions is another. In 2022–23, the department obtained just over \$147 000 in court-imposed penalties against employers, mainly for obstruction and ignoring court orders to produce employment records. These are not employers who made an innocent mistake. They chose to flout the law.

Although it is disappointing that even one worker was underpaid, I am pleased that industrial inspectors were able to assist 144 workers receive their correct entitlements last financial year. Inspectors will continue to target high-risk industries in 2023–24, with a focus on disrupting wage theft business models.

GOLD CORPORATION — ANNUAL REPORT

Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [9.21 am]: I am pleased to inform the house of the significant achievements of Gold Corporation, outlined in its annual report for 2022–23. Trading as Perth Mint, Gold Corporation is a vertically integrated precious metals business, employing more than 700 Western Australians. Gold Corporation provides vital support for Australia's gold industry, and delivers income to the state through its value-added precious metal products.

Although the impacts of COVID-19 have largely abated, demand for Gold Corporation products has been resilient on the back of inflation, geopolitical conflict and bank failures in the United States and Europe. In the last financial year, Gold Corporation produced positive annual results, with turnover of \$23.19 billion and profit before tax of \$52.67 million. In 2022–23, Gold Corporation continued to be a trusted partner to Australia's gold industry, and the nation's pre-eminent gold refiner. Seventy-eight per cent of all new doré from gold mined in Australia was refined by Gold Corporation. That is a testament to the high regard in which Gold Corporation is held by the industry.

Although precious metal transactions comprise most of the reported turnover, it is the sale of value-added coins and products that underpins the profitability of Gold Corporation. Gold Corporation produced 114 releases of Australian legal tender coins and 82 releases of Tuvalu legal tender coins and medallions. These products are locally designed, tooled and minted by Perth Mint employees in East Perth. They are highly regarded and sought after by customers around the world. More than 19 million coins and minted products were sold in 2022–23, which demonstrates the excellent global reputation of the Perth Mint's name. Sales to the United States were particularly buoyant and sales to Germany remained strong despite changes to the tax treatment of silver coin imports.

Closer to home, Gold Corporation continues to play its role in promoting WA as a premier tourist destination. After three years of COVID-19 disruptions, Gold Corporation's exhibition tour attracted almost 79 000 local and international visitors, the best result since 2013. In addition to its financial performance, Gold Corporation has continued to strengthen its anti-money laundering systems. Gold Corporation has worked cooperatively with Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre and the external auditor, and submitted its final report in July.

Gold Corporation is making excellent progress on its AML remediation program, which is driving a major uplift in capability across the business. I am proud that the Cook government has funded this program to the tune of \$34 million. I congratulate everyone at Gold Corporation on their outstanding work this year. I look forward to continuing to work together to deliver value for the gold industry and the wider Western Australian community.

GOLD CORPORATION — MANAGEMENT

Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [9.23 am]: I am very pleased to inform the house that Gold Corporation has a new chief executive officer. From 20 November 2023, Mr Paul Graham will take the reins, following the departure of Jason Waters. Mr Graham is an accomplished executive leader with more than 30 years' experience in financial and commodity markets. He has broad experience in government, most recently as the CEO of Keystart. As members know, Keystart is a transitional lender owned by the WA government. Under Mr Graham's leadership, Keystart has helped thousands of Western Australians get into their own homes. Mr Graham has overseen Keystart's transformation into a modern digital business, which will hold him in good stead at Gold Corporation. Mr Graham will continue the process of modernisation commenced by Jason Waters, including the implementation of Gold Corporation's fully funded anti-money laundering remediation program. Mr Graham brings a valuable skill set to Gold Corporation, and I am very pleased to have him on board.

Finally, I thank Jason Waters for his leadership of Gold Corporation. Mr Waters' achievements as CEO are formidable. He has worked proactively to address historical issues and has commenced the process of modernising Gold Corporation. Gold Corporation has faced some significant challenges over the past 18 months, which Jason has handled with focus and professionalism. One aspect that I particularly appreciated was Jason's concern for the wellbeing of the 700 Western Australians who work at Gold Corporation, who endured relentless criticism from some quarters, often without evidence. Jason's service at Gold Corporation capped off a long career in WA's public sector, including eight years as CEO of Synergy. I congratulate Jason on his achievements, and I wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT — MURRAY–WELLINGTON

Grievance

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [9.25 am]: I thank Minister Saffioti for the opportunity to express the concerns raised by the constituents of Murray–Wellington about the lack of public transport. I understand it

can be a challenge to meet the public transport needs of regional communities. It can be difficult to provide regular public transport when there are lots of small communities with large distances between them. For example, in my electorate of Murray–Wellington, there are 50 towns, with the majority needing some form of transport to move between them. More importantly, services are very limited in the region, with the only major shopping centre being in Pinjarra. Waroona has an IGA, Carcoola has no shops at all and Coolup has a small general store. Moving further south, there are only IGA stores.

Over the years, I have heard consistent concerns from my constituents about the limited public transport available to them. Following their ongoing feedback, I wanted to hear directly from these communities about the challenges and how services could be improved to assist them getting to essential services, going shopping and attending medical and job provider appointments. We conducted a survey throughout the Shire of Murray to hear from constituents directly. We doorknocked and called Pinjarra, South Yunderup, Ravenswood, Carcoola and Coolup to ensure that we captured as much information about the issues as possible.

The feedback was clear: our community wants and needs further transport options. Residents expressed concerns about the infrequency of the current service and the route the service takes. That was much of the feedback we received. Currently, most services go up Pinjarra Road instead of through residential areas such as Ravenswood and South Yunderup. From the beginning this has not just been about convenience; it has been about ensuring our residents can access shops, essential medical services, job opportunities and work. Many in the community have voiced their transportation challenges, especially those in Carcoola. Without a car, many families and young people undoubtedly find it tough to reach essential places like the Pinjarra town centre, medical facilities or even a local shopping area. What might seem like a necessity to most is sadly lacking for many residents in Murray–Wellington. We estimated it was around a five-kilometre walk to the nearest bus stop in South Yunderup, which only has one early morning and one afternoon bus service.

Ravenswood is a growing community and it also has its challenges, with the only bus stop out on Pinjarra Road. There is a retirement village at the back of Ravenswood estate that has over 400 residents. When I met with a group of them to discuss transport issues, they overwhelmingly said that if a bus service came through Ravenswood, they would not be able to access that service as it was too far to walk to Pinjarra Road to the only bus stop.

Furthermore, we have a beautiful region in Pinjarra for tourists to discover, with historical buildings, gorgeous specialty shops and antique shops. Our historic Exchange Hotel will soon be restored to its former glory, offering a great place to stop and have a meal and drink with friends. It would be a great opportunity to have a Saturday bus service from Mandurah to Pinjarra so people from Perth could catch a train to Mandurah, jump on a bus to Pinjarra and spend a few hours discovering a hidden gem of a town. Then would then use a return service after enjoying a great day out on the two-zone capped fare. Pinjarra has so much to offer for a great family day out or for east coast and overseas tourists.

Although I had not surveyed the Shire of Waroona, I became increasingly aware that there was a need for some form of public transport service for the people of Waroona. They were aware of the survey and interested in having their voices heard. Bronwyn Chomppff-Gliddon, one of our Waroona residents, highlighted during this year's budget breakfast in South Yunderup with Minister Templeman that Waroona was a growing region. Young families are moving there and teenagers have the added challenge of not being able to get work outside the town or attend job provider appointments to help them secure work. She mentioned the real problem of young people stuck without options for work or further tertiary studies due to this transport issue. Our youth are particularly affected. Without reliable public transport, many find themselves unable to access further education beyond year 12 unless they own their own vehicle. This lack of access to education and job opportunities is leading to higher youth unemployment in the region. It is known that the Peel region has the highest youth unemployment in the state. Similarly, our senior residents are struggling to reach vital health services, attend specialist appointments or even complete simple tasks like grocery shopping.

In several of our surveys, people shared similar challenges they face due to a lack of transport. For instance, one of our constituents, a 22-year-old young lady from Carcoola, was excited about a part-time job offer in community services in Mandurah. However, she had to decline it because she did not have her own vehicle at the time. A 72-year-old Ravenswood resident needed regular physiotherapy sessions after knee surgery. With no family nearby and unreliable public transport, he often missed his appointments, slowing down his recovery. Moreover, a young family from South Yunderup with two children with special needs encountered significant challenges. Although they managed to secure vital therapy sessions for their two children, the absence of reliable transport often led them to miss these critical appointments, impacting their children's development and wellbeing. These are not just isolated incidents; they reflect broader challenges many people in Murray–Wellington face. The lack of transport, especially in isolated areas, disproportionately affects residents from lower socio-economic backgrounds, leading to even greater challenges. It is clear that we need change. Better bus routes and more frequent services are essential, not just for convenience, but for our community's wellbeing so that families and individuals can access essential services and medical appointments. Let us not forget about those with special needs. It is also important for young individuals seeking employment opportunities and pursuing education. Furthermore, it will help our local economy by opening tourism opportunities, allowing visitors to explore our beautiful region.

I ask the minister whether there is any possibility of reviewing the bus services for the Shire of Murray, making them more frequent and adding a possible Saturday service going into the suburbs of Ravenswood and South Yunderup. Is there any possible way of utilising a service, even a limited service, for Waroona, Coolup and Carcoola? I thank the minister for her attention to this critical matter.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Transport) [9.32 am]: I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for her grievance. The member has, as always, been very active in representing her community. Over the past few months we have seen her raise a lot of different issues in this place, such as road safety and keeping assets like the *Australind* in the area for tourism purposes. Whether it is road safety, economic development or public transport, she is actively representing her constituents.

With all bus services, particularly in these areas, it is always hard to find the right balance between frequency of service and demand for services. As the member outlined, she undertook a lot of consultation with her community earlier this year. We have received very clear feedback through the member that people want more services and to connect into Mandurah and surrounding areas. Of course, while we introduce the new locally made *Australind* and rebuild the Armadale rail line, *Australind* services will be suspended from 20 November. Given the impact of the closure and all the other issues the member raised, following her representations I asked the Public Transport Authority to look at the bus services in the member's electorate, particularly communities connected to Mandurah and other options for residents to get into Mandurah and to catch the Mandurah rail line.

Following discussions the member has had with my office and my team, I am pleased to announce that the Public Transport Authority is planning to commence two 12-month trial services to improve access to public transport in the member's electorate. The first trial service, starting on Tuesday, 21 November 2023, will see an increase in the frequency of the Waroona–Pinjarra shopper service. This service currently operates once a week, and travels from Waroona to Carcoola into Pinjarra, travelling on to Mandurah, including a stop at Peel Health Campus. From 21 November, we will double the frequency of that service, which will operate twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays all year round, including school holidays, excluding public holidays. In addition, Coolup residents will benefit from the introduction of a stop on the service at Enzo Menara Reserve in Coolup. This change will improve access to shopping and medical services for Coolup, Pinjarra, Carcoola and Waroona residents, allowing them to travel into Mandurah for appointments, or have a day to do their shopping.

The second service route improvement we will introduce is an upgrade to the 600 bus service, which travels between Mandurah and Pinjarra. From Monday, 18 December 2023, the start of the Christmas school holidays, there will be an increase in the frequency of services, particularly in peak times, with the introduction of a much-requested Saturday bus service for Pinjarra residents. Each week an additional 44 trips will operate, improving service frequency and capacity, with 14 trips on the new Saturday service to improve access to services and employment in Mandurah. The drafted timetable will allow students or young people who work in Mandurah to catch a bus to and from work. It has been designed around the opening hours of places like Mandurah Forum. The bus route will also be altered to better serve the community in Ravenswood, with the new route travelling into the community, instead of just travelling down Pinjarra Road, improving access to bus stops for residents. The new timetable will also improve access for those living in South Yunderup, including additional services to Austin Cove Baptist College. A weekday return trip to the Murray River Country Estate will be introduced during school holidays as will two trips in each direction on Saturdays to the Austin Lakes Estate. The timetables for these services are being finalised and will be made publicly available within the next few weeks. These changes will operate as a 12-month trial, so we can monitor patronage and make sure that these services are appropriate for the demand from the member's community.

I am glad the member raised this issue today, that she has sought feedback from her community and worked constructively with both my agency and office to deliver improved services. I know that she is very passionate about making sure everyone in her community has access to services and work opportunities. We will continue to work with her to make sure that everyone in her community has access to transport and employment opportunities.

OLD CABLE STATION — COTTESLOE

Grievance

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [9.37 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Lands. I thank the minister for taking my grievance. My grievance relates to the proposed amendment to the metropolitan region scheme that seeks to rezone lot 556 Curtin Avenue. That lot is locally referred to as the Old Cable Station and includes the surrounding bushland. As the minister knows, I have given a similar grievance to the previous two ministers. It is very important and I hope the minister is aware of the information relating to this site. The site is owned by the state government and is listed on the state Register of Heritage Places. In more recent times, the buildings on the site were occupied by the former Department for Child Protection and Family Support until 2016 and known as the McCall Centre.

The purpose of the amendment is to transfer approximately 8 028 square metres of land in Cottesloe from the public purposes–special uses reservation to the urban zone in the metropolitan region scheme. The proposed urban zoning will enable the sale and redevelopment of the land. It has been stated that the rezoning will allow for the renewal and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings on it. This proposal has been with the Department of Planning,

Lands and Heritage for some time, and public submissions closed in April 2022. It has been some 18 months since then and the local community is becoming anxious to hear what the government proposes for this site. I have raised this matter before, but I consider it sufficiently important to raise it with the new Minister for Planning; Lands to ensure the minister is aware of community concerns relating to redevelopment of the site. I hope community concerns are considered by the minister when decisions are made.

I want to make it very clear that I am not opposing the redevelopment of this site, and, like up the coast, it may be a site that is appropriate for some apartment developments. The preservation and redevelopment of the Old Cable Station would, if done properly, provide a community benefit, especially if any redevelopment is designed to draw people to the area. However, there is considerable community concern about the potential of land sales and development destroying the critical bushland and heritage that exists on lot 556. That is a concern I share.

A local community group Friends of Mosman Park Bushland, with the support of the Cottesloe Coastcare Association and both the Mosman Park and Cottesloe Residents and Ratepayers Associations, has advocated that the land around the Old Cable Station should be preserved from redevelopment. The bushland within lot 556 forms a crucial part of the green link that exists between the Indian Ocean at Mosman Beach and the Swan River at Milo Beach. The river to beach ecological link is unique in Western Australia and in Perth and has become known as Vlamingh Parklands. This link comprises Garungup Park, Minim Cove Park and the Chidley Point Reserve Bush Forever site. The unique tract of bushland provides a vital ecological link for rare and endangered flora and fauna that is unbroken by significant residential or commercial development. The area also provides a critical habitat for native fauna.

In that regard, I draw the minister's attention to the thriving colony of quenda at Minim Cove and the 18 bird species that use the bushland and associated water bodies. These include the white-browed scrubwren, the forest red-tailed and Carnaby's black-cockatoos, and the locally rare variegated fairy-wren. Of special interest is the rainbow bee-eater, a migratory bird that uses this area as its metropolitan habitats are vanishing. As the minister would be aware, small animals require nearly continuous bush coverage as they migrate. The existing bush link protects these native birds and mammals from predatory birds, cats and foxes by providing them with vital bush cover. Thus, as a vital remaining habitat for locally rare bird species and other small native fauna, it is vital that the Vlamingh Parklands ecological link remains protected. Although the area around the Old Cable Station itself is dominated by introduced Victorian tea-trees, the densely packed understory these trees provide creates an ideal breeding and feeding ground for small birds, particularly the white-browed scrubwren and the variegated fairy-wren.

Volunteers from Friends of Mosman Park Bushland, in conjunction with the Town of Mosman Park, have done an outstanding job progressively restoring and replanting the bushland through that area with endemic native flora. Therefore, the existence of some introduced flora around the Old Cable Station cannot, in good faith, be used as a justification for the destruction of this environmentally critical ecological link. The introduced flora has benefited the fauna as it provides a key breeding habitat and there is a demonstrated will and capacity within the community to progressively restore diverse indigenous flora to the bushland. If the whole area is sold for commercial development, the opportunity to maintain this unique ecological link between the river and the ocean—an ecological connection that protects and provides habitats for our local native flora and fauna—will be lost forever. I sincerely ask the minister to ensure that any development on lot 556 preserves enough bushland to ensure that the Vlamingh Parklands ecological link continues to function as a fauna habitat.

As per the *Leighton regional planning guidelines*, published in 2000, lot 556 is within the coastal foreshore reserve. Typically, a setback zone of 125 metres from the high-water mark is recommended. The setback creates a buffer against future coastal erosion and, for this reason, should not be built upon. That is certainly occurring to the south-west of the Old Cable Station. Lot 556 starts at just 60 metres from the high-tide mark of an already eroding Mosman Beach. At some points along Curtin Avenue, there is as little as 40 metres to the high-water mark. In light of the erosion that is already occurring, the setback requirements must be considered in the development of the link.

The bush near the Old Cable Station is adjacent to the Vlamingh Memorial, reportedly the place where Europeans first landed in the Perth area in 1697. It is a significant historical site that should be maintained. Moreover, the area has a rich Aboriginal heritage. The site adjoins the heritage-listed Aboriginal camp at Minim Cove. Numerous Aboriginal artefacts have been found in the area and the limestone rocks and the reef immediately adjacent to that area have ceremonial significance to local Aboriginal people. There is also the mythological story about the seven hills in the area.

I appreciate that this site is an appropriate site for certain developments, but I implore the minister to give good consideration to maintaining the critical bush link in any redevelopment that occurs on the site.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Lands) [9.44 am]: I thank the member for his question. The member has given some history to the site. As people know, this land is owned by the state government. As the member identified, the land is occupied by the former Cottesloe cable station, which I note is on the state Register of Heritage Places. The buildings are currently unoccupied.

When giving consideration to a site or precinct it is the normal process to look at the zoning. If we wish to renew the site in any regard, we will give serious consideration to the zone. That is what the Western Australian Planning

Commission has done. Before my time, it initiated a metropolitan region scheme amendment to rezone the site from a public purposes special use reservation to an urban zone. The idea behind that is that we facilitate some renewal of the precinct and, obviously, also the heritage-listed buildings, and activate the site through adaptive re-use.

As the member noted, that amendment went out to consultation. It generated strong interest and there were 270 submissions. There was a two-month period for public comment. I want to be very clear that the time frame taken is to be expected because scheme amendments and future planning of any precinct can take time. This is normal. I understand that the community may want things to move quicker, but things have to go through particular processes. It has done that. For example, the WAPC did advertise an amendment report that stated that a coastal hazard setback assessment was prepared for the site and it indicated that the site was not likely to be impacted by coastal processes over the 100-year planning time frame. As such, the proposed amendment is consistent with the requirements of the state planning policy 2.6 for coastal planning.

The member mentioned Aboriginal heritage. The site does intersect with two Aboriginal heritage sites. Noting that we are currently going through the Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation, should the bill pass, any proponent or landowner would of course require an approval under proposed section 18 of the act before commencing any work. I want to note that the process of rezoning the land—the MRS amendment—is in itself not directly affected by the Aboriginal Heritage Act as changes to land use within that amendment are broad in nature and obviously do not physically interfere with the land.

Regarding conservation, this proposed amendment was referred to the Environmental Protection Authority for advice to see if an environmental assessment would be required. However, the EPA advised that the proposed amendment did not require formal assessment under the Environmental Protection Act. It advised that the site contained some remnant vegetation that could be considered in any future redevelopment of the site. I will wait for the advice of the WAPC and give careful consideration to a range of different policies, including the *State planning policy 2.8: Bushland policy for the Perth metropolitan region*, and any other relevant policies.

I want to be clear about what we imagine for the site into the future. I think everyone agrees that we would like to see re-use of the heritage buildings. Beyond that, I will wait and see. However, I want to say something about the design. Yesterday, the member respectfully had a crack at me and the government about it. I can actually point to a number of design reforms that will assist with any potential renewal of this precinct. In 2019, we brought in *State planning policy 7.0—Design of the built environment*. That is the lead policy that elevates the importance of design quality. We brought in a state design review panel for major development proposals. We brought in a design review guide for local governments. We brought in the state planning policy precinct design that provides guidance on good design, planning, assessment and implementation of precinct structure plans, local development plans and subdivision in the areas identified as precincts. I would suggest that that precinct design approach would be applied for any considerations for the renewal of this precinct. Of course, one that I personally worked on as the parliamentary secretary is the state planning policy 7.3 for the design of apartments and buildings. That demonstrates that we have made a breadth of changes and reforms, which I have personally worked on, to improve design outcomes for precincts like this in Western Australia.

I want to end on this: people see the word “urban”, but under a metropolitan region scheme amendment, urban can cover a large number of purposes. Obviously, it can be residential, civic or public open space, and it can be a mix of difference uses. I am not jumping the gun here. I will wait for the advice of the Western Australian Planning Commission. However, I note that under the previous minister and now me, the government is working for better precinct design.

CLIMATE CHANGE — IMPACT — PERTH AND PEEL REGION

Grievance

MR P. LILBURNE (Carine) [9.51 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Climate Action; Environment concerning the impacts of climate change right here in the Perth and Peel region, and I thank Minister Whitby for taking my grievance. Unfolding before our eyes in our beloved capital city are numerous matters. It is not just a matter of environmental concern; it is a matter of our future, our wellbeing and our responsibility to act. Our capital city of Perth is known for its natural beauty and unique biodiversity, but our precious environment is facing a crisis like never before and we cannot afford to turn a blind eye. The time for action is now. There is no doubt that rising temperatures have become an undeniable reality. We endure prolonged heatwaves that not only affect our daily lives, but also strain our energy resources as we desperately seek relief from the scorching sun. Our once-reliable water resources are dwindling. Prolonged droughts and diminishing rainfall mean less run off, and drinking water reservoirs are under pressure. The implications are here, and they are affecting our agriculture, drinking water supply and the sustainability of our region.

The threat of bushfires looms larger than ever. Higher temperatures and drier conditions have elevated the risk of catastrophic bushfires, threatening lives, homes and our natural environment. We have seen the devastation that bushfire can cause in Western Australia and even in my electorate of Carine—a thoroughly suburban electorate that has experienced bushfires such as the one that hit Star Swamp Bushland Reserve last year. I supported my

fellow neighbours along Marmion Avenue in Marmion and North Beach on the day of the fire and can attest to the ferocity of the fire and the enormous effort needed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to contain the blaze. The resilience of the native flora species and the fauna that includes the endangered native quenda, and my neighbours' endurance, is amazing.

We must act to prevent future tragedies. As sea levels rise, our coastal areas bear the brunt. My electorate is lucky to include some magnificent stretches of coastline, including Sorrento, Marmion, Watermans Bay and North Beach. Erosion is causing damage to vital infrastructure. The threat to our coastal communities is all too real. In my electorate my constituents and I have witnessed significant sand erosion and movement at Sorrento Beach that has impacted on the local flora and the physical structure and stability of the primary dune systems. We cannot ignore these impending challenges. Perhaps most tragically, our unique ecosystems are under threat. Climate change disrupts our flora and fauna, endangering not only our environment but also the tourism industry that relies on the beauty of our natural landscapes. We cannot stand idly by while our city, our home, is threatened.

It is unfortunate, although not surprising, that the impacts of climate change have only been exacerbated by the complete inaction of the coalition at the federal level of government and the confusion it created when it last held office in WA. The former Barnett government even sent bulldozers to destroy the ancient and unique ecology and Aboriginal heritage of the Beeliiar wetlands. There have been backflips on energy policy, which means the business sector has no confidence in how it should proceed. There has been significant opposition to net zero targets and continued dispute of the human cause of climate change. There has been much inaction and confusion and many missed opportunities, mistakes and misinformation. The incompetence of the previous government was astounding, leaving our government to play catch-up once again.

Thank goodness we now have a federal and a state Labor government that take climate change seriously. Climate change is a global issue; therefore, we must all do our part to be part of the solution. Thankfully, our state is one of the best equipped places in the world to lead the future green economy. It is a collaborative effort and our government continues to support amazing community-led initiatives and action on the ground. Perth is more than just a city; it is a community, a sanctuary of natural beauty and home to more than two million people. It is our duty to protect it for ourselves and for generations to come. I ask the minister to please explain what the impact of climate change is having in these regions and outline the steps the Cook government is taking to further climate action in Western Australia. I again thank the minister for taking my grievance.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Climate Action) [9.57 am]: I thank the member for Carine for his grievance and for realising, as many others do, that climate change, while a global challenge, has direct impacts on the communities in which we live at a very local level. As the member for Carine pointed out, climate change presents huge challenges for our community—from declining rainfall and drought, to longer and hotter summers, extended bushfire seasons, which we are about to enter, and increased coastal erosion, which is an issue for the member's electorate. The Perth and Peel region is famous for a Mediterranean climate, but the climate we love so much is at the forefront of climate change. The frequency of summer heatwaves and prolonged drought periods has increased in recent decades.

Perth has seen a doubling of days hotter than 40 degrees Celsius and a 1.5 times increase in heatwave events when comparing historical and current periods. Our region has experienced climate-induced drying at one of the fastest rates in the world and it is projected that it will continue to dry. Along with the reduction in rainfall, we are seeing shifts in rainfall seasonality. Since 1970, our rainfall has declined 20 per cent. The wetlands in our region are particularly vulnerable to climate change through impacts on water depths and water quality, including acidification. Star Swamp Bushland Reserve, a class-A reserve in the Carine electorate, with which I am familiar—as a kid growing up in Warwick I used to go down to Star Swamp—features a semipermanent freshwater lake, paperbark trees, banksia, tuart, jarrah and marri woodlands. It is home to at least 209 native floras, a breeding site and sanctuary for over 65 species of birds, and is the vital habitat for numerous other species including the threatened quenda that the member for Carine mentioned.

Building the resilience of Australia's biodiversity, including threatened species and ecological communities, is key to helping retain the capacity to adapt to a shifting climate and withstanding a range of current and emerging future threats. Western Australia's well-managed and comprehensive conservation reserve system supports resilience and mitigates adverse impacts on biodiversity assets that may arise from climate change. The management of conservation reserves also supports climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration and emissions reduction. We know that climate change is also increasing the likelihood and consequences of extreme bushfire events such as the bushfire in Star Swamp Reserve in March. Eliminating the occurrence of bushfires is not possible, but adaption and mitigation efforts, including fuel management, are proven approaches to managing and reducing risk. Prescribed burning is the primary tool to reduce fuel loads and protect communities and biodiversity values from the devastating impacts of large, intense summer bushfires. I might add that it is our protection for saving lives and property as well. Current and future investment in fire management is critical to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate risk.

Without a doubt, the member's electorate of Carine is home to some of our most beautiful beaches, apart from maybe Rockingham and other parts! But these beaches, marine environments and fisheries are affected by rising

average sea surface temperatures, which can be devastating, and coastal erosion. An assessment completed in 2019 by the Department of Transport and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage identified 15 coastal erosion hotspots in the Perth metropolitan area, including the Marmion Angling and Aquatic Club seawall in Waterman's Bay. The member is seeing the effects of coastal erosion at his front door. DPLH manages the hotspot coastal adaptation protection grant scheme that is aimed to address coastal hazards, and there is \$33.5 million over the next five years for Coast WA programs to fight erosion, build local capacity in managing coastal hazards and protect Western Australia's coastline.

The Cook Labor government is taking action on climate change and transitioning to a clean-energy economy. The Western Australian climate policy was released in November 2020, underscoring our commitment to work with all sectors of the economy to achieve net zero emissions in 2050. The climate policy includes action to transition public sector agencies to net zero emissions and prepare Western Australia's electricity network, which is critical for the transition to net zero, and develop strategies to guide emissions reductions across other key sectors. In June last year, we announced a state target to reduce emissions from government operations by 80 per cent below the 2020 levels by 2030. We are ending coal power in WA through a \$3.8 billion investment in new green power infrastructure in the south west interconnected system, which will include wind generation and storage to replace fossil fuel energy sources. The member for Collie–Preston knows very well the great investment we have made in her community to assist with that transition. In July this year, the Cook government released Western Australia's climate adaptation strategy, prioritising 37 actions to ensure that our communities and the economy are resilient to the risks posed by climate change. Around \$40 million has been allocated in this year's state budget to deliver this strategy, which will prepare our state for the climate of the future. Sectoral emissions reduction strategies are being developed in consultation with business, industry, research institutions and the community to identify robust and credible emissions reduction pathways to transition our economy to net zero emissions.

Our green energy approvals unit is up and running to help streamline renewable energy and decarbonisation projects across the state. More than \$60 million has been allocated to grant programs that are focused on reducing emissions and addressing climate change, including our Clean Energy Future Fund, the carbon innovation grants program, the Western Australian carbon farming and land restoration program, and the WA renewable hydrogen fund. The government is investing more than \$80 million in the state electric vehicle strategy to support the uptake of electric vehicles.

Addressing climate change for a cleaner, more sustainable environment continues to be a very high priority for the Cook government. I am proud of what we are doing, but I realise that we have important challenges ahead to deal with. I look forward to our team delivering more on our commitments as a government. I would like to finish by thanking the member for Carine for his commitment to his community and for his ongoing support and advocacy for climate action.

VISITORS — PENRHOS COLLEGE

Statement by Acting Speaker

THE ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk) [10.04 am]: Before I call the member for Vasse, I welcome the students from Penrhos College who are in the gallery.

ELECTIVE SURGERY — CHILDREN — WAIT TIMES

Grievance

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [10.04 am]: My grievance is to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health. I thank the parliamentary secretary for taking my grievance that relates to the extraordinary blowout in wait times for children in need of elective surgery in Western Australia's public health system. I am raising this grievance on behalf of the many parents who have been in contact with my office with concerns around this issue. As the parliamentary secretary would appreciate, there are few issues that mean more to Western Australians than the health and wellbeing of their children. As we have seen this week, these concerns about extended wait times are backed up in the Child and Adolescent Health Service's annual report, which was tabled in this place this week. It states that the number of children waiting more than the recommended month for category 1 surgery—the most urgent surgery category—has doubled from one in 20 to one in 10 in the past year. Two in five children who require category 3 surgeries are waiting more than a year to receive their surgery.

When questioned in this place yesterday about the waitlist, it was distressing to hear the Minister for Health claim that the waitlists were due to events outside her control; namely, a 10-year upward trend in demand for children's surgery and a lack of staff. These may be contributing factors, but I also suggest that they were foreseeable. Given our increasing population and the upward trend in demand over such a long period, it is fair to ask why the government has not addressed these issues sooner. For almost seven of the past 10 years, the Cook Labor government and former McGowan government have been in the driving seat of this state. Most people recognise that it takes time to ramp-up health services to meet the changes in demand, but telling this place that over seven years and with \$7 billion in budget surpluses over the past three years is not long enough is difficult to accept.

I raise this grievance today in a genuine attempt to ascertain what other measures are being considered, if any, by this government and how it plans to reduce these over-boundary waitlists for children's surgery as a matter of urgency. It is not enough to simply blame the workforce shortage if the government is not pulling all levers and putting all options on the table. These surgeries, although elective, are not optional extras. Any delay, particularly in category 1 surgeries, can lead to life-threatening emergencies. We also know that the longer than recommended wait times for surgeries for less urgent conditions can also lead to poorer health outcomes and behavioural and learning issues.

I am raising this grievance on behalf of children such as four-year-old Tobias and his two-and-a-half-year-old sister Davina from Port Kennedy. Tobias and Davina have been waiting three years and 18 months, respectively, for surgery for hearing loss. During that wait, Davina had to be fitted with a hearing aid and Tobias has experienced issues with his speech and motor skills. Their mother, Shannon Cowan, confirmed yesterday that both children have been scheduled for surgery on 7 December. As an early childhood worker herself, she said that she is very concerned about the potential for long-term speech problems for both children.

This grievance is also on behalf of Melissa Harris and her four-year-old son, Lucas, who has waited three years to finally—just two days ago—have surgery for hearing loss, which had been diagnosed as fluid behind the eardrum, only to be told after the surgery that fluid did not appear to be the problem. After a three-year delay, doctors will now have to begin investigating to look for another cause for his hearing loss. She is understandably gutted at the lost time for her little boy, who she feels will be permanently impacted by the effects of this hearing loss.

As the parliamentary secretary would appreciate, these are real parents feeling real and ongoing anguish for their children. We know that Western Australia is in the best financial position of all the states in the nation. The government says that was achieved by the government's efforts alone over the past seven years, but somehow, over seven years, the same government has not been able to organise kids to have life-changing surgery within the medically recommended time frame.

The Minister for Health has also raised the challenge of attracting staff. Although that is a recognised challenge, it is fair to say that the government must do more to be an employer of choice for health workers so that it can compete better with other states. The ongoing dispute with Western Australia's nurses has highlighted the poor relationship between the government and this valuable workforce. If our nurses are the lowest paid in the country, we will not be able to attract nurses from either interstate or overseas, or it will be significantly challenging. We know that this was not always the case. When the McGowan government was elected in 2017, our nurses were the highest paid in the nation. That is something Labor has been able to turn around in seven years. As the wealthiest state in the nation, it is concerning that there is a lack of incentives for health workers at a time when our health system is going from crisis to crisis and we are seeing such concerning outcomes. I appreciate the parliamentary secretary taking the time to take this grievance on behalf of the Minister for Health. I welcome his response and an outline of how his government will address the concerns that we have heard from parents such as Shannon Cowan and Melissa Harris.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.10 am]: I thank the member for Vasse for her grievance. In particular, I thank the member for the way in which she couched the grievance—I do not mean to misquote her—as a genuine attempt to see what is being considered and to question what levers are being pulled and what options are on the table. I appreciate the member couching her grievance in those terms, because what I hope to do in my response this morning is to give her an indication of the genuine attempts the government is making. As the member for Vasse said, this is a complicated situation, but she can rest assured that the government is looking at a range of remedies to address the challenges we are facing in the health portfolio.

I start by thanking the member for Vasse for making her grievance to me and advise the chamber that the Minister for Health asked me to take this grievance as she is away from the chamber to attend a meeting of state and territory health ministers. I thank the member for Vasse for her indulgence. The other reason I wanted to raise that is that some of the issues that have been raised are being dealt with on a national basis. The minister is advocating on behalf of the Western Australian community and consumers of Western Australian health services to make sure that other states are appreciative of the situation in which Western Australia has been placed and that the federal government completely understands the role it will need to play in alleviating some of the pressure on the WA health system. In that regard, I am talking about proper funding for disability care through the National Disability Insurance Scheme and proper funding for aged care. Long-stay patients are stuck in our hospitals and should be getting discharged into aged-care and disability facilities. They are taking up beds when that is not clinically indicated, and their health outcomes are not optimal because they are in that situation. One thing the government has been working on, and on which I have been working in particular as the chair of the Ministerial Advisory Panel on Aged Care, is how we can expedite the discharge of aged-care patients into aged-care facilities.

I want to go through some of the comments the Premier made in his response during question time yesterday, because it is important to recognise that this government has actually reduced the number of over-boundary cases—a term that both the member for Vasse and I are using. For the purposes of anyone reading *Hansard*, when I talk about over-boundary cases, I mean patients who are waiting longer than clinically recommended for their urgency category.

The member for Vasse mentioned that category 1 surgery has a one-month indicated wait time. The Cook Labor government has reduced the number of over-boundary cases—that is, cases in which patients are waiting longer than the clinically preferred number of days—by 36 per cent, and has reduced the elective surgery waitlist by another 12 per cent. We have also just completed the highest number of elective surgeries a month for March, May and August, with a total of 49 514 surgeries.

In addition to discharging aged-care and disability-care patients from hospitals, we need to focus on reducing ambulance ramping. The minister has adopted a laser-like focus on tackling ambulance ramping. As members have previously heard, the Cook Labor government has reduced ambulance ramping by 30 per cent. One of the first things the Minister for Health did when she was appointed to the role was to convene a ministerial taskforce—the health emergency access response team—which brings together system leaders and stakeholders to deliver practical solutions to reducing ambulance ramping and bed block. The government is rolling out innovative solutions across the system, including the WA virtual emergency department, or WAVED, which is designed to try to prevent aged-care patients who can be treated in their aged-care facility from accessing an emergency department when it is not clinically or medically indicated. Virtual care is being provided to aged-care facilities rather than having patients present at an emergency department. We are also delivering the state health operations centre, which will be designed to better streamline patient flow and system coordination, in partnership with St John Ambulance. The government is helping long-stay patients—that is, patients who are medically fit for discharge—to get out of hospital and into community aged-care or disability facilities. We have been recognised as a national leader. The minister is at a national meeting of state and territory health ministers, and this is something on which other jurisdictions are looking to us as a model to reduce their own ambulance ramping and bed-block issues. As I said, our reforms are working. Ramping is down 30 per cent on last year's figures, despite having a record number of flu hospitalisations this year. Reduced ramping and bed block means that our hospitals can conduct more elective surgeries. We have reduced the surgery waitlist by nearly 7 000 patients. These complex reforms will take time to bear fruit, but they are worth doing.

The member for Vasse raised the outstanding financial management of the McGowan and Cook Labor governments. That point was well made, and I thank her for making it. In addition to the operational reforms that the government is undertaking, we are investing the money derived from that financial management. Since coming to office, the WA Labor government has significantly increased WA Health's annual budget, by 33.4 per cent. The budget was \$8.8 billion in 2016–17 and is now up to almost \$12 billion for 2023–24. The Mental Health Commission's annual budget has increased a massive 57.3 per cent, from \$863 million in 2016–17 to \$1.4 billion in 2023–24. Western Australia has the highest per capita spend on hospitals of any state, being 18 per cent above the national average. Since the 2021–22 budget, 547 new beds have been added to the system. As members will have heard the Minister for Health say previously, that is the equivalent of a new tertiary hospital. Tomorrow, I will convene a round table with representatives from the allied health workforce. We are tackling the workforce shortages that we are confronting in health at the moment. That is another lever that we are looking to pull to try to alleviate the issues facing our health system. I thank the member for the grievance, and I hope that answers her concerns.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION

Tenth Report — Annual report 2022–23 — Tabling

MR M. HUGHES (Kalamunda) [10.17 am]: I present for tabling the tenth report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, *Annual report 2022–23*.

[See paper [2429](#).]

Mr M. HUGHES: I am pleased to table the annual report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission for 2022–23, which was a busy year for the committee. It held 16 deliberative meetings and had 18 formal evidence hearings, with 63 witnesses appearing. The committee had three briefings—two in relation to its inquiry “What happened next? Beyond a finding of serious misconduct”, and one in relation to the committee's oversight role of the Corruption and Crime Commission. The committee tabled three reports. One of the three reports tabled was the annual report of activities for the previous year. I will briefly comment on the remaining two reports.

In the committee's eighth report, *Unlawful detention in public hospitals—Parliamentary inspector's report*, tabled in March 2023, the committee provided an update by the parliamentary inspector on his 2022 report, titled *Report on the operation of the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003: The definition of 'public officer'*. The supplementary report alerted Parliament to another case of unlawful detention in a public hospital and a recent District Court of Western Australia ruling on this issue. The Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission observed that the law on the right to detain the patient was not well understood by hospital staff, thereby creating a serious misconduct risk. The parliamentary inspector suggested that the cases he highlighted demonstrated a need to ensure that all hospital staff are made aware of the law to avoid future incidents. The matter received attention at a recent Australian Nursing Federation legal conference held in Perth. Here the rights of a patient to decline care was discussed with a key message that if a patient is competent, their autonomy is paramount. The government's response to the committee's report indicated that a new policy on restricted practices would be developed to address both the restraint and detention of patients in non-mental health settings. The minister also

advised that an education package on restraint and detention was being developed, which will be disseminated to staff across the Western Australian health system. The committee has also asked the Department of Health to provide an update to the committee on further action taken to address the matters raised in the report.

The ninth report, *A need for clarity: Parliamentary inspector's report: Can the Corruption and Crime Commission decline to form an opinion that serious misconduct has occurred despite the definition being met?*, was tabled in March 2023. It informed Parliament of a disagreement between the parliamentary inspector and the commission on the nature of the commission's power to form opinions on serious misconduct. Essentially, the parliamentary inspector is of the view that when it is clear that a public officer has engaged in conduct that meets the definition of "serious misconduct" in the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act, it is not open to the commission to decline to form an opinion that serious misconduct has occurred. The commission, however, takes a view that its ability to form an opinion of misconduct is discretionary in nature, and it is not bound to form such an opinion despite the definition being met.

The committee sees an opportunity to address this uncertainty as part of the Department of Justice's current project to modernise the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003 and recommended this be done. The committee is pleased that the government has accepted this recommendation, with the Attorney General undertaking to direct the department to examine the matter. I, along with other members of the committee, look forward to seeing the outcomes of the Department of Justice's project to reform the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003 and a new bill to modernise that act.

The committee's annual report also brings two other matters to the attention of Parliament. The first is in relation to the commonwealth's Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979 and its relationship to the work of the parliamentary inspector. The functions of the parliamentary inspector include auditing any operation carried out pursuant to the powers conferred or made available by the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act, the audit function, and assessing the effectiveness and appropriateness of the commission's procedures, which is the basis of parliamentary inspector's investigative or complaints function. Under the provisions of the act, the parliamentary inspector is unable to view or access telecommunications information lawfully interpreted by the commission or interpret warrant information, including the affidavit to support the application for a warrant, unless it is for the purpose of dealing with matters of misconduct by the commission, an officer of the commission or his own officer.

This issue is not new. This gap in the parliamentary inspector's ability to oversight and scrutinise the work of the commission is of ongoing concern to this committee and others. The current and previous parliamentary inspectors have raised deficiencies in oversight due to the operations of the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act with this and previous committees. This committee continues to encourage the state government to work with the commonwealth government to pursue a legislative solution to this problem. The Attorney General has asked the commonwealth government to consider introducing appropriate amendments to its legislation to ensure state oversight agencies can appropriately carry out their function.

The second matter concerns information sharing between officers of the Western Australia Police Force in situations following incidents for which an investigation against an officer is likely to occur. The situation arose following an incident in which a member of the public was injured during an arrest and the officer that caused the injury was subsequently convicted of dangerous driving. At trial in the Magistrates Court, the magistrate was critical of the actions of that officer, who, the magistrate said, was dishonest and adjusted his testimony to absolve himself from criminal liability. The officer used information that was made available to him after the other officers involved in the arrest completed their documentation for the district awareness summary entries. Noting the Western Australia Police Force's response that standard procedures were being followed, the committee is asking the Western Australia Police Force to investigate ways to better manage information in circumstances that could result in an allegation of police misconduct. I encourage members to read the report for a full explanation of what transpired to have the magistrate comment as he did.

Finally, the committee continues to work on its inquiry titled "What happens next? Beyond a finding of serious misconduct". The committee is inquiring into what happens after a public officer is found to have engaged in serious misconduct, including disciplinary and other sanctions imposed by other government agencies, criminal prosecutions arising from serious misconduct investigations and the roles and systemic responses of various agencies. There is limited public information on personal outcomes and institutional responses that follow a finding of serious misconduct. Instances of serious misconduct can shine a light on action needed at an agency or sector-wide level to prevent serious misconduct and enhance the public sector's capacity to prevent misconduct. The committee intends to report on this inquiry by 30 November this year.

In closing, I take this opportunity to thank the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission, Matthew Zilko, SC, and the Corruption and Crime Commissioner, Hon John McKechnie, SC, and their respective staff for assisting the committee carrying out their oversight role. I also thank my colleagues on the committee, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, MLC, deputy chair; Hon Mia Davies, MLA; and Hon Klara Andric, MLC. In particular, the committee extends its thanks to its research officers, Suzanne Veletta and Jovita Hogan, for their dedicated support without which the committee simply could not carry out its work.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (FINANCE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2023*Second Reading*

Resumed from 11 October.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [10.28 am]: I was part way through my contribution. Yesterday I talked more about the \$6 million advantage that the Labor Party has, in association with the unions, under this bill. One of the areas I want to talk a little about in relation to that was the in-kind support. As I understand the Electoral Act, in-kind support should be considered as part of a donation, if you like. For example, if an organisation donates a person who is going to work full-time on the campaign, that part of their time would be considered a donation. It is not clear to me that the in-kind effort by the union officers is captured in that way. I am happy to be educated on that. From what I observed over many years, when it comes to election time, union officers are effectively fully devoted to campaigning; that is, the entire office, all the equipment and all the staff are devoted to that. It is not clear to me that the staff take leave. In fact, my suspicion is that they do not take leave. They do not do it on their personal time; they do it as paid union employees.

I suspect this is not a matter under this legislation, but I would encourage the electorate office to look closely at in-kind donations because the simple reality is that on our side, we do not have organisations that are devoted to the political cause during campaigns. With the Labor Party's affiliated unions, they are intrinsically political organisations. They are devoted to them. Once we get into the campaign period, although they might be servicing their members, in large part they devote themselves to the campaign. As I have pointed out, members in this place—they all know who they are—are affiliated with unions and, in significant part, the majority owe their positions in Parliament to the fact they have been supported by a particular union coming in here. It is important to particularly capture in-kind donations because I think that is another intrinsic advantage that the Labor Party has because of the union movement.

Other groups can have significant input into political campaigns. Again, it is not clear to me whether they will be captured. Hopefully this legislation will capture them. Groups like GetUp! run very well-funded campaigns, which are clearly in support of particular candidates—not just a cause, but particular candidates.

I think I have covered those points reasonably well. I appreciate that lifting the amount of funding for each vote is a difficult issue for the government. One of the issues I have always had since I have been involved in politics is the degree to which political organisations have to rely on donation support. One way or another, that affects what political parties do. Ultimately, it also has some impact on what parliamentarians are doing in Parliament. I think the more we move away from that the better. Providing additional funding will provide greater certainty for organisations.

I am interested in the question of privacy, which I visited a little bit yesterday. As I understand it, people are required to publish not just their names and donated amount, but also their address. We said that candidates should not have to do that. I can understand why we might want to collect that information if there were some impropriety, but why does it have to be made public? I think that makes it possible to target those individuals. An alternative could be that the Electoral Commission maintains that information, and if there is an allegation of impropriety, obviously the Corruption and Crime Commission, which would be the appropriate body, could investigate, or the Electoral Commission could as well. I will leave my further comments to the consideration in detail stage.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Minister for Electoral Affairs) [10.33 am] — in reply: I thank the members of the opposition for their contributions, particularly the member for Central Wheatbelt, Hon Mia Davies, the member for Moore and the member for Cottesloe. I want to address some of their concerns during this reply, although the answers will be more fully fleshed out the consideration in detail stage.

The lead speaker raised a number of questions during her helpful contribution. I will try to deal with some of those now and then we might return to some of the topics in consideration in detail. One of the questions was about campaigning and fundraising for political parties that are not registered with the Electoral Commission—for example, One Nation. She asked whether One Nation's spending will be captured under the legislation. If it spends more than \$500 in the campaign, it will be captured by the legislation and will be treated as an Independent candidate. Like any other Independent candidate, it will have to make the necessary disclosures. If it is part of a party that is not a registered party and it is running on the ballot paper, it will not be above the line—the candidates will be below the line in the Legislative Council as Independents—or if they get together as a group, they will only be able to be called group A, but the candidates will be regarded as Independents.

A question was also posed about what consideration was given to a different model for public funding—for example, New South Wales has administration funding. I was asked whether the administration funding model was considered; and, if it was, why it was rejected. I had considerable angst over this because we will be imposing more obligations on political parties. I recognise that New South Wales, Victoria and, I believe, Queensland, on top of the amount paid each primary vote, have an administration fund. In New South Wales last year, I believe it was \$6 million. I looked at Western Australia having, in round figures, a third of the population of that state, so that would mean the administration fund could be in the order of \$2 million. At the moment, we are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis for all families. How much weight can the community bear and how much weight should the political parties

bear during these very straightening times? The government elected to increase the amount for each vote from \$2.26 to \$4.40. I deliberately chose \$4.40 in my cabinet submission because it was 1¢ cheaper than in South Australia, so I could boast that we still have the cheapest. I note, however, that going to the election in 2021, the South Australian Premier said that they would go for full public funding. One would expect that, if they go through with it, the amount per vote will go right up. I looked at doing that in Western Australia.

What if we got rid of all donations and had a completely clean system, and had only public funding of elections? No-one could then cast an aspersion against a politician for receiving money or donations. When I looked at it, it came out at around about \$8 to \$9 per primary vote. Of course, that would benefit existing parties because the \$8 to \$9 would be worked out by what votes they got at the last election. It would be a party going into the 2025 election. The opposition parties would be thinking that perhaps they will do better than what they did in the 2021 election so that their take will increase. What about a candidate who wants to enter, but has never been a member of Parliament, so they have never had a primary vote? How could we calculate what that person will get? They would be going into an election not knowing whether they will get \$1 back.

For people already in Parliament, it will be worked out on the primary vote they got. It would be very difficult for a new player in the field under a totally publicly funded model. If it is not going to be totally publicly funded, what is a reasonable level? I think \$2.26 would not assist the parties to cover their burden. I also realised that if I went to \$5 or \$6, the community would ask what the politicians were doing, trebling it during a cost-of-living crisis. I tried to be fair to the public and to the political parties, and come up with a balance. I think that by coming to \$4.40, we will have the cheapest in Australia, but only by the breadth of an angel's wing because South Australia is \$4.41, and it will go higher in South Australia. It is considerably less than New South Wales, which is \$6 something. Victoria is a bit cheaper at about \$5. It is all a balancing act, and we tried to have it proportionally balanced and fair for everybody.

There has been some talk about fundraising events. Submissions were made and questions were asked, especially by the member for Cottesloe and others. I think the member for Roe raised it as well. What will happen when a political party sells a ticket to a fundraising event at a restaurant that charges \$200 for a three-course meal including wine, and the party sells tickets for \$1 200? What will be the disclosable amount? Will it be \$1 200 or the profit of \$1 000? I hope I have made that clear enough and correctly put the opposition's concerns. Under the current wording of the act, I believe it is the value of the gift, not the consideration, but I agree that there could be some argument about that. The WA Solicitor-General has been in the Speaker's gallery, listening to the debate. I approached him to find out whether we could come up with a form of words that would put that beyond doubt, so if a party sells a ticket to an event, the profit is declared as the gift. If the dinner costs \$1 200 to put on—sorry, may I take that back? I misspoke. If the dinner costs \$200 a head to put on and tickets are sold for \$1 200, under the amendment I will table this morning, the disclosable amount will be just the profit, not the \$200 that it costs to put on the event. Similarly, if a bottle of wine is auctioned, the cost of the bottle of wine will not be declared, but the profit made from the auction of the bottle of wine is clearly a gift because the buyer could go to the bottle shop and buy the same bottle of wine for \$30. If the bottle of wine sold for \$300, the amount to be declared would be \$270.

I have to say that I know the administrations of the parties—Liberals, Nationals and Labor—do not go around trying to bodgie all this. It is too big a risk for the parties. Their administrators and party secretaries work hard to put in honest returns. I do not carry any particular fear that any of the major parties will try to raise the objective value of the gift and say that the bottle of wine was worth \$100 and, therefore, the gift was only \$200. It is too big a risk to the reputation of the party and those employed by the party.

I will put that amendment. This morning, I disclosed that amendment to the opposition. Although it is not on the notice paper, we have had discussions about it behind the chair.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Very loudly, I might add.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We have had discussions behind the chair, and we have got to a position, for which I think there is agreement, about how we can deal with that so it will be only the profit.

I was also asked a rhetorical question—it might have been an actual question—by the lead speaker of the opposition about why there will be no ban on property investors. To arrive at my position to cabinet, I took advice from a whole range of people and discussed it, not with property developers but with the likes of Hon John McKechnie, KC, the Corruption and Crime Commissioner. About 18 months ago, Mr McKechnie published a paper saying that we should perhaps ban property developers. I put to him the alternative, which is real-time disclosure, every seven days during the year and every day once an election is called. In a democracy, the public can then make up their minds about whom they want to vote for, considering who is donating and how much they are donating.

I will not repeat Mr McKechnie's private discussions, but, as I said in my discussions, I put it to Mr McKechnie that other sectors of the economy can just as easily be enriched as property developers by a decision of the minister. For example, under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, a ministerial consent under section 18 could confer quite large profits on a mining company that wanted to mine an area. In the health sector, private providers could be greatly enriched by government's decisions to put a private hospital in an area and give the contract to a health provider.

I do not want to name any health providers in my speech at the moment, but we know that that could happen. That could happen in many areas of the economy, and a government decision could enrich or profit an organisation, outside of property developers. That is very true at the moment. The multibillionaires created in the last decade have not come from the property sector. They have all come from the mining sector, and they need environmental approvals, mining approvals and the whole lot, so it is best to have real-time disclosure.

Although I will not repeat anything Mr McKechnie said to me privately, I note that since the introduction of the bill, in his public comments, he has said that the bill addresses his concerns, and I am comforted by that. After all, he is the Corruption and Crime Commissioner, no less, so if he publicly says the bill addresses his concerns, I am fortified in my opinion.

The question was also put about how we will deal with GetUp! and other organisations not based in WA. Under this bill, it will not matter where they are based; it is to do with how much they give to a candidate. They are not running all these campaigns themselves. They do that as well, but they also fund individual candidates, and those candidates will have to disclose the funding they will get in real-time. There is no cap on donations as such because as to how people can donate became a mire. They can donate through different companies; they can be the director of six companies and have each company donate. They can walk around donation caps easily. What they and candidates cannot do is walk around the expenditure cap. That all must come from the state campaign account. The state campaign account is not an invention of Western Australia, me or this government; it is tried and tested in other jurisdictions. The Electoral Commission can audit the expenditure by going to the state campaign account, to which it will have access to see that expenditure was within the cap. Big penalties will apply for exceeding that. If we put in a penalty of \$50 000, does that deter a billionaire? Hardly. If we put in a penalty of three years' imprisonment or a \$50 000 fine, the provision of penal penalties might cause them to think again, because a court may take the view that they could write off a \$50 000 fine just like that. It would not be the operating fee on a piece of machinery for a day. However, the prospect of being found guilty and being sentenced would certainly cause the richest and most reckless in our community to think twice before they attempted it.

Another question has arisen during debate that was amplified by the member for Cottesloe and mentioned by others—namely, concerning fundraising events. Opposition members expressed concern that, in their minds, the language of the bill was less than clear regarding fundraising events. If an event was held and the ticket price was \$1 000, but the restaurant where the event was held charged \$200 for food and drink, what was the gift—was it \$1 000 or \$800, being the profit going to the party, not the restaurant? It was always our intention, of course, that the cap applied to the profit, not to the cost of food and drink given to the restaurant. To meet that opposition's concern, as the Solicitor-General was here, an amendment was drawn up that has been handed over that I think satisfies that issue.

The opposition raised a question about the ceiling above which all donations must be declared. It believes it would be an inhibition on its fundraising efforts because it goes for donations, as I think the member for Cottesloe said the other day, of a more modest amount, and it felt comfortable with the existing \$2 600. I made the recommendation for \$1 000. I was asked by one member how I arrived at \$1 000. A joint standing committee report of the federal Parliament on electoral reform recommended to reduce the ceiling under which its donations do not need to be disclosed to \$1 000 from about \$15 000 I think. I went with that recommendation, but I will listen to the opposition. We are Western Australia with our own methods of fundraising here; they are honest. But the opposition had concern. If the opposition wants to press that point, I will not oppose it. I am not looking for controversy here. I have tried to do the right thing by redefining what a gift is so we can address those opposition concerns.

It was said that the bill was designed to help Labor. I sat here watching the opposition lead speaker make her case that this was a bill just to help Labor, which I of course reject. I was in admiration of her advocacy. It reminded me of my late mentor, Brian Singleton, KC—he died as a Queen's Counsel. He was a great advocate. He used to say to me, "Do you ever get asked at parties what happens when you're defending someone who's guilty? What do you do then?" "Singer" always had the quick response, "If you know they're guilty, well then you double the fee!" The member for Central Wheatbelt's daily rate could have been doubled; her advocacy was splendid in making the case that this process was all to help the unions. It is a flawed case, of course, but it was brilliantly put. The member is not standing again and will undoubtedly be a loss to this chamber. It was a flawed argument, despite how well it was put, because she said, "You've got 14 unions, and they can all spend \$500 000." That is true if they have got the brass, which I doubt, to spend \$500 000 on their own campaign. Let us theoretically say that they could—they are not the only people in society. Any third-party campaigner could spend \$500 000. What is \$500 000 to Mr Clive Palmer? He could come over here and start attacking the Labor government and spend \$500 000. The Pastoralists and Graziers Association, our friends from the country, can attack us over our first amendments et cetera with \$500 000. All sorts of different interest groups could do that. It is unlikely, but to say that this is biased toward Labor overlooks the fact that a whole lot of groups are out there, such as nurses and perhaps teachers—I do not know—who may want to run a third-party campaign, not in support of us, but to attack us.

Dr A.D. Buti: Minister, I do not want to stop your train of thought, but I think a lot of people are under the misapprehension that nurses and teachers are members of the Labor Party. They are not affiliated with the Labor Party.

Ms M.J. Davies: Most of them are, though.

Dr A.D. Buti: No, they are not.

Ms M.J. Davies: Most unions are affiliated with the Labor Party, and that is the difference: the Pastoralists and Graziers Association is not affiliated with the Nationals or the Liberal Party.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: When we talk about affiliation, let us talk about two things. There is affiliation and an associated body. An associated body is when the party controls the organisation. With affiliation, it can get votes at state executive, but it does not run the joint. Not all of them are entitled to come to state executive because they are not affiliated because they do not pay the affiliation fee. In any event, any union, whether affiliated or not, can run a campaign. At the 2017 election, the prison officers ran a very strong campaign against Hon Joe Francis, who was the corrective services minister. These unions can pick on anyone through a third-party campaign. I do not begrudge the farmers, but they ran a very strong campaign against the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill. We do not know who will come out of the woodwork against us in an election campaign. I turn to the bikies. They have resources! They have kilos and kilos of methamphetamine to sell! They get picked up. What did Labrook get picked up for? He had half a million dollars. No, Kersley got picked up with half a million in her boot. That is just a little bit of their money.

Ms M.J. Davies: It is not normally how they resolve things, as I am told—running political campaigns!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I know. Their normal donation is about three ounces of lead delivered at a muzzle velocity of 32 000 feet a second. A bikie came out of court with that iconic T-shirt, which was a third-party endorsement, was it not—Eff your laws, Mr Squiggles? The bikies have said that they would run a candidate at the election. I doubt whether they will put up the sergeant-at-arms or the president, but they might get some person who does not have bikie tats or they can run a third-party campaign all over the state with my funny face all over their T-shirts. We do not know who will run third-party campaigns, but it is not right to say that this legislation is biased towards Labor. I have really tried not to make it thus.

Ms M.J. Davies: A valiant attempt!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I have tried. We will deal with it in consideration in detail. I really appreciate and value each member's contribution.

There was one other thing I discussed with the Electoral Commission and that was the registration of how-to-vote cards and the impediment this might place upon candidates once the balloters have their position on the papers. People know because nominations will have closed on the ballot and then the parties will decide the order of preferences for each seat, which is what how-to-vote cards are all about. Parties can do that in fairly quick time. If there is any hold-up in that process, it is the parties' hold-up. If they get onto it after nominations have closed and the ballot for positions on the paper has been held, the commission says that it is only a tick-and-flick exercise. The party sends in its how-to-vote order for a seat, and all the commission needs to see is that nothing on the ballot paper misleads an elector—for example, "Only vote for 1." I understand from the media I have read that some misleading material was put out about the forthcoming referendum, and the Electoral Commissioner had to correct it. It is only about the fact that the how-to-vote card complies with the legislation, and ticking the box. Then it is registered. No sneaky person, no third party, can come in at the last minute and start handing out false how-to-vote cards because the polling booth workers will close them down. It is illegal. We want to give all members the circumstance that they will reflect upon as a fair election.

I take on board what the Nationals WA say about the first tranche of electoral reform. With hand on heart, I can say that there is nothing in this legislation that I approached from an ideological point of view. I tried to make it fair for all people. I have tried to the best of my ability, as has the government, to stop scams within the system. To assist people, we have drilled right down to the provision of conveniences for poll workers. In the metropolitan area—I do not know what it is like in the regions—we have had reports of polling places at schools having a toilet open, but staff say it is only for Electoral Commission staff and campaign workers are not allowed to go to the bathroom. State elections take place in March and of course electorate workers have to drink water and keep hydrated. That will require a bathroom visit. Where reasonably practical, the commission has to provide that bathroom. When the commission organises these polling places, it will have to negotiate with the places it rents to provide access. We do not expect the commission to cart portaloos around in a truck like Kenny the plumber, but where reasonably practicable, if bathroom facilities are available at a polling booth, the commission is required to provide them. I only mention that. It is not the big headline of the reforms, but I notice it was mentioned by a speaker in the second reading debate.

Much of the debate on this legislation, in this chamber at least, drills down into party politics. I have been a Labor member in this chamber for 23 years. I was a member of the Labor Party for only 12 months before entering this chamber. I have said before that I do not come from a background of Labor people. What drew me to the party was its care for the underdog, the underprivileged and the vulnerable in our community. During my tenure as Attorney, I have tried to address the issues of the vulnerable and the underdog because I am wholly committed to them. I do not come from a Labor background down there at Nedlands Primary School—quite the contrary; nonetheless, I am

committed with all of the cells of my body to protecting the underprivileged. That is why we brought in legislation to lift the statute of limitations, something that had been opposed by the former government, to help those who had suffered at the hands of abusers. That is why we expunged convictions for homosexual offences when we introduced reforms. That is why we helped those who were bereaved by losing a loved one through murder with our no body, no parole laws. I could go on and on, but that is not the point.

I am committed to this bill, not ideologically to crush the opposition, but to present an updated, fair electoral structure. In doing so, I went to the commission and asked what problems it saw. The issue of registering on the day was raised. We have an inclusivity provision that is the antithesis of what happens in Florida, where they clean the rolls and try to keep as many people off it as possible. We are the antithesis of that. We try to get as many people who are entitled to vote onto the roll as possible.

I was asked about the age of 16 years. We chose the age of 16 because that is what the commonwealth does; people can provisionally enrol at 16. We are bringing it into alignment with the commonwealth. A child who enrolls at 16 or 17 is enrolled as a silent voter, and they have no right to vote. There is another added advantage. Many schools run a civics course, and the students in that course will be not just told about their entitlement to vote in two years, but also shown how they can enrol. Indeed, they can enrol from their classroom if they want to and get onto the roll. That is great; there will be more people coming onto the roll. We want as many as possible on the roll.

As to being able to enrol on the day—this is going to hold up everything—I was involved in the last Court of Disputed Returns in a case when the judgement was to oust a minister. It was *Bridge v Ridge* in the Court of Disputed Returns in 1977. There were a lot of Aboriginal people around the Kimberley. A group called Walkabout—two women who used to take clothing to sell to those in communities who could not get to town; I think they still do it in Kununurra—helped those people enrol, which they all did. However, those enrolments were not processed in time for the 1977 election. They came into town in trucks, literally—a great lot of people. Dozens upon dozens of Aboriginals came into town. When they went to vote, they were not on the roll, so they could claim a section 26A provisional vote—that is, filling out a form that says, “I have enrolled. I will vote.” That is then marked as a provisional vote. That takes longer than enrolling the person on the day. If a person comes in and says that they want to vote and they cannot be found on the roll, they can enrol. It will still be a provisional vote because it must be checked subsequently that that person was entitled to be on the roll, but that is the same as filling in a section 26 vote. However, the section 26A provisional vote took a lot longer to deal with. Pandemonium broke out in Kununurra that day because those people could not vote. The sergeant closed the polling booth for a little while to settle it all down, and a lot of them then dispersed. The late Hon Ernie Bridge filed a notice under the Court of Disputed Returns saying that the booth had been closed down. The election was overturned, and Mr Ridge was displaced. The point I make is that allowing people to enrol on that day would have been no different from claiming a section 26A vote. Under the principle of inclusivity, it helps more people onto the roll, so we will stick with that amendment.

It struck me as curious in Butler when it was three weeks of pre-poll. That was too long. This bill will cut that down to 11 days. The commission wanted a bit longer. I said, “No, we have to have a compromise here.” During that three weeks, I had workers there and people were dribbling in. There was not a big queue. There were perhaps a few more at nine o’clock in the morning, but by 10 o’clock it had petered out. On the Friday before the vote, at five o’clock, the queue went around the corner. They were all pouring in because they did not want to spoil Saturday by being in a queue. What was holding it up was that everyone who voted on Friday evening voted, and because it was an early vote, their vote had to be put in an envelope. They had to go and vote, and then bring it back for it to be put in an envelope and the particulars filled out, signed and sealed, and the envelope was posted in the ballot box. In the morning, there was none of that malarky; people just voted and put it in the box. Why could that not occur the night before? The bill has done away with that to try to make it more efficient on the day. That will be a time saver and will more than offset anyone who comes along saying that they need to enrol. They must have lived in that district for a month. It is a provisional vote until the Electoral Commission ticks it off.

I realise that little legislation goes through this chamber for which my bald head is patted for a good effort. As I have said, I have tried to come up with best practice that does not prejudice anybody, apart from those who through chicanery or trickery will try to get an advantage over any of us here. They will be excluded and we will have a fair election for everybody. May it please you, Madam Acting Speaker.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I start by thanking the minister for providing a marked-up copy of the bill. That courtesy was not extended to us for the piece of legislation that I most recently dealt with. It certainly made it slightly easier to understand where the amendments are being made. However, having read the explanatory memorandum, I would say that it is still a relatively complex bill because of the things that we are dealing with.

Clause 1 is probably the only place I can ask my first question. Can the minister advise who was consulted during the drafting of the bill? Was the administrative branch of the Labor Party involved in, or did it provide any recommendations about, the drafting of the updates? Were any unions affiliated with the Labor Party consulted or did they offer input, or was what we are about to debate formulated simply on the advice received from the Western Australian Electoral Commission and the government's policy decisions?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It was a mixture of all of the above but not on all matters. For the disclosure requirements, for example, we consulted with the Electoral Commission and the administration of my own party to see what the practicalities were in meeting the requirements. The commission said that it would create a portal that would be available to all parties. I also consulted with the Electoral Commission about a range of things that it wanted in the bill. I think I described the first tranche of going through the administrative provisions of cleaning up the bill as “rats and mice”.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you, minister. Can the minister confirm that he had a discussion with the administrative arm of the Labor Party? I wonder why a similar conversation was not held with the Liberal Party, the Nationals WA or any other political parties about some of those practicalities, because there are differences between the parties. Why was that not considered prior to the legislation being brought forward?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I did not want this to bog down forever. On the practicalities of the administration, I wanted to satisfy myself that we could meet the requirements and that it would not be too much of a burden on the commission. I asked whether a political party could comply if the commission created a portal. No-one is happy with the disclosures, the spending limits and all those things that I put in. I have put them there because that was a government decision. I do not deny that I talked about the practicalities.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Further to that, the minister would agree that the Labor Party has a different party machine from the National Party. The National Party has a state director and part-time administrative assistant. I am not sure what the arrangements are in the Liberal Party's headquarters, but I suggest that perhaps the administration of the Labor Party is significantly different and has a capacity that might not be extended to other political parties or players. Would it not have been a good idea for the minister to at least reach out and find out whether the practicalities of what we are debating would work for all sides of politics?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That approach does not always solve the problem. Sometimes too many cooks spoil the pudding. With the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, lots of people were consulted. Aboriginals were consulted, the farming lobby was consulted and the opposition was consulted, but what we ended up with was, as the Premier said, an unworkable situation. The government tried to satisfy all interests and ended up not satisfying anyone. The only friend the bill had in the end was the cabinet. Not one person supported it. The farmers did not support it and the Aboriginals did not support it. It was friendless. That was after, I think, two years of consultation. I wanted to make sure that, administratively, what was being proposed could be achieved. When a donation is received by the National Party, it will have to write out a receipt for the donation irrespective of this bill. We are creating a portal so that the receipt can be recorded electronically and posted on the portal. I wanted to see whether the administration could get its head around that, and it said that it could.

We will also be increasing the amount per vote. That might give the National Party more resources. When I looked at all this, I did not look at the 2021 election, which everyone in Australia would agree was an unusual election because we now have only two members of the Liberal Party in the chamber and four members of the National Party, with the National Party being the official opposition. That is unusual. I went back to the 2017 and 2013 elections and, by increasing the return per vote, I believe that on the 2013 and 2017 primary returns, the present official opposition party would have a significantly increased return and therefore availability of resources. It is not that we believe there will be heaps of extra resources. The member alluded to the real question of resources, which is the commission, not the parties. We believe that the portal will take care of that, but the commission will have to audit 500 voters, and make sure that it is all live every year and that the parties are under the expenditure caps. This will take a lot more work by the commission. I cannot go to the Expenditure Review Committee yet because I do not have legislation to take there, but as soon as this bill passes Parliament, whenever it passes Parliament and in whatever form it passes Parliament, I will hotfoot it to the ERC with a submission. The government is bringing this in, so it has to fund its policy.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you, minister. That pre-empted some of the questions I had on funding. I can ask them in other parts of the bill, but the minister has raised that issue now. I am interested to know just what additional resources are likely to be needed if the bill is passed in its current form. I presume it will pass because we do not have the numbers to change it. Has the government discussed with the Electoral Commission the amount of funding and the number of people that will be required? Are we talking about a doubling of the commission's budget? Is it something the commission has put its mind to? Given that we know the legislation will pass, I presume the commission will start working on that, although I appreciate that the minister cannot go to the ERC.

I also want to make the point while we are talking about this that the minister mentioned he will increase the rate from \$2.26 to \$4.40. There is a clause in the bill in which we can deal with that, but my understanding is that although the minister said that that may assist in the administration provisions of the bill, it is a reimbursement for

funds that have been expended. The parties would have to prove they expended the funds during the election campaign to get a return on that number. I do not think that the increased administrative burden will cover that, in my view; it is simply a return on what is spent as a political party. There might be a little bit of an uptick, but it is just an increase in the dollar value. To the minister's point, which is that it is more expensive to purchase corflutes and things like that and, therefore, there will be an increase, we are not arguing that there is no public funding in Western Australia already. The question comes back to the provision of resources for the Electoral Commission. Has the commission turned its mind to it? Did it provide the minister with advice on what that might look like in the context of the next state budget or midyear review? What are we looking at in terms of those amounts and resources?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The government will adequately fund the commission. In answer to the member's question, the commission has turned its mind to it and is discussing that with me. That is the subject of a submission to cabinet. I will not disclose that at this point, other than to say that the commission has given me numbers in terms of what it will need in people power—I was going to say “manpower”. The commission has given me an idea of what that will involve and at what levels, but I need to make a submission to the Expenditure Review Committee and cabinet. Having been a minister, I am sure the member will appreciate that I will have to stay my hand on that until cabinet has made its decision. I know that the member will drill me on it during the 2024–25 estimates hearings; I have confidence in that!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have one further question on this. The minister confirmed that there had been consultation with the administrative branch of the Labor Party. Were any unions that are affiliated with the Labor Party consulted during the construction of this bill; and, if so, did they provide advice on any of the elements contained within the bill?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Some of the people on the state executive might be in unions. I discussed with the administrative branch how much it had spent on the election. There were returns to the Western Australian Electoral Commission. I think the opposition had a briefing by the Solicitor-General. We tried to work out the maximum spend, and we are not going to reduce that. I discussed what headroom there is, and that is why I came up with the figure of \$10 million. That is not a \$10 million war chest to Labor—we do not have \$10 million to spend. It is to stop any billionaire from dropping in \$80 billion or \$20 billion, as I have read happened in the eastern states. Sorry, I mean million; I was getting the Bs and Ms mixed up. They dropped \$80 million into one election and \$20 million into another election. That disfigures democracy. I tried to come up with a figure that was above what any party is currently spending or likely to spend but well beneath the level of expenditure that billionaires can pour in, as was done in the seat of Pilbara. That was just shocking. Any of us could be targeted with a \$5 million campaign. If they did not like me, I would be done. How could we meet that sort of expenditure? I would say, “Here's my signature; I'll go out quietly.” We have to make it fair. I consulted the party on the maximum amount and then went above that. When I looked at the last election, the opposition was well below that amount. The cap will not impede anybody. No-one can say that I am getting in the way of political communication. I tried to do it honestly. I have the Solicitor-General with me this morning to assist with the explanations when we get to the clause.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I appreciate that explanation. I am not quite sure that I got the answer about whether any unions had provided advice about the preparation of the bill or gave any feedback during the consultation period.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No, they did not provide advice. I am not part of the union body, but there might be someone in admin who is. I do not want to give a wrong answer here. My advice came mainly from the Western Australian Electoral Commission, the Solicitor-General, my office, cabinet and extensive discussions with the former Premier. The unions have not advised me on what to put in the bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2: Commencement —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Can the minister advise why the date of 1 July 2024 was chosen for the commencement?

Mr W.J. Johnston: It's the start of the financial year.

Ms M.J. Davies: So, answer the question.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is fair. It is the beginning of the financial year.

Ms M.J. Davies: Pipe down, minister; I don't need your interference.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It's bloody obvious. Anybody reading the bill would know what 1 July is. It was such a silly question.

Ms M.J. Davies: Thanks very much. I have had quite enough of your input from last night. I do not need your interjections.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Stop interjecting.

Ms M.J. Davies: The Attorney General and I are doing quite well, thank you.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You're not letting the minister answer your question. How silly. If you want the minister to answer the question, stop interjecting. Stop being disorderly.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Thank you, minister.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The date “1 July” was chosen because we wanted a commencement date out from the 2025 election. It is the beginning of the financial year. Most organisations run their books from 1 July to 30 June, so I decided that if I started it on 1 July, we would be safe. It will be in effect well in advance of the election. I could have made it 31 December next year, but the parties would not have had time to get their heads around the new administrative rules. There had to be a date, so I chose the beginning of the financial year, when all the books start afresh.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Can the minister clarify that no candidate, no political party and no third-party campaigner will need to adhere to the new caps or the expenditure or disclosure requirements prior to 1 July, even if they have commenced campaign-related expenditure?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Correct.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 4AA amended —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I seek clarification in relation to official agents for the appointment of scrutineers. Can the minister advise why this required updating or amending? I could not follow what was happening in the legislation.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We are changing the reference in the definition from “secretary of the political party” to “registered officer of the registered political party”. Having two registered officers will assist the commission in cases in which the person who would have been regarded as being the secretary is not available. During an election, the commission might have to urgently contact that political party, so we replaced it with officers and we have two of them.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7 put and passed.

Clause 8: Section 5F amended —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This clause will amend the section relating to the functions of the Electoral Commissioner. There will be some modernisation of the language and it will bring in a new paragraph to allow the Electoral Commissioner to perform the function of a returning officer when that officer cannot exercise the function or it is necessary or convenient for conducting an election. Again, I am asking for a real example of when that might be required and why it was brought forward. I assume this is on advice from the Electoral Commission.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I wish no ill to befall any returning officer, but people suddenly can fall ill or become incapacitated, and we cannot have an election held up waiting for a returning officer to recover. The returning officer is appointed in the first place by the commission, so it is not a case of delegatus non potest delegare—the delegate cannot delegate. The person with the authority delegates to a returning officer, and if that returning officer is incapacitated, the person who had the authority to appoint him could act as the temporary returning officer—that is, the commissioner himself—to get a result. If someone had heart attack—I do not wish that upon them—the whole election could be derailed for weeks.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9 put and passed.

Clause 10: Section 5I inserted —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This clause relates to the introduction of the inclusivity principle. Perhaps the minister can advise whether this was included on recommendation from the Electoral Commission or whether it was a government policy decision. In my second reading contribution, I commented that I was under the impression that the Electoral Commission was already required to create opportunities for as many people as possible to be enrolled and asked why it is necessary for the principle and the cohorts to be specifically mentioned. The opposition has no issue with acknowledging that particular cohorts are under-represented on the roll, but my understanding of the act is that that is the job of the Electoral Commission already, so why will we have a very specific list? Was it a recommendation from the Electoral Commission or was it a government policy decision?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: As I said at the start, none of this is government ideology. I think I referred to it before in the estimates hearings as rats and mice. These are matters that the Electoral Commission raised with me as not being required but would benefit from clarification for all officers at the commission. It will be in black and white for all officers at the commission. It was raised with me. Most of these matters, apart from donation amounts, were raised by the commission—I would say overwhelmingly. We had a new commissioner and a new Minister for Electoral Affairs. I sat down and said, “Well, we are going to do electoral reform. Can you give me some headlines and we will go through the act together and work out what you think will deliver the best result?” I have tried to do that.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: How does the commission propose that this is to be monitored, because it will be specifically mentioned in the bill that this is a requirement? Presumably, there will then be some sort of monitoring and reporting against these particular groups and some strategies will be put in place that will require resourcing. It cannot just be a nice and very virtuous inclusion in the bill. What practically will be done to report back on how the commission delivers on this inclusivity principle?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There will be key performance indicators against which the Electoral Commission can be audited by the Auditor General. That is the first thing.

Secondly, there will be an increased effort by the commission to engage with the community. Additional resources for that will be looked at by the Expenditure Review Committee and subsequently the cabinet and the Treasurer. We are serious about these things. The rate of Aboriginal enrolment is a bit low and in some of the remote areas, it is very low. We want them all included as far as possible. There will be KPIs. There will be extra resources to the commission. I know that the member will examine me come next June, I think, on where we are up to on that, though the act will not have commenced.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Chair—oh, he is still going.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): He is still on his feet.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I will not take all the three minutes and 42 seconds, member. I can also confirm that the commission already employs two community engagement officers to engage with regional communities especially to try to lift the enrolment rate. We have two already out of the existing budget, but there will be a submission to the Expenditure Review Committee over the implications of this bill.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am intrigued about why these groups have been selected. Surely it would have been better to have a general clause to say that the Electoral Commission should ensure that a special focus is put on under-represented groups. I will give the minister an example. In my experience, a community like the Indian community—I do not know why it is—just loves democracy, and the Indian community is very active in all levels of politics, local government—

Ms M.M. Quirk: That is a generalisation.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I know it is, but it is true. There was a vacancy for a councillor in Riverton and all five candidates were from the Indian community. It is an observation. My other observation is that people who have come from totalitarian regimes are very reticent to get involved in politics. They are very reticent to speak up and indicate any sort of political allegiance. I suspect that people from those communities are under-represented and a disproportionate number of people from those communities would not register to vote because they eschew politics. Their experience of being involved in politics is a negative thing and they should stay out of it. Why did the government not say to the Electoral Commission that it should identify and focus on under-represented groups, rather than choosing these particular groups?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I thank the member for the question. I think—I am certain, in fact—that with proposed section 51 as originally designed, we were worried about accessibility to vote. A lot of these people have difficulty. If we go to, for example, what the member is talking about, yes, Indian people do love democracy. We have two people of Indian descent in the chamber now.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Three.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Three. I am sorry. I apologise. Four because the Solicitor-General joins us this morning! I might be good at law, but I am not much good at arithmetic, am I? They say that is a failing of lawyers. Proposed paragraph (b) refers to “persons who are from culturally and linguistically diverse communities”. That would cover the sorts of communities the member has described. We would like to get those people involved in our democracy. As the member said, a lot of them love democracy and are scared of government. We have come up with these principles to energise the Electoral Commission with our two new community engagement officers and more to come to try to lift enrolment.

I am sorry; I referred to proposed section 51. I am corrected again; it is proposed section 5I. I thank the Solicitor-General. He has corrected me twice already this morning—once on his cultural background and again on my misreading of the numbers. It is to lift it up for everybody, member. It is not ideological in any way.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I do not know, but I suspect that in remote communities in the state generally, other than the Aboriginal people who live in those remote communities, enrolment for non-Aboriginal people would be low as well. I come back to the point again: why is there not a general requirement to ensure representation from unrepresented groups and that the Electoral Commission has a general responsibility rather than identifying specific groups? I am always worried when there is a choice of specific groups because the problem is whether there are unrepresented groups. We do not want to have that for a good democracy. We want our whole society evenly represented in the voting population. Why is there no generic clause?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We have not got to the clause yet but, firstly, we will enrol people on the state roll from the federal roll. Secondly, in later amendments to this legislation, people can be enrolled from other databases such as

drivers' licences. A lot of the people that this proposed section is trying to capture within its embrace are people who might not have drivers' licences or be registered with other agencies that feed into the Electoral Commission. In those circumstances, the commission will be energised by reason of this proposed section to give them a reasonable opportunity to enrol and to vote.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 14 put and passed.

Clause 15: Section 17 amended —

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I have amendments standing in my name at clause 15. I do not know whether the amendments can be considered cognately.

Ms M.J. Davies: I think so.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY — by leave: I move —

Page 23, line 28 to page 24, line 2 — To delete the lines and substitute —

- (b) the person has lived in a district (the *relevant district*) for a period of at least 1 month ending immediately before the day (the *relevant day*) on which the person intends to vote in an election in the relevant district or a Council election (the *election*); and
- (c) on the relevant day —

Page 24, lines 5 and 6 — To delete “vote in the relevant district.” and substitute —
vote.

Page 24, lines 15 to 18 — To delete “as a provisional voter under section 97G at an election in the relevant district or a Council election held on the relevant day; and” and substitute —

in the election on the relevant day as a provisional voter under section 97G; and

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Given that these amendments are on the notice paper, perhaps the Attorney General could provide us with an explanation as to why we are amending a bill that is already amending the act and the purpose of the amendments.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Certainly. Clause 15 will amend section 17 of the act, “Who is entitled to be enrolled and vote”. The bill currently introduces new subsection (2), which will provide for a person to be present at a place to vote on the day that they intend to vote to be enrolled and make a provisional vote. We discussed this in my second reading reply. The proposed amendment is to put beyond doubt that the ability to enrol and vote on the day applies at an early polling place and a mobile polling place, not just on polling day and regardless of whether the person presents at a place to vote in their district. This clause will be amended on the advice of the Western Australian Electoral Commission and to give effect to the policy intent of maximising the number of eligible voters. As written, when they attend a polling place on polling day, they can enrol on that day. The amendment as written did not cover early voting or mobile voting. When we did a final, fine toothcomb reading of the bill, the commission said we should extend this provision to not just voting day because it could cut out FIFO workers from that amenity. They will be able to do it on other days when they go to vote.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Can the minister clarify for me what happened prior? We are seeking to resolve an issue, essentially, to make sure that anybody who wants to vote can vote in the right electorate on the day. That is my understanding. Can the minister outline for me, without these amendments, what happens if a voter turns up on election day and they are not enrolled? What happens under the current act?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: At the moment, if a person is not enrolled, they cannot vote on that day. If they have put in a registration card and it has not appeared on the roll because it has not been dealt with administratively, they will deal with a section 26 provisional vote. They will make a declaration that they have claimed enrolment before the polling day. If they have not registered before the polling day, they cannot vote because the rolls have closed.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Was there any concern about or consideration given to providing this opportunity to people to provisionally vote and enrol on the day because of increased complacency by people about getting themselves on the roll?

Prior to an election, the Western Australian Electoral Commission runs a campaign to say that people need to be on the roll. This is people's responsibility; people who are given the privilege of a vote must have some agency. Now we are giving them a get-out-of-jail-free clause. I understand the principle of what we are trying to achieve, but was consideration given to the fact that it will probably be at cross-purposes to the call from the Electoral Commission prior to the closing of rolls, which is that people have a responsibility to enrol themselves and be involved in the democratic process?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes. When I was a young lawyer, everything was black and white. The older I got, the less certain it all became because there was always a good competing alternative argument, and that is why we

have shelves and shelves of law reports and appeal cases. It is a balancing act. Yes, we want everyone to enrol in good time before an election, but, yes, we want everyone to vote. What impact will that have on people? It is a balancing act.

It will be an unpublicised change. We will not advertise that people can enrol on the day, and we will not give any hint of that. Unless *The West Australian* picks up this argument and does a headline, which I cannot imagine, the public will not know, and everyone will be encouraged to be on the roll. Having been a member of this Parliament for quite a long while, the member must know that people do rock up to vote and have forgotten to register or they have changed address, the person who moved into their previous address has got on the roll at that address, the roll has been cleaned up and they are not on the roll. We want those people to be able to vote. There is a balancing act, but we think we have got it right.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you. The clause we have just dealt with is the inclusivity principle and includes the homeless cohort. What will happen when a homeless person turns up on the day? How will that get dealt with? Will it be in the same way and then the Electoral Commission will deal with it after the fact?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: If we take the homeless person as an example, a homeless person will claim a vote and be able to vote in the district in which they identify.

Ms M.J. Davies: That is a provision in the act.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Correct. That is exactly what happens under the federal scheme. They can vote in the area that they identify with—if they couch surf at their rellie’s house or whatever. We do not want the homeless disenfranchised because of their terrible economic circumstances.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: What analysis has the Electoral Commission done on previous elections about how many people who turn up on election day are not enrolled to vote? What numbers did it provide to say that this is an issue that requires resolving?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I cannot give the member numbers, but I can give her this information: I am advised by the Electoral Commission that only approximately 10 per cent of the claimed provisional votes are validated. The other 90 per cent cannot be located on the roll. Those people are claiming a provisional vote but are not on the roll. Under the amendment, they will be able to vote if they enrol on that day and qualify. It will still be a provisional vote, but the process will not be checking to see whether they are on the roll; it will be applying to go on the roll. They will have to qualify as being an elector.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Perhaps the Attorney General cannot give me numbers, but can he give me a ballpark? Is it hundreds or thousands? It is obviously an issue. He said that it is rats and mice among the issues that he is trying to resolve through the bill, but it is substantial enough to raise with him as the minister. Are we talking about hundreds of votes or thousands of votes?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Take me out to the ballpark! I will give the member a ballpark figure. I am told that at least 1 000 provisional votes are claimed in each district.

Dr D.J. HONEY: From the experience of my family, I can say that there is great excitement once people turn 18 years old. Parents exhort their children to get themselves enrolled to vote so they can participate in the democratic process. Of course, the carrot we wave is that my kids have strong political views, as the Attorney General might guess. I can say that they have very diverse political views—not all mine.

Mr J.R. Quigley: You have some enlightened members of the family.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am working on them but to no avail. They were keen to be able to vote. I have a concern about this general provision, outside the amendments, which is that the default will be that people do not have to worry; they do not have to enrol because they can just leave it until polling day and enrol on the day. That goes to the Electoral Commissioner and the staff being able to cope on election day. At my polling booths, voters get very frustrated when they are waiting in big long lines, and that is not uncommon. Once, the long lines used to be at the end of the day, but people now get in early and get voting out of the way.

Mr J.R. Quigley: To get those sausages; they want the sausages.

Dr D.J. HONEY: They want the best cakes from the stalls and the democracy sausages. There are long lines of people, and the staff in the booths are completely overwhelmed trying to deal with it. I wonder whether we will see additional resources given on polling day. I anticipate that, once it becomes common knowledge that people can enrol on the day, a good number of kids who have turned 18, and perhaps migrants who have arrived, will simply not make the effort to do it beforehand. Many will not and will procrastinate, safe in the knowledge that they will still be able to vote. I have a genuine concern about the capacity of the booths to cope. Will additional resources be provided so that they have the capacity to cope and we will not have frustrated people waiting in long lines to enrol before they can vote?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The Electoral Commission cannot do anything about the length of the lines; that is when people choose to vote. Addressing the point the member raised, we are allowing provisional registration at the age

of 16 years, which will happen while children are at school. They will be educated about the electoral system. As I have said previously during consideration in detail, there is a balancing act. We do not believe that this amendment will cause a substantial shift in the way that people register. We believe that the amendments will encourage people to register younger and earlier, but we want to make sure that everyone who is eligible to vote is able to vote.

Amendments put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 16: Section 17AA inserted —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I understand that this clause will allow 16-year-olds to be put on the voting roll. In his second reading reply, the minister mentioned that this provision had come from the commonwealth; it is already done. I was not familiar with that, so I have some questions about what information this will allow people to access through the Electoral Commission roll. I understand that the Electoral Commission is required to make the roll available in its office. If a 16-year-old goes on the roll, will they be on it as a silent voter? Will that mean that someone who walks into the Electoral Commission office will not be able to see the details of 16-year-olds? Who will have access to that information? Will political parties have access to it? I, like many members of the government, see 16-year-olds when I am signing birthday cards and I communicate with them in my electorate office.

Mr J.R. Quigley: No-one has ever sent me one!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: In my electorate, people have to hit a big birthday to get a birthday card from me—18 years old, 21 years old, 80 years old, 90 years old and 100 years old! Every month in my electorate I sign cards for 101st, 102nd and 103rd birthdays.

Mr J.R. Quigley: It is the country air!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes, it is; it is amazing!

Anyway, that is the other end of the spectrum to what we are talking about, which is people who are 16 years old.

Mr D.R. Michael: I will send you a card in three weeks!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That is very kind!

The minister can see what I mean. Sixteen-year-olds are on the roll and then they essentially become political commodities. Who will be able to access their information? I am not sure that many people know that they can just walk into the Electoral Commission and ask to see the roll in its entirety, but people can do it, as I have discovered reading this bill with a fine toothcomb.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I thank the member for the question. Of course, we want to protect the privacy of our children. We do not want their addresses and all that detail the member referred to to be broadcast. One of the amendments that we will come to subsequently is about the register of voters. This will introduce a new concept that the commission will keep an electronic register of all the people it has registered, and from that register a roll of eligible voters will be extracted and that will become the electoral roll. The roll will have a list of people who are eligible to vote that has been extracted from the electronic register, and children are not eligible to vote so they will not appear on the roll. They will be registered and when the date comes around and they turn 18 years old, they will be eligible to vote and pop up on the roll. That has to do with the computer program. A person will not be able to examine the register of voters; they will be able to examine the roll.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Will the list that will be provided to members of Parliament be the roll and not the register?

Mr J.R. Quigley: Correct.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Therefore, no member of Parliament will have access to the register.

I come back to the rationale for having 16-year-olds included on the register at all. Who will communicate with them? Who will have the capacity to use that information?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I hope their parents and their teachers communicate with them and not politicians! At the moment, children register. At the moment, the legislation provides for 17-year-olds to register. The commonwealth has 16-year-olds on its register. Because we are registering people from the commonwealth register, we want to bring things into alignment. A 16-year-old will be able to register for the commonwealth and Western Australian roll. In both instances, they cannot vote, but we will be in alignment with the commonwealth so there will be no confusion.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Can I take it that the only reason they would be enrolled to vote at 16 or 17 years old is that once they hit voting age, they will already be on the roll, and there will be no communication from government departments or the Electoral Commission other than to confirm that they are on the register, and government agencies or departments will not be able to access that information? I understand that the public and members of Parliament cannot do so. Is it simply being done so that when they turn 18, they will appear on the electoral roll? Is my understanding correct?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Under this legislation, people under the age of 18 will be regarded by the commission as silent electors, so the only communication they will get from a government department or agency will be a letter of acknowledgement from the commission of their registration—that will be it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 17 and 18 put and passed.

Clause 19: Section 18 amended —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I presume this clause goes to the creation of the register we were just talking about. Could the minister provide a little explanation about why we are shifting to this —

Mr J.R. Quigley: No.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: No; have I got that wrong?

Mr J.R. Quigley: Clause 19 will amend section 18, and regards disqualification.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Sorry.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Do not say sorry. It is complicated because there are so many amendments.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have the bill and the amended act going at the same time.

Mr J.R. Quigley: We both have to accommodate each other because this is so complicated.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Does this clause relate to people not entitled to vote being enrolled and provide for circumstances in which people will be disqualified from voting? Is that correct?

Mr J.R. Quigley: Yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Could I have an explanation about the change of terminology? In the second reading speech, there was reference to people of unsound mind being subject to a lack-of-capacity notice. I think a clause much later in the bill deals with this, and if it is better to ask questions about this at that stage, I am happy to do that. I think clause 41 deals with how the enrolment process is undertaken. I seek clarity about what this clause does, and then I can deal with some of the other issues in debate on clause 41 if that is a more appropriate place.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Do not deny me the opportunity to give my little prepared spiel on clause 19! Part of it is about modernisation. “Person of unsound mind” is an archaic term and “mental impairment” is the preferred term. “Mental impairment” is a term used in the Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 and in the Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023, which the member will recall this chamber and Parliament passed earlier this year. In addition, the unamended act automatically disqualifies a person of unsound mind. This is where we go back to section 41. The bill will establish a new scheme whereby persons with mental impairment, such as those lacking the capacity for the purpose of casting a vote, may lose the entitlement to vote. The scheme will set up natural justice—we will go to those sections later—so that a person must be given notice of the intention to remove their name and they will have a right to be heard by way of a written application setting out the grounds. Other modernisation provisions in the clause will make terms consistent with commonwealth legislation, including a temporary entry permit becoming a temporary visa and a “prohibited immigrant” becoming an “unlawful non-citizen” under the Migration Act 1958. We are modernising the terms. The member is right, the procedure by which someone might be found to be of unsound mind is dealt with later in the bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 20 put and passed.

Clause 21: Sections 19 to 30 replaced —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Have I got the right clause on the register of electors?

Mr J.R. Quigley: Yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Could the minister explain the rationale for shifting from the current practice to what is being proposed? There are quite substantial changes. Why has it been recommended? I presume it was recommended by the Electoral Commission as a result of discussions about the modernisation of the bill.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Thank you for the question. Yes, the bill adopts the approach taken in Victoria and New South Wales. I looked around the country for best practice. A register of electors is the source of all enrolment information from which electoral rolls are drawn and certain enrolment information is provided to candidates, parties and the public. The Western Australian Electoral Commission already has a database on which enrolment information is stored and from which rolls are produced. It was recommended that we follow the Victorian model. The bill codifies existing practices and sets out additional rules for the maintenance, revision and release of information from that register. Parties, candidates and the public will continue to have access to the same information as provided in the unamended act. These provisions have been drafted in close consultation with the Electoral Commission.

There will be a register of electors from which rolls for elections will be drawn. Provisions about rolls for election now commence at part IV division 1A—proposed section 76AA. Provisions about accessing enrolment information are now in proposed part III division 6, replacing sections 25 to 25E. We are trying to follow best practice from around Australia in creating the register. Obviously, the Electoral Commission keeps electronic records at the moment. We are formalising that into a register and deciding what will go onto the roll and what people can access. With the advent of computers, the Electoral Commission started to use databases, but we want to formalise that into best practice in Australia. That is why I looked at the other states.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: To make it clear: has that already been done by the Electoral Commission? Is it already operating in that way? Will the bill ensure it has the legal capacity to do it and it is not in contravention of the act as it stands at the moment?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There is no contravention of the act at the moment. There is a database and the commission creates a roll from it. This legislation will codify what people can access and what goes onto the roll. It gives de jure to what has been de facto practice.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Is the bill an enabler for electronically recording attendance at the polling booth versus the current practice of ruling out an address? My grave concern in elections is the possibility of multiple voting. To be frank, the identification requirements are weak. Someone could attend all booths. In my electorate, I think there are eight booths. It would be quite possible for a person to attend all booths and vote eight times, and all eight votes would stand. It is impossible to single them out. My party has not looked at this for some time, but I do recall some years ago our women's division was concerned about this. It looked at some electorates in which it was a close vote and identified multiple voting under the same name across a number of booths in different electorates. At the end of the day, nothing was done about that.

Multiple voting would be trivial if we had electronic registration of voters at booths. It would eliminate the possibility of illegitimate multiple voting, because once a name and address had been crossed off the system digitally it would raise a red flag if someone attempted to vote at another booth. I wonder whether we intend to go to that system. I will use my time to say that I strongly encourage that because I think there are a couple of weaknesses in our current system. The first is that the identification requirements are weak and the second is that it is entirely possible for someone to vote at all of the booths in an electorate and it is likely that it will not be picked up. There would be no way of recording that they had done that unless the Electoral Commission was intending to install cameras.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I take the member's point. We would have to buy and issue thousands of laptops and have wi-fi, or 5G, available in each polling place, and I am not sure whether that is available in the regions. The laptops would be used for 11 days and then put in a cupboard until the next election by which time the laptop system would probably be out of date. Yes, I take the member's point. At the moment, if a person votes in Cottesloe, they get their name crossed off. They think, "I'll be sneaky; I'll now go up to Butler and vote Liberal up in Butler." They do it again and they get their name crossed off again as an out-of-district absent voter. When the votes come in and are checked off against the person who has voted, multi-voters will be picked up and will be, and are, referred to police for prosecution because they are trying to disfigure our electoral system.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The problem is that they are not detected. I agree that there is no question that if someone has cast a provisional vote, there will be physical evidence of a signature and fingerprints that could be investigated by the police. However, in my electorate they can vote at the civic centre and then pop down to North Cot, over to Cot, on to St Hilda's school, North Cottesloe Primary School and Swanbourne Primary School, and then on to City Beach and Churchlands Primary Schools as well. There is no way that will be detected, unless some sharp-eyed person happens to see that person going to the different booths. The only identification check is that at each booth the voter gives a legitimate name and address. They then get a ballot paper and vote. Outside of an external reference, there is no way that is captured. The Minister for Electoral Affairs talks about the resourcing requirement, but this is why I am a strong advocate of moving to electronic recording of people attending the booths. It would not mean that the wrong person might not vote once, but it would remove the opportunity for a person who is otherwise minded to vote several times within a particular electorate. It is not a problem generally, as the margins are reasonably large. However, the minister knows that a number of elections have been decided by a very small handful of votes, especially when it comes to tipping preferences to one candidate or another. Often that can decide the election.

I think this is a real issue. As I said, there are two critical weaknesses: that issue is one and the second is that the identification requirements are weak. People simply have to know someone's name, address and date of birth. I can find that out by just reading the electoral roll.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: What the member is saying happens in Cottesloe is giving life to the old saying, "Vote early and vote often"! They do not do that in Butler; they vote once. People will be detected if they vote at North Cottesloe Primary School and Cottesloe Primary School, and then vote down on the beach. They will be prosecuted as a multi-voter.

Dr D.J. Honey: How will they be detected? They could choose the name of a person who was recently deceased.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It will be after the declaration of the poll, but it will be detected when the rolls are checked. They will see that young Master Honey—the errant son the member referred to earlier—has voted Labor six times around Cottesloe. However, he will be detected and he will be prosecuted as a multi-voter. The polls will have been declared, but if it has affected an election, the candidates can always challenge the election in the Court of Disputed Returns on the basis that people voted early and voted often, which is absolutely illegal. They will be detected.

I do not know for how long I will be the minister. I would like to see it all done electronically one day, but we are not there yet. Perhaps one day there could even be electronic voting at the booths—who knows? That is all years down the track. We are modernising the system; we are getting there. Multi-voters will be prosecuted.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I think the minister is missing the point. Yes, a legitimate person such as one of my errant children could vote multiple times, particularly for the wrong party, and get their name crossed out. However, I could use any name at a polling booth. I could use Bill Bloggs. I could identify people who were recently deceased but who were still on the roll and I could use their name multiple times. There is no way of detecting that, outside of someone observing it. If people are using someone else's name when they go to those other booths, they can still vote multiple times, and that is my concern. Whereas if there was a digital system, in the circumstance of a recently deceased person who is still on the roll—it is easy enough for people to find that out—at least there could be only one illicit vote that might be discovered ultimately. There is no guarantee whatsoever that the system as it is would detect the person and lead to a prosecution.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Detecting fraud is always a challenge, no matter what area we look at. Whether it is social security fraud or voting fraud, any area of human enterprise carries the risk of fraud. We have a system in which if there are multiple votes, people will be prosecuted. If multiple votes affect an election, the election could be set aside. It is clear.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 22 to 28 put and passed.

Clause 29: Sections 37 to 39 replaced —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This clause covers the regulation-making power in relation to enrolment and will insert new sections. I understand an increase will be made to the penalty that can be applied if someone fails to do what we have just been talking about, which is enrol and vote. I think it was a \$20 fine previously.

Mr J.R. Quigley: And now it will be \$50.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It will be \$50. It will not break the bank. It probably will for a few people in today's cost-of-living crisis, but it is right that it will be increased; \$20 is pretty nominal. One of the questions I have in and around this is: how many fines were issued for the last general election? I contrast that with some of the recent by-elections. What work does the Electoral Commission do to recover the funds? I understand that it issues a fine, but is there a follow-up to that, and how much is recovered?

How many fines were issued in the 2017 general election and the 2023 by-election? Is there a point of no return at which the commission stops trying? Is it really something that acts as a deterrent for people who do not vote? What happens if ultimately they do not pay?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I wish the member could help me, having exposed my deficiencies in arithmetic thus far.

Ms M.J. Davies: That is not my forte!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I can give the member this information. In relation to the 2021 election, \$1.659 million in fines was paid to the Western Australian Electoral Commission—the member can divide that by 20—and a further \$1.825 million was paid through the Fines Enforcement Registry. That might have included costs as well. I am sorry, member, but it is difficult for me to divide that figure by 20 and come up with a number. I have given the total amounts. It is significant; it comes to nearly \$3.5 million.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Just to be clear, is that for not being enrolled or for not voting?

Mr J.R. Quigley: For not voting.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: So that I am clear on this clause, the regulation-making power that we are talking about is for enrolment. I am trying to be clear in my mind whether there will be a penalty for not enrolling and also for not voting, or is it one and the same thing?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It is not part of the bill to prosecute people who have not enrolled. It is very hard to find them. How can we find people who have not enrolled? They are out in the community hiding. We would not know. It will be a \$50 fine for the offence of breaching the regulations, but we cannot fine people who we do not know. I do not know whether that satisfies the member.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is not a trick question. It is a regulation-making power in relation to enrolment. In my mind, I had assumed it was about not voting. Is that correct?

Mr J.R. Quigley: That is true.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Right. What is true of what I just said? I am thoroughly confused, minister!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Most of what the member says, apart from the exceptions to that!

It is true that if someone who is on the roll does not vote, they will be fined. When the member asked whether they would be fined for not voting, I said that was true because if they are on the roll and have not voted, they will be fined, but we cannot fine people for not going on the roll. The register can be grown by referencing other governmental databases like drivers' licences. Someone who is on the register but has not enrolled or voted properly will be pinged.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Does the minister have any figures for the by-elections? Obviously, that is a different beast. We have had two. One for Rockingham and the other for North West Central. Does the minister have those figures to hand to give us an idea of how much the Electoral Commission garnered from non-voting?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I do not have those figures to hand but I could take that question on notice. One of the member's colleagues in the Council can provide a question on notice and I will get the commission to come up with those figures. I am sorry that I cannot at the moment.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: What would happen if a person did not pay? Obviously, there will be a first request and that would go through the Fines Enforcement Registry. It would send a pretty scary letter to say that someone has forgotten to pay a fine. I may or may not have received one of them in my lifetime due to not paying attention in my busy life. The person would either pay it or not pay it. Ultimately, what would happen? How many people do not pay those fines?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: As I said, the commission will send a notice saying that the person has not paid the fine and then a second notice and then a final notice. As a result of those three efforts, some people will pay the fine. The fines paid after those demands comprise the \$1.6-odd million received by the commission. Those who fail to respond to the three notices will get referred to the Fines Enforcement Registry. The efforts of that office have resulted in the collection of a further \$1.8 million. I cannot give the member the actual number of electors, but I can tell her that voters with fines amounting to \$1.8 million did not pay their first three notices and were referred to the Fines Enforcement Registry. The member and I both know, because we were in this chamber, that we reformed the fines enforcement regime so that people could not be imprisoned. If they were outside a certain postcode, their licence could not be suspended either—perhaps in some of the member's electorate where there is no public transport. Otherwise, the normal fines enforcement procedures will prevail.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have one last question on that matter. Will that money go back to the Electoral Commission or into consolidated revenue?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The Electoral Commission fits within my portfolio. I would love it to come back to the commission but all fines end up in consolidated revenue.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 30: Section 40 replaced —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have a quick question on this clause that relates to changes to the register of electors that requires that certain persons can be removed. Can the minister explain what will happen if the Electoral Commission proposes to remove a person from the roll? How will they be notified? Would that occur before or after the person is removed? What information will the commission use to base its decision on to remove someone from the roll? I presume that the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages will come into this at some point in the case of a death. I have to say that I have sent birthday cards to people who are no longer with us, which is awkward when the family brings the card back. I tend to check before I send birthday cards for people turning 100 because it is more likely that I might offend someone! We would normally think that the electoral roll is spot-on when sending a birthday card to a 70 or 80-year-old. We try to minimise the awkwardness for the families. I do not get many birthday cards, but they are appreciated by that generation and I would like to keep doing it. Perhaps the minister could explain how people will be notified when the Electoral Commission removes a person from the electoral roll. Obviously, someone who has passed would not be notified, but will other people get notified that they will be removed from the roll before or after it happens, and what recourse will they have?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Proposed section 40 says —

- (1) The following persons must be removed from the register of electors —
 - (a) subject to section 51A, a person who is not entitled to be enrolled, including under section 18;
 - (b) a person who, from information supplied by the chief executive officer as defined in the *Prisons Act 1981* ... appears to not be entitled to be an elector;
 - (c) a person who does not appear to live in the district for which they are enrolled, unless the person is enrolled under section 17(4), 17A or 17B.

Here is the crux of it —

- (2) If a person’s name appeared on the register of electors and was removed under subsection (1), an enrolment officer must give notice to the person stating —
- (a) the person’s name was removed from the register of electors under subsection (1); and
 - (b) the person may be enrolled again if the person makes and sends a claim to be enrolled.

That claim would be assessed at that time. Practically, the Australian Electoral Commission does most of the roll cleaning, but there is the legislative capacity for the state commission to do it as well. A person must be given notice that it has happened and advised that they can still make a claim.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 31 to 33 put and passed.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5435.]

ESPERANCE DISTRICT FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Statement by Member for Roe

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.50 pm]: The Esperance District Football Association recently celebrated the end of its 2023 season by recognising the efforts of players, teams and umpires during the year. Esperance Football Club midfielder Richard Bourne was awarded the Hepburn Medal for the senior men’s league, with a Bulldogs teammate the runner-up. The Hepburn Medal was not the only honour bestowed upon Bourne, who was also deemed to be the association’s Footballer of the Year. Gibson Football Club women’s player Rani Smart won her second fairest and best medal in a three-year period, taking home the Brett Crawford Medal. Her club colleagues Jacob Barber and Regan Mott won similar accolades for the A-reserves and colts grades respectively. Mott was awarded the McArthur Medal, while Barber was presented with the Frank Murray Medal by its namesake, Frank Murray. The Paddy Rule Medallist was Matt Harding, the Ted Young Medallist was Brett Trocinski, and Umpire of the Year was David McGrinder. Newtown–Condingup Football Club player Oakley Wallace received the Graeme “Ozzie” Ainsworth Memorial Shield for the best player in the association under the age of 21. Volunteer Club Person of the Year awards went to Sophie Hawke for Esperance, Greg Curnow for Gibson, Shane Liddelow for Newtown–Condingup and Chris Cassam for Ports.

The strength of sporting clubs in places like Esperance reflects the role of sport in the community. A sense of community is strengthened by gatherings for events like these awards, and resilience is fostered by the bonds that are encouraged on and off the field.

JOHN PATE, AM — TRIBUTE

Statement by Member for Warren–Blackwood

MS E.J. KELSIE (Warren–Blackwood) [12.52 pm]: Earlier this year, we lost a highly respected Western Australian and Denmark resident. Emeritus Professor John Pate, botanist, researcher, teacher, author, husband and proud father, was 91 years old. His legacy will live on. Albert Einstein said that by looking deep into nature, we will understand everything better. Professor Pate devoted his life to doing exactly that. His fascination with plant science began in the United Kingdom during the Second World War, when his family grew peas and beans to combat food shortages. He studied at Queen’s University Belfast, and his journey eventually took him to the University of Western Australia, where he served as professor of botany for 27 years. Professor Pate’s research has helped us to better understand our natural environment, the stresses on our precious ecosystem and the productivity of our pastures and crops through his research into the carbon and nitrogen economies of plants. He was a world leader in his field, being a fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and the Royal Society in London; a recipient of the Australian Minerals and Energy Environment Foundation Award and the Centenary Medal in 2001; and inducted into the Premier’s Western Australian Science Hall of Fame in 2017. This year, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to botany and tertiary education. Our thoughts are with Professor Pate’s wife, Trudy; his sons, David, Michael and Stephen; his four grandchildren; his great-granddaughter; and his sister, Sheila Cross.

COUNTRY RACING

Statement by Member for North West Central

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [12.54 pm]: I stand to recognise the many dedicated community members and volunteers who work tirelessly throughout the year to provide important and vibrant country race meetings in our regions. Country racing is an integral part of regional WA. With this year’s race round in the electorate now over for another year, the many volunteers, community members and sponsors who work tirelessly to ensure these events happen all deserve to be acknowledged, celebrated and supported.

Country racing events provide remote and regional communities with the opportunity to reconnect, socialise and attract unique tourism opportunities to the region, with local businesses benefiting from an influx of people. Visitors are welcomed to the region to take part in some unique experiences in the bush, including camping, gymkhanas, fashions on the field, tug of war and two-up.

My electorate is currently home to four vibrant country race clubs that are steeped in history. The Junction, Mount Magnet and Eastern Gascoyne Race Clubs meet once a year, while the Carnarvon Race Club hosts 10 events each year. Carnarvon Race Club is one of the oldest clubs in the north west and this year celebrated its 140th anniversary, while Junction Race Club, established in 1907, has held its event every year since 1947. Eastern Gascoyne Race Club, known as the Landor race club, hosts an annual four-day event that is held in the spirit of a strictly amateur race meeting and attracts hundreds of visitors to the region. The event held by Mount Magnet Race Club, which was established in 1896, sees the town transform for a vibrant, action-packed race weekend. The survival of these clubs and their facilities is reliant on many dedicated people. Without those committed groups, these important clubs and institutions would not survive. I congratulate and thank all the committee members, volunteers, communities and sponsors across our regions for their commitment to country racing in WA and for a successful 2023.

DENNIS WELLINGTON — MAYOR OF ALBANY — RETIREMENT

Statement by Member for Albany

MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany) [12.55 pm]: Next week, City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington hangs up his boots. Mayor Wellington has led the City of Albany for the last 12 years as mayor and served on council for a remarkable 23 years. I have been fortunate enough to work alongside him as his personal assistant, serve alongside him as an elected member and, now most recently, work with him in my role as the member for Albany. I have seen firsthand the unwavering commitment he has shown to the people of Albany. He has been the passionate guiding force behind numerous transformative projects that have reshaped Albany, making it an even more vibrant and thriving place that we all call home. During his tenure, he led Albany through the Anzac Centenary commemoration project, the redevelopment of Centennial Park sporting and recreation precinct and upgrades to Middleton Beach–Binalup, and he has laid the groundwork for the upcoming Albany Bicentenary celebrations in 2026. Dennis was actively involved in ensuring that the youth of Albany are represented through the Albany Youth Advisory Council and that Albany is passionately known as a compassionate community.

Dennis, you should be extremely proud of your many incredible achievements, and I thank you for your service to the Albany community. You always led with the attitude “Is it good for Albany?”, and, if it was, you championed the issue. You have been the heart and soul of our city. Our thriving regional city has been forever changed because of the impact of your dedication and leadership. Best wishes for your retirement and enjoy watching more sport on the TV.

WESTERN KNIGHTS SOCCER CLUB

Statement by Member for Cottesloe

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [12.57 pm]: It is my distinct honour today to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Western Knights Soccer Club for its remarkable triumph in winning this year’s WA State League division 1 title. What makes this title win even more special is that it was achieved during the club’s fifty-fifth anniversary year, no less. It also means the Knights have earned a well-deserved promotion to the National Premier League WA.

As a member of Parliament, I am proud to witness how sport can transcend boundaries and have a positive impact that resonates far beyond the field of play. Sport has the power to unite, inspire and elevate communities, and the Western Knights has exemplified these ideals through its dedication, passion and unwavering commitment.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Western Knights president, Mr Dean Zlendic, and all the club’s volunteers and supporters for their tireless work behind the scenes. Your efforts do not go unnoticed. To the Western Knights soccer team, I extend my warmest congratulations. May your journey in the NPL WA be marked by continued success, camaraderie and the joy of playing the game you love. Zivjela Croacija!

ISRAEL — ATTACK — WA JEWISH COMMUNITY

Statement by Member for Mount Lawley

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.58 pm]: I stand today to unreservedly condemn the abhorrent and brutal acts of terror carried out by Hamas in Israel. It seems that each new media report carries details of an even more unspeakable horror, prompting international condemnation. On Tuesday, European, US and UK governments had this to say —

We make clear that the terrorist actions of Hamas have no justification, no legitimacy, and must be universally condemned. There is never any justification for terrorism.

This is a terrifying time for a significant section of my community in Mount Lawley and has affected all facets of community life. I acknowledge the strength and dedication of many local community leaders, such as Geoff Midalia

and Steve Lieblich, president and vice-president of the Jewish Community Council of Western Australia; Rabbi Marcus Solomon at the Dianella Shule; Rabbi Kim Ettlinger at Temple David; Rabbi Dan Lieberman at the Perth Hebrew Congregation; Adi Peleg, David Karotkin and Todd Wilner at the United Israel Appeal; Gavin Kotkis and Nikki Leib at JNF Australia; principal Dr Julie Harris and her team of teachers and administrators at Carmel School; Philippa Hinton and staff at Maurice Zeffert Home; and Justine Sharbanee at Maccabi WA.

I was fortunate enough to travel to Israel with the Premier when he was the Minister for Health and I saw firsthand his respect and affection for the people of Israel. As a result, I was humbled to be asked to present a message on behalf of the Premier at a community solidarity event last night. He had this to say, according to my notes —

Western Australians right across the state grieve alongside you as we grapple with the outrageous acts of terrorism and brutality committed against Jews in Israel.

The images we are seeing on social media and news media are utterly horrifying.

The deliberate targeting of innocent Israeli civilians by Hamas is an outrage to democratic societies everywhere. I condemn them in the strongest possible terms.

...

But here in Western Australia and in our communities, we have not forgotten what your community has endured.

...

We stand with you all and we stand with Israel.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

**VISITORS — KALAMUNDA CWA, ST DOMINIC'S SCHOOL,
SEVENOAKS SENIOR COLLEGE AND ST JOHN'S SCHOOL**

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Members, I am very excited to have quite a lot of guests here today, especially in my Speaker's gallery. On behalf of the member for Kalamunda, can I please welcome the Kalamunda Country Women's Association of Western Australia, who are visiting Parliament today. Welcome!

On behalf of the member for Scarborough, can I acknowledge the principal and student leaders from St Dominic's School. On behalf of the member for Cannington, can I acknowledge the student leadership from Sevenoaks Senior College. Also, on behalf of the member for Geraldton, can I acknowledge St John's School from Geraldton. It is great to have people here all the way from Geraldton. Welcome!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL — GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

729. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

I refer to the Solidarity with Israel event held last night to support the Jewish community, members of which are watching Parliament online. This event follows the horrific terror attacks in Israel. I also refer to the Premier's message delivered by the member for Mount Lawley that promised that the Jewish community in Western Australia would be kept safe.

- (1) Given that there is a pro-Palestinian rally planned for tomorrow, will the Premier keep his promise and ensure that the vile, anti-Semitic activities that occurred in Sydney are not replicated here?
- (2) Noting the actions of the Premier's counterpart in New South Wales, will the Premier move to block the rally?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! This is a very serious issue. I am going to suggest to people that they do not interject, and we will hear from the Premier in response.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) The events in Israel have shocked everyone in terms of their ferocity, the loss of life and the senselessness. I have said on a number of occasions that peace is hard, and what we have seen erupt in Israel is an affront to us all who believe in peace and living in harmony. We all stand in solidarity with the people of Israel and are all shocked by the impact that those horrible attacks have had on their community and their nation. Indeed, we look now in horror at the loss of life across civil populations right across that region. Once again we stare on in despair, but with ongoing hope that people's ambition for peace will overtake these horrible events.

As a community, we should also take the opportunity just to give thanks that we live in a relatively peaceful part of the world where these sorts of events do not confront us on a day-to-day basis. It is consistent with

my comments to the media during the week that I think we should all take the opportunity to embrace the ideals of peace and living in harmony. As I have been saying repeatedly this week, this is not the time for protests. This is a time and an opportunity for everyone to be mindful of the things we say and the things we do and the hurt, division and, indeed, pain that it can causes, with the potential for harm and danger.

I am aware that there have been some reports about people wanting to protest and express their concerns on all sides of the debate on this particularly complex issue. I know that the Minister for Police, Hon Paul Papalia, has been working with the police, the state security investigation group and both the Jewish community and those who support the other side in this difficult debate to make sure that we have a quintessentially Western Australian response, which is to call on everyone to be respectful, to be mindful of our deeds and to ensure that we do not escalate the situation in Western Australia. Now is not the time to do that. Now is the time to de-escalate, and I think we all have a responsibility to make sure that it happens.

I want to acknowledge the member for Mount Lawley, who led a large delegation of members of Parliament at the event last night to express our solidarity with the Jewish community. I know that Minister Papalia and the teams in the Western Australia Police Force are working with both the Jewish community and others to ensure that we do not see the situation that we saw unfold in New South Wales.

FITZROY RIVER BRIDGE — RECONSTRUCTION

730. Ms L. DALTON to the Premier:

I refer to the flooding emergency experienced in the Kimberley earlier this year and the Cook Labor government's subsequent response.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on the progress to build a new bridge at Fitzroy Crossing to reconnect the East and West Kimberley?
- (2) Can the Premier outline what economic and social benefits the project has had for the local community?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. It is a very important one. This is an opportunity for everyone in the Parliament to acknowledge some great work that has been undertaken in the Kimberley this year. We know that it has been challenging to build any infrastructure for the last several years. Workforce constraints, rising material costs and supply chain disruptions have impacted projects around the world, and we are not immune to that. In regional areas, it is even harder, but in the Kimberley we have had the extra element of the impact of not only the harsh terrain, but also the wet season and the challenges that come from that.

Developing successful infrastructure projects in remote areas needs careful planning, innovative engineering solutions and collaboration with local communities, not to mention an incredibly determined Minister for Transport. We saw the once-in-100-year floods in the Kimberley wreak havoc across that region, and that was felt most acutely in Fitzroy Crossing. The way that those floods tore through that community was shocking. Anyone who has been up there to see the devastation of that flood will really appreciate the impact that that has had on communities.

When the old bridge went down, it cut off the only route across the region and caused major disruption. The government acted immediately—firstly, to create a temporary low-level crossing; and, secondly, to embark on an expedited tender process to build a bigger and stronger new bridge to reconnect those communities. We all saw the impact of the roads being flooded or washed away, with whole supply chains completely disrupted and trucks having to travel via Alice Springs to get materials up there. It was a significant challenge for the community. Remember that this happened in January. By the end of March, an alliance contract was awarded to three local companies and Main Roads Western Australia. Then, just five months ago in May—just a short time ago—with the wet season over, groundworks and demolition began. This week, Main Roads confirmed that the bridge will be open to all traffic by the end of the year. This is an extraordinary outcome.

Dr D.J. Honey: You should get them onto Metronet. It would speed that up!

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: Clearly, the member for Cottesloe does not appreciate just how challenging this particular project was, and it has now been delivered six months ahead of time. The new bridge will be six times stronger than the original bridge. The piles were driven around 40 metres into the riverbed compared with around 15 metres for the old bridge. That gives people an idea of the scale of this flood. Pillars that went 15 metres into the riverbank were washed away like toothpicks. This was an extraordinary event. We now have a new bridge, which, at 270 metres long, is about 100 metres longer than the old bridge, and will also be wider so that traffic can pass. There will also be a pedestrian pathway.

Perhaps one of the more remarkable aspects of this project is the jobs that have been created for local people. The bridge project created a sharp spike in Aboriginal employment. Those of us who have had the privilege of seeing

this project in place will have seen how nearly the whole community has been engaged, if not on the bridgeworks, then in other activities around the town site to continue to rebuild the houses in that area. Along with this, many Fitzroy Crossing locals have reported a noticeable decrease in crime and dysfunction. I am not surprised; they are so tired and busy from working! I spoke to one local businessman; this chap is the head of a plumbing business. I asked him how many people he was employing and he said that he had about 12 people working with him at the moment. I asked him how many people he would normally have, and he said, “Just me and my wife.” This is a real indication of the huge lift in economic activity. The challenge will now be to make sure that we keep these people in an employment cycle by making sure there are other projects they can move on to, to really leverage from that tragic set of circumstances and produce some great economic and social outcomes for that community.

I congratulate all who were involved in this project, particularly the Minister for Transport for her great work in guiding the departments on this. I commend Main Roads, which has done a great job in working with the alliance contract partners to bring about this incredible project in such an extraordinarily short time. To all the workers involved: thank you for the incredible work you have done so far. Everyone should be incredibly proud of the progress. It is truly an extraordinary result to reconnect this important route in such a short time after an emergency, and that is to the great credit of everyone involved. I look forward to seeing the new bridge open in the very near future.

MURDOCH MEDI-HOTEL — AEGIS HEALTH

731. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the documents obtained under freedom of information legislation that highlight that Fiona Stanley and Fremantle Hospitals do not have enough patients to fill the 80 beds that the state government acquired for the Murdoch medi-hotel in the \$55 million four-year deal with private operator Aegis Health. Why did the government approve the business case prepared by Aegis without seeking advice or clinical guidance from the South Metropolitan Health Service, or, at the very least, ensuring that the facility was configured for optimal service delivery?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I am often on my feet in this place defending the great work that happens in the health department and across our great hospitals; usually it is about the lack of hospital beds. I think the critique today is that there are too many beds. There is no pleasing those on the other side. They are never happy. They are so negative and always take the opportunity to run down our great doctors and nurses in our health system, who are doing such an incredible job day in, day out.

I believe the member is referencing a letter that was written by a leader in our health system about two years ago. It is great to see that those beds will come onstream now. Any new beds are a great opportunity for us to utilise them to make sure that we can create spaces in our more acute wards. This will be a great opportunity. It is a commitment we made in 2017 and it is great to see these beds now coming onstream in a partnership with the private sector, which is obviously another important feature of that facility. I think that precinct at Fiona Stanley Hospital is called the knowledge centre. It is a great addition to the precinct. We are really excited about how it will enhance healthcare services right across the board, whether it is aged care, accommodation, the medi-hotel, primary healthcare services or specialist facilities. This is a great opportunity for us to celebrate a growing health service that can accommodate the huge demand on our system, and everyone, including those opposite, should take the opportunity to celebrate it.

MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA — MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

732. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Cook Labor government’s longstanding commitment to bringing outsourced services and jobs back into the public sector.

Can the minister update the house on the work underway to end the outsourcing of road maintenance, instead bringing jobs back in-house with Main Roads Western Australia, and can the minister advise the house what this decision will mean for local jobs and communities across Western Australia?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for the question. Of course, in April last year, we made the key announcement that contracted routine road maintenance and other minor improvement works would return back in-house to government. I will give those who were not around at the time a quick history lesson. Back in the Court Liberal–National government in the late 1990s, there was a decision to outsource road maintenance to long-term contracts. That saw the number of people employed by Main Roads drop overnight from over 2 000 to 819. We saw jobs lost throughout regional WA. In fact, a lot of the jobs lost were those of Aboriginal people, because a lot of Aboriginal people were employed in road maintenance throughout regional WA. There was a loss of jobs and security and an impact on regional towns.

Last year, we made the decision to bring road maintenance back into government ownership. As a result, we are transferring people from their work in the private sector to government, creating security and stability. The progress so far has been significant. In October last year, 48 workers were transitioned to Main Roads in the wheatbelt region.

Last November, a further 50 people transitioned in the midwest–Gascoyne region. Last week, we saw a third region come on board, with 26 people welcomed in the goldfields–Esperance region, and tomorrow a further 111 people will transition to Main Roads employment in the metropolitan area throughout the northern suburbs. This will mean that an additional 230 Main Roads employees will be on board. The critical point is that there will be better pay, better conditions, security of employment and more stability for regional towns. It will also save taxpayers' money, so it is a win-win! When we went out to the market to ascertain whether this was a value-for-money proposition, the answer was yes. There will be better conditions for workers and a better outcome for the community.

We just heard from the Premier about the Fitzroy River Bridge. We want to be able to retain some of the technical knowledge that we have built during the construction of that bridge. We want to create more jobs in local road maintenance, and we want to make sure that many of those people who have been trained on road construction up there can be retained and work throughout the entire region. Of course, the government controlling that will mean that we have a much better chance of retaining local workers, getting the training, and making sure we have good full-time, solid jobs in regional WA. We are also re-establishing and creating new depots and offices in Broome, Karratha, Manjimup and Esperance and expanding other facilities.

As we said, we are 100 per cent committed to jobs and full-time employment in this state, and we are 100 per cent committed to reversing many of those bad privatisation and contracting-out decisions, which did not actually deliver competitive tension, value for money or any better outcomes for workers. We are committed to reversing those decisions and creating full-time jobs, which will mean that when there is a natural disaster or issues that we need to deal with, we will have a workforce that is ready to go and knowledgeable, and has an understanding of the region. Particularly when it comes to road maintenance, local people know their region. They are proud of their roads and they are going to put extra effort into maintaining them, not only in response to natural disasters and other issues, but also in a proactive way. We are making sure that we are always on the front foot, making sure that our roads are the best in the nation and improving road safety and the quality of experience for all.

RESOURCES SECTOR — COMMONWEALTH INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REFORMS

733. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

I refer the Premier to media reports that he will stand up for WA's resources sector, and note the widespread concerns of that sector with the commonwealth government's proposed industrial relation changes that are also alarming the general business sector.

- (1) Has the Premier written to the Prime Minister to outline the concerns about the negative impacts of the proposed federal industrial relations changes on mining in WA; and, if so, will he release the correspondence?
- (2) Did the Premier acknowledge the ramifications for other sectors, especially small business, the self-employed and casual workers?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his acknowledgement that we stand up for the resources sector. We work with all our industry partners to make sure we get the best for Western Australia. That is a path that we are committed to and one of which we are very proud. I am informed by the Minister for Industrial Relations that the only company in Western Australia that will be impacted by those laws is, in fact, BHP, because it works through enterprise bargaining arrangements. From that perspective, I assume those changes will not impact WA as severely as other parts of Australia.

I also make the observation that, although general conversations have been brought to me about anxieties in the industrial relations area, no company has actually asked me to make representations to the federal government on this matter. That is because they believe they already have good access to the federal Labor government in relation to dialogue, but I am sure that if they need me to add my voice to their concerns about threats to productivity in the sector, we will have an opportunity to do so. As the Minister for Industrial Relations informs me, they will not impact Western Australia as they will, perhaps, other parts of Australia. From that perspective, the changes do not represent a significant threat.

RESOURCES SECTOR — COMMONWEALTH INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REFORMS

734. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Given the massive impact on small business as well as mining, how does the Premier reconcile his claim of batting for WA, as reported, if he is not prepared to advocate for WA on this cause?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

We always advocate on behalf of Western Australia. In fact, just last week, I was in Adelaide working with other Premiers on issues in the health system and the NDIS in terms of how we can stand up for our state. I notice that that is something that members opposite decided to critique. They thought it was not important more for me to be in Adelaide with other Premiers —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: Sorry, Madam?

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: I was actually in a press conference with other Premiers around Australia, so I am not quite sure how we sustain that argument. But I would like to thank the member for the interjection; she is as irrelevant as ever.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: We will continue to stand up for Western Australia and we will continue to make sure that our voices are heard in Canberra; that is part of my Canberra strategy. We will continue to make sure that Western Australians —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Premier, just pause for a moment. Member for Vasse, your interjections are incessant and off-point, and you are not the person who asked the question in the first place. I am asking you to desist.

Mr R.H. COOK: We will always stand up for Western Australia, and that is why we got the new GST arrangement. That is why we continue to make sure that Western Australia's voice is heard in Canberra, and we will continue to do so.

WEST COAST DEMERSAL SCALEFISH RESOURCE

735. **Ms E.L. HAMILTON to the Minister for Fisheries:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to rebuilding the state's stocks of demersal fish for generations to come.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how this government is creating new high-quality fishing opportunities for charter operators and recreational fishers whilst ensuring the sustainability of the resource?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of any alternative policies to preserve demersal fish stocks for future generations whilst also maintaining a balanced fishing allocation between sectors?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

- (1)–(2) Some 18 months ago, the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, Recfishwest, the Marine Tourism Association of WA and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development came to me with a serious problem—our prized demersal species were under significant threat and we had to halve the benchmark recovery target for the species to 375 tonnes. That is a serious issue because it is about the sustainability and future of a species that is highly prized by fishers on the west coast of Western Australia. It meant that some hard decisions had to be made, and we made them; we did not resile from them. They were tough decisions and they were not popular. They were decisions that were very hard to explain in terms of the science, but the issue is there and the science is there. In making those decisions, we recognised the need to support rec fishing, commercial fishing and the charter boat sector into the future. We put together a \$10 million package—a package that is unprecedented in Australia. We were able to do that thanks to our careful budget management.

I was very pleased to be on the water down in Fremantle today with Dr Andrew Rowland from Recfishwest to confirm that our \$1.5 million package for fish aggregating devices, or FADs, is underway. That initiative will provide new recreational opportunities, targeting surface-dwelling fish like tuna, mahi mahi and marlin. These are really interesting and exciting fish to fish for, and they provide a good feed as well. We are providing alternatives and encouraging people, as part of our campaign, to switch their fish. I am really grateful to Recfishwest, which has undertaken the pilot to prove this technology up. We have had it in place in the north west, and we have had some really feedback from there. I recognise the great work that Recfishwest has done in proving the value of FADs to recreational fishing.

We are putting in place 28 FADs to be deployed along our coastline from Albany to Geraldton. In winter, they will be deployed in the northern waters to provide an alternative fishing location in the north. We are providing funding to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to support that program on an ongoing basis. These are not a passing "fad"; these are fish aggregating devices that are there for the future. We intend to increase the number of them up to 40 to make sure that we have great opportunities for boat-based recreational fishing and charter operators into the future. We are really encouraging fishers to switch their fish.

Throughout this period, I have looked to see whether the opposition would show a single shred of leadership on an issue that is important to the future of Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I had faith that the opposition would show some leadership and join us in protecting these species — Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! The Minister for Fisheries has the call.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I expected members opposite to show some leadership and recognise the hard work that has been done, with difficult decisions, to support these fishers into the future. What did the Leader of the Opposition say? He said on 31 August—my birthday, actually!—that the changes were unwarranted. He has no respect for the science, for the people in DPIRD who put this work together, or for the opinions of the peak bodies. He said that they were unwarranted; that is his view.

Then the member for Vasse stood on the steps of Parliament just a few weeks ago and said that 80 per cent of charter operators were looking at pulling up stumps. If she had requested a briefing on this, she would have known that 50 per cent of charter boat licences have been inactive for years. This is just more of the misinformation that the member for Vasse comes in here with and repeats, on any issue. It does not matter whether the issue is health or fishing; regardless of the issue, she comes in here and spreads misinformation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: This tells us that not a single member of the opposition has requested a briefing on the science. They do that deliberately, because they do not want to know the science and they do not want to know the facts. They just want to go out there with plausible deniability and spread misinformation. The opposition has engaged in spreading commentary that has no basis in science or fact and only serves to discredit the extraordinary work of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, its internationally recognised scientists, and the peak bodies. All opposition members want to do is serve political interests by appealing to grab a few votes. That is what they did in 2010 when they totally undermined the sustainability of the fishery then, and they are doing it again today. That is absolutely true.

If members opposite think they are showing leadership by representing a populist view, ignoring science and placing the future of this fishery at risk, they are not fit for government and they should be ashamed. The last thing I want to see is a situation like we had in South Australia, where the fishery is closed. No-one has an industry in South Australia, with a closed fishery, so I am calling on the opposition to show some leadership, look at the science, and start coming in here and commenting based on fact.

TOM PRICE DISTRICT HOSPITAL — REDEVELOPMENT

736. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the redevelopment of Tom Price District Hospital. Can the minister provide an update regarding the status of significant works at the existing hospital site, the feasibility study and land assembly work on the proposed new site, and the time line for commencement and completion of the project?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for North West Central for some notice of the question. The Cook Labor government is absolutely committed to improving health services across our region in Western Australia both through investment in infrastructure and upgrading different models of service and care. WA Country Health Service staff do an incredible job. I think we all agree that they do an outstanding job in regional Western Australia in often very challenging circumstances, and the government is absolutely committed to delivering them and the community world-class facilities and resources.

Planning for the Tom Price hospital is continuing, and I am continuing to work closely with the WA Country Health Service and Rio Tinto, which has provided \$20 million in funding towards the project, to ensure that it progresses as quickly as it can. We have identified a site that is currently vested with the Shire of Ashburton. The shire is working constructively with WACHS to deliver appropriate land tenure outcomes so that we are able to build the hospital on that land. As with all infrastructure projects, once a managing contractor is appointed, we will work with it to establish the program of works that will include indicative time frames for construction and completion.

The reality is that it is an incredibly challenging construction market at the moment, particularly in regional parts of Western Australia. It does not get much more regional than Tom Price. It is very challenging to build within the metropolitan area, let alone in regional Western Australia, and at a reasonable cost to taxpayers. It has to be done responsibly. We are absolutely committed to redeveloping and rebuilding Tom Price hospital, and we will have more to say once we have resolved the land tenure issues with the Shire of Ashburton. I acknowledge that this project has taken sometime, as it has with other regional projects, because of those challenging construction markets and making sure that the taxpayers of Western Australia get best value for money. We will continue to work with the sector to deliver those outcomes. The government is frustrated by some of the time frames and the limited market available. There simply are not many market-ready construction companies that can build in regional WA.

That is the reality. We are working to invite other international players into the market to make sure that we have a competitive market and there is broad interest in these projects. We continue to invest, but not only in Tom Price. With the former Premier, we recently opened the \$61.4 million redevelopment of Newman Health Service that is absolutely outstanding. That project also had a \$15 million contribution from BHP.

Infrastructure is one way that we upgrade and deliver high quality services. Models of care and upgrading technology is a really important way to deliver emergency care into really remote and regional areas. We are doing that by upgrading our emergency telehealth service with our \$24 million investment. We have introduced the virtual 24/7 stroke care services that are world leading in an area the size of Western Australia. We have provided mental health emergency telehealth service teams and midwifery and obstetrics emergency telehealth teams that give emergency care and support to women and staff on the site and tele-chemotherapy. Innovation is as important as infrastructure, and we are absolutely committed to both.

TOM PRICE DISTRICT HOSPITAL — REDEVELOPMENT

737. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Is the cost escalation also preventing the progress of the redevelopment?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

Cost escalation is a reality for every single construction project. That is an obvious point. I just outlined that. Cost escalation has occurred across every single construction project, not just for government. That is one factor, but there are a number of factors. Cost escalation will not prevent the project from going forward. We are looking at how we manage the cost escalation and get best value for money for taxpayers as well as deliver the hospital. Of course it is a factor, but it is not the only factor. As I outlined, we are working through land tenure issues with the Shire of Ashburton.

SCHOOLS — CAPITAL WORKS

738. Dr J. KRISHNAN to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to providing high-quality education facilities for students across Western Australia. Can the minister outline to the house how Western Australia's \$1.5 billion public education capital works is modernising schools across the community, including Rossmoyne Senior High School?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I would very much like to answer the member for Riverton's question. He is an outstanding local member who champions high-quality education in his electorate. I was very happy to join his good self and the Premier on 19 September this year as we inspected the new works at Rossmoyne Senior High School. As we all know, that is an outstanding educational institution. It has a number of Beazley Medal winners, Rhodes scholars, Olympians, Paralympians and so forth. The member is the ideal local member to represent that excellent cerebral institution.

We inspected part of the \$39.1 million project that will deliver a range of new facilities for students including a two-storey classroom and library block. The new library will provide a modern space with integrated technology and the capacity to cater for a larger number of students than the current facility is able to accommodate. The upgrade will provide new science facilities and STEM labs, a new physical education change room, learning areas and staff areas that will run off the development. The project was designed by Bateman Architects and is being built by Crothers Construction, which I think has its headquarters in the seat of Geraldton. We expect total completion of the project in late 2025. It was great to be there with the member as we fulfilled another major election commitment.

I was also recently in the electorate of Baldivis with the member for Baldivis and the Premier again on 22 September where we opened the new state-of-the-art facilities at Ridge View Secondary College—a beautiful school. The completion of stage 2 of the \$29.4 million development doubles the capacity of the college to 1 450 students since opening in 2019, and it will accommodate the inaugural cohort of students when they commence year 12 in 2024. The state government has invested \$70 million into extensive redevelopment of the college through the great advocacy of the local member. The new facilities include performing arts and lecture theatres and a commercial kitchen with a student cafe. Some very nice afternoon refreshments were delivered to us by the hospitality students at the school. It also includes a fitness centre, a mechatronics area—the Premier and I knew little about this but we have been educated now!—engineering labs and specialist classrooms for drama, dance, music, visual arts and media. The new facilities add to existing general teaching buildings, digital technology laboratories, a gymnasium, technology facilities and science labs. Additional parking has also been provided that also includes electric vehicle charging stations, something that the Department of Education is very keen to roll out as we move forward in our new education institutions.

That is part of what we have been doing in our great education build. It is all part of the Cook Labor government investing \$1.5 billion to build and improve our physical education facilities. I am very proud to stand here as the Minister for Education in the Cook Labor government that is directly investing in the future of our state by investing in our students and building world-class education facilities.

RESOURCES INDUSTRY — SCARBOROUGH LNG PROJECT — FEDERAL COURT DECISION

739. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:

I refer to the recent decision by the Federal Court of Australia to reject the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority's approval for Woodside Energy to complete seismic work associated with the development of the Scarborough project. I also note industry concerns that the Federal Court's decision sets a precedent for ongoing easier challenges to mining projects based on similar grounds. What contact has the Premier had with the Prime Minister and/or the federal Minister for Resources to discuss this new threat to the resource industry in Western Australia, in particular the gas industry, to determine what urgent action needs to be taken in the federal Parliament to remove this threat to mining development and our state's gas industry?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I am not sure what the opposition has planned for me for the rest of question time, so in case this is my last question, I take the opportunity to wish everyone all the very best for the referendum on the weekend. That provides me with an opportunity to acknowledge the member for Central Wheatbelt and her position on this. She has our respect and great admiration for her position on this. I think the Nationals WA is all the poorer for not having her in the position of Leader of the Opposition.

The decision by the Federal Court is obviously very disappointing. It presents a significant challenge for industry. It relates to the capacity under legislation for the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority to provide a conditional licence subject to further consultation, which is what it did in this particular case, as the member would be aware. The Federal Court came to the view that under its legislation it did not have that capacity. This obviously represents a significant challenge for the industry.

Upon hearing of this particular decision, I immediately contacted the federal Minister for Resources; Northern Australia, Madeleine King. She shares my concerns I think it is fair to say. She was awaiting advice on what response the federal government should take, if any is required. Obviously, we were anxious about that. We would expect some response. Obviously, we will await, with some anticipation, the outcome of those considerations. I want to assure the member that I have been in touch with both industry and the federal government in relation to this matter and we are monitoring the situation very carefully.

RESOURCES INDUSTRY — SCARBOROUGH LNG PROJECT — FEDERAL COURT DECISION

740. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Given the Premier's role in state development, is he or his department providing any assistance to the federal minister in helping to develop a proper solution for this matter?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I take the question in the spirit I am sure that it was intended, and that is: are we assisting the federal government? Obviously, when the federal government makes its decision or consults in relation to that, we would be keen to participate in that process. Western Australia is the engine room for the country. For that reason, what happens in WA or, in this context, offshore, is an important aspect of making sure that the nation's economy stays strong, which is the reason we made these representations to the federal government. Minister King is one of the most skilled and adept ministers in the federal government and we are lucky to have her on our team in Western Australia. For that reason, I will always make the resources of the government available to the federal government in terms of these things, but I reckon she has this one.

POLICE — RESOURCES

741. Mr P.C. TINLEY to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's unprecedented investment in modern resources and frontline police, keeping Western Australians safe.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what equipment and support capabilities this investment has delivered to our police?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this investment is allowing police to better respond to emergency situations and crime in our community?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for his question. Some of the equipment that we revealed the other day would have no doubt appealed to him. We recently went out and confirmed delivery to the Western Australia Police Force tactical response group of additional equipment and world class upgrades to their BearCat armoured vehicles. These ones are petrol, the member would be happy to know, and much more comfortable, to the extent that they smell like brand new cars and inside they even had cup holders for the driver and the

passenger, which struck me as a very good improvement. We also announced for the TRG new rigid-hulled inflatable boats, built in Western Australia. They are excellent boats—absolutely the best quality for our TRG and tactical officers who attend so many high level responses. They confront some challenging situations, like the recent Kellerberrin incident for instance, and many others. Almost every couple of days, the TRG is deployed. It does not always use this equipment, but we ensure that it has the best equipment necessary to support it when it does.

As people would have noted, we have also taken delivery of a \$54 million H145 Airbus helicopter, a world-class addition to the police air wing. Another one is coming later in the year. This confirms to everyone in the chamber that our police are continuing to be delivered with the absolute best equipment possible. Madam Speaker started it in the first term of this government with an extraordinary upgrade to our police force, body armour and the rollout of OneForce mobile phones, which brought an extraordinary change in capability. People do not recognise or understand the extent to which that changed policing in this state. Every police officer is now connected directly to databases and intelligence, the likes of which would never have been afforded to a police officer on the ground in the past, ensuring that they have exceptional situational awareness. They share information and people know where each other are located and convey that information. We are in the process of rolling out satellite communications to 550 vehicles and 139 police stations across the state to ensure that police and communities in the regions receive the very same connectivity as metropolitan residents and police officers. That is an extraordinary thing. It is a wonderful continuation of our commitment to ensure that not only do we have the best police force in the nation if not the world, but also we are equipping them at that level.

VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

742. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

I refer to the Voice to Parliament referendum this Saturday and note Labor Senator Pat Dodson's encouragement of the state government to seriously consider pursuing Western Australia's own Voice to Parliament regardless of the national outcome. Will the Premier categorically rule out legislating a state-based Voice to Parliament should Western Australia's verdict —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr D.J. Kelly: You're an absolute grub!

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I require you to withdraw that comment.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I withdraw it.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will the Premier categorically rule out legislating a state-based Voice to Parliament should Western Australia's verdict be against Labor's proposed federal Voice?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. I would have used my preamble for the last question on this one if I had known I had one more opportunity, but there you go! Obviously, this weekend we will all, as citizens of Australia, have a great opportunity to bring this country together, move forward in an act of unity and reconciliation to create a regime through the Voice of Parliament that means we can be a more effective nation in addressing the issues that impact on our First Nations people. As the Prime Minister said, "If not now, then when? And, if not us, then who?" I beseech everyone in this chamber to take the opportunity to vote yes, to be positive and take this nation forward in an act of reconciliation.

As the opposition has been keen to point out, I was recently in Adelaide. What I did not appreciate, because I live in Western Australia, is the wall-to-wall, back-to-back advertising by Clive Palmer in relation to the No campaign. Now I understand why those opposite switched their positions. They originally came out supporting the yes vote. All it took was a quick phone call from Clive Palmer, and there they go again.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R.H. COOK: There they go again—the puppetmasters.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members!

Mr R.H. COOK: If we want to know what the member for Vasse is thinking, we will consult Hon Nick Goiran.

This is a huge opportunity for our nation and I fervently hope that we take it as a nation and step forward together. Obviously, many people are still to make up their mind, and the conversations that we have over the next few days will be very important to the outcome.

The member opposite asked whether we would consider a voice to Parliament in Western Australia as part of a response after—he hopes—the hopes of Aboriginal people have been dashed. How he can want that is completely beyond me, but not to worry. That is a measure of him. What will our response be? In Western Australia, we have already had some great responses, including the 2014 resolution of the Parliament that recognised the traditional owners in Western Australia in our Constitution, the 2021 resolution of Parliament that acknowledged the Noongar people as the traditional owners of the land on which the Parliament meets, and the important comprehensive native title agreements we have made with the Noongar nation and with the peoples of the southern Yamatji region. They are important outcomes of nation-to-nation agreements across a whole range of issues. They are important opportunities. Of course, we now have our Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia, an important group of elders and senior and young people who come together to provide advice to the government on a regular basis and give our policy advisers great insights and guidance on issues that impact on them. Western Australia has a very proud record in working with First Nations people, but we must do more, and we will do more.

We will continue to have the conversation about how we can work with our First Nations people to work on reconciliation, to get better outcomes and to make sure that we are proud of our history and our future. That is not for me to make a call on. That is a conversation that has to be had with First Nations people and with everyone in the community. It is not for someone like me to dab a magic wand and say, “This is what we are going to do.” This is something that we all have to do together, in unity. I so wish that those opposite would understand the importance of that unity and that we all could have stood together for the yes vote on the weekend.

VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

743. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. It is a simple enough question. Will the Premier rule out a legislative voice to the Western Australian Parliament if the vote is no on Saturday?

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Perhaps by way of interjection, the member might explain to us what he means by a voice to Parliament.

The SPEAKER: No; it is question time and you will respond.

Mr R.H. COOK: I was just looking for guidance, Madam Speaker. I am very keen to understand what the member actually means by the concept of a voice to Parliament.

Mr R.S. Love: Will Western Australia be following South Australia? It’s a simple enough question.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr W.J. Johnston: You can’t bind a future Parliament; it’s constitutionally impossible.

Mr R.H. COOK: I take the interjection from the Minister for Industrial Relations. It is a very good point. The Parliament will do what the Parliament wishes, no doubt under your guidance, Madam Speaker.

We are focused on Saturday. It is an important opportunity for this nation—an opportunity to walk together in unity, to walk together in reconciliation and to be more effective in how we move forward together.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY STANDING COMMITTEE

Extension of Reporting Date — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.53 pm]: I draw to members’ attention that the Economics and Industry Standing Committee has resolved to extend the reporting date for its inquiry into the Western Australian domestic gas policy to 30 May 2024.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (FINANCE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2023

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Debate was interrupted after clause 33 had been agreed to.

Clause 34: Section 44 amended —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: As I understand it, this clause will make some quite substantial changes to the existing provision. I would like the minister to clarify why proposed section 44(1) will be removed. It will essentially delete

the requirement to include the date, the place of birth and the signature of the person who wants to make a claim. Why is that being deleted and what rationale was provided by the Western Australian Electoral Commission on this matter?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The most significant deletion will be the witness's signature. There is no way of checking a witness's signature; anyone can just do a squiggle and that is the witness's signature. I decided, and took it to government, that we should align ourselves with the commonwealth. The place of birth and usual signature is not an essential part of the claim for initial enrolment. In addition, the removal of this factor is consistent with the commonwealth requirement. The consistency underpins the joint-roll agreement. We are bringing ourselves into alignment with claims to go on the commonwealth roll so that there is consistency.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 35 put and passed.

Clause 36: Section 45 replaced —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This clause seeks to replace section 45. It is quite a significant rewrite of the original provision of the act. I note that the penalties will not change.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Sorry; they were talking behind me. I couldn't quite hear.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Pipe down in the back! Is it the member for Mandurah? He is always —

Mr J.R. Quigley: Between you and me, I will leave it up to the chair.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I do not think it was, but it normally is the member for Mandurah having a little chitchat.

Clause 36 is about offences in relation to compulsory enrolment. It is quite a substantial rewrite of the current section 45, but I note that the penalties have not changed. Can the minister clarify what the deletion and amendment will achieve? It appears to be an almost wholesale rewrite. I am happy to accept it if it is just a matter of modernising the language, but it does seem to be quite a substantial rewrite.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There is no substantive change; it modernises the language. A person must update their enrolment after moving to a new district. The language is modernised, but there is no substantive change to the law.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 37 to 40 put and passed.

Clause 41: Section 51A replaced —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: We touched on this earlier. It relates to a lack of capacity to vote. As I understand it, the clause provides an updated reference to people who lack the capacity to vote and sets out how those people who will not be included in or removed from the register of electors, including a requirement for the Electoral Commission to give notice of that. Why are those changes being made and why has the government considered them in the context of advice? Is this something that has happened in other jurisdictions? Is it to align the legislation with commonwealth legislation? I am seeking some clarity on this particular clause.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There are a number of things here. There is the modernisation of language, and we discussed that before during the consideration of earlier provisions. The wording will be changed to ensure that a person is disqualified for voting because of incapacity, not by reason of impairment. A person might be impaired but still have capacity. A person will be disqualified on the basis that they do not have capacity. It is not the impairment itself that will disqualify someone; it is their lack of capacity to understand. We are seeking to cleanse the roll of only those who are incapable of making an informed decision at the time they enter the polling place.

The provision will also provide for a person to not be included or removed from the register if they are not on the commonwealth roll due to the equivalent provisions of mental impairment under the commonwealth act. Once again, it is to achieve consistency between the two registers, or rolls. In that respect, later on we will look at proposed section 206A, "Persons who lack capacity to vote", as well as proposed section 206B, "Revoking lack of capacity notice".

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Can the minister define lack of capacity for me? I presume it is a legal term and that there is a formal process in which a person is declared to have a lack of capacity; it is not a subjective subject on behalf of the Electoral Commission.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The commission would require a medical practitioner to sign off on the lack of capacity. They can also challenge the decision at the State Administrative Tribunal, because it is administrative.

Ms M.J. Davies: The individual?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes. They will get the medical certificate. A person who maintains that they have capacity but are being struck off could seek to have that decision reviewed.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am interested because I have not turned my mind to this previously. Is this something that normally involves an application from the individual or from family dealing with someone qualified as lacking capacity or does it come from a medical practitioner? Who approaches the Electoral Commission to say, “Please take this person off the list”?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The application is most often from care or nursing homes. They have locked areas. My late father was in a nursing home. He was not in a locked area, but I know that there was a locked area for demented patients. The nursing home would contact the commission. Sometimes it may be from a family member, if they are the primary carer. Those sorts of support people draw the situation to the attention of the commission and obtain the medical certificate.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 42 put and passed.

Clause 43: Section 51B replaced —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: As I understand, this clause relates to silent electors—that is, the request for somebody to not be identified on the roll. The proposed section defines the conditions that will enable a person to be a silent elector. From my understanding, someone has to provide information to the Electoral Commission to justify that. Can the minister clarify whether there has been any real substantive change from what is in the current act to what is being proposed? To me, again, it does seem to be quite a significant rewrite of the existing clause. Maybe the minister can answer that question, and then I will ask the next one.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There will be no substantive change to the law. It will introduce the term “silent elector”, which was not in the act before. We note that under regulation 8(3) of the Electoral Regulations 1996, a person’s name may also be omitted when the commissioner makes the roll available for public inspection or gives the enrolment information to other persons or organisations that are not members of Parliament or parties. There will be no substantial change to the law. Clarifying the language is important, but as I said about rats and mice, we are trying to clean up all those things.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Out of interest, how many silent electors would there be at any point in time? Can that be answered? Has it come up?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I will have to take advice from the commission. There are about 25 000 silent electors and it is always rising. There are new victims of domestic violence. Police officers are also silent electors so that is another whole new cohort that will come in, I believe. It rises, but it is for people who have genuine concerns for public safety.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Proposed section 51C refers to the review of the register of electors in relation to silent electors. This is the review of the roll. What does that entail and how many times is that actually done by the Western Australian Electoral Commission? Is it something that the Electoral Commission initiates? Is it required to do it from a timing perspective? Or is it a request from the government of the day? What will happen?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It is not done as a specific enterprise; it is part of the general roll cleansing done from time to time on an ongoing basis. There is no specific task to say, “Right, we will deal with silent electors this month”, or something like that. It is just an ongoing task of roll cleansing to keep in sync with the federal roll and keep it as clean as possible from the register.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 44 and 45 put and passed.

Clause 46: Section 56 amended —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Earlier, we touched briefly on the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. This provides for the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages to notify the Electoral Commissioner of deaths in the state. I mentioned that, from time to time, I have sent correspondence to people who may already have passed away.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Sorry?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I made the comment that from time to time, I have used the roll provided by the Electoral Commission and sent letters to people who have already passed away. Firstly, is there any substantive change? I could not see it. Secondly, how does that work exactly and how often does it get updated when somebody is registered as having passed away, because that is quite awkward?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I am advised that the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages advises the commission on a monthly basis. It could blow out to six weeks, but never several months. Usually, it provides the updated list of death certificates issued. There might be people who have died because of coronial inquests, and the member knows it can take a long time before the registry is advised; it could be advised by someone else presenting a doctor’s certificate that the person is dead. However, Births, Deaths and Marriages send it through on a monthly basis. That information is processed through the registry about every month or six weeks. I say registry, as before, as a kind of de facto electronic database.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 47 and 48 put and passed.**Clause 49: Sections 61 and 62 inserted —**

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This will insert new sections into the act. It refers to the conditions for applying to be a general postal voter. I thought this was already a provision within the act. I am not sure why. I am surprised, actually, that once a person hits 70, they can just apply to be a general postal voter. It seems quite a young age to say that is a reason. I think in our society today, voting is not a particularly onerous task. I thought this provision already existed, but I could be mistaken. I am looking for some clarity around why it appears here. Again, I hope to be corrected, but I think proposed section 62 and the marked-up version of the bill is not the official version, but I could not find it in that version, which pertains to the offences relating to applications to be general postal voters. I want to ask whether this is the section that will prevent political parties from participating in the postal voting application process, but I am happy to deal with general postal voters first.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It was there before in section 93(1), (2) and (3), which referred to those applications to be registered as a “general early voter”. The application then was to be registered as a general early voter. We are introducing the term “general postal voter”. People could vote early in the extended 11 days as a general early voter, but this is for a general postal voter. If someone qualifies under proposed section 61(1)(a) to (g), they can be registered as a general early postal voter. If a person is over 70, they can register. Okay, I will plead, I can register, but I like the sausage! If a person fulfils any of the criteria, they will be registered as a general postal voter, not a general early voter. It is modernisation and clarification, but not any substantive change to the law.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Proposed section 62 refers to offences in relation to applications to be general postal voters. Does that have anything to do with political parties being involved in postal voting applications, or is that later in the bill? Does it have anything to do with the political parties being involved with the postal vote application process?

Dr D.J. Honey: Is it specifically aimed at that?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That is what I am trying to clarify.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It does, of course. All those offences in proposed section 62(2), (3) and (4) come out of section 95 of the act. Subsection (1) deals with parties controlling postal votes, as is what used to happen. It states —

- (1) A person commits a crime if the person distributes or makes available a form for making an application under section 61(1), or causes or permits a form for making an application to be distributed or made available, unless —
 - (a) the person is authorised by the Electoral Commissioner to do so; or
 - (b) the form is accompanied by a statement advising that when the application has been completed it must be returned directly to the Electoral Commissioner.

It must not be returned back through a political office.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you for the clarification. For the purposes of *Hansard*, this is obviously a process that all political parties have undertaken for every election, and I spoke about it in my contribution to the second reading debate. As a former campaign and state director, it caused me enormous anxiety, but it is a political tactic that is used by political parties. Just to clarify, will there still be an ability for political parties to post something to voters telling them to apply for a postal vote, but they cannot ask for the voter to send that application to the political party? Will it have to say that they must forward the application directly to the Western Australian Electoral Commission?

Mr J.R. Quigley: Correct.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Will there no longer be any capacity for political parties to harvest information from a postal vote application being sent directly to voters?

Mr J.R. Quigley: No—however.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Perhaps can the minister advise why this is being pursued, and was it on the recommendation of the Electoral Commission? Has it come from advice from the Labor Party, or is it a government policy decision?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Political parties will be able to send out an approved form to a general postal voter, but it will have to be an approved form and it must have the direction to send the form back to the commission. If political parties want to send out a how-to-vote form to people applying for a postal vote, the information as to who is making those applications will be available through the commission. This will keep the party at arms’ length from the casting of the actual vote. A political party will be able to find out from the Electoral Commission in real time who has applied, and then it can post out its registered how-to-vote card to that postal voter.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: So that I am clear in my mind, a political entity will be able to apply to the Electoral Commission for a list of people who have applied to be a general postal voter. That entity will be entitled to have those contact details for that particular election, and it can then directly post its how-to-vote card to those individuals. Is that what the minister just said?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes, with one caveat—that is, unless the person is registered as a silent elector. If we leave the silent electors out, the answer is in the affirmative.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am not satisfied—at least I do not think I understand the answer the minister gave to the member for Central Wheatbelt. If I understand the dialogue, the member for Central Wheatbelt said that if a party sends out whatever information plus the appropriate application form so that a person can apply directly to the Electoral Commission for a postal vote, that will not fall foul of this law.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes, as long as the material is in there: this must go to the Electoral Commission.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Absolutely. I will read out the clause because perhaps I am missing something here. On page 60, at the top, proposed section 62(1) states —

A person commits a crime if the person distributes or makes available a form for making an application under section 61(1), or causes or permits a form for making an application to be distributed or made available ...

Mr J.R. Quigley: Unless?

Dr D.J. HONEY:

unless —

(a) the person is authorised by the Electoral Commissioner to do so —

Mr J.R. Quigley: Or?

Dr D.J. HONEY:

... or

(b) the form is accompanied by a statement advising that when the application has been completed it must be returned directly to the Electoral Commissioner.

Okay. Therefore, it has to be very explicit in that form; however, if they just send it out carelessly, they can end up committing a serious offence.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That was a statement of clarity, so no response is required.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: If a political party does exactly what the member for Cottesloe just read out, is it covered? If a political party sends a form to a voter, but the voter just sends it back because that is what they have always done, is the political party covered from any infringement? Would the political party be obliged, as it has been in the past, to send it on as soon as possible, but would there be no issue about it? Can the party be subject to an infringement for that?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The answer to that is no because no offence has been committed by the political party, just to make it clear for the member.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I think that last question is clear, under proposed section 62(4). I am worried about unintended consequences. Proposed section 62(2) states —

A person must not persuade or induce an elector, or associate with any other person in persuading or inducing an elector, to make an application under section 61(1).

Quite often, more often than we might expect, people ring up my electorate office. I have a very good person named Adam, who is very diligent, on the front desk there. Electors will explain a particular circumstance, and Adam may give them advice and say, “In your circumstance, if I were you, I would make a postal vote application because there is not an appropriate pre-poll,” or whatever it is. I am interested in the definitions of “induce” and “persuade”, in that if my electorate officer gives advice to a person in my electorate, such as “I think the best thing for you to do is to put in a postal vote application,” will they potentially fall foul of that clause?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No. As I have said to the member before, this is not a change to the current law. What it was trying to strike at, the old law successfully struck. Inducing someone to do a postal vote is saying, “Will you do a postal vote?” and then inducing them to do it. It is not giving advice about a person’s alternatives. That is one thing. This is current law; it is nothing new. People can give advice about what is available to electors to facilitate the vote, but they cannot say, “I encourage you to put in a postal vote and you can vote for me!”

Clause put and passed.

Clause 50 put and passed.

Clause 51: Part III Division 6 inserted —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This clause seeks to insert proposed division 6. I think we have talked about this already, so I will not dwell on it, because, as I understand it, this relates to the creation of the register. The Electoral Commission

will prepare register extracts for the purposes of the election, which we have touched on already. The proposed division includes regulation-making powers. Can the Attorney General talk about what he envisages will be part of the regulations? What is required to be put in regulations?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: To put it into context, this provision clarifies what a register extract may relate to and what it must include. It will be extracted from the register. This bill provides that if an extract relates to more than one district or the whole of the state electorate, it must identify the district in which the elector is enrolled. The provision allows for the extract to be in electronic form and will allow regulations to be made on the content of what will be extracted from the register to go on the roll.

We have already discussed the register. There might be telephone or other contact information on that register. Regulations will be made on what will come out of the register and go onto the roll, because the roll will be made public.

Section 25(5) of the current act states —

The regulations may provide that if by virtue of —

That section —

information relating to a person is not shown on a roll, that person’s name may be omitted when the Electoral Commissioner makes rolls available under this section.

This clarifies it all and makes it a lot simpler. That is all I can help you with.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I refer to proposed section 62AA, “Public inspection of register extracts”. This is the requirement for the Electoral Commissioner to make a register extract available for inspection by the public without a fee. Will a member of the public be able to just wander in and ask for an extract? Will there be one prepared and sitting there waiting for them, or will they have to request it in advance? I understand that this can already be done, so I apologise for not being familiar with what one can already do. My question is how will that extract be prepared, and how will a member of the public access it? Will they be able to access it for the whole state? Political parties can access the information of the whole state, but members of Parliament are restricted to their own electorate. Can a member of Parliament walk into the Electoral Commission and request that? What can they do? Can they just view it? Is that the extent of what they can do?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There are terminals in the reception at the Electoral Commission, so any member of the public can walk in and search on the terminal. If they have the details of whom they are looking for, they can search it on the terminal, and it will come up, if they are not a silent elector. We could not make it any more available than being able to go in and search it on a database.

Dr D.J. Honey: They used to be in post offices, back in the day. You could go and look at it.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: They are not post offices anymore; they are shops. We are not going to sell the roll!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are there any further questions, member for Cottesloe? Clause 51 goes through to page 67.

Dr D.J. HONEY: No, that was resolved earlier. Just to explain myself, my question about proposed section 62AC was about contact details for 16 and 17-year-olds, but the Attorney General answered that in a previous question.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 52 to 61 put and passed.

Clause 62: Section 71 amended —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This clause seeks to amend section 71 of the act and the heading to the amended section will be “Rules for fixing polling day”. The bill seeks to add Christmas Day to the list of excluded days for election days. It is really just a curiosity from my perspective. Were any other days considered, such as Anzac Day or New Year’s Day? Why only Christmas and Easter?

Mr D.R. Michael: Whenever it’s 40 degrees or above!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That is the whole of March in the wheatbelt! My question is why has Christmas Day been added and not New Year’s Day, Anzac Day or those sorts of things?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: They are the days of Christian festivities.

Ms M.J. Davies: I see that!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The existing legislation, against which there has been no protest, provides —

excluded day means —

...

(b) Easter Saturday or the Saturday immediately preceding or succeeding Easter Saturday.

We are adding Christmas Day into the count, or excluding it from the count, I should say.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: We have a very multicultural community these days. I know that governments are mindful of big holidays like that, so it would never set an election day on those days, just like it would never set an election day on AFL grand final day. Would it not have been more appropriate to remove Easter and what was there, and just leave it to the discretion of the government, as opposed to defining additional days that are specific to a particular religion? I am going to get myself into trouble here!

Dr D.J. Honey: You're going to get a lot of emails and letters!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: No, I am just saying that no government would ever set an election on Christmas Day—they never have. I just wonder why this amendment has been recommended?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It really only applies to by-elections, because we have fixed days for general elections. If we had a referendum, I suppose it would be applicable, but I cannot think of the last state referendum. I just cannot think of one. It only applies to by-elections.

Ms M.J. Davies: I think it was daylight savings. Don't mention the war!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Don't mention the war; that is right! There is a whole party now that wants to promote the war! It really applies only to a referendum, which is rare, and a by-election. I do not think it is a great issue.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 63 to 67 put and passed.

Clause 68: Section 78 amended —

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I move

Page 82, after line 27 — To insert —

(ab) after paragraph (b) insert:

(ba) include details of a means by which the candidate can be contacted in connection with the election; and

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Could I ask the minister to perhaps provide some guidance on that amendment?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: This proposed amendment is to ensure that a candidate nominating in an election must provide at least one means by which they can be contacted in connection with the election. This is necessary due to the proposed amendments to sections 86 and 87 of the act, so that we have a definite point of contact for the candidate.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 69 to 72 put and passed.

Clause 73: Section 81A amended —

Dr D.J. HONEY: I refer to page 87 of the bill and proposed subsections 2A and 2B. Why is there a limit of one candidate per party? If I have read that correctly, does it mean that if the Electoral Commissioner receives two or more party nominations from the same registered political party for a single member and all but one of the party nominations are not withdrawn under section 82 of the current act, there can be only one nominated candidate from a party in an election? I will give the minister a very specific example that goes back a bit in history. The first time Sir Charles Court stood for election to the seat of Nedlands, the Liberal Party for various reasons actually nominated two candidates for that election; I cannot remember the name of the other candidate. It was actually quite a willing campaign with all sorts of skulduggery—not on the part of Sir Charles Court, can I say—but in any case, the minister can read his biography if he wants to know the history of that. Nevertheless, the party nominated two candidates for the same seat. I wonder whether I am misreading this. Will this clause prevent a party from nominating more than one candidate for a seat; and, if that is the case, why?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes, parties are prohibited from nominating more than one candidate for a seat. It will be only one candidate for a seat, to prevent the skulduggery the member mentioned and to have a clean list on the ballot paper; otherwise, parties could start nominating not one but a dozen candidates for the seat, hoping that one will end up in the number one spot on the ballot paper. We do not want that. If a party wants to put up a candidate, let it put up a candidate and name the candidate, and the public will not be confused. Otherwise, a party could just flood the ballot paper with numerous candidates. As the member said, even when there were only two endorsed candidates from the Liberal Party—it is unimaginable today, is it not, member?

Dr D.J. Honey: I wouldn't hold your breath!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I understand, but I can guarantee that on this side of politics we only ever nominate one candidate per district. The member said when there were two candidates for the seat of Nedlands, there was skulduggery involved.

Dr D.J. Honey: Only between the two candidates.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes, well, that is what we want to avoid, because where will that leave the public? If they want to vote Liberal, who are they going to vote for? That is the problem. We want to keep it nice and clean.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 74 and 75 put and passed.

Clause 76: Section 86 amended —

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY — by leave: I move —

Page 90, lines 18 and 19 — To delete “names, occupations and primary residential addresses” and substitute —
names

Page 90, lines 21 to 23 — To delete “names, occupations and primary residential addresses of all candidates nominated” and substitute —

name of each candidate nominated, and details of a means by which the candidate can be contacted,

Page 90, lines 26 to 28 — To delete “names, occupations and primary residential addresses of all candidates nominated” and substitute —

name of each candidate nominated, and details of a means by which the candidate can be contacted,

Page 91, lines 1 to 6 — To delete the lines and substitute —

(3) Delete section 86(2AAA) and insert:

(2AAA) Despite subsection (2), if a candidate is a silent elector the returning officer must not publish information that might enable the candidate’s residential address to be ascertained.

The proposed amendments to clause 76 are to remove the requirement for the Western Australian Electoral Commission to publicly declare and publish on its website the occupations and primary residential addresses of all candidates in a single-member election. Making this information publicly available on the internet may give rise to safety and privacy concerns for all candidates and their families, and potentially dissuade people from seeking public office. The Western Australian Electoral Commissioner has recommended removing the requirement for residential addresses and occupations to be published, instead replacing them with a requirement to publish the means of contacting that candidate. This is similar to the requirements for candidates in local government elections, with the wording of the proposed amendments modelled on corresponding provisions in the Local Government (Elections) Regulations 1997.

In moving these amendments, I am mindful of the member for Cottesloe’s comments during the second reading debate when he said that the government was doing this for candidates but not for donors. We are not changing it at the moment for donors. The particulars of donors will remain the same as under the current act. We need those details, because people go around using fake names and there is no way for the Western Australian Electoral Commission, if it is going to audit anything, to check whether the person was actually alive and a real donor, unless it is supplied with their name and address, which can be checked against the electoral roll or other databases.

That is the current law, and it is the same for candidates. However, during the consultation process either the member for Cottesloe or Hon Tjorn Sibma raised this issue. They asked whether the government would give consideration to the issue, so I discussed it with the commission in the context of the way in which protests are going, like the invasion of the CEO’s home in City Beach. Protests are no longer just, “What do we want? We want it now!” being chanted on the corner; there is trespass and crimes involved, and that is heightened during an election period; it brings out the crazies, so we gave the matter our consideration. The advice I got back from the Electoral Commission is that, yes, what we have at the moment is good and the Local Government Act provisions seem to be effective. Having regard to the dangerous nature of current protests, on balance it is probably best to protect the address of the candidate, but for the Electoral Commissioner and everyone else to have a point of contact for that candidate.

Amendments put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 77: Section 87 amended —

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY — by leave: I move —

Page 93, lines 13 and 14 — To delete “names, occupations and primary residential addresses” and substitute —
names

Page 93, lines 16 to 18 — To delete “names, occupations and primary residential addresses of all candidates nominated” and substitute —

name of each candidate nominated, and details of a means by which the candidate can be contacted,

Page 93, lines 21 to 23 — To delete “names, occupations and primary residential addresses of all candidates nominated” and substitute —

name of each candidate nominated, and details of a means by which the candidate can be contacted,

Page 93, lines 25 to 27 — To delete the lines and substitute —

(3A) Despite subsection (3), if a candidate is a silent elector the returning officer must not publish information that might enable the candidate’s residential address to be ascertained.

These amendments will amend section 87 of the act titled “Close of nominations procedure for Council election where relevant number more than one”. The proposed amendments are identical to those for clause 76, which we have just dealt with. They will remove the requirement for the Western Australian Electoral Commission to publicly declare and publish on its website the occupations and primary residential addresses of candidates for the Council. Instead, the WAEC will be required to publish a point of contact for those candidates, which is the same as we did with clause 76. I hope that meets with the member for Cottesloe’s approval.

Amendments put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 78 put and passed.

Clause 79: Part IV Division 2A inserted —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This clause refers to the registration of how-to-vote cards and inserts a proposed section into the principal legislation. In the time we have had to speak with our party secretary, concerns have been raised. When the Attorney General and his staff provided the briefing, it raised some red flags for me in terms of the practicality of being able to get this done in a timely manner. I understand the basis for wanting to have the how-to-vote cards registered. The Attorney General in his second reading speech talked about a reduction in the distribution of misinformation and making sure there was no mischief on polling day. We have all seen it happen. We have seen how-to-vote cards that are not authorised and that contain misleading information. It is very frustrating, because on election day there is very little we can do. Once the cards have been printed and distributed, there is not much one can do, other than complain after the fact. It can be stopped on the day if the person in charge of the polling booth is prepared to take it on. I have some very small polling booths and some very big polling booths and things can get a bit willing on election day, so I understand the intent and I agree with wanting to limit mischief and misinformation.

However, the registration of the how-to-vote cards is one thing. When I read the detail of how this process will work, it says that it will have to be done within a particular time frame. Therefore, there will be no possibility after the ballot draw of having a how-to-vote card without the numbers filled in. Once the ballot draw is done, we will be unable to insert the numbers on the how-to-vote card, send them off to the printer and put them in the post. I am going to set all the triggers off for Australia Post again, because apparently I turned up on its media monitoring yesterday for having a crack at its inability to deliver post in regional communities, but, unfortunately, it is a fact in regional Western Australia. It takes time for the post to arrive. In election timetables, every moment counts. We want to get that information out as soon as possible. We post out how-to-vote cards to not only electors but also polling booths in the Kimberley. In fact, we pay a lot of money now for couriers because we do not trust that Australia Post will be able to get the cards there on time. We have 59 candidates in this house and 36 in the other house—that is a whole-of-state view, so we probably will not have that many from a regional —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is 37.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It will be 37 candidates. Thank you, Deputy Speaker. We will not have the regional how-to-vote cards anymore, but 59 candidates from each political party, plus the Independents and anyone who is running a third-party campaign will all be going to the Electoral Commission at the same time because there will be a start date and a finish date for the registration of cards. As I understand it—and perhaps the Attorney General can provide me with some advice—it says that we will not be able to change a card six days out from polling day. Proposed section 89C provides for the registration process and includes a time line that begins the day after the close of nominations and ends on the day that is six business days before polling day. When I read “six business days before polling day”, it sounded like we will not be able change our how-to-vote cards during those last six days. That happens on a regular basis. In fact, I have seen it happen on the night of an election.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Sorry, I got distracted on that. What happened on the night of the election? I want to hear more.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I want to hear more from the member.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: As I understand it, proposed section 89C provides for the registration process, including the time line that begins on the day after the close of nominations and ends on the day that is six business days before polling day. I have seen people change or create new how-to-vote cards on the day before the election. I do not think this will be allowed to happen any longer.

Mr J.R. Quigley: No, it is.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am happy to sit down and have that clarified and then I have a whole bunch of other questions about this.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I thought that if I satisfied that question, the member might give me a rest. The how-to-vote card will have to be registered in that period. A candidate will be able to apply to the commission to alter their how-to-vote card at any time. A candidate might have registered the card the day after a nomination has occurred, but four days out from the election, because their preference says something crazy or something like that and they want to change it, the candidate will be able to email the commissioner and apply to have it changed. This is under proposed section 89E, which states —

The accountable person for a registered how-to-vote card may apply to the Electoral Commissioner to replace the registered how-to-vote card with another how-to-vote card (the *replacement how-to-vote card*).

We have not got to that, but we will get to it soon. Let me off the other questions; I gave the member such a good answer!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: As I understand, this is all under clause 79, so we might do a bit of jumping around those proposed sections. Will there be any restriction on how many times someone can change it?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: To go back to the minister's answer, why was there no consideration, or consideration that was discarded, to allow parties to provide the pro forma for their how-to-vote card in advance of nominations closing? It could then be filled in once the nominations are closed without any substantial difference. The numbering of the card is what gets done in quick succession after nominations close so that we can get it to the printer. I am not making it up, because I have done it. I was the state and campaign director. We literally get ours to the printer that night and they are then packed up and posted, because we have to meet really stringent guidelines. If we are waiting for the Electoral Commission, how long will this likely take? It will not be one party. Every political party will want their bit done. As a new process, I am concerned that this will be an unwieldy process to deliver practically.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I am aware of the whole postal vote issue, because, I cannot believe it, I have stood six times, and we go through it each election cycle. We would not think it will take a week. It would take hours, a day or two days maximum. Providing there are a sufficient number of officers, which will happen straight after the close of nominations, it will not take long to check a how-to-vote card. They just have to make sure that there is nothing on it contrary to the legislation—that is it—and that the application has been made by the appropriate person from the political entity. If they are satisfied that they have the application from the right political entity, and an experienced officer looking at the how-to-vote card does not see any instruction on it contrary to the legislation, then tick—next. It will not take long. Once ticked, the party will be safe from an incursion on election day by false how-to-vote cards being handed out. As the member said, at present, it is a bit problematic what officers at polling booths can do when false material is complained about, but we will now have the authority of the act behind us when we complain. At the last election, people who were not standing in that district were handing out anti-vax cards against Labor and all that. They will be required to register if they are spending over \$500 in the campaign, and they will not be able to hand out how-to-vote cards unless they are registered.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Proposed section 89B(2) states —

However, a how-to-vote card is not *suitable to be registered* if the how-to-vote card —

- (a) is likely to mislead or deceive an elector in relation to the casting of an elector's vote for a particular candidate, political party or group; or

I have a question about that one —

- (b) is likely to induce an elector to mark their ballot paper otherwise than in accordance with the directions on the ballot paper ...

I understand that. The cards need to have instructions that meet the requirements of the election. They cannot tell someone that they can draw pink elephants on their paper and they will be voting correctly. Proposed paragraph (c) then states —

contains an error or abusive, obscene, threatening, violent or unlawful or similarly offensive material.

That seems fairly self-evident and a reasonable inclusion. Proposed section 89B(2)(a) states —

is likely to mislead or deceive an elector in relation to the casting of an elector's vote for a particular candidate, political party or group;

That is a slightly subjective. In politics, one person's encouragement is another person's deceit. Can the minister give me an example of what the Electoral Commission will be looking for when it comes to applying proposed section 89B(2)(a)?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: One example could be using the colours or motif of an opponent to mislead electors that it is the true intention of the party when really it is a rogue card. It will not be registered if it is going to induce a person

to think, for example, that the candidate out there is Labor—because I have got a big margin. It could be someone else using colours to suggest that they are a Labor candidate, or perhaps using a variation of my name to trick people into thinking they are voting for me, but they are voting for somebody else. The registration of these cards is to protect the integrity of the election so that the information contained on the card truly reflects the intention of the candidate and the party that is supporting that candidate.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I give the minister a hypothetical, which may be loosely based on something that may have happened a long time ago when one of our candidates first ran for our party.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Council or Assembly?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: In the Assembly. He did not use the livery of the National Party, so it was not a green and yellow how-to-vote card. It was, in fact, white and blue. It had his name on it, and it was our party and he followed all the rules. There was nothing wrong with the actual how-to-vote card, but it was not green and yellow. It was a strategic choice; I am not going to lie. At that point, he thought it would benefit him. If that were sent to the Electoral Commission under these rules, would that be deemed unregistrable?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The party can apply in whatever manner it likes, but it will ultimately be to the discretion of the Electoral Commissioner whether that presented application is likely to mislead voters. There is a discretion with the commission to protect the integrity of the election, but there is no rule that says the National Party has to use green and yellow. The application could be put in, but if the intention is to try to make the National Party candidate look like the Labor candidate in Butler, the Western Australian Electoral Commission might exercise its discretion and say, “This is getting confusing; they’re trying to sneak it in to make it look like he’s the Labor candidate for Butler.” Short of misleading the electorate, it will be approved.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Maybe a contemporary example of this is the Australian Electoral Commission taking umbrage with the purple that is being used by the Yes campaign. I understand that it said that it looks too similar to the Australian Electoral Commission’s colours and it makes it look like the Yes campaign is being endorsed by the Australian Electoral Commission. Is that something that is likely to be an issue when the registration of how-to-vote cards comes up?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: When I used to appear for a lot of police, they always used to say that it was about time, place and circumstance when exercising discretion. We will have to look at the circumstances of the particular election. If the Australian Electoral Commission is using purple, I can see the objection. It is trying to mislead the unwary voter into thinking that they are holding something official that tells them how to vote. That is what we have to steer clear of. There will always have to be that discretion—always. However, it is not to impede the member’s party or any other party; it is to protect her party and other parties and all candidates who put in an honest effort from sneaky ways of trying to beat the system. That is what we are trying to do.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Proposed section 89D provides for the publishing of more than one how-to-vote card, but, in my mind, it is ambiguous on whether a party can have more than one how-to-vote card in circulation for the same candidate. Will parties and candidates be able to have two or more how-to-vote cards in circulation at the same time for the same electorate or division?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No. They will have to apply to replace it with a new one. They could not put out two. That would confuse. As I said in my second reading speech, this is not ideological. I am trying to approach this so that there are clean and fair elections. If a party put out two how-to-vote cards, it would leave the constituency confused. We do not mind if a party changes it unlimited times. If I said something nice, the party might say, “Put Quigley second.” If I said something radical against sheep farmers the following week, the party might say, “Put Quigley last.” The party will be able to change it all the time, but it will not be able to put out two because people would just get confused, and the commission would not register such a card.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Again, I can think of a couple of scenarios in which a party or candidate might do it, such as when a preference deal has not been done. I could say, “Put my name first and here is the preference flow if you want to put Labor second.” However, for a Liberal voter, people would be given an option. What will happen in some electorates—probably not mine, but others—that have culturally and linguistically diverse communities? One card might be published in a language other than English, so there could be one in English and one in Mandarin. Would that be approved? They would be the same card, but they would not be. There would be two in circulation.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Once again, all these cards will be at the discretion of the Electoral Commissioner. But a Liberal voter would be handing out a Liberal how-to-vote card.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Maybe, but sometimes you’re a Nat and you give your preference to the Labor Party and sometimes you’re a Nat and you give your preference to the Liberal Party. It’s not just the Liberal and Labor Parties in this state.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: But what will the party want by way of preference, because that is what will happen?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: We could potentially decide not to allocate preferences and give people a choice.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That would be okay. The party could put out its how-to-vote card saying, “Vote number 1 for Mia Davies and after that, choose your candidate.”

Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I am told by the minister that the Greens already do that. They say, “Vote Greens 1 and after that, choose this or that—name your candidate.”

Dr D.J. HONEY: Coming back to proposed section 89A(1), before the last couple of elections, *The West Australian* entered the fray on whom the community should support and it was very explicit that a certain candidate should be supported and another candidate should not be supported at the election, and it did that on a seat-by-seat basis. Would that fall under this rule?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No; that would not be a party handing out how-to-vote cards. That would just be the media saying what its preference is. News Ltd will go around saying, “Don’t vote for this person” and it usually chooses a conservative. Other media outlets like *The Guardian* might choose someone else to promote. That would not be a how-to-vote card. Commentators saying whom to vote for will not be captured by the provisions of new section 89. What will be wrong is a how-to-vote card that bears the party’s name that is misleading of the party’s intentions. That is why we want them to be registered—to protect parties.

Dr D.J. HONEY: This question is related generally to the handing out of how-to-vote cards. We will have the registration of workers on the booths. Will I be able to hand out another party’s how-to-vote card? It is not uncommon for workers on polling booths to hand out the how-to-vote card of another party. I am not saying that it would be an unauthorised card, but will I be able to hand out the how-to-vote card of another party?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Of course, that happened in Rockingham, where the Leader of the Opposition pretended to be a Liberal, and I can understand why. However, there will be no requirement for what card they hand out. We just want the Western Australian Electoral Commission booth workers to be statutorily recognised so that they will have the amenity of a toilet and will know who to order to move six metres from the door and those sorts of things. There has been no requirement until now to have any registration of a booth worker, but they can affect an election. Western Australian Electoral Commission officers are part time. They do not know these people. They will have to have some sort of identification. Once again, it is just about keeping it clean. Once they are identified, they will be able to hand out whatever material they like. Some poll workers could hand out two how-to-vote cards, perhaps because the Nationals and the Liberals could not man every booth and they asked them to hand out some of theirs. That happens with the Greens and all these people.

Ms M.J. Davies: We cover our booths.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The member knows what I mean. There are people who do this.

Ms M.J. Davies: With locals.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: If the member is running short of numbers, do not send them to Butler; she can send them elsewhere!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a couple of quick questions. How will people be able to identify that the card has been registered? Will there be some sort of writing at the bottom of the card?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: If it is registered, the card will have small print at the bottom stating “Authorised by the Electoral Commission”. All registered cards will be published on the Electoral Commission’s website, so the member’s electors cannot be fooled. They will see that it is a ridgy-didge card for the electorate of Roe. It will be right there. If they want to check further, they can call up the WAEC website and it would be published there.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I think the member for Central Wheatbelt raised the issue of timing. It concerns me that if a party is waiting for approval, in preparation, it will automatically print “Approved by the Western Australian Electoral Commission” on the bottom of the card assuming that it will get approval.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Well, you shouldn’t do that.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is what I am saying. As pointed out by member for Central Wheatbelt, time is of the essence in this period. The minister said that registration needs to happen six days prior to the election; how will parties get how-to-vote cards ready for pre-polling?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Registration opens a good three weeks out from polling day and is a good week before early voting commences. I have been advised by the commission that the member was not present when I explained this. I make no criticism of that, but I will just have to repeat my explanation. It is a tick-and-flick exercise and it will not take long: Did this application come from the registered entity? Does it comply with the law? In other words, they have not put “1”, “1”. Tick! Bang! We are going to put enough officers on this particular task so that it can be dealt with quickly. There are 59 Assembly seats times five candidates. There are 300 how-to-vote —

Ms M.J. Davies: I had 13 candidates in mine last time.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I think I had five, but I am just giving an example.

Checking 300 cards might take 15 or 20 minutes a card, with numerous officers. This will not be a backbreaking task for the commission. It will email back and say “You are right to go!” and then the party’s template will go off to the printer—hopefully on the same day, but it might take a couple of days.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I appreciate the minister’s optimism about this, as well as his clarification that it is a week before pre-polling starts. I can tell the minister that it takes longer than a week to get the how-to-vote cards printed, posted or couriered—however it is—to the furthest reaches of this state. It is a challenge. When pre-poll opens, we want people ready at the booths to hand out how-to-vote cards and assist people. I will not ask the minister to repeat what he has said, but I am very sceptical about the timeliness and time frames. I think there will be a fair amount of scrutiny during the first election when this happens. As a political party, it is already a challenge for us. The Labor Party and Liberal Party experience that challenge as well. I have talked about the time frames that we use. We go to print that night; we get it done and then we get them couriered. Adding another process in that is going to create some challenges. I truly hope that the minister will provide additional resources that are sufficient to get this done on the first day so that we can actually all get on with what we need to do.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I am already trembling about budget estimates, but I will leave that until June next year when the member will question me about that.

Ms M.J. Davies: It will not have happened then! I will be gone. I will not have a chance to scrutinise you after the next election.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The member will be here during the next election on television commentating and saying “I know it’s a clean election because I was in Parliament when Minister Quigley put this bill through!” I know the member will be there, but in a different capacity. I want to respond to the member regarding pre-polling: parties do not have to wait until the last day to register. They can register on the first day of the close of nominations. They will still have a full week to do their how-to-vote cards. From day one, they can perhaps print their own if they have not got them back from the printers. It is not a big deal.

Ms M.J. Davies: It is when you put caps on expenditure, Attorney General. Every dollar counts!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It would probably be cheaper to run a thousand through my photocopier than to print a thousand. The main thing is that we have to have these blessed things registered and avoid the public being misled. If that puts a little bit more pressure on us, so be it. The public expect a clean, open and fair election. As the minister, I am determined to see that delivered by the commission—so long as it re-elects me! That was not for *Hansard*!

Clause put and passed.

Clause 80: Part IV Division 3 replaced —

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY — by leave: I move —

Page 139, line 7 — To delete “A person” and substitute —

(1) A person

Page 139, line 9 — To insert after “polling place” —

in a district

Page 139, after line 19 — To insert —

(2) Subsection (1) applies even if the claim relates to enrolment for another district.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Could we have an explanation of what the amendments are?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: They will insert proposed section 97G, titled “Provisional voting if person applies to enrol on day on which they intend to vote”. It will provide for a person who, under section 17, has enrolled on the day that they intend to vote, to vote as a provisional voter. The proposed amendments are consequential to the amendment to clause 15 to ensure that a person who has been enrolled under section 17 can vote, even if they presented at a polling place outside of their district. This is one of those ideas that came during consultation. The member will remember from the second reading debate that they could do that at the polling place on polling day, but we had not included a provision to allow it to happen at other places.

Amendments put and passed.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Page 118 has proposed section 92F, “Appointment of scrutineers during polling”. I want to clarify whether this must be a singular scrutineer or can there be more than one. It states —

(1) A candidate in an election, or the candidate’s official agent, may appoint a scrutineer to represent the candidate at a place to vote during the polling for the election.

In the past, it has not been uncommon, particularly at the big booths, to have had more than one scrutineer present because two tables can be counting votes and sometimes upper house votes and lower house votes are counted at the same time. Perhaps I am misreading this, but will there be a limit on the number of scrutineers that a candidate can appoint, or will a candidate still be able to appoint more than one scrutineer when they believe it is required?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There will be no change to the existing provisions. Proposed section 92F will replace section 114, but there will be no substantive changes to the law as it currently exists. It is just terminology, and I will just pull it up here. There will be no change to what is currently there.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I wish to clarify, as we have the commissioner here, that if a candidate wanted to appoint more than one scrutineer, as has happened in the past, would there be an impediment to that?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Page 164 has proposed section 100M, which states —

- (1) The Electoral Commissioner, or officers directed by the Electoral Commissioner, must, at a time not earlier than 72 hours before the commencement of the poll on polling day, begin the scrutiny of declarations relating to postal ballot papers ...

Will there be any impediment to the postal ballots being counted alongside the other votes once the polls have closed?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Was the member reading from clause 100? The member referred me to page 164.

Dr D.J. Honey: No, page 118 I referred you to, Attorney General.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Page 118?

Dr D.J. Honey: Yes—the new clause 92F. Sorry, Attorney General; I apologise. Page 164—100M.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is right. The member is getting ahead! He was reading from clause 100, I think.

Dr D.J. Honey: No—still section 80, on page 164. It's the new clause 100M. Attorney General, if I could clarify?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much. I am not sure whether this confounds it. Would this clause be an impediment to the counting on the day? Officers will be qualifying all those other votes up to 72 hours—so three days—before polling day. Is there any reason they cannot commence counting at the same time as they are counting the other ballots at the end of polling day?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The postal votes go to a processing centre where, three days before polling day, they are checked that they comply with the declarations for the postal vote. If they are checked and are compliant, they will then go to the district to be counted after 6.00 pm that night.

Sorry! I have made an error. I want to correct the record. Page 131 of the bill, proposed section 96(2) states —

At a polling place for a single member election, only 1 scrutineer at a time is allowed for each candidate.

That is exactly the situation under the existing section 114(1)(a), which states —

at a single member election, not more than one scrutineer at a time shall be allowed to each candidate at each polling place, or section of a polling place, if divided;

I made an error earlier.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 81 to 105 put and passed.

Clause 106: Section 156 amended —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: We have hit the hundreds, Attorney General! Clause 106 will amend section 156. It relates to electors' voting obligations, and there is a new section in here. New section (1A) states —

a *valid and sufficient reason* in relation to a failure to vote includes an honest belief on the part of an elector that abstaining from voting is part of their religious duty.

I am not sure whether this is a new section for this part of the bill or whether it is a new section in its entirety. How is this honest belief judged? Who will be the judge? Does the person have to be part of an official congregation or grouping and have evidence? Do they require third-party confirmation of said religion? Perhaps the minister could provide some examples of which groups of people this applies to that causes a clause of this nature in the bill.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The person will be a non-voter, and because of a religious reason, they have not gone to the polling station. They will then get a notice, as a non-voter, and that notice also includes that they have committed an offence if they do not have a valid and sufficient reason. That will be judged by the Western Australian Electoral Commission. If the person is a member of a congregation that has a doctrinal position against participating in state elections—I mean “state” in the wider term—the Electoral Commissioner will accept that. A person does not have to be a member of a congregation if they genuinely have a conscientious, valid and sufficient reason for not voting. It is the same in the commonwealth legislation as well, because, as I said, we are trying to keep the two in harmony. It is up to the person to put evidence before the commission that they are sincerely of the belief that it is against their religious belief. It will be easy to capture that belief if they are part of a congregation well-known for that. It might require a little more effort from a person who is sincere in that belief to produce evidence of it.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is a new section, is it not? It did not appear in the act previously. Or was there already a provision for people with this honest belief contained in the act?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I refer to the struck-out bit in the member's blue copy of the bill. I know other members have not got the blue copy, but I refer to page 287. The member will see there the struck-out part that this clause replaces. Section 156(16) of the original act stated —

Every elector who —

- (a) fails to vote at an election without a valid and sufficient reason for such failure (in this section the words *valid and sufficient reason* shall include an honest belief on the part of an elector that abstention from voting is part of his religious duty); or
- (b) makes a statement in response to a penalty notice or to an infringement notice that is, to the person's knowledge, false or misleading in a material particular, shall be guilty of an offence.

It was there, and we have cleaned it up.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 107 to 112 put and passed.

Clause 113: Section 175 amended —

Dr D.J. HONEY: I move —

Page 225, line 14 — To delete the figure “\$1 000” and in its place insert —

\$2 600

There has been some discussion behind the chair about this amendment. I thank the Attorney General for taking on board the comment that \$1 000 was such a threshold it did not represent any meaningful risk of a minister having their head turned on a matter. It would have been a horrendous administrative burden for the parties. The point I made in particular—on our side at least and for the local campaigns—is that \$1 000 would act as a substantial disincentive. I do not see any reason why we should change the amount from what it is now. I do not think there has been any demonstrated evidence, Attorney General, that the amount of \$2 600 has resulted in any corruption of government or government processes. That is a compromise amount to stay where it is currently and not reduce it. That will make it administratively simpler but will not represent any risk, I believe, of encouraging corruption.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: As I said at the start of my second reading speech, as the minister I am not trying to weaponise the process by these amendments. The member for Cottesloe made a case that, as he said “his side” of politics would find this an inhibition on its normal fundraising activities. I do not want to pass any legislation that he feels inhibits them, so long as it does not tarnish the transparency and integrity of the process. I accept the member's amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I want to deal with some of the definitions laid out at the beginning of this clause. Clauses further down the track deal with foreign donors and capped expenditure and things like that. I have a couple of questions about definitions at the beginning of this clause, under part 6. The first is why has “campaign committee” been included and referenced in the act?

Mr J.R. Quigley: The increasing of?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am referring to campaign committees in the definitions section at the top of page 221. Why has that been included in the bill? I assume it is in reference to how, as political parties, it is the state secretary or state director who is responsible. I am not entirely sure why there needs to be a reference to a campaign committee, because that formalises something that sits within political parties ordinarily and there are formal definitions for party agents and people who have responsibilities to the Western Australian Electoral Commission. I can sit down and let the Attorney General answer that, or I can keep going. The second question I have is on the compulsory party levy. Under the definition of “compulsory party levy”, which is referred to later in the act, part (b) is —

a person employed by, or appointed or employed to assist, an elected member who is a member of the political party, including an electorate officer as defined in the *Parliamentary and Electorate Staff ...*

I do not understand why we would be making reference to an electorate officer in relation to a compulsory party levy, which is included in the campaign finance. I would appreciate an explanation of whether we deal with that here in the definitions, or where it is actually pertinent in the bill.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I got a bit confused, because I think we started off with “campaign committee”.

Ms M.J. Davies: I did, and while you were having a chat, I moved on to the next one, sorry! We can come back to it.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I know, Speedy Gonzalez; the member left me in the dust! “Compulsory party levy” means an amount a political party requires to be paid by an elected party member or a person employed by the party, including an electorate officer, because they are working for a party member. The levy has been defined and identified to capture levies as political contributions. That is why we have included electorate officers.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Perhaps this is where a consultation with the Labor Party might have influenced what has ended up in the bill. None of our electorate officers pay a levy to our political parties unless, privately, they are members of the organisation.

Mr J.R. Quigley: That's right.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: But why would that be defined in the act to specifically include an electorate officer? They pay a membership, not a levy. None of our electorate officers would pay what we would determine as a levy. Members of Parliament pay a levy to our political parties, but none of our electorate officers do. They might be members of the party. I just cannot understand why the act would include a specific reference to an electorate officer and a compulsory party levy.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: If a political officer is not subject to any compulsory party levy, they will not be captured by this proposed section. We have to take care of all possibilities. Some electorate officers might be members of a party that has imposed a general or specific levy. Caucus gets levied; other people in the party get levied. This provision fits in with the definition of "political contribution" on page 224 in proposed section 113 of the bill, which states —

political contribution means any of the following —

- (a) an affiliate fee;
- (b) a compulsory party levy;
- (c) a gift;

Any levy paid by an electorate officer is captured. If an electorate officer is not captured by the requirement to pay a levy, there is no deal. But I have to take care of other parties that might have electorate officers who are levied. That is then part of a political contribution.

Mr R.S. Love: There's an income stream!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No further suggestions for questions!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The Leader of the Opposition has just identified a new income stream for the Nationals WA!

Mr R.S. Love: What level is the levy?

Mr J.R. Quigley: I can't find that in the bill, member!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am genuinely astonished that we have electorate officers who are, for all intents and purposes, supposed to be independent of political parties. There is nothing to say that they cannot be members of organisations in their own private lives, but for the purposes of being an electorate officer —

Mr J.R. Quigley: You don't have to be a member of a political party.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: No, but the Attorney General is trying to capture something that clearly exists, which is a levy being paid by an electorate officer to a political party. I find that quite astounding. There are all sorts of references, such as the red shirts in New South Wales. It may have nothing to do with that, but that rings alarm bells to me, because electorate officers are supposed to be independent, certainly from a campaigning perspective, at the very least.

Mr J.R. Quigley: I agree, but—may I respond?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Lilburne): Certainly.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I agree, but an electorate officer may be—they are entitled to be—a member of a political party. A political party may impose a levy on certain categories of people, like current members: "We're hard-up, we've got to double the fee." I am not talking about Labor; I am talking about some of the other smaller parties. I know that some of the smaller parties have very politically active electorate officers. They might be levied. I do not want their contribution to escape and not be captured by the legislation. Any levy is a gift. Just because a person is an electorate officer, they are not excused from that contribution by reason of their employment as an electorate officer. We want to include it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is interesting. Was there any discussion with the Australian Taxation Office about the tax deductibility of gifts and compulsory levies? I wonder whether, by defining that as a gift, you are inadvertently creating a tax issue for electorate officers, who can only claim a tax deduction on a donation up to a certain value. Was there consultation with the tax authorities when the Attorney General made that determination?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No, we do not do this because of the tax deductibility or otherwise. There has been no discussion by my office or any of my advisers with the ATO.

Mr R.S. LOVE: As I understand it, under the current rulings of the ATO, a levy is tax deductible at any level, but there is an upper level for a tax deductible gift. It is a donation.

Mr J.R. Quigley: I think the upper level was 15.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Federally, I think it is to be dropped. I am wondering whether there has been some discussion on that, or should there be, between here and the arrival of this bill in the other place?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: No, I do not believe there should be. We are not being driven by the Australian Taxation Office or the rules around taxation. We are trying to come up with a fair and clean system. There has been no discussion or consideration of the taxation effects of all this. We are trying to present to the public a clean system. If levies are imposed, they will be considered as contributions. If a person who is employed as an electorate officer is subject to any party levy, they will be included. They will not be excluded by reason of their employment.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I move on to the definition of “foreign donor”. I know that there is a whole section on foreign donations further down, but this is the definition.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Where are we?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is on page 222. The definition of “foreign donor” means —

... a person who makes a political contribution who is any of the following —

It goes from (a) to (f), and (e) is —

a body (whether or not incorporated) that does not meet any of the following conditions —

- (i) the body is incorporated in Australia;
- (ii) the body’s head office is in Australia;
- (iii) the body’s principal place of activity is, or is in, Australia;

How easy is it for someone to become incorporated or to set up a business in Australia that would allow them to get around not being a foreign donor? Are there any loopholes?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The foreign donor provisions, as the member may recall, received some criticism from the Standing Committee on Legislation as being inadequate, so we have taken the commonwealth definition of “foreign donor” and there is an offence for trying to get around those provisions. We will come to that. It comes up under proposed section 175SAF, “Offence to enter scheme to receive foreign contribution not permitted under Division”. I do not know how easy it is, but it is risky.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That is a good answer. Can the minister explain the difference between a “registered third-party campaigner” and a “third-party campaigner”? There are two definitions. Again, I know this is dealt with at a later part of the bill. I would appreciate more detail than that one of them is registered and the other is not.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There are a lot of little local campaigns. I can remember one in North Beach about cutting down trees to expand the football field. A local campaign about cutting down trees to expand a football field is likely to spend less than \$500, so that will be a third-party campaigner. If they spend more than \$500, they will have to be registered and become a registered third-party campaigner. The expenses will have to be reported and the whole trip. They are little community campaigns.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes. How will they know that they need to keep their expenditure under \$500, and that if they tip over that they will have to inform the Western Australian Electoral Commission and register? The minister is talking about local community campaigns. It is not very hard to get hold of \$500, by the way. It sounds to me a little challenging to monitor and police all this. I presume the Western Australian Electoral Commission will be responsible for that.

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Sorry? I just wonder how the Western Australian Electoral Commission is going to keep tabs on that kind of expenditure and how it is determined. If the Electoral Commission calls them, will it demand to see their bank account in relation to that expenditure? It sounds a bit of a grey area.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There will have to be information on the commission’s website. There can be some advertising prior to the election for third-party campaigners to remind them of their obligation to register unless they are not intending to spend more than \$500. If they do intend to spend more than \$500, they should get in at the outset and register. If they change their campaign strategy during the election period and it looks like they will exceed \$500, they should register. I do not think it will be too hard at the bottom end. We are trying to stop third-party campaigners from coming and just flooding an election. They have nothing to lose; they are not standing.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: In the definitions of “third-party campaigner” and “registered third-party campaigner”, there is the use of the word “person”. I assume that is the legal definition of “person” and applies to businesses, organisations or individuals.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I am pleased that this lawyer received the endorsement of the Solicitor-General for my proposed answer, which is that under the Interpretation Act, the word “person” will include a corporate entity. I thank the Solicitor-General.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I refer to the cap amounts laid out on page 223. As far as I can see, that is the only specific mention of the amounts for the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council in a general election or a by-election. I note that in the 2020 bill the Legislative Assembly candidate cap was set at \$125 000 and it has now gone up to \$130 000. Could the minister provide an explanation as to why there is a difference between the 2020 amount and the 2023 amount?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It is set out in the justification statement. I refer the member to page 5 of the justification statement. The previous electoral returns do not generally show the amounts spent by or on behalf of the party-endorsed candidates for the Legislative Assembly separately from the party-endorsed candidates for the Legislative Council. However, the largest electorate expenditure for a party for both houses was by an ALP branch in the 2021 state election. An amount of \$6 173 558 was spent on behalf of 95 candidates for both houses, there being 59 fielded in the Assembly and 36 in the Council. An individual cap on electoral expenditure in the Assembly is set notionally by assuming that the amount of \$6 million was spent only upon 59 candidates in the Assembly. This would overestimate the average amount expended on each Assembly candidate in relation to the largest amount expended.

On that basis, an electoral cap of \$104 637 would apply, which is significantly more than the cap set by reference to the average expenditure on all 95 candidates, which would be \$64 985. That is a difference of \$41 456. The difference suggests that any variability of electoral expenditure in individual seats above or below the average is likely to be accommodated by an individual expenditure cap of, say, \$130 000, because there is variation between the seats. We worked it out based on \$130 000 per seat. If we multiply that by 59 seats, we come to about \$7.4 million.

For the Legislative Council, as noted, I think, by the member in the second reading debate, a different approach was taken because the cost of Council elections is substantially less than the cost of Legislative Assembly elections. In a general election, the electoral expenditure on Council candidates is reduced by the general expenditure on Assembly candidates in delivering the party message. We note that the largest amount spent by an individual candidate upon a Council region in a state general election was in the same vicinity as the notional calculation that we did before when we got to \$65 000. It was \$79 000 at the 2021 election. That is more than double the next highest expenditure by an Independent Council candidate, which was \$33 187 in the 2017 state general election. It is unknown why so much was spent by this one Independent candidate Mr Peter Lyndon-James, but it clearly represents an egregious outlier and may be excluded from consideration. In these circumstances, if the individual expenditure cap for the Council were set at \$65 000, it suggests that it would be very unlikely to interfere significantly with any communication on political matters. That is what the High Court of Australia is looking at: does the cap interfere with communication? Such an individual cap is approximately equal to the average individual expenditure of Australian Labor Party candidates in the Legislative Council in the 2021 state general election, which was the largest of any state general election that has been held.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am very interested in what is being said—I have no idea—and I would like the Attorney General to continue.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is how we got the expenditure caps. We feel that it gives a fair amount for any candidate. It does not mean that \$130 000 will have to be spent in that electorate. If I spend \$60 000 in the electorate, the \$70 000 will not be transferrable to another district, but it could be used by the party for general election campaigning. We have tried to introduce sensible caps that are not, as I said—I was criticised for it by the member but I will take that—a war of money, not a war of ideas. A \$10 million total expenditure cap will not give someone the capacity to flood the whole state like a cap of \$30 million or \$40 million would. If a billionaire comes in to spend and they want to reach that cap, they have to find a candidate for 59 seats in the Assembly and 36 in the Council. From their past effort of fielding about four or five candidates, they rake up all the crazies who say weird things and then damage them or are disendorsed. Imagine what would happen with one of those extreme parties fielding 59 candidates who have only been recruited into a party, but are not affiliated to the party. It would be bedlam. I thank the member for her questions. In the justification statement, the High Court wants to be assured that these matters and these caps have been properly considered by the legislature. If they are reasonable and proportionate, they will pass muster and they will not interfere with the ability to communicate on political matters. On advice from the Solicitor-General, they are designed to limit egregious expenditure by the wealthy who want to take over this Parliament.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.

House adjourned at 5.16 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

SCHOOLS — HOME EDUCATION**877. Mr P.J. Rundle to the Minister for Education:**

I refer to Home Education in Western Australia and I ask:

- (a) In the school years 2019–2023 and according to the Department of Education’s Semester One and Semester Two census data:
- (i) How many students were/are registered as being educated at home for academic years 1–12; and
- (ii) What was/is the department’s Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) allocation to home education moderation in each of the years 2019–2023?

Dr A.D. Buti replied:

- (a) (i)

| Year Level | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Year 1 | | 275 | 341 | 459 | 426 |
| Year 2 | | 289 | 338 | 512 | 511 |
| Year 3 | | 356 | 337 | 510 | 516 |
| Year 4 | | 334 | 402 | 506 | 521 |
| Year 5 | | 347 | 385 | 549 | 529 |
| Year 6 | | 384 | 377 | 505 | 531 |
| Year 7 | | 345 | 403 | 495 | 511 |
| Year 8 | | 395 | 436 | 597 | 607 |
| Year 9 | | 384 | 447 | 586 | 679 |
| Year 10 | | 392 | 407 | 580 | 659 |
| Year 11 | | 249 | 307 | 341 | 493 |
| Year 12 | | 163 | 168 | 185 | 232 |
| Total | 3,720 | 3,913 | 4,348 | 5,825 | 6,215 |

Notes:

No data is available by year level for 2019.

Prior to 2020, home education census data was not captured by year group. It was collated as a total figure from Year 1 to Year 12. It is not possible to retrospectively analyse this data.

Home education census data is captured once per year in March of the calendar year. No Semester 2 data is captured.

2023 data will be provided in the Department of Education 2022–23 Annual report.

- (ii)

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Moderator | 22.30 | 24.97 | 28.37 | 33.66 | 33.20 |
| Support staff | 5.82 | 5.09 | 6.09 | 7.60 | 7.23 |
| Total | 28.12 | 30.06 | 34.46 | 41.26 | 40.43 |

Notes:

2022 data includes Department of Education ‘surge workforce’ staff deployed to support education regions following an increase in home education registrations associated with COVID-19.

Support staff includes administrative staff within education regional offices.

SCHOOL OF ISOLATED AND DISTANCE EDUCATION — STUDENTS

878. Mr P.J. Rundle to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the School for Isolated and Distance Education and I ask:

- (a) In the school years 2019–2023, and according to the Department of Education’s Semester One and Two census data:
- (i) How many students were enrolled with the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) by the academic years K–12; and
- (ii) How many of those students were receiving their SIDE online learning from a Western Australian Education Department site and in which education region?

Dr A.D. Buti replied:

- (a) (i) Table 1: SIDE current roll enrolments by year level as of Semester 1, 2019–2023

| Year | KIN | PRP | Y01 | Y02 | Y03 | Y04 | Y05 | Y06 | Y07 | Y08 | Y09 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Total Students |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 2019 | 2 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 16 | 15 | 17 | 22 | 13 | 28 | 34 | 50 | 63 | 82 | 374 |
| 2020 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 14 | 20 | 21 | 27 | 45 | 51 | 56 | 84 | 361 |
| 2021 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 12 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 27 | 32 | 50 | 67 | 78 | 328 |
| 2022 | 7 | 13 | 20 | 11 | 13 | 12 | 19 | 15 | 24 | 36 | 42 | 42 | 68 | 91 | 413 |
| 2023 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 13 | 14 | 12 | 17 | 16 | 27 | 43 | 51 | 37 | 63 | 84 | 402 |

Excludes students on the external roll at SIDE.

- (a) (ii) Table 2: SIDE current roll enrolments by year level as of Semester 2, 2019–2022

| Year | KIN | PRP | Y01 | Y02 | Y03 | Y04 | Y05 | Y06 | Y07 | Y08 | Y09 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Total Students |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 2019 | 0 | 11 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 15 | 18 | 17 | 31 | 42 | 50 | 81 | 90 | 409 |
| 2020 | 2 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 9 | 15 | 20 | 21 | 30 | 48 | 49 | 82 | 82 | 404 |
| 2021 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 18 | 30 | 29 | 51 | 96 | 73 | 380 |
| 2022 | 8 | 19 | 21 | 17 | 14 | 9 | 25 | 16 | 33 | 46 | 39 | 45 | 78 | 89 | 459 |

Excludes students on the external roll at SIDE.

- (a) (ii) Table 3: SIDE external roll enrolments by year level 2019–2023

| Year | KIN | PRP | Y01 | Y02 | Y03 | Y04 | Y05 | Y06 | Y07 | Y08 | Y09 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Total Students |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| 2019 | 0 | 8 | 13 | 24 | 126 | 131 | 106 | 110 | 33 | 63 | 100 | 107 | 335 | 327 | 1,483 |
| 2020 | 1 | 21 | 40 | 44 | 161 | 161 | 159 | 141 | 109 | 99 | 120 | 162 | 378 | 305 | 1,901 |
| 2021 | 0 | 19 | 38 | 61 | 183 | 151 | 157 | 145 | 120 | 132 | 139 | 176 | 390 | 357 | 2,068 |
| 2022 | 1 | 16 | 45 | 72 | 232 | 232 | 209 | 208 | 304 | 178 | 157 | 218 | 420 | 405 | 2,697 |
| 2023 | 0 | 17 | 48 | 64 | 229 | 227 | 210 | 204 | 381 | 332 | 265 | 249 | 491 | 452 | 3,169 |

Excludes students on the current roll at SIDE.

Data as at late August or early September each year.

- (ii) All students in Table 3 on the external roll will have, to varying amounts, some learning delivered through schools/services other than SIDE. These are students who, for example, attend another public or non-government school and undertake a limited number of subjects, courses or programs through SIDE.

The provision of this information would require manual processing and place an undue burden on school staff.

FISHERIES — STAFF — SHARK BAY

880. Ms M. Beard to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the West Coast Demersal Scalefish Recovery Plan and staffing across regional WA, and I ask:

- (a) What is the total number of Full-time equivalents (FTE) fisheries officers employed and based in Shark Bay for each of the below years:
- (i) 2017–2018;

- (ii) 2018–2019;
 - (iii) 2019–2020;
 - (iv) 2020–2021;
 - (v) 2021–2022;
 - (vi) 2022–2023 as at date of submission; and; and
 - (vii) Of the number of positions outlined above, how many positions are vacant as at today;
- (b) For each of the financial years between 2017–18 to date, how many Fisheries staff were based at Shark Bay;
- (c) For the location outlined in (a), how many positions are vacant at date of submission; and
- (d) For the location in (a), please outline the role title and level of Fisheries staff?

Mr D.T. Punch replied:

Information below is provided for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development’s Denham Office in the Shire of Shark Bay, noting that Shark Bay is outside the area of the West Coast Demersal Scalefish Resource referenced in the question.

- (a) (i)–(vi)

| Year | As of | FTE |
|---------------|---------|-----|
| (i) 2017–18 | 30 June | 2 |
| (ii) 2018–19 | 30 June | 2 |
| (iii) 2019–20 | 30 June | 2 |
| (iv) 2020–21 | 30 June | 2 |
| (v) 2021–22 | 30 June | 2 |
| (vi) 2022–23 | 30 June | 2 |

- (vii) As of 11 September 2023 both positions were filled.

- (b)

| Year | As of | FTE |
|---------------|---------|-----|
| (i) 2017–18 | 30 June | 3 |
| (ii) 2018–19 | 30 June | 3 |
| (iii) 2019–20 | 30 June | 2 |
| (iv) 2020–21 | 30 June | 2 |
| (v) 2021–22 | 30 June | 2 |
| (vi) 2022–23 | 30 June | 2 |

- (c) As of 11 September 2023 both positions were filled.

- (d)

| Classification | Location | Position Title |
|----------------|----------|--|
| FMO5 | Denham | Supervising Fisheries and Marine Officer |
| FMO3 | Denham | Fisheries and Marine Officer |

RACING AND GAMING — TAB TOUCH ADVERTISING — GENE SIMMONS

881. Mr P.J. Rundle to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

I refer to the TAB Touch advertising promotion featuring Gene Simmons, and I ask:

- (a) How many advertisements did Gene Simmons feature in;
- (b) What was the overall cost of each advertisement;
- (c) How much did it cost to engage Gene Simmons:
 - (i) Please provide a breakdown of costs (including any on-going) paid to Gene Simmons; and
- (d) Which advertising company was contracted to produce these advertisements?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

- (a) Gene Simmons was employed to record a song, which has been used in all subsequent audio channels, and featured in five television advertisements – TABtouch then created digital versions.
- (b) The contract between Gene Simmons and TABtouch’s agency partner Clemenger BBDO Sydney was not broken down on a per-advertisement basis.
- (c) The total cost of engaging Gene to record the song, five television creative executions and the use of his likeness across all media channels for a two-year period from February 2022 to February 2024 is commercially sensitive and bound by the terms of the contract.
 - (i) This information is commercially sensitive and bound by the terms of the contract.
- (d) Clemenger BBDO is TABtouch’s contracted creative agency.

WATER CORPORATION — STAFF AND MAINTENANCE

882. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Training; Water; Youth:

- (1) The 2022 annual report for Water Corporation reports that full time equivalent employee numbers (FTE’s) have increased from 2,609 in 2018 to 3,627 in 2022. What is the breakdown of the increase in numbers for employees by job classification and salary level?
- (2) Water Corporation insourced maintenance activities from the Aroona Alliance in 2020. Public statements indicated that this would result in 250 positions returning to Water Corporation. How many additional maintenance positions were created in Water Corporation following the end of the Aroona Alliance maintenance arrangement?
- (3) At the time of the announcement that Water Corporation would be insourcing maintenance activities, the Premier stated that this would save Water Corporation \$2 million a year in maintenance costs. Following insourcing of maintenance activities into Water Corporation in 2020, has there been any maintenance savings demonstrated and, if so, where have these savings been achieved?
- (4) How much money did Water Corporation spend on maintenance in 2017/18 and each subsequent financial year including 2022/23?

Ms S.F. McGurk replied:

Answer:

- (1) [See tabled paper no 2430.]
- (2) The media statement dated 26 November 2019, stated “around 170 employees to transition to the Government-owned utility”. The total of employees who transferred from the Aroona Alliance to the Water Corporation was 173.
- (3) The media statement dated 26 November 2019, stated “the publicly owned utility will be able to deliver better services for Western Australians and also provide a saving of about \$2 million to the WA tax payer each year”. The Aroona Alliance Management Fees and Margin in FY2020, the last full year of the Aroona Alliance being operational, was \$4.48 million. Following insourcing this margin was no longer paid.
- (4)

| Year | Total (\$m) |
|---------|-------------|
| 2017–18 | 80.5 |
| 2018–19 | 85.9 |
| 2019–20 | 88.8 |
| 2020–21 | 87.2 |
| 2021–22 | 80.3 |
| 2022–23 | 90.5 |

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS — STAFF

883. Dr D.J. Honey to the Treasurer:

- (1) By year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE’s) by Department since the 2016/17 financial year up to 2022/23?
- (2) By year, what is the total number of State Government employees (full-time equivalent positions) since 2016/17 up to 2022/23?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

Please refer to the answer given to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

PREMIER — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

884. Dr D.J. Honey to the Premier; Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade; Public Sector Management; Federal–State Relations:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

The Public Sector Commission collects and reports workforce data from public sector agencies. This information is published quarterly by the Public Sector Commission, with the annual average tabled in Parliament each year in the *State of the WA Government Workforce Report*.

Since 2017–18, the majority of jobs added to the public service have been in frontline services, particularly health (53 per cent) and education (29 per cent), including:

2,713 FTE additional nurses and midwives.

1,490 FTE additional medical practitioners.

1,855 FTE additional teachers.

1,951 FTE additional education aides.

I note that the Member does not support the public service and has publicly stated that the Liberal Party would cut the public service if elected.

TREASURER — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

885. Dr D.J. Honey to the Deputy Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Transport; Tourism:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

Please refer to the answer given to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR FINANCE — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

886. Dr D.J. Honey to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance; Commerce; Women's Interests:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Dr J. Krishnan replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

887. Dr D.J. Honey to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and the Digital Economy; Science; Medical Research; Minister assisting the Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Ms J.L. Hanns replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

888. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Culture and the Arts; Sport and Recreation; International Education; Heritage:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr D.A. Templeman replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

ATTORNEY GENERAL — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

889. Dr D.J. Honey to the Attorney General; Minister for Electoral Affairs:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17 including 2022/23?

Mr J.R. Quigley replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR POLICE — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

890. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Police; Corrective Services; Defence Industry; Veterans Issues:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr P. Papalia replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR MINES AND PETROLEUM — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

891. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Hydrogen Industry; Industrial Relations:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr W.J. Johnston replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR TRAINING — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

893. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Training; Water; Youth:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Ms S.F. McGurk

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

894. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Health; Mental Health:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR PLANNING — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

895. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Planning; Lands; Housing; Homelessness:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr J.N. Carey replied:

Please refer to the answer provided to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

896. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Regional Development; Disability Services; Fisheries; Seniors and Ageing; Volunteering:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr D.T. Punch replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

897. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Environment; Climate Action; Racing and Gaming:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

898. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR PORTS — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

899. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Ports; Local Government; Road Safety; Minister assisting the Minister for Transport:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr D.R. Michael replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

900. Dr D.J. Honey to the minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry; Small Business:

For all Agencies within your portfolio, by financial year, what is the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTE's) since 2016/17, including 2022/23?

Mr D.T. Punch replied:

Refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 884.

MINISTER FOR PLANNING — PORTFOLIOS — STAFF

901. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Planning; Lands; Housing; Homelessness:

I refer to the East Perth Power Station Site Redevelopment, and I ask:

- (a) What is the current status of plans for the redevelopment of the East Perth Power Station site;
- (b) Has redevelopment of the site been vested in any entity (individual or company);
- (c) Are any offers to redevelop the site being considered by the Government;
- (d) What process is being, or was followed to select a party to redevelop the site;
- (e) What works are occurring on the site at present; and
- (f) Are any other works planned for the site in the coming 12 months?

Mr J.N. Carey replied:

- (a) DevelopmentWA is currently undertaking strategic planning of the East Perth Power Station.
 - (b)–(c) No.
 - (d) N/A.
 - (e)–(f) Decommissioning, demolition and remediation of the Western Power Lot 601 Switchyard.
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