



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTIETH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2020

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 19 August 2020

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) took the chair at 12 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

BUS ROUTES 518 AND 519 — CALLEYA ESTATE

Petition

MR Y. MUBARAKAI (Jandakot) [12.01 pm]: I have a petition that has been certified as conforming to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. It has 114 signatures and states —

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, say that given the population of Treeby is forecast to increase by 10,000 to the year 2036, the Public Transport Authority (PTA) must improve bus connectivity through Calleya Estate. The 518 and 519 bus routes currently only travel along Armadale Road and do not divert into Calleya Estate, thereby creating accessibility issues for residents who do not live close to the southern boundary of the Estate.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly request the State Government and the Minister for Transport to continue to pursue the PTA to improve bus connectivity through Calleya Estate.

[See petition 187.]

The SPEAKER: Members, there is social distancing in the chamber. That is for those three members over there who are looking very happy!

PAPERS TABLED

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

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020

Remaining Stages — Standing Orders Suspension — Notice of Motion

Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 to proceed through all remaining stages without delay between the stages.

PERDAMAN INDUSTRIES — COMMON-USER INFRASTRUCTURE — PILBARA

Statement by Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [12.04 pm]: Today I rise to inform the house of my government's conditional support for the development of common-user infrastructure to facilitate major projects in the Pilbara. One such project involves Perdaman Industries (Chemicals and Fertilisers), which is proposing to develop a \$4.6 billion urea plant in the Burrup Strategic Industrial Area. The project will use natural gas to produce approximately two million tonnes of fertiliser a year. The project will create an estimated 2 500 jobs during construction and 300 permanent residential jobs during operation, and will help to underpin development of the Scarborough gas field.

To facilitate major job-creating projects, the state government has provided its conditional support to fund common-user infrastructure upgrades. This includes extending the Dampier cargo wharf to allow for bulk solids exports and unlock access to a wider range of vessels, increasing its import and export capacity. The state government has also provided its conditional support to expand the Burrup seawater supply scheme, which will clear the way for other water-intensive processing industries on the Burrup and support the state's renewable hydrogen strategy. We have also allocated \$35.5 million for road relocation costs, lease subsidies, detailed design of the cargo wharf extension and upgrades to seawater supply infrastructure. Any state government financial contribution is subject to a number of conditions, including the project receiving a Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility loan, the project reaching financial close, all statutory and regulatory approvals being met, including environmental approvals, and the project securing offtake agreements.

This project represents a fantastic opportunity for the Pilbara region and will help to ensure Western Australia makes a strong recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. These infrastructure upgrades will not only give Perdaman the best chance of success, but also create further opportunities for investment that will create local jobs and assist local businesses in our regions.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Statement by Minister for Mental Health

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Mental Health) [12.06 pm]: I rise today to talk about the recent McGowan government announcement of a further \$24.4 million for mental health services at Fremantle Hospital. This funding is on top of the McGowan government allocation in the 2019–20 state budget. This 40-bed mental health development will significantly increase the number of mental health inpatient beds at Fremantle Hospital, from the existing 64 beds to 104 beds, and will transform Fremantle Hospital into a key mental health hub in the southern suburbs. The inpatient services provided through the new secure unit will complement existing community-based mental health services, which is a key platform of the McGowan government. Preliminary work on developing the unit is set to commence shortly, with the unit expected to open in 2023. These inpatient beds will complement the community mental health services we have in Western Australia.

There has been a significant increase in investment in community services. Last year, the McGowan government provided nearly \$526 million in total to mental health and alcohol and other drug community services. This was a more than 10 per cent increase since 2016–17. Earlier this year, the Premier and I opened the Bunbury community mental health step-up, step-down service. Richmond Wellbeing has been contracted to operate this service. Richmond Wellbeing is an example of a great community organisation that is assisting people across Western Australia. The McGowan government provides Richmond Wellbeing with about \$14.62 million in annual funding for a range of mental health services across the Perth metropolitan, Peel, south west and great southern regions, including 130 supported accommodation beds, group support activities and personalised support, among many other services.

Of course, our inpatient and community services are also supported by the work we do in prevention. Recently, the McGowan government invested \$10 million to develop and implement region-by-region plans to address Aboriginal suicide in Western Australia. This follows a boost of \$32.3 million for the continuation of programs that formed part of the Suicide Prevention 2020 strategy. The region-by-region plans mean that communities will be heavily involved in how we address the issue in their region, because we know that they are the experts. We are also providing additional funding of \$4.8 million to suicide prevention programs for all Western Australians. This will include a statewide service to support people and communities affected by a suicide death and an expansion of services that provide long-term support to children who have been affected by a suicide death.

POLICE — POST-CRITICAL INCIDENT REST PERIOD

Statement by Minister for Police

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland — Minister for Police) [12.09 pm]: Recently, significant improvements have been introduced to the way police deal with the aftermath of critical incidents. Policing is often dangerous and difficult work. Serving and protecting our community can involve officers in incidents that most of us would run from. These incidents can result in the police officers who are involved suffering distress and trauma. Such critical incidents include witnessing or being responsible for the discharge of a firearm resulting in the death or serious injury of a person, deaths in police custody or the death of a colleague or co-worker while on duty. Over the past 10 years, there have been 50 such critical incidents. Until recently, officers involved in incidents of this kind were usually stood aside. This practice has long been seen by police officers as punitive, since it is the process and terminology used when an officer is under investigation. In addition, officers who are stood aside often have limited or no formal contact with their workplace, and this isolation has been counterproductive in protecting the mental health and resilience of the affected officers.

Recently, these longstanding practices have been set aside, and in their place a three-day mandatory rest period for any officer involved in a critical incident has been introduced. The new guidelines apply to all officers regardless of rank and there is no limit to the number of rest periods an officer can take. This three-day period aims to enable officers to recover physically from an incident, and to protect their mental health by ensuring that they remain in contact with their colleagues throughout this time. This practice has been introduced after careful research and thorough consultation, including with the WA Police Union. The length of the mandatory break, being three days, is based on sound clinical advice, and aligns with procedures in other Australian jurisdictions.

The McGowan government is committed to the ongoing health and welfare of our police officers and welcomes this reform by Commissioner Dawson. Our police officers sometimes risk a great deal to keep us safe. It is only right and fair that we take care of those officers who suffer injury or distress in the service of the community.

WANDOO REHABILITATION PRISON — CYRENIAN HOUSE THERAPEUTIC MODEL

Statement by Minister for Corrective Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Corrective Services) [12.11 pm]: I rise to update the house on the two-year anniversary of the Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison for women, which was an election commitment delivered by the McGowan Labor government. The therapeutic model at the now publicly managed Wandoo, delivered by contract provider Cyrenian House, has successfully adapted to a prison environment that empowers

its female residents towards change. Wandoo maintains a comprehensive drug-management regime, inclusive of weekly random drug testing, breath analysis, local searching, and the regular presence of drug detection dogs. Wandoo has remained a drug-free prison since its opening, which is nationally unprecedented.

All management positions have been permanently filled, creating a strong and stable leadership team, and custodial officers have received specialist training in the delivery of the therapeutic program. Effective system supports have been established at Wandoo, including the elder/Aboriginal visitors scheme, prison support services, peer support teams, and fully staffed health services.

I am pleased to also advise that the independent Inspector of Custodial Services, Mr Eamon Ryan, also commended Wandoo in his recent inspection report. The inspector reported on positive feedback from residents, many of whom had a sense of pride in their achievements while participating in the therapeutic program, and were determined to better understand themselves and gain new tools to self-regulate their behaviours, express themselves, manage their feelings, strengthen their intentions, and contribute more effectively to community life. The inspector commended the department on establishing the Wandoo therapeutic program in 11 months, from the time of the first government announcement, until the first residents arrived in July 2018. As of August 2020, 115 women have graduated from the program, many of whom are now in the community having successfully completed their parole, or are working towards completion of their parole. Since the commencement of the program, only one Wandoo graduate has returned to custody on a new sentence of reoffending.

The success of Wandoo is a reflection of the government's commitment to trauma-informed rehabilitation for some of our community's most vulnerable offenders. The facility is yet another example of our whole-of-government response to the scourge of methamphetamine in our communities, and another tool to break the cycle of disadvantage and the misery it causes.

CORONAVIRUS — MARKYT COMMUNITY RESILIENCE SCORECARD

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Local Government) [12.14 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to advise the members of this house that the state government has launched the results of an online COVID-19 survey—the MARKYT Community Resilience Scorecard—which mapped community wellbeing and resilience levels across Western Australia. The survey collected local data to help state and local government leaders determine priorities and action required to respond to COVID-19. This includes how to cope with short-term disruption; how to anticipate, prepare and adapt to longer term changes; and how to build hope, trust and confidence that WA is on the path to recovery. The MARKYT Community Resilience Scorecard was undertaken from 5 June to 8 July 2020 and was completed by 7 666 residents aged 18 years and over, of 128 local governments across Western Australia, from the Kimberley to the great southern.

As minister responsible for local government, I am pleased to report local governments were pivotal in providing COVID-19 responses and have an important role in recovery. Local governments in Western Australia have shown that they are innovative and that the sector is resilient and manages resources effectively. Overall, the community is happy with local government's response to COVID-19. Local communities across Western Australia have shown strength and resilience in response to the pandemic. The key findings from the survey and its report include the following. The main priorities for local government were economic recovery, community health and wellbeing, local infrastructure, recovery planning, support services and community safety. The top five concerns were family and friends getting sick, recovery of the local economy, personal finances, staying connected and work and employment opportunities. Sixty-nine per cent of community members feel hopeful and enthusiastic about the future. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries funded and partnered with Local Government Professionals Australia WA and Catalyse to develop the MARKYT Community Resilience Scorecard. The report is available on the department's website.

FREMANTLE PRISON

Statement by Minister for Heritage

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Heritage) [12.16 pm]: Today I had the absolute privilege to attend the Fremantle Prison to mark 10 years since it was inscribed on the World Heritage List by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in recognition of its significant heritage value. I was joined by my parliamentary colleague and member for Fremantle, Hon Simone McGurk, and federal member for Fremantle, Mr Josh Wilson.

Fremantle Prison is one of 11 Australian sites that comprise the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property. The prison is an intact and wonderfully preserved representation of the forced migration and penal transportation of prisoners across the world. Conservation of the significant fabric of Fremantle Prison, its collections of objects and its related stories are fundamental to the ongoing success of the site as a tourism destination. There is a significant cost associated with looking after our world heritage places. The best way to achieve this is for state and federal governments to share the costs. Today I announced that the McGowan government will commit \$1.6 million from the WA recovery fund towards urgent conservation works at Fremantle Prison. This is on top of the \$3.5 million we committed last year, some of which has already been used for conservation works to the main cell block. Part

of this funding will go towards levelling the slope of the main parade ground to prevent future damage to the cell block caused by insufficient drainage. There is much potential for dynamic and interactive events set amongst the historical and beautiful buildings here at Fremantle Prison. This new funding will also go towards structural repairs to the hospital, which was constructed in 1857. The literature centre, which currently leases the building, will no doubt be delighted to see improvements being made.

We have all been affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Potential ticket sales for the various tours and visitor experiences to the prison have been hampered due to the restrictions. The ever-popular tunnel tours—one that you should do, Mr Speaker—for example, are still not operating and school visits have dropped off. These ticket sales are vital to self-sustaining the prison to keep it operating so people can visit, explore, enjoy and learn. Fremantle Prison is Western Australia's only built World Heritage site—the only one—and only World Heritage place in Perth. I am pleased that the McGowan government is investing in the protection and conservation of this iconic place of architectural and social history for Western Australia.

PRISON IN-REACH LEGAL SERVICE AND BAIL SUPPORT SERVICE

Statement by Attorney General

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.19 pm]: I rise to inform the house of a new McGowan government initiative reducing barriers to bail and therefore avoiding unnecessary remand when safe to do so. In 2019–20, 29 per cent of the prisoner population was in custody awaiting trial or sentencing, referred to as remand. Half of these remand prisoners will eventually be released on bail, as they are not a risk to the safety of the community. Others would receive bail but for an inability to meet the conditions of their release. These barriers often include a lack of social supports, such as not having a fixed address or employment. Remand incurs a substantial social cost, especially to Aboriginal communities, which remain tragically over-represented in the criminal justice system. The financial cost of holding a person on remand is \$5 523 per reception to prison, plus \$217 for every day they are unsentenced. In 2019–20, 1 996 adult remand prisoners were taken into custody but released on bail within two weeks. These remand prisoners spent 10 572 days in custody, costing the state over \$13.3 million.

I am pleased to inform the house that on 6 April 2020, the government launched the new prison in-reach legal service and bail support service at the Perth Magistrates Court delivered by the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia and Legal Aid WA. The prison in-reach legal service focuses on bail applications or variations and early resolution of remand cases, while the bail support service—to be rolled out later this year in Broome—provides practical support for people to meet their bail conditions. The bail support service has already helped reconnect people with family support and provided help with transport, medical services, accommodation, court and bail reporting reminders, mobile phones and food vouchers. These new remand services recently worked together to secure the release of an 86-year-old Aboriginal grandmother remanded in custody for six days on a charge of breaching a misconduct restraining order, in part for spraying her neighbour with a garden hose. The program has been described to me by those at the coalface as “a quiet revolution” turning people's lives around. Although these services benefit the whole community, it is another example of the McGowan government's commitment to addressing the unacceptably high rate of Aboriginal incarceration.

“INNOVATE: RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2020–2022”

Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.22 pm]: Reconciliation is a living appreciation, understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is important that we acknowledge and celebrate the richness and diversity of their histories and cultures. The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety is committed to supporting the reconciliation movement. Last month, on 20 July, the department launched its “Innovate: Reconciliation Action Plan 2020–2022”, also known as the RAP. The RAP follows a long history of reconciliation at the department and continues a journey towards building reconciliation into its values and culture. The department provides services throughout Western Australia, making it critical to maintain and enhance strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the broader community.

The RAP has four key pillars: building and maintaining mutually respectful relationships; respectfully acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, histories and rights; creating opportunities for employment and career development; and increasing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' businesses. The department reaffirms its commitment to reconciliation through the implementation of the RAP over the next two years.

On behalf of the Minister for Commerce and myself, I say thank you to the department, the RAP committee, and the Gnalla Mila, Gnalla Wangkiny Committee for all their hard work towards bringing this plan together.

SWAN VALLEY PLANNING BILL 2020

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Ms R. Saffioti (Minister for Planning)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [12.25 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am very pleased to introduce legislation to the house that will provide planning certainty for the Swan Valley and ensure that the unique character of this very special region of our state is protected and enhanced for many years to come. From Guildford to Upper Swan, the Swan Valley spans approximately 71 square kilometres at the foot of the Darling Range. It is a place of significant Aboriginal cultural value and boasts more than 200 years of rich history in agriculture, viticulture and tourism. More than 7 000 people currently call the Swan Valley home. The region has more than 650 established family and Western Australian businesses, many with a great heritage of their own. Every year, the Swan Valley attracts some two million visitors looking to escape the city, explore the wineries and enjoy the serenity of its rural charm and a healthy dose of country air.

It has been almost 10 years since the first attempt to reform the planning system in the Swan Valley. The McGowan government was elected on the promise of a review to hone planning laws for the region and ensure future land use and development that is sympathetic to the character of the Swan Valley. We wanted a consultative process to help shape a new reform strategy that considered all industries and aspects of the community. The late Hon John Kobelke commenced an independent, whole-of-government review of the Swan Valley in 2017. Our intention was to identify measures that would ensure the region would remain an attractive and thriving destination, offering the right balance of viticulture and agriculture, lifestyle and tourism, and rural charm and growth. In October last year, I released the “Swan Valley Action Plan: Protecting the Swan Valley’s Unique Character,” and I am very pleased to stand here today to present the new bill to Parliament.

Over 700 Swan Valley residents, landowners, businesses and community groups provided feedback about their vision for the future and the identity of the region. We held a series of meetings and interviews, sought feedback on an initial survey, and released an interim report for public comment. We sought the views of grapegrowers, winemakers and the local equine industry; those who enjoy a rural lifestyle; those looking to conserve their cultural heritage; and those seeking to expand their business ventures. We also spoke to a broad range of key stakeholders, including the local government, key regulatory and service agencies, and current Swan Valley Planning Committee members. We asked about the right to farm, the importance of rural land use and the options and challenges of subdivision. We sought views on the future tourism potential of the region. We also asked about the adequacy of the current planning framework, the role of the Swan Valley Planning Committee, governance and the sustainability of water supply. All of the feedback was reviewed and consolidated to help inform an action plan—a way forward—which I was very pleased to release in October 2019.

The “Swan Valley Action Plan” identified four broad goals for a new legislative framework that would establish proper planning for the area: first, to create a sustainable, long-term vision for the Swan Valley; second, to provide certainty to landowners, residents and small businesses; third, to create a dedicated and streamlined planning framework for decision-making; and fourth, to support the character of the Swan Valley and pursue initiatives to address longstanding issues that will move the Swan Valley forward. This bill brings those four goals to reality. It will replace the Swan Valley Planning Act 1995, which has worked ineffectively to provide proper planning guidance for the region. It will also provide a modern planning framework for the Swan Valley and ensure that the right development is supported in this unique region of our state.

This bill does not establish a separate statutory regime in its own right. However, it interfaces with the recently amended Planning and Development Act 2005 and seeks to establish a single planning authority for the Swan Valley, streamlining the current arrangement of three different planning regimes. Specifically, the bill sets five key objectives for the Swan Valley. It will repeal the existing Swan Valley Planning Act 1995 in its entirety and set a clear vision to guide land use planning and development in the Swan Valley region; establish a new Swan Valley strategic coordination group to advocate for and advise on a broad range of matters to benefit the Swan Valley; establish a Swan Valley statutory planning committee, replacing the existing committee and creating a single planning authority to assess development proposals for the Swan Valley; facilitate development and introduction of a bespoke Swan Valley planning scheme, which will be a single layer of planning control to replace the current three-tiered system that includes the City of Swan’s local planning scheme, the metropolitan region scheme and the Swan Valley planning area; and clarify the relationship between this legislative framework and the Planning and Development Act 2005, which is the state’s ordinary planning system.

Our vision for the Swan Valley is greater than planning and development. It is about protecting and sharing stories of the region, providing quality tourism experiences, and supporting the local agricultural economy. A new Swan Valley strategic leadership group of seven members will be established to advise and advocate for the region. The group will have an advisory role to the Minister for Planning across a broad range of matters, including protection of the Swan Valley as a productive rural area, and promotion and marketing of the region, which is known for its viticulture, horticulture, hospitality, hobby farming, and equestrian and recreational activities. The group of seven members, led by a presiding member, will be appointed by the Minister for Planning and selected for their practical knowledge or experience of the Swan Valley, or their capacity to appropriately represent the

interests of Swan Valley businesses and residents. This group will undertake reviews and report to the state government as requested. Advice and feedback will be sought on any future scheme amendments and new or revised planning policies that may change the planning framework set for the Swan Valley. However, it is not intended that this group will provide advice on individual development proposals.

The Swan Valley action plan proposed a number of recommendations in addition to the development of new legislation. Once established, it is my intention to assign the Swan Valley strategic leadership group with progressing options to rename suburbs in the Swan Valley; championing measures to support both agriculture and tourism in accordance with the guidelines set by this bill and the new Swan Valley planning scheme; improving the infrastructure for horses and equine uses and promoting efficient land management; and enhancing and protecting the cultural heritage and built heritage and recreation and landscape values of the Swan Valley.

Although the Swan Valley strategic leadership group will focus on a broad range of matters and act in an advisory capacity to government, the state planning system requires a vehicle for the determination of planning and development matters within the Swan Valley. Given the uniqueness of the region and the complexity of industries and future growth opportunities, a new Swan Valley statutory planning committee will be established with modified membership that is representative of the Swan Valley. The nine-member committee, including representatives of the local government and the local community, will be a single planning authority functioning as a subcommittee of the Western Australian Planning Commission. The single planning authority will replace the existing statutory body and will have powers or duties delegated by the Western Australian Planning Commission, just as the statutory planning committee does. The committee will determine development proposals for the Swan Valley, ensuring that they are consistent with the provisions of a new planning scheme.

In parallel with drafting new legislation, work has also progressed on developing a new planning scheme, which will come into effect with enactment of the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020. The Swan Valley planning scheme will replace the metropolitan region scheme and the City of Swan local planning scheme 17 and will provide a single scheme for the Swan Valley. The scheme will refine existing rural areas, designate a priority agriculture zone and set in place a hierarchy of development that will place viticulture and horticulture as the most important. Tourism will be permissible if it is of an appropriate scale, ancillary to a rural use and avoids impacts to existing and potential farming operations on rural land. The new scheme will include new land-use zones and definitions, guide new ventures and encourage innovative proposals that preserve the Swan Valley's historical and cultural heritage, while supporting viticulture, lifestyle and equine uses, and suitable food, beverage and local produce tourism. The creation of a bespoke planning scheme for the Swan Valley is one of the primary attributes of this bill, which will remove the duopoly of a local and regional scheme, and help streamline planning processes for landowners and businesses. Draft planning policies will be considered by the Western Australian Planning Commission and will be released for public consultation after the scheme comes into effect.

The bill will also establish a "right to farm" principle. In other words, it will protect the Swan Valley as a productive rural area. It was important to the existing Swan Valley community to ensure that farming, viticulture and horticulture are not impeded as a result of maximising the tourism potential of the region, and that there is no conflict between the various land uses. Defined as "non-rural development", it is intended that the new planning scheme will specify locations for such land uses so as to minimise the potential for nuisance claims as a result of noise, dust and other associated impacts of farming activities. Detailed provisions are included in the draft Swan Valley planning scheme. The provisions place emphasis on new non-rural developments, such as tourism and hospitality, to be designed and located so as to avoid potential impacts, such as spray drift, from the farming of rural land.

The protection of the Swan Valley as a productive rural area includes discouraging subdivision of rural land to ensure a variety of lot sizes for a range of horticultural uses. Land identified for priority agriculture will not be considered for subdivision, with a few exceptions. We acknowledge that many long-term residents call the Swan Valley home and over generations the families have established grape-growing businesses on their properties. The new scheme includes a mechanism for those landowners to provide for subdivision that would enable the families to continue to reside on this land, while also ensuring the continuing of business activity. We want to encourage the retention of viticulture in the Swan Valley, as it is integral to the uniqueness of the region.

The sustainability of the future water supply across the Swan Valley was a priority element of local community feedback. The McGowan government has been working to establish a water licensing regime specific to the Swan Valley, which will be developed under existing provisions of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 as part of the Gngangara groundwater allocation plan. We hope to have a proposed regime available for consultation soon.

The Swan Valley is without a doubt a popular tourist destination, but its unique rural character and contribution to agriculture also makes it a key attraction for locals and an important region of our state. The Swan Valley has some of the most well-established family businesses in Perth, boasts some of the most renowned wines and produce, and is home to thousands of residents and hobby farmers because of the rural lifestyle that the region offers. This bill will finally provide planning certainty, provide a streamlined decision-making process and support initiatives to protect the unique character of the Swan Valley, while also encouraging future growth. Community and stakeholder consultation has been pivotal to the development of a draft bill, with submissions received from many Swan Valley stakeholders,

including government agencies, community and industry groups, businesses, rural lifestyle residents, grape growers and the equine industry. I want to briefly acknowledge the late Hon John Kobelke, who personally conducted many interviews with stakeholders and ensured that their concerns and views were captured. John played an instrumental role in getting us to having a draft bill. He understood the need for real community engagement, undertook his own research, and completed the review with good grace, diligence and a commitment to the public interest.

In closing, the Swan Valley Planning Bill 2020 will benefit and protect the Swan Valley through the retention of the Swan Valley as an area of rural character and as a tourism icon; continuation of the historic grape-growing industry; promotion of appropriate tourism; promotion of equine land uses; provision of certainty to long-term landowners seeking subdivision; and consistent, simplified development assessment. The right growth and development of the Swan Valley will support the future viability of the region and ensure that it remains a favourite destination for weekend escapes and international tourists, while retaining its rural charm and character and continuing to make a valuable contribution to the state's agricultural sector. I call upon all members to support the Swan Valley community and ensure that this unique region of our state benefits from a modern, streamlined planning system that will protect its unique character for many decades to come.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup**.

PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (COVID-19 RESPONSE) BILL 2020

Council's Amendments — Consideration in Detail

The following amendments made by the Council now considered —

No. 1

Clause 2, page 2, after line 8 — To insert —

- (2) However, if no day is fixed under subsection (1)(b) before the end of the period of 10 years beginning on the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent, this Act is repealed on the day after that period ends.

No. 2

Clause 14, page 12, line 25 — To delete “the date of” and substitute —
receiving

Mr R.H. COOK — by leave: I move —

That the amendments made by the Council be agreed to.

These two amendments were made in the other place during its consideration of the Public Health Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Bill. They will have little consequence in the functioning of the bill. Nevertheless, members of the other place saw fit to pass them. The first amendment relates to the proclamation of the bill. Essentially, it states —

However, if no day is fixed under subsection (1)(b) before the end of the period of 10 years beginning on the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent, this Act is repealed on the day after that period ends.

I understand that the amendment that has been put forward is a common amendment moved by Hon Michael Mischin or Hon Nick Goiran, in particular. I gather that it is largely a nuisance factor and really has no effect of improving the law. It is one that they have wished to insert on a number of occasions. If it so pleases them and it means that we can get on with this important public health initiative, so be it and let us get on with the task.

The second amendment relates to the issuing of invoices to people in hotel quarantine. The amendment essentially means that a person will be subject to payment of an invoice for hotel quarantining 30 days from the date of the invoice. The changes to the clause that were made last night sought to delete the words “the date of” and to insert the word “receiving”, referring to the invoice. I am sure that in the Legislative Council's collective mind, this was considered an important change, even though it really does not reflect common practice when it comes to commerce. When we issue someone with an invoice, it is always payable from the date of the invoice. I understand that there will now be a point of contention between the person receiving the invoice and the 30 days from which they pay it. They could say, “I haven't received this invoice.” It will obviously now be important for us to ensure that the person has in fact received the invoice. We can anticipate a situation in which the invoice will now be either handed to the person directly or sent by email with some sort of capacity to note receipt of the email, which includes the invoice.

Even though I am sure that in the minds of some of the members in the other place this change sought to ensure that people were not pursued too aggressively or enthusiastically from the date of the invoice, it will now lead to a situation in which more effort will be made to ensure that the person did receive the invoice, and it means that the invoices will be potentially payable sooner than they perhaps otherwise would be. I stress that there was never any intention that on day 31, people's invoices would be handed over to the debt collector as a way of speedily or aggressively pursuing the debt. This is simply a way that we can undertake the orderly collection of fees payable at a particular point.

From that perspective, we are happy to accept these amendments if it means that we can now get on with the task of protecting Western Australians, as we have committed ourselves to by virtue of these changes to the Public Health Act. They are important changes. I am sorry to have delayed the chamber with the bill returning to this house. The amendments are largely changes of zero effect and certainly potentially of nuisance value. However, in the spirit of making sure that we get on with this legislation, we have decided to accept them.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Obviously, I rise as the Liberal Party spokesperson for health in this place to respond very briefly to the minister's contribution after moving that the amendments made by the Legislative Council be agreed to. The minister is right with respect to the fact that a lot of attention was paid to this legislation in the other place. The result was that two amendments were moved and agreed to in the Legislative Council and they are here before us today. I understand that amendment 1, which amends clause 2 on page 2, basically repeals the act if the operative elements have not been enacted. I understand that that is a relatively customary amendment that is moved in the upper house to ensure that legislation remains relevant to the people of Western Australia. In that case, I understand it was passed on the voices in the Legislative Council without much discontent.

Amendment 2 deletes the words "the date of" and substitutes "receiving". As the minister outlined, it changes the nature in which invoices are dealt with by the people who have received them subsequent to their hotel quarantine. We made the point, as I said to the minister, that it was an unnecessary level of detail in the legislation to provide the specifications of how invoices would be treated. I think they could have been dealt with by way of regulation or other means.

Dr D.J. Honey: Through normal methods.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Indeed. We find ourselves considering these amendments which all parties, except the Labor Party, in the Legislative Council agreed were important. I think it is a reflection of the important role that the Legislative Council continues to play in this state of emergency when legislation is dealt with expeditiously in this place. It is dealt with in a similar theme in the Legislative Council, which obviously plays its role as a house of review as well. The Liberal Party is obviously pleased that the government has agreed to these amendments so that we can get on with ensuring that hotel quarantine is appropriately operating, consistent with the national cabinet's decisions. We note that a number of breaches of hotel quarantine have occurred recently, none of which relate to invoicing, payment or the like. We look forward to the continued improvement of hotel quarantining in Western Australia, which these amendments relate to. We continue to encourage the government to take up our offer of an independent review into arrangements relating to our pandemic preparedness, noting what has occurred more recently with those breaches.

That being said, I welcome the minister moving that these amendments be considered en bloc, and I look forward to the bill being given royal assent, hopefully very soon.

Mr R.H. COOK: I thank the member for his support for these amendments. Obviously, these amendments bring into sharp focus the difficulties that we have in legislating in this place. When legislation goes before what the member for Dawesville describes as the house of review, we find ourselves negotiating with a completely different Liberal Party opposition. Legislation relating to health rightly goes to the member for Dawesville, the opposition's representative. I might say that he does a very good job in that role. It is unfortunate that the member for Dawesville's policy position is constantly second-guessed by the members of the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council. It would appear that they have absolute contempt for the leadership provided by the Liberal Party. They are incapable of committing and sticking to a policy position in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. Member for Cottesloe, I certainly do not have any quarrel with the member for Dawesville. I think he does a good job. We reached an agreement about the policy position and we welcome his support, and I continue to work with him very closely. I just do not think it is fair that the member for Dawesville should be stood up by his colleagues in the other house, and that we have to completely renegotiate the bill on every single policy point simply because of the contempt that the members of the Legislative Council have for the Liberal members of the Legislative Assembly, in particular for the Leader of the Opposition. We simply cannot get a commitment from the Liberal Party on any particular policy position. The resolutions of its party room mean nothing, because we know that the moment any bill gets out of this place, with or without amendment from the opposition side, and gets to the other place, we meet an entirely different Liberal Party with a different ideology that responds to a different leadership and a whole new set of values. It is not the Liberal Party we see here, which is made up of people with responsible values and measured attitudes who can cooperate. Over there, we see a completely different political beast that has absolute, utter contempt for the Liberal Party's leadership. The Leader of the Opposition has no control of the Liberal Party in the other place—no control at all. In fact, members of the Liberal Party in the other place hold her in the highest contempt, because we know that every commitment made by the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Dawesville as the shadow minister can be completely turned on its head in the other place, not because the Liberal Party has changed its position, but because the members of the other place do not have any regard for the Liberal Party's actual policy position. They are happy to turn that position on its head and simply have contempt for any arrangements that the Liberal Party comes to.

This is a problem for democracy. It is a problem for the Liberal Party as a political party that it cannot commit to a policy position unless it has the permission of, in particular, Hon Michael Mischin and Hon Nick Collier—I mean, Hon Nick Goiran. I was thinking of Hon Peter Collier, but he has no more control over them than the Leader of

the Opposition does—or does he? Perhaps he has decided he wants to run the Liberal Party from the other place. Once again, the member for Dawesville came to a responsible, considered position on behalf of the opposition, presumably with the endorsement of the deputy leader and leader, and probably with the resolution of the party room, only to see that completely turned on its head and reinvented in the other place. I have the utmost respect for the member for Dawesville, and I think he does a really good job in this place representing the Liberal Party on health policy, but it is clear now, through my experiences with legislation in this place, that those in the other place have utter contempt for the Liberal Party position and the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Of course, I cannot help but respond, and I apologise, Daphne, for the yelling that is about to occur! I cannot help but respond to the Minister for Health and his suggestion that somehow there are two different Liberal Parties and there is a “problem for democracy”. The real problem for democracy is the continued ramraiding of legislation through this Parliament and the expectation from this government that there will be total acquiescence from members who serve in this place and the Legislative Council. We see extraordinary pieces of legislation brought into this place with very little notice through the suspension of standing orders, with the expectation that the bills will pass without delay. The Liberal Party and the Nationals WA have been absolutely forthcoming on every single piece of COVID-19 legislation that has been brought into this place and the Legislative Council. I will not accept for a moment that there is a problem with our democracy. The problem with our democracy, the biggest threat to our democracy, is the government of Western Australia, the Labor Party, and the way that it expects this Parliament to operate during this state of emergency. The pandemic presents us with real challenges—real challenges in our society, real challenges in our community and real challenges in the Parliament more broadly.

I will not be lectured to by this minister that somehow there are two Liberal Parties and somehow there is a problem with our democracy because members of the Liberal Party continue to do their job. That is an absolutely abhorrent statement by this minister. I cannot imagine for a second that there would be an expectation otherwise that members would serve with distinction in the other place and review every piece of legislation that comes before them, and if issues are identified, make amendments to improve the bill, which have ultimately been accepted by the government in this place. I find it completely unbecoming to suggest that somehow there is an affront to and an erosion in support for the Liberal Party in the Legislative Assembly by our colleagues and friends in the Legislative Council. They are simply doing their job. They are ensuring that improvements are made to legislation wherever that can be done. We see it time and again. The Labor Party in this place, the Labor Party in Parliament, expects members who serve but are not in cabinet to be just mindless drones and to be at the beck and call of the narrative of the day that the government puts out. They do not understand that in the Liberal and National Parties, there is independence of thought and mind—that we have the capacity to think independently and offer independent contributions. When improvements need to be made, legislation should be improved. What we find time and again from the Legislative Council is that that is where its interest lies.

I look forward to continuing our very good working relationship and making sure that we continue to improve legislation, however that might be, but I tell the minister this: I will absolutely refute, every single moment of the day, that somehow improvements should not be made in this place and that somehow there should not be a second chamber that operates as a house of review. If the Western Australian government wants to continue to operate in a pseudo-dictatorial state, it should introduce legislation to abolish the Parliament so that the cabinet can continue to do its job without oversight! That is what the government wanted to do with the Henry VIII clause in the omnibus bill. That revealed the government’s true intent; that is, in a state of emergency, the government of Western Australia and this Premier act like dictators and expect that there will be no opposition and no oversight. That is why it calls the opposition terrorists; that is why it calls the opposition the enemy of the state during a state of emergency. The government expects no oversight and no review, and, gosh, when it happens, it throws the baby out with the bathwater and suggests that somehow there is a “problem for democracy”. The problem for democracy is the Labor Party in Western Australia. We commend these amendments.

Mr R.H. COOK: I feel I have been verbally. I am not accusing the upper house members of being mindless drones; I am accusing them of running the show. The problem for the member for Dawesville and the Leader of the Opposition is that they, and the Liberal Party, have no authority over the members in the other place. That fundamentally is the problem. They cannot carry a policy position beyond this chamber, and that is unfortunate. I think it is a fundamental problem. At the end of the day, those members are doing their jobs as members of Parliament; they are simply not Liberal members of Parliament, or, if they are, they are the ones pulling the strings. This is a fundamental problem for the Liberal Party side of politics. At the end of the day, we cannot rely upon the good policy input of the member for Dawesville here, because members in the other place simply turn him on his heels. They do not have any regard for the member for Dawesville or his policy positions. I think that is unfortunate, because he is a decent, good, balanced member of Parliament. The contribution he makes to this place vastly outguns that of members of the upper house—but the problem is they will just ignore him. They do not care about what he or the Leader of the Opposition say, and I think that is a problem. It is a problem for the Leader of the Opposition that they have so little regard for her leadership and her authority, and at some point all members on that side are going to have to face up to it.

Question put and passed; the Council’s amendments agreed to.

The Council acquainted accordingly.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020*Consideration in Detail*

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 7 amended —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Clause 5 amends section 7 in the Industrial Relations Act 1979, which is the definition clause. I draw the minister's attention initially to the definition of "employee". To make sure that we have this on the record, this amendment will remove the exemption for domestic workers and several other types of workers in Western Australia. Through this mechanism the government intends to ensure we have compliance with our International Labour Organization requirements as specified by the federal government. Can the minister confirm that?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This clause deals with domestic workers.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: That confirms that particular issue. I will then go on to the definition of "employer", which is a pretty straightforward definition. It states —

employer means —

...

- (b) except as provided in the *Foreign States Immunities Act 1985* (Commonwealth) section 12, a foreign state or consulate employing 1 or more employees; ...

Can the minister confirm that the effect of that provision means that foreign nationals employed at consulates, be it the consular general or the consul or the like, do not fall under the provisions of this bill? But if local staff were engaged by a foreign consulate—obviously, we do not have embassies in this state—they would be engaged under the act if they were deemed to be covered by the act?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Paragraph 54 of the explanatory memorandum details what will be achieved by this provision. People covered by the Foreign States Immunities Act 1985 legislation of the commonwealth Parliament are not bound by this provision.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6 put and passed.

Clause 7: Section 16 amended —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Clause 7 will give the Chief Commissioner of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission further powers and it clarifies some of those powers. We were told at a briefing at the minister's office—we thank the minister's office for that—that this was done at the request of the Chief Commissioner. Can the minister outline what powers this clause will confer on the Chief Commissioner that she does not currently have under the construction of the act?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The explanatory memorandum outlines at paragraphs 76 and 77 what will happen and it is correct that we did this at the request of the Chief Commissioner to make it clear what her powers are.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8 put and passed.

Clause 9: Section 23A amended —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Clause 9 is a very important clause that will amend what the Industrial Relations Commission will consider in determining whether the dismissal of an employee was harsh, oppressive or unfair. Under the way proposed section 23A(2)(a) is framed, when there is a claim that a dismissal was harsh, oppressive or unfair, the commission must have regard to whether the employee was employed on a probationary period. A second limb will be brought in. Proposed section 23A(2)(b) states —

whether, at the time of the dismissal, the employee was employed in a private home to provide services directly to the employer or a member of the employer's family or household.

This is very important because we are bringing domestic workers in. Yesterday, we discussed that there has been significant growth in domestic workers being employed in different ways. In some circumstances domestic workers are employed through an agency, so the employment relationship is not directly with the person residing in the property, but in other circumstances, they are directly employed by either the person who is seeking their services or sometimes a family member of that person. It could be in the context of disability or aged care or in a broader context of offering services along the lines of nannying or housekeeping. Can the minister outline to the house how this provision will work? Regarding the statement that the "Commission must have regard to" the

fact that the employment was “in a private home to provide services directly to the employer or a member of the employer’s family or household”, what will “have regard to” mean in practice if there is a claim for harsh, oppressive or unfair dismissal?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Again, the explanatory memorandum at paragraphs 79 and 80 sets out an example of how the legislation will work, but I will make a few general comments. The commission in Western Australia’s unfair dismissal jurisdiction is very specific and it arises only under section 23A of the act. Often unions, of course, will apply under section 44, which gives the commission additional powers, but in respect of an application for unfair dismissal, the powers of the commission are very limited. One of the issues that has to be taken into account is whether the relationship between the employee and the employer had broken down, which is already an obligation on the commission. Obviously, where an employee and an employer are in such a personal relationship, with an individual hiring another individual to work in their own home, clearly the commission will take that into account. This will make it absolutely clear that it is a serious arrangement and that the commission will need to take account of it. It is a very strong provision that will ensure that the commission does not make casual decisions in these important matters.

I also point out that in his question, the member said that a person might be hired through an agency. When a person is hired through an agency, they are not covered by the issue that the member raises because they are employed by an agency and not by a home owner. Proposed new section 23A(2) will provide additional protection for the employer than is already provided for in section 23A. There are already extensive rights for employers included in section 23A. This proposed new subsection will make it go further. Indeed, by including it in the same section for probationary and new employees, of course the existing case law that has been built up over a long time can be availed of by the commission. I am sure that there will be absolutely no doubt about the commission’s interpretation of these provisions. The number of occasions either a probationary employee or an employee in their first three months of employment has successfully sought protection under section 23A of the Industrial Relations Act has been very small. It has been very rare for an employer in this situation to get any protection from the commission. This is a very strong protection for employers. It is not a prohibition, but, in fact, is close to a prohibition on the commission awarding a benefit to a dismissed employee. What it simply means is that the commission can intervene when it clearly meets the test in section 23A(1)—that is, “determines that the dismissal of an employer was harsh, oppressive or unfair.”

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I thank the minister for taking the time to put that on the record. I agree with him that this is an important protection for individuals who seek assistance. It is a very, very personal relationship. When there is a breakdown of the relationship, there is not much people can do about it.

The comfort factor for an employee who is employed through an agency in these circumstances is that an agency has the capacity to move the employees—the domestic workers who are offering these services—from one household to another if there is a breakdown in the relationship without denying that person employment. That is sometimes a good protection for the person who is seeking the help as well. However, when it is a direct employment relationship between the person who is seeking the services and the person who is delivering the services in the household, it is important to know how this provision will operate. I thank the minister for highlighting the fact that the same jurisprudence that has been built around what “must have regard to” means in claims of dismissal in a probationary period will be used to determine how the commission must have regard to this sort of domestic relationship. I think that is really helpful because it adds a new area, but it does not create a whole range of question marks about how the particular provisions will be applied in practice, because they have been used in an analogous context in the past. As I said, I think this is an important protection for both those people who seek these sorts of services of domestic workers and the domestic workers themselves. We welcome that this has been included in the bill. It is one more mechanism that provides for protection now that domestic work relationships are being brought into the industrial relations context.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 10 to 13 put and passed.

Clause 14: Sections 37A to 37D inserted —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Clause 14 inserts proposed sections 37A, 37B, 37C and 37D into the principal act. We spent a fair bit of time discussing this during the second reading debate. I highlighted the opposition’s concerns primarily in relation to the insertion of proposed section 37D, which will allow the commission to vary private sector awards of its own motion. The minister said in his response that this is non-controversial; the commission has that power in another context and that power is limited to various provisions of particular awards. I think the minister referred specifically to section 40B of the act. We accept that that power is there. This is a very broad provision. It will enable the commission to vary the scope of a private sector award of its own motion. Despite the words of the minister in his summing up, we are not convinced that this is the right way to go. There is concern, particularly amongst industry and the joint industry groups, about this provision.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, have you got an amendment that you wish to move?

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Yes, I do. I will get to that.

We believe that the Ritter report provided an alternative framework for dealing with this issue that may well have seemed a little bit more longwinded and perhaps not as direct and sharp as this. However, when the government has a review and consults widely, it ought to be worthwhile to take on the recommendations. The Ritter review did suggest creating a framework in which the commission could help bring the parties together, but it did not suggest giving power to vary the scope of a private sector award of its own motion. It is interesting that this will be limited to only private sector awards. We do not believe that this is the right way to go, as I highlighted yesterday. We could debate this for hours, but we have a philosophical difference of opinion. Therefore, I move —

Page 14, line 21 to page 15, line 22 — To delete the lines.

My amendment will simply delete the addition of proposed section 37D from the bill so that that power is not vested in the commission. As I said, that is our position. The minister has a different position; I respect his right to hold that position. We do not believe that that is the right way to go, which is why we are moving to delete this proposed section. We do not want to stop the bill from going through; we just think that if we are going to do this, it should come out of a direct consultation process because it was not something that was directly contemplated by Ritter; in fact, Ritter suggested an alternative construction.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We do not support this amendment for a number of practical reasons. It is true that Ritter recommended a particular pathway. We went out and consulted on that and worked out that that pathway would lead nowhere. What we are doing is not controversial. I do not know why the member suggests that it is. This is the exact same arrangement that was used by the Liberal Party in the 1990s to update awards. It is not correct to say that there would not be consultation. I remind the member that the state wage decision is made on the motion of the commission. That is not to say that when the commission proposes that the state wage case be held, no-one comes along to talk about what should go into the state wage case. Everybody in the industrial relations system makes submissions on the state wage case if they are interested.

It simply is not true to say that this is somehow giving the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission a power to take action without regard for the industry. After we consulted with the industry and the commission, we realised that this provision will allow the commission to manage the workflow of reviews. This is the best way forward for this arrangement. Let us understand what would happen if this is not supported. It would mean that the section 50 parties would bring the applications, and who is most likely to oversee that? It is the minister. We would be taking the power away from industry and giving it to the minister to start the process. I do not know who is advising the member, but obviously they do not understand the industrial relations system in Western Australia. The suggestion that the commission proposing action means that industry would not be involved is not borne out by the facts. I am indebted to the advisers from the department who pointed out that it was in 1925 when it was originally inserted into the legislation that the commission could act of its own volition. For nearly 100 years in Western Australia, the commission has had a power to act. I suggest to the member that this is not at all controversial. It is no more controversial than the commission setting the agenda for the state wage case each year. It invites submissions. Members can imagine what would happen in this case: the commission could program those key awards that it knows so well to be reformed. Members should remember that we have section 50 parties and the named respondents to the award, and then we have the interested parties to the award. This allows the commission to engage those people to come to a conclusion. It is not a right for the commission to do whatever it wants without listening to industry. This provision does not say that, in the same way as the act provides for the commission to take other actions under section 40B or any of the other powers it has of its own motion, which not a right to ignore industry. When I say “industry”, I mean the social partners, both employers and employees.

The problem is that the member’s amendment does not contemplate the Western Australian industrial relations system. It does not reflect what happens. The member is trying to prevent a harm that does not exist. As I say, if this amendment is passed, it will give more power to the minister over the industrial relations system. It will be me who decides the programming for the applications for the awards. Let me make it clear that we know that the other section 50 parties are not interested, because they have had 30 years to resolve the problem and they have not. Let us be blunt. The question is: do we want an independent organisation doing the programming, deciding the time line and fixing who will be consulted, or do members want me to do this? Those are the two alternatives.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: As I said, we are going to have a philosophical difference on this. The minister’s default position whenever there is any difference of opinion is that nobody else understands the system, only the minister understands it.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, I never said that.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: He said it last night about the member for North West Central. He regularly says it to me and to stakeholders that he often names, and sometimes does not name, suggesting that they do not understand the system because they have a different view from his. The commission has the ability to action state wage cases of its own motion; that is its job, because there are no direct counterparties to a state wage case. In a private sector award there are—the employers and the employees. We believe philosophically that when we want

to vary the scope of a private sector award, the starting point is with those two parties. It is as simple as that. The starting point is the employer and employee parties to that award. They should be the ones who instigate this process, which is why we say that this is a power that has not been made out. If the minister held a consultation process post-Ritter, clearly it has not satisfied some of the stakeholders that made their case to us that this is not the way to go.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I support this amendment moved by the member for Hillarys. As I said during the second reading debate last night, proposed section 37D applies to private sector awards in general. I said, “Aside from the complete lack of consultation, something that the minister —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Are you quoting from the uncorrected *Hansard*, member?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No; I am quoting from my notes.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Excellent.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There has been a lack of consultation. Clearly, the industry groups that have approached me and the Nationals WA have indicated that they have had no consultation whatsoever on this legislation and, in particular, proposed section 37D. Although the National Party opposes the legislation—the right to voice that last night was taken away; I am not having a crack at the Acting Speaker who was quick to end the second reading debate—we support the amendment moved by the member for Hillarys. A good example that I gave last night is when the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission may see fit to declare that all pharmacist assistants come under one award of their choosing, such as the Shop and Warehouse Award, without consultation with or regard for the financial implications of that change on the employer. We are questioning the implication of this provision on the employer when the Industrial Relations Commission can change the award as it sees fit. This is why we support the amendment to clause 14 and proposed section 37D. The amendment is a logical step that will provide certainty within the workplace for both the employer and the employee.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: This is a fundamental misunderstanding of the way the award system works. Let me make it clear. I highlighted this last night in respect of the Shop and Warehouse Award. Many of the listed respondents in the Shop and Warehouse Award do not exist anymore. Let us assume that an employer party wants to seek an amendment to the Shop and Warehouse Award. The party would serve notice on the union party and all the named parties, many of whom do not exist, and it would get return mail from those. It would also notify the section 50 parties—that is, the minister, UnionsWA, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia and the Australian Mines and Metals Association. That is the way the system works. They are the only people who get notified of an award amendment. The provision here will not change who would be notified. The separate question is: who is involved in the hearing? Let us take the state wage case as an example. The state wage case leads to a general order that applies to every award in Western Australia. The amendment is not correct. It is wrong. To think that the commission holds a separate hearing for every single award does not understand the way the system works in Western Australia—it does not. We have a general order provision in Western Australia that is unique to our state. People familiar with the system understand that the section 50 parties process sets us aside from other jurisdictions.

This is not a power for the commission to act without having hearings. It is not a power for the commission to ignore the interests of employer associations in individual employer or employee organisations. Assuming that we agreed to the member for Hillarys’ amendment, the commission could still seek to vary the scope clause on its own motion under its existing powers. All we are doing here is highlighting what we are trying to achieve. The conspiracy theory is being run: why are they not related to the public sector awards? It is because the public sector awards have a completely different structure. They do not apply in the common law fashion and these do. This is about the common rule awards that are unique to Western Australia. At the end of the day, I could agree to this amendment, but let me make it clear to the people who are lobbying the member that it would not change the outcome of what is occurring. As I have said to the member, yes, there is a range of consultations. Some of those are internal to government. We took Mark Ritter’s ambition, which is the simplification of the award structure, and we asked how we could achieve that. This is the way it can be achieved. How do I know that? It is because that is the outcome of the discussions with industry partners, but more importantly, the commission, because this puts the commission in the driver’s seat. The commission is the one that has to cope with all the challenges around the scope clauses of awards. It is not three months since the chief commissioner was in my office complaining about the scope clauses of awards. If we do not want to have the entire structure of Western Australia’s common rule industrial system collapse, we have to have it modernised, and we have to have somebody in the driver’s seat.

There are effectively two alternatives: there is this alternative, which asks the commission to be the driver to get the industry partners to do their work; or the other alternative is that I am going to do it. We know the industry—when I refer to the social partners, I mean employers and employees together—has had 30 years to solve the problem and it has not. We have to have another system because the current arrangement does not work. This arrangement will work. Seriously, name me an employer association that is registered in the state system that is complaining about the proposal.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Ms M.M. Quirk) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (17)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Dr D.J. Honey	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr P.J. Rundle
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr P.A. Katsambanis	Dr M.D. Nahan	Mr A. Krsticevic (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Mr D.C. Nalder	
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mr K.M. O'Donnell	
Mrs A.K. Hayden	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.T. Redman	

Noes (33)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr D.A. Templeman
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr M. McGowan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr J.N. Carey	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr R.R. Whitby
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms A. Sanderson	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr M. Hughes	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	
Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr C.J. Tallentire	

Pairs

Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr M.P. Murray
Ms L. Mettam	Ms J.M. Freeman

Amendment thus negated.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15 put and passed.

Clause 16: Section 40 amended —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: An amendment standing in my name to clause 16 has been circulated. This amendment was consequential on the amendment to clause 14, so I do not propose to move it.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 17 put and passed.

Clause 18: Section 49D amended —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Clause 18 inserts changes to the record keeping of employers, particularly employment records. The changes are largely consistent with record keeping obligations in the commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009 and the regulations that arise under the Fair Work Act. A number of provisions will be inserted. One of the provisions inserted into section 49D(2) of the principal act is contained on page 20 of the bill. It states that where an employee's employment is terminated, the employment record must include the name of the person who terminated the employee's employment. That might sound like a simple matter—someone comes to the decision to terminate the employment and they record that decision and the name of the person who came to that decision—but in practice, it has been brought to my attention by a number of stakeholders that there might be different elements of termination. The person who decides on the termination might not be the person who communicates the termination to the employee. It might be that someone in a human resources department in Sydney makes the decision and a manager or an assistant manager in Perth delivers the message to the employee. It might be a bit unfair to use the Sydney example because we might be in the federal system anyway, but it might well be that someone in Perth makes the decision and communicates it to the manager in Bunbury, who then communicates the decision to the terminated employee. Just for clarity, who is the person who needs to be put on the record as the person who terminated the employee's employment? Is it the person who made the decision or the person who said to the employee that they were terminated? It could well be two different people.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is a fair enough question, but I think the member should recognise the circumstances of the Western Australian industrial relations system. Unless it is a public sector organisation, it is an unincorporated business. I acknowledge that law firms are unincorporated businesses, but other than that, the majority of unincorporated businesses have surprisingly few employees. For people outside the public sector in Western Australia, the decision-maker and the person who informs them is highly unlikely to be a different person, because it is only unincorporated private sector businesses to which this legislation will apply outside the public sector. My view is that the words mean what the words say—the name of the person who terminated the person's employment will, from any reasonable reading, just be the person who told the person that they were sacked. I do not believe that those words say anything else.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I do not necessarily accept that it will apply to so few businesses that it does not really matter. Some unincorporated businesses that are not considered to be national system employers have a significant number of employees. Perhaps it could be pharmacies that have grown up over time. It could be anything that is operated under a trust that does not have a corporate trustee. There could be a number of groups in our community. It could be publicans for that matter. It is possible. Some arrangements have been around for a long time—they have passed through families and have never enlivened the need to go into the federal system. Perhaps there is an argument for making it easier for people to change the corporate structure when they are keeping it all in the family. That might be a good idea. However, there are some significant businesses out there that have employees numbering in the dozens. Sometimes it may well be a relatively small business and the decision-maker is simply not on site at the time. If the minister says that the person who terminates the employment is the person who communicates the termination to the employee, that at least provides a level of comfort to those businesses that have raised that issue with me. I thank the minister for putting that on the record. I assume that the people who are concerned about this will at least have the clarity that, based on what the minister said, the person whose name needs to be recorded on the employment record is the person who communicates to the employee that their employment is terminated.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I thank the member for Hillarys for that long comment. I suggest that the people who communicated with him talk to an employer association, because these same words are used in the regulations under the federal act. If they had gone to an employer association, they would have been directed to the fact that all we are doing here is taking the provisions of the federal regulatory framework and including the same words in the state regulatory framework. As I said, organisations that are familiar with the industrial relations system would be familiar with this provision.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Supposition, in this case, is not always a good thing. Perhaps the people who raised it with me were part of an employer organisation. Even though we say that it is well understood in the Fair Work system, consideration in detail is a good opportunity to understand how it will apply under the state system. That is why I asked the question in good faith—to put it on the record. We now have an answer. Unfortunately, our legal system more generally—I am not talking about our industrial relations system—is littered with different interpretations in different jurisdictions, even within the state, let alone between the federal and state systems. That is why it is always important to get that on the record. If someone raises an issue with me in good faith, I think it is important to get the answer on the record. The minister has given the answer and I am happy with that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I agree; I am very happy to get these sorts of things on the record, because it is very important. If I can use the sexist term, we are looking to the average man on the Clapham omnibus. I must just make the comment that when I was in London in January, I took a photograph of a Clapham Junction omnibus and sent it to the Acting Speaker (Ms M.M. Quirk), because I thought she would be the only one of my friends who would get something out of that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: What about the member for Mount Lawley and the member for Armadale?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, they probably would have done as well!

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 19 to 21 put and passed.

Clause 22: Section 49I amended —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I have circulated an amendment to this clause, which I will speak to in a minute. Amongst other things, clause 22(2) introduces into section 49I(2)(c) of the act a power to enable a union official who is conducting an inspection under a right of entry to not only view any work, material, machinery or appliance that is relevant to the suspected breach, which is the current provision, but also take photographs, films and audio, video or other recording of any work, material, machinery or appliance that is relevant to the suspected breach. In response last night, the minister indicated that this would rectify a problem that officials might have when they are on site—that if they want to take a copy of documents they are inspecting, the employer might say that they cannot use their photocopier. To use the vernacular, they might tell them to bugger off. They also cannot currently take photographs to make a copy. The problem for the minister in that regard is that that power does not exist in section 49I(2)(c); it actually exists in section 49I(2)(b). Section 49I(2) states —

For the purpose of investigating any such suspected breach, the authorised representative may —

...

- (b) make copies of the entries in the employment records or documents related to the suspected breach ...

That is what I said in my contribution. Paragraph (c) is a different provision; it is about the viewing processes. It is about viewing the machinery and the like; it is not about making copies. If the minister thought it was actually a concern that officials could use their phone to make a copy, he would have made that change in section 49I(2)(b), which he has not done. If he did that, I do not think we would particularly object to it if it were narrowly framed.

He might want to consider that when the bill is between the houses, if he thinks it is a problem. I do not think it is a problem. I think it is well accepted nowadays that if someone wants to make a copy of something and they are entitled to make a copy of it, one way of doing it is to take a photograph on their phone. I do not think it has been litigated in the Industrial Relations Commission. I have never heard of an employer saying, “No you can’t take a photo of the document that you are entitled to copy.” Maybe that has occurred in the past, but I think it has become more acceptable. If it is a problem, amend paragraph (b). We might have inadvertently stumbled across a concern here for the minister to look at when the bill is between the houses.

However, section 49I(2)(c) is not about copying documents; it is about taking photographs or making videos and perhaps even live-streaming a video, and that is not prohibited. If someone is allowed to make a video, they could be doing anything at the time; it could be information of a sensitive, commercial nature or a process subject to intellectual property rights. It could enliven safety issues. We have received submissions from a number of stakeholder groups concerned that this could have consequences for real-life employers trying to do the right thing, including in cases in which information might be passed on to third parties, perhaps in an animal welfare sense and the like.

Mr W.R. MARMION: I would like to hear more from the member for Hillarys, if I could, please.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: We think it is a bridge too far to allow a trade union representative to go onsite and have access to all the records—that is fine, they could make copies of the records—but then start videoing or photographing any work, material, machinery or appliance in an enterprise when that enterprise may have intellectual property rights attached to it. It may have legitimate safety concerns. Many organisations ban their staff from having mobile phones anywhere near machinery. How could that prohibition be resolved? The organisation may have concerns about misuse, as I said, be it in the animal welfare context, or, as we have seen, the myriad examples contained in the voluminous Heydon Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption about the misuse of information, recordings and the like, including secret recordings. They may simply not want that to occur. There have been examples in other jurisdictions where it has been found that an employer can ban that, and that these sorts of analogous provisions will not be upheld when they contravene an employer’s right to prohibit photography or videography onsite.

The opposition does not think the case has been made out to allow this power. As I said in relation to paragraph (b), if it is a real concern and people are being stopped from taking copies of documents by photographing them on their phone and the minister thinks he can fix that up, he can fix it up. If it is properly calibrated and properly refined, I do not think anyone will object to it. It makes sense, but that is not what this will do. Let us make it clear: it is a much, much broader power to allow someone to walk into an enterprise and start filming and videoing anything, potentially. As I said, we think that is a bridge too far. On that basis, I want to move the amendment to clause 22 standing in my name of the amendments I have circulated. I move —

Page 24, lines 15 to 19 — To delete the lines.

We believe that will ensure that no inappropriate photography, videography or any other type of recording will take place on a worksite and that union officials do not have the power to go in and take photographs or video something that may infringe on people’s intellectual property rights or their privacy rights, or may create legitimate safety concerns simply by operating the phone or the video recording mechanism. We therefore believe that it is right not to support this particular proposed amendment to the act.

There is little evidence to suggest that this will deal with a real problem. A lot of evidence suggests that it will create another area of unnecessary friction and unnecessary concern for very little gain in relation to either workplace safety or industrial relations generally. As a result, we think this is one area of overreach whereby if the government could see sense not to go down this path, we would be prepared to support the other provisions of the bill. However, we think this is a step too far.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Firstly, I want to address something raised about this matter last night. The member for North West Central highlighted the fact that regardless of anything in this provision, people already go onto worksites and use their cameras to do stuff that employers are not happy with. I want to remove the debate here from this being an argument about putting videos on Facebook, because apparently, according to the member for North West Central, that is happening today—when this provision is not law. Therefore, nothing proposed here has anything to do with the situation that was raised last night by the member for North West Central.

The question is: what circumstances will authorise the use of twenty-first century technology by union officials in twenty-first century workplaces? I said to the member for Hillarys last night that if he could come up with a proposal that showed how that occurred, I think he would be cooking with gas. However, the idea that in the twenty-first century we cannot use twenty-first century equipment is unsustainable. What I am asking—it is exactly what I asked employer organisations—is: what circumstances do they think union officials should have the right to use twenty-first century recording devices in the twenty-first century? We cannot have laws written a long time ago controlling what we do because they do not reflect the situation today. Union officials are using these devices. The question is: in what circumstance are they used? It is not “if they get used” because, as the member for North West Central pointed out at some length last night, these things are happening already.

I am inviting the Liberal Party to give me a provision that authorises union officials to use these devices in the appropriate circumstance, as they see fit. That is the answer, not a ban, which is what the member is suggesting and some employer associations have said to me is the solution. That will not work. I understand that with these issues, everyone refers to the building industry because that is the one that gets on TV. But, actually, most people do not work in the building industry; they work in the services sector. I can describe to the member a range of circumstances in which a union official would find it convenient to do their work exactly as set out in the legislation and obtain unimpeachable evidence through a twenty-first century technological device. That is the question for the Liberal Party. I am not rejecting all amendments to this section. The other amendments the member proposed misunderstood the circumstance of industrial relations in Western Australia. However, I accept that there needs to be proper limits and appropriate sets of rules, and that all these things need to be done in an appropriate fashion. However, to just remove the provision will not achieve that. We have to let them join the twenty-first century.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5248.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

DOMESTIC GAS POLICY — LNG JOBS TASK FORCE REPORT

573. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:

I refer to the WA Labor government's recent decision to change the domestic gas policy. Will the Premier outline to the house the recommendations of a report commissioned by the LNG jobs task force undertaken by ACIL Allen Consulting into opportunities for the development of gas intensive downstream industries in Western Australia?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

It would have been nice to have had some notice about outlining the recommendations of a report to government for the LNG jobs task force by ACIL Allen Consulting. I do not have that in my head, but I can say that we are committed to domestic gas supply and our policy is very much devoted to ensuring that happens.

DOMESTIC GAS POLICY — LNG JOBS TASK FORCE REPORT

574. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Will the premier undertake to table in this house the recommendations of the LNG jobs task force report, which, according to Tenders WA, cost \$137 000 of taxpayer money; and why did the Premier change the domestic gas reservation policy without having an understanding of or having read that report?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I cannot commit to tabling any such report without first knowing the details of the report and whether there are any reasons why it should not be tabled, such as commercial-in-confidence reasons or otherwise. I want to be clear that our policy is to support domestic gas. Some people out there say that domestic gas means domestic gas for New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. I was advised that the former Premier argued that yesterday. Our view is that the Western Australian allocation of domestic gas is domestic gas for Western Australia. It is not domestic gas for Victoria, New South Wales or Queensland. Over there, they largely sign up contracts just to export, and domestic gas comes second. Here, since Alan Carpenter and the Labor government put in place the domestic gas reservation policy in 2006, we have ensured that there is gas for domestic supply. I was in Parliament at the time and people objected to that policy, including the then federal government. The federal minister, Ian Macfarlane, was very vicious about it. These days, it is widely accepted as a good move that ensures that we will have domestic gas supplies for the future.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you have had two goes.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Leader of the Opposition has now been office for three and a half years. She has no policies.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: If I go to the Liberal Party website, I can see that it is a policy-free zone. The Leader of the Opposition said that this year was going to be the year of policy development and release. Where are they? She comes in here and asks me about an obscure report. The government get hundreds of reports on all sorts of issues virtually every month. After three and a half years as opposition leader, she may have learnt that she might want to give a bit of notice if she is going to ask a question seeking that level of detail.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you had two goes and I called you to order once. If you want to go home early, keep it up.

CORONAVIRUS — WA RECOVERY PLAN — SCHOOLS

575. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$5.5 billion WA recovery plan, which includes an unprecedented funding package to upgrade schools right across the state. Can the Premier outline to the house what this \$492 million infrastructure package will mean for Western Australian students, particularly those in my electorate of Kingsley, and how this investment in schools will support local jobs and local businesses?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. We have committed \$492 million, as part of our COVID response package, towards infrastructure in schools in regional and metropolitan Western Australia. Outside of a budget process, this is an unprecedented funding package and comes on top of the \$200 million for maintenance that we committed to in December last year. This will mean that local businesses are the big winners—in particular, those in building, construction and training.

With this package, 63 public schools across Western Australia will receive major additions. It will also ensure that many schools all over the state will get performing arts centres, new specialist facilities and the like. Of those 63 schools, 17 are in regional Western Australia and 46 are in the metro area. We expect that it will create nearly 2 000 jobs.

In the member for Kingsley's electorate, we are putting \$2 million into the new performing arts centre at Warwick Senior High School, \$1.5 million for an early intervention facility at Hawker Park Primary School, and \$2.4 million for various upgrades to Greenwood College. In Kalamunda, \$15.2 million will go to Lesmurdie Primary School, which was built in 1920, so it is an older school that needs some investment; and \$18.3 million will go into Kalamunda Senior High School. Across the regions, \$22 million will go to Karratha Senior High School for a new classroom block, including specialist classrooms for engineering, robotics, IT and food technology; and \$42 million will go to Roebourne District High School, which has always been forgotten, so the children of Roebourne will have a first-rate learning environment. That is basically a complete rebuild of the school. That will be terrific for the kids of Roebourne and its surrounds. Margaret River Senior High School will get a new sports oval on top of the \$30 million, I think, that we have already spent there. Performing arts centres will be built at Pinjarra, Albany, Wanneroo and Dianella. When I went down to Pinjarra, they were very excited. All the young men with mullets gathered around me for a photograph, as I remember. They looked magnificent! It is very exciting.

One of the investments that I am very excited about is \$32 million for Carine Senior High School, in the western suburbs. That builds on our commitment to fix the issue of overcrowding of schools in the western suburbs with Bob Hawke College. But I do note —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: When did Carine become part of the western suburbs?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is the broader western suburbs! To me, if you go west, there is Carine. It is the broader western suburbs! I suppose you could say that Rockingham is in the western suburbs as well. I am very broad in my assessment of the western suburbs.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Anything that's near the coast!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think the member is going a bit far there, but certainly Rockingham and Carine are western suburbs!

There is \$32 million for Carine Senior High School. I went there earlier this year, or late last year, and saw that it obviously needs some significant improvements. It is this government that is delivering this infrastructure package, but I have noticed that the Liberal Party constantly campaigns around our commitments. I have a Facebook post by the shadow minister for cost of living, the member for Carine, in which he has two thumbs up while standing in front of Carine Senior High School. It states —

The Liberals support the \$32 million for a major upgrade ...

We are committed to progress this project if elected.

...

This is great news for local parents ...

I also have an announcement from the Leader of the Opposition. The way its Facebook posts are promoting it, people would think that it is a Liberal Party policy. Do members opposite actually think they are doing it? Members should read this, because it is hilarious. The opposition leader's Facebook site says —

HELPING OUR KIDS GET AHEAD

\$492 million for school upgrades including science, design and technology facilities

There is a photo of the opposition leader and a group of kids. If people visit the Liberal Party's website, they will see that it has no policies; yet the Liberal Party goes to our website, cuts and pastes our policies, then claims them as its own. That appears to be the Liberal Party's policy development process these days. I suppose one could say that plagiarism is a form of flattery.

POLICE — RECRUITMENT

576. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Premier:

I refer to the horrific, senseless and disgusting attack on a defenceless 84-year-old man, Emilio Lombardi, in East Cannington. When is the Premier going to put more police on the street to protect our community and to protect people like Mr Lombardi?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I saw the images of Mr Lombardi on the television and in the newspaper as well. Obviously, attacking an 84-year-old man is a shocking and appalling thing for anyone to do. I know that the police are looking to deal with that matter as quickly as they possibly can. I expect the perpetrators to have the full force of the law applied to them. Since the Labor Party has been in office, we have either employed or commenced the recruitment of an additional 300 or so police officers. Prior to the last election, the Labor Party was the only party that committed to additional police.

POLICE — RECRUITMENT

577. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. If 400 police have been taken off the front line to fight COVID-19, will the Premier finally admit that the safety of Western Australians is being compromised because of Labor's failure to put more police on the beat, where they are needed most?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

No, I will not, and politicising COVID-19 is something that I would urge the Liberal Party to stop doing.

MINERALOGY PTY LTD AND INTERNATIONAL MINERALS — CLIVE PALMER

578. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Attorney General:

I refer to the tabling by the Attorney General yesterday of a document that outlines the quantum of the claim by Mr Clive Palmer and his companies against the state of Western Australia. Is the Attorney General aware of Mr Palmer's response through a spokesperson yesterday, stating that he would not breach the confidentiality of arbitration; and can the Attorney General advise the house whether Mr Palmer has ever breached the confidentiality of arbitration with regard to this matter?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

I thank the member for Girrawheen for the question. I am aware of the statement Mr Palmer put out through his spokesperson to say that he would never breach the confidentiality of an arbitration. Members will recall that yesterday I tabled six of the 89 pages of Mr Palmer's statement of contention facts, and I did so in the public interest, publishing only those portions of that statement that exposed the lie Mr Palmer was telling the people of Western Australia—that he was not putting in a \$30 billion claim. As I said yesterday, that proves beyond reasonable doubt that he is a liar.

His response to that was a criticism of the government for tabling that document, saying through his spokesman that he would never breach the confidentiality of an arbitration award. In doing so, he has lied again; he is a serial liar. He just cannot help himself. He is a compulsive liar, and a hypocrite.

I refer to page 2215 of the Queensland Parliament's *Hansard*, dated 5 June 2014. In the middle of the night, at 12.56 am, under the heading "Palmer United Party", he had his Palmer United Party member, Dr Douglas, drop the arbitration award that found Hon Colin Barnett had erred in rejecting Mr Palmer's 2012 mining proposal application. Dr Douglas said —

This is the result of the arbitration matter between Mineralogy, International Minerals, CITIC and the State of Western Australia. The document speaks for itself. Clive Palmer was 100 per cent successful in his claim. The finding, which is a damning indictment on CITIC and the Western Australian government, is within this document. I table it today.

He then tabled the document "Arbitration matter under the Commercial Arbitration Act 1985, dated 20 May 2014, between Mineralogy Pty Ltd and International Minerals Pty Ltd and the State of Western Australia". That proves, once again, that Mr Palmer is, beyond reasonable doubt, a liar. When confronted with his lies, he just lies again; he is compulsive. This guy cannot lie straight in bed! It is just incredible that a person in the public spotlight like Mr Palmer would just build upon his reputation of being a liar. Today he put out a statement saying —

WA fails to have order in the Queensland Supreme Court set aside

...

... the state has failed to have the registered Awards by the Queensland Supreme Court removed.

There was no such failure at all. The state appeared before Mr Justice Martin, and Mineralogy and International Minerals pleaded for an adjournment. Confronted with the truth of what is in the affidavit of the state of

Western Australia they said, “We need an adjournment.” That adjournment was granted only after Mr Palmer gave undertakings to the Supreme Court of Queensland that he would take no action on the arbitration award or upon the registration of it in the Queensland Supreme Court, so there is another lie. He is compulsive.

As the Premier said yesterday, I ask all members of the Western Australian public, when reading Mr Palmer’s black and yellow double-page garbage advertisement in *The West Australian*, to bear in mind that its author is a serial, compulsive liar, and that has been established in this chamber, as I said, beyond reasonable doubt.

PERTH ROYAL SHOW — CANCELLATION

579. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:

I acknowledge the difficult announcement yesterday regarding the cancellation of the Perth Royal Show. Will the Premier commit to working with the Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia to ensure that any fixed or unrecoverable costs for the Perth Royal Show, and any regional shows impacted by delays in introducing phase 5 restrictions, are supported by the state government?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. Obviously what happened yesterday was very regrettable and was not our preferred course of action. We announced in early July that the Royal Show would go ahead, but obviously circumstances changed, particularly in Victoria and New South Wales, which necessitated the decision we made yesterday, based on the advice of the Chief Health Officer. When I called the head of the Royal Agricultural Society yesterday morning to advise him of the decision, I committed the government to working with the RAS to help mitigate its losses. We will work through that process with the RAS. I have authorised the head of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Mr Ralph Addis, to get in touch with the Royal Agricultural Society, and indeed Hon Alannah MacTiernan will be involved in that process as well. We originally allocated \$2.1 million towards supporting the Royal Show, so that funding, including a Lotterywest component, is there and will no doubt assist, but it is obviously terrible for many people. I watched the news last night and saw some farmers who are unhappy about what has occurred, so I understand that, and I commit to continuing the process of working together.

PERTH ROYAL SHOW — CANCELLATION

580. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. With around 20 of Western Australia’s 57 regional agricultural shows taking place in October and November—and many, including the Katanning and Kojonup shows in my electorate, planning to go ahead—what advice is the state government providing to regional agricultural societies to ensure that events can take place safely?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for that question as well; it is a good question. When I made the announcement yesterday morning, I indicated to the assembled press that we were getting urgent advice from the Chief Health Officer about regional shows and, indeed, outer metropolitan shows. There are shows in Wanneroo, Cannington and Osborne Park, and country shows like the Brunswick Show that are very large. We are getting urgent advice about these events, whether they can continue and, if so, what the conditions around them would be. That is something on which we are getting written advice from the Chief Health Officer; hopefully, it will arrive in coming days and we will be able to provide some direction going forward.

CORONAVIRUS — AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE PERSONNEL

581. Mr D.R. MICHAEL to the Premier:

I refer to the Prime Minister’s offer of additional Australian Defence Force personnel to support the Western Australian government’s efforts in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Can the Premier advise the house whether he has responded to the Prime Minister; and, if so, can the Premier outline to the house what has been requested by the Australian government?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Balcatta for the question. Firstly, I would like to thank all the police officers and staff of the state government who have been dealing with COVID-19 across the state, particularly those out in the more remote parts of Western Australia. They have done a great job and they continue to do so.

The Prime Minister wrote to me, maybe last week, with regard to Australian Defence Force personnel, offering further assistance. Therefore, I wrote back to the Prime Minister and I have requested further assistance from the commonwealth government. I will go through the areas in which we have asked for additional assistance.

Firstly, in the area of border patrols, the intrastate border support would be much appreciated. It would allow us to provide additional support and ensure that there is some relief for our police officers on the border. We have

requested 24 additional ADF personnel to help patrol the checkpoints split between Eucla and Kununurra and we have also requested additional support to patrol other road-entry points such as the back roads between Eucla and Kununurra. That is 12 personnel with vehicles to support police on those points. In total, that is 36 ADF to assist us on the borders.

We have also requested additional ADF personnel to support operations at the airport and at the ports. We have asked for an additional 32 ADF personnel and two vehicles to assist in the management of arrivals at the airport. This would include escorting passengers to quarantine, which is obviously a pretty large logistical exercise that we have to do every single day. Furthermore, Australian Border Force resources could therefore be redeployed to assist Western Australian authorities and vetting and processing both international and domestic arrivals.

We currently have Department of Health personnel assigned to monitor our hotel quarantine arrangements. They are doing a great job. They are supported by 40 current ADF personnel. We are now requesting an additional 40 ADF personnel to assist us in managing our hotel quarantine sites across the city.

In terms of contact tracing, there is an opportunity for us to train ADF personnel in the area of contact tracing should it be required. The Department of Health has trained staff before. We would like to train a contingent of 20 ADF personnel for the purposes of contact tracing, which would be a preparatory measure should we have an outbreak of COVID-19 in Western Australia.

Finally, a number of COVID coordination mechanisms have been established by Health and the WA Police Force. We believe these mechanisms could be reinforced by Australian government support. I understand that the State Health Incident Control Centre—otherwise known as SHICC—has made a request for four ADF personnel. I have now requested that these personnel be made available to support SHICC. We have also requested an additional two ADF and two Australian Border Force personnel to assist to support the WA Police Force's response in that regard.

It is a significant ask of ADF personnel. We have requested from the commonwealth to back up the state resources that are involved in dealing with COVID-19. We will go through the relevant processes of putting in an application to the defence assistance to the civil community, which is required, but I have written to the Prime Minister along the lines of what I outlined this morning. We have done some work to make sure that we got our “ask” correct over the course of the last week, but we are keen to take up the commonwealth's offer of assistance and we look forward to the commonwealth providing the support that I asked for in coming weeks.

SMART FREEWAYS INITIATIVE — MINISTER'S COMMENTS

582. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the minister's admission on 6PR that the \$47 million smart freeways initiative project has blown out by almost 50 per cent to around \$70 million.

- (1) What contributed to this increase in project costs?
- (2) Who is responsible for the blowout?
- (3) What will be the actual final cost of the project?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for that question. I actually got it wrong on 6PR this morning; it is not \$70 million. We rang up the station to clarify that. It is not \$70 million; it is \$56 million. We believe that that is not the final cost; it will be lower because we will be recouping some costs back. It is not \$70 million and I apologise for the error.

SMART FREEWAYS INITIATIVE — MINISTER'S COMMENTS

583. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Transport:

I have a supplementary question. As with most major projects that the minister has responsibility for, both the budget and time frame for the smart freeway project has clearly blown out. Why is the minister so incapable of delivering projects on time and on budget?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I am sure the minister can answer this on her own.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

When members go around Western Australia at the moment, what do they see? They see construction. They see works happening. They see people employed.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, you had a question and you had a supplementary. I call you to order for the first time.

Ms L. Mettam: Bayswater!

The SPEAKER: Now I call you to order for the second time. Is there something on in Vasse tonight?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am glad that the member for Vasse yelled out “Bayswater”. Let us go through Bayswater station. When the Liberal government committed \$1.9 billion to the Forrestfield–Airport Link, how much did it allocate to improving Bayswater station? It allocated a few million dollars? It was going to let —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Member for Vasse, listen and learn! The Liberal government was going to leave a 1960s station there with inadequate disability access and a bridge that basically every truck got stuck under. That was what it was going to do.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Vasse talks and talks and talks and talks. She talks and talks and talks.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you to order for the third time. Member for Darling Range, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member talks and talks and talks like she did in government. The Liberal government was going to build the Thornlie–Cockburn link, was it not? It never did anything. It never actually did anything when it was in government.

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range, I call you to order for the second time. That is not even your question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What was that, member for Darling Range? The successful small-businesswoman from Kalamunda! Where was that small business, member for Darling Range? Where was it? Where was that successful small business in Kalamunda, member for Darling Range?

Mrs A.K. Hayden: You know nothing.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, come on. You wanted to interject.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range, I call you to order for the third time.

Mrs A.K. Hayden: She asked!

The SPEAKER: It does not matter! You do not interject. You give it out, but you do not like it to come back.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will let her tell me where that successful small business was in Kalamunda.

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Speaker, the minister cannot continue to bait a member on this side who you then call to order. I ask you to return the minister to her question.

The SPEAKER: Let me just put this point to the member. I have been in this chamber for 20 years. When an opposition member attacks someone in the government and the government member gets up to have a go back, the opposition cannot say, “Oh, no; you can’t do that!” Members cannot interject when someone is on their feet. It does not matter who you are.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can the member for Darling Range let us know where the successful small business was in Kalamunda? The member for Darling Range has said there was no successful small business in Kalamunda. Is that what the member for Darling Range put on her form when she ran for Mayor of Kalamunda?

The SPEAKER: Minister, through the Chair. No, the Chair is this way, minister. Through the Chair.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry, Mr Speaker. When you go through Western Australia, as we often do —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: You are on three calls, member for Darling Range.

A member: Member for Vasse.

The SPEAKER: Sorry. Member for Vasse, you are on three calls so it is a toss-up on who wants to go home early. We need a little bit of discipline here. Let the minister finish and we will get on with question time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: All that negativity just rolls around. Where are the opposition’s policies? Today we learnt that the opposition is taking our commitments and claiming them as its own. Yesterday, it took our policy on planning reform and did a fundraising breakfast to promote our planning reform bill. It was a bill that the Liberal Party said was corrupt. Again, where are the opposition’s policies? They are nowhere. The opposition is a ball of negativity. It is knocking, knocking and knocking while we are out there creating jobs and delivering projects that it could not dream of delivering.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — FUNDING

584. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$5.5 billion recovery plan, which includes a comprehensive package to support victims of family and domestic violence.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what this government's \$28 million package will mean for those who are experiencing and/or fleeing family and domestic violence?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how this funding package will build on the government's unprecedented record of supporting victims and, in particular, its investment in women and children's shelters?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I thank the member for the question and for her interest in the safety of women and children in her electorate and the broader Western Australian community. I know the Premier has made the point a couple of times that when we talk about this recovery package of over \$5.5 billion in spending, the figure can just roll off the tongue, but the actual supports on the ground for the people who need them are significant. This commitment of \$28 million, which includes \$5 million in federal funding, is a significant contribution to the particular needs of those experiencing domestic violence during the COVID-19 period. We know that more domestic violence is being experienced. We already had high levels, but particularly since the COVID-19 period started in February and March and onwards, there have been more family-related assaults and threatening behaviour being experienced and being reported to police.

- (1) I want to go through the details of what the recovery package will mean for victims of domestic violence because it is important that people understand it. Out of the \$23 million in new funding from the government, \$8.6 million will help to employ 23 additional outreach workers across the state. That is 23 additional workers who will be lodged with women's services who will be able to be deployed in refuges to support women and children experiencing domestic violence in their local communities. In addition, an extra 17 family and domestic violence response teams will get extra community-based resources with those co-located response teams. At a price tag of \$6.7 million, there will be 17 additional staff in those co-located response teams. That is, again, actual resources, new resources, 17 extra people who will be based around in those co-response teams around the state. In addition, over \$100 000 will be allocated to a job retraining program that will be made available for women in refuges in the metropolitan area. Of course, they also have access to free and discounted TAFE courses, which has been announced as part of the recovery program. Also, \$1.1 million over two years will be made available for counselling, advocacy and support services.
- (2) The member asked specifically about refuges. She and the Parliament would be aware that we are building two new refuges: one in Peel and one in Kwinana. The Premier, the member and I were at the Peel build to make this announcement a few weeks ago, with Anne Moore from Lucy Saw Refuge and the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services. That additional money for those refuges will effectively double the capacity of those two new refuges. That is a significant investment in crisis support. Of course, the Peel refuge will be a therapeutic refuge, the first of its type in this state.

All in all, with this new spending and our existing commitments, we will have invested over \$76 million in new funding to tackle domestic violence. Of course, that is on top of significant law reform through the Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill. Just yesterday, with the Minister for Corrective Services, we were able to announce the commencement of a trial—\$15.5 million for 100 new electronic monitoring devices that will be available for courts to put as a condition if perpetrators breach family restraining orders and commit further acts of violence. That is the actual devices as well as community corrections staff and police to respond to any of those breaches. This is a significant investment by this government. We are taking this issue seriously. The extent of domestic violence in our state will not be tolerated. The people of Western Australia, the women and children of Western Australia—we have their backs.

HORIZON POWER — TARIFFS

585. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the state government's commitment to freeze increases on household fees and charges in response to COVID-19 and subsequent calls from the state government for local governments to freeze rates and other charges this financial year.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that Horizon Power has increased local government streetlight tariffs by 10.6 per cent?
- (2) Has Horizon Power increased any other tariffs on small businesses, not-for-profit organisations and charities, including crisis accommodation, this financial year; and, if so, for what reason?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

(1)–(2) Yes. Horizon Power has increased streetlight charges for its area of operation by that figure, and that is because it is transitioning to be cost reflective. That was announced a long time ago, because it was announced when the Treasurer was still the Minister for Energy. It is simply rolling out a pre-existing decision; it is not a new decision and has been reflected in the budget papers for quite some time.

In respect of the other tariffs for business for Horizon or Synergy, there are, of course, two separate groups to those. The first are those that are in the deregulated space. Of course, they change over time, but they are benchmarks and not an actual tariff. They are in the contestable market, so if people do not want to pay Synergy or Horizon, they are able to do other things. In respect of the regulated tariffs, the government has given \$2 500 to every business on a regulated tariff. For Horizon, the L2 tariff, for example, is for small businesses, and I cannot remember the name of the charity rate. We have given them \$2 500.

Mr V.A. Catania: Now you're increasing their prices.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No. Think about it, member. What we have done is we have given them a \$2 500 offset. It is true that there has been a small increase in the regulated tariff, which, of course, is a cost-reflective tariff—not for Horizon customers, of course; only for Synergy customers. Horizon customers, of course, have a significant embedded subsidy because we have a uniform tariff policy.

Yes, the tariff has increased, but nobody is paying it because they have not yet worked off their \$2 500 credit. Think about it, member. They got \$2 500.

Mr V.A. Catania: Not everybody can get that \$2 500.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No. Everybody on the regulated tariff has it. Every single business and every single charity on the regulated tariff has received a \$2 500 offset without exception.

HORIZON POWER — TARIFFS

586. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. How can the minister justify imposing tariff increases on small businesses, charities and local governments and sharing the pain during this pandemic while the government continues to claim that we are all in this together?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

It is pretty easy, Mr Speaker, because businesses and charities are not paying their electricity bill at the moment. They were given a \$2 500 credit in May. The average bill for a person on the L1 tariff for Synergy is \$2 800. No-one on those regulated tariffs with an average electricity consumption will be paying a bill until next year because the government has given them credit for \$2 500. The government has paid them that money. They will not be paying their electricity bill for a long period.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Even if they have double the average electricity consumption for a Synergy customer, they will go five months without having to pay an electricity bill.

Mr V.A. Catania: What about local governments? You've frozen their rates.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Local government are not trading enterprises. They are taxing organisations.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member! I have given you enough leeway. That is enough.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Horizon Power has simply continued to move towards cost reflectivity for the streetlight tariff. But I want to emphasise that small businesses and ordinary consumers on the regulated tariffs in Horizon's area of coverage do not pay the full cost of electricity. In this financial year, they will get a \$187 million subsidy from Western Power, which is collected from mums and dads in the south west of the state, to make sure that their electricity charge is no higher than the electricity charge in the south west.

CORONAVIRUS — CULTURE AND THE ARTS ECONOMIC RECOVERY PACKAGE

587. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$5.5 billion Western Australian recovery plan, which includes a massive investment in supporting the state's culture and arts sector.

(1) Can the minister outline to this house what this government's \$76 million recovery package will mean for those workers in WA's creative industries who have been hit hard by COVID-19?

(2) Can the minister outline what this package will mean for key cultural infrastructure in WA?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I am very pleased to answer the question and I thank the member for Mount Lawley for his question—a man of culture.

(1)–(2) I appreciate his strong advocacy for the creative industries in Western Australia. I know that in his electorate there are a large number of people who are practitioners—artists and artisans—in the creative industries and I thank him for his advocacy. As we know, when COVID-19 struck earlier this year, many industries were immediately impacted, but none were more severely impacted than the entertainment, culture and arts sector. Indeed, the sector continues to be impacted even as we move into the recovery phase. However, this government recognised very quickly the needs of that industry and consulted closely with the industry. We recognised that if we are to have a vibrant and creative industry in Western Australia, an industry that values culture and arts and those creative people in our community who are creating jobs of the future, we needed to respond.

I want to outline very quickly some details of this package. This package reflects job creation, investment and a forward-thinking and forward-looking approach to what role creative industries will play in a post-COVID economy. I will highlight the contributions. The government has provided \$30 million to the Perth Concert Hall redevelopment, which will finally deliver a home for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and a genuine centre of music excellence. It has provided \$15 million to His Majesty's Theatre for capital works. This magnificent building that dates back to 1904 will see the return of its balconies and verandas and its heritage values of the past. This will not only create jobs for people who work on the building, but also enhance that building as a wonderful, iconic performing arts venue. I know that the member has worked very hard and advocated very strongly for the new Jewish community centre in his electorate, which has a strong Jewish community. The state government has committed \$6 million to that project. It has also provided \$5 million through Lotterywest to support an artists-in-residency program focused very much on getting money out to local artists to work within communities in collaboration with community organisations and local government. These artists will be paid for their work in developing innovative programs in the cultural space. The government has provided \$2 million towards the planning of an Aboriginal cultural centre—that is very important. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Wyatt, and I announced this very important planning process so that we will have the plans in place to deliver a world-class centre that showcases our tremendous Indigenous history. I pay tribute to the member for Kimberley, who announced that she will not be standing at the next election. She has been a tremendous advocate for artists in her region, particularly Indigenous artists. We have made a \$2 million commitment to sell Western Australia to the world and deliver a design-and-delivery portal for Aboriginal art sales and performing arts events so that our Indigenous artists, be they fine arts or visual artists or performing artists in the Indigenous space —

The SPEAKER: Minister, can you face this way. Remember, Hansard is up in the gallery.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We will be able to sell that to the world. This is something that has been asked for for a long time and we will deliver on it. We have also provided \$1 million for a regional arts resilience grants program, providing up to \$15 000 in individual grants to get money out to individual artists in our regions. The government has provided a \$15 million commitment to the Getting the Show back on the Road package because we want the lights back on, the performers back on stage and the audiences coming back to our theatres and performing arts venues and spaces. We have recognised that that is really very important, and this program allows shared risk to be available to get those performing arts venues back on track.

This is a \$76 million commitment. It builds on some other commitments made through Lotterywest, but it is all focused on ensuring that we target our approach to what is needed in the industry so that our artists can get back to work and our cultural institutions, be they the Perth Concert Hall or His Majesty's Theatre, are enhanced for when the borders come down and we welcome the world back from interstate and overseas to see some magnificent and truly unique Western Australian experiences. This Premier and this government is delivering a cultural recovery program to that very important sector in Western Australia.

CORONAVIRUS — ECONOMIC RECOVERY PACKAGE — RENEWABLE HYDROGEN STRATEGY

588. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's \$22 million hydrogen announcement on Monday. Why can the Premier give large mining and energy companies—Fortescue Metals Group and ATCO—millions of dollars of taxpayers' money for hydrogen projects, but not grants of up to \$10 000 for struggling Western Australian small businesses crippled by the COVID crisis?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I support hydrogen. Hydrogen is a large part of our state's future. I am very excited by hydrogen. I do not have the details in front of me, but my memory tells me that in relation to FMG, and as part of the \$22 million program, we provided a \$2 million grant, which has enlivened around \$32 million of investment from FMG towards hydrogen powering its Cloudbreak mine site. That is a major mine—the member has probably never been there.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am just saying; it is probably a statement of fact.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: I have been there.

The SPEAKER: Members! The Premier is on his feet. I want to hear him in silence.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Good for you! I have been to Hillarys lately too! I go and speak to lots of people in Hillarys. Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I did not see you around.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys!

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I saw on Twitter that you were out doorknocking. I think that is probably the first time in a long time.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys! You do not have to answer, member for Hillarys.

Mr M. McGOWAN: At any rate, it was a \$2 million investment that we co-funded, with a major hydrogen investment of around \$32 million from FMG, to power its Cloudbreak mine. In a way, government has worked with industry to leverage a major project, a major investment, that will create a great many jobs. Our hydrogen future is largely green. It is based upon solar and wind power. If we desalinate sea water using solar and wind power—the abundant resources that we have—to produce hydrogen, we can create an export industry, but we need the basis of it here in Western Australia before we do that. Showcasing to the world what we can do, whether it is powering cars here in Perth or powering mine sites in the Pilbara, sets up an enormous opportunity for the state. This is an exciting opportunity for Western Australia.

The government has done an enormous amount for small business. The Minister for Culture and the Arts a moment ago outlined the \$15 million support we are providing, as part of the \$72 million, and, from memory, another \$22 million we provided earlier. The \$15 million component was dedicated to live shows that have to get down payments, if you like, on a facility but they do not know whether they will have sufficient people attending to guarantee a certain return. That \$15 million provides support for small businesses, which a lot of arts companies are. On top of that, the Minister for Energy outlined major grants in electricity for around 100 000 small businesses across the state. We are targeting our effort to leverage the maximum benefit for the state. We are the only state that has launched a major recovery plan—the \$5.5 billion recovery plan. We are getting on with the job of getting this state back on its feet.

CORONAVIRUS — ECONOMIC RECOVERY PACKAGE — RENEWABLE HYDROGEN STRATEGY

589. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. I note the Premier's answer that he believes the government has provided grants to help small businesses. Unfortunately, they have not assisted our small businesses. Can the Premier please confirm that his government has no plan or desire to support family-run small businesses and that his priorities are giving money to the big end of town while local small businesses go bankrupt?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

What always happens when I answer a question is that this member, among others, never listens to the answer. I just explained it to her: \$2 million is leveraging \$32 million of investment in hydrogen. She can shake her head. She seems to hate Fortescue Metals Group. FMG will have the first major mine site in the world to be powered by hydrogen. That is quite an achievement. It is quite an achievement. It uses green energy and has no emissions. It is renewable hydrogen —

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: You are on three calls, member.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member sniffs away and is sniping all the time but she does not listen to the answer. The Minister for Energy outlined the \$2 500 electricity grants provided to 100 000 small businesses across the state. I repeat: \$2 500 off small business electricity bills across Western Australia. The \$5.5 billion recovery plan is important but the main thing we have done, more than any other state, is get our economy open within our borders. Had members opposite been in office, they would have pulled down the borders, COVID would have come back, and we would not have been able to do so. That is what Liberal Party members would have done. I saw them all standing behind the Leader of the Opposition when she was out there saying, "Pull down the borders! Pull down the borders!" I saw the members for Vasse and Dawesville standing behind her. If they had had their way, our economy would be in the doldrums and we would have COVID in Western Australia. That is what would have happened.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020*Consideration in Detail*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Clause 22: Section 49I amended —

Debate was interrupted after the amendment moved by Mr P.A. Katsambanis had been partly considered.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I will not speak for much longer but I make it clear that the government would be pleased to discuss an amendment that provides the framework around regulating the use of recording equipment by union officials onsite. However, I make the point that we cannot wish away the twenty-first century. As the member for North West Central pointed out, there is already unregulated use of recording devices by a range of people in workplaces. We cannot be King Canute. We have to face the reality of today's situation. I would be happy to discuss with the opposition sensible amendments that provide the framework in which these things should occur, but to argue that they should never occur is to argue that the sun should not rise in the east. These things are going to happen, so what is the circumstance in which we want them to happen? That is the reality. As the member for North West Central made clear last night, these things are occurring now. Given that they are occurring, what are the circumstances in which we regulate those occurrences?

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Like the minister, I do not want to take up too much time on this. Again, we are going to agree to disagree; it is quite obvious. The minister invites me to make some suggestions. I have already made one to amend section 49I(2)(b). The minister himself suggested there may have been a problem with that provision, yet no amendment has been made to that section. A properly calibrated amendment there may clarify circumstances, but we certainly do not agree with the minister that that should be expanded to trade union officials being able to video, or take photographs of, work, material, machinery or appliances when intellectual property rights as well as safety issues exist.

Another matter the minister can consider in that regard if he is looking to make amendments is the decision made in the Fair Work Commission on BPL Adelaide Pty Ltd and the National Union of Workers. The decision made in 2015 clearly found, quite rightly, that nothing could limit a property owner or an employer from specifying the ownership rights that are of concern to it and requiring that all visitors to its premises comply with those particular policy requirements. Any rights given to video machinery and the like need to be understood to be qualified rights in relation to that overriding right by the employer, and it made it clear that that was the case. If the minister is looking for a way forward, as I said, I had suggested a way forward based on his commentary last night. Clearly he is not prepared to take it. I am conscious of the formalities and I think I have moved the amendment standing in my name. We support it; it is clear that the government does not support it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, the member has already moved the amendment. That is what we are debating, and we are about to put it to a vote. Again, I say to the member, yes, we recognise that there are qualifications and this bill does not attempt to remove qualifications. A range of rights occur under federal legislation to do with broadcasting and all those things. None of those is impacted by these suggested changes. That is not what this is about. It is like the straw-man argument about intellectual property. This bill says that the intellectual property becomes the possession of the union. That is not what the amendment says. As I say, if there was to be a sensible discussion, I would be happy to be part of it, but to just say no is not sensible. As the member for North West Central made clear, recordings are currently occurring, so what is the circumstance in which those are to take place?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The Nationals WA supports the amendment that the member for Hillarys moved to clause 22. As the minister outlined, union officials are already doing it, and he is right. It is occurring on construction sites where video footage or photos have been taken of things that are perceived as a health and safety risk to employees. Do members know what? I accept that people sometimes have to get their point across, but to my mind, this endorses the taking of footage or photographs and putting it on social media. That shows only one side of the story. We live in a world in which people are innocent until proven guilty. Processes and procedures are in place for unions to follow when workplaces potentially do not adhere to work health and safety regulations or any other matters. I absolutely accept the right of unions to represent workers and that workers have the right to be in a safe place, but this provision endorses the ability for unions to put the footage on social media straightaway and argue the case online. That argument would be from only one point of view, which would be damaging to the company or business. It would be onerous and expensive for a business, specifically a mum-and-dad business or a sole operator, to go through the courts to get the video or photograph taken down. Often, there is only one person working in the shop. They would need to find the time, energy and money to fight a union organisation to take down the footage. The footage could provide a very good explanation of the situation, but that is not afforded to the small business owner, the mum-and-dad operator or sole operator. That is why the Nationals WA really oppose this legislation. Our opposition is based on the freedom that it will give unions. Everyone in this house knows that I am a big supporter of the unions, but this is taking it to the next step and crossing the line by advocating that pressure should be applied to small businesses in particular, such as sole operators. It could potentially spread into a person's home, where they may be working. I think that crosses the line. That is why I support the amendment put forward by the member for Hillarys and why the National Party does not support this legislation.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I was not going to speak again, but unfortunately the Nationals WA have posed a different set of straw-man arguments. Nothing in this provision authorises the broadcast of video collected by a union official. The allegation that is being made about what the government is proposing is not based on what the government is proposing. As I say, this provision is about the collection of evidence for the work of the union. I will give an example. Imagine that a small garment shop is being run in a warehouse unit in Carlisle, which is a little industrial suburb. A union official comes in and finds people crowded together using sewing machines and working in unsanitary conditions. Why can the union official not pull out their iPhone and record what is in front of them? They are allowed to make a drawing of it or to sign an affidavit to say what they saw, but why can they not take a recording of what they saw?

Employer associations have raised these provisions with me. I said to them that I get that things are currently happening in a way that they are not satisfied with, but that that has nothing to do with this legislation, because we have not passed the legislation. Whatever is happening today, I am not dealing with those issues. I have had industry associations talk to me about certain problems, but we are not dealing with those problems; they are somebody else's problem because they have nothing to do with this bill. This bill is about the right of union officials to get video and photographic evidence of what is happening in a workplace. Let us go back to the example of a person who walks into a warehouse. The advantage to the employer of the union official using a video to record what is happening in the warehouse with those sewing machines is that it is fact—we can see what is occurring.

I accept that there are arguments in a particular industry because there has been a breakdown in the relationship between the union and the employer association, but, again, this does not change the breakdown in the relationship between the Master Builders Association and the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union. This bill is not about that. If members want to propose a way to get those two groups back into friendship, I look forward to hearing that, but that is not what this bill is about. This provision does not throw any fuel on the fire of that dispute nor does it throw water on that fire, but it does give union officials a right to collect evidence that is not just an affidavit of what they saw. Quite frankly, I do not get why somebody would not want to collect the truth.

As I say, if members want to set up a regulatory framework around how that happens, I am very happy to do that, but I make it clear that this legislation does not give authority for a union official to put that video on Facebook. It does not authorise that. If the member wants an amendment to make that clearer, he should propose one, but to take the twentieth-century approach and say that we are going to ban the twenty-first century and nobody is allowed to use a mobile phone is ridiculous. I will give a final example before I sit down, and we can then hopefully vote on this. A little while ago, a driverless truck at a Rio site had broken down. The tradesman came out and disconnected the remote system. He then went into the truck to repair it and the first thing that happened was that he drove the truck over his own car. A photograph was taken of that incident, but Rio bans phones on the worksite. These things are going to happen whether employers admit it or not. This is not about authorising the putting up on a website of a video that attacks the MBA; this is about the proper —

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to hear further from the minister on this very important point about getting to the truth.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I was trying to time my finish to the countdown of the clock, but I am indebted to the member!

This is simply about how we can allow the twenty-first century collection of facts. I say to all industry associations and the opposition that if they want to suggest some amendments about how to do that, I look forward to talking to them when the bill is between the houses.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I want to put the clause as well, but given that the minister has spoken about some examples, let us be very clear: the next clause we will consider will extend the union right of entry into homes in some circumstances. When we are talking about workplaces, that includes people's homes. The capacity to photograph and video in people's homes could lead to some of the most serious breaches of privacy, as well as the breach of other rights, including intellectual property rights. In particular, I refer to the entry into people's homes that are workplaces in relation to services being provided to elderly or disabled people. The risk of misuse is significant. The question I will ask the minister is a question that a number of people have asked me: if this capacity becomes law, what remedy is provided in this legislation for misuse of this provision by the people who take the photography or the video? Is any remedy provided in this bill or is it left to the common law? Will all that the poor, unfortunate person who is seeking domestic help—the disabled or elderly person—be able to do is to get legal advice and maybe lodge a claim in the Magistrates Court, District Court, Supreme Court or whatever? Is any remedy for breach provided here?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: A range of penalties are available to everyone already. The point I keep making to the member is that I am not changing those provisions. Whatever the rules are about broadcasting things, they exist already. Not only am I not trying to reduce those protections, I cannot because they are commonwealth responsibilities. It is true there is a provision for access to a home for a union official—we will debate it in a minute—but let me give the member an example. I deliberately chose the example of a warehouse full of sewing machines because the member might remember the raids on houses in the northern suburbs where the people who were sewing were

not in a warehouse; they were in people's garages. These are real, live problems being dealt with by union officials every day—exploitation of vulnerable workers in our community in people's houses. The member for Hillarys is saying that we do not want to collect evidence of that potentially illegal conduct. I am saying that I want the evidence out there.

As I say, if somebody can describe to me what provision they want to deal with that will limit how the data is used, I am very happy to have that discussion. I want to make it clear: I am asking for that. I invite a proposal that does not ban the twenty-first century, but one that provides a sensible regulatory framework for the twenty-first century because everyone has a mobile phone, which is a recording device, a camera and a video camera. That is the reality of the way the world is. How will we regulate the twenty-first century? If the member can tell me how we do that, I am in the game. But just to say we will ban it is not sensible.

I will go over this point again. The member for Hillarys raised the extreme cases. The member for North West Central raised the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union and its relationship with the building industry. This legislation has nothing to do with that because that is a problem today. It has nothing to do with changing the law. It is today's law. The member for Hillarys raised the question of people going into someone's house. That is a genuine problem for today as well—where people are being exploited inside houses today. I make the point to the member for Hillarys that at the moment, the inspectorate can enter a house without any limit. Our bill proposes to put a limit on the capacity of the inspectorate to enter a house. Do not forget that; we will introduce a limit.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: We'll get to that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I know; we will. The point is the member raises arguments that do not relate to the real world and asks me to respond to them. That is not a sensible way forward. As I say, with respect to the problems between the construction union and the construction employer association, nothing in this bill will change any of those relationships. Whatever problems they have now, they will have them tomorrow. We will talk about right of entry to houses in a second. There is an extensive set of protections in here because we absolutely recognise the risk of union officials having right of entry. But there cannot be no right of entry because if workers choose to be represented by a union, they must have that right. The inspectorate must be able to go into a workplace and ensure that the laws are being complied with. The Master Builders Association says that the duty of government is to do the inspections and the enforcement; therefore, we have to have the tools to do that.

I think we have talked more than we should have. We will not support the amendment because we cannot say the twenty-first century does not exist.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr T.J. Healy) casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (19)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Dr D.J. Honey	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr K.M. O'Donnell
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr P.A. Katsambanis	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr D.T. Redman
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Ms L. Mettam	Mr P.J. Rundle
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Dr M.D. Nahan	Mr A. Krsticevic (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs A.K. Hayden	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.C. Nalder	

Noes (33)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr D.A. Templeman
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr M. McGowan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr R.R. Whitby
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Ms S.F. McGurk	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms A. Sanderson	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr T.J. Healy	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Mr M. Hughes	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire	

Amendment thus negated.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23: Section 49K replaced —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Clause 23 will replace existing section 49K with a new section. Existing section 49K is a very, very important protection. It is headed "No entry to premises used for habitation", and states —

An authorised representative does not have authority under this Division to enter any part of the premises of an employer that is principally used for habitation by the employer and his or her household.

Union officials acting as authorised representatives are not able to enter premises that are principally used for habitation. The bill seeks to amend this to continue that prohibition except when an authorised representative may apply to the commission for an order permitting them to enter the premises. When the commission makes an order it must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist that warrant the making of the order. To kick this off and for completeness, can the minister outline to the house why we need to change this strict prohibition into one that is not as strict and will allow that application process to be made?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Absolutely; that is a good question. I will explain later on why we do not agree with the member's amendment. This provision was inserted in 2002. I make it clear that it does not currently prevent an authorised representative from entering any part of a premises usually used for habitation by someone other than the employer. Aged-care facilities, group homes, hotels, motels or fly in, fly out camps are not excluded places. At the moment, a person working as a domestic worker in a home is not an employee. We are going to make them employees; therefore, we need to have the capacity for that person to have their rights enforced in the same way as any other worker does. I will give members an example. It might be a person working as an in-home child carer. If members have read any of the literature about in-home carers in Hong Kong or Singapore, they would be aware of the extraordinary number of problems that have occurred for those workers. They have been completely and utterly mistreated. We need a provision that says that if someone is in those circumstances, they will be able to have their rights enforced. That might include having a union official visit them at their workplace, which is the home. Clearly, a union official cannot just be let into someone's home. We have to build in a provision, which is that the union official can exercise that right only if they can prove to the commission that there are exceptional circumstances. It cannot be in ordinary circumstances or in any circumstances; it can only be in exceptional circumstances. Members should not forget that the commissioner is not a judicial officer, but they hold the same —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: Quasi-judicial.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: They are quasi-judicial. We are not giving the union official any direct right to enter a person's home—not at all! We are saying that if the union official can prove that something is exceptional, then and only then can they be given the right to enter.

The member for Hillarys' amendment says that the employer should be notified that there are exceptional circumstances. The member should think of the worker. He should read the literature about in-home carers in Asia—the stories of women who have been exploited in the circumstances. Can he then come back and tell me that the only way their rights can be enforced is if they tell the employer first? The member should come back and look me in the eye after he has read those stories and tell me that the only way that an exploited worker can have their rights enforced is if they tell their employer.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: The first part of the minister's statement answered my question. We accept the need to bring domestic workers under this legislation. It has been pointed out by the federal government that their exclusion has precluded the federal government from signing certain international conventions. We accept that domestic workers will be brought into the scheme. We further accept that, given that domestic workers are being brought into the industrial relations scheme —

Mr W.J. Johnston: I think I fixed your problem.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I will get to that. Part of the problem —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Your amendment is fixed.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: We will get there. The minister should let me articulate my concerns and then answer those rather than guessing what my concerns might be.

We accept that there may be extraordinarily limited circumstances in which this right will need to be enlivened because domestic workers have come under this legislation. We also question—we do not know the answer—whether leaving in a strict prohibition in the circumstances would mean that we are still noncompliant with those international conventions. We are cognisant of that. We are not insisting on maintaining the existing full and total prohibition in section 49K. We accept that it needs to be absolutely and utterly only in circumstances of last resort.

We do not accept that somehow or other by incorporating domestic workers into our industrial relations system, all of a sudden, domestic workers in Western Australia will end up with the same terms and conditions as exploited domestic workers in Singapore and Hong Kong. We are not creating a new category of worker. We are not saying that there have not been domestic workers in the past and now there are going to be domestic workers. Domestic workers exist now. If there was exploitation of domestic workers in Western Australia, significant attention would be paid to them.

Mr W.J. Johnston: There is!

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: The minister says that there is. There may well be, in some extremely limited circumstances, but we are not talking about Singapore or Hong Kong as an example. We are talking about the reality in Western Australia today for all those domestic workers and their employers who are not exploiting them. Workers who are caring for the elderly, the infirm, the disabled and the sick are not being exploited. Those disabled or elderly

people are not exploiters. People who are employing domestic help in other circumstances, such as nannies or housekeepers, are not exploiters. The Premier thinks that the western suburbs covers a far broader area, but I do not think many people in Carine would have housekeepers. Perhaps the member for Carine can tell us. Perhaps in places such as the western suburbs and in regional areas, people might have housekeepers. They are not being exploited now. We are enlivening their rights under the industrial relations system. We accept that, so we accept that there needs to be some very limited right of entry. I know that the minister will say that it is implied in the legislation that any application to the commission by an authorised representative will be heard and the employer who is alleged to be doing wrong will be given the opportunity to be heard. We say that that should be stipulated so that it is clear whether the application by the authorised representative is ex parte or involves a hearing in which the employer will be heard. There is no harm in the first part of the amendment that I am going to move in a moment.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I would like to hear a bit more from the member for Hillarys, if I can.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Thank you, member for Roe.

We are also saying that the power of the commission to make an order only if it is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist that warrant the making of the order is completely undefined and too broad. In particular, it runs the risk of significant amounts of jurisprudence before we get to the stage at which there is an accepted limit of what are exceptional circumstances and what are not. Really, at the end of the day, a union official is asking to access a worksite—in this case, a home—to obtain certain information, either physical or visual. They want to check out something and work out what is going on. The commissioner can bring the parties together and ask what the issues are and what the union official will be looking for if they go into the workplace, which is a home. The official can say that they are looking for A, B and C. The commissioner can ask whether the home owner—the employer—can provide that without the union official coming to their house. If the answer is yes, there we are. If they cannot provide it, the commissioner will say, “Well, we think this is a legitimate request. It has not been granted. Here’s your order to go into the property.” If it is not a legitimate request, or the request can be satisfied in any other way, they do not need to enter the property. That is why we have drafted the amendment to clause 23 standing in my name, which has been circulated. I will move it now. I move —

Page 25, lines 5 to 7 — To delete the lines and substitute —

- (3) The Commission may make the order only if it is satisfied that —
- (a) the owner or occupier of the habitation premises has had a chance to make representations to the Commission relating to the entry to the habitation premises; and
 - (b) the information sought by the authorised representative cannot be obtained in any manner other than entry to the habitation premises.

The opposition thinks that that is well calibrated. We sought parliamentary counsel assistance to draft the provision to make sure that it is accurate and that it uses the words that are required. I know that the minister will say that it is contemplated—it is not directly said in the minister’s amendment—that the parties will have a chance to be heard. We make it clear that the occupier of the home will get a chance to appear before the commission to put their case, and we also make it clear that the commissioner is there to decide. The union official says, “I seek information; this is what I want in my visit.” The commissioner says to the employer, “Can you provide this, please?” The employer says, “No, I can’t.” The commissioner then makes the assessment that it is a legitimate thing to seek, because that is what commissioners do, and gives the order. However, if the employer says, “I can provide this. You don’t need to come to my house; I’ll provide it for you, here it is.”, we have covered it off. That is what we are trying to do with this amendment.

We are not in any way trying to defeat the principles relating to the government’s amendment of the principal act. We accept that we need to make this extremely narrow exception; we are 100 per cent with the government on that. We accept that, and we also question whether, as I said, by not doing this we might still fall foul of that International Labour Organization convention. We are just saying that this is a better way to do it. It is clear and concise, and we do not leave it up to the commission over time to determine what the boundaries of “exceptional circumstances” may or may not be, resulting in argy-bargy and getting differences of opinion, depending upon the commissioner. One commissioner might think one way, and another might think another way. This way it is a case of, “Is the information legitimate?” “Yes.” “Can you get it without entering the home?” “Yes.” “If so, here you are.” If they will not give the information and it cannot be obtained any other way, then they are allowed to enter in these limited circumstances.

We think this amendment is well calibrated and we think it makes sense. We do not think it will derogate in any way from what the government is trying to achieve. If the minister cannot give a yes or no today, can he at least give us an undertaking that he will consider this in the stages between the houses? We would appreciate that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I need to apologise, because I was wrongly of the view that this was an ex parte provision, and of course it is not; only access to the habitation by the inspector is ex parte. I should have listened more closely to my advisers before I got things wrong. If there is an application under this provision, the application will be referred as an industrial matter to the commission, pursuant to section 29(1)(a) of the Industrial Relations Act. This means that the processes under section 32 of the act would apply to the application. Under section 32 of the act, the

commission would deal with the matter by conciliation and arbitration. This necessarily means that both parties—that is, the authorised representative and the home owner—would be involved, and the home owner would have the opportunity to put their case across. It is therefore unnecessary to make any amendment to the bill for a home owner specifically to be heard in situations in which an application is made, because that is exactly what would already occur under the provisions of the act. I misread that to understand that it was an ex parte application. It is, in fact, not an ex parte application, and therefore the home owner would be heard and in fact could potentially be conciliated before arbitration.

The only other difference is whether there are exceptional circumstances, or it is a situation proposed by the member—that the information sought by the authorised representative cannot be obtained in any manner other than by entry to the habitation premises. I make the point that that is actually a broader range of circumstances. The proposal from the Liberal Party is wider than is the proposal by the government. We are not allowing a circumstance in which the information cannot be obtained by another method; we are saying that it is only in exceptional circumstances. There could even be a situation in which information cannot be obtained except by entry, but the commission still does not consider it to be exceptional.

As a former tribunal member, I would have thought that the member would understand the proper role of decision-making in tribunals. I do not believe there is a challenge for the commissioners in making a decision about what “exceptional circumstances” might mean. Remember, “exceptional circumstances” means the ordinary words; just look it up in a dictionary, and that is what it means. We do not have to try to circumscribe the exercising of the commissioner’s jurisdiction, because they will exercise it under its common meaning, which is exceptional circumstances—not ordinary circumstances, and not circumstances that happen every day, but exceptional circumstances.

I will go further. The Fair Work Ombudsman is currently prosecuting the Sydney manager/director of Award Mortgage Solutions, Mr Tony Lam, in the Federal Court for allegedly paying his nanny \$2 per hour for working between 88 and 106 hours per week. This equates to an alleged underpayment of \$155 000 over 12 months. The idea that these things are not happening in our community is wrong.

The Salvation Army made a detailed submission to the ministerial review, setting out the very real issues attached to the exploitation of domestic workers in Australia, particularly migrant domestic workers. In its submission it cited the case of Zoltan and Melita Kovacs, who were convicted of intentionally possessing a slave in 2007. The Kovacs brought a young woman to Australia from the Philippines and required her to work in their store and perform domestic work in their home. She worked seven days a week and did not receive a regular wage. I want to make a point about this: as the law stands today, with regard to the woman in Sydney who is alleged to have received only \$2 per hour, in Western Australia that is currently lawful. I can tell the member that I am aware of a past situation of an Indonesian woman working in a family home in Fremantle, in 2018, for less than \$2 an hour. The idea that these things do not occur is wrong.

Mr D.R. MICHAEL: I would like to hear a lot more from the minister!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That woman had her passport taken from her after coming to Australia on a tourist visa. The idea that these things are not happening in our community is naive.

I will make another point. If the member is being lobbied by industry associations, I can tell him that no member of any of those industry associations will be impacted by these changes because they, by definition, are in industry; they are not about domestic service. These provisions apply to an unfortunately increasing number of people. It is not right to think that in our modern day and age, here in Perth, Western Australia, domestic workers are not being exploited. The point I make is that that is currently allowed under Western Australian law. The law in Western Australia allows people to be paid less than \$2 an hour, and that is what we are trying to fix.

As I said, this provision will allow a union official the right of entry in exceptional circumstances; not in ordinary circumstances, and not because they have an argument, but because there are exceptional circumstances. As I have pointed out, we do not need to put in a provision for the occupier to be heard because it is an industrial matter and therefore falls under section 32 of the Industrial Relations Act. The commission would deal with the matter by conciliation and arbitration which, by definition, means that both parties would be involved in the hearing. The member’s proposed amendment at proposed section 49K(3)(a) is therefore not necessary because it is already in the arrangement, and proposed section 49K(3)(b) is not required because it would expand, not reduce, the number of times a union official would be able to gain access to a home.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: As I said in my contribution, I accept that the construction of the clause, as proposed by the government, that someone has a right to be heard is not explicit. Clarifying that someone has the explicit right to be heard should be a harmless thing. In relation to whether my proposal is broader or narrower than exceptional circumstances, “exceptional circumstances” is undefined. It is as broad as a commissioner might want to determine it to be and, at appeal, it is as broad as a judge may want to determine it to be. It is undefined, and I would say in these circumstances of dealing with allowing someone to enter someone’s home, “undefined” means “ill-defined”. It is as simple as that.

With this amendment, we are trying to address the actual matter at hand. Entry is being sought for a reason—to seek certain information. If someone can do that without entry, it has solved the problem. If the application is the process by which we get together to solve the problem, that is great because we do not have the entry into someone's home. If the threat of such application achieves that and the information is handed over, that is again a great thing because we do not have entry into someone's home.

In the first few years of the operation of this provision, to leave it up to the commission and then eventually to a court of higher standing, to put a ring fence around what might or might not be exceptional circumstances, I think is doing a disservice both to the workers to be protected and to the home owners more particularly, who believe that their home is their castle.

I have seen some of the footage recently. One of the cases that the minister referred to was the importation of someone from overseas to work concurrently in a business and a household and they were not even given a bedroom but were basically bringing out a sleeping bag at the end of the day to lie on the floor in what looked like a lounge room or a dining room. That is horrific. But let us be frank; that sort of treatment is an absolute outlier in Australia. We all condemn it. We condemn any form of modern slavery. There are forms of modern slavery that are happening here today that we will not deal with through this legislation. We will have to deal with them in other manners—and we should. I do not think there is any reason why we should not address that because it is a problem. We are all at one on this. We just think that the calibration of this amendment, firstly, makes it clear that the home owner has a right to be heard and it is not left to some other provision in the act. We are dealing with people here. We are dealing with households. We are not dealing with traditional employers who may have a human resources department and perhaps an industry association to rely on or anything like that. We are dealing with individuals, particularly vulnerable individuals—disabled people, elderly people or people stressing to care for their loved ones and the like. Let us make it very clear that they have that power, and then let us curtail the entry to the issues at play. The issue at play is that we need information. Can we get it without entering? I think the minister would agree that it would be egregious to have circumstances such as the exploited workers in the other states he spoke about and the commissioner said that they could not enter and the information was not handed over. The amendment makes it very clear what the dispute may be about out in the real world, which is why we think that this amendment is a better way of achieving what we are in unity on attempting to achieve.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am pleased that the member will not defeat the bill if we do not pass his amendment. I am pleased that that is what the member just said.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: I didn't say that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member did. He said that he was in unity on getting this fixed.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: This particular provision—unity on fixing the provision.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We will not pass the amendment. It is not necessary and we are not agreeing to it. If the member is saying to me that he will defeat this bill if we do not agree to this, that is an outrage.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: That's not what I'm saying.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is what he is saying to me.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: So if we have a package of amendments that we believe improves the bill?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We are not agreeing to this amendment. If the member is saying to me that he will defeat this bill because I do not want to support his amendment, that is what he is saying to me.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: No, I'm not. I'm not. I'll get up and I'll respond.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: All right; so the member is going to pass this bill without his amendment.

Section 32 of the Industrial Relations Act 1979 states —

- (2) In endeavouring to resolve an industrial matter by conciliation the Commission shall do all such things as appear to it to be right and proper to assist the parties to reach an agreement on terms for the resolution of the matter.
- (3) Without limiting the generality of subsection (2) the Commission may, for the purposes of that subsection —
 - (a) arrange conferences of the parties or their representatives presided over by the Commission;
 - (b) arrange for the parties or their representatives to confer among themselves at a conference at which the Commission is not present.

Subsection (4) goes on about other powers. The commission already has extensive powers. I have already apologised: I thought it was the next part, a provision that comes later in respect of the Inspectorate—and rightly so. But in respect of this provision, the commission already has those powers. This application is made in accordance with the act; it is not separate to the act and the commission already has the powers that the member is asking for.

Finally, in respect of the amendment, paragraph (b) is much broader than the provision that the government is proposing. The member says that they will get together and sort things out. That is why I read out to the member the obligations of the commission under section 32(2) of the act. Those are things that the commission already does. I would have thought that the member for Hillarys, as a former member of a lay tribunal, would have respect for the capacity of the commission.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr T.J. Healy) casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (19)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Dr D.J. Honey	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr K.M. O'Donnell
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr P.A. Katsambanis	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr D.T. Redman
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Ms L. Mettam	Mr P.J. Rundle
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Dr M.D. Nahan	Mr A. Krsticevic (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs A.K. Hayden	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.C. Nalder	

Noes (31)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr P. Papalia	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr S.J. Price	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr M. McGowan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr R.R. Whitby
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms S.F. McGurk	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Ms A. Sanderson	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr T.J. Healy	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms J.J. Shaw	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr M. Hughes	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	

Amendment thus negated.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 24 to 26 put and passed.

Clause 27: Part II Division 3AA inserted —

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Clause 27 inserts new part II division 3AA, which introduces a stop bullying regime into the commission. It has become accepted at the federal level that bullying, although ordinarily treated as a work health and safety issue, is a legitimate issue that should be looked at in an industrial relations context. Fair Work Australia has a stop bullying regime. About 700 applications are made every year and about 10 per cent of them come from WA. About that same percentage—10 per cent—end up in Fair Work Australia with an order needing to be made. All the others, in one way or another, are resolved before they reach the stage of a hearing and an order being made. Some may be dismissed and some may be accepted in full; the majority of them, I imagine, would be negotiated. It is very important to stress that both at the federal level and in this jurisdiction, it is proposed that no compensation is payable under this process. It is really a process to create some framework to deal with the legitimate issue of bullying so that the employee and employer relationship can continue without bullying. That is good. We accept that.

We just want to clarify some issues that have been raised. First of all, paragraph 205 of the explanatory memorandum states —

The use of the term 'individual' and 'groups of individuals' is broad and intended to capture a wider range of persons than co-workers or an employer. For example, s 51BI(1) will capture clients or customers of the business or undertaking in which the worker works. It can therefore include an individual who is a national system employer or employee.

I seek some clarity from the minister. The way I read that is that a state system employer may have an employee who feels bullied by a supplier or contractor or someone like that. That person in the ordinary course of events, in their own right, might be a national system employer but in this context is just an individual who is bullying someone else, so when nothing happens, the employee takes the employer to the Industrial Relations Commission. The employee's employer is a state system employer. That is how I understand that. Is it any broader than that? Will it allow an employee to take action against their own employer if their own employer is a national system employer?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: By definition, if their employer is a national system employer, this provision would not apply because it applies only to state system employers.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Is the example I gave of a third party who might just be a national system employer what that provision, or that explanatory note, is intended to cover?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes. This provision is about state system employers and, therefore, their employees. We are extending to state system employees the same rights that currently exist for federal scheme employees. As the

member said, it might be the supplier not the employer who does the bullying and the employee has the right to take the person who is bullying them to the commission for a remedy. The employer might not be the respondent to the application; it could be the person who is doing the bullying. Of course, they can raise the problem with their employer. If they are unsatisfied with the action, they can also take their employer to the commission to seek a remedy, but that would be about the remedy in respect of the behaviour of the employer. Arguably, if they are a unionised employee, they could probably already take the same action under section 44 of the act, because it could be argued that there is a dispute. Obviously, we would now be in a situation in which we are continuing—which unions often do not like—to increase the right of employees to directly access the commission. This is another example of that, which, as I say, is not always popular amongst our union colleagues. But, yes, this is a provision in respect of a state system employee, by definition. If they are a state system employee, their employer is a state system employer. However, the reason for that note and the other commentary in the explanatory memorandum is that the bullying could be done by somebody who is not another employee or not a manager of the business, but is somebody from outside the business.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I am seeking clarity because stakeholders have been looking at this and have some issues with it. What will be the limits and boundaries of the jurisdiction? Paragraph 218 in the explanatory memorandum reads —

The power of the Commission to deal with a stop bullying application is also not limited by another provision of the IR Act or another enactment providing for the resolution of grievances or disputes by workers.

I generally understand why something like that would be included, because we do not want to limit other available remedies for employees. But what is there in this amendment or in other provisions to stop an employee in these circumstances from forum shopping and getting a better hearing in one forum rather than another, particularly in the context of when perhaps a WorkSafe investigation is on foot at the same time as an application in the Industrial Relations Commission?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is an interesting question. “Forum shopping” is an interesting term, because for the commission to exercise its functions under this provision, it must be satisfied that there is a matter to be heard. People can make complaints—there is no way of stopping a complaint—but the question is: what will be the result of a complaint? Let us take the example of a woman on a work site who is being sexually harassed. They might see that sexual harassment as sexual harassment and take it to the Equal Opportunity Commission, but they might see it as bullying and take it to the industrial tribunal. Potentially, they might say that it is a work health and safety question and take it to WorkSafe. I am not sure whether that is called forum shopping, but, rather, it is the victim determining how they want their matter dealt with. They can enliven the jurisdiction only if the jurisdiction is satisfied that the application is valid. I am less familiar with those other tribunals, but I am very familiar with the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission. The good news is that it is a simple layperson’s tribunal that is directed to get away from legal form and get to the heart of the challenge. The industrial commission is a great place to enliven this jurisdiction.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

CORONAVIRUS — SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE GRANT

Motion

MRS A.K. HAYDEN (Darling Range) [4.01 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the McGowan Labor government to stop neglecting our hardworking Western Australian small and family-run businesses by immediately providing a COVID-19 assistance grant to COVID-19 affected small businesses of up to \$10 000, like all other governments have done across Australia, because behind every small business is a family.

It is sad that we need to come into this place today and ask this government to take the Western Australian small business sector seriously and back it like every other state government across Australia has done. I want to say from the outset that the other states did this at the beginning of the pandemic. It is now August and we are still asking this government to show and lend support to our small businesses, which are the backbone of our state. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, I have been hearing from many diverse sectors of our small business community. They have been struggling with the reality of being forced to shut their doors, standing down staff, and not knowing whether they have a future and, if they do, what their future will look like. I must admit that many small businesses—I do mean many—have said that if they return, it will be a far leaner operation. That means fewer staff, fewer jobs, fewer people earning money and less money going to our families and into our households. As we all know, everyone in Western Australia is already suffering under the cost-of-living increases of \$850 a year inflicted upon them by this Labor McGowan government. To now hear that businesses will reopen their doors but come back leaner is a very scary and sad proposition, and unemployment levels will rise across our state.

As I said, some small businesses are reopening, which is fantastic. They have been able to pivot their business in an effort to reinvent themselves and to remain open and operational. Are they making money? That is yet to be seen, but they are just delighted to have their doors open and to welcome back some of their staff. I would like to take

this opportunity today to pay credit to those businesses that have actually achieved that and been able to reinvest and to reinvent themselves. Small business people are extremely dynamic individuals who are always eager to find a way out of a difficult solution. They are willing to adjust accordingly and they are always prepared to put everything on the line. However, it is worth noting that not all industries have that flexibility. Today I wish to highlight one of those industries in particular.

We are all well aware of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our cafes, restaurants, pubs, hotels and tourism operators. They have all received attention and been highlighted. However, the industry that has not had much support is our travel industry and our travel agents. The travel industry has had very little light shone on it. I believe that it, along with many other small businesses, has been forgotten in the development of the recovery plan and the stimulus packages. Another point that I want to quickly highlight is my concern with the high proportion of females in the travel industry who either are employed by or run a travel agency. As a side note, my biggest fear is that one of the fallouts of the COVID-19 pandemic is a massive drop in the number of women in the workplace. The first businesses that were shut down were in hospitality—cafes, restaurants and retailers. Those businesses predominantly employ women. I think it is worth highlighting as a long-term picture the concern that women will be left out of the workplace post-COVID-19. It is a matter that we need to address, but perhaps not today. I will go back to the topic of travel agents.

Despite travel agencies not being considered tourism-based businesses, they are still an important aspect of the industry. They have completely missed out on any state support. According to the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, there are about 300 storefront travel agencies and about 150 home agencies across Western Australia. About 3 000 people are employed in the retail travel industry across WA. As I said, 72 per cent of all retail travel agency staff are female and 70 per cent of travel agencies are mum-and-dad small business operators. What most people do not comprehend is that, currently, about \$100 million in outstanding travel credits are to be processed over the next two years, and an estimated \$200 million in travel refunds is owed in Western Australia alone. Thousands of holiday bookings have been cancelled—wedding trips, family reunions, special birthday celebrations and the bucket-list holiday. We all have that bucket list that we want to work through before we kick the bucket—some of us will be able to achieve that and some of us will not. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has seen the cancellation of many of these trips. These people have been scrimping and saving for years to go on these trips. Every one of these trips required deposits and booking fees to be paid in advance, so when COVID hit, not only did these holidays become broken dreams, but also it became a priority for these families that had been saving for these trips to have their deposits refunded.

With travel bans in place, travel agents were no longer able to earn a living, yet they had to keep their doors open to process these refunds. Every booking requires ongoing work, whether it is to cancel a trip, arrange a refund or postpone a trip to a later date, hoping for the best that the borders will reopen and the bucket-list trip can be realised. To make matters worse, these travel agents have to speak with the many providers from hotels, tour guide operations and airlines all over the world. The policies and circumstances of each district and industry have been constantly changing. We all know about the changes made here in Western Australia and their massive impact on a daily basis—what we can do, what we cannot do, whether businesses can open, whether businesses can bring back their staff, and the two-square-metre and four-square-metre rules. Those changes have been difficult for us. Imagine that at a higher level with the chaos occurring right now in other countries around the world that have a higher threat. These travel agencies have to deal with businesses in those countries on a daily basis. Of course, the industries in each country are changing their mind on a daily basis, and travel agents have to keep up with that all the time so that they can look after their clients. Let us remember that their clients are Western Australians as well. Clients are desperate to receive a refund. Obviously, in this time of COVID, everyone is looking to save what money they can. Clients are stressed out, extremely emotional and, I have to admit, not always on their best behaviour. Our travel agents are having to endure this. They are working long hours without being able to collect one cent for the hours and days they are working. Their staff still need to be paid, the rent still needs to be paid, the lights must stay on, and their phone bills are obviously going through the roof, having to keep up to date with the changes around the world. Some of the agents I have spoken to have taken on part-time work to be able to pay the bills at home. Obviously, they need to work during the day in their travel agencies, but they are having to work at night too. Some of them are stocking shelves in Woolworths. One has taken up a part-time job as a personal trainer in a gym in the evening. They are not only enduring long hours looking after their clients, but also having to pack up their business, go out and work again so that they can put food on the table for their family and pay their household bills.

Western Australia is processing around \$200 million of travel refunds. I have been led to believe that it is expected to take 10 months to process that \$200 million. That is 10 months of working without any revenue. Those agencies and travel agents are real heroes. They are on the front line. It may not be the medical front line, but it is the economic front line. Every single day they deal with Western Australians who want their money back. They do it for the love of and passion for their industry, but also the care for their clients and, as I said, without collecting a cent.

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents is very concerned about the mental health of the agents within its organisation. The agents are under extreme duress and they are trying to save their businesses while dealing with millions of dollars of cancellations and hundreds of clients calling in. Over the past months, I have asked the

minister and the Premier how similar small businesses are meant to keep their head above water. Today I ask the minister: how are the travel agents meant to keep their head above water while still providing that vital service? The last thing we want is to see them shut down, because thousands of Western Australians will be without any recourse to get their money back.

I have told the minister previously—I know he has heard this before—that I have had calls, emails and Zoom meetings and, more recently, thanks to our restrictions being relaxed, face-to-face meetings with small businesses and tourism operators. I have talked to businesses from Broome, Geraldton, Dongara, Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Albany and across the metropolitan area, including, of course, Darling Range. I raise these concerns on their behalf. They have asked me to keep raising this issue, keep putting this matter in front of the minister, and keep highlighting that they need the minister and this government to stand up for them and give them support. Our small business community is on its knees. We have only to open the newspaper or listen to the TV or radio stations to find, sadly, another story of a business that is struggling. They want to pivot; they want to adjust but, as I said earlier, not all can do that. Thousands of businesses are not able to pivot; they are not able to adjust and operate simply because of the current restrictions. Through no fault of their own, they have no alternative. Tourism is well recognised as being hard hit. Hospitality was hit extremely hard, but has now reopened on a small scale. However, in the events industry, the contractors, the skilled labour marketing, the promoters and so forth have a far slower pathway back than our hospitality sector, especially after yesterday's announcement that the Royal Show has been cancelled. I know the minister is well aware that the events industry and the carnival operators were excited to be able to get up and running again, but obviously, due to health advice, the decision has been made to shut that down. Their pathway back is far slower than they expected.

The pathway back for travel agents is even slower and more severe, with months and months, if not years, before they will be able to get up and operate again. The other week I sat down with four local home-based travel agents in Roleystone who told me how they have to pay back commissions that they earned six months ago. They have done their job; they have booked the holiday and they have got their commission. They have used that commission. They have put it back into their business and it has been spent, but they now have to repay the commission they were paid because the holidays were cancelled. It is through no fault of their own, but they are doing the right thing and taking the money out of their pocket and giving it back to their clients. The women I spoke to field calls every day, as I highlighted earlier, and it has taken a toll on them. It has taken a toll on them mentally and they are just trying to keep going. They get the odd phone call or message from a client thanking them, but at the moment everything they do, every holiday they cancel, is causing heartbreak for them.

I heard the same story when I was in Geraldton with our great candidate Rob Dines. He introduced me to Peter and Jenny from Helloworld Travel. Peter told me that \$10 000 would mean that they would be able to keep their doors open and continue through this tough time and help their clients and keep their staff on. Their three staff members are essential. They need the staff because they have the knowledge of the holidays, they have knowledge of the bookings, they know the clients and they have the skill set that is required to manage this serious and difficult situation they are all in.

I was pleased to see that a few of our travel agents have finally received some media attention. I want to draw members' attention to an article in WAtoday of 30 July by Aja Styles headed "‘Extremely distressing’: WA travel agents can't survive on stimulus so far provided". Even when the government attempts to put out a stimulus for small business operators, they are falling through the gaps. Small business operators have not been able to meet the criteria and be eligible for the packages that the minister and his government have put out. One of the packages was for cheap Virgin flights to the Kimberley for local travel agents. Travel agents thought that could have been a great opportunity to package a deal, get hold of those cheap Virgin flights and get them sent off, and be able to earn some money and help their customers have a great holiday experience. But, sadly, this was not available to the travel agents. Travel agents did not get an opportunity to work with the government and the airlines to build those packages before the announcement was made so that they could actually do some business. Everybody in Western Australia right now is supporting local. Everybody in Western Australia is happy to pay a little extra if it means that they are going to keep that business open on the street and they are going to keep local jobs going in their area. I honestly believe that if the government had worked with the travel agents on the cheap Virgin flights to the Kimberley, that would have been a great opportunity to make that stimulus go even further. When we offer a stimulus package, we need to, first, make sure that we have not created gaps; and, second, maximise that ability to stimulate as far and wide as possible. This is one that I believe was extremely mishandled and an opportunity missed by the state government. The WAtoday article states —

The 7800 tickets travelling between Perth, Broome and Kununurra got snapped up within 48 hours, leaving little opportunity for agents to utilise the deal, according to Christine Ross from Attadale Travel.

This is the travel industry begging and pleading to work with the government, but it was not given that opportunity. It was fantastic that 7 800 tickets were snapped up, but were they return tickets or just one-way tickets? Were they people travelling? Were they having to travel on their own or were they travelling with a partner? How do we know that these tickets actually went to the travel industry, to visitors and to people who were going to go out there and spend? We do not know that. Not using that opportunity to engage with our travel agents is a missed opportunity.

Mrs Ross said that flights in themselves provided very little margins to travel agents, who relied mostly on being able to sell packages that include hotel stays and tours as part of the deal. The article continues —

“We definitely need those types of discounted flights but there was not enough of them to be honest; they were gone so quickly that you couldn’t even package them and promote them and advertise them,” she said.

“So it really didn’t stimulate too much for us.”

How long do I keep paying for my business to be here to support the needs of Australian travellers ... at a really heavy expense for my family’s financial health, and my mental health?

Christine Ross, Attadale Travel

She is among 300 WA travel agencies lobbying the state government for a travel industry-specific survival grant of between \$5000–\$25,000 through to June 2021, to match similar small business support grants in other states and territories.

This is what the Australian Federation of Travel Agents is doing. I believe the minister has had a meeting with some of its representatives, so I will be interested to hear his thoughts on that and whether there will be any support for them. The article also states —

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents said the industry contributed about \$2 billion annually to the state economy. More than 70 per cent of WA travel agencies were owner-operated small businesses and employed 3500 people, most of who were women.

AFTA chairman Tom Manwaring said ...

“However, without tailored government support while we get back on our feet, the future is bleak.”

Flight Centre spokesman Haydn Long said they too had received no government assistance beyond JobKeeper.

“We raised money in April and increased our borrowings at the same time to get a runway in the order of 18 months with zero revenue,” ...

Again, they are getting assistance from the Liberal federal government with JobKeeper. I have heard the same story over and over—that if it were not for JobKeeper, these businesses would have been shut and gone long ago. The Liberal federal government stepped up and supported them. They are now asking the state government to do the same. The minister’s response in the article was that —

“The travel agent sector faces unique challenges driven principally by international border closures, a responsibility of the federal government,” ...

I also wrote to the minister to ask him a question along the same lines about support for our small businesses and travel agents, and he also gave that response to me—that it is a federal responsibility and that he wiped his hands of it. I do not understand how the Minister for Small Business could just wipe his hands clean of these small business operators in Western Australia. Yes, travel agents may be shut down because of international border closures, but they are also shut down because of state border closures. They are shut down because of COVID-19—through no fault of their own—but they are still servicing Western Australians, for whom the minister is responsible, to make sure that they get their refunds. To palm it off and say that it is only a federal government responsibility is quite disappointing, to say the least. The minister needs to start standing up for the very sectors for which he is the minister—small business and tourism. The minister said further on in the article —

“I undertook to phone [federal Tourism Minister] Simon Birmingham and ask him to consider creating a working group, including industry representatives from the travel agent sector, to look at the challenges they confront and propose a way forward.”

I am super keen to find out when the minister responds today whether he has done what he said he would do and has spoken to the minister, Hon Simon Birmingham, or written to him to ask for what he said he would ask. If he has received a response, I would like to know what it was. I would also like to know what the minister plans to do if he does not receive a response, so that we can move forward on this.

As I said, an article came from my visit to Geraldton that again highlighted the need for our travel agents to get support. A \$10 000 grant would allow them to see it through to the end of this year and even further, to be able to keep their staff on, their lights on, their doors open and servicing their customers. I am begging the minister, on behalf of the travel agents to whom I have spoken, to listen to this and take up their plight and the argument that they are putting forward. I also met with travel agents in Roleystone. Another article on ABC online news on 19 August again highlighted the need for assistance to our small businesses. The article also quotes Ms Ross from Attadale Travel, under the subheading “All work, no pay for travel agents right now”, and states —

She has only been able to retain her four staff members with the help of JobKeeper payments, but fears what will happen when that payment ends.

“Effectively the entire business has been decimated,” she said.

At the same time, she and her staff are working harder than ever because of the amount of time it takes to chase refunds.

“The time that it takes to make a booking usually will equate to about the same amount of time it takes to undo a booking in usual times,” ...

“In Covid times you could say four, five, six times longer to undo a booking because the wholesalers, the airlines, the cruise companies are not operating with full staff because they just can’t, because they are bleeding.

“So we spend four, five hours on hold on phone calls.

“If it took me 25-30 hours to make a complicated booking, it’s probably taken me somewhere in the vicinity of 80 to 100 hours to undo that booking.”

In the initial weeks of the pandemic, Ms Ross worked seven days a week.

“It was absolutely relentless and extremely distressing,” ...

“We had clients who were on cruise ships off South America that weren’t being allowed to go into any of the ports, trying to get them home, a lot of elderly clients.

“We had families that were displaced from each other trying to get them home, flights being cancelled over and over, countries being unable to be transited through, so it was a really distressing time for the clients.”

Each cancellation ‘heartbreaking’ as holiday dreams dashed

City Beach travel agent Jo Francis tells a similar story.

“Every holiday I’ve had to cancel has been heartbreaking,” she said.

“And I know for a lot of people it’s not something that they’ll be able to do again.

“A lot of them are elderly, or it was for a special event, weddings all sorts of things have had to be cancelled or postponed.”

She said with refund policies constantly changing as international borders close and reopen, it had been been a frustrating time for agents and customers alike.

“I did have a couple of clients who were pretty distressed and did get pretty angry with me, and I tried my best to talk them through that,” she said.

“These days as I’m dealing with clients, people are much more understanding, but it’s been really tough.

“I think my role is a public servant right now. I feel like I’m providing a free-of-charge service because I don’t get paid for what I do anymore.”

As I said, travel agents are on the front line looking after Western Australians. If they were not there, who would do this for them? If they were not there, hundreds of millions of dollars would not be returned to Western Australians. These ladies are doing an extremely tough job. It is emotional. They are simply asking for some support.

I know the minister will get up and start listing off all the grants and stimulus packages that he and the Premier have provided to small business, but I want to go through them in detail. The majority of small businesses have missed out on all the grants that the minister will outline today. I will start with commercial tenancies. To be eligible for the commercial tenancy package, businesses need to have had a 30 per cent drop in revenue. What members need to understand is that the majority of businesses had already had that drop in revenue prior to COVID-19. Retail was doing it tough. Small businesses were doing it tough. Everyone was doing it tough prior to COVID-19 coming along. Then COVID-19 dropped. Even if revenue dropped another five, 10 or 15 per cent, it was enough to hurt them, but it was not enough to make them eligible, because they had already experienced a drop prior to COVID-19. They have also had the stress of dealing with their landlords. I can say that some landlords have been excellent; other landlords could improve their customer relations. They could also perhaps support the small businesses that are paying the rent and have been tenants for a very long time, but we are not here to discuss landlords right now. The businesses I have spoken to have not been assisted by the commercial tenancies package. A couple have had some help, but many have fallen through the gap because they have not been able to prove that 30 per cent drop, which is the eligibility requirement for COVID-19 relief.

Payroll tax relief of a \$17 500 payback grant is available to employers with an annual payroll between \$1 million and \$4 million. I do not know the last time the minister spoke to a small business operator, but not many have a \$1 million payroll. Most small businesses do not have a payroll of \$1 million-plus. I asked the Treasurer a question on notice about how many small businesses had applied for payroll tax relief. I asked him to advise how many small businesses had been able to access the \$17 500 payroll tax relief. The answer was that 5 300 employees claimed the waiver, but—this is the kicker—this includes payroll of up to \$7.5 million. Again, I do not know any small business that has a \$7.5 million payroll. Of the businesses across Western Australia applying for payroll tax relief, 5 300 have

a payroll of up to \$7.5 million but the payroll must amount to over \$1 million to pay payroll tax. Currently, there is no data on how many have received that payment. I believe it was automatically paid in mid-July so I have a question for the Treasurer to find out how many of those 5 300 businesses received the grant and how many of the 5 300 were small businesses. I think I can guess the answer, but we live in hope. I have heard feedback on the ground, and I have not met one small business owner who can benefit from the payroll tax relief.

I refer to the tourism survival package, which the minister said would be the bee's knees in supporting our tourism sector, with \$6 500 to support 1 600 tourism operators. I admit that at the time I said 1 600 was not nearly enough. There are over 28 000 tourism-related businesses, and I know the minister has another figure of, I think, around 5 000 tourism businesses. Even if we work on a figure of 5 000 tourism businesses, the minister was offering 1 600 tourism businesses \$6 500 from a massive fund of \$10.4 million. From an answer I received from the minister to a question on notice, out of the 1 600 grants available, only 884 tourism operators qualified and received that funding. The minister even fell short of his own target of 1 600 businesses. Only 884 businesses qualified to receive the funding out of the \$10.4 million. That means the minister dished out just over \$5.7 million to the 884 businesses and that he has over \$4.6 million left in the kitty. The amount of \$4.6 million is sitting in the minister's kitty and that could be helping our small business operators right now. However, because he made the criteria so tight, he has not been able to assist even his own target of 1 600 business and has left thousands of tourism businesses without any assistance at all. When the minister dangled a carrot and said that he had the answer to support tourism and small business, all he did was deliver them a lemon.

I am keen to know what is happening with the \$4.6 million he has left stashed away from the \$10.4 million fund. Where is the \$4.6 million? When will the businesses get it and will they get it in time, or is he waiting for them to shut their doors for good? The other issue he is going to spruik is his tourism recovery grants of between \$25 000 and \$100 000, again with a cap of \$4 million. Maybe he could add that other \$4 million and double it. That would be nice, because at the moment, the grant of between \$25 000 and \$100 000 with a cap of \$4 million will support only 40 businesses if they all receive \$100 000. Let us give the minister the benefit of the doubt and say that all the applicants will get only \$25 000—the lower end. He will still help only 160 businesses. Out of 226 000 small businesses across Western Australia, the minister has a recovery grant that will help between only 40 and 160 businesses. Let us give the minister some credit and say he will help the maximum number of 160 out of 226 000 small businesses. That is appalling. The feedback I have received from the sector is that the application process is way too onerous; it is complicated and requires a lot of detail and a lot of depth. Many of them are saying they cannot fill in the form and have to employ an accountant or a bookkeeper to do so. I need to remind the minister that these businesses are doing it tough. They do not have money in the bank to employ an accountant or a bookkeeper to fill in a form to apply for money because they are in trouble. They are applying for the grant because they are in hardship. The minister is saying, "We'll give you money, but fill in this form. I know you won't be able to fill it out; you'll have to pay someone to do that." What does that mean? The minister hopes people will not put in the application. Will he keep the \$4 million and put it with the other \$4.6 million he did not dole out?

I am very keen to find out. I know we do not have the figures yet but I will be asking how many people applied for this grant and I am very keen to see how many people were successful. It is another stimulus by his government that has let down thousands of small businesses. His one-off small business tariff offset of \$2 500 to businesses that use under 50 megawatts of power is great—fantastic! However, his own media release said that he will be able to help only 95 000 businesses if they all apply and if they are all eligible. Again, of the more than 220 000 small businesses, his package will help a maximum of 95 000 businesses. I was interested to hear today in question time the answer to one of my questions when the Premier spruiked that this will help hundreds of thousands of small businesses. Hundreds of thousands of small businesses will receive the one-off small business tariff offset. I suggest the minister update the Premier that his package will not deliver what he thinks it will. Not only are small businesses being sold a carrot and delivered a lemon, but also I think he has sold his Premier a lemon because he believes this will help hundreds of thousands of small businesses, when the minister's media release says 9 720 to be precise, because, again, he is applying a cap of \$236.8 million. I have talked to businesses out there and they have said that if they use under 50 megawatts of power, they will not be able to apply. All they will need is a cooler fridge in the corner containing drinks and, bang, they are gone—they cannot apply. Again his one-off small business tariff is falling short and making a massive hole for our small businesses to fall through.

I refer to a small business grant. Hang on—wait; he does not have one. Every other state around the country has one, but this minister does not. I will touch on that in a moment.

I refer to the PIVOT program, which I suppose is one of the newer programs that has come out. The Small Business Development Commission will deliver a free recovery program to businesses with fewer than 20 staff, including sole traders, that will offer online webinars, mentoring and tools to help WA small businesses develop new ways of operating to successfully pivot operations following the impact of COVID-19. That is great; I am glad to see the SBDC knows what a small business is. The minister may need to read its briefing notes a little more closely. Sole traders are included, which is fantastic, but again it does not address businesses that are unable to pivot; it does not help businesses, such as our travel agents, to change the way they operate due to a situation that is no fault of their

own. Our events industry cannot pivot. Until they can conduct events such as the Perth Royal Show, they cannot pivot their business. People cannot put a sideshow alley ride on the side of the river and start selling tickets. It cannot happen. Again, the PIVOT program sounds lovely; it sounds warm and fluffy but it will not deliver.

I note that last week when I asked a question in Parliament some comments were made by the minister and the Premier that no other state is offering a \$10 000 grant. It obviously highlights that the minister is not in touch with his counterparts in the other states. I encourage him to do a little research because some states around Australia are doing extremely well. They are supporting their small businesses; they understand that our small business industries are our backbone. They understand our small businesses are mum-and-dad operators.

Mr P. Papalia: Are you sure I said that?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: On the floor of the chamber.

Mr P. Papalia: Are you sure you're not misleading Parliament?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I am not misleading Parliament. Unlike the minister, I do not mislead Parliament.

Mr P. Papalia: Are you sure you're not misleading Parliament right now saying that I said that?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I will ignore the minister because he is being silly.

Mr P. Papalia: I know what I said.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I am encouraging the minister —

Mr P. Papalia: You're not misleading Parliament?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I said the minister and the Premier.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Give her a chance to respond.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Gentlemen!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I used that term guardedly!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I am trying to highlight that if the minister was in touch with his counterparts in other states, he would be well aware of what stimulus packages they are providing to their small business sectors. The Northern Territory is absolutely outstanding in what it is doing to promote and support its small businesses. As I was trying to say, small businesses provide us with local jobs. They are run by mums and dads, fathers and sons, and mothers and daughters. They are awesome businesses, which are trying to keep their heads afloat. They employ local people —

Ms A. Sanderson interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can the member for Morley shush? She just walked in!

Ms A. Sanderson interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The member is so rude and pathetic!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Member for Darling Range, if you would like, please talk to me.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Absolutely. You are a lot nicer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I am paid to listen.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: If the minister had engaged with his counterparts, which I strongly suggest he does, he would have learnt of other packages that he could implement in Western Australia, which would be welcomed and would support our small business sector.

On 21 March, Victoria announced a \$500 million business support fund, which provided one-off grants of \$10 000 to support affected businesses in the hardest hit sectors, including hospitality and tourism, accommodation and food services, arts and entertainment, health and beauty services, retail other than supermarkets, groceries, liquor and pharmacy businesses, and other services such as real estate agencies as assessed against the criteria. On 21 March, Victoria was right in there! Right at the start of the COVID pandemic, Victoria stepped up and provided a \$10 000 grant to its small business operators. It understood the need to put security and support behind those businesses. On 17 March—again, right at the very beginning—New South Wales announced a \$1.6 billion tax cut to support businesses. On 3 April, it announced a \$10 000 grant to provide fast relief for New South Wales' small businesses battling COVID-19. Again, New South Wales understood the importance of supporting its small businesses. I note that last week in Parliament comments were made that other states are not giving \$10 000 grants, that they could not be found and that I was making it up.

Mr P. Papalia: I am glad you're correcting yourself now. I told you that I did not say that.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Will the minister please shush? I did not say the minister; I said the minister and the Premier. A member interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The minister needs to sit when he talks. He needs to abide by the rules.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The minister is walking through the chamber and talking to the member on her feet.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is quite right, member for North West Central. Minister, you need to be in your seat to address people. I also point out that you should not be interjecting at the moment. The member for Darling Range has indicated at least twice that she is not accepting interjections at the moment.

Mr P. Papalia: As long as she is not misleading anymore.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, please be a bit careful.

Debate Resumed

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: It is obvious that this minister has no respect for anybody or anything—not even the rules of this place.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do not bait him.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The Queensland government is another state government that has stepped up in support of its small businesses and understands how important its small business sector is. It understands the employment opportunities it creates and delivers. It gave businesses a \$10 000 grant under its \$100 million package to help them counter the impact of COVID-19. It was a \$100 million package of \$10 000 grants to its small businesses. Members should compare that to our \$10.4 million package, of which the minister spent just over half. The minister has a long way to go!

The South Australian government announced not one round of grants, but two—one on 11 March and the other on 26 March. It understood, the minute that COVID hit, the need to get in and support its small businesses. Unlike this government, it acted quickly and helped its small businesses. It gave two rounds of \$10 000 emergency cash grants to small businesses on 11 March and 26 March. Well done, South Australia! It did a fantastic job.

The Tasmanian government understands its small businesses and the need to support them and that government has to get behind them, back them up, give them confidence and let them know that that their government has their back in times of need. Unlike WA, Tasmania also stepped up. It gave out emergency grants of \$2 500 to businesses under severe hardship. It gave an additional small business hardship grant of \$15 000. A sum of \$20 million was allocated to provide a one-off grant of \$15 000 to those businesses that had been highly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. That was up to \$20 million allocated by Tasmania. If Tasmania can afford to put \$20 million in the pool to support its small businesses, why can WA not? We have had a huge GST return, we get great iron ore royalties and have far more income coming to our state than Tasmania. Tasmania put its money where its mouth is, with \$20 million to support its small businesses. Let me check. It was \$20 million. I just wanted to ensure that I was not misleading Parliament!

I mentioned how great the Northern Territory was. The Northern Territory government needs to be acknowledged for its extremely hard work and its commitment to its small business sector. It created a \$50 million small business survival fund for businesses across the Northern Territory. It had five different packages. To help its small businesses, it not only provided \$50 million of grants, but also helped its businesses with the paperwork. Businesses filled in one application and the government then assessed which grant they were eligible for. Businesses were not eligible for just one grant; they were eligible for all five grants. Getting one grant did not stop businesses getting the third, fourth or fifth grants.

The Northern Territory government gave businesses an immediate survival payment of \$2 000 for businesses with one full-time equivalent employee, \$5 000 for businesses with two to four employees, \$20 000 for businesses with five to 19 employees, and \$50 000 for businesses with more than 20 staff. Let us say that a travel agent has about five to six employees. It would have received \$20 000 from the Northern Territory government. It did not stop there. Businesses could go on to the rapid adaption payment. Businesses with one employee could get up to \$1 000 and \$5 000 for other eligible businesses to offset costs. If a business had five employees, they would now receive another \$5 000. That would be \$25 000 from the Northern Territory government. The third grant was the operational boost payment. Businesses were also able to apply for that on the one application form. A business with five employees would be entitled to another \$16 800. That grant started from \$2 800 for businesses with one employee and went up to \$42 000 for businesses with more than 15 employees. Then there was the operational support statement. Businesses with an annual turnover of greater than \$75 000 were able to get another grant to help pay their full-time staff of \$1 000 for each full-time employee to be paid fortnightly, to a maximum of \$15 000 for each payment. After businesses received all the other payments, the Northern Territory government backed them even more and helped them with their staff. Why did it do that? It helped businesses and kept their people employed. The last

grant was the rebound support grant. Businesses would still be able to get that even if they had been successful for the four previous grants. They could get the rebound support grant, which was the government helping businesses to rebound. If people needed to invest in their business to rebound, they could get grants of an unmatched portion worth up to \$5 000. After that, if people wanted to invest in the business even more, the government would match their contribution dollar-for-dollar up to \$10 000. The maximum grant range was between \$10 000 and \$15 000 in total. The Northern Territory is leading the way in supporting its small businesses. It is leading the way in making sure that its local community members have jobs to get up to get up to go in the morning.

They go to work and come back with money in their pockets to put food on the table. They have money in their pockets to support other small businesses. That is how a government can start getting the economy to turn around.

We need to make sure that our small businesses are getting support. It is obvious that the WA state Labor government has ignored our small business sector. That is obvious just by looking at what other states around Australia have done and what the Minister for Small Business has not done. Comparing all the Western Australian programs I have mentioned, from which small businesses are unable to get funding, with what is happening in other states shows that the minister has failed in his portfolio, he has failed the small business sector of Western Australia and he has failed the tourism sector of Western Australia.

Members will be beginning to understand why I brought this motion on today, and the importance of it. It may be long and laborious for the minister to sit here and listen to these stories, but he needs to listen because he does not understand the dire need out there. He does not understand how desperate our small business operators are. Every single day they are getting up, going to work, incurring bills and not getting money through the door. The minister needs to start standing up for the small business sector.

Several members interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Would the member like to know? Protect West Security—look it up. Operating for 25 years, and still operating successfully.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you are in the chair in a minute, so I do not want to send you home. Can you just be quiet, please. Members, can we let the member for Darling Range finish? I suspect she is on the downward slope now.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I am, but they are encouraging me to keep going!

The fact that government members all think this is a joke and are actually laughing shows their lack of respect for our small business sector. The small business sector is vital to WA's economy and to WA jobs. It is mums and dads who are operating these businesses, and members opposite are laughing at them while they are struggling. Shame on every single one of them. They think it is a joke to come in here and think that these stories are not real. These people are struggling every single day, and members opposite think it is a joke. They go home in their flash cars with their good incomes, which they take to their homes. I suppose when they go out, they are drinking champagne and celebrating their secure income while small businesses are struggling. They are a disgrace.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think Hansard is probably a little bit worried about now, so if members want any of what they are screaming at each other to be recorded, it would be good if Hansard could hear it. One at a time, please. The member for Darling Range still has the call.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I will ignore the people on the back bench—who will not be there for very long.

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

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

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Before I was rudely interrupted by people who do not understand the need for our small business sector, I was explaining the reason I brought this motion to the attention of the house today. We have businesses that are going to the wall, and businesses that, if they do reopen, will reopen as leaner operations, and that means fewer jobs. Unless we get behind these businesses and start supporting them, our unemployment rate is going to go through the roof. Our unemployment rate is already the second highest in the country. I do not know what reputation this government wants to have, but unless it starts taking this issue seriously, it is going to have a reputation for having overseen the largest number of small business bankruptcies, the largest number of businesses closing their doors, and the highest unemployment rate that the state has seen for a very long time.

I have been urged by many small business operators and travel agents to raise a petition to try to highlight this issue. I have a petition online to ask the Premier and the Treasurer to put forward their plan for a \$10 000 grant to help our struggling family run small businesses that are suffering from the effects of COVID-19. Western Australia is the only state in Australia that is not supporting small business, and that is beyond shameful; it is absolutely alarming, and demonstrates the Labor government's lack of understanding.

I do not know what the figures are the moment, but before the outbreak of COVID-19, Western Australia had 226 000 small businesses, which represented 96 per cent of all businesses in our state. We have more than 28 000 tourism-related businesses in Western Australia. Since 22 March many of them have been forced to close and stand down staff, through no fault of their own. It is a long time to have to shut the doors of a business and face that reality every single day. They were the first and hardest hit, and they will take the longest to recover. The majority of them are ineligible to receive the funding this government pretended to put up.

As I said, small businesses are the backbone of our state. They are run by local families, mums and dads, fathers and sons, and mothers and daughters. They provide our local jobs and, at the end of the day, they are Western Australians who deserve to have their back covered by their state government. That is why I am standing here today, calling on the Premier and the Minister for Small Business to immediately provide a COVID-19 grant for small businesses of up to \$10 000, as all other state governments across Australia have done, because behind every business is a family that has to pay their bills.

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [4.55 pm]: I stand in support of the member for Darling Range and the motion she has moved today on the lack of support for small businesses that has been provided by the Western Australian state government. It is without question an undisputed fact that the McGowan government has provided the lowest level of support for households and businesses of any state in Australia. It is an undisputed fact that it has under-delivered for the people of Western Australia, and what it has promised has proved to be a lot of smoke and mirrors. We do not have to look much further past rent relief and some of its payroll tax programs to see that although the government spruiks a large number and says it is supporting people, no-one can access that support; very few people can actually access it. There is a lot of smoke and mirrors in what the government has promised, but even what it did promise was the smallest level of state government support for households and businesses in Australia.

Let us have a closer look at some of the economic indicators that the Western Australian business community is currently facing. The problem with the McGowan government's Minister for Small Business is that he does not understand the consequences of poor policy decisions. Some of the policies that this minister has supported have had detrimental impacts on small businesses in Western Australia. Let us look at households. Members might sit there and say, "What do household prices have to do with small businesses?" They have everything to do with small businesses. Small businesses rely on the equity in their homes to actually finance their operations, and in Western Australia there has been a continual decline in housing values for 100 per cent of this term of the McGowan government. It is fascinating that the Treasurer has, in fact, misled this Parliament by stating that 60 per cent of the fall in household prices happened under the previous government. In fact, 60 per cent of the fall in household prices has actually occurred under the McGowan government.

At one point the median house price in Western Australia was above that of New South Wales. Nobody in their right mind thought it was realistic to expect that our housing prices would continue to grow above the median price in Sydney; we would not expect that. But, at this point, the median house price in Perth has fallen below that of Adelaide, and is nearly \$50 000 less than that of Hobart. We have had a 21.8 per cent decrease in housing values since a peak in 2014. That decrease is actually restricting small businesses from getting up and operating. What is this government doing about it? It actually put policies in place to put downward demand on housing. As housing values continue to fall, small businesses have less equity in their houses to be able to start up or even finance their businesses.

The government might say, "Oh, it's not our fault; it's not us. It's whatever the reason may be." I am saying right here and right now that the policies of the McGowan government have contributed to the erosion of housing values in Western Australia and made life even more difficult for small businesses in Western Australia. Let us have a look at a couple of them to highlight the point. One was the change in regional migration status, which went on the political line "local jobs for local kids". No-one in this room would disagree with that. When it comes to local jobs, we all want to put our kids first and foremost. But when the government changed the regional migration status, there was no reduction in the number of people immigrating into Western Australia from overseas. The same number of people came through, but the international students bypassed Western Australia and went to South Australia and Tasmania. Those states' domestic economies started to spike but ours kept going down. Our market share of international students, which Australia-wide in the 2018–19 financial year was a \$37.5 billion industry, dropped from seven and a half per cent to five and a half per cent. That was a reduction of opportunity in Western Australia and it decreased the state demand. Our domestic economy lost \$750 million per annum. It was the equivalent of 12 000 students, who would have sought accommodation. In fact, under the rules, their parents could buy properties in their names. Losing those students put a downward demand in the property sector.

The government brought in a foreign buyers' surcharge. At the time, as the shadow Treasurer, I pleaded with the Treasurer to defer it. We were not against the principle of a foreign buyers' surcharge, but, given the state of the domestic economy and the housing industry in Western Australia, it was not the time to introduce it. We pleaded with the Treasurer and, as an opposition, we were accused of putting the interests of foreign investors ahead of Western Australians. What a joke! We warned the government that the surcharge would strip further demand out of the housing sector at a time when the housing industry was on its knees—and what happened? Housing prices fell further and faster. In 2019, we saw the largest fall in housing prices since they started declining. The median house price went down around nine per cent in 2019.

These are the government's policies. Government members sit there saying, "Oh, it's not our fault. Oh, we've changed it. Oh, we've still collected foreign buyers' surcharge that we wouldn't have otherwise." But the government has not measured the amount of stamp duty that it has lost or the rebates it has given back to foreign buyers. The government has given more rebates to foreigners than what the foreign buyers' tax would be. For apartments costing less than \$720 000, the rebate is greater than what the foreign buyers' surcharge would be. The government has done that now, but it is all a little bit too late because the damage is done and we have already seen the dramatic fall in housing prices. At that point in time, the Premier was spruiking that we had bottomed out and that it was the perfect time to go and buy a house. What great financial advice that was! I believe that if the Premier provides financial advice, he should be responsible for the losses that people are facing. He has taken no accountability for that decision. The Minister for Small Business—with the smug look on his face all the time in this chamber—has taken no responsibility for the damage that he has done to small businesses in Western Australia. That minister is a part of cabinet and he has to take responsibility for the decisions that he makes.

Taking housing prices another step further, we have now seen that one in five houses in Western Australia are in negative equity. One in five home owners owe more on their mortgage than the actual value of their property. How can they borrow against that to establish their small business? The government has taken away that opportunity. Under this McGowan government, people in Western Australia are financially worse off than the rest of Australia. People's net position is based on the value they have in their house. The Australian dream is to own your own house—that is what people take pride in—but the government has destroyed the value of people's net wealth. At the same time, government members sit there saying, "Oh, we're doing a great job. We're doing a great job." But they are ignoring these facts. Western Australians are financially worse off and it is not just in housing prices.

The member for Darling Range touched on the unemployment rate, which is now sitting at 8.3 per cent. This state is supposedly leading the nation in its attack on the coronavirus and we have the most relaxed environment in Australia, but we have the second highest unemployment rate in Western Australia's history. Wow, that is a proud achievement of the government! There are 62 400 fewer Australians employed than were employed pre-coronavirus. We have not had a community transmission since 11 April. We are now in mid-August and we still have not had a community transmission, yet our unemployment rate is the second highest in Australia.

These issues actually hurt small business. Of all the states in Australia, we have the biggest decline in wages growth during the coronavirus. In addition, during the previous three and a half years of the McGowan government, wages growth was the lowest of any state in Australia. These issues flow through and if members are wondering what this has to do with small business, it has everything to do with it because businesses cannot work under the restrictive policies of the state government and therefore cannot afford to pay people. We are seeing the weakest wages' growth for the entire period. In addition, business investment in Western Australia has declined every year under the McGowan government. Every year is worse than the previous year. The government members are saying, "Oh, look at us. Look at what we've achieved." But the government is not delivering for households or small businesses, and it is an absolute sham.

What other conditions has the government taken on to make small businesses hurt? In its first two years of government, it went hard on electricity prices and attacked the fixed component, which had an adverse impact on those who could least afford it and 20 000 small businesses experienced a 40 per cent increase in electricity charges. The smallest businesses were adversely impacted by these utility increases. We had a situation in which housing prices were falling and small business could not access its equity; utility prices increased dramatically, impacting on the viability of small businesses; and policies from the McGowan government adversely impacted on housing values and on small business to run effectively and efficiently—all these things had a detrimental effect on our domestic economy and small businesses in Western Australia. Therefore, it is more than reasonable that the member for Darling Range, who clearly pointed out the flaws in the policies and plans that the government has put in place, should appeal to the government to do what every other jurisdiction did in Australia. It should support our smallest businesses just like the other states have done for smallest businesses that are not paying payroll tax. We are talking about the smallest end of business, but it makes up the highest number of businesses in Western Australia. Small business owners have every right to feel aggrieved that the state government has not supported them—not one iota.

I want to take this one step further. Some businesses have been able to get up and get going and that is a blessing, but we want to see more effort from this government in putting support in place where there are restrictions. Small businesses in the agricultural sector are really concerned about getting people to work on the farms, to pick fruit and to harvest crops et cetera. Other jurisdictions in Australia are trying to work out how to keep their state or territory safe whilst trying to get people in to support small businesses. We are not seeing anything like that from this government to support small businesses. All it is saying is, "Our unemployment rate is high. Those people can go down there and work." It is not doing anything to work with industry and to support small businesses so that they can deliver on the opportunity that is coming with the current harvest.

Mr A. Krsticevic: They are telling the industry they should do it themselves. They don't want to help.

Mr D.C. NALDER: That is exactly right, member for Carine. They are ignoring the industry and leaving it to find its own way, while making it impossible for businesses to operate.

I close by saying that I fully support the motion put forward by the member for Darling Range. Western Australian small businesses deserve this government's support and, to date, it has been absent.

MR K.M. O'DONNELL (Kalgoorlie) [5.10 pm]: I, too, would like to talk on this subject. I support the comments of the members for Bateman and Darling Range, calling on the McGowan Labor government to stop neglecting our hardworking Western Australian small and family-run businesses and to immediately provide a COVID-19 assistance grant of up to \$10 000 like all other governments across Australia have done, because every small business is a family.

Looking across the country, it clearly becomes apparent that Western Australia is lagging behind the other states in providing COVID-19 assistance grants to small and family-run businesses. New South Wales has a \$750 million small business grant program that helps businesses with fixed costs such as utilities and rent. Grants of \$3 000 are available to help small businesses safely reopen after COVID-19 to cover expenses such as marketing, advertising, fit-out changes, training, paying staff to work safely under current health conditions and financial advice. But to receive all that, they must be a small business or a not-for-profit organisation based in New South Wales, have an ABN and a turnover of more than \$75 000.

Queensland has made available through its small business COVID-19 adaption grant program \$100 million in small business grants for projects worth up to \$10 million. Businesses can apply to help pay for their operating costs, access digital technologies to rebuild business operations, upskill and reskill business owners and staff, and create or retain employment. It is also good to note that they are available specifically for regional small businesses located outside south east Queensland. There are various eligibility criteria, including that they must have been subject to closure or otherwise highly impacted by current shutdown restrictions, have experienced a minimum 30 per cent decline since 23 March 2020, and have an ABN, an annual turnover of \$75 000 and a payroll of less than \$1.3 million.

In South Australia, \$10 000 emergency one-off cash grants are available to businesses that are deemed to be highly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, or subject to closure. Obviously, they must meet set criteria to be eligible. Businesses must have an ABN, be carrying on a business within South Australia, be employing people in South Australia, have a turnover of more than \$75 000—which appears to be the benchmark for many states—and have a payroll of less than \$1.5 million.

The Northern Territory has a small business survival fund of \$50 million, which focuses on businesses in the hospitality and tourism sectors. Businesses can apply to be listed on the business hardship register, which allows them to waive or defer payment of payroll tax and reduce utility bills and rates when provided, and offers incentives for landlords. Again, eligible businesses must have an ABN.

Tasmania has the small business emergency support grants program to support small businesses such as companies involved in the seafood, tourism, accommodation, retail, hospitality, art, entertainment and fitness sectors. It also offers a small business hardship grant of \$15 000 to assist with the long-term impact on Tasmanian small businesses. Tasmania is a small state, yet it is offering \$15 000 to small businesses. It also has a \$5 000 small business sustainability and recovery grant program that offers grants of up to \$3 000 to sustain small businesses across a number of sectors so that they can recover, reopen, build capacity and innovate in these challenging times. Eligible businesses, too, must have an ABN and, in this instance, an annual turnover of more than \$50 000.

Victoria has a business support fund expansion program, which offers one-off grants of \$5 000. Again, businesses must have an ABN, be registered for GST, employ people and be registered with WorkSafe Victoria.

As for Western Australia, it has the small business relief package of \$17 500 for eligible businesses, the criteria for which states that it is only for small businesses with a payroll between \$1 million and \$4 million. How many small businesses meet that criteria? Certainly not those in my electorate that are struggling. None of the eligibility criteria for the other states' programs is attainable in WA. Many other states have set their payroll criteria at just above \$75 000. That is what we are looking at—small businesses, not businesses with a payroll in excess of \$1 million.

I was talking to one business owner who said that the \$17 500 is great. He pays \$12 000 in payroll tax, but got \$17 500! That is fantastic. But if someone pays \$50 000 in payroll tax, they get only \$17 500 on the same formula. Also, if a business is just above the payroll tax threshold and pays \$500 in payroll tax, they will get \$17 500. The worst case is for businesses that are just under the threshold and are not paying payroll tax; they do not get anything. I know that we have to draw a line in the sand somewhere, but in this instance the government has put the threshold at between \$1 million and \$4 million. There is nothing for small businesses with turnovers of \$75 000. We want them to be included.

It is estimated that 10 700 businesses are eligible for that \$17 500, which is only 4.7 per cent of small to medium-sized businesses. A business with a payroll of up to \$4 million is heading towards being a medium business. I do not classify that as a small business.

I was at a playgroup the other day and it got \$2 500 for its electricity bill. That is fantastic, but we really need to be looking after small businesses. It is said that there is no need to apply for the \$17 500 grant; it will be automatically sent to all qualifying businesses. If we are going to look after small business, I do not think anybody would begrudge people applying for it. There is one for job employment. A business can get people on the books and, when people apply, they can start going through all the applications. That is an improvement for employment.

I was speaking to a local travel agent, who arguably would be in the one industry that has been most affected by the pandemic. I was disappointed to find that a travel business must be a member of certain associations to receive assistance. Blind Freddy knows how affected they are. They get nothing. They need an accessible support package now, not when it is too late. They are selling the family home just to pay the bills.

Also, there is a husband and wife who own a newsagent across the road from my office. They start their day at three in the morning delivering newspapers. They open their shop at 6.00 am and close it at 6.00 pm. Then they stay on to finish any paperwork and to prepare for the next day. They said that they do not normally get home until seven at night. They end up working anywhere between 15 and 17 hours a day. They close on Sundays. When I asked them what a \$10 000 grant would do for them, they said lots. It would mean that they could employ someone to help out and to give them a break. It could go towards making the storefront more attractive to entice customers and putting in more shelving so that they could sell more things to make more money and to improve their bottom line.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes.

Mr P. Papalia: They've got a lot of money.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: They have got a lot of money.

Mr P. Papalia: You should ask them what we've done for them.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Okay, I will the next time I go in.

Then we have Ruby and Long, a Vietnamese couple who own and run a bakery in Maritana Street. Again, they are very hardworking. Long starts in the early evening and works all night. He does his deliveries in the morning and then helps out in the shop. Ruby comes in in the early hours of the morning to help. Their mother, Manoi—I refer to her as Manoi from Hanoi—looks after their triplets. Ruby first had triplets and then she had another child. She has four kids who are in their early years at school and that family is doing it very tough. An extra \$10 000 could help them to employ someone to help out, or they could do up their shopfront and a few other things to entice people into their shop.

Aaron, Ben and Brendan own the Miners Rest Motel, a family-run overland hotel. They have seen a dramatic drop in revenue since COVID started. They were catering for tourists, fly in, fly out workers and others and it has been a struggle for them. I spoke with Aaron recently and asked what a grant would do to help his business. He said that it would be fantastic; it would absolutely help. He said that their hotel price rates have been the same for eight years and a grant would help to promote the business and get people in, especially from the tourism sector. Although their overheads have not disappeared, their paying customers have. If they have any increase in costs, it is because of all the extra measures they had to implement just to be able to trade. A small business grant would really help a business like theirs.

Mark, Marisol and their kids run Freerange Supplies, a camping, fishing and firearms shop. They work very long hours and, again, this is a family-run business that would benefit from having some financial assistance to not only help them through these challenging times, but also promote and encourage people to come to their shop.

I agree with the other members who suggested that an immediate one-off payment could be offered to small businesses with a turnover above \$75 000, like the other states have provided, and that criteria should apply; I do not begrudge that. I would even go further to say that regional businesses should be given a higher amount if they can put the money towards employing someone from a non-regional area to move to a region and work in that business. For example, a one-off payment of \$10 000 could be provided for small business to relocate people. We need more people in the regions. I remember the Premier saying earlier this week that people should consider moving to the regions for work instead of working in just the metropolitan areas. We need small business grants to ensure that regional small businesses thrive. If a grant can assist in bringing others to the regions, it is a win for all.

I keep hearing about how great the mining industry is: how it has kept the country running and people employed and how so much money is coming in because of that industry. Let us use some of that money to help the businesses that support our mining towns. Am I being cynical when I think that that money might be being kept for something else in the budget? Hopefully, the government is not storing the money away just to make the budget look good. People would understand it if the government told them that it has used some money prior to the budget. I am sure that the government would not want to be labelled as Scrooge McDuck, having a vault full of coins.

I want to touch on just a couple of issues around government assistance. The one-off payment of \$2 500 for those customers consuming less than 50 megawatts of electricity per annum was very good. I am not going to bag and bag the government; if it does something good, I will acknowledge it. I would like the government to revisit the tourism recovery grant and consider some of the tour operators who did not fall under the criteria and how they could be assisted. The one-off payroll tax grant of \$17 500 to help those businesses with an annual payroll of \$1 million is good—it helps that group of businesses—but it does not help the small family-run businesses. It would be great if the minister could revisit that grant.

Finally—some of the other members have mentioned this—as of 19 August, 62 500 jobs have been lost since February this year. We now have 8 700 fewer full-time jobs than we did in March 2017. Currently, 119 700 Western Australians are unemployed and the unemployment rate is 8.3 per cent, the second highest in Australia. We have 67 000 people on JobKeeper. If we did not have JobKeeper, our unemployment rate could skyrocket anywhere up to 13 per cent. Thank you, minister. I appreciate your time.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [5.25 pm]: Back in 2017, when the Minister for Small Business; Tourism got his portfolios, he would have thought: “You beauty! Minister for good times! I have tourism and small business; this is going to be easy!” What a change of fate. Tourism and small business have become the two most important portfolio areas in the state government. What we have here, in his own words, is a mediocre, midrange minister when it comes to tourism and small business—who is not respected in those industries.

Mr P. Papalia: That’s a bit harsh. That’s a bit of a stretch—come on!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We are meant to tell the truth in this place. As I travel around and meet with organisations such as the Tourism Council Western Australia or the visitor centres, tourism groups or small businesses, or whether I am speaking to people in Kalbarri or Broome or out in the bush in Cue or Meekatharra, the common theme is that this government has left small businesses adrift. This government is riding on the popularity of the Premier to get it through, and it has no plan for small businesses and tourism businesses in Western Australia. The plan is to Wander out Yonder, a campaign hatched on the east coast—taxpayers’ money gone to the east coast, employees on the east coast, but the Buy Local campaign is going well! We all know where the Buy Local campaigns is: it is not here, it is over east!

When it comes to priorities for tourism and small business, it is fate that the borders have closed. We have to commend the Premier for his strong stance on the borders, which continues, but it has meant that people have no choice but to travel around Western Australia. We could have had any slogan to encourage people to travel to these places! But that aside, our regional towns such as Kalbarri, Shark Bay, Coral Bay, Exmouth and many others are under pressure because they cannot find workers. If they can find workers, they cannot find workers’ accommodation. The Premier’s response is: “Just go to regional WA. Get a couch. Lie somewhere. You’re young enough!” Well, yes, I think we all acknowledge that that does suit some elements of the population, but we need a plan. How do we attract 18 to 25-year-olds to regional WA? The campaign should be: “Go Bush! Go and have a gap year”, because we need a plan to convince our 18 to 25-year-olds—those who will go to university but who generally first go overseas and have a gap year—to have a gap year in regional WA.

That sounds all very well and sensible and logical, but we have to place them. If they work in hospitality, they can go up the road and work on a plantation, but we have to show them the seasonality that exists in regional WA to enable them to be employed over the 12 months. They may be able to work in Kalbarri for three months, go to Carnarvon for three months, and then all the way to the Kimberley for another three months. They could have that opportunity to be employed for 12 months so they can enjoy regional Western Australia and see the sites. They can go to Mount Augustus, the biggest rock in Australia. They can go to Ningaloo Reef. They can go to the skywalk at Kalbarri. They can go fishing. They can go camping. They can go surfing—all those things that people do when they go overseas, they actually can do in Western Australia. But we have to sell it. We have to entice people and get them out. Perhaps the \$10 000 grant the member for Darling Range has advocated for small business can be used to entice workers from Perth to the regions. Perhaps that is one way of enticing them. We must be able to assist small businesses to pay for accommodation, which has gone through the roof. A lack of accommodation means that prices have gone up. People cannot find accommodation even if they want to visit a lot of those places, so there is a problem there. We could offset some of those costs.

The government can be judged on closing the borders and keeping us safe. Yes; I think we would all put up our hand and acknowledge that. However, the real test is to assist our community, assist small businesses and assist the tourism businesses. How do we do that? That is the true test of the government. It has to come up with a campaign, but not just a slogan. The government has to come up with a way it can work. It must educate the community that people can have 12 months of employment if they go from one place in Western Australia to another.

There needs to be a longer-term plan. We all know that the international borders are not going to open any time soon. We do not know when the interstate borders will open up. Even if interstate borders open up in, say, July next year, people will come here in droves, which will put more pressure on small businesses; more pressure on Exmouth, Coral Bay, Shark Bay, Carnarvon and Kalbarri and inland to Meekatharra, Cue and the Kimberley, because everyone will be travelling everywhere. All of those areas will be under pressure so there needs to be a long-term plan by the government other than just saying that it kept us safe. No, no, no—now is the time to start planning. When we put questions on notice about the \$5 billion recovery plan, there is smoke and mirrors and sleight of hand. For example, as I mentioned today, \$2 500 is going to Horizon Power customers in regional Western Australia, but there is a 10.6 per cent increase on lighting for local governments.

Mr D.T. Redman: Give with one hand and take with the other.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes, and here we go. It is not just that, but small businesses and community groups have all been bit with an increase. The government says, “Oh no, we had that planned.” The plan is that we are all in this together. It does not seem like that.

We have those charges and then there is sleight of hand and smoke and mirrors. Out of the \$5 billion, around \$1.3 billion—I could be wrong—is from future charges. Take that away. Future charges? That is not aiding recovery. That is not, “We are all in this together.” That is saying, “One day I am going to do this.” That is not recovery. What is concerning is how much money has actually been spent. How much money has hit the ground? Members will find that little has hit the ground and that there are no time frames on a lot of the projects that have been announced—no time frames. This may play out in due course, once the budget is handed down and we are able to scrutinise what is going on. However, what we know at present and what we know will hit our businesses hard come school holidays, Christmas, next year and potentially the year after, is that our small businesses are under huge stress.

The owner of a hotel in Broome called me to say that his chef had worked 26 days straight. He had a day off and went to pick up a car in Derby. He picked up his car but was so tired that he crashed it. The reaction by the people who went to his rescue was, “How the hell did you survive that crash?” He was absolutely exhausted. Nearly every small business has a similar story. Last week in this house the minister mentioned that the owners of Finlay’s in Kalbarri were being innovative and had rented a house. Yes, they have been fortunate that they can do that, but they cannot get workers. Even if businesses are fortunate enough to be able to rent a house, they still cannot get workers.

We need a campaign. Yes, we need a slogan. “Go Bush” is a slogan. Go north, go east, go south —

Mr D.T. Redman: Go yonder!

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Go yonder! I like that, member for Warren–Blackwood. I am going to steal that slogan from you!

Go yonder: 18 to 25-year-olds should go and have a gap year. We need a plan more than a slogan from the Labor government. Businesses need some assistance with accommodation and potentially relocation costs. How do we attract those workers to go yonder; to go out bush and help our regional towns?

We should not say it is about only the 18 to 25-year-olds. There are seniors who are already travelling around in their caravan. They are happy to work a few hours’ a day, whether in Cue or elsewhere in the north. Wherever—they are happy to do it. What discussions has the government had with the federal government to change the way our seniors think about this, to be able to fill a void? How can they earn a little more money? These are the types of discussions that I expect government members to have with their federal counterparts—coming up with solutions to a problem that is crippling our businesses and which ultimately cripples our tourism product. If people cannot get a meal or they have to wait two hours for food, or they cannot get into their hotel room at two o’clock and have to wait until seven o’clock because there is no-one to clean the room, or they wait half an hour to have a beer because the line is long, that is an issue. They are the problems that small businesses face, particularly in regional Western Australia.

The Minister for Tourism thought this was an easy portfolio: “Yes, I have won lotto!” The minister for good times has turned out to have one of the most important portfolio areas for this state in this critical time and we are not seeing any action. We saw the bungle with the \$14 million to assist small businesses, then we read the fine print that said they had to be a member of the Tourism Council or another regional tourism organisation, but they could not be a member of the industry they belonged to. If they are the caravan industry or a hotel association, their accreditation does not matter. Perhaps the minister can talk about how many businesses actually access that \$6 500. How many businesses missed out that could have done with that \$6 500? It will be interesting to see who gets the other \$4 million, I think it is, for larger grants. It was \$14 million to assist our tourism industry, back when they had no tourists. It is not business as usual because the government opened the regional borders and allowed people to travel. It is not business as usual. People are still reliant on JobKeeper. One of the issues is that JobSeeker discourages people from going to work. I know that changes in September, but we will see how that affects our small businesses and their ability to employ people.

What is the government doing to deal with some of those issues? What conversations have ministers had with their federal counterparts? The mental health of a lot of small business people is at breaking point. Businesses are closing their doors. The Potshot Hotel Resort is packed but it is closing its doors one night a week. Grace’s Tavern in Exmouth is closing its doors one night a week. Businesses in Kalbarri and Shark Bay are doing the same so that they can take a break, because they have no staff. All I hear from members opposite is bizarre. This is the reality. When I first started speaking tonight, I said that not many people respect the minister because of his smug, arrogant view of how small businesses and tourism businesses are operating.

Mr P. Papalia: I thought that was a bit unkind.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No. The minister has no understanding of the pressure that businesses are under, particularly in regional WA.

Mr P. Papalia: So what have you done?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Actions speak louder than words, minister. The actions coming from the minister are zilch. They are doughnuts. The minister could help small businesses by making sure that they have workers and that the

workers have accommodation. The government should build some workers' accommodation. That is what we did when we were in government. It took the pressure off Karratha and Coral Bay. I am glad the minister is in here. We built a \$17.5 million 70-bed facility in Coral Bay for workers' accommodation. It is now due for the next lot because businesses cannot expand to cater for the public. That is why some further beds need to be put there.

One other issue for the Treasurer and the ministers who are present is the influx of people to places like Exmouth and Coral Bay. I will pick those two towns. There can be potentially 20 000-plus people in Exmouth, while Coral Bay can have 6 000 to 8 000 people. A volunteer ambulance service is meant to look after all those people. Small business owners are run off their feet. Coral Bay, for example, does not even have a four-wheel-drive ambulance. If there is an accident down at Warroora or anywhere along the coastline, they have to use their own ute. We hear stories about someone having perished, and they have had to put them on a board, put them in the back of the ute and drive them to the road, where they can get the normal ambulance to pick them up and take them away. There can be 6 000 to 8 000 people in Coral Bay but no police, because there is no police accommodation. It costs thousands and thousands of dollars for police to go to Coral Bay, and that takes police away from Exmouth, which has 20 000-plus people.

Several members interjected.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I heard the comment, "Eight and a half years to do something." We actually did something. However, an influx of people is putting pressure on all the services. The sewage ponds cannot cope with the number of people in Exmouth. This pressure is occurring. The government talks about the recovery plan, but where the recovery is occurring, there is no plan; there are only slogans about keeping the borders closed and Clive Palmer. It is smoke and mirrors and a sleight of hand. The Minister for Tourism; Small Business is incompetent, because he laughs at the challenges that regional communities and businesses are facing. As I said, in Coral Bay, the volunteer ambulance service is catering for 8 000 people, small businesses are under pressure and there is no police presence. Yes, there are two nurses there, but I tell members what: if they get hurt along the coastline up north in WA, they will be in serious trouble, not because of a lack of volunteers who want to save them, but because there is a lack of support from the government. The volunteers are fundraising to get a four-wheel-drive ambulance for Coral Bay, but the government cannot even come to the rescue. Clearly, we have a fundamental problem here. The road to recovery does not include our regional towns. It does not include the vital infrastructure that we need to be able to keep their constituents—Perth constituents—safe when they visit the north.

I urge the minister to represent the portfolio areas he is in charge of and become a champion of small business and tourism businesses. He should do what they are pleading with him to do—that is, represent them. He should fight for them. He should get a blood nose. He might not get it right all the time, but he should give it a crack, because people's lives are being put at risk because of mental health issues and the lack of services in regional WA. I support this motion because we need to do more for our small businesses, particularly in regional WA.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse) [5.45 pm]: I rise in support of the motion presented by the member for Darling Range and mirror the comments of the member for North West Central by calling on the Minister for Tourism; Small Business to represent those businesses in regional WA. Further to that, we are once again calling on this government to be a government for all Western Australians, and not just for those in Labor seats. The motion reads —

That this house calls on the McGowan Labor government to stop neglecting our hardworking Western Australian small and family-run businesses by immediately providing a COVID-19 assistance grant to COVID-19 affected small businesses of up to \$10 000, like all other governments have done across Australia, because behind every small business is a family.

That very worthy motion has been put forward by the member for Darling Range. When COVID-19 became a significant issue back in March, businesses obediently responded to the obvious restrictions that were required in response to the health crisis we faced. Many shut their doors. Since then, they have followed the necessary restrictions. Governments have responded with some assistance for small businesses, but state government assistance in Western Australia has fallen well short of what has been provided in other states. In fact, when it comes to the financial support that has been provided to small businesses in this state, many businesses would point to the great financial assistance provided at a federal level by the Morrison government in the form of JobSeeker and JobKeeper, but when it comes to state government assistance, many small businesses have been left wanting. That is because a dedicated stimulus for small businesses has been absent. The member for Darling Range has been advocating for that very strongly, with a lot of support for her online petition as well. There has been a tourism recovery fund, but that package is available to only 1 600 businesses across the state. There has been an appeal from this side of the house and many small businesses as well to expand the criteria beyond the operators who are accredited with the Tourism Council Western Australia or Australia's South West. There are 2 700 businesses in the south west, so the fact that this program targets only 1 600 businesses across the whole state illustrates the level of the shortfall.

The payroll tax benefit grant has been very much welcomed as well, but in the tourism sector, which has been heavily hit during this period, small businesses with a turnover of less than \$1 million, such as cafes, restaurants, retailers and sole traders, have not been eligible. I will read some comments from a couple of small business

operators in my electorate. One is from a travel agent, and it should be of no surprise to anyone on this side of the house, or to many of the other states across the nation that recognise the need to support the travel industry. I quote Anita Ness of Helloworld who states —

The travel industry and in particular travel agents were the very first to be hit with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in most cases at least 6 weeks before any other industry felt the financial effects and we will very likely be the absolute last to recover considering there is no immediate plans to open interstate or international borders which is our entire business.

Travel agents have no way of offering an alternate way to operate a viable financial business in this environment, put simply we only sell travel and this has been completely halted. Our agency has experienced a 100% downturn in the past 4 months we have nil income and in fact in some cases are having commissions clawed back from us that were earned for work on bookings already undertaken 8–10 months ago that we have already spent the hours doing the work, paying our staff, paying our rent, paying our taxes and then this earnings is clawed back with suppliers cancellations.

Anne Johnston of the Comfort Inn Busselton River Resort states that she is not eligible for the funding package. She was a member of the Australian Tourism Industry Association until recently, but it was cost prohibitive and provided no return on her investment. She has been in business for 15 years and annually provided complimentary accommodation to visitor centres for events such as WA Iron Man. Despite years of supporting the industry, she is not eligible for the tourism recovery package. I might also point out that Anne Johnston of the Busselton River Resort was not eligible for any assistance with her energy usage. In light of her energy costs and the government's announcement about the \$2 500 credit for small businesses in that state, she writes —

Whilst this is a great initiative and will provide much needed support to many businesses and organisations, it does not cover off on many small businesses who are deemed ineligible because of the Tariff they are charged by Synergy.

She states further on —

Because we are on the R3 Tariff, even though we are a small business, we are ineligible for the credit. The reason we are on the R3 Tariff is because we consume more than 50 MWh/annum of power.

According to Synergy, once an organisation consumes more than that, it is automatically “migrated”. Her business consumes so much power because she is an accommodation supplier. Necessarily, as part of that model as a tourism operator, she does not get that level of support. We have written to government at ministerial level but, unfortunately, she has been unsuccessful for that support, as well as being unsuccessful as a small business operator under the so-called tourism support packages that have been promoted by this government.

We know the tourism industry has been dealt a significant hit during this period. It lost more than \$3 billion or more than 30 000 jobs, and six months' worth of bookings were cancelled. Overall, tourism has seen a 26 per cent hit since about this time last year. Admittedly, compared with other regions, the south west region has done reasonably well, with growth of six per cent due to the increase in tourist numbers.

Mr P. Papalia: Where are these numbers from?

Ms L. METTAM: From the Tourism Council of WA.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes. That is genuine feedback. I think it is quite clear and true that the state government does not have a dedicated package of support for our small businesses. Stories are true from operators who are not eligible for any level of support, whether it is Anne Johnston of the Busselton River Resort or others from the travel agents industry. There is some concern. The figures do not lie. There is high unemployment in the state at the moment, well above the national level, and it is the second highest in the country. The real unemployment rate is significantly more than 8.3 per cent. Our tourism regions are really hurting.

In addition to the comments about the dedicated stimulus, I would like to again touch on a point I made at the very beginning of this speech—that is, that we need to see a government for all of Western Australia. We want to see a Minister for Tourism who is a minister for every region and every tourism region. Unfortunately, when we look at investment in tourism, we have seen some really poor examples in this space of the level of support in the electorate of Vasse or the broader Margaret River region. An injection of \$150 million of investment into the tourism industry that was announced recently was welcome. However, it was disappointing that no funding was provided for the Australian Underwater Discovery Centre project. As the minister may be aware, the Busselton jetty has been named WA's major tourism attraction for the last two years. It is the most popular paid tourist destination outside Perth, beating only Perth Zoo. There is a real opportunity here to match some funding that has been provided at the federal level to support a \$30 million project for a world-class facility that will make the underwater observatory the largest in the world. It would support the Busselton Airport project, a project, I might add, that the minister called “a pup”, which is quite insulting from a Minister for Tourism.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: It would help the project to expand. We thought the minister was an advocate for regional aviation, but it is quite clearly only for other areas. It is disappointing because Jetstar was committed to those flights, and it is ambitious.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: The minister has missed the point. I am talking about the comments made by the Minister for Tourism well before the pandemic. We look forward to some support and to Jetstar getting on board and perhaps some renewed support for this project to bring flights from Melbourne to Busselton well after the COVID crisis is over.

In relation to picking winners and the fact that this is not a minister for all Western Australia, I point to a letter I wrote to him in July regarding CinefestOZ. He commented on the Shinju Matsuri Festival most recently when I raised the issue about the festival. The McGowan government has been, rightly, applauded for its health response to the COVID pandemic, but quite clearly there are issues around support for small business. It is fantastic to see that CinefestOZ will be one of the first major tourism events to be delivered here in regional WA and WA as a whole. This year, unfortunately, there is no funding for the major prize. Acknowledging and accepting the challenges that have come as a result of COVID-19, the team has worked very hard to fit in as the restrictions have been adjusted. On 28 July 2020, I wrote to the Minister for Small Business. As the lucrative festival prize, which is Australia's richest, was no longer on offer, I asked whether there was an opportunity for \$100 000 to be provided to promote the event with digital marketing to target social media and traditional media. That funding was requested because the team at CinefestOZ had a very limited lead time in which to promote the event. The film prize that is associated with the event, which is Australia's richest, had been given up this year because it was not known what level of restrictions would be in place. Given that the team had shifted its plans with the changing restrictions in support of the government and had worked very hard to deliver a program of 40 live events, which were scheduled between Busselton and Margaret River, it was disappointing that the answer was simply no. In his response, the minister wrote —

As you state, I understand the event is now principally a virtual/live event with limited real screenings and live events to be held from 25–30 August 2020. I both acknowledge and empathise with the challenging times the events industry is facing due to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The minister's reply went on to state that that had been relayed to the chair and the CEO. It is disappointing that this letter indicates that it has not been spelt out to the minister that CinefestOZ had planned live events, which would support small businesses across the region. Although, in April and May, the focus of the event was limited because of permitted crowd numbers, with the restrictions changing, the focus changed. This is a program that supports Orana Cinemas, the Esplanade Hotel, the Equinox restaurant, Margaret River HEART, the Eagle Bay Brewing Company, the Rose Hotel and, of course, many other businesses. The festival supports small businesses and was seeking only \$100 000 in support, which would have indirectly supported those other small businesses across the region. The event has received funding in support of not only its events goal and tourism goal, but also the educational benefits it provides. In addition, Indigifest provides broad community benefits.

Those are two examples of what I stated at the start of my contribution; that is, we are not seeing a government for all of Western Australia. Most importantly, we are not seeing genuine support for our small businesses across the board, which is the theme of the motion we are speaking in support of today. Western Australia has seen the lowest level of support for small businesses in the country, with no dedicated stimulus package for small businesses. That is at a time when we have the second worst unemployment rate in the nation. That is why we on this side of the house support the member for Darling Range in her efforts to see a dedicated support package of up to \$10 000 introduced for our small businesses. It is a commendable motion, which this side of the house thoroughly supports.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Mr Acting Speaker!

Mr P. Papalia: Mr Acting Speaker!

The ACTING SPEAKER: The minister has the call. Member for Churchlands, we will go back and forth.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Small Business) [6.05 pm]: There is no need to. We have heard from the opposition for two hours. I think that is more than adequate. There has been a lot of repetition of not much substance. At the outset, I will say that in the highly unlikely event that any small business owner has had the tenacity to have endured the excruciating contributions that we have had to submit ourselves to over the last two hours, I extend to them thanks, yet again, on behalf of the state government and the Premier for their forbearance and willingness to sacrifice self-interest on behalf of their fellow citizens. They have made a contribution, like the rest of Western Australians, towards ensuring that the response to COVID-19 in Western Australia has been the equal of any in Australia. In fact, I believe that it has been easily the best. It is probably the equal of any response in the world. That can be attributed to the fine leadership that we have witnessed and the great governance system that we enjoy and, above all, the willingness of Western Australians, in particular small businesses, to make that sacrifice of self-interest and support this government's measures to combat the threat of COVID-19. If any small business owners have been able to sustain themselves by perhaps going away from the live feed for some time and coming back at this important moment, I again convey my thanks and that of the government for their contribution.

I am confused by the contributions, which is not surprising. I am not necessarily easily confused, but it is almost as though we in Western Australia exited isolation and lockdown, but the members of the Liberal Party stayed in lockdown. They are still back there in the darkened room, with all the windows shut and the television off. They are telling us that things are dire, that businesses are going to the wall all over the state and that the Western Australian government should be creating a \$10 000 gift for every small business in the state. With there being around 226 000 small businesses in the state, that would equate to more than \$2 billion being given to people who are currently in the best —

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member for Darling Range is on three strikes. I would be very careful if I were her. Does she want to see the end of this debate or does she want to leave? The Acting Speaker will call her because I am not inviting interjections.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: There are almost 230 000 small businesses in Western Australia that are enjoying the most open economy in the nation. Just quietly, I will tell the Liberal Party of Western Australia that if people were in Melbourne right now, it would not matter how big the grant was from the state government for their small business, because they would not have a small business. That is a terrible tragedy; it is a very sad thing. They would not have a small business right now because they would be shut. That is the reality! Any number of thousands of dollars of grants could be on the table. I will come to that in a moment and tell some truths about the observations and claims made by members of the opposition about small business grants. People in Tasmania are able to go outside, but there is no business because there are only a few hundred thousand people in Tasmania. That is all it has. It does not have a manufacturing industry, a mining industry or a construction industry to speak of, as we have here in Western Australia. It does not have that. People do not have the income or capacity to spend that people have in Western Australia. We did not shut down our key, crucial businesses. The Premier fought off the demands of the Liberal states and others on the east coast to shut down mining in Western Australia. We insisted that we would keep vital industries open and we are sustaining the nation because of it. As a consequence, Western Australian small businesses are now enjoying the most open and liberal environment in the country for business, and they are benefiting from that, because people have certainty, employment and the capacity to spend. I know this because I have gone and personally met with hundreds of small businesses over the last three weeks. I have sat across the counter from them and sat at roundtable meetings in the Kimberley, Geraldton and Kalbarri. I have walked door-to-door to hundreds of businesses, and I know that the outrageous claims that have been made by the member for Darling Range are false.

Yes, some people are doing it tough; that is true. On the only matter of any substance to speak of in the contribution made by the member for Darling Range, she referred to travel agents. After making claims about the collapse of the entire small business sector in Western Australia, she talked about travel agents and quoted Christine Ross-Davies—that is her name, not Christine Ross. The member obviously has not met her, has she? When did she meet with her?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Minister, if you could talk through the Chair.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, I am inviting an interjection now. When did the member actually meet with her? She has not met with her, because she is solely reading from contributions —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister! Just so I can have some clarification, you said earlier that you did not want to seek interjections. What would you like to do?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will continue, thank you.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I take it that you are not seeking any more interjections?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, no more, because —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Then please speak through the Chair.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Christine is a wonderful person and she is doing it really tough. All travel agents have been impacted by the federal government's action in shutting the international borders. Ninety per cent of Western Australian travel agents' revenue comes from Western Australians flying out of WA, travelling overseas—not even interstate, but overseas—for cruises and visits to other nations, and that has been stopped by the pandemic and the federal government's correct action in shutting down international travel. That is not a state government matter. However, I have met with Christine three times now and I am full of empathy, concern and sympathy for the plight of travel agents. I support Western Australian travel agents, and Christine knows that because I have facilitated and assisted her to have a meeting with the Premier to discuss the issue. She has met with the Premier twice, and so has Joe Francis. The problem is that the travel agents' situation is a result of the pandemic.

I have written to the federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Minister Birmingham, and I spoke to him today on the phone. I have asked him to match our tourism survival grants package, but unfortunately the federal government will not do that. He has indicated that the response from the federal government is the JobKeeper and JobSeeker spend. That is a significant thing, and it is wonderful that the federal government responded in that manner, and I thank it for that. After we wrote to the minister—I am sure we were not the only ones—the federal government announced an extension of JobKeeper and JobSeeker, at diminishing rates. There are now more criteria and more robust measures for eligibility attached to those programs, and rightfully so, in my opinion. That will be coming into play from September onwards, and extending out to March.

The suggestion that the state government has done nothing for any particular sector, but especially for travel agents, is not correct. All of the 300 shopfronts the member for Darling Range referred to have benefited from our code of conduct for commercial tenancies. We have compelled landlords to negotiate and provide some respite for commercial tenancies, initially for a six-month period, and we are working on that measure to potentially be extended. I feel that travel agents are the one particular part of the small business sector that will be most impacted for a long time.

There are other parts of the sector. Next month, the events sector will benefit from the most open economy in the country, with a lot of support from the state government and a lot of enthusiastic assistance from the Minister for Culture and the Arts. The Getting the Show Back on the Road campaign will be kicking in from 2 September, which will be beneficial for events operators and performers. However, there are still some parts of the sector that will be doing it tough. I understand that big city hotels have suffered from the loss of around 85 per cent of their revenue stream that comes from interstate business travel, but we are not going to sacrifice the safety of Western Australians and the ability to have the most open economy in the country for a vast number of other businesses in the state by allowing community transmission of COVID-19 to come in from the markets that those businesses normally rely on. That is the sad fact; the health and safety of Western Australians will be the priority. No matter how many times the Western Australian Liberal Party calls for us to drop the borders, we will take our advice from the Chief Health Officer and other appropriate authorities. That is a fact.

I will leave some time for some of my colleagues who are very enthusiastically waiting for the opportunity to contribute to this debate, but I want to address the fallacies, falsehoods and inaccuracies peddled in this motion and by the many members who have already made contributions on the subject of grants. Firstly, the member for Darling Range misled the Parliament by suggesting that I had said that no other state has a \$10 000 grants scheme. I have never said such a thing. Had she bothered to do some research, she would have been able to confirm that fact. I have never said that. However, I will take a moment to educate her and other members of the Liberal Party who fell into the trap of believing that the member for Darling Range had bothered to do any research at all.

Every jurisdiction has had a different response; we have the best in the country, I think. We have the most open economy; people are back at work. That is the biggest contributing policy that we can apply to this challenge. However, when other jurisdictions announce \$10 000 grant schemes—members have listed the criteria—do members opposite think that every single small business in those states will be the recipients of those grants? What do members opposite think is the proportion of small businesses in each of those states that have received said grants? I know the answer.

It is true that New South Wales has a \$10 000 grants scheme, and it is possibly true that some travel agents have received it, but of all the small businesses in New South Wales, only 9.5 per cent have received the grant. In Queensland — Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might also say that if people want to go to a restaurant in New South Wales, they had better hope it is a really big one, because they have the four-square-metre rule in place. The vast majority of hospitality outlets in New South Wales are not open or are not making money, because they have the four-square-metre rule in place. Ask New South Wales how its casino is going. Ask New South Wales how many people are gathering in crowds. New South Wales has a far more restricted economy than Western Australia, so the fact that only 9.5 per cent of its small businesses—most in the hospital sector are not making any money—are in receipt of that grant is an important point.

Queensland's economy is far more reliant on tourism than our own. A big proportion of the employment in Queensland relates to hospitality and tourism and it shut the border to its two biggest markets. A Queensland small business, restaurant, cafe or pub owner is hoping a lot of Queenslanders are feeling really hungry because they do not have their markets. However, only 8.8 per cent of Queensland businesses have received this fund. We have an open economy. We have a \$5.5 billion recovery plan. Everyone in Western Australia is going to benefit from that. Queensland and New South Wales do not have a recovery plan. South Australia, where customers have to sit down to have a beer, has reimposed restrictions because it has a community transmission problem. South Australia has the highest proportion of small businesses, but only 12.8 per cent have received this grant. The vast majority of small businesses in every other jurisdiction did not get this grant scheme, yet they are suffering under far more trying circumstances than businesses in Western Australia.

There is confusion amongst the opposition. The Liberal Party opposition is locked up in a dark room and believes that everything is dire and disastrous, and the Nationals WA opposition is screaming at us to get people out to the regions because the regional businesses are doing so well and are experiencing a boom and are exhausted. That part of the claim is pretty accurate; people are doing it tough, because every single region, with the exception of East Kimberley, is going off. More people are travelling and it is not the usual Western Australian travel with limited spend, despite some of the claims made by people who claim to know about tourism. Tourism has not just been during the school holidays. No-one can get a booking in Kalbarri right now. Geraldton is packed. Good luck trying to go to Broome in the next couple of months. We heard from the local member of Exmouth, who is complaining that it is going so well.

As the Premier already announced, there will be a campaign and a system to entice Western Australians who live in the metropolitan area or in some of the regions where there may not be high employment to go out to those places to support them, particularly in agriculture and hospitality. Calling for something that we have already announced that we are going to do is a great move. But it is not in any way support for the argument that we have not done anything that somehow it is not working. The Wander Out Yonder campaign is an absolute success. It is driving Western Australians into the regions like never before. People who would normally take a cruise on the Rhine or fly to America for a month, or go skiing in Japan, are going out to our regions and are doing things they have not done before. When I was in the regions, people talked to me about that. I talked to the small businesses in Geraldton, and small businesses in retail are benefiting like never before from Western Australians travelling out there; it is not just the locals.

There is evidence that retail in Western Australia is leading the nation. Jobs growth in WA has led the nation in the last month. It is laughable that members of the opposition still make reference to the unemployment rate when they know full well that we have the highest participation rate in the nation. Obviously, that skews the data. If we care about actual jobs and whether people are benefiting, we will look at the number of jobs created and we will see that Western Australia is doing a wonderful job. Of all the mainland states, we had the strongest jobs growth in July. Employment has increased by around 19 000, recovering 41 300 of the jobs that were initially lost since the onset of COVID. These are good-news stories. These are good things. Opposition members should not talk down small business in Western Australia.

We are benefiting from good, strong leadership, great governance, wonderful public servants and the contribution of Western Australians across the board in the form of having the best, most open economy in the nation, thanks to our hard borders and thanks to the Premier refusing to listen to the Leader of the Opposition and the entire Liberal Party and thanks to the leadership the Premier has provided. It is extraordinary that the Liberal Party would even come in here and have the gall to suggest anything in regard to policy.

I will conclude because I think it is important that other members of the government are given the opportunity to speak, noting that we have had two hours of opposition falsehoods peddled in this place.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister. Thank you, everyone.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I note that the opposition members are incapable of agreeing on what the problem is before they stand up in this place. The WA Liberals are still locked in the closet and think everything is terrible, but the Nationals WA think it is going so well and we are not building enough houses for all the extra workers that we need to get into the regions to support the boom time. It is a challenging environment, but, ultimately, the pandemic caused the problems for the travel agents and the challenges for the businesses, and it is still causing challenges, particularly for our big city hotels. We are working on something for them and for east Kununurra. We have done stuff for them and we are doing more. All the businesses across the state have confronted a challenge. Neither the federal government, with its unlimited capacity, nor the state government, with its much lower capacity, will be able to replace that period of loss—in the south, it was a period of only two months—by government grants, and nor should they.

The best thing that we can do for Western Australians, taxpayers and small business people is to ensure that our economy is open and vibrant and that there is plenty of opportunity for all people so that they can do what they are doing well at the moment in a lot of locations across the state far better than any other jurisdiction. People do what they do best: run a good, solid business; meet the demands of their clientele; and, in this case, build a future market. If their normal revenue stream, which might be generated by interstate or overseas travel and is now replaced with interstate travel, can be retained when we open the borders, they will have even more opportunity. It will mean people will have greater markets and greater diversity and they will be more robust and resilient into the future.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Member for Churchlands. You were quick, member for Victoria Park, but you were not quick enough!

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [6.28 pm]: Mr Acting Speaker, I think it is fantastic that you kept your word, saying you were going to rotate speakers when you were in the chair.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! I will take speakers from either side as we go. I am not favouring anyone, but thank you for the compliments from both sides.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I think it is important that the opposition gets an opportunity to rebut some of the comments made by the Minister for Small Business, particularly given that during his contribution, he failed to address a key point brought to this chamber by the member for Darling Range. What extra support will be given to these small business owner-operators who have missed out under the government's efforts to support the small business sector? That is the whole point of the member for Darling Range's motion today.

The member for Darling Range presented to the Minister for Small Business examples of ministers in different states around this country who are doing more than he is doing to support those small businesses that have not been captured by the support currently given by the state government. That was the whole point of the member for Darling Range's presentation today.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: She presented examples of how different states around this country are doing more than this government and how small businesses in this state are missing out because they are not caught up by the support currently being given by this state government. That was the premise of her whole contribution. I know that the Minister for Tourism tried to hold members on this side to account for their honesty in this chamber, which I think is a bit unfair. I was not in the chamber at that time—so correct me if I am wrong—but I was told that the minister said that the member for Darling Range had never met Christine Ross-Davies, who goes by the name of Christine Ross.

Mr P. Papalia: She talks as if she never met her.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Apparently the minister did not say that. The minister needs to look at the member for Darling Range's Facebook page. There is a video on that Facebook page in which the member for Darling Range is standing with Ms Christine Ross-Davies. There is also a video on my Facebook page that was taken at a small business in my electorate. It shows the shadow Minister for Small Business and a number of owner-operator tourism businesses from my electorate, her electorate and surrounding areas who are all very, very concerned about how the McGowan Labor government is handling the current situation.

Yes, we are in a pandemic and, yes, we are in very difficult times, but thank goodness for the member for Darling Range bringing a motion like this to the chamber today. Let us not forget that the member for Darling Range is Ms 9.3 per cent. I know government members do not want to hear it. I know they thought that they had it locked in. They thought it was a lay-down misère that Labor would win the Darling Range by-election, brought about due to the unfortunate circumstances of the sitting member. Nonetheless, there was a lot of hubris at the time. The government had been hitting people with very, very difficult cost-of-living increases, ignoring the needs of the suburban people of the Darling Range electorate and small business owner-operators out there. Lo and behold, the current member for Darling Range got out, doorknocked, did the hard work and got to know the key issues and won with a landslide swing of 9.3 per cent. When she comes into this chamber and says to the government, "You guys need to listen to these small business owner-operators", she is representing their interests. She is out there on the ground and is listening to them. She does not sit behind a desk waiting for ministerial advisers to tell her the latest data. She actually sits down with people, listens to their concerns, understands the challenges that they are facing, looks for solutions that she sees other states utilising to help businesspeople and comes into this chamber and says, "Why don't you do the same? Tell us why you can't?" If the Treasurer gets an opportunity to stand up today, maybe he can tell us: Is the impact on the budget too great? If it is not, why not do it? If it is, tell us why it is too great? Tell us what else the government will do to support people in this situation? Tell us why the government cannot do what the member for Darling Range has said these other states are doing? We want to hear the reasons why the government cannot do these things. We do not want to hear the rhetoric of data and statistics that suits the government's argument. We want the government to address what the member for Darling Range has brought to the chamber today.

I, too, agree with many of my parliamentary colleagues on this side of the chamber that the McGowan Labor government has done a good job with the hard border. For those who decide to follow my Twitter feed, I was a very strong advocate on the stance of a very hard border closure. I never changed my position on that. There was a reason for that.

Ms R. Saffioti: You disagreed with your leader?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I stuck to my views on it from the start, minister.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Our leader actually agrees with hard borders.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Our leader has said publicly that she agrees with hard borders.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: We have two points of entry across —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Can I just move on?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am in the same paragraph, but if I could move to the next sentence, it would be much appreciated, minister.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am still on the same paragraph; let me finish it.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Let me finish it. We know that we have two land borders through which people enter this state: across the Nullarbor or up through the Kimberley. The rest is by sea or by air. We know that while those borders were secure —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: This gets to the minister's point on why —

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am finding it very difficult.

Point of Order

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: When the Acting Speaker makes a call, I think members are meant to come to order, and listen to and obey the Acting Speaker. I believe Mr Acting Speaker is being disrespected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Thank you. The point of order is not upheld but, member and ministers —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member! Minister! I am on my feet. Minister for Transport, I call you to order for the first time. Ministers, please allow the member to continue his remarks. Minister for Small Business, I do believe the member for Churchlands when he said that he was not interjecting on you. Thank you.

Debate Resumed

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The Minister for Transport, with all of her prowess, having run many, many small businesses, may well be able to educate members on this side of the chamber on how to run a small business.

Ms R. Saffioti: I actually lived in one.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister might have lived in one, but has she actually set up one on her own—laid out her own capital and had a crack?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Ministers!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Has the minister actually run her own balance sheet on a business? I do not think that she has. If I can continue with the paragraph I began some time ago —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, please allow the member to continue his remarks. I assume, member for Churchlands, that you are not seeking to take interjections?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am trying to get this paragraph out of the way.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I assume you are not taking interjections! Thank you, ministers.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: It is probably only three sentences, but I am only on sentence one. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I will continue.

Because the government closed those borders, it obviously meant that once we got to the phase that allowed people to go out and travel intrastate, the businesses within Western Australia that could take Western Australian tourists could flourish. Of course, no-one disagrees with that. That is a great outcome.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: That is sentence two; can I get to sentence three?

Mr P. Papalia: She said they were all shutting.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Listen to me; obviously, some businesses are doing it tough —

Mr P. Papalia: You've got no idea.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: So now I have no idea. Maybe if the minister would let me speak, he would understand what I am getting to.

We have a situation in which there will be business groups that cannot be sustained. We are asking the Minister for Small Business —

Mr P. Papalia: Which ones?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The ones that are not succeeding right now.

Mr P. Papalia: Say which ones.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The shadow Minister for Small Business has already outlined them.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Sorry, member. Minister for Small Business, I am on my feet; I call you to order for the first time. I will ask the member for Churchlands to talk through the Chair. Minister for Small Business, I know questions are being asked, but the member is not seeking interjections.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Clearly, there are small businesses that are not succeeding in current times and need support. That is why the member for Darling Range has brought this motion before us. As Western Australians have got used to the fact that they are living in a much safer environment than Victoria, for example—we congratulate the government on its hard stance on the borders and we have supported that—we are starting to notice that people are getting somewhat confused with the government's stance, because it is starting to make decisions on who can and cannot cross the border.

Mr P. Papalia: Do you want the borders down?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am not saying that at all. I am not saying that; I am talking about how the government is managing the people that it has allowed into this state. There is a difference. Some people are coming into the state without being tested, but others are being forced into quarantine. The member for Hillarys was telling me about a married couple in his constituency who could not get back to Perth. They finally got permission to come back to Perth but one was on a flight the day before the other. The person who arrived first was allowed to go straight home. The other partner arrived the next day and had to go into quarantine, which they had to pay for. These inconsistencies in how the government is treating Western Australians during the COVID pandemic is confusing people.

It is like the government's decision on the Perth Royal Show. I am not saying that it is good, bad or otherwise. All I am saying is that on the one hand the government is advocating for the Grand Final to be held at Optus Stadium, but on the other hand it is cancelling the Royal Show. On one hand, the government is saying that we need to be social distancing while at the footy, while on the other hand, it is saying we do not need to while we are on public transport. These types of messages are starting to make people think: what is going on? We do not have community spread, so they just want some clarity. Beyond looking for clarity on how the government is managing the health situation, people are now also asking: what is the economic plan for recovery in Western Australia? People are genuinely concerned about that. What is the government's plan? The minister will recall that I have talked about planning methodology and end-state planning. The Minister for Tourism knows all about end-state planning.

Mr P. Papalia: The recovery plan.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The government has its recovery plan phases, but what is the government's end state plan? What are the government's objectives for achieving jobs growth in the various sectors linked to that end-state plan? We are not seeing that.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Listen and you will find out.

The way small business succeeds in this state is through a vibrant economy. If a vibrant economy is not operating, small businesses do not succeed. The government needs to generate more income in the economy of Western Australia and it needs to have a plan for that. It does not. I will tell members why the government does not have a plan. If we look at the latest CommSec “State of the States” report, dated July 2020 —

Mr P. Papalia: That’s the WA Recovery Plan, right there.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members.

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: I turn to the CommSec report. Members will notice in the CommSec report that we are doing well in economic growth and equipment investment. We are ranked second in Australia. Why? The government knows why. We are completely reliant on that bit of data because of the performance of the mining sector. The mining sector is propping up the data that the government is using in this chamber to say that it is succeeding as a government. It is ignoring the data that demonstrates which sectors of the Western Australian economy are genuinely hurting. One of those sectors, the key sector that the member for Darling Range spoke about today, is the small business sector. That is why she asked: What is the government’s plan for more support to match the support being offered by other states? What is the government’s reason for not doing it? Tell us the reason. Give us the rationale. Do not just tell us that it has good statistics and equipment investment brought about by the mining sector.

Let us not forget that the iron ore price is booming right now. It is great for the Western Australian budget. We know that. The Treasurer knows that. We also know that the Chinese buyers are very keen to make sure they are getting a lot of iron ore from Western Australia at the moment. We understand that this state is supplying that iron ore through companies such as Fortescue Metals Group and BHP because after its tailings dam failure, the Vale mine in Brazil currently cannot get ore to the market. We are a key supplier. This increased demand for our iron ore and lithium, as the minister knows, is driving investment and economic growth in that sector, which is propping up not only this state but, more broadly, the national books. I know the government knows that because it was in its 2019–20 budget. From memory, it might have been on page 9 of budget paper No 3. It outlined exactly the projected economic growth figures in its own budget paper, off the back of the success of the mining sector. Even then, I know that the Treasurer would not have envisaged the volume of success that flowed from the mining sector. The unfortunate counter to that success has been COVID-19. These other sectors have gone backwards while the mining sector has managed to go forwards. We have seen that success in strong gold and iron ore prices and with the investment in lithium et cetera. That sector is going well. That is the only thing that is propping up the statistics and books for the performance of the Western Australian economy.

If we think about the performance of this economy in the context of COVID-19, we should do so whilst comparing it with the performance of the other states. In that regard, we are doing very poorly because we know that the unemployment rate, for example, is 63 per cent higher than the on-decade average, ranking us eighth or last out of all the states and territories in Australia. That is even up against a state such as Victoria, with its dramas. Why is the minister saying on the one hand that we are operating more successfully than any other state in managing COVID and therefore we have more economic activity that can drive the domestic economy in Western Australia while, on the other hand, we are ranked eighth? Why is it that we are not second or even first? What did the government do in the three and a half years leading up to now to shore up the Western Australian economy so that it can be prepared and ready for shocks like this? I do not think the government has a plan. It is completely reliant on the success of others to prop up its statistics and help its media releases. I have not seen anything.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia poached the Treasurer’s key adviser to become one of its senior economists. After the adviser was poached from the Treasurer’s office, the Treasurer said, “He was an outstanding senior adviser of mine and I wish him well in his new job at the CCI.” He had fewer troubles than some of the Treasurer’s other advisers. Lo and behold, within 24 hours of the Treasurer saying how outstanding that senior adviser was, that senior adviser said that the Western Australian economy—this is pre-COVID-19—was in dire straits. There you go. We cannot get a more damning indictment of the performance of the Western Australian government than when a former senior adviser to the Treasurer says, after taking on a new job, that the position he just left was not doing a good enough job to support the people of Western Australia and grow the economy.

The government gets a tick for COVID-19. It has managed to flatten the curve and it has stopped community spread by maintaining the hard borders. We give the government a tick for that—there is no argument here—but it should not allow that to be its smokescreen for its economic mismanagement, which was the case until March this year. The government was asleep at the wheel of the economy of Western Australia. It was only succeeding off the back of the mining sector with China’s demand for iron ore and the Vale situation in Rio, Brazil.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: Getting back to the Treasurer’s former senior adviser, the CCI’s biannual analysis shows that population growth will slow to its lowest levels since 1916, which presents a very real challenge. Before COVID-19, the government turned foreign students away from the state in droves due to its incompetent management of the international student sector and the way it managed overseas investment in the Western Australian apartment sector. Those things combined have meant that we have lost a huge amount of the market share of that group of

international students, who could have become future residents and citizens of Western Australia, which would have been some effort to curb the population growth disaster that lies ahead when we will see the lowest population growth levels since 1916.

The CCI said that the domestic economy is forecast to contract by 1.9 per cent. It highlights the fact that the overall economy will shrink by only 0.2 per cent. Why? As I said earlier, it is because it has been completely propped up by the success of the mining sector. The CCI states that the main drags on the economy in 2020–21 will be significant falls in consumption and business investment, which is the point of the member for Darling Range's motion. Her point is that if the government does not support domestic economy businesses that do not rely on global commodity markets and global demand—local businesses—that will be a big drag on the economy. The CCI said that if business investment increased by just one percentage point over the next three years, the Western Australian economy would be around \$1.5 billion larger.

Mr P. Papalia: How many small businesses should get \$10 000?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister can tell me.

Mr P. Papalia: No, I'm asking you.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister should tell me.

Mr P. Papalia: It's your policy. It's not my policy.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: No, the minister should tell me. He knows what I have said from the start.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Let me repeat it for the minister.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy): Member! Minister! Minister, the member for Churchlands is not seeking to take interjections. Member for Churchlands, you said that you did not seek to take interjections. Please talk to the Chair.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Acting Speaker, from the outset I have sought to address the member for Darling Range's motion, which is to prove why the government cannot match other states in what they are doing for small business.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have even pointed out to the Treasurer in my contribution today that if he cannot match —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: — what the member for Darling Range is putting forward, he should tell us why. Did I not say that, members?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Ministers!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I will tell the ministers why I put that question.

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I can read. The minister can read; she should read it out herself.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Ministers!

Ms R. Saffioti: You do not know what she is putting forward.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Give me the piece of paper. I read it earlier. I am not going to quote it.

Ms R. Saffioti: How do you know what she is putting forward?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: She is putting forward —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, member for West Swan —

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The government has its big heavy hitters coming through now!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, I am on my feet. There are several calls: member for Wanneroo, member for Warnbro, member for West Swan, member for Churchlands and member for Carine, I am calling each of you to order for talking when I am standing. Member, again, you have indicated that you do not seek to take interjections. Can you speak to the Chair so you can finish your remarks.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia goes on.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The minister should listen to my contribution and she will find out.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia goes on to say that in 2021 household consumption is forecast to fall by three per cent.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: This badgering —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Household consumption is forecast to fall by three per cent, business investment by 4.5 per cent and imports by five per cent, and unemployment is forecast to reach 11 per cent. Those statistics are the ones that matter to the people of Western Australia. The Prime Minister of Australia is doing a fantastic job over there in Canberra, and we already hear people talking up the prospects of a vaccine. We are already hearing globally that on the near horizon there is the prospect of a vaccine. What the people of Western Australia will start turning to very, very quickly is an economic narrative for an economic recovery. That is what they will be focused on right now. I have here what the member for Darling Range is saying. This is her motion. We are here to listen and to debate it, because do members opposite know how debate works? Arguments are presented —

Mr D.A. Templeman: You yell and we do not listen!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I tell members what, when the Minister for Local Government says, “You yell and we do not listen”, do members know what he does? He does not listen to towns such as the Town of Cambridge.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: He goes out there and threatens and bullies.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, if you could keep to the context of the motion.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Darling Range moved a motion. She said —

That this house calls on the McGowan Labor government to stop neglecting our hardworking Western Australian small and family-run businesses by immediately providing a COVID-19 assistance grant to COVID-19 affected small businesses of up to \$10 000, like all other governments have done across Australia, because behind every small business is a family.

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Acting Speaker, can I continue?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, thank you!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The point of her motion is for the government to prove it cannot be done.

Ms R. Saffioti: What is your policy?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am debating this motion, minister. What is the minister's point badgering me about whether I have a policy or not? Can I debate the motion or not?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! I seek to give you all of the protection that I can, but if you could please not respond to interjections when you have advised that you would not like to take interjections.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I appreciate your protection, Acting Speaker.

The member for Darling Range has moved her motion to be debated. The whole point of a debate is to tell us why something cannot be done. Have you done that yet? No. You have not told us.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, through the Chair.

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Acting Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am on my feet. Member, please talk to the Chair.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. The whole point of this motion is to address what the member for Darling Range has put forward. That is the point of private members' business. That is the point of debate. If government members want to turn this into some cheap political pointscoring to try to draw in the shadow Minister for Defence Issues; Racing and Gaming; Corrective Services; and Emergency Services so that he can roll

off his tongue some small business policy here and now, they are not going to get it, because that, ministers, is not the point of this debate! The point of this debate is to address the motion of the member for Darling Range. So far, government members have not come up with one rational reason why they cannot address what she has put in this motion. They have simply not put it.

Ms R. Saffioti: What's your policy?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Read it; it is a motion. It is not a policy; it is a motion.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands, thank you.

Ms S.E. Winton: You've got 200 days to come up with a policy. You've got to get to work!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am really glad that we have the member for Wanneroo giving us advice on how to be an opposition!

Dwelling commencements are down 37.4 per cent. We are ranked seventh. As I said, our unemployment rate puts us last. We are really struggling with population growth. Our housing finance commitments are down 33.5 per cent. We are ranked seventh across the board in all of the key economic indicator areas, according to CommSec, and that is why our state is not succeeding in managing two things. We have given the government a tick for COVID-19 and the health aspect. We have said, "Well done." I have said that several times—tick; well done.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have not contradicted anybody, minister.

Ms R. Saffioti: I went through your social media and there is not one picture of your leader.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have not contradicted anybody.

Ms R. Saffioti: I went through your social media. There is not one picture of your leader.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have not seen any likes. Give me a few likes on some of my posts!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, thank you.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members! Thank you!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Member, please continue.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr W.J. Johnston: So why don't you put photos of Liza on any of your social media?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, thank you very much!

Mr W.J. Johnston: So tell me, why don't you do it?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, it is lovely that you have joined us, but please allow the member to continue his remarks. He is not seeking to take interjections.

Ms R. Saffioti: I have been through a year of posts.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: A year! I think I have been posting for longer than a year.

Mr W.J. Johnston: But for over 12 months you haven't put your leader in your social media.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am amazed at how much interest they take in my social media!

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The Acting Speaker will notice —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, do you seek to take interjections?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: No, I am just waiting.

The ACTING SPEAKER: If you could refuse or decline the dialogue, that would assist me.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I am trying to.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Please continue your remarks, member for Churchlands.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I am just fascinated that they are interested in my social media posts. They are either community-based posts or they are shadow portfolio posts. They are one or the other. They are perfectly normal.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. Johnston: Who is doing your costings for your policies?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Who is doing my costings?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, of your policies.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: For my policies or for our policies?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands, you cannot see me because you are looking towards government members.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I keep getting drawn in! They are like a black hole—they just suck you in!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands, I am on my feet. Please do not engage in a dialogue. If you speak to the Chair, you can see whether I am on my feet. Please continue your remarks.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cannington!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Minister for Mines and Petroleum, we have our leadership team. We have an election committee. We have a shadow Treasurer. We have a leader. They get together. We submit our policies to them. We have all done it; we all submit our policies. They are then costed and given a hierarchy. There is a process. It is being followed. I do not know why the minister is asking me about this.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It's probably because I just want to know who's doing your costings.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have just told the minister who is doing the costings.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have told members who is doing the costing.

Several members interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: My God! Look at them all! It is like a gaggle or something.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! We need to move on.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Yes, good point, Mr Acting Speaker. We need to wrap up. It has been a very exciting afternoon.

The ACTING SPEAKER: You do not need to wrap up. I am just indicating that you have about 30 seconds.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: In conclusion, whilst dealing with an atrocious display over there, I make the point that the member for Darling Range put forward a perfectly reasonable motion to be debated. She was looking for answers in support of her community.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND INJURY MANAGEMENT
AMENDMENT (COVID-19 RESPONSE) BILL 2020**

Assent

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

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

**MINISTER FOR POLICE — PORTFOLIOS —
RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE PROJECT FUNDING**

6253. Mr W.R. Marmion to the Minister for Police; Road Safety:

- (1) Can the Minister advise for each portfolio agency within their responsibility, what expenditure was incurred in supporting external and internal research, innovation and/or science related projects for the years 2017–18 and 2018–19?
- (2) Can the Minister advise for each portfolio agency within their responsibility what funding has been allocated towards supporting external and internal research, innovation and/or science related projects for 2019–20 and 2020–21?
- (3) For each of (1) and (2) can the Minister provide a breakdown of expenditure/funding between the following recipient categories:
 - (a) Universities;
 - (b) State government agencies;
 - (c) Private organisations;
 - (d) Cooperative Research Centres; and
 - (e) All Other Categories?

Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:

The Western Australia Police Force advise:

(1)–(3) 2017–18

- (a) \$188,700
- (b) \$0
- (c) \$70,000
- (d) \$0
- (e) \$0

2018–19

- (a) \$190,000
- (b) \$0
- (c) \$13,372.50
- (d) \$0
- (e) \$0

2019–20

- (a) \$44,500
- (b) \$0
- (c) \$0
- (d) \$0
- (e) \$0

2020–21

- (a) \$86,700
- (b) \$0
- (c) \$0
- (d) \$0
- (e) \$0

The Road Safety Commission advise:

(1)–(3) 2017–18

- (a) \$775,005
- (b) \$0
- (c) \$0
- (d) \$0
- (e) \$0

2018–19

- (a) \$432,203
- (b) \$0
- (c) \$0
- (d) \$0
- (e) \$0

2019–20

- (a) \$395,238
- (b) \$0
- (c) \$0
- (d) \$0
- (e) \$0

2020–21

- (a) \$831,316
 - (b) \$0
 - (c) \$0
 - (d) \$0
 - (e) \$0
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