



# Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTIETH PARLIAMENT  
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2020

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 15 September 2020



# Legislative Assembly

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**THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson)** took the chair at 2.00 pm, acknowledged country and read prayers.

## LOTTERYWEST COVID-19 RELIEF FUND

*Statement by Premier*

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier)** [2.01 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the government has granted a temporary extension of the Lotteries Commission Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020. Extending this act means Lotterywest can continue its COVID-19 support for the WA community by providing grants during and after the crisis as needed. This law means Lotterywest can work directly with non-government organisations hit hard by COVID-19, and also in partnership with state government agencies to provide grants that deliver the greatest benefit for the Western Australian community. The extension has been granted until 15 March 2021, and will also make it easier and extend the time available for lottery winners to claim their prizes, and observe COVID-19 measures.

Since March, Lotterywest has been implementing its \$159 million COVID-19 relief fund in a phased approach, to assist the WA community to respond to the immediate impacts of the pandemic, and to support recovery. The relief fund to date has delivered \$67 million in grants to the Western Australian community. This includes Lotterywest working with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to deliver \$10 million in grant programs specifically for the sports and arts sectors. In addition, Lotterywest has provided \$11.2 million in grants to community organisations that support individuals and families experiencing hardship, and \$26.3 million to sports, arts and community organisations to address the financial impact of cancelled events, and to support ongoing resilience. The support that Lotterywest has been able to offer the community through this pandemic demonstrates the power of our state-owned and operated lottery.

I now table the declaration.

[See paper [3644](#).]

## YOUTH IN EMERGENCY SERVICES PROGRAM

*Statement by Minister for Emergency Services*

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services)** [2.03 pm]: I would like to take this opportunity to inform the house about the Youth in Emergency Services program—YES—which is providing fantastic opportunities for young people across the state. The program is being led by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and delivered in partnership with local emergency service volunteers. The program provides young people with learning experiences that they would not ordinarily be exposed to, including an increased understanding of local hazards; training to improve emergency preparedness; and pathways for local emergency service volunteering and career opportunities.

During my recent visit to the state's north west, I met the YES participants in Port Hedland where they showcased the skills they have learned with the Marine Rescue Port Hedland volunteers. I was impressed by their enthusiasm and professionalism when using the radio direction finder on board the marine rescue's vessel *Iron Pride*, their knot-tying skills and use of other marine safety equipment. The YES participants range in age from 12 to 15 years and come from diverse backgrounds. They are supported by a network of local volunteers and community members from the volunteer bush fire brigade, the State Emergency Service WA, Marine Rescue WA, the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the WA Police Force, who dedicate their time to delivering emergency service skills and training.

Western Australia has more than 26 000 emergency service volunteers. Volunteers, of course, are such an important part of building a safer and more resilient Western Australia. It is our hope that the YES participants will use their new skills in the future to serve their communities. Participants will also have foundational skills if they go on to join their local emergency service. Members, I would like to acknowledge everyone involved in this fantastic program, including local communities, emergency service volunteers, emergency management agencies, and the young people themselves.

I hope to see the YES program expanded to the Kimberley in the near future.

## WORK AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT SCHEME

*Statement by Attorney General*

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General)** [2.05 pm]: I rise to share with the house the exciting news that the government's work and development permit scheme, provided for in the Fines, Penalties and Infringement Notice Enforcement Amendment Act 2020, will come into operation on 30 September next. In keeping with the

government's focus on supporting marginalised and vulnerable Western Australians, the act introduces a statutory concept of hardship that includes mental illness and disability, experience of family and domestic violence, homelessness, drug and alcohol problems, and financial hardship. When a debtor is experiencing hardship affecting their ability to pay or otherwise discharge their fine debts, they can enter into a consensual agreement to undertake approved activities with the support of an approved sponsor, known as a work and development permit. Activities could be, for example, drug and alcohol counselling, vocational or educational programs, unpaid work, or medical or mental health treatment. The work and development permit scheme is being delivered by the Department of Justice in partnership with Legal Aid WA and the Aboriginal Legal Service WA. All three agencies are actively engaging with potential sponsors throughout the state who may be able to support vulnerable and disadvantaged clients in making applications on their behalf, supervising the approved activity and reporting on progress. Sponsors are key to the success of the scheme. Approved sponsors can provide additional support to existing clients, as well as help new clients. Working with clients, a sponsor will assess an individual's suitability, identify appropriate activities, submit an application and, if approved, supervise and report on completed activities. So far, sponsors include Bloodwood Tree Association, which offers a range of services, including alcohol and drug and mental health services; Anglicare WA; and Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation, amongst others. I thank all sponsors for their collaboration. I believe that 50 organisations have so far applied to be sponsors.

We are hopeful that, if given the option to complete treatment plans, programs and the like, debtors will be able to address the offending behaviour that led them to come into contact with the justice system in the first place.

### **CORONAVIRUS — ECONOMIC RECOVERY PACKAGE**

#### *Statement by Treasurer*

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer)** [2.08 pm]: I rise to update the house on the McGowan government's COVID-19 recovery effort and the impact the government's significant investment is having on maintaining and creating jobs across Perth and regional Western Australia. When the pandemic hit, we were faced with tough decisions to shut down parts of our economy to ensure the health and wellbeing of our community. Our strong budget management and economic strength going into this crisis gave us the financial firepower to immediately respond to those industries, communities and businesses who were struggling the most. The government's initial response was an investment of around \$2.7 billion, with a total of \$5.5 billion of recovery initiatives creating a pipeline of projects over the next few years. Today I table a document that provides information that some members have requested on the status of various support measures.

As we know, WA's economy is outperforming the economies of most advanced nations around the world, demonstrating that our response has been world leading. In the early days of this pandemic, Treasury modelling forecast that the Western Australian economy would contract by as much as 12 per cent in the June quarter. We have now seen that our contraction was half that forecast, at six per cent, and we have had overall growth in 2019–20. It is clear that the best economic policy is controlling the spread of the virus, which is exactly what this government has done. This means that some relief or grant programs did not have the uptake we anticipated, and we have chosen to reallocate some of this underspend into a COVID-19 industry support fund.

Although some grant programs experienced underspends, other programs, like our building bonus, are forecast to be oversubscribed. The McGowan government's building bonus has delivered exactly what the building and construction industry needed—a pipeline of work to secure jobs and support local businesses during the pandemic. This morning, I announced with the Premier that \$30 million from the new industry support fund will be allocated to this successful program. Following the introduction of these \$20 000 grants, Real Estate Institute of Western Australia data showed that land sales increased significantly, peaking at around 500 sales a week in late June. This is a significant increase on the historical average of around 60 a week.

This government has overseen one of the most significant economic turnarounds in the state's history. From the dark days of the former government, when the economy was in recession and business confidence drained away, we are now the only state to record economic growth in 2019–20 despite the challenges posed by this pandemic.

[See paper [3645](#).]

### **CORONAVIRUS — PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS — EVICTIONS MORATORIUM**

#### *Statement by Minister for Housing*

**MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee — Minister for Housing)** [2.11 pm]: I am happy to inform the house that the government will continue to adopt a moratorium on evictions for public housing tenants. This will ensure that the Department of Communities remains in line with the broader rental evictions moratorium recently announced by the Attorney General. We understand that despite the good work of everyone in Western Australia, many people are still doing it tough, and any reassurance the government can provide is of benefit. Therefore, public rental tenants will continue to be protected through to March 2021.

Western Australians who rely on the state's public housing system represent some of the most vulnerable people in this state. At a time of great uncertainty, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to be able to provide this

reassurance. Of course, there are some limited exceptions. Criminal behaviour and illegal use of property can still lead to an eviction. Disruptive behaviour complaints will also continue to be investigated and, when appropriate, acted on. I encourage any tenants who feel they are being pressured to allow illegal or disruptive behaviour at their properties to contact the Department of Communities to help them resolve the situation. The moratorium on evictions will run through to March 2021.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### CORONAVIRUS — METROPOLITAN HORTICULTURE WORKERS

**658. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:**

I refer to the \$3 million accommodation and travel support scheme to entice seasonal agricultural workers to regional Western Australia. Is the Premier aware of reports that horticultural businesses in the metropolitan area are struggling to get workers and may be forced to plough crops back into the ground, and that this may have a significant impact on fresh food prices in the lead-up to Christmas?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Obviously, there is a significant issue, which the member has identified, about getting people to work in seasonal agriculture, whether it is in the regions or the city. Clearly, the government's focus has been on incentivising people to go to regional Western Australia to undertake these roles, particularly in the south west, great southern, wheatbelt and Carnarvon areas. The program we launched last week will provide, from memory, up to \$4 000 in incentives from the state towards that purpose. We also launched an advertising campaign. The program has been well received across the board. I note that the federal agriculture minister, David Littleproud, who is a National Party member from Queensland, endorsed the program. He said —

... we welcome what the Western Australian Government has done, and that's why anything that we do and announce will complement that and hope that other states will also undertake these pre-emptive measures as well.

In other words, he is saying that Western Australia has done it right and our approach is correct. That is from the National Party in the eastern states. We are doing what we can.

We have also launched the Work and Wander Out Yonder campaign. I note that there has been some criticism of it. We want to encourage people to go. If we show the beauty of Western Australia in our ads and show how marvellous our regions are, what is wrong with that? I have seen some commentary online and from the eastern states that it is terrible that we show that working in agriculture can actually be fun. I mean, what are we supposed to do? Are we supposed to say that people are unhappy, miserable and hate it? Look at the Minister for Transport—she used to work in it and look how she turned out! We are highlighting the beauty of regional Western Australia as part of the campaign.

To the Leader of the Opposition's specific question about horticulture in the metropolitan area, clearly, the solution to this, if there is one, is to ensure that those people who are on JobSeeker are able to keep their JobSeeker payments and get those seasonal payments in agriculture on top. This is a one-off. This is a one in 100-year pandemic. I think this is the only way we are going to be able to get people who are on JobSeeker to go and do this sort of work. On top of that, of course, people have talked about giving university students some sort of exemption from HECS or some other assistance or whatever it might be. That has to be the solution. We cannot bring people in from overseas. Obviously, there is also horticultural and agricultural work in the other states. We have to rely upon ourselves here, and the way to do that is by ensuring that people are given some additional incentive to go and do this work.

#### CORONAVIRUS — METROPOLITAN HORTICULTURE WORKERS

**659. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. I thank the Premier and note his answer. This is a local, Western Australian labour shortage issue. What is the Premier going to do to assist metropolitan fruit and vegetable growers who are facing financial ruin this year because they cannot get workers?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

It is not only a Western Australian issue; it is also a national issue. It is happening across Australia. The Joint Standing Committee on Migration handed down its report on the working holiday maker program either yesterday or today. It has recommended —

... for the next 12 months, the Government —

That is, the federal government —

enable workers to stay on JobSeeker payments while undertaking low paid agricultural and horticultural work.

It also recommended —

... for the next 12 months the Government —

Again, federal —

establish a one-off payment to help with the travel and accommodation costs incurred, to be paid after a certain period of time working in regional, rural and remote areas.

We have already done that in Western Australia. It also recommended that the federal government —

... urgently develop and implement a 'Have a Gap Year at Home Campaign' to attract young Australians, particularly the current cohort of Year 12s and university graduates, to undertake regional work.

In terms of people in the city, if there are market gardens within the metropolitan boundaries, the clear way to deal with that is by allowing people on JobSeeker to keep their JobSeeker payments and get some additional payments on top. That does not accord with our traditional understanding of welfare, whereby if somebody undertakes paid work, their welfare payments will naturally diminish, but these are extraordinary circumstances. We work cooperatively with the commonwealth, but the state government has done its bit. We ask the commonwealth government to help us with this problem.

#### CORONAVIRUS — STATE ECONOMY

##### **660. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Premier:**

I refer to Western Australia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the McGowan Labor government's decision to maintain the hard border while community transmission continues in the eastern states. Can the Premier outline to the house what WA's success in stopping the spread of COVID-19 has meant for the state's economy, and how WA compares with other states when it comes to the economic restrictions that may be in place?

##### **Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question. The clear evidence around the world is that the best economic response to COVID-19 is a strong and effective health response. The countries around the world that have managed the health impacts inevitably have the best economic outcomes. In Britain and the United States, where there have been very, very poor responses in a health sense, the economic consequences have been dire. In those countries where there have been very strong health responses, the economic consequences have not been as significant.

Western Australia has had, touch wood, no community spread of the virus for around 155 days, and that means we now have the most open economy of any state in Australia. We do not have to constantly change restrictions; we are not shutting down businesses as we respond to outbreaks; and we are not doing all the chopping and changing that other states are doing. I want to outline for members, so they understand, what is happening in other states versus here. In respect of gatherings, in New South Wales there is a limit of 20 people, whether inside or outside a home. In Queensland, gatherings in homes or public places are limited to between 10 and 30 people. In South Australia, there is a 50-person cap on a residential property, which means that if you want to have a barbecue or a party, only up to 50 people are allowed. In Tasmania, household gatherings are limited to 20 people. Here, it is the two-square-metre rule; that is one person per two square metres, which obviously means we do not have anywhere near the restrictions on gatherings that they have in other states.

With regard to hospitality venues, Western Australia is the only state where you can drink alcohol while standing up!

Government members: Hear, hear!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** In New South Wales, there are all sorts of restrictions. New South Wales businesses are subject to the four-square-metre rule, and a cap of 300 people. That means that a major pub or a major function centre is capped at 300 people and there is a four-square-metre rule in place. Bookings for tables are limited to 10 people; I do not really know how that is a gold standard, but apparently it is. In Queensland, the rules are different for different-sized venues. There is a plethora of rules in Queensland. In South Australia, all venues are restricted to seated services, so you cannot go to the bar and have a drink in South Australia.

In respect of weddings and funerals, New South Wales and Queensland have capped the number of guests at 100 people. Obviously, we do not have that rule; we have the two-square-metre rule, which basically means generally unlimited numbers of people at both those sorts of events. When it comes to dancing, Western Australia is the only state where there are no restrictions on dancing at a bar or nightclub. Dancing is currently banned at venues in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. In South Australia, dancing and drinking are banned; I always thought the two were intrinsically linked! We do not have those restrictions on dancing.

What this means is that if we were in the same position as the other states, we would have all sorts of restrictions and rules around these sorts of events. All those people over east—commentators and the like—are demanding that our borders come down. All that would mean is that if we were to have an outbreak, we would go into the environment that New South Wales is in, where there are all these rules and restrictions. I do not get it. I do not get why there is such an appetite amongst some of the commentators in the east for the virus to come here. I do not get why they say it would be better that we have the virus, and then clamp down on it at various locations and venues and the like, than the arrangement whereby we do not have the virus, but we have some restrictions on whether people can come into or leave the state. I do not get it. I think most Western Australians understand that having a strong economy with vibrant retail, hospitality and tourism sectors is a better outcome than the restrictions that are in place in other states of Australia.

## CORONAVIRUS — BUDGET SURPLUS

**661. Mr D.C. NALDER to the Premier:**

Can the Premier confirm that the government ran a budget surplus for the last financial year; and, if so, why did he not do more to support struggling households and small businesses impacted by COVID-19, including overturning his mean-spirited refusal to provide grants of up to \$10 000 for struggling small businesses?

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** At the end of the month you'll find out.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** You've signed off on it?

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Yeah, I have. You'll find out at the end of the month.

**The SPEAKER:** Who is in charge here?

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** Sometimes Ben likes to take them!

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry, Treasurer; I thought it was the Premier!

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I just gave an answer to a question in which I outlined how well Western Australia's economy is doing compared with other states of Australia. On virtually every indicator, our economy is doing better than other parts of Australia. Although we cannot currently go to New South Wales, Brisbane or Victoria, if someone were to go to those places, they would see the economies of those states versus that of Western Australia and they would note that our economy is doing better. If members were to ask retail, hospitality and tourism businesses across the state—this is my experience—inevitably, they would find that they are so grateful that there are far fewer restrictions within our state than there are in other states.

The other point I want to make is this. Fortunately, over the first three years of this government, we managed the finances better than the prior government in its two terms, and better than any other government in Australia. That is a credit to the Treasurer and the cabinet. That financial management means that we are now able to invest in our Western Australian recovery plan—a \$5.5 billion plan. We were the first state in Australia to launch a recovery plan; I think most of them have not even launched one. Most of them are sort of muddling along in the COVID environment, whereas we launched a recovery plan six or eight weeks or so ago, through which there will be major investments across the board for our state, to ensure that we get economic activity back as strongly as possible.

Only the other week, SEEK said it was back to 99 per cent of the job advertisements it was running prior to COVID. I launched a policy this morning with the Treasurer for expanding the building bonus grants, and the land sales industry is selling 500 blocks a week; that is multiples of what it was selling before. Our building industry is going very strongly as a consequence—so much so that we have to put extra money into the program to support it. Good financial management, which the opposition obviously does not understand, has its rewards, because it allows us to invest in things like the recovery plan, the building bonus scheme and multiple initiatives across the state.

Members opposite perpetuate a particular line about small business. I quote the member for Darling Range from ABC radio, on 13 May 2020 —

Every other state around the country has been putting that \$10,000 cash grant to their small business operators, no questions asked.

That is not true. We have provided —

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** The member for Burns Beach just accused the member for Darling Range of being a liar. I ask him to withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not hear it. Did you say that, member for Burns Beach?

**Mr M.J. Folkard:** I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** Stand up, thank you.

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** I withdraw.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We have been very, very sympathetic and supportive of small businesses, and we have provided payroll tax relief; grants of up to \$17 500 for small businesses, subject to payroll tax; waived payroll tax for small to medium-sized businesses for three months; lifted the threshold permanently; reduced electricity bills for small businesses and charities by \$2 500; provided rent relief for tenants and land tax relief for landlords; waived fees and licenses on leases for small business operators who are tenants of the government; provided the tourism support package, with grants of up to \$100 000 available; and the list goes on, in support of small business.

I tell the opposition what: the main thing we can do is to have an economy that is up and functioning. That is the main thing we can do. If members opposite think the solution to everything is the government borrowing more money and continuing to do so forever, which seems to be their solution for everything, they are wrong. The main thing we can do—and again, I think Western Australians understand this—is to have a functional, operating, well-performing economy, and that is exactly our focus.

## CORONAVIRUS — BUDGET SURPLUS

**662. Mr D.C. NALDER to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. There are industries in Western Australia that are struggling, with small businesses going to the wall, and tourism and events-type businesses are in that situation. With the excessive windfall the government has received from high iron ore prices, delivering more than \$300 million a month over budget forecasts in the last two and half months, will the Premier now consider grants of up to \$10 000 to assist the small businesses that are significantly impacted by COVID-19, as all other states have done, before Western Australian businesses close unnecessarily?

**The SPEAKER:** Premier, just before you answer, in future, supplementary questions need to be short and sharp, not a long one like that one.

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Three and a half years in and members opposite still have not learnt.

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bateman!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Is the opposition's policy that it will provide \$10 000 grants to all small businesses if it is successful at the election? Is that its policy?

**Mrs A.K. Hayden:** Wait and see.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Members opposite are promoting it here.

**Mrs A.K. Hayden** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Darling Range!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Members opposite are promoting it here, but is it their policy? Is that what they are going to do? I am just asking.

Several members interjected.

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

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** There is some debate about the Liberal Party's policies. So that we can understand, I am just asking: is this its policy?

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bateman! It does not matter.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I think it is a pretty straightforward question. The reason I say that is that I was scrolling through Twitter and I found this story on WAtoday about the Leader of the Opposition. Today she is reported to have said —

We've got all of our policies pretty much bedded down now ...

Is this her policy?

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** How can she be taken seriously! She said that the Liberal Party has got all its policies bedded down, but she will not tell us whether this is one of them.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Because you won't reveal the financial statements. You're making us wait for the budget.

**The SPEAKER:** No, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** It is interesting that the opposition leader said that, because on the same day, the shadow Treasurer said —

... these aren't policies from the Liberal Party at the moment, as the shadow treasurer I'm working on policy, I've got to convince my colleagues that these are the right things to take and so, you know, there's a bit of work to go yet ...

Which one is it—are they bedded down or is the shadow Treasurer still working on them?

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Has there ever—I pose this rhetorically—been a worse opposition!

As I outlined before, we have released numerous support measures for small business in Western Australia. The case that the shadow Treasurer outlined was a tourism case. The tourism small business one-off grants is a \$14.4 million scheme, with \$6 500 for eligible tourism operators who are accredited.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The tourism business survival grants are between \$25 000 and \$100 000. I have enormous sympathy for those businesses in particular that rely upon, for instance, overseas tourists—Chinese tourists and the like. I met a woman in Geraldton—this one has been raised before—who operated flights over the Abrolhos. Ninety-five per cent of her business was Chinese tourists. It is not easy to solve that in the current environment. It is, in fact, impossible to solve that in the current environment. These sorts of grants are out there and available for businesses, and we have put them in place.

#### CORONAVIRUS — BUILDING BONUS

##### **663. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Treasurer:**

I refer to the building bonus program, a key part of the McGowan Labor government's \$5.5 billion recovery plan to support jobs and local businesses.

- (1) Can the Treasurer outline to the house why the government is investing a further \$30 million into the building bonus program?
- (2) Can the Treasurer outline to the house what this investment will mean for businesses and tradies in WA's housing construction industry?

##### **Mr B.S. WYATT replied:**

I thank the member for Mount Lawley for his question.

- (1)–(2) I note that he asked about the impact that this is having on tradies. Indeed, the member for Mount Lawley may need to call his retired plasterer old man, Brian Millman, and tell him to dust off the trowel because it is creating a lot of work that tradies provide, and that has been the intention of the building bonus. It has worked far better than I could have hoped. The latent demand in the domestic economy for home building was much greater than I ever expected. What we have had to do—the Premier and I announced this today—because of that demand and the expected applications as a result is put an extra \$30 million into the building bonus grant, which brings to \$147 million the taxpayer support for the construction industry. This has been a very popular program as part of—the Premier was just waving it around—our \$5.5 billion recovery plan.

To remind everybody, grants of \$20 000 are available to any homebuyer who wishes to build a new house or purchase a new property in a single-tier development. We have not restricted this to owner-occupiers or first home buyers. It is very much for anyone who wants to buy land and build a property, because it is all about providing work for tradies. It goes well with the commonwealth's home builder program. That is perhaps not as expansive or generous as the state's program in how it applies, but as a result, a first home buyer can potentially receive up to \$70 000 in support, so, unsurprisingly, there is a lot of interest in it—and there has been; we are seeing it. The Premier has already referenced this: there were 500 land sales a week in the final week of June and more recently. To give members an idea of the impact it is having on land sales, on average, there were about 60. Indeed, last week the data that was released for the July home finance figures showed a 94 per cent increase in finance applications by investors and owner-occupiers in WA. Again, it is the largest number in Australia. We are seeing, fortunately, in Western Australia economic data highlighting that our state is performing the best of all the states and, indeed, the best of most economies on the planet.

Interestingly, I was always surprised that the shadow Treasurer would oppose the building bonus. He has been very critical of the building bonus as a policy lever of the government.

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The shadow Treasurer has been, and I have been surprised by that. He has opposed the building bonus.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** No.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I have plenty of quotes from him, including just yesterday, when he opposed it again on Oliver Peterson's show. This has always been the confused nature of the Liberal Party.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** Quote me!

**The SPEAKER:** I quote you, member for Bateman! I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** This has been the problem. The party that historically has been pro-economic growth, pro-freedom of the economy and pro-support for businesses is now very much now pro-welfare, pro-spend and pro-public borrowing. The best thing we can do is not simply write cheques for every single business in Western Australia, as the opposition has advocated. As we saw yesterday, I think, we are expecting up to 75 per cent of businesses to come off JobKeeper by the end of September. The opposition will complain about that! But it means that our businesses are doing well and they no longer qualify for the support of JobKeeper. That is not something that the Liberal Party of Western Australia needs to complain about; it should celebrate it. What we will continue to do, because we have done the hard work around budget repair, is focus our spend on areas that need it and that will

have a positive outcome. We are not simply going to do a cash splash as demanded by the Liberal Party. Ultimately, I am very aware of this: when I inherited the borrowing profile that the former government left me, I was traumatised by that. I want to assure members of two things: we support both the homes and businesses of Western Australians during this period of great uncertainty and I am very aware that ultimately, at some point, I need to hand over the finances and I am determined to do that in a much better way than was done with the one I inherited.

**CORONAVIRUS — AGRICULTURE WORKERS**

**664. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I refer to Craig and Michelle, a couple currently living in their motorhome in South Australia who have secured work on-farm in Merredin for the upcoming harvest but who have had their G2G PASS application to enter Western Australia rejected five times since 7 August 2020.

- (1) Does the Premier think it is appropriate that farm businesses and people like Craig and Michelle are experiencing weeks of delays to secure essential work in the agricultural sector?
- (2) What additional information does he think is required to gain approval, given that Craig and Michelle have provided a letter of confirmation of employment from their future employers; copies of their contract; copies of their passports, licences and Medicare cards; confirmation that they have resided in South Australia for six months; and evidence of their ability to quarantine safely in isolation upon their arrival?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) I do not know who Craig and Michelle are and I do not know anything about their circumstances. If the member wants to give me the details, I will pass their details to the WA Police Force, which manages these things in accordance with the law, and let it manage this particular case. I get a great many cases brought to my attention through my office —

**Ms M.J. Davies:** They're not the only ones, Premier. There are more involved.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Yes, that is right. We have a hard border.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** So you think it's acceptable for them to take five weeks —

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We have a state without COVID. Everything is a balance, and there are trade-offs.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the National Party!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I said earlier in question time, and I will repeat it: we are a major state of Australia, we have the strongest economy in Australia and we are the strongest growing state. We have a fly in, fly out workforce coming from the east to live here. Today I noted that Woodside announced it is doing the same as BHP and Rio Tinto, and I congratulate Woodside for that. This is significantly strengthening the Western Australian economy through doing this, but there are trade-offs involved. One of the trade-offs is that we have a hard border with the east to keep COVID out. It has had some complainants. I was talking about the commentators over east who are complaining about the arrangement in Western Australia. They seem to want the virus to come in here and then as the alternative we would have to adopt the New South Wales' model of tracing and clamping down, closing businesses, having restrictions on dancing, drinking, parties, weddings and funerals and all those sorts of things. I disagree with that. I think having a hard border and having a far more open economy, a far stronger economy and far more life and vitality in our state is a better model. I do not get how they cannot understand this.

The Tasmanian Premier agrees with me, but I note that there is never any complaint about him. I wonder why that is? What could it be that is different? What could it be? Let us think about that. It is certainly not that Tasmania has a more robust economy than ours. Surely, if members are concerned about the strength of an economy, they would be more worried about the Tasmanian example than the Western Australian example.

In any event, I digress. If the member wants to bring that case to my attention, I will pass it to the police. I do not know the truth or otherwise of everything that the member has just alleged. I will pass it to the police for it to deal with.

**CORONAVIRUS — AGRICULTURE WORKERS**

**665. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Craig and Michelle have had their G2G PASS application rejected five times since 7 August. What can be done to ensure that people with a legitimate reason to enter Western Australia do not have to wait weeks and endure multiple rejections?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

People go through the exemption process via the WA Police Force. That is what they do. That has been the situation now for six months.

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the National Party!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Does the member want us to bring down the border? Is the member's position to bring down the border?

**Ms M.J. Davies:** No, Premier.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Okay. Rather than coming in here and giving me a case with the two first names of people who I have never heard of before, the member gives me the details and I pass it to the police to analyse, as is the case with the thousands of cases we—all of us—have received that we pass to the authorities that manage these matters.

**CORONAVIRUS — STATE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN — CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE**

**666. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$5.5 billion COVID-19 recovery plan that includes a major investment in cycling infrastructure, such as a new, iconic cycling and pedestrian bridge over the Swan River.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what this significant investment will mean for not only cyclists, but also local job and local businesses?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's commitment to locally manufactured transport infrastructure compares with the record of the previous Liberal–National government?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I thank the member for Thornlie for his question and, of course, his significant commitment to cycling in Western Australia and working very well with the cycling bodies to make sure we continuously improve cycling infrastructure around the state.

**Mr S.A. Millman:** He's a demon on the bike!

A member: Good on ya, Lance!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** He is a demon! Well, hopefully not, Lance, but anyway!

- (1)–(2) Recently, I was out with the Premier and the member for Perth to announce that the government has injected an additional \$60 million towards cycling infrastructure in Western Australia. One of the key features of that program is a new bridge that will provide a safer connection from the Perth CBD to Victoria Park. Initial consultation with the Whadjuk working group has led to the bridge design. The design of the structural elements will continue to be worked on to make sure that we get an iconic bridge over the water. The final design and planning will continue and tenders will be released next year. Currently, more than 1 400 cyclists and 1 900 pedestrians funnel through the two-metre wide causeway path each day.

**Mr S.A. Millman:** It's a nightmare!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is a nightmare. It is dangerous and it is actually not encouraging people to be out there, crossing the river into the city and vice versa. The new path will be six-metres wide. It will have two crossings: 250 metres on the Victoria Park side and 140 metres on the City of Perth side. This is part of our overall package. As part of the Premier's \$5.5 billion economic recovery plan, we are delivering a lot of other initiatives—for example, a new project along Bennett Street in East Perth; another \$2 million around Moore, Wittenoom and Nile Streets in Perth; lighting upgrades around Waterbank, and another key issue is improving safety and connectivity around RAC Arena. We also committed \$3 million to deliver the Soldiers Road shared path, connecting Mundijong to the rapidly developing Byford Town Centre, which is something that has been advocated by Councillor Hugh Jones in that area, who is a very keen councillor for the City of Armadale and who is already kicking goals for that area. As a councillor for the City of Armadale, he raised this issue, and look at that—we are delivering this new path through that area. He is a very effective local councillor and I am sure that he would make a very good local member, too, members! Most people who I have already spoken to in that electorate already agree with members on this side.

As I said, there will be a record amount of spending on cycling infrastructure. One of the key aspects is that the new bridge will be made in Western Australia. Like the Matagarup Bridge, it will be constructed using local fabricating firms. Remember what members on the other side did. Somewhere, in some back lane in Malaysia, in some yard, rest fragments of the former government's Matagarup Bridge. Bits and pieces are lying around. One day I will write a book about that bridge.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** The member denied it was there!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The member for Bateman denied it was there. We will be entering an alliance with local firms to deliver this bridge to create an iconic and beautiful result, just like the Matagarup Bridge. When the Leader of the Opposition talked about the Matagarup Bridge, she said that Western Australians had been delivered a compromised piece of infrastructure. The Leader of the Opposition criticised Western Australian businesses and Western Australian firms. The opposition criticised railcar manufacturing saying, "Why would you bring back an industry from a bygone era?" That is what Leader of the Opposition said. She criticised the manufacturing of the Matagarup Bridge because it was being done by Western Australians. That is what the Leader of the Opposition said. But we are committed to Western Australian jobs, to Western Australian manufacturing and to a new beautiful bridge for cyclists and pedestrians throughout our suburbs.

**The SPEAKER:** Before we go to the next question, we have had only six questions and it has been 35 minutes, so could the answers be a little bit quicker, Treasurer?

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I wonder!

#### CORONAVIRUS — MENTAL HEALTH

##### **667. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Minister for Mental Health:**

Can the minister please outline to the house the extent of the mental health issues that are impacting Western Australians as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, and what the expected demand is on our health system in the short, medium and long term?

##### **Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

I thank the member for the question. Obviously, we are acutely aware of some of the levels of anxiety that have risen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will have an opportunity to dig into these issues in much more detail in the matter of public interest that the opposition has signalled that it wishes to raise today. I can tell the opposition that mental health issues are more acutely felt by those who are concerned about their jobs, the economy and the future for the Western Australian community. I can tell the opposition that the best way it can undermine the progress that we have made on jobs, the economy, and bringing the Western Australian community to a new normal is by dismantling our hard border. Today, the biggest threat to the Western Australian community is the Liberal Party, which seeks to bring down the hard border, which has allowed us to keep Western Australians safe and to bring our economy back.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** Move on from this old line! It doesn't work.

**The SPEAKER:** I have an old line for you. I call you to order for the first time, member for Dawesville.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Whether it is the Liberals in Canberra or the Liberals in Western Australia, we know that they are the enemies of the government's policies to keep Western Australians safe and bring back Western Australian jobs. The Western Australian community supports our hard border approach and we will continue to progress it. One thing we can guarantee is that mental health and anxiety issues in our community will be much better resolved by a hard border policy.

#### CORONAVIRUS — MENTAL HEALTH

##### **668. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Minister for Mental Health:**

I have a supplementary question. Has there been a significant increase in the number of mental health patients presenting to our state's emergency departments as a result of COVID-19; and is that one of the reasons that we are experiencing record high ambulance ramping levels, especially considering that there is virtually no flu or respiratory illness in Western Australia?

##### **Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

I can confirm for the house that presentations to our emergency departments for mental health issues dipped significantly during our early experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have moved back to pre-COVID levels. People presenting with mental health issues to our emergency departments continue to be a challenge for us. That is why we have continued to upgrade our EDs by including mental health observation areas, expanding the EDs in Peel Health Campus and Joondalup Health Campus, introducing a short-stay unit at Armadale Health Service to make sure that that ED gets the support that it needs, and introducing an urgent behavioural assessment unit at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. These are great investments that will make sure that our EDs continue to get the investment they need to meet the demand for their services.

It is perhaps due to some of that investment, but definitely due to the great work of our doctors and nurses, that our emergency departments are the best in the country. For the January to March quarter, Western Australia had the best emergency access target numbers of any ED system in Australia, with 76 per cent of all people being admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours. Queensland and Western Australia are, by a country mile, the best in the country, and Western Australia is better even than Queensland. We have every reason to be confident and proud of our emergency departments and the great people who work within them. The member for Dawesville has made some commentary about ramping. I can confirm that we are no longer focused on ramping because we are not concerned about ambulances —

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** You're not focused on it? That's evident! You have the worst ramping record in history.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Dawesville, it is not a shouting match. I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I am not so much concerned about the welfare of ambulances; I am concerned about the welfare of the patients inside them! It is about outcomes and how quickly we transfer those patients into emergency departments and into the great care of our consultants and nurses. Our transfer-of-care performance has improved on last year. Our transfer-of-care median wait time has been 22 minutes right across this year. Last year, 69 per cent

of all patients were transferred to the ED in under 30 minutes. This year it is almost 72 per cent, so the situation is continuing to improve. We can always do better but we know that transfer of care is the best measure of how well our EDs are performing. It is how quickly we get the patient out of the ambulance and into the hands of our medical practitioners.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Do you want to go home early, member for Dawesville?

**Mr R.H. COOK:** It is not how quickly we get ambulances back on the road. That is the job of St John Ambulance, which is why we focus on transfer of care. The McGowan government puts patients first. We have the best EDs in the country and are continuing to improve on how quickly we get patients into those EDs.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE —  
MANDATORY REPORTING — MINISTERS OF RELIGION

**669. Ms E. HAMILTON to the Minister for Child Protection:**

I refer to the state government's commitment to keeping children safe, which includes implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Can the minister outline to the house why it is important that the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse be extended to ministers of religion; and why the government has taken a staged approach to implementing the royal commission's recommendations?

**Ms S.F. McGURK replied:**

I thank the member for the question. This is an important matter of policy that the Parliament, particularly the other place, will get to decide this year. This year will be a test of all representatives in the other place. Members will be aware that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse reported in 2017 and made 409 recommendations. It was an extensive piece of work that made recommendations that would ensure that changes would be put in place so that history would not repeat itself. It was five years of work, and thousands of people contacted the commission. Tens of thousands of calls and almost 26 000 letters and emails were received by the commission, and over 8 000 private sessions were held. It was an extensive piece of work that made a large number of recommendations and has set the gold standard for how we can best prevent sexual abuse from occurring, and also ensure that victims are heard and perpetrators are held to account.

One of the recommended changes was that governments implement an expansion of the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. It was recommended that mandatory reporting be extended to a series of additional professions, including out-of-home care workers, youth justice workers, early childhood workers, registered psychologists, school counsellors and, of course, ministers of religion.

The royal commission explicitly recommended writing into law the clear expectation that should a religious minister learn of child sexual abuse during confession, they would be required to report it to authorities. That was an explicit recommendation of the royal commission. When the report was released in 2017, the McGowan government committed to implementing all its recommendations and we stand by that commitment. We want those recommendations to be implemented in a phased approach to ensure that they are implemented effectively. That has never been in question. In 2017, we committed to implementing all the recommendations. About the other occupations, we have said clearly, both publicly and in this house, that we would implement those in a phased approach to ensure their effective implementation.

A bill is before Parliament that was passed in the lower house and is now before the upper house. As a government, our commitment to the implementation of those recommendations is not in question, but what is in question is the Liberal and National Parties' stance on requiring ministers of religion to break the seal of confession.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** No, it's not!

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** The Leader of the Opposition says that that commitment is not in question; however, last week a parliamentary committee of the other house, whose members include Hon Simon O'Brien, Hon Jacqui Boydell and Hon Nick Goiran, found, and I quote —

... the case for clause 53 has not been fully established.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Clause 53 extends the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse to the confession. Without the support of the other parties in the upper house, the legislation is at risk of failing to pass. Survivors of child sexual abuse will rightfully be asking themselves, as we are on this side of the house: Do members of the Liberal and National Parties think that they know better than the five-year royal commission? Why are they prioritising religious institutions over victims of child sexual abuse? Why are they not putting child safety first? Have the Liberal and National Parties shifted their position after they accepted amendments in this house, the Legislative Assembly?

The response from some churches to this reform has highlighted why it is very clearly required. I am concerned that those churches believe that they are above the law. This is now a fundamental question of leadership. The evidence is clear, the public support is clear and the right thing to do is clear. This side of the house is committed to implementing this reform, and we will campaign on this issue in the next election if the leaders opposite cannot stand with us. There is an opportunity —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** We support the bill.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Mr Speaker, we continue to have interjections from the Leader of the Opposition, who says that they support the bill.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, if we have this performance tomorrow, I will cut the number of questions in question time. Minister, can you finish, please.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I am trying to finish, Mr Speaker, but I continue to have interjections from the Leader of the Opposition, who says that the opposition supports the bill.

**The SPEAKER:** Just ignore her, minister, and finish what you have to say.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** She clearly has members of her party in the upper house who are saying that they believe that ministers of religion should be exempt from mandatory reporting in the confessional. That is clearly the position of some members of the upper house.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! Minister, finish, please.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I want to make it clear that this government stands by its commitment to implement the recommendations of the royal commission. It stands with victims of child sexual abuse.

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bateman.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** It stands with the highest levels of accountability and enforcement to ensure that child sexual abuse victims are honoured. We stand to implement the recommendations of the royal commission.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** All of them?

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Yes, all of them, member.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, will you finish up, please.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I am trying to finish but I continue to have interjections —

**The SPEAKER:** Do not worry about them. I will sit you down, minister.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I continue to have interjections, which make it difficult. I am making my point clear—that we stand by victims of child sexual abuse.

**The SPEAKER:** Do not make me sit you down, minister.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** We stand by implementing the recommendations of the royal commission.

**The SPEAKER:** I will sit you down.

#### DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — ABC REPORTING

##### **670. Mr D.T. REDMAN to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to ABC reporting of Department of Fire and Emergency Services activities, including the McGowan government support for gagging DFES volunteers from talking to members of Parliament. Has the minister's office lodged any official complaints to the ABC for its reporting of such activities; and, if so, how many complaints have been lodged and what has been the basis for lodging such complaints?

##### **Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:**

Here we go again with the member for Warren–Blackwood. It goes in one ear and out the other. Let us just go back to basics because the member for Warren–Blackwood and some of his cohorts in the Nationals WA did everything they possibly could not to take any notice of the Public Sector Management Act 1994 when they were in government. Let me take them to clause 9 of the Public Sector Management Act. It refers to the principles of conduct by public sector bodies, stating —

The principles of conduct that are to be observed by all public sector bodies and employees are that they —

...

- (b) are to act with integrity in the performance of official duties and are to be scrupulous in the use of official information, equipment and facilities;

That is translated by each director general in the Western Australian government into a code of conduct for their various departments. The code of conduct for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, which I am sure the member has read —

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Mr Speaker, the question related to whether or not the minister's office has made any formal complaints to the ABC. I ask you to bring the minister back to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I am sure the minister will.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I am getting there, but first of all I want to make sure that the member for Warren–Blackwood is clear about what he is complaining about. I am referring to the Public Sector Management Act, which is then interpreted by every director general in the government. I will go to those dot points in the DFES code of conduct that refer to what the member is complaining about. It says that employees must —

- *adhere to policies regarding communication and protocols with ministers, ministerial staff and lobbyists*
- *not contact or communicate with any Federal or State Members of Parliament regarding Departmental business; or invite or allow them onto any DFES premises unless authorised*
- *not respond to any media enquiries unless authorised*

The member for Warren–Blackwood has been out there in the media complaining endlessly about that code of conduct, which has been set down by the Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Services, as he is required to do under the Public Sector Management Act. When the opposition was in government, the Nationals WA in particular did not take any notice of that at all.

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Mr Speaker, my question simply asked whether the minister's office has made any official complaints to the ABC on these matters. I ask you to bring the minister to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, could you answer that, please.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I will. That is exactly where I am going to.

**The SPEAKER:** Do it now, please.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I will go to that very point. With that reference to me, the member for Warren–Blackwood has been in the media complaining about —

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, I want an answer to the question, please.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I am actually getting to it.

**The SPEAKER:** We are not going to be here all day.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Mr Speaker, I am talking about the media itself, which is at the heart of this question. In that case, with the ABC down in Albany, the member is using one of the councillors to make a complaint about the code of conduct. His name is Mr Ian Osborne. I think the member for Rockingham and maybe the member for Midland would remember Mr Osborne.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** We certainly do.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** They certainly do. He was sitting in this house. He is also a councillor down in Denmark and a former colleague at the school that the member for Warren–Blackwood taught at.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Has everyone had their fun? He lives in Denmark, not Albany, so do not taint Albany, please. He is a councillor in Denmark, not Albany.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** He trotted Mr Osborne out to the media, I am sure as a friend of the member for Warren–Blackwood, to complain about the code of conduct. The ABC did not pick up on the background and history of Mr Osborne, nor did it pick up on the fact that Mr Osborne was a member of the bush fire brigade—nothing to do with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, but the bush fire brigade. We brought that to the attention of the ABC.

One final thing: if the member for Warren–Blackwood and Mr Osborne were to look at the code of conduct for Denmark shire council, of which he is a member—he is a bush fire brigade member as well—he would notice that it is not too different from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' one.

## DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — ABC REPORTING

**671. Mr D.T. REDMAN to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I have a supplementary question. I take it from the minister's response that, indeed, his office has made a formal complaint. Can the minister confirm that this is simply another strong-arm tactic to extend his gag order to the national broadcaster?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:**

I can confirm that we bring the truth to the attention of the ABC and the tricks that the Nationals WA normally try to play on volunteers and, unfortunately, on the media.

**The SPEAKER:** That is the end of question time.

*Point of Order*

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Can I seek a clarification?

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, you can seek a clarification. It is 3.10 pm. It is way past the time we normally have. If you are going to ask why fewer questions were asked today, it was because there was continual interjecting, even from yourself.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I appreciate that, Mr Speaker. I am not entirely certain of the time constraint. I am just clarifying what that might be.

**The SPEAKER:** I warned everyone before that I would cut it back, and I have.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** By virtue of that, Mr Speaker, if government members continue to interject on us, we do not get to ask questions.

**The SPEAKER:** The members for Darling Range, Bateman and Dawesville are the ones with all the calls to order, so I would say it has something to do with your side of the house!

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** It is usually the answers, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I have been told by the Clerk that question time is up to the Speaker's discretion.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Of course, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** If you want to query that, I am sure we can sort it out later.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I look forward to it, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides of the house, it took nearly an hour to go through the questions we had today. I will keep cutting the questions down. Ministers, please try to cut down the answers to a large debate.

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS — CANNINGTON***Petition*

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum)** [3.10 pm]: I have a petition that has been signed by 211 people.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** That is it. It has been certified as compliant with the standing orders.

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

We, the undersigned are opposed to the Education Department's proposed changes to the current structure of public schools in Cannington.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to recommend that the following schools in Cannington remain in their current structure—Cannington Community College catering for Kindy to Year 10, Sevenoaks Senior College catering for Years 11 and 12 as we believe this is the best outcome to children's education in Cannington.

An additional 53 signatures did not conform to the standing orders.

[See petition 190.]

**COVID-19 RESPONSE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY OMNIBUS BILL 2020***Assent*

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

**PAPERS TABLED**

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

**CORONAVIRUS — WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS — REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA***Notice of Motion*

**Ms M.J. Davies (Leader of the Nationals WA)** gave notice that at the next sitting of the house she would move —

That this house acknowledges the difficulties faced by industry, business, not-for-profits and community organisations in accessing workers and volunteers, and calls on the state government to outline a plan to ensure regional Western Australia is given the support it needs to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**CORONAVIRUS — MENTAL HEALTH***Matter of Public Interest*

**THE SPEAKER (MR P.B. Watson)** informed the Assembly that he was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Leader of the Opposition seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition)** [3.13 pm]: I move —

That this house notes the ongoing economic and employment uncertainty associated with the COVID crisis and calls on the McGowan government to provide a clinical assessment of what impact this uncertainty will have on the short, medium and long-term mental health of Western Australians.

I stand to support this motion because we, as a community, have spent considerable time and effort in lifting the profile and importance of mental health in Western Australia. However, mental health seems to be a casualty of the COVID pandemic and has been largely sidelined despite the clear fear and anxiety caused by the crisis. People are worried about their jobs, including what will happen when the commonwealth payments draw to a close in a few short weeks. Likewise, small businesses are worried about how they are going to survive and the impacts on those businesses once the commonwealth support is withdrawn.

I am concerned about the very real mental health impact of the COVID crisis on Western Australians and that is why we are calling on the state government to provide the house with a thorough analysis and assessment of that impact. This is a very real public health issue and we have very little or no visibility of it. This crisis has been going for six months and we have no idea how much longer it will go for—a year, two years or even longer. A range of potential mental health impacts can stem from the fear and uncertainty of this crisis. We also know that domestic violence has increased during the COVID crisis and we need to understand the short, medium and long-term mental health impacts associated with this scourge. We know, and I know personally from some of the local stores in my electorate, that alcohol consumption has increased. In my patch, sales in some liquor stores are up well over 30 per cent, which is alarming and concerning. It will have a long-term impact on the health of Western Australians. We know that increased drug use is also occurring, including substitution with other drugs when availability has been impacted for those who choose to use illegal substances.

We have heard really sad stories, including about elderly people being separated from loved ones and people being unable to attend funerals or be with loved ones as they pass away. This has to have an impact, especially for vulnerable people in our community. To drive home this point, I have a small collection of emails that have been sent to my office. My staff and I find them extremely distressing but I bring them to this house to illustrate the impact that this crisis is having on our constituency.

I quote from an email from one constituent, Bill —

... my frustration is growing my mental health is becoming a struggle the more I hear of rules being bent for football and now with the separation from my family for the forcible future it is more of a struggle. It's like a prison sentence with no release date

My right to return to my home has been taken away from me and know one will take the time to listen to my situation.

...

Can you imagine what it's like to hear your wife on the phone in tears and being helpless ,can you imagine what is list like listening to your kids crying down the phone asking can you come home daddy while your stuck in a room in a strange house in another state

I will read from another email, from a family that is stranded in the UK. They see no pathway to come home. It says —

We recently traveled to the UK to attend the funeral of my wife's mother... We understood the risks of leaving the country at the time and decided that my wife should travel alone. However, when my wife arrived at Perth airport she suffered a panic attack and was medically assessed by a paramedic ( over the phone ) at the airport to be "unsuitable to fly".

We returned home and assessed our situation. We ran through various options available to us that included. Leaving our two children in the care of a close friend for the ten days that we would be away, not attending, or travelling as a family.

We eventually decided upon the latter and booked 4 return tickets at an elevated rate. Having completed all of the relevant online information including the G2G we thought our return flight would have been assured.

... We left on the 8th July and had return flights booked in for the 19th July.

Those flights were cancelled and postponed and they see no pathway home. The email continues —

... My wife suffers with severe anxiety and depression that she is able to control in the most part with medication ... This is medically diagnosed depression/ anxiety that greatly limits her day to day life and I hope you can now understand our reason for travelling as a family.

...

We really do need to return home and would be on the next flight to leave London with you special assistance in this.

I have a countless number of these, and I want to read them in to get them on the record. This is from another constituent who has written to me about a number of various issues, and it states in part —

I work in the construction industry. Which we all know has one of the highest suicide rates in the country. With high suicide rates, I am saddened to think the amount of those suffering with mental health issues that go unreported. Which makes me even more concerned to think about the suffering in the current climate. I work with men and women who have not seen their families in close to 6 months. Not only does this effect these personnel but their partners, elderly parents and young children. The ripple effects of closing borders on mental health will largely go unnoticed to our governments. That, however, does not mean it doesn't exist.

...

I have watched some return home to be with their families, without a job and others stay and struggle in order to continue to support their families.

Are we willing to sacrifice our hard-working men, women and their families to mental health issues that may result in further fatalities or ongoing health issues?

It is people like this and the matters they are raising with us who have presented us with the reason for bringing this matter of public interest to the Parliament today. We believe the government needs to do some work to understand the short-term, mid-term and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic on our population, because we need to prepare for the future. If people are exposed to traumas or anxiety and depression or are having increased episodes of anxiety and depression during this COVID-19 period, they will be exacerbated and we need to plan for a contingency in the future. This is from another person called Nicola, who contacted me —

My own situation is that my long-term partner lives in Melbourne—usually I commute and spend 50% of my time over there with him, returning to WA to take care of my teenage sons the other 50% of the time. I haven't seen my partner for months and I'm regularly seeing media stories where Mark McGowan is insisting he will keep for borders closed for months more if necessary—even until the middle of next year.

I had a pass to self isolate at home if I travel to see my partner, but now that has been revoked.

This is breaking my heart, and the prospect of this continuing on into Christmas and beyond is devastating. My partner has applied for a job in WA so he can move here to be with me, but even if he gets it we are worried he won't even be allowed in to take the job on. What would the situation be in those circumstances?

Members, I do not have time to read all these scenarios, but I will finish with a heartbreaking story of a family who lost their father during COVID. He was taken from a hospital to a hospice. Unfortunately, it was his great desire to be taken to his home, where he thought he would spend his last days. He had to be sedated when he arrived at the hospice when he realised he was not being taken to his own home. His daughter wrote, in part —

I cannot comprehend the feeling of desolation which must have overcome him, when he woke in the strange environment without us.

... he had no hope within his heart; and —

It was 13 days later —

we were called urgently to the care home. It took some time to “sign us in”, be issued the electronic pass and to sanitise our hands. As my mother walked into his room, speaking words of love to him, he died. We hope he knew we were there with him.

That there must be many other similar stories around Australia and the world. Where much loved elder members of our communities died alone and in desolation. What was intended to keep them safe kept them from the loving arms of their families and friends at the time of their greatest need.

...

This is a burden we will carry.

That is why we are telling the Minister for Mental Health that we need from the state government a clear understanding of the current mental health situation and the potential impact so that we can understand the scale of this issue, but also what the public policy response needs to be to support these and hundreds of other people who have contacted us in their time of distress.

**MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman)** [3.24 pm]: I rise in support of the Leader of the Opposition in raising some of the concerns we have seen in our community and the impact it is having on families throughout Western Australia. We have all been faced in our electorates with a number of people who have been trying to come home, who are really frustrated and concerned when they see reports of potentially thousands of people coming into Western Australia without the need to quarantine, yet they cannot seem to find a way to get home. There appears to be a lack of empathy from the state government to find a solution to support these people and to keep people safe in Western Australia while allowing people to come home. In other circumstances, we hear of the death of loved ones around the country. This government needs to make a more concerted, empathetic effort to work with the people concerned to ensure that they can spend those important last days with their loved ones. That is really a concern for the health and wellbeing of all Western Australians.

However, I want to direct the remaining time of my contribution to the economy because I found it fascinating at question time when the Treasurer and the Premier talked about how strong the Western Australian economy is and how well it is doing. They used language such as, “It is the best in Australia.” Yet when we looked at the Australian Bureau of Statistics domestic economy statistics for the final quarter, it was clearly a fact that Queensland, South Australia, the Northern Territory and the ACT all performed better in the June quarter than Western Australia did. They all performed better. If we are doing something so well, why are their domestic economies performing better? If we take that a step further and look at the unemployment statistics, surely if we are performing better economically than any other state in Australia is, we would not have the second highest unemployment rate. There would not be nearly 270 000 people either unemployed or underemployed in Western Australia. There would not be a youth unemployment rate exceeding 16 per cent. These are damning statistics for the state government when we talk about the domestic economy in Western Australia.

We know that from a pricing perspective, Western Australia is going through another mining boom. In fact, overnight iron ore prices hit \$US129 and given the current exchange rate at the time was 72.9¢, that is equivalent to \$A177. It is within a whisker of breaking an Australian record for iron ore prices, so no wonder rivers of money are flowing into the state coffers at the moment. Given the December accounts forecast the price of iron ore in this financial year to be \$66 and the actual price was \$120, we know that the economy is receiving well in excess of an extra \$300 million a month. We know from the financial perspective that the government has been very fortunate, particularly given there is now a floor in the GST. If there was not that floor, the GST would start eroding as it did during the former government when the GST started to drop. Pretty much for every additional iron ore royalty the state received, we were losing 90¢ in the dollar in GST. That does not happen now because of what the federal government put in place.

When I look at the health of the domestic economy in Western Australia, I want to take it another step further. If WA’s economy were doing better than every other state in Australia, it would not have a forecast mortgage default rate of nearly double the national average. Digital Finance Analytics is forecasting that in the next 12 months the mortgage default rate across Australia will be 2.8 per cent but that it will be 4.5 per cent in Western Australia—nearly double. Under this government, the number of households suffering mortgage distress has spiked during coronavirus. If our economy is doing exceptionally well, Treasurer and Premier, we would not have this spike in the number of households suffering mortgage stress. The number has risen from 152 000 in January to 193 000 in August. There are 193 000 households now suffering mortgage stress. It has risen over 100 per cent since the McGowan government got into power. What is really concerning about this is that it was already up 67 per cent prior to the outbreak of coronavirus. Despite this so-called fantastic government managing the economy, some really interesting statistics suggest that it is not doing so well.

I want to look at another statistic. The majority of Western Australians aspire to own their own home. In fact, the net wealth of the majority of Australians is determined by the equity they have in their home. Yet Western Australia is the only state in Australia in which the median price of housing has fallen over the last 12 months. In fact, the median price of housing in Perth is now less than the median price in Adelaide and nearly \$50 000 less than the median price in Hobart. No-one would suggest that where we were seven or eight years ago, when the median house price in Perth was higher than in Sydney, was realistic, but to say that the value of a property in Western Australia is \$50 000 less than in Hobart and less than in South Australia signals that our domestic economy is not doing that well. This is where people’s net wealth is.

The government has not established any policies. It has delivered some short-term programs that will drive some jobs and a spike in demand across a few areas while the subsidy lasts, but it has made no underlying changes to our domestic economy to drive future, sustainable jobs in Western Australia.

The points that I have highlighted are driving stress, which is impacting on the mental health of many Western Australians. Sure, I can identify, and have met with, local businesses in my electorate that are doing well—they are doing better under today’s trading conditions than they were 12 months ago—but I can also identify

those that are not. We are focusing on the number of people that this is affecting, and it is not a small number. There are record levels of unemployment and underemployment. We need more from this government to better support the mental health and wellbeing of Western Australians. The government has tried to spruik how fantastic it is, yet a lot of people are still hurting and struggling in Western Australia.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA)** [3.31 pm]: I would also like to contribute to this matter of public interest. I say at the outset that the Nationals WA support the matter of public interest motion moved by the Liberal Party today, and share the concerns about the mental health of the community because of the economic and employment uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 situation. There are two aspects to employment, with one being the job security of workers and certainty about the future of their careers, and the other being the availability, or lack thereof, of staff. Farms, the tourism industry and small businesses throughout our electorates—up and down the coast and inland—are struggling greatly to find staff to keep their businesses going. The consequence is that many business owners are basically working themselves into the ground to cope. Of course, this will have long-term impacts on their mental health and wellbeing.

Until now, the response to COVID-19 has been a response to an emergency situation. The reality is that COVID-19 is not going to go away tomorrow, but will hang over the heads of Western Australian households for months and years to come. We need to move from this uncertain emergency response to a response that provides more predictability and certainty for households and Western Australians, as they negotiate the various government decisions that they will have to take into account as they try to get a job or back into the state to contribute to the economy going forward. We need to understand the stress and uncertainty people on the JobSeeker payment and the JobKeeper program will face when those measures wind back. Those measures have been vital in making sure that the short-term economic impact on households has been mitigated, but sooner or later those programs will come to an end. That leaves recipients in severe uncertainty.

We also know that the situation for people who want to return to the state is very uncertain. This is causing a lot of distress for people who are trying to negotiate a return for work or family reasons. To get back into the state, they have to do a mandatory period of quarantine in hotels. I have highlighted before in the house how this quarantine can affect the mental health of people, who may be inside a hotel for two weeks without any way of getting fresh air and with very little stimulation. Some of my constituents have reported to me that this has been one of the most mentally challenging episodes they have had to bear. Of course, that is accentuated when people also face the uncertainty of whether they will get a G2G Pass, and, if they do get a pass, whether they will actually be allowed to come into the state. Sometimes, for whatever reason, people are refused entry at the last minute. International returnees also face an arbitrary cap. They may be sitting on a plane and then be kicked off, because they will not fit under the cap that day. That does not seem to apply to those travelling business class. I think there is a certain degree of inequity in the way in which this is playing out. People who are already struggling to stump up the cash for a return trip are booted off the plane and have to find another return trip or, because of the closure of airlines, have to go through a long and convoluted flight pattern to get home. This type of uncertainty needs to be addressed. The state government has to play a part in addressing that. There will be huge mental health impacts on people who face this type of uncertainty.

As I have highlighted, businesses are facing the other side of that stress—they are trying to get staff to help run their business or farm, and they are not able to do that. It is manifestly obvious that the regions are bearing the brunt of this.

Hon Jacqui Boydell recently asked some questions in the other place about mental health presentations to emergency departments. As at May this year, 606 people in her region alone had shown up to an emergency department to seek help. The number of telehealth consultations more than doubled from May 2019 to May 2020, from 1 835 to 4 087. We know there is an acute problem in the regions, but we also know that there is a lack of services. We are not just saying that; the Australian Association of Social Workers has also said that. It is also demonstrated by the fact that Rural Health West has six mental health vacancies in regional Western Australia listed on its site at the moment. The government needs to do more to address these issues. We need to have a clear understanding of the mental health impacts of COVID-19 and a plan to address them in the future.

**MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville)** [3.37 pm]: I, too, rise to speak to the matter of public interest moved by the Leader of the Opposition, which notes the ongoing economic and employment uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 crisis and calls on the McGowan government to provide a clinical assessment of the impact this uncertainty will have on the short, medium and long-term mental health of Western Australians. There can be no doubt that we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, but, undoubtedly, we are also in the midst of a mental health pandemic in Western Australia.

From 1 July 2019 to date, more than 1 778 mental health patients were held in an emergency department in a Western Australian hospital for longer than 24 hours. Of those patients, 41 were children aged under 16 and 90 were people aged over 65 years. Of those 1 778 patients, 28 per cent were discharged, 41 per cent were eventually transferred to another hospital and 31 per cent were admitted to a psychiatric ward within their admitting hospital. The problem appears to be getting worse, which is the concern that all of us share in this place in moving the motion.

We know that emergency departments are the wrong place to hold mental health patients. The Leader of the Opposition and I have had the opportunity time and again to talk to community service organisations and residents, who repeatedly remind us—indeed from the Leader of the Opposition’s own experience—that emergency departments are poorly designed for those who are suffering from mental health concerns. We also know that a patient’s stay in an emergency department can sometimes be prolonged if they cannot be referred to another treatment facility. We know of cases in which people have spent more than five days in an emergency department, sometimes sedated and sometimes securely strapped to their bed and restrained, because there was nowhere else for them to go. The minister will undoubtedly make the point that mental health admissions make up around two per cent of emergency department attendances, but the problem is that it is getting worse. We know that our community services are under strain. Important organisations like Kids Helpline and Lifeline WA continue to suffer the consequences and very real impact of the increasing mental health concerns in our community. Just last week the Leader of the Opposition and I had an opportunity to visit Lifeline WA, just across the way in Shenton Park. I was advised last week that Lifeline had, unfortunately, broken a 57-year record, with 3 326 calls taken last Tuesday—a 30 per cent increase on the same day last year. Of course, we in the Liberal Party recognise the ongoing strain Lifeline is under, which is why we have made a significant commitment to boost Lifeline’s funding by \$5 million over the coming five years under an elected Harvey-led government.

The problem in Western Australia is that we simply do not know the true scale of the problem. We do not know what impact this situation is having out in the community. Understandably, the Nationals WA and, indeed, our regional Liberal Party members, often talk about regional concerns. They have been exacerbated by the impacts of COVID-19. I have had an opportunity to survey people in my district. We put out a survey, to which 642 people responded, that asked a range of questions about how people felt about COVID-19. Interestingly, 60 per cent of people said that they were worried that either they or a family member would catch COVID-19—that is 60 per cent of 642 respondents in my community. Of the respondents, 25.71 per cent of people believed that the pandemic would get worse, not better, over the coming six months. The survey also asked how people now felt compared with how they felt prior to COVID-19. Interestingly, the number of people in financial difficulty now is almost double that compared with pre-COVID-19. The number of people who felt that they were overwhelmed more than doubled and, unfortunately, there was a more than 290 per cent increase in the number of people who were concerned about their future. More than half of the respondents—52.72 per cent—said that they were worried about their future, compared with only 13 per cent prior to COVID-19. Only a couple of days ago I put up a poll on Instagram to which more than 100 people responded. Although it is not scientific, 74 per cent of respondents said that they were also worried about the future of the economy in the coming six months.

We do not know the true impact of COVID-19 on our community, which is why we are calling for an assessment of the true situation here in Western Australia, and we hope that the government will support us. We obviously think it is important to be fully aware of the impact COVID is having on people across our community. Such an assessment could be carried out through the Mental Health Commissioner together with our fantastic research partners, such as the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, the Telethon Kids Institute and, perhaps, the universities. The reality is that we cannot meet all the demands of our community if we do not know what they are. First and foremost, the government should invest in understanding the true extent and impact that COVID-19 is having on the mental health of our community in Western Australia. We know that people who go into hotel quarantine suffer; we know that that is a significant concern. That has been noted by the minister in a variety of his press conferences. We know that there are outreach teams that meet with those who are in hotel quarantine. I suspect the government’s plan to move stranded Western Australians into offshore detention facilities will only exacerbate that situation. I think it is a flawed plan. Indeed, the situation for those who already suffer severe mental health concerns will only be exacerbated by a great stressor event such as COVID-19.

It is important that we fully understand exactly what is happening out in the community. If we do not, we will continue to see emergency department figures spiking and people with severe mental health concerns being left to wait days before getting treatment because the government has not adequately resourced the emergency departments. We call on the government today to support this motion so that we can understand the short-term, medium-term and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the mental health of Western Australians. We call on the government to conduct a study so that we can become fully aware of what is going on out there in the community, and to fund the services appropriately. We call on the government to join us in funding important services like Lifeline. We expect and hope that the government will come along and join us on that commitment so that this is not a political issue but a bipartisan one.

Ultimately, the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA have the mental health and welfare of the people of Western Australia at heart, and we hope the government will support our motion for a full clinical assessment of the mental health needs of people in our community, and requisite funding to support our community services, which are of such importance at this time.

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health)** [3.44 pm]: I thank members for bringing this debate to the chamber today. It is always good to have a focus on mental health and its importance for our community. Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic brings many of these issues into sharp focus. I assume, from the motion that

has been moved today, that we are not looking for a clinical assessment of people, but a health assessment of the community. This is something that has been considered at all points. We need to understand all the impacts of COVID-19, and make the necessary policy responses to ensure that we can protect the community as best we possibly can.

There is an assumption in the opposition's motion that there is a link between the impacts of COVID-19 and mental health, so I think it is worth digging into some of those issues to make sure we can appreciate what is exactly going on with some of our community mental health services and how they have fared over the COVID-19 pandemic. During COVID-19—when we use that phrase, we are talking about March through to about June—we saw a decrease in demand for emergency departments and hospital services for mental health issues. However, we know that that demand is now back to pre-COVID levels. In July, presentations at emergency departments were sitting at around 44 cases per day, and that was essentially a one per cent growth on the 2019 levels. Mental health presentations at emergency departments declined by 35 per cent from the week commencing 8 March compared with the week commencing 29 March. Those figures have since rebounded and are currently tracking slightly above those for the same period last year.

Alcohol and other drug presentations climbed by 36 per cent during the same COVID-19-impacted period, and have rebounded at a rate similar to those for mental health ED presentations. Mental health bed occupancy levels decreased during the tight WA COVID-19 restrictions between March and May, but have since returned to pre-COVID levels. The evidence suggests that people with chronic, severe mental illness continued to attend mental health services, but that there was a reduction in new presentations during March to April. Similar to presentations in emergency departments, the number of contacts for mental health services delivered in the community also declined and then rebounded. Lifeline WA reported an increase; in June 2020, the number of calls to Lifeline WA was 43 per cent higher than the number for June 2019. As the member for Dawesville said, there was a particular spike during that period. I am informed that that spike has now subsided, and Lifeline now reports a 14.9 per cent increase in calls answered in August compared with the same period last year. In August 2019, there were 4 079 calls and in August 2020, there were 4 685 calls. I am not calling into question the conversations that the member had with Lifeline, but I will say that what we are seeing is an ongoing trend of, firstly, a period of time during which things spiked and there was a great deal of anxiety in the community—we saw that right across the community—to now, when we are seeing a plateauing, although at a level higher than that of pre-COVID-19. We understand that there are some additional anxieties and stresses in the community relating to COVID-19, and that is reflected in the number of calls to Lifeline.

We need to understand whether there is a link between COVID-19 and an increase in mental health issues, and I think it is fair to say that there is. We know that the social determinants of mental health include the conditions under which people are born, grow up, live, work and age. Those circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. We know that COVID-19 caused people to withdraw their agency and restricted their movements. Many people lost their jobs. Many people suffered as a result of the economic circumstances that they found themselves in.

One of the most important things that we can do as a community is to do our very best to reverse those impacts by bringing things back to the new normal. As a result, we have been focused, as the Premier said, on making sure that we get the health component right, because if we get the health component right, we know that the economic impacts and, therefore, the social impacts will be reduced. If we can get the health component right, we can minimise the impact on the economy and, therefore, ensure that people have the services they need, they can access those services, they can have connections with others in the community and they can have financial security. The opposition's motion explicitly makes the link between people's jobs and economic certainty and the mental health issues associated with COVID-19. To one extent, I cannot necessarily tell members exactly what the mental health impacts are, but I can tell them what the impacts will be if we take our foot off the pedal with the restrictions and the important role that they are playing in ensuring that we bring the economy back to life.

First of all, I want to talk about some of the responses the government has made to address these mental health issues. To address the short-term area of need, the McGowan government delivered an additional \$6.5 million through the COVID-19 package to help targeted community mental health, alcohol and other drug services to support Western Australians. We heard that many of our organisations right across the board are continuing to struggle because not only have some of their income streams and revenue sources been challenged, but also some of their service demands have been challenged. For instance, the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors provides a lot of social services, particularly mental health services for new Australians. Many of the families that went to that service were worried about loved ones in overseas countries that had poor health responses to COVID-19 and, therefore, had dire health outcomes. Obviously, they were concerned about their communities. That organisation had a sixfold increase in the number of presentations or contacts during those early periods. It was important that we were in a position to support these organisations to make sure that they could continue to provide services.

This investment also assisted in transitioning services from face-to-face to virtual support and provided additional supports in the community to meet the increased demand for services over this period. Additional support included

services to support individuals to stay out of emergency departments and for our higher risk accommodation support services. This included extra funding for Lifeline WA, multicultural community organisations, the Child and Adolescent Health Service, alcohol and drug supports and public education. This funding is also helping services adjust to the new environment and maintain infection control standards. It is also important for us to be mindful of our mental health and wellbeing and, if issues arise, to address them and seek help if needed.

It is no different for our homeless population, who can find it extra challenging to seek support through the usual mainstream primary care and mental health pathways, which is why we have provided a \$3.7 million investment as part of the WA recovery plan to continue to deliver mental health triage, assertive outreach, clinical assessment and treatment via a mobile clinical outreach team. This team provided support to more than 120 clients on the streets of our main business districts last year. The team consists of a psychiatrist, social workers and mental health nurses working closely with other specialist mental health staff in partnership with local specialist homelessness services.

We also undertook to make renewed investment in suicide prevention, with the allocation of \$4.8 million for programs to provide additional suicide prevention, including after-care support, support to meet the needs of those people affected by a suicide death, increased capacity of services that provide long-term support and improved community-level data collection for suicide prevention, and the injection of nearly \$10 million to develop and implement a region-by-region approach to Aboriginal suicide prevention. These are critical initiatives.

I note the comments of the member for Dawesville about some of the difficulties we are having with our EDs at the moment. We have encountered these problems throughout our time in government and the same problems were encountered by the previous government. We are failing the mental health patients who are stuck in our EDs, so it is important that we get them into a mental health bed as quickly as possible.

I want to acknowledge the additional \$25 million to be invested in a 16-bed youth mental health, alcohol and other drug homelessness service and an extra \$25 million for a new 20-bed community-based adult mental health service. This service will provide high-level support and rehabilitation services in a homelike environment in the community. The only way that we can get people out of EDs is if we have beds to put them in. The decades of underinvestment in the mental health system has meant that bottlenecks occur throughout the system, so we are investing in an extra 40 beds at Fremantle Hospital to create a specialist mental health hub that will enable a 105-bed facility to be provided at that hospital. This is an important investment to make sure that we have the mental health services for the people who count: those people who are sitting in our EDs. I acknowledge the issues that the member for Dawesville raised about that, but the only way that we can respond to those issues is to have long-term investment to increase the number of mental health beds that we can transition those patients to. We are making that investment now, and as that investment comes on board, we will continue to improve the level of care that we provide to people in our EDs. We have been crying out for this investment for decades. Only this government is seizing the day and taking the opportunity to make these investments. I thank the Treasurer for his unwavering support for the mental health sector in making sure that we have strong investment in the provision of mental health beds.

We have also provided significant investment in a range of mental health services. The Leader of the Opposition highlighted the difficulties in the construction area in relation to suicide prevention. One of the important investments we have made recently is in Mates in Construction, which has been provided with more than \$525 000 in grants from the McGowan government through Lotterywest and the Mental Health Commission. Lotterywest made two grants from the COVID-19 relief package to assist Mates to address the financial impact of cancelled events and challenges to people's income streams. Furthermore, the Mental Health Commission provided Mates with a grant of \$289 000 for two full-time case managers until the end of this year during this period in which we have COVID-19 challenges.

The important thing we are doing is providing immediate investment of \$6.5 million for our organisations on the ground, medium-term investment to ensure that the organisations that provide these services can run forward during this period, and long-term investment to ensure that we are building the bed base so that our mental health system works better, particularly for those people who are reporting to EDs.

The Leader of the Opposition provided us with four really pertinent case studies, and I have already referred to the case study about a member of her community who works in the construction industry. In the first case study, the Leader of the Opposition said that the constituent alluded to rules being bent for football. If there is one thing that characterises the McGowan government's approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is that it will not bow to or waver under the pressure from the sporting codes to ease our restrictions and create special rules for them. We have made sure that we have been unwavering in making sure that our hard border stands, because our hard border is what keeps Western Australians safe. The second case study that the Leader of the Opposition raised was the difficult issues associated with people overseas. We do not have control over the international borders; that control is with the commonwealth. The Premier commented today that we stand ready to assist the commonwealth to bring more people back home. The commonwealth has to do its fair share of the heavy lifting, and its fair share of the heavy lifting does not include taking pot shots at the state governments that decide to keep their citizens safe and decide to open up their economies as best they can because they have kept their hard borders in place.

Finally, the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of older Australians who, unfortunately, are dying away from their loved ones as a result of the restrictions. We know this is tough, but this is the balance between keeping people safe by making sure we have these measures in place and allowing the disease to escape and then we see the untold death rates, particularly in our aged-care sector. Almost half the people who have died in Victoria are people in residential aged-care centres and that is why it is important that we strike the right balance and that we keep people safe. By striking the right balance, we keep Western Australians safe but we also open our economy. There is a direct relationship between our hard borders and the easing of restrictions. Our hard borders have to be a specific part of the response if we want to ease restrictions; make sure that we have more opportunities to go to work, socialise, connect with our families; have more people at our funerals and weddings; and have those sorts of community activities that bring us together and ease the mental health burden on our community.

If people want a softer stance on our borders, we have to increase the restrictions to make sure that we stay on top of any outbreak of the disease. Earlier, the Premier provided a comparative analysis of the different states, particularly with New South Wales because the Prime Minister, presumably with the support of members opposite, used New South Wales to criticise Western Australia and other Labor states—not Tasmania, which has the same hard border as us, and not South Australia—about our hard borders.

In Western Australia we have no caps or limits on people in restaurants, cafes or pubs. The only limits are determined by the two-square-metre rule. We have no requirement for seated-only service. In our pubs, people can stand up to have a beer. In New South Wales, people are still subject to the four-square-metre rule and a cap of 300 people. Group bookings are limited to 10 people. Venues must have a dedicated marshal to ensure that social distancing is maintained. In restaurants there is only seated service. There are no dance floors, except at a wedding reception at which only the wedding couple may dance. Only the wedding couple may dance at a wedding in New South Wales! Therefore, we are striking the right balance required to ensure that we keep Western Australians safe and to open our economy. By opening our economy, we are providing an increase in jobs and we are ensuring that our construction industry and residential building industry come back online.

As the Premier said, Seek is now reporting its pre-COVID job vacancy levels are 99 per cent. I will invite the Treasurer up in a jiffy to further describe the economic impact of what our hard border has done. What is clear is that our hard border has been fundamental to making sure that we can keep Western Australians safe and open our economy through the \$5.5 billion recovery package, which ensures that we can support small and medium-sized businesses, which means we can support industry, which means we can support the industries that are getting people back into the workplace. This is going on only in Western Australia. The opening of our economy and the capacity for Western Australians to come together—to socialise as a community and to socialise as families, and to reconnect in a way that allows people to manage their ongoing mental health issues—is happening in Western Australia. This should be a cause of great celebration. The only way we can do all that is by ensuring we have our hard border, which, clearly, the Morrison government wants to pull down. Clive Palmer wanted to bring down the hard border. The Canberra bubble has decided to pick on the hard border, but the Premier stands strong on the hard border and we know he has the support of the Western Australian community.

*Amendment to Motion*

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Therefore, I move —

That all of the words following “house” be deleted and that the following words be substituted —

acknowledges its support for the hard border and the McGowan Labor government’s \$5.5 billion recovery plan that includes additional resources for mental health

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer)** [4.04 pm]: I rise to speak to the amendment moved by the Minister for Health—Deputy Premier—to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. This is a good amendment. It is an interesting motion that has been moved today. The matter of public interest, moved by the Leader of the Opposition, is effectively around “uncertainty”. The Leader of the Opposition made the point that the house notes the economic and employment uncertainty, and wants to do a clinical assessment of the impact of that uncertainty on the mental health of Western Australians.

I will focus on that word “uncertainty”. It means that we need to, as much as we can, make our state as certain as it can be. By way of an aside, that is probably an interesting debate to be had and, no doubt, PhDs have been written whether the increasing mental health issues over the years have actually been driven by a changing globe and a changing nation and the way we work and how we work. I suspect that they have, but, of course, with the coronavirus, we have incredible uncertainty.

The member for Dawesville noted that the results of his Instagram poll said that people were uncertain about the next six months. I am not in any way surprised. The world is in an incredibly uncertain place, whether that be for job prospects, state and commonwealth government policies or the nine per cent contraction in the US economy or the 20 per cent contraction in the United Kingdom’s economy. All these things have an impact on us in Western Australia. But as I have explained here time and again, and as the Deputy Premier just explained, what we have sought to do is make that key decision to protect the health of Western Australians. Fundamentally, that is the best economic

decision we can make; therefore, creating as much certainty as we can around people's health outcomes is how we create as much certainty as we can around their economic circumstances. The "Minutes of the Monetary Policy Meeting of the Reserve Bank Board" was released today and I will quote one part of it —

Some economies with high or rising COVID-19 infection rates had recently lost momentum. In contrast, economic growth had been relatively strong in China.

This is the key line —

The future path of the recovery was highly dependent on containment of the virus.

That is from the Reserve Bank of Australia. I am stunned that the commonwealth government and the commonwealth ministers are still articulating the case that we need to compromise our borders to get a better economic outcome. The reality of the data that we are seeing is that is simply not the case and that has also been confirmed by more analysis released today. The ANZ is very good: it puts out regular economic insights. On page 2 of the "Australian Economic Insight" that it put out today—this is a reflection of all the states—it reads —

Performance across the states has diverged sharply over the quarter, with Western Australia picking up sharply, while New South Wales looks to be languishing alongside its south-eastern neighbour.

Again, the Premier made the point in question time, and the Deputy Premier just made the point then, that New South Wales is not the gold standard. Its economy is not performing as well as it would like and its restrictions are much more severe than those in Western Australia. In Western Australia, we are leading a life that is as close to normal as can be hoped for anywhere on the planet. That is the key point that I keep emphasising.

The Leader of the Opposition outlined a few emails. We have all received similar emails. I think that the vast majority of people who wrote those emails are fairly understanding of the hard border, as it has come to be referred to, that we have in Western Australia. It is imposing incredible difficulties on people, and I get that. My sister is one of those people in Melbourne who are keen to come home. It is imposing incredible difficulties on her, but because she lives in Melbourne she can see the different lifestyle that we are leading here and compare it with the lifestyle being lived in Melbourne. Hopefully, it will not be like that for too much longer in Victoria. The point is that these are difficult times. We are doing things that we have not done before and never thought that we would have to do, such as the international border restrictions imposed by the commonwealth and the border restrictions within Australia. Again, I make the point that whether we look at the global data or commentary by the Reserve Bank, the ANZ Bank and others, it is clear that the best economic policy is a strong health response.

The member for Bateman went through a few issues that he has gone through before. I do not agree with his comment about the lack of empathy from the government. Nonetheless, that is the opposition commentary on that. He raged, as he does, against iron ore prices, and complained that the government has a very conservative view on the iron ore price. I want to make this point: does anybody think that the current iron ore price is a sustainable figure?

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** No.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Thank you, member for Bateman. That was a hook and I gotcha! It is not sustainable. Yet not a day goes by that the shadow Treasurer or Hon Dr Steve Thomas, the shadow Minister for Finance, do not demand that we spend more based on the iron ore revenues. That is the problem every single day.

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The shadow Treasurer should wait. I did not interject on him. I want to respond to the comments he made about iron ore. The price is not sustainable. Under the former government, we learnt that when governments assume that the iron ore price is here to stay at a record high, they leave themselves vulnerable to the whack when it declines. That is what the shadow Treasurer did when he was the Minister for Finance; admittedly, it was under the former Treasurers and the Premier. They took a rosy view of the iron ore price, locked it in across the forward estimates and spent accordingly. He has not learnt his lesson. Every day, both he and Hon Dr Steve Thomas demand that we spend more based on the iron ore price. I thank him; by way of interjection, he said that it was not a sustainable figure. He was correct; it is not. Do not get me wrong; it is a good thing to have at the moment. The demand from China and the lack of supply from Brazil have had an impact on the price. That is fantastic, and we should all be happy about it, but it is not sustainable. I will not allocate spending on the basis that that price is here to stay, as the former government did. The opposition talks about uncertainty around the economy and unemployment, but I can tell its members that what they did to the finances created uncertainty. It took the greatest mining boom in the state's history and drove the economy into recession. It is unbelievable! Who would have thought it would do that? It is incredible.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** Your spend is not lower!

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Bateman!

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** He says our spend is not lower. Honestly, the shadow Treasurer knows better. He should not demand spending based on a temporary revenue source. He got up and complained about the building bonus because it is creating unsustainable jobs. He said we need to focus on future sustainable jobs with appropriate reforms. The

only reform that I have heard from the shadow Treasurer is to impose an ongoing land tax of many thousands of dollars on the households of Western Australia. The member talked about mortgage stress, but he should wait until he imposes that tax on the households of Western Australia. That is the reality! I note he tried to crab walk away from the commitment when talking to Oliver Peterson, but that is what he will do in the event that he moves from that side of the chamber to this side. He will impose a flat average bill of about \$3 000 on all Western Australians. We will not allow the Liberal Party anywhere near this side of the chamber again.

Amendment put and passed.

*Motion, as Amended*

Question put and passed.

## ARTS AND CULTURE TRUST BILL 2020

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 11 March.

**MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville)** [4.15 pm]: I rise to speak to the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020. I am not the lead speaker for the Liberal Party, but I am certain that our lead speaker will be present in no time. He is, undoubtedly, dealing with important parliamentary business and serving the great people of the electorate of Hillarys.

I note that the government seeks to introduce the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020. Of course, this matters a great deal to the arts and culture community in Western Australia and those who rely on the important work that those in the arts do across Western Australia. In the very few minutes in which I will speak to this bill before the member for Hillarys gets to his feet, the only concern I will raise is that the government, unfortunately, has no intention at all of getting this legislation passed in both houses.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** How do you know that?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I know that because the government has provided a list of priority legislation to the Legislative Council that detailed 18 pieces of legislation, and this arts and culture bill was not on that list whatsoever. Unfortunately, although the Minister for Culture and the Arts undoubtedly wants to see this bill pass, the team is assembled in the Speaker's gallery, and the opposition is here ready and raring to speak to this important bill, we are very surprised that the minister has no intention of passing this bill through this place. If it were a priority for the government, it would have ensured —

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price):** Minister! Member for Dawesville, can you address the Chair, please, and not the minister?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** If this were a priority for the government and the minister, it would have been on the list of priority legislation to get passed during the fortieth session of Parliament. Of course, it was not. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 was noticeably absent from the list provided —

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Indeed, if it had been on the list, I am sure that the Leader of the House would have flagged it early on. I am sure that the minister is diligent and members in the upper house are diligent, but the reality is that in the upper house, the government has mismanaged its legislative agenda. Unfortunately, the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 is not a priority for the government. I look forward to hearing the lead speaker for the opposition speaking to this important bill and helping to get it through. Unfortunately, it will be a futile effort because the government does not believe that this is a priority bill so it is not on the list of legislation it wants to see get passed by the fortieth Parliament.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Thank you for that contribution. The member for Hillarys has the call.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Here's a bit of sense!

**MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys)** [4.18 pm]: The minister should not get carried away! They say that you can be saved by the bell, but when there is no bell, you cannot be saved! As the cultured man that he is, I know that the Minister for Culture and the Arts recognises that there is always a bell before a performance starts or after an intermission to make sure that everyone gets to their seats.

As the lead speaker for the Liberal Party on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020, I indicate our support for this bill, which has bipartisan support. It has had an interesting genesis, which leads on to what may happen in the future. This is essentially a more administrative process rather than a process of deep policy, ideological division or anything like that. It is a process to reform the existing Perth Theatre Trust and create in its place a broader Arts and Culture Trust to manage the cultural assets of the public of Western Australia, on whose behalf the government holds them.

This process commenced in the previous Parliament by the then Minister for Culture and the Arts, Hon John Day, MLA. That process led to the legislation that has been progressed by the current Minister for Culture and the Arts and brought to this place. It is here now.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It's in the spotlight.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** There is strong support for the legislation. Yes, it may well be in the spotlight but we wonder for how long. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be in the upper house's spotlight. When he sums up, the minister will have an opportunity to let us know whether it is likely to be added to the upper house's spotlight. I think the manager of opposition business made the point that this bill was not listed as one of the 19 priority bills that the government intends to pass through both houses of Parliament before it rises for the forthcoming election. That is disappointing. The minister said by way of interjection that it had not passed this place yet, but other bills on that list had not passed this place when the letter setting out the business of the house was sent to the opposition. We hope that this idea that started in the thirty-ninth Parliament and is being debated in the fortieth Parliament does not have to be re-examined in the forty-first Parliament.

**Mr A. Krsticevic:** Do you want to make a bet?

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** The member for Carine asked whether I want to make a bet. I am not a betting man, as he would know. I am a non-betting person. I am not an anti-betting or anti-gambling person; I am just a non-betting person. I sincerely hope that we get this legislation through in this term of government so that the forty-first Parliament does not have to revisit the legislation, which is complex in some parts. It is critically important for the cultural heritage and the future of culture and the arts in our state but it is totally uncontroversial. There is significant support for this legislation from all the relevant stakeholders in the arts and culture community in Western Australia, including the Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia. Clearly, it will be an improvement on what we have.

There were a few teething issues when the Perth Theatre Trust was first created, but, over time, it has served us relatively well. It is passing strange at best. If members want to be less charitable than me, calling it passing strange, I think a hell of a lot of inertia has led to the Perth Theatre Trust being responsible for the venues that are located in places such as Subiaco, Albany and the goldfields. As broadly as we might want to draw Albany and the goldfields, they are certainly not Perth. Having a Western Australian-focused organisation with a name that reflects that is critically important to show that culture and the arts extend beyond the city limits of the city of Perth, beyond the CBD and Northbridge, and that they are important to every Western Australian. I might address that later, particularly in relation to the northern suburbs of Perth.

The intention of this bill is to abolish the Perth Theatre Trust, to repeal the act that created it and in its place set up the Arts and Culture Trust. It will have wider powers and responsibilities than the Perth Theatre Trust has. It will have the ability to —

- (a) to establish, care for, control, manage, operate, maintain, develop and improve Trust venues and other Trust property;

Those venues are entrusted to the trust. It will be able to use venues for artistic, cultural, recreational and educational activities and promote the activities of the trust and the use of its venues, including investing in and managing those venues. They will be its functions. It will have lots of very interesting powers.

One of the major differences between the Perth Theatre Trust and the Arts and Culture Trust that will be felt initially is the requirement that three of the eight board members of the Perth Theatre Trust are representatives of the Perth city council, either members or officers nominated by the Perth city council. If we were setting up a trust solely to manage Perth city assets, that would probably be the right and responsible thing to do. As I said, this trust will be set up to manage Western Australian assets, and limiting it to a CBD council is not the right thing to do. It actually adds to the concerns of people in my area, the northern suburbs, that perhaps arts and cultural events are concentrated primarily in the CBD to the exclusion of people in the suburbs. They have to come into the city rather than the events going to them. I know that the minister will tell me he recently put on a performance by a band that was a little too soft for my liking. I do like the band. The performance was not by the band AC/DC, but it paid homage to it. It is something I started out with but I verged to much heavier music that I still listen to today.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Unfortunately, I invited the minister. The band will come back again; I am told it will be next year or the year after. There is a standing invitation for the minister and I to attend a performance by Metallica—perhaps to go to the mosh pit. I know that the Leader of the Nationals WA has indicated some interest in attending an event like that, so maybe we can have a tri-partisan attendance. It could very well work. Culture and arts extend well beyond that and include popular music, but people forget that. It is often popular music that engages young people and expands their horizons beyond just popular music and to the culture that is around it. Hundreds of events have taken place around the world over many years when a music festival becomes an arts and culture festival. They include all the popular events that have been held in Australia, such as the Big Day Out, the

Soundwave Festival, and international festivals such as the Blow Up Festival and, more recently, Coachella—all the things that are not happening today, unfortunately. Hopefully, they can be held again in the future when the world gets back on its axis and on a more even keel.

In order for those events to occur, we need a body like this. That is recognised by all. The board will no longer comprise those three members from the Perth city council. I think that is appropriate. Also, as happens in modern days, but did not happen when the Perth Theatre Trust was established in 1979, board members are often required to have specific skill sets. I know there are varying degrees of opinion on that. When we are setting up a statutory board that is primarily looking after assets on behalf of the people of Western Australia, we have to know that the people appointed have the skills necessary. If it is a private board or a publicly listed company board, those appointments can be dealt with in the way that the board and the shareholders see fit. But when it is for the general public, I think it is a good thing that some of the board members will be required to have certain knowledge and understanding of things like finance, the law, and culture and the arts so that we ensure we are getting not only the best people, but also the right fit of people to make the board operate and add value.

As I said, there is a perception that not many cultural events are held in the northern suburbs where I live and in the area I represent. The local government does a really good job. The City of Joondalup puts on a lot of arts and cultural events. It has had a summer concert series. Members might be interested to know that last year, at the newly developed Whitfords Nodes park, we even had a performance by Fatboy Slim, the well-known British artist from a few decades ago. That was very good.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Is that the new development up there?

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Yes, the Whitfords Nodes development that we like to call “Albert Jacob’s ladder”! I believe the minister may be coming out to visit there soon. It is going to be a great cultural and recreational precinct.

The City of Joondalup puts on great events and so do the other cities. It is clear that we do not have as many venues. There has always been chatter about a performing arts centre or some form of public venue in the City of Joondalup, perhaps in the CBD. That always causes consternation amongst ratepayers. Other parts of the state have had varying experiences with the ability of local governments and communities to sustain venues over longer periods. The capital funds might be there but venues can sometimes be quite intensive from an income point of view and may not necessarily make the returns that their proponents thought they might make. They may have looked at them through rose-coloured glasses or there may be periods such as right now when no large venue is able to make a return because we do not have touring acts or large-scale performances that rely on people being able to cross interstate and international borders very quickly in order to make events economical. In the past, I have had plenty of experience in putting events together. They were not on a huge scale—not tens of thousands of people—but involved thousands of people and it is costly.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** I can explain that to the minister in very fine detail afterwards, if he likes. It is perhaps the sign of a misspent youth, or a very well enjoyed youth—whatever the case may be.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Yes, it was well before I came to this fair state. Who knows what the future holds?

There is always talk about a performing arts space or centre, or some form of venue in the City of Joondalup. I think anything that was likely to happen has now been delayed by quite some time because of the health and economic disruption that we have experienced. I have always said that I am happy for such a venue to be developed in the northern suburbs. I think it would be really good for the people of the northern suburbs, but the economics have to stack up. The fear is that City of Joondalup ratepayers may end up carrying an ongoing cost for the operation of a venue that is established, as has happened in other communities here in Western Australia and in other places. We know the celebrated examples. I referred to a couple of them as venues managed by Perth Theatre Trust. The economics really have to stack up. That is when a body like the Arts and Culture Trust can give significant support, encouragement and direction. It is the sort of body that will develop its expertise in managing venues and creating the infrastructure and broader structure around that infrastructure that is required for a vibrant cultural and arts precinct. Perhaps it can play a part in informing and advising bodies like the City of Joondalup or other local government authorities that will embark on exercises of modelling and costing, and perhaps looking at funding for new venues in the future. As our city grows, there is no doubt that we should not clump everything in the CBD and Northbridge, and in what is, from time to time, quite an exciting scene in Fremantle—I acknowledge that. Things also happen in Mandurah. If events are clumped only in those centres and we forget Perth’s north, the people in Perth’s north will feel disconnected from the rest of the city, particularly in being able to access cultural and arts events. I may be spruiking for the idea that next time the minister considers an equivalent to the *Highway to Hell*, he looks at the northern suburbs rather than the southern suburbs. I am sure that all the local government authorities—the City of Stirling, City of Joondalup and the City of Wanneroo—would be very willing to partner —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price):** The City of Kalamunda!

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** I am advocating for the north; I will let you advocate for the east!

I am advocating for my area, Hillarys, and the north more generally. I think that would be a great way to do it. We had *The Giants* in the city and the *Highway to Hell* south of the river. As I always say to people—I see my friend the member for Balcatta—“Perth does not end at Reid Highway; it goes north!”

**Mr D.R. Michael:** Or Scarborough Beach Road.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Some people would say Scarborough Beach Road, yes.

**Mr D.R. Michael:** A performing arts centre in Stirling city centre would be magnificent.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** There we are; I will let the member for Balcatta propose that. It may be a shared facility with the City of Stirling, including Wanneroo and Joondalup. That is all up for discussion.

I raised that point specifically to indicate that I think a body such as this, which has been created by this bill, could add significant value to the discussion around proposals for events that will happen in the future. It will generate a body of knowledge. It will be the keeper of a lot of information—the modern word is “learnings”, although I try to avoid using it. Whatever the word, the trust will have the ability to advise, assist and inform, and I think that is a really good thing.

It is disappointing that there is a possibility that a subsequent Parliament will revisit this in the future. This is not a controversial bill, as I said earlier. The provisions of the bill are quite extensive. I have looked through them from a corporate governance point of view and I had some questions. Those questions were answered at a briefing that was kindly provided by the minister’s office for me; the responsible shadow minister, Hon Michael Mischin; and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Nedlands. We attended the briefing quite some time ago, which shows members how long it takes sometimes for bills to come through. My questions were answered in a very affirmative way. I think the bill creates a very good framework of corporate governance. Of course, these sorts of frameworks are always tested in implementation rather than on paper, so we will see how it goes. I have faith in this Minister for Culture and the Arts. I have seen the love he has for his portfolio. He will administer the trust, while it is in his hands, faithfully and diligently. I am sure that future ministers of any political persuasion will do exactly the same thing.

With those words, I do not want to hold up the passage of this bill. I hope that it is not held up by the machinery over in the other place. We can have a debate in this chamber about the other place. The minister and the government will say that the opposition parties in the other place are being obstructionist and dragging things out. On our side, we will say that the government is not doing a good job of managing the other place and that it could be managing the agenda much better to get bills through in a quicker and more efficient manner, especially the non-controversial bills. We could have that debate and argy-bargy about whose fault it is, but, as members of the Legislative Assembly, we should be saying to all members in the other place, “Here’s a bill. It not on the government’s list but, my goodness, how long are you going to take to debate it—an hour or two? Find some time to get it through because it’s important.” The culture and arts industry is waiting. The Perth Theatre Trust Act is no longer fit for purpose. It does not have the rules of corporate governance that we embrace 41 years later. That scares me because I was in high school in 1979. It was a long time ago.

The act is past its use-by date, particularly because it is about managing venues that are not in the city of Perth or even in the wider metropolitan area. Let us give it a modern focus; let us update its powers, its functions and its responsibilities; and let us allow the Arts and Culture Trust and the vibrant and thriving arts and culture communities here in Western Australia to get on with the job. I sincerely hope that happens and that we can send a bipartisan or multi-partisan message from this place rather than argy-bargy about “It’s your fault; it’s our fault” across to the other place, but say with one voice that we support it. We think it is good; we think it is important. It has been a long time coming. It was started by Hon John Day in the previous Liberal–National government. It is now being advanced by the current Minister for Culture and the Arts, the honourable member for Mandurah, so it has totally and utterly bipartisan support. Let us get on with it so we can allow these important cultural institutions and important employers also in this current environment—they are very important for the social fabric of Perth—to get on with doing what they do, which is to provide wonderful cultural and artistic entertainment for us all here in Western Australia.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood)** [4.40 pm]: You might have to wake up now, minister!

I want to talk for a very short time and highlight the support of the Nationals WA for the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020. As previous speakers, particularly the last speaker, the member for Hillarys, made the point, there have been a number of points in time when the need to update this bill has been identified to make sure that it applies in a modern context to maintain the vibrancy of the arts and culture within our community and to enhance that if it possibly can. I guess from my perspective and that of the National Party, we want to ensure that the regions are not lost in that discussion. A number of centres in regional Western Australia find it pretty tough going. It is my understanding that the current Perth Theatre Trust has a role in the Albany Entertainment Centre. There is, of course, the Goldfields Arts Centre in Kalgoorlie and we have quite a vibrant centre in Bunbury’s Live Events and Conferencing Centre. Busselton is a very big centre for the creative industries and does pretty well, and there is also Geraldton. There are certainly some regional challenges to ensure that regional Western Australians get access to culture and the arts.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** There is a new one in Margaret River.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Yes; Margaret River HEART. It has been the centre of a lot of our discussion around the National Party table in the past. When we were in government and had opportunities to roll out the royalties for regions program, we very quickly identified that with engagement with the community, it is not about just physical infrastructure, hospitals, schools and other services provided by government. Culture and the arts is another wedge, and that adds almost the heartbeat to our communities. It is massively important to a different degree in different parts of regional Western Australia, but certainly in my electorate, in the seat of Warren-Blackwood, Denmark is a very culturally and artistically focused community. Margaret River is the same; they are almost the bookends of my electorate. It is highlighted in a lot of work that the National-Liberal government did when in government when we rolled out the blueprints. It was not about just building the physical infrastructure, fixing up roads or building a new hospital; there is another piece that needs support—the artistic and a cultural piece that often flies under the radar when we are looking at the finances. It is very challenging to make it economic, but it is massively important.

As the minister rolls out and supports legislative changes like this, it is really important that we capture that regional piece so that the regions are, and have the opportunities to be, as engaged in culture and the arts as anywhere else in Western Australia. People who live in the regions should not be disadvantaged just because of where they live. That is challenging and needs to be at the forefront of, firstly, decisions made by government and, secondly, the operations of the new Arts and Culture Trust. That needs to be part of its discussions about how it can get proper engagement from regional Western Australians.

The other component that I think this bill will enhance is the scope of the organisation to engage in business and commercial activities much more than previously occurred. That is obviously important because we can then bring to the table opportunities that might not have been possible. Those commercial opportunities are more challenging in regional Western Australia. Again, I highlight that although this bill will unlock some potential in the arts and culture space, assurance that the regions are not forgotten is also critically important.

The government has the National Party's support for this bill, but I highlight that our focus, of course, is in regional Western Australia, and that wedge of building a community in the culture and arts space is critically important. If we are to build vibrant communities, culture and the arts need to be a key part of what we build. These are the strategies and the tools that we should use to achieve that, and they need to be at the forefront of the Arts and Culture Trust's decision-making and the resources that it can deploy to achieve that end. This bill has our support and it is great to see it here. It will certainly get support from the National Party in both houses.

**MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Parliamentary Secretary)** [4.45 pm]: It is my pleasure to speak to the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020, which I will call an arts reform bill. I note, first of all, the member for Dawesville's performance, which I believe would win the worst performing support actor! I note also that he would never be a lead actor because he will never be the leader!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I would never have cast him.

**Mr J.N. CAREY:** I think he would certainly win worst supporting actor for numerous reasons, although he does put on a good performance, as he is doing in his electorate right now.

It is fantastic to see that this Arts and Culture Trust Bill has come to the Parliament, and I want to make some broad observations about it. Although we have heard already from some members who do not want a city focus, obviously as the member for Perth, I will always champion greater arts and culture in the heart of the city. We have seen some big transformational projects for the Perth CBD. Obviously, we saw Elizabeth Quay, Yagan Square and Perth Stadium close by. These big projects and big public spaces are there, but now the city faces a challenge. Ever since then, the boom has ended and now COVID is hitting, so it is about getting people back to the city and filling those public spaces. We understand that for the future of Perth to be vibrant and dynamic, to be a place where people want to live and visit, it needs people. That is the critical heartbeat of the city. It is not about more stadiums, more Elizabeth Quays or Yagan Squares. We need more people every day in the city, living there and deciding to shop and work there. That is what we critically need if we want Perth to grow into the future.

How do we do that? One key part of that is to invest strongly in arts and culture. Arts and culture is the heartbeat of any city. It gives a city identity, it gives it a sense of community and it brings people together who might never have come together before. I think some people strongly underestimate how the arts and culture sector provides an incredible daytime and night-time economy. We know this, and it is evidenced when we see the city during the Fringe World Festival season because our city is most alive, most vibrant and most dynamic during our Fringe Festival and our Perth Festival. Those two critical arts and cultural events draw life into our city like never before. I want to see more of that. I am proud to be part of a state government that recognises the significance to the city of the arts and cultural sector by investing heavily in a \$76 million package for our arts and cultural centre.

Something that the previous government was repeatedly warned about but ignored and never did anything about was the Perth Concert Hall, which is a key cultural institution for not only Perth but also the whole of Western Australia. For too long, it was ignored by the previous government. There was no investment. I am proud that this state government recognises the value of that major cultural asset to Perth and Western Australia and has announced a \$30 million investment in that building to enhance its capacity for cultural and arts events.

The government has also announced other parts of that package that will significantly support the arts and cultural sector, including \$15 million to reactivate and drive live performances and tours, including through waiving fees.

Most importantly, the government announced that the package includes funding of \$2 million to investigate the provision of an Aboriginal cultural centre in Perth, Western Australia. This idea has been mooted by some of the mayoral candidates. The \$2 million investment will ensure that we look at this idea seriously and genuinely and, most importantly, we engage in an honest conversation with the traditional owners of Western Australia. If we are to develop a major and significant cultural building for Perth that recognises our First People and traditional owners, they must be at the forefront. This could be a game changer for Perth. Do not underestimate how an Aboriginal arts and cultural centre of national significance could transform Perth. Research shows that tourists who come to Western Australia crave an experience where they can learn about and understand Aboriginal culture and history. Unfortunately, many will not experience that at all, particularly if their trip is just to the city and then perhaps to the south west. Although we have some incredible Aboriginal tourism companies, tourists crave, when they have a city stay, an experience that helps them to understand Aboriginal culture and heritage. This \$2 million will help us to not only get to the detail of a business case, but also undertake genuine consultation with traditional owners, so that we can put forward a case to the federal arena for why Perth should be home to an Aboriginal cultural centre.

This legislation is another part of that picture of putting culture and the arts first in Western Australia and providing the framework—the infrastructure—to support it. As chair of the Perth Cultural Precinct Taskforce, as appointed by the minister, I can say that the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 is very important, as it will do two key things through this new authority. Firstly, it will extend the scope by empowering the authority to take responsibility for and have authority over a cultural space like the Perth Cultural Centre. It is not just about institutions; it is also about the spaces that link and bring people together, which in themselves can also be hubs of cultural activity and events. We know that the Perth Cultural Centre has been just that, as it has been used as an important venue for both our Fringe World Festival and Perth Festival seasons. However, it is fair to say that the Perth Cultural Centre has had better days. That is why this minister had the foresight to establish a task force, with representation from all the key institutions, to look at both the short-term and long-term actions that can be taken to bring this important cultural heart of our city back to life. The task force has come close to producing a scoping document to go out to market to create a new master plan for the Perth Cultural Centre. The new museum, the State Library of Western Australia, the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the Blue Room Theatre are in this precinct, but it is fair to say that the space itself does not live up to these incredible arts institutions. Again, this is something that this state government is doing. The previous state government let it slip. It did not properly invest in the Perth Cultural Centre, so this minister has been left to clean it up and get it back in order by creating a new master plan for our city and this important culture centre.

The second aspect of this bill that is important for the Perth Cultural Centre is that, as we have already heard from other speakers, it will give the trust increased power to participate in commercial and business arrangements with arts organisations and the private sector. In particular, it will enable the new authority to capitalise on business arrangements for entities like the Perth Cultural Centre. It will be better able to grip potential commercial activities that will drive activation and vibrancy in the Perth Cultural Centre. This is key for me. As the chair of the Cultural Precinct Taskforce, this is perhaps the most important part of the bill. The authority will not simply be given responsibility and authority for spaces like the Perth Cultural Centre, but also be able to maximise its resources and, hopefully, in the long run, reduce its reliance on state funding by potentially using the cultural centre as an income earner for the authority and for investment back into the Perth Cultural Centre or other arts institutions.

I know the bill will provide a different structure from the Perth Theatre Trust board by removing the City of Perth appointees. I do not consider this to be a bad thing. I agree with our regional members of Parliament that if we want this trust and authority to have a broader state focus and recognise regional institutions, it no longer makes sense to have three City of Perth appointees on the trust. It is a logical direction to change the structure of the new authority.

I want to end by thanking the Perth Theatre Trust for its work. It has had to adapt to the times. It has been given many responsibilities. I recently had the pleasure of giving the Perth Theatre Trust an update on the progress of the Perth Cultural Centre. I want to acknowledge the current board members and the work they have done to provide a vision within the limited constraints of the current act. I am very hopeful for the future of arts and culture in our city, because the government is providing not only significant investment through this \$76 million package, but also a reform package through the legislation so that the new body is better able to manage not only existing cultural aspects but also new or revamped cultural spaces, such as the Perth Cultural Centre.

**MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont)** [4.59 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020. I wish to begin by acknowledging and congratulating the Minister for Culture and the Arts and his terrific work in this space. He is incredibly dedicated to the arts community in Western Australia, so I take this opportunity to acknowledge that.

I would like to start by reading out a quote from an Israeli artist, Yaacov Agam, who said —

There are two distinct languages. There is the verbal, which separates people ... and there is the visual that is understood by everybody.

Art is an incredibly significant part of the fabric of our society and our culture. It can strengthen social relations and identity; express complex emotions; tell original stories; provide deep insights; bring communities together; and translate experiences, memories and moments across time and space. The arts can entertain us, educate us, illuminate our lives, and enrich our emotional world. Beyond this, the arts and culture have a broader impact upon our economy, health, wellbeing, society and education.

Let us for a moment imagine a world without the arts: museums, galleries, theatres, festivals, school choirs, songs on the radio, concerts, films, TV shows, comedy and dance performances—all gone. There would be no comics performing at Fringe World Festival; no actors at the Heath Ledger Theatre; no paintings on the walls of the Art Gallery of WA; no dancers at the West Australian Ballet; no films to watch at the local cinema; and no live music to see at concerts, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, or at your corner pub. Without our arts, we are left with a society bereft of identity, culture, entertainment and diversity. We would fail to share our own stories in our own unique and creative ways. I am sure some of us here can remember a moment—a theatre performance, a scene from a film, a song or a concert, painting or a poem—when the value of the arts to the fabric of our society and ourselves as individuals really became clear. Art is crucial in nourishing our culture, but also in preserving it.

The McGowan government recognises the rich and diverse contribution the arts has made to the fabric of our society, our culture and our way of life and wellbeing here in WA. Our government demonstrably recognises the importance of the arts and cultural sectors within our state, which is why, through this bill, we are developing and modernising the management structures for that sector. We are firmly committed to the advancement of Western Australian arts and culture. In order to achieve greater outcomes in this sector, WA needs a new and modern trust that can manage a broader range of cultural assets entrusted to its care.

The Perth Theatre Trust has served its role for many decades, in accordance with the powers granted to it under the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 will create a trust that will continue the great work done by the Perth Theatre Trust over many decades and, crucially, expand into a broader encapsulation of arts and culture in our state. The Arts and Culture Trust will feature greater responsibilities, broader powers and greater flexibility in carrying out its duties. This will equip the trust with the tools necessary to facilitate an expansion of venues, services and activities within the sector.

The establishment of the Arts and Culture Trust is covered under part 2 of the bill. This trust will differ from the Perth Theatre Trust in many regards, and I would like to touch on some of the most significant reforms. The trust's responsibility will extend to all kinds of art and cultural venues, rather than being limited to just theatres. This will give the trust broader scope to manage assets within the arts and culture sectors, to direct activity and provide quality services to the public. The bill acknowledges the wide variety of arts and culture projects, industries and entities within the state, and seeks to provide support and guidance to achieve positive outcomes across the board.

The trust will have greater power to engage in the commercial activities of the properties vested in its care. This will allow the trust to maximise the commercial potential of arts and culture in this state. By providing the trust with increased power to participate in commercial activities and business arrangements, the government will allow the trust to maximise its resources, reduce its reliance on state funding, and create flow-on benefits for businesses in new trust venues, which is fantastic. There is no question that artistic ventures have considerable potential economic value, and we are giving the trust the freedom to be able to tap into that potential to allow for greater sustainability in the industry, which is clearly very important.

The trust board will be comprised of nine members rather than eight, to make quorums and majority decisions easier to obtain. This procedural change is perhaps less exciting than other reforms contained in the bill, but it is incredibly important. This change will likely allow the trust to run more effectively and efficiently, meaning that there will be more time for the planning and management aspects of its responsibilities.

Board members will be required to possess skills and experience that directly relate to the trust's operations. At the heart of this bill is a desire to enhance the reputation and quality of the arts and culture sector in WA. The economic benefits that will accompany this will be simply an added incentive to tap into the potential of this industry. That is why we are legislating for the board of the trust to have members who possess skills and experience directly relating to the operations of the trust. We envision an entity that performs in the best interests of the arts and culture sector, and this specification will ensure that decisions will be made by members with appropriate experience and knowledge. Board members will be required to have different skills to ensure that the trust board has a broad spectrum of knowledge to draw upon. We are taking a holistic approach to the arts here, so it makes sense for the trust that will be established under this legislation to be a reflection of that approach. This reform will ensure that the board of the Arts and Culture Trust has a diverse range of knowledge and experience to draw upon when making crucial decisions about the direction and management of the arts and culture sector in our state. This acknowledges the diversity of the sector and will provide a range of different voices to reflect that diversity on the board of the trust.

I personally understand the importance of having a broad range of skill sets on boards, as for 10 years I was a member and chair of the not-for-profit Film and Television Institute WA. We had industry practitioners; people with business experience; people like me, with a background and experience in finance; and legal professionals. That really added a lot of value and different insights and perspectives to our board discussions and debates.

Furthermore, the trust will be subject to special safeguards for the use of information and disclosure of conflicts of interest. It is important to ensure that that is enshrined in this bill. The state government is committed to ensuring that the bodies it establishes are fair, accountable and completely transparent. We are confident that these provisions will ensure that the trust is able to perform its role while maintaining its integrity.

In addition to this bill, as a state government we are doing a great deal to support the arts in WA. We want to ensure, during the really uncertain times we are going through in 2020, that our storytellers, commentators, comedians, designers, artists and singers, just to name a few, remain supported so that they can continue operating, secure future employment, and deliver programs for our community, at a time when we are really looking for and longing for connection—and entertainment, of course.

The state government, through Lotterywest, is committing \$159 million in the COVID-19 relief fund to respond to hardships being experienced by the WA community as a result of this pandemic. A number of artists in my own community reached out and contacted me in the early days of the pandemic to share their stories about how hard it was when venues closed down and there were no audiences for artists to perform for. That was a real challenge. I am really proud that our state government is providing that critical support to artists, especially in this time of need.

This package includes event cancellation relief for arts, sports and community groups. Up to \$14 million will be available for not-for-profit arts, sports and community organisations that are experiencing financial hardship as a result of events being cancelled due to COVID-19. In addition, up to \$25 million will be available for not-for-profit arts, sports and community organisations across the state to maintain staff, pivot their operations, collaborate and develop new ways of working, innovate, maintain viability, and build resilience as appropriate for future recovery through sector support and resilient organisations. In addition, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries continues to provide support to the independent sector through the Arts U-15k grant program. The DLGSCI is making up to \$2.4 million of support available via the Arts U-15k grant program and the contemporary music fund grant program, and strategic project support for independent artists unable to access that Lotterywest funding. This also includes up to \$500 000 for contemporary music relief grants for recording and digital distribution activities.

The McGowan government has also recently approved a \$1.5 million support package for WA artists. The initiative, which was developed by the Art Gallery of Western Australia and its board, will help Western Australian artists during the COVID-19 emergency. Under the initiative, all living Western Australian artists represented in the state gallery collection will receive \$2 000 to go towards creating an online state art collection archive, which I think is a great initiative. In addition, independent art centre-based Aboriginal artists will share up to \$525 000 through a targeted acquisition program to purchase existing works from up to 15 independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and from 25 Aboriginal art centres, which is fantastic. That means that, in total, more than 400 Western Australian artists will directly benefit from this initiative, which is truly remarkable.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** Furthermore, Screenwest, WA's screen funding and development organisation, has announced \$2.5 million for a WA screen industry sustainability package as a direct response to COVID-19. It is being funded by repurposing existing funding provided by the state government through Lotterywest, but it will deliver in addition to funding already committed projects, which is great. I feel particularly passionate about our screen culture, as it is vital that we maintain local content for our local screens. We want to capture our unique individual stories and most especially our Indigenous stories.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Did you tread the boards?

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** I did, in community theatre in Mt Macedon. We were the Macedon players. During my time at the Film and Television Institute of WA, one of the programs I was incredibly passionate about was when we went out and captured Indigenous stories for the national archives. That was really fantastic. We also sent crews out on country in remote Indigenous communities to teach some of the young kids how to make their own films and tell their own stories. That was incredibly transformational in the lives of those young people in a short space of time.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** Yes, I believe they are still in the national archives. I think those types of programs are fantastic. I am very passionate about local content. As a mum with two young kids, I think it is beautiful to see animated shows like *Bluey* really take off. It is incredibly popular. My kids adore it, but I love it because it is distinctly Australian. I absolutely love that and we should continue to celebrate it. We should continue to fund arts and screen culture so that we can continue to produce those shows.

As part of the state government's recovery plan, \$76 million in funding to support culture and the arts was announced in August. This package includes \$30 million for the redevelopment of the Perth Concert Hall, which will transform the venue's accessibility and make it into an active cultural hub. It will also have the benefit of creating an additional 230 jobs, which is critically important in this environment and should be celebrated. A further \$15 million will fund upgrades to His Majesty's Theatre—the member for Perth touched on this—to reinstate original balconies and verandahs and to provide new event spaces. Again, and importantly, these restoration works are expected to create an additional 110 jobs for local west Aussies, which is terrific.

Recognising the immense value of culture and the arts to our communities, other funding provided as part of this recovery package includes \$5.6 million for venue hire waivers for local performing arts companies, which means free access to state government venues; \$9 million to underwrite COVID-19-associated financial risks for live music performers; \$5 million from Lotterywest for the Creative Communities Recovery—Artists in Residency program, which will provide employment opportunities for individual artists to work with local communities to activate spaces and deliver broad community benefits; \$2 million to begin planning a new Aboriginal cultural centre, which will be fantastic; and \$2 million for the design and delivery of online portals for Aboriginal art sales and presentation of performing arts activities, which I think will be breathtaking and is so overdue—what a wonderful initiative. There is also a \$350 000 contribution towards events delivered by the West Australian Music Industry Association. This funding will provide a much-needed boost to the culture and the arts sector. I think it is fair to say that this industry has been really quite savaged during the pandemic. WA has largely been inoculated to some of the effects of COVID, but I think the arts took quite a bad hit early on.

In addition to the recovery package, the state government has also contributed \$60 000 to the WA Reflections—Our History Rediscovered program. This program encourages mid-career filmmakers to access grants to make short films, bringing stories from the State Library of Western Australia to life. The state government's \$60 000 contribution will assist filmmakers to creatively depict diaries, journals, letters and oral histories from the State Library's collections. With the support of the state government, young and emerging artists and filmmakers will be encouraged to develop and showcase their talents. I really value these types of programs, because investing in and supporting emerging filmmakers provides them with that critical platform by which they learn and hone their craft to hopefully go on to become professional filmmakers here in WA. Anything we can do to support them is truly fantastic. Again, harking back to the days when I was on the board of the Film and Television Institute, we ran a lot of programs to support that aspect of the industry—the emerging filmmakers. We provided small grants to help them make their first film or a short film and then we provided them with the opportunity to showcase those films in short film festivals. At the tail end of that, there was the opportunity to nominate for the WA screen awards that we ran annually. There was that whole opportunity to build up a suite of skills as a filmmaker. Some really great success stories have come out of the Film and Television Institute. Zak Hilditch, who went on to make a Hollywood film, started at the Film and Television Institute. It is important that we provide those opportunities in every sector for emerging artists so that they can cut their teeth, learn the skills and build their confidence so that they are able to compete in a creative industry in a global environment. It is really important that we support them in those endeavours.

The government also recently announced a \$195 000 relief fund for eligible regional art galleries, and I know that my friends in the Nationals WA would be very interested to see how much the government is dedicating to regional art. The relief fund supports artists in regions where exhibitions had to be cancelled due to the onset of COVID-19. This funding will provide immediate support for regional galleries and will ensure that the galleries have the ability to host visual art exhibitions and stimulate and revitalise community arts activities in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The state government also committed \$1 million to the regional arts resilience grants program, which offers grants of up to \$15 000 to regional artists, cultural practitioners and arts and cultural organisations. This will help re-establish arts in the regions by encouraging community participation and involvement, promoting local talent and assisting with the business and professional development of the sector. It is fair to say that this is one of the biggest investments in regional art that the state has seen in a very long time. I congratulate the Minister for Culture and the Arts for looking beyond the metropolitan area. There are a lot of thriving and budding artists in regional and remote communities who desperately rely on the government's support to allow them to continue to create their art, so I am incredibly supportive of what we are doing to help regional artists.

I am proud to be a part of the McGowan government. This government truly supports our artists, entertainers and performers, particularly at a time when so many face significant uncertainty. I am excited to see the passage of this bill. I would love nothing more than to see Western Australia become a bastion of the arts and a sought-out location for artistic ventures and projects—maybe even Hollywood films! I believe that the establishment of the Arts and Culture Trust will contribute to our artistic landscape. I hope that it paves the way for an expansion of this industry that I hold very dear. Without art—in the words of Robert Frost—there is nothing to look backward to with pride and nothing to look forward to with hope.

I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Before you go, member. What was the name of the players you were with? I've got the "Mount Players".

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** Mount Players—that was it!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** What years would you have been in there?

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** Pre-Facebook—thank goodness!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** They've got the list of the productions.

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** It would have been 1994 through to 1998, maybe?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Well, therefore, you would've been with some of these very outstanding performances!

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** They were outstanding performances—*Bye Bye Birdie*.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Yes. I just think it's really important that we acknowledge the role that community theatre plays.

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** Absolutely!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** And they are spread throughout Western Australia, of course.

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** The community theatre was my home for my teenage years. Most of the time I auditioned, I was rejected by the director, but eventually one director caved and said, "You're in, but sing quietly at the back of the chorus." Thank you, members.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk):** The question is that the bill be read a second time. I call the member for Mount Lawley, who, of course, has the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in his electorate, which is very important!

**MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley) [5.22 pm]:** It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak in support of the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020. I start by saying that I never cease to be amazed by the depth of talent on the government benches, particularly when it comes to culture and the arts. After my contribution, members will have speeches from the member for Mirrabooka and the member for Kingsley to go with the speeches by the Minister for Culture and the Arts, the member for Perth and the extraordinarily talented member for Belmont, who was the chair of the Film and Television Institute WA, which is something I had no appreciation of until her contribution just now. I speak for fellow members when I say that we are all very proud to be part of a McGowan government, in which culture and the arts are front and centre of what this government is trying to achieve. We all recognise and appreciate how important culture and the arts are for telling our stories. We are all very proud to have a Minister for Culture and the Arts who is so assiduous, dedicated and hardworking in promoting this portfolio and in making sure that culture and the arts gets the proper attention of this chamber and Parliament, which it deserves.

With those introductory comments, I want to thank the minister for introducing this bill into this chamber. As I make my contribution on behalf of the people of Mt Lawley, I will refer back to some of the comments the minister made in his second reading speech. What is the need for this amending legislation? Why is this legislation required and why is it required now? The minister said —

... the Perth Theatre Trust has been hindered by the limitations of that act. Although the act has done what it was designed to do, it has also restricted the Perth Theatre Trust's potential and prevented it from moving beyond the narrow role assigned to it, which is to manage theatres.

Establishing an independent trust with the ability to maximise revenue is important. He continued —

The McGowan government has a vision of a Perth Theatre Trust that manages not only theatres, but also cultural centres and other valuable cultural assets—a vision that cannot be achieved with the Perth Theatre Trust in its current form.

The minister spoke about the responsibilities of the new trust. He said —

The trust's responsibilities will not be limited to theatres. It will have the power to manage all kinds of cultural venues, including —

This is important, members —

outdoor spaces such as the Perth Cultural Centre.

...

The new trust will reach even further and potentially control assets across the whole state.

This picks up on the very good point made by the member for Belmont—that is, our stories are being told from Eucla to Kununurra, from the border to the coast. Our stories are the stories of the whole of Western Australia, and cultural centres throughout regional Western Australia need to be supported because they have such important stories to share. There will be increased partnership with arts organisations, and the electorate of Mount Lawley has several fantastic arts organisations.

The minister continued —

An important provision in the bill will allow the government to declare a state-funded arts organisation to be a "resident company" for the purposes of the bill.

This seems to be completely logical and it almost comes as a surprise that it does not exist in the current legislation. How good would it be to have a resident company? The bill will allow us to maximise commercial potential. This is always a challenging subject. We are often very concerned about the economy and not the pure and beautiful pursuit of the arts, but this legislation will harvest both aspects. The minister continued —

The bill will also grant the trust with increased power to participate in commercial activities and business arrangements.

This legislation will grant the trust the freedom to do the work that it needs to do to make it self-sustaining, as the member for Perth said. He continued —

The Perth Theatre Trust is currently restricted to managing the specific theatres vested in its care. The current legislative regime is restrictive and does not easily facilitate short-term events or opportunities that can arise within the cultural and artistic sector. To enable the new trust to hold artistic and cultural events to be enjoyed by the community, the bill will grant the minister with the power to declare any part of the state a venue if it is intended to be used partially or wholly as a place for cultural and artistic purposes ...

A declaration will enable the area to be used by the new trust to hold events and provide the trust with broad powers to manage and conduct those events. This reform will provide a long-overdue opportunity for the government, through the trust, to host cultural and artistic events anywhere in the state.

Once this bill is signed into law, it will provide opportunities for local businesses, artistic endeavours and cultural expression in other parts of the state, which goes far beyond the scope of the existing Perth Theatre Trust and the Perth Cultural Centre. In short, this legislation has the real potential to bring in more arts and culture events and flow-on benefits to surrounding businesses in our local neighbourhoods.

I turn to the question of our local neighbourhoods. The electorate of Mount Lawley contains many great examples of a thriving arts and culture sector. It already has performing arts venues and organisations, and local hospitality and retail businesses would jump at the chance for a partnership with the new Arts and Culture Trust. These organisations are already actively involved in promoting arts and culture in our local community. A local example of Mt Lawley's thriving arts and culture sector is the Beaufort St Serenade, which is on tomorrow night on the Beaufort Street strip. It is happening at a number of local businesses, but we will be in Parliament!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** No, we could always get a pair!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** You and me, minister, perhaps!

Side Door Barbecue, Hermanos en Cantina, el Público and Si Paradiso will all host the Beaufort St Serenade tomorrow night and there will be no menus. It is a fantastic example of how culture and the arts can be brought to the community on the Beaufort Street strip to enliven what is already a fantastic community asset.

As the minister knows, performances by WA artists at the Astor Theatre have been revived after they unfortunately had to be shut down due to COVID-19. We have some fantastic cultural centres, such as the Jewish Community Centre of WA in Yokine, which has cultural programs and is getting an investment from the McGowan government, as is the Laguna Veneto Social and Bocce Sporting Club in Dianella and the Hungarian Association of WA in Mt Lawley. As the minister knows, having been there with me, the Jazz Club WA has residency at the Yokine Districts Bowling Club, while other sporting clubs also offer their facilities for live performances, such as the Inglewood Bowling and Sports Club, with its blues and roots music performances, the Alexander Park Tennis Club and the Mt Lawley bowls and tennis clubs.

As the member for Perth touched on so clearly, this bill also has the potential to expand on Perth's existing major summer arts programs, such as the Perth International Arts Festival and the Fringe Festival, as well as working with local governments to secure partnerships for performing arts and cultural events in our local suburbs. Our summer arts festivals have ballooned massively over the past few years, and this bill will provide the minister with the power to declare temporary venues. I see an obvious opportunity for the electorate of Mount Lawley, the venues in that electorate, and neighbouring businesses to allow for a natural expansion of these festivals into our neighbouring suburbs.

Further local venues that already add to Mt Lawley's diverse arts and culture offerings include school auditoriums at some of the fantastic schools in the electorate, including public and private schools such as Mount Lawley Senior High School, Carmel School in Dianella, and Perth College in Mt Lawley; church and community halls; TAFE facilities; piazzas, and public reserves. There is a fantastic gazebo at Copley Park that is a great location for a band to play.

**Ms J.M. Freeman:** A good jazz band!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** A great jazz gazebo, member for Mirrabooka!

When the arts are fostered in our community, local jobs and nearby businesses thrive. The most visible example I have of this, as I have mentioned before, is the Astor Theatre, which is near my office. When the Astor has a sell-out show, as it so often does, its patrons, both before and after the event, frequent local restaurants, cafes, bars and retail shops all along Beaufort Street. The potential of this bill is key not only to building on the arts and culture of our great state, but also to infusing our local businesses with flow-on revenue for our local entertainment precincts and venues. The beauty of this bill and the great foresight of the McGowan government is that it will boost local jobs and our local economy. As the member for Belmont just said, in the context of COVID, this bill could not have come at a better time to inject revenue into hardworking local businesses.

Before I finish my contribution, I want to focus on a wonderful institution in the electorate of Mount Lawley, which is an educational institution of unparalleled repute—that is, Mount Lawley Senior High School. I want to talk about the specialist visual and performing arts program at that high school. I want to thank a work experience student from Mount Lawley Senior High School who is with me this week, Alexander Hondros, and give him a shout-out for the research that he put into this contribution. Alex is doing a great job and he got a selfie with the Premier this morning out in Yokine. He is a student at Mount Lawley Senior High School and is a former participant in the specialist visual and performing arts program. The SVAPA program is a three-year course with a contemporary and experimental arts focus.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** What's it called? The strapper?

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** No, it is SVAPA, which stands for specialist visual and performing arts.

**Ms J.M. Freeman:** Member, will you take an interjection?

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Absolutely. Does the member for Mirrabooka know anyone who has been through the SVAPA program?

**Ms J.M. Freeman:** I know someone who has been through the SVAPA program. It absolutely established him for a life of love and involvement in culture and the arts, particularly music and performance, but he also did lots of acting and visual arts when he was there. It's a great background for students and really a fantastic program at Mount Lawley Senior High School.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Thank you for the interjection.

It is an incredible school and an incredible program. It is a very competitive program that people are extraordinarily keen to get into. I want to take this opportunity to speak to the program and promote it to the community of Mt Lawley, Western Australia and to the minister so he understands how proud we are in Mt Lawley at the SVAPA program at Mount Lawley Senior High School. It is a three-year course with a contemporary and experimental arts focus and has been running since 2004. Students who are enrolled in the SVAPA program are required to attend early morning workshop classes, school theatre productions, weekend workshops, and arts festival days. They work with professional theatre and dance companies and artists; go on excursions; participate in incursions; go to the SVAPA camp; and, pre-COVID, go on international tours. Mount Lawley teaches drama, media, music and visual arts classes for non-SVAPA students as well; thereby spreading the benefits of artistic endeavour across the whole student population.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Is it international?

**Ms J.M. Freeman:** They went to London and Paris a few years ago!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** That is an excellent question. I wonder whether I can come to that shortly.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** I'm a little disconcerted by the government occupying both sides of the chamber!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Wait until after March next year, mate!

In addition to all the classes that are taught to non-SVAPA students, the school also conducts the Lawley Art Auction every June, which is a highlight of the calendar. Unfortunately, as a result of COVID, it was not able to be held this year, but it is the program's most important fundraiser and is well supported by the local community. Residents from all over Mt Lawley participate in it.

There is a music camp for all the music students. Every year, there are 300 students in the music program and the school is able to offer music scholarships. The instruments available to learn are the flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, tuba, French horn, violin, viola, cello, double bass, classical guitar, electric guitar, percussion, drums and voice.

Former well-known Mount Lawley Senior High School and SVAPA students who have contributed to Australian arts and culture on the national and international stage include, but are not limited to, the son of the member for Mirrabooka. They include Dacre Montgomery, who is the actor from *Stranger Things* and *Power Rangers* —

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Yes.

The also include Luke Steele, who is in *Empire of the Sun* and won the Australian Recording Industry Association awards album of the year and song of the year for *Walking on a Dream* in 2009; Katy Steele, who is a musician in Little Birdy; and Marcus Graham, the actor from *Jack Irish* and *Home and Away*, who won the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts award for best guest or supporting actor in a television drama.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Are these SVAPA alumni?

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** These are SVAPA alumni from Mount Lawley Senior High School.

They also include Tammy Macintosh, an actor in *Wentworth* from 2015 to 2019, and—a favourite of the member for Dawesville—*Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* from 2012 to 2015.

I acknowledge a couple of the teachers at Mount Lawley Senior High School: Moya Thomas and Natalie Diggins. The specialist visual and performing arts program premiered in 2004 at Mount Lawley Senior High School. The program was a brainchild of Dr Dale Irving, an educational visionary, and is a cross-arts program that focuses on connections within the arts disciplines rather than teaching them in isolation. This is a fantastic example of artistic collaboration, which is so worthwhile when people move into professional careers. It was created to meet the needs of an intake that were creative and community oriented. The three-year program is the first and only one of its kind in the state. Since its inception, it has grown into a highly esteemed and respected industry-led program with an emphasis on experimental and contemporary work. Auditions for primary school kids take place in year 6 across music, art, drama and include a portfolio submission. The program takes only 32 merit-selected students per year. As I said before, they are required to attend early morning classes, music ensembles and arts enrichment classes, as well as rehearsals, Saturday workshops, concerts, exhibitions, arts festival days, camps and performances.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Do they have to be in the Mount Lawley Senior High School catchment area?

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** No. Students can come from outside the catchment area. In fact, Alex, my work experience student, now lives in the catchment area, but lived out of area when he first enrolled and qualified for Mount Lawley Senior High School on account of having gone through the merit selection process when he was in primary school.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Member for Mirrabooka, a tour of London and Berlin takes place every three years.

**Ms J.M. Freeman:** They went to Paris!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** There you go!

When they go to London, they go to the Tate museums, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Saatchi Gallery. In Germany, they go to the Berliner Philharmoniker. Workshops with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Punchdrunk and Frantic Assembly are conducted for exposure and a deeper understanding of the arts. The teachers say that their collaborations with the industry are very strong. Key partnerships with local artists and arts organisations include with the Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Co3 Contemporary Dance, the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, the Black Swan State Theatre Company and The Last Great Hunt, as well as musicians, artists, directors, broadcasters, gamers, dancers, puppeteers, set and lighting designers, painters and writers.

In 2017, Mount Lawley Senior High School collaborated with Ian Wilkes on *Midsummer Dreaming*. The minister will remember this. The production was a *Midsummer Night's Dream* from a Noongar perspective. The performance was revived the following year as a joint production with fourth-year drama education students at ECU. As a self-funded program, SVAPA definitely punches above its weight, creating and hosting at least two large theatre performances, one exhibition and eight music concerts a year. I will come back to the Lawley Art Auction, which is organised by not only the students, but also the SVAPA P&C committee. It really enhances and deepens that connection between the local community and the school.

I am not sure that I will need an extension; I think I will finish in time.

**Ms J.M. Freeman:** Take an extension.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** No, I am going to finish in time.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk):** Can I say, member, that you have been proceeding at race caller's speed. You are passionate.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Madam Acting Speaker, I know that many government members are so passionate about the arts that I can take only a short amount of time because there are many contributions to come.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Sorry to have interrupted.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** No, not at all. This is an issue that we are passionate about. As I said, we are proud to serve with this minister, who is so focused and dedicated to promoting this area.

Mount Lawley Senior High School says that because it believes its students are innovative artists and they have been trained to work collaboratively alongside professionals, it has a large uptake of students pursuing a career in the arts. In addition to the alumni that I mentioned earlier, I wish to refer to Asher Yasbincek from *The Heights*, Shannon Dooley from *Packed to the Rafters*, Isabelle McDonald, an award-winning theatre maker, and countless musicians, artists, backstage techies and arts administrators. In addition to the contributions that I made previously about the importance of culture and the arts to people in my community, to the people in Mount Lawley, we will forever remain a passionate, innovative and creative community. Institutions such as Mount Lawley Senior High School and its SVAPA program speak volumes to that. I could not be prouder to be part of a government that is focused on promoting culture and the arts and putting in place the necessary regulatory regime and the legislative amendments to give full purpose and effect to that. It is unquestionably the case that I support this bill. I commend the bill to the house. I congratulate the minister.

**MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley)** [5.41 pm]: “All the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players”. Although I am nowhere near as talented as the man who wrote that, William Shakespeare, in *As You Like It*, nor as talented as our minister, I have been known to sing and act on stage and on screen in the past. I applaud the minister for introducing the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 to this house. This bill represents previously untouched potential in Perth and Western Australia. The McGowan government has a vision for a trust that can manage not only theatres, but also other cultural assets entrusted into its care. This vision cannot be achieved with the Perth Theatre Trust in its current form. I commend the minister for having the foresight and the vision to bring this bill to the house in its current form to ensure that we will have a much more adaptable trust to move us forward in an ever-changing world.

There is so much opportunity in Perth. This bill will give the minister the ability to designate any space in the public realm to performances. This is a great thing for Western Australia. Our climate encourages us to be outdoors. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, Perth averages 140 sunny days and 121 partly sunny days a year, so essentially we have the capacity to perform and enjoy our activities outdoors and to utilise our beautiful locations, picturesque scenery and our very temperate climate for about a third of the year. Perth lends itself naturally to outdoor events. We have the Kings Park Festival, which is currently running, Shakespeare in the Park, Opera in the Quarry, Opera in the Pinnacles, fashion shows on the beach, Fringe World and the Perth Festival. Even in my local area in the City of Joondalup, in the past we have had the Little Feet Festival, the Joondalup Festival and, more recently, the Kaleidoscope Festival. This opportunity is about bringing arts and culture into our communities. If we allow for arts and culture to be accessible, we allow for people to interact in a social way in our local communities. Gone are the days when attending the theatre, the ballet and the opera in the city were for the sole enjoyment of those who could afford it. Gone are the days when children were not encouraged to go to the theatre. Those days are dead. We need to bring our arts and culture to our children and our local communities. I believe that this bill will help do that.

Even in Perth’s winter months, we have relatively mild weather for a majority of the time. We have capacity for outdoor adventure, and arts can trigger that adventure. I was talking earlier with somebody about a time—probably three or four years ago, in winter—when there was an ice rink in the middle of the Perth Cultural Centre. It was amazing. We all took our kids there for a little skate. It was outdoors, and we were all rugged up. It rained but that did not matter; we were outside enjoying our winter weather in Perth. I remember thinking at the time that it was a missed opportunity. We had a fabulous ice rink in the cultural centre and we could have linked it into the library, which could have had a display of books and catalogue items that showed what winter looked like through the years in Perth or highlighted stories about winter and snow. Our kids never see snow in Perth. It is not something that we have the opportunity to see. We could have leveraged this event to spark their imaginations and drive their curiosity. Along with the library, the museum and the art gallery are located in this precinct. Temporary exhibitions could have been set up that linked to this one idea of snow, ice and winter. Our kids never see that. We could have had an exhibition in the Art Gallery showing a winter wonderland. We could have had displays in the Museum that related to the ice age and how we have progressed since then. This bill unlocks so much potential and opportunity.

Perth has often suffered from the Dullsville tag. I personally disagree with it. It is very derogatory and something that has been labelled on us by our eastern states counterparts, possibly to make themselves feel better. There is so much here in Perth; we could utilise what we have at our disposal to create the vibrancy that we want to see. There is so much potential for culture and the arts to drive this vibrancy not only in Perth, but also in Western Australia. If we are clever about it and we use what we have and connect it to other things in our state, it can also drive tourism and our economy. Arts and culture drives activation. There is no denying that. It drives patronage directly to our small businesses. When we go to the Heath Ledger Theatre, especially with a child, we will not get out of there without going to the ice-cream shop or grabbing dinner before we go or getting a milkshake at the milk bar, whipped with waffles and ice creams. We cannot go past the ice-cream shop without our children saying, “I want to go in there.” They would never get that opportunity if we were not seeing something at the theatre. When we go to the ballet, we go to a cafe beforehand. We make it a special outing. These arts and cultural events drive patronage directly to our small businesses such as restaurants, cafes and bars, but also indirectly to tourism operators, clothing shops and gift shops.

We have this opportunity to showcase our rich and diverse Western Australian culture, starting with the stories of traditional owners, through to the melting pot of 2020. Australian Aboriginal culture is the oldest living culture in the world. I do not understand why we do not activate that more. Why have we not used this opportunity to create an Aboriginal cultural centre? Perth is the ideal location for such a cultural centre and I know that the minister has been talking to his federal counterparts about it, and championing Western Australia as the location for an Aboriginal cultural centre of national significance. It just makes sense.

I would also like to see utilised our natural assets and our capacity to host outdoor events, and tie that to Aboriginal culture. Although their stories are not my stories to tell, nor the stories of many of the members in this chamber, that does not mean we cannot champion the mechanisms to allow Aboriginal stories to be told. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill gives us an opportunity for creative, out-of-the-box thinking. When we are allowed to go on holiday to

other countries again, what do we go for? It is to see the history and culture—that is certainly what I go for. When I went to Barcelona for my cousin’s wedding, we went to see arts and culture. We went to see the Sagrada Família being built, but not because it is a particularly beautiful building—it is quite Gothic and dark—but because it represents Barcelona’s arts and culture over an extended period. Although it is a faith-based institution, we went to see the building’s absolutely exquisite artistic work, including the stained-glass windows and Gothic impressions on the outside. If people go to Paris, they see the Eiffel Tower, but they also go to the Louvre and the places where they know they can find arts and culture. I would love for that to be the case here in Western Australia. When we go to Singapore, one of the things the kids love to do is visit the *Wings of Time* multimedia attraction. There are live actors and displays of lighting, water and fire. It is a vehicle to tell a story. We have the capacity to do something similar here. We have a beautiful river with great foreshores where we could create something like that. We could project stories of our Aboriginal people over the river. It could be a Dreamtime story with the Rainbow Serpent on a projected screen with live actors. People would feel involved in the story. This bill will allow us the chance to seize that opportunity in the future.

Culture and arts is more than just theatre. It includes outdoor theatre, flash mobs, screen and television and increasingly, virtual reality. We need the capacity to be able to move with the times and be flexible—for example, if there is a new art movement. We need the capacity to jump on it and engage with it, and use it to promote all the things that we love about Western Australia and our arts and culture.

The recent interest in producing film and television here has been amazing. As the minister can attest, I have championed this for a long time with the members for Belmont and Bunbury. I think that the poor minister is quite sick and tired of hearing from us about it!

**Ms C.M. Rowe:** Sorry, not sorry!

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** Sorry, not sorry, minister! I am passionate about Western Australian stories being told and about Western Australian creatives having work in their own home towns. *The Furnace* is an amazing film and when it makes its theatrical debut, I suggest that every single Western Australian go to see it, not just because it was made by a good friend of mine, but also because, as the minister knows, it is a fabulous story. It is a story that lots of people in Western Australia do not even know forms part of our heritage. Without giving too much away, the story is about the interactions between an Afghan cameleer and Aboriginal people—the Badimia people; I am sorry I probably butchered that pronunciation—in the north of Western Australia. When I talk to people about this film, I pose the question: why do we have feral camels in Western Australia or in Broome? Most people know that we have feral camels but they have no idea why. It is because in the late 1890s, when we were looking to move freight and trailblaze through Western Australia, cameleers from a range of countries—this film is about an Afghan cameleer—were employed to come to Australia with their camels to trailblaze or beat the trails and move freight. With the invention of steam engines, they were no longer required. What did they do? Some cameleers tried to assimilate into “white” culture, which did not work very well. Some of them went home. Some of them progressed their relationships with Aboriginal people in Western Australia. Reportedly, that is one of the reasons some Aboriginal people in Western Australia have green eyes. This story is based around a particular cameleer and his journey to find himself—probably the best way to put it. It is a beautiful story. The locations, Kalbarri and Mt Magnet, are stunning, with beautiful gorges in our north. The film is shot beautifully and viewers go on an amazing adventure.

However, there is more to the story. The process of shooting the film was an economic multiplier. I cannot remember the exact number, but when we went to see the preview, I think we were told there were around 300 accommodation nights in Mt Magnet. I have not been to Mt Magnet, but I cannot imagine the accommodation requirements for a five-week shoot. The film shoot meant that local accommodation was used, as well as people eating at local restaurants and hotels. There was even an article in *The West Australian* because one of the main actors, David Wenham, had showed up at a shop. That proves when people are working on Western Australian films, there is an economic multiplier effect. So much can be gained from producing film and television in Western Australia. Besides anything else, it also diversifies our economy. If we have learnt anything from our boom and bust economy, it is that we need to diversify so that we can inoculate ourselves a little bit from that cycle.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** I would also like to briefly touch on the skills of STEM versus STEAM. STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, arts and maths. The arts teach so many of the skills that employers are looking for, including collaboration, teamwork, creative thinking, problem-solving and communication. We want to instil those things in our children because they will need them when they get into the workforce. They can be taught how to do maths and read scientific documents, but it is much harder to teach them teamwork, collaboration and creative thinking. I think the arts steps perfectly into that space. Love of culture and the arts starts from a very young age. I have spoken to teachers and parent bodies at primary schools who tell me that the demand to introduce the arts into the curriculum is massive. The issues are about trying to find staff and spaces to do so. The arts can take many forms including visual arts, multimedia, dance, drama or music. Any of them provide a great foundation for our children’s further learning. In my electorate, there is a big focus on performing arts facilities. Warwick Senior

High School was very excited and thankful that it received \$2 million to upgrade its performing arts facilities under the McGowan government's \$5.5 billion economic recovery plan. Besides being one of the great things about schools, the arts is also one of the things that attracts kids to staying in school and turning up every day. It is one of the things kids enjoy and why they go to school. Greenwood College is campaigning, with my assistance, for a new gymnasium. People say, "That's sport; it's not art!" but the purpose is to move the current gymnasium to a new site and redevelop it into a performing arts centre. Greenwood College has the most amazing dancers and cheerleaders and they want a space that is appropriate for the professionalism that those kids show. I totally support their campaign for a new gymnasium. In fact, I stood with them on the steps of Parliament House last week to present a petition with 1 600 signatures from the school's students, parent body and teachers.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** I will attempt to be brief in my concluding remarks. During the dinner break, we had some spirited conversation with the Leader of the National Party about the film I was talking about, *The Furnace*, and it prompted my memory to put on record that *The Furnace* is the only Australian film to be selected to screen at the Venice Film Festival, which finished on Saturday. A little Western Australian film represented the whole of the Australian screen industry at one of the only international film festivals to be held this year.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It got a good review, too.

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** It got a fabulous review. It just goes to show the strength of the screen industry here in Western Australia and the capacity we have in Western Australia to further strengthen it by supporting it with infrastructure. I commend the Minister for Culture and the Arts for calling for submissions for new studio infrastructure. It is something that the screening industry in Western Australia has been calling for for a very long time. It will provide the base for sound stages, post-production, set building and costume design and will help multiply the economic effect that I was talking about before when shooting these films. This is another aspect of the screen industry in which we can provide real jobs on the ground in Western Australia, using Western Australian creativity in costume design, hair and make-up—all those things needed for screen production whether it be for movies or television.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** "Templeman Studios".

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** I am sure, minister—Templeman Studios. "Stojkovski Studios" has a good ring also—just saying!

We want to provide that infrastructure here. I think this Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020, combined with that commitment, shows how strongly the McGowan Labor government values arts in Western Australia.

When we broke for dinner, just before the bells rang, I was talking about the desire of high schools and primary schools to have performing arts spaces. Warwick Senior High School has just received \$2 million to upgrade its performing arts space and Greenwood College is on a major campaign at the moment to build a new gymnasium. One of the primary purposes of that is to refurbish the existing gymnasium into a performing arts centre. Currently its performing arts, particularly dance, is conducted in a classroom. I have been to the classroom it is conducted in, and there is a large metal pole in the middle of the room, which, as members can imagine, is not very conducive to creating dance works. The space is not meant for dancing and it will be fabulous if this campaign is successful and the school manages to get the money for the gym, so it can move all that dance, music and theatre into a refurbished purpose-space in the existing gym.

Arts and culture, in my opinion, is what enriches and ties together our society. Arts and culture can document what is going on; it can provoke conversation and thought; it can reflect; and it can teach. One of the best examples I know of is a fabulous Australian play called *The Shifting Heart*. It is set, I think, in Melbourne and focuses on an Italian family in the 1950s adjusting to life as an immigrant family. The lessons in this play resonate today in everything we do. Every time there is a new influx of a particular culture into Australia we see Australians repeat the same behaviour. Sometimes I wish that we would stop and reflect on what art can teach us. If we did, I hope that we would not be doomed to make the same mistakes that can be seen in *The Shifting Heart*, which portrays an ethnic Italian family in the 1950s of a diverse culture that had to deal with the social intricacies of trying to assimilate into a foreign culture. However, I firmly believe that art and culture have the capacity to do all these things—to document. When we look back at history, a lot of the time we look at it through film, photography or poetry to provoke good conversation about what we are doing, why we are doing it and how we construct our social fabric. These things are all moved along through art. It is not the only mechanism but it is certainly a very important one.

As other members have said, the Perth Theatre Trust is a very Perth-centric-focused trust, but this bill will create the Arts and Culture Trust, which will have a much wider scope to allow for arts and culture around WA. I know that this is really important, particularly in small towns. My mum runs the Jurien Bay Sport and Recreation Centre in Jurien Bay, only two hours from WA.

**Ms J.M. Freeman:** From Perth.

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** From Perth, sorry.

The centre is increasingly finding it difficult to engage certain parts of the community in arts and culture, so she has made it one of her jobs to bring to Jurien Bay a lot of the different acts and performances so that the kids there can get access to great arts and culture. Also adults will be able to see comedians or musicians that they would not go down to Perth to see. I think it is really important for us to remember that WA is not so Perth focused. I think this reinforces the fact that the McGowan government has a commitment to enable residents in regional and remote communities to equitably access all aspects of society, whether it be for health reasons, education or the arts. Arts are a lot more than just the fluffy stuff—which is what a lot of people think they are. There are some very strong, driving reasons why we need art in our society. For these reasons I find particularly disturbing the federal government Higher Education Contribution Scheme cuts proposed to the humanitarian degrees because without arts and humanities degrees or arts and culture, what are we as a society? If all we are focused on is economics, what are we doing it for? We do it for enjoyment, for enjoying society and bonding with society. I think the federal government is taking a very serious misstep in seeking to increase the cost of humanitarian degrees.

On that note, I will conclude my comments. I commend the bill to the house and look forward to the opening of the “Templeman Screen Infrastructure studios”.

**MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka)** [7.10 pm]: I, too, rise to speak on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020. From my reading of the bill, it ensures that the trust will reflect how arts and culture is currently operating. Historically, Perth’s cultural centre was very much in the middle of Perth. As a young child, I remember when the Perth Cultural Centre Precinct was established. Between 1975 or 1980, there was much fanfare when that area was being established to create some buzz, because we wanted to be seen as more than having a “steak, mash and peas” culture. We wanted to reflect what Western Australia actually was, which is, and always has been, a very multicultural community. We wanted a centre that reflected the broad cultural diversity. I understand that the cultural centre started as an arts hub in the centre of the city and that it later expanded to Albany and the goldfields. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill reflects that with the renewed board, which will set the state’s arts and culture strategy, vision and purpose. The board also has the capacity to go further than just the central CBD and out into the community. The nine members who will sit on the board will have certain experience and qualifications. I hope that experience takes in the diverse needs of our community.

Arts and culture are very much part of keeping together the community and the community heritage of the electorate of Mirrabooka, which I represent. Recently, I was at the thirtieth anniversary of St Andrew’s Grammar School, which is a Greek language school. Greek dancing is an important aspect of its cultural and community heritage. I see that in many ways in the many different communities that I represent. The students at St Andrew’s Grammar School are well and truly second or third generation Australians. They identify very much with their Australian heritage and as Western Australians, but from a Greek–Australian heritage perspective.

I ask those who decide on the appointment of the board members to ensure that it is culturally diverse as well as gender diverse. Arts and culture absolutely needs to be inclusive and to enhance the opportunities that are available to our communities throughout the suburbs. Last year, I was lucky enough to see *Fully Sikh* at the State Theatre Centre. That show was a great representation of what it was like to grow up as a young Australian woman in the suburbs in Western Australia, coming from a Sikh cultural and religious background. The production was about the struggles that involved and about the ability to accept and weave that heritage into a rich identity, particularly for the young woman who performed the play, but also for many other young people in our community. I see the importance of culture and arts in schools such as Balga Senior High School. It uses the arts, and music in particular, to deliver education. It has a really great ensemble called OLE—Only Love Exists. Many of those young people get a sense of being together as a community. They come from a variety of cultural backgrounds from many parts of the world. Most of them or their parents are refugees, with all the complexities that come with having a trauma-based history as part of their life journey and having to find their feet and economic security to develop in Western Australian society. Arts and culture, including music and dance, provide a strong sense of belonging and purpose, which is important for how many of those young people will go forward with their lives.

I congratulate the Western Australian Museum in particular for naming the new Museum Boola Bardip. I understand that its exhibitions will include Western Australia’s diverse cultural heritage, such as the Afghani or Sikh cameleers. Many of us had an education that made us seem like a monoculture, whereas our community has always been multicultural. It is really great that the museum has included that diversity.

I understand that this bill will enable the minister to declare parts of the state as a venue. Minister, please feel free to come to Mirrabooka. We have some great cultural performances in the community. When Barber Shop Chronicles came to Perth Festival, its members worked with some of the young people in Mirrabooka on acting and music. Recently, Perth Festival also worked with community members in Mirrabooka. I was not able to attend any of those performances, but they included not only the high arts, but also all types of arts for the community to enjoy and participate in.

I congratulate the State Library of Western Australia for its partnership with Total Green Recycling and Red Cross and its interaction with refugee communities to provide laptops and other IT technology to help close the digital technology gap. It is really important that the State Library sees its role in the broader sense of reaching out to all parts of the community.

In this COVID period, Western Australia is now fortunate to be able to open many venues, and our day-to-day lives are getting back to some sort of normality. Clearly, we still have restrictions. However, as the Premier pointed out, we are not like New South Wales where people cannot go dancing.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I know how you love to dance.

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** I have been to a nightclub already, minister.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I remember you telling me how excited you were about going.

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** I was so excited. I went clubbing a couple of weeks after we opened up, although I stayed away from the crowds. I was lucky—I did not have to stand in a long line because I got there early.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** I couldn't think of anything worse than going clubbing!

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** Really? You've got to come with me, Mia!

**Ms M.J. Davies:** I think I ran that out a few years ago.

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** You can never run out of clubbing.

I want to tell a story. On New Year's Eve, I went to an event—I have forgotten the name of it. Some fantastic DJs were playing who I really wanted to see. As we were walking towards the WACA, where this thing was on, I was saying to my friend, who is older than I am and who also loves clubbing, "Wow! Look! We're not going to be the oldest people there." Then all these older people turned into Gloucester Park and we turned into the WACA. Honestly, the staff were younger than us! We had all these young people coming up to us and saying, "Can we get a selfie with you?" because we were old.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Make sure you don't overheat.

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** No.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis:** Careful, you'll start dancing soon.

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** No. A young man also came up to me and asked if he could get a selfie with me. I said yes, but by this stage I had probably had selfies with about 10 different people. He said, "You know, I'm famous, and you'll be famous now." I said, "Really? I've always wanted to be famous. Thanks for that." I have no idea what ended up happening there. It was hilarious! Sorry, I digress. I will have to seek an extension soon!

The other funny part of the story is that we went there thinking that we would be able to get ourselves a champagne because it was New Year's Eve. We went to the bar and found that there was no champagne and no wine; just these mixed drinks in, like, ice. It was a night of no drinking for us, clearly.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** Those violently green premix drinks.

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** Yes, but we did not have them.

I want to talk about the music industry and large events. I have spoken to the minister about this matter before. Large events, with really big bands, are a love of mine. Many promoters, events managers and businesses associated with large events have found it difficult to see football being played and IKEA full of customers, yet they are not able to hold large events. I understand that there is a pandemic, but there should be some capacity to work through this. I understand that the minister's office has been talking with the Australian Live Music Business Council, whose membership, I also note, includes about 72 businesses with about 2 500 employees and \$74 million in turnover. They deliver thousands of live music events to the Western Australian public every year. In their correspondence with the minister and the Premier, they recognised and thanked the government for its strong leadership on COVID-19. They clearly appreciate living in Western Australia, but they were one of the first industries to close. My son is a musician, as the minister knows. When COVID-19 hit, he lost two weeks of work instantly and about \$2 000 from his income. It is really hard to deal in this space. I am not sure how we move forward, but I do know that the music business council has sought guidance on gatherings and the parameters around features-based evaluation processes and objectives that will allow the industry to deliver events in compliance with COVID restrictions. I also understand that it has advocated for the appointment of a state emergency events officer, who would be a single point of coordination—a port of call—so that events can take place. There also needs to be some understanding of how the council could develop some sort of isolation or quarantine system that would allow eastern states' acts to come to Western Australia.

The contemporary music sector is an important part of the small business sector. It creates really important economic, employment and cultural activities. Only last week or the week before, I was at my son's gig in a really small venue in East Perth. It was great to be in a venue to watch a live performance. They are small and niche. Venues that put on bigger events, such as the Fremantle Arts Centre, are also, frankly, an important part of the complex aspect of arts and culture. They are cultural and iconic. Those venues are going to suffer if they are not able to deliver important community events. It is really important for those organisations to have the capacity to earn revenue and keep their venues operating.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** These venues are really important. I do not know whether the minister has had the opportunity to go to Red Hill Auditorium, which is on the way to Gidgegannup. I always get lost in that part of the world. It is a big venue where big world-class acts perform.

We can do that in our own communities. It is probably easier to comply with social distancing requirements at outside venues, but we need to work with the industry, as we would work with any industry. It is not enough to just say, “Well, we’re in a pandemic. There is nothing we can do.” We have been able to negotiate with other large performance industries such as the AFL—the AFL is, in fact, just a performance act—and this sector and industry also needs to be considered.

That brings me to the next point I want to raise: how do we see the arts and culture going forward? Many artists and organisations are now performing on digital platforms because of COVID-19. I congratulate them for that; however, they risk being exploited. On 4 June 2020, Caitlin Vincent, a lecturer in creative industries at the University of Melbourne, summarised this issue in an article in *The Conversation* headed “Giving it away for free—why the performing arts risks making the same mistake newspapers did”. We need a strong vision on how artists can access digital technology, but not risk undermining their worth and the viability and capacity of venues to keep delivering that art. The article states —

From a business perspective, financial viability is also of grave concern. Under social distancing guidelines, performing arts venues will be limited to a fraction of their standard audience capacity.

The article states that the sector is reliant on box office sales to maintain the bottom line. It continues —

To survive, arts organisations must establish a monetised business strategy for online performances and presentations.

I think this new trust has to play in that space. It has to consider how we protect our artists’ intellectual and performing property and their own capacity. What we know—I have raised this about Fringe World Festival, and I am going to talk about that in a moment—is that there are no real standardised rates for artist compensation for digital work. Under the Rudd government, the Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts at that time, whose name has just escaped me —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It was Peter Garrett.

**Ms J.M. FREEMAN:** Thank you; it was Peter Garrett. All I could think of was Midnight Oil! He did really important foundational work on intellectual property for artists on the use of their music and artwork, enabling them to gain commissions for their work. This is a vital area that we also need to consider. This *The Conversation* article quotes the old saying, “The problem with working for exposure is you can die from exposure.” Certainly, I have raised in this house before that the model for Fringe World—a model of exposure for artists—is fundamentally flawed. I note that the new trust will have powers to manage all kinds of cultural venues and the ability to optimise the potential of the assets it controls, including assets that are located near major commercial tourism hubs. I assume that is the Perth Cultural Centre. I would implore the board of the trust to ensure that those powers are used in an ethical manner and not in exploiting artists, because the new trust needs to grow the Western Australian industry. We are seeing the sector being fragmented because of the current disputes around Fringe World. We now have the Guerrilla Fest fringe because the established Fringe World model undermines the returns for artists. Basically, we need to be clear that Fringe World has to be a service organisation facilitating a festival for which the artists and the audience are the stakeholders, but for which the artists deserve the best return, not the not-for-profit organisation. The use of the cultural centre by Fringe World should ensure this. I believe that the state government needs to be part of the debate on this and the operation of it as it has a responsibility to the artists.

I do not know whether members are aware of a recent discussion in the Fringe World sector about a clause in the contracts of artists and producers that restricts them from saying anything negative about sponsors. I understand that it is not a new clause, but it has been highlighted. A line in the contract states —

If you have an objection to a FRINGE WORLD sponsor, we ask that you consider whether participation in the Festival is the right platform for your presentation.

That is arguably a new sentence in the clause. It is still not completely clear to me, but my understanding is that it has been highlighted and brought forward in response to last year’s controversy regarding some of the artists’ activism on climate change and views on fossil fuels. I think that is a really backward step for Fringe World. I think that shows that Fringe World is not about allowing artists to be exposed and to deliver; Fringe World is more interested in how it delivers and meets the concerns of its sponsors. I want to put that on the record. I recognise that Fringe World has reminded us that WA produces fantastic, internationally recognised high-quality arts and artists. I have a problem that it brings in overseas artists that then detract from those artists; that is going to be more difficult, I should think, in 2021, so it will be interesting to see how Fringe World deals with that. But WA artists want recognition from a festival that values their worth. What we have to consider—what has to be at the forefront of the consideration of any cultural and arts festival in Western Australia—is that artists are worthy of equal pay to any other career choice that they may make in Western Australia. They are entitled to be paid in the same manner as the cleaners at Fringe World. It should not be on some sort of commission basis whereby 30 per cent of ticket sales are taken

away from them and they have to wait for a period before receiving payment. I have said this here before: as a good unionist who believes that workers such as artists deserve the same recognition and pay as anyone else, I am really challenged by this model. Therefore, I think that curated shows that take into account people's wages and conditions are very important.

I finish by saying I recently went to the launch of the Muslim Film Festival, which was a great festival, and from that I went to see one of its films. I recognise and congratulate the people involved with that on their great work. I think this is the festival's second year. I got to announce the award for best drama. That was fun; I felt I could almost be at the Oscars. They did not ask me to come in a gold number. Next time, maybe I should. It may not be completely appropriate for a Muslim Film Festival in any event! I want to particularly recognise Suzie Worner, who is a director of the Revelation Perth International Film Festival here in Western Australia, and her work as one of the judges. Her capacity to work across the community in the area of celebrating film and the different offerings of film in our community is particularly great. I always thank those small film operators such as Luna Palace Cinemas and others that ensure that we see a vast range of films from various backgrounds and various movie production companies, because I think that is important. I think that is one aspect of our arts and culture that is highly accessible by a broad range of community members, and we need to consider that as well.

In finishing, I want to agree with the member for Mount Lawley that the Specialist Visual and Performing Arts program at Mount Lawley Senior High School is an absolutely fantastic program and delivers great things to its students, my son being one. I want to commend the member for raising it and giving it the accolade it needs, and particularly the person who established it and the teachers who run it.

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA)** [7.40 pm]: I rise to talk about the arts, in the context of the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020, which I think allows for a fair amount of broad discussion, with a bit of latitude —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** The arts is a broad church.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It is a broad church, yes.

I did not want to miss this opportunity, because I want to say a few things from an electorate point of view, and also as a supporter of the arts in my electorate. The power of the arts and culture sector is something that I have been very supportive of since I was elected as a member of Parliament, and prior to that, in fact. Therefore, it is nice to be able to talk about things like this.

I want to kick off my contribution by acknowledging something that has happened in the last couple of weeks. That is that a Western Australian film, *The Furnace*, was selected to premiere at the Venice Film Festival, which has just finished. The previous speaker and I spoke during the dinner break about how exciting it is that that was the only Australian film to be accepted to the Venice Film Festival. *The Furnace* is the product of a young Western Australian man called Roderick MacKay. I remember that over six years ago, Roderick came to this place when the Liberal–National government was in power, sat in our Parliamentary National Party meeting room and pitched his idea to Brendon Grylls and me. I think Hon Jacqui Boydell, as a member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, may have been in the room as well. It has been wonderful to see that go from an idea six years ago to the screen and to be not only acknowledged here in Western Australia—as I am sure it will be when it becomes available to the public—but also chosen to premiere at the Venice Film Festival.

To give members some background, *The Furnace* is set in the 1890s gold rush period of Western Australia. It is a ripping tale. It also brings in a raft of important stories about the different cultures that were meshed together at that time. Those stories will be incredibly meaningful to all those different communities when they see them represented in film. For a lot of reasons, those are important stories to be told, and they really have not been told until now. I want to add my congratulations to Roderick and all the team that has been involved. I will not tell members the storyline. I had the privilege of seeing a screening of the film. It stars young Egyptian actor Ahmed Malek. It also stars Erik Thomson, Baykali Ganambarr, Jay Ryan, David Wenham and Trevor Jamison, who have all been in various art films that would be known to Australian filmgoers. The film is essentially the account of some Afghani cameleers. “Afghani” is used in the broadest sense, because this is when the film starts to delve into issues around prejudice, and generalisations. It is about the Persians, the Afghans, the Turks, the Egyptians and the Indians, alongside the Aboriginal community. The film is filmed with language. It is wonderful to see the relationship that is depicted between the cameleers, and particularly the Aboriginal community, and also the harsh interaction between the European community that had been infected with the gold rush and the greed that came with that period of time. The film also highlights the role of the Chinese community. It is an important story, and it will touch many different communities in Western Australia. It was filmed in Mt Magnet, and also in the Kalbarri gorges. It is a beautiful showcase of our Western Australian landscape. I am no film critic, but, on my assessment, although the film is quite brutal at times, it is also deeply spiritual. It is a really good story. It is exceptionally exciting that the film went to the Venice Film Festival, and hopefully it will go from strength to strength.

Again, my sincere congratulations to Roderick MacKay for his passion and commitment, to the crew and the actors, and to all the supporting industry that helped make that movie magic happen. Through this film I have gained

a greater understanding of how many people that industry supports and touches. We have some incredibly talented people in Western Australia. We want to these stories to keep being told. It was wonderful to see that royalties for regions played a role through the regional film fund, and also Screenwest and Screen Australia. There was also private investment from individuals as well as major companies that helped make this happen.

For me, the importance of the arts in the context of that film is that we are able to tell stories and bring together many different groups of people. Minister, I have just come from launching the Parliamentary Friends of Netball, along with Hon Samantha Rowe.

**Ms J.M. Freeman:** Yay!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That was fabulous. My congratulations to Hon Sam Rowe, because she approached me and said, “I would really love to do this. Would you like to be involved?” As a previous Minister for Sport and Recreation, I jumped at the chance. As sports minister, I spent a lot of time talking about sport; I had to talk about it all the time. But one of my passions is culture and the arts. I am very excited about the Parliamentary Friends of Netball. We have asked all our members to sign up, because there will be a scratch match. I am quite nervous about whether we will get through that unscathed.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** What position would I be?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** The minister is a bit of a niggler. I think he would be in there on the WA–WD, in and around the edges. I think that is probably where he would fit.

I am passionate about the arts. As a regional member of Parliament, I have an enduring connection to sport, although I think this is the case across the board; it is not regional versus metro. However, the arts and culture community in my electorate is no less important, although it is probably less prominent. I am absolutely passionate about the arts. I have many art societies in my electorate. Every two years, I host the Wheatbelt Arts Prize. It is one of those things that supports wheatbelt artists. It has grown from strength to strength. I took that over from Hon Brendon Grylls when he moved on from being the member for Central Wheatbelt. It has great support across the electorate. Our government encouraged and supported significant investment in regional arts. We made a significant investment through the country arts program, which touched things like performance art and music and upgrades to facilities.

I listened to the previous member speak about the importance of having venues to encourage people to engage in the arts. There is a beautiful theatre in Merredin called the Cummins Theatre. It is very historic. It was originally in Coolgardie. It was owned by the Cummins family, which owned both a brewery and the theatre. When the Cummins Theatre in Coolgardie was packed up after the gold rush, they came to Merredin and set up the brewery, and they brought the theatre with them brick by brick.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Did they really?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Yes, they did.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I didn’t know that.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** When we came to government in 2008, it was in a serious state of disrepair. It was a passion project for Hon Brendon Grylls, who was a friend of the Cummins Theatre. He had been trying to stitch together bits of money to try to replace the carpet, and to stop the fly out the back from falling on the heads of visiting artists. In fact, it got to the point that the theatre could not host any visiting acting troupes or shows because it was simply unsafe. That theatre was the beneficiary of significant investment from royalties for regions. It is a jewel in the crown in enabling the community to bring in art and put on showcases. I know that just before COVID, the minister was involved in the AC/DC production—what was it called?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** *Highway to Hell.*

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Yes. AC/DC actually played at the Cummins Theatre.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Did it?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It did. Tony Crook, who was at one point the federal member for O’Connor and grew up in Merredin, tells me that he remembers as a little tacker standing in the wings at the Cummins Theatre watching Bon Scott and AC/DC. That theatre hosted some amazing shows back then. It is truly magnificent.

Investment in those types of facilities is very important. We see them all around regional Western Australia. The Cummins Theatre is at one end of the scale, and then we have the beautiful Red Earth Arts Precinct in Karratha, which, again, was built as part of the Pilbara Cities initiative, supported by the City of Karratha and private sector investment. It is just an amazing facility. It allows that community to attract shows and creates opportunities. Those thinking about investing in projects like that might not even have a notion of what could be achieved. It is simply spectacular. The Albany Entertainment Centre is similar. But the one factor that runs through them all is that they are very expensive to run. The Nationals have always talked about how we can level the playing field. We have magnificent facilities in Perth that are supported by state government, and although it is great that they are supported through touring organisations and bringing people in, I think there is a real need to make sure that we look after the continuing operational costs of those regional facilities, because it is beyond the scope of many local governments

that have inherited those facilities. In the case of the Cummins Theatre, which has been around forever, the Shire of Merredin has had to look after that. Other newer facilities have had fewer problems, but equally struggle to get operational funding to turn that over. When we look at how we support major arts facilities in the metropolitan area, we need to think about how we might do the same in our regional centres to make sure that we can continue to offer and support all the wonderful artists and to bring those shows to communities.

I want to briefly touch on how we ensure that we nurture future artists. I know that in my electorate there has been an ongoing struggle to have appropriately funded and affordable art courses through Central TAFE. I subscribe to the notion that having art courses available through TAFE is fundamentally important because it is an avenue to get people back into education and connected to their community. There is evidence that many people use a general arts course as a springboard that encourages them to take the next step into further education. I do not think art courses are seen as a key job skills area; people do not pop out the other end with a job in the mines. The arts do not necessarily have the same amount of support or attention within our TAFE system, yet it is incredibly important that we continue to offer those courses. TAFE has to do more than offer key job skills and trade training centres. There should be a holistic approach to make sure that we are looking after our whole community. From an ongoing education perspective, we should never lose sight of re-engaging people in the workforce and simply nurturing that next creative generation by providing affordable access to the people offering those courses, who in many cases are highly qualified artist themselves.

I want to do a quick shout-out to Nigel Bird at West Australian Music. Nigel is incredibly passionate about supporting country artists. He has been very successful in creating touring circuits so that we have artists from the metropolitan area supporting bands and emerging artists from regional Western Australia. It is worthwhile for those artists to spend time going around areas that normally might not have a music circuit. It is very sophisticated, or more mature, in the south west of the state, but the wheatbelt touring circuit was really well received in my electorate, in particular. I think we need to keep looking at and supporting those sorts of programs. The new artists, bands and creative people were put with experienced sound engineers to not only give them experience, but also put their work in a more professional setting. Nigel Bird does an amazing job and we were very pleased to be able to support WAM with royalties for regions funding while we were in government. I would like to think that that is continuing, because we need to do every little bit that we can, particularly for an industry that has been really hard hit by COVID.

On that note, I will give a shout-out to Hon Colin Holt. In the middle of the COVID lockdown, as the member for South West region, Hon Colin Holt created a forum called Gigs from the Garage. Every Friday, he supported a different artist from the south west. He set up a live feed and paid the artists to play for two hours. He promoted it through the south west. It was a fantastic opportunity for those tragics who need to see live music all the time to log on and see it, and it gave the artists the opportunity to perform, albeit in a slightly different way. Hon Colin Holt has a real passion for and commitment to the arts sector and he created that forum. A number of different artists played and people were Zooming in or tuning in from all over the state. It was a great experiment that lightened a Friday afternoon in the middle of COVID lockdown when we were not sure whether we would ever be able to go back to the pub to watch live music.

I hope that the house can see that I have a real passion for the arts, music and human expression. We support artists because they allow us to see the world from a different perspective. In very difficult times, but at any time, it is important that we understand that and learn from people who might have a different interpretation of the world. We should nurture, celebrate and encourage the sector, and we should fund it appropriately. Quite often, the arts sector feels like it is a poor cousin.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I listened to the member for Mirrabooka talk about AFL being theatre. We see it as a show or a production. Quite often, artists struggle to get into that realm to do something very similar, but maybe on a different scale. I was very pleased with our commitment to the arts while we were in government. As a local member of Parliament, I have maintained an interest in supporting my local arts groups and making sure that we celebrate the people who bring some joy and creativity to our community.

Coming back to the bill, obviously, the Nationals are supporting the bill. From our perspective, anything that we can do to support and create opportunities for artists, culture and the arts to flourish in Western Australia is something that we should all support.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie — Parliamentary Secretary) [7.56 pm]:** I commend the minister for bringing the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 to the house. It is wonderful that our arts community is being respected and emboldened by a minister whose legislation will give us a new and modern Perth Theatre Trust that will enable us to take our performing arts, and so many facets of our arts community, to another level.

Various theatre productions I have seen in recent times have stayed with me and impacted on my life. Thinking back to my younger days, in the 1970s, one of the first professionally produced plays that I saw would have been an Edgar Metcalfe production at the Playhouse Theatre. I am not sure whether Edgar Metcalfe was involved in it —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You must've been just a boy at Trinity.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** At the time, I was a very young fellow at Trinity. We would have been allowed to go up the road to the Playhouse. It was a wonderful production of Ray Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*. The play explores the issue of ageing, and even as a youngster, I was maybe 17 or 18 or so years at the time, I realised that time goes by. The story is about Roo who suddenly realises that age is catching up with him and he is no longer the gun cane cutter in the cane fields and that other people are faster than him. That is the reality of life. The richness of what theatre can tell you, the experience it leaves with you and the outlook that it delivers to you is just amazing.

In recent times I have seen some of the great names. Years ago, I got the chance to see Glenda Jackson perform, I think at the Old Vic. Of course, it was a stellar performance. Recently, in Perth we had David Suchet come and perform in the play *The Last Confession*, which is the story of Pope John Paul I, who the play tells us was assassinated because he had too liberal a view. He was too much of a progressive, and the conservative ranks of the Vatican just rallied around and saw his demise. It was a fascinating tale, with an amazing performance by one of the big names, David Suchet.

We see on our TV wonderful local productions such as *The Heights*. It is great to be able to watch a show on television, a real quality production, and recognise bits of Perth interestingly mixed together, so we think we are in Vic Park and then we realise we might be in the City of Vincent. It is fascinating and deals with such contemporary issues. It is a real delight.

I turn to some of our literary feats. We obviously have great talent with people such as Randolph Stow and *The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea*, a story he tells about the damage caused by the war experience. I think of a contemporary Western Australian author such as Josephine Wilson and her book *Extinctions*. The member for Mirrabooka recommended it to me, and it is in our library. Again, it deals with the theme of ageing and the idea of extinction of chapters of our life. I think that is what Josephine Wilson intended: chapters of our life become extinct. Reading that book, I was struck by the idea that potentially it would make a brilliant theatre production. There is an opportunity there.

This is exciting and enlightening. Normally, when we go home and switch on the TV and tune in to the ABC, there is a succession of Brit cop shows of varying ability, whether it is *Vera* or *Shetland* or something like that, but it is not really about us. It is not really our story.

I really want to tell the minister about a play that I think is of particular relevance to a historical moment that we can celebrate as an anniversary next year; that is, it will be 100 years since Edith Cowan was elected to this Parliament. She was elected to this Parliament on 12 March 1921. The story of Edith Cowan is remarkable. She was not really on the same side of politics as me, although when we project back 100 years, it is very hard and it is quite confusing to know where people might be situated. The play, and the screenplay, was written by a friend of mine and one of our very talented playwrights, Trevor Todd. It is a brilliant piece of writing. I was lucky enough to see Trevor give what was described as a presentation to the Royal Historical Society in Nedlands. It was a presentation, but I would actually describe it as a performance. Trevor's presentation was based on his screenplay, and his theatre piece, about Edith Cowan. It was based on the biography written by Edith's grandson Peter Cowan, *A Unique Position*. Trevor has developed this screenplay and has called it *With Fire in Her Heart*. I think a production of *With Fire in Her Heart* would be a tremendous way for us to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first woman being elected into Parliament in Australia. It is very relevant. To think that Edith Cowan stood in this very space. The way she was heckled by other members was absolutely striking. Trevor has been good enough to copy across to me some moments from the play. We can imagine the drama. Members were watching this woman come in. The 100-year anniversary of her first speech in this place, right here, will be in July 2021, so when the new Parliament resumes, we will be able to celebrate that moment. This play does a brilliant job of it. One act starts off with Edith being jeered along, in many ways. Words are spoken under people's breath. They say —

Edith know your place  
Edith know your place ...  
Edith ...  
Know your ...  
Place.

Then, she is speaking and she says —

If we have much more of our time wasted I shall feel inclined to get up and say, as was said by an influential public man many years ago, 'For goodness sake, gentlemen, cease wasting time like this; let us get on with the work of the country!'

To that there was a ripple of consternation, and Mitchell, the Premier at the time, was peeved, and the Speaker said, "Order! Order!" He then said —

The honourable member for West Perth. Pray continue.

Acting Speaker, you might use that phraseology in the future—"Pray continue, member"! Edith then says —

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Women's Legal Status Bill will put women on a reasonably fair footing in point of holding offices and positions now closed to them. This bill will give women the right of entry to the legal profession.

Angwin, another member of the time, says —

The best thing that they can do is to try and seek more marriages so as to secure in that way an increase in population!

That was the sort of constant denigration that our first woman member of Parliament was confronted with. Edith Cowan led an amazing life. Some members will be aware of a tragedy in her very early life. She was born on a station inland from Geraldton and sent to school in Guildford. I think as a seven-year-old she was in her classroom in Guildford, and there was a knock at the door. A policeman came in and asked whether he could please see Edith Brown. The news for Edith Brown was that her father, who had remarried after the death of Edith's mother—I think she died in childbirth—had murdered Edith's stepmother. That is the sort of tragedy that was in her life as a youngster, and she had to deal with that, yet, despite everything, she was able to make a major contribution to public life in this nation, to be in this place and work on many different committees. She was one of those people. We know many members of this fashion who are involved in lots and lots of different things. Edith Cowan was definitely of that nature, too.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** What was the name of that play?

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** The play is called *With Fire in Her Heart*. Interestingly, I understand it was presented to Edith Cowan University. We would have thought that it would want to embrace this. There is Edith Cowan House in Joondalup, I believe. The university has not really been enthusiastic about taking on this play. I think it could be a remarkable production for us to commemorate this incredible life. Just as an amusing anecdote, and Trevor Todd gets this point across in his play, Edith Cowan's husband, James, was doorknocking around West Perth, just a couple of kilometres away from here. A crusty rival of Edith's was there to receive the doorknock from James Cowan, doorknocking on behalf of his wife, and this woman said to him, "I hear that Mrs Cowan's children are grossly neglected and they are completely forgotten about." James Cowan just quietly said, "Well, actually, madam, I think the youngest is about 30 years old", and the woman just said, "Well, well, well." The woman went on to say, "Oh, but I hear that poor Mr Cowan is absolutely heartbroken, just left to his own devices and completely lost." James Cowan just said, "Actually, I hear he is very much engaged in his wife's campaign." It is interesting how these things stay with us. The dedication Edith Cowan put in is an inspiration to all of us.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** That is right. We are looking forward to celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** It is next year. She was elected in 1921, so it will be in 2021. Of course, there have been other great women elected to this Parliament. Indeed, we are surrounded by them. May Holman was another one. We really have great fortune to have such inspiration.

These stories can be told, and of course we tend to think of television as a means of conveying the message, but I think so often the theatre can be a really brilliant way of doing it as well, and that is what I think this Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 can do. It can ensure that we are really scanning the horizon to find what is coming up, to see what is potentially going to be of great value to our community and not just be won over by those big name acts that I talked about earlier, the David Suchets and other people, fabulous as it is to see them when they come to Perth. It will be of great value to also have an arts and culture sector that really embraces our own story, tells it and helps Western Australians connect with it as richly and as thoroughly as possible. I commend the bill to the house and again thank the minister for his work.

**MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton)** [8.10 pm]: I do not want to speak for very long on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020, but as the Nationals WA spokesman for regional cities, I want to talk about the aspiration of the regional cities. During meetings with the Regional Capitals Alliance Western Australia, one of the issues it touched on is the level of service or standard facility that it thinks each of the members of the Regional Capitals Alliance aspire to. The cities that the Nationals have in our group, what we call the "regional capitals", are slightly different from the ones that are within the Regional Capitals Alliance. The ones that we call the regional cities that I am spokesman for are Broome, Port Hedland, Karratha, Geraldton, Bunbury, Busselton, Northam, Kalgoorlie, Albany, Esperance and Kununurra. A few of those are obviously not cities, because I think to be a city in Western Australia it has to have 20 000 people for three years, does it not?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Yes.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** Yes, and so there are obviously a few that fall a bit short, but we grade them up, if you like, when we see that one of the largish towns has the potential to grow. Northam, for example, has the potential to be a reasonably sized regional city if we wanted to grow it, whereas it will take ones like Kununurra and Esperance a long time to be a regional city, but they occupy a significant space in Western Australia. Their influence goes a long way. Kalgoorlie is like that, of course, but it qualifies as a city.

I will speak briefly about my home town of Geraldton, where we have a thriving arts scene.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I am very impressed by Euphorium.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** The event in February; that is interesting. I had not thought of mentioning that. Of course, that is one of the many things that I sponsor.

We have a very good art gallery, and I want to acknowledge one of my predecessors, Hon Jeff Carr, who was the member for Geraldton for 17 or 18 years.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** He was a very fine member.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** I am sure he was. He was Minister for Police in the Labor Party.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** That is right, amongst other things. He was also Minister for Local Government at one point.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** Yes, and he is still a very respected member of the community. The current building was the town hall and the council decided that the site would make a very good car park and decided to demolish the town hall. It was Jeff Carr, I think when Mr Burke was the Premier, who found the funds to convert the town hall into the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery. It is a very good art gallery. It is a class A art gallery, which means it can have national exhibitions. It has a very advanced air-conditioning system, so the humidity and temperature is very good.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You could even hang some of your etchings there, if necessary.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** Me?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Well, you could. I have heard about your etchings.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** Etchings?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** I have heard that you have a very impressive array of etchings. It must be a very fine collection. Several members interjected.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** He seems to know more about it than me!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It must be a very private collection.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** Yes, something like that.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Unlike the member for Mandurah's etchings. They are completely public.

**Mr I.C. BLAYNEY:** No, he wants a gold statue.

There are two components to the theatre: its capital and its operating. We have once again a very fine theatre in Geraldton, which was built in the 1980s, but funding the operating is always difficult. We also have a range of more community-based organisations that do not require big venues or large amounts of money to operate. I acknowledge the no longer in existence Arts and Cultural Development Council art group and the still operating Theatre 8 group. They are both fantastic—well, one was a fantastic community organisation. Another useful thing, which does not seem to happen as much now as it has in the past, was when we would get acts from the Perth Festival. We certainly had some in Geraldton in the past, and a program was set up so that quite a few of the larger regional communities would get things that were brought over for the Perth Festival. That was a relatively cheap way to bring some quite high profile and quality things to the regions. I acknowledge Rio Tinto, which does some work in this area and helps with visits to the country.

We have a significant art prize in Geraldton every two years. I sponsor, of all things, the people's choice prize, which is quite appropriate for a democratically elected member of Parliament; we have some art house-type films, which is quite good; and the TAFE college runs an art course that is quite popular. The smaller the community, the harder it is to acquire a mass of people, but it is surprising that wherever one goes, there seems to be artists of one type or another, and they are a valuable part of our community. At times, we will get visits from performers such as the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. It was the first act, if I can call a symphony orchestra an act, when we opened the Queens Park Theatre in Geraldton in the 1980s.

That is my little contribution. The Leader of the Nationals WA, the member for Central Wheatbelt, spoke about these things and about the difficulties of funding them and operating them, and how important they are to the fabric of a community. It is just another aspect of a place that makes a big difference.

**MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands — Deputy Speaker)** [8.17 pm]: Far be it from me to miss an opportunity to stand up and give members some of my personal experience of being on stage.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Do you know who you most remind me of?

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Who?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Dame Judi Dench.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Really?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Yes!

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Wow. I am impressed, thank you. That is totally unwarranted, I might say.

I want to start by trying to think of the most amusing story I could remember of theatre and performing arts, and what came to mind was a dear friend of mine telling me about her very first, probably her one and only, experience

of being on stage. I think she must have been about seven years old and it was a school concert. It was a while ago, in the eastern states. Her mother had knitted her a full-body playsuit. I do not know whether the minister has worn wool close to his body all over, but it tends to itch a bit.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It tends to chafe.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Yes. She told me the story about her debut performance in the school concert whereby she had a song to sing. She is not the most extroverted person; in fact, it is safe to say she is an extraordinary introvert. There she was, standing on the stage in New South Wales, quivering with terror and she was so frightened that she had a little accident.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Wool tends to help!

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Yes, you can imagine the combination of bright lights; a full-body, hand-knitted woollen jumpsuit; and a little puddle on the ground, to which the principal of the school rushed up behind with a towel and pushed it around the floor trying not to be noticed! She was sitting there pulling at this woollen suit and was very, very uncomfortable. She got through the song but that finished her performing career. It was a brief but illustrious one; and a little bit itchy, so I am told!

I have no story to match that. I will move right along by telling members that John Forrest Secondary College has been the recipient of —

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** No, not her knitwear!

John Forrest Secondary College is finally—thank you to the McGowan government—getting a performing arts centre. We are spending an awful lot of money—well over \$50 million—to renovate and completely revolutionise that school. It is one of the oldest schools in the state, and it will now have a performing arts centre. To underline how important that is, when I first visited the school and was shown the gymnasium—as with all schools, it smelt of adolescent athletes rather than the kind of place you would go to listen to a play or whatever else; lots of sweaty socks and things—I saw that it was very old. John Forrest Secondary College has a performing arts focus. The students had to carry the instruments down the back of the gymnasium from the mezzanine floor. I do not know whether members have ever seen the size of a double bass and a drum set; they were in absolute terror of breaking their necks carrying this equipment up and down those stairs. To say that the performing arts centre is long overdue is an understatement and I am extremely proud to say that John Forrest Secondary College is going ahead in leaps and bounds. That redevelopment work has started.

Moving right into the centre of Maylands, yesterday I was at the community gardens at the back of Roxy Lane. To my surprise, they picked bunches of celery and carrots from the community garden for me, for which I was appreciative—not as much as my horses appreciated the carrots when I took them home!—and took me into the centre that the community garden is behind. It used to be a seniors centre and it has been let to a fantastic theatre group. The thing I love about my job so much is the constant occurrence of new groups that find support from members of the community, particularly during COVID, when it has been quite difficult to forge new relationships outside home, because no-one has been going particularly anywhere. To see this new centre in Maylands, the Roxy Lane Theatre, was just fantastic. The theatre group is called ArenaArts. It started performing in the Maylands Autumn Centre in 2018. That is when it was renamed the Roxy Lane Theatre, which kind of “rox”! It does rock and roll, I tell you; it is a fantastic group. The group started in 1988, and back then, it was based in my dear friend the member for Belmont’s electorate. It came to Maylands in 2018. It is a professional co-op show and has community theatre and theatre for schools; all sorts of different productions. Jim Chantry, who is a Bayswater resident and also the secretary of the Roxy Lane Theatre, said that the group had put in several hard years of work to find a home. What has been done with that little area is just extraordinary and it is now this really intimate little theatre. Their production at the moment is called *Bombshells*, which started earlier this month. The theatre can fit 40 people and, when it is at full capacity, it will fit 100. We are not talking about any threat to Perth Theatre Company! It is a great local community theatre. I am very proud that it has found its way into the electorate of Maylands. It is doing so well, with such a good group of people behind it.

Across the road, radically more professional and upmarket, is the West Australian Youth Jazz Orchestra. I was very proud to take the minister along to visit the orchestra in one of his first roles as the Minister for Culture and the Arts. I took him into the basement to listen to a small performance. WAYJO is doing really well. Following the COVID restrictions, it had to cancel all of its concert series, but on 1 June, it announced that instrumental rehearsals were going to begin, keeping the ensemble numbers within safe limits. On 29 June, the staff returned in a staged process. On 20 July, all WAYJO staff returned to normal office hours and the band started full rehearsals. In August, a series of shows were announced called *Live @ Lyric’s Underground*. Lyric Lane is a new venue on Guildford Road in my electorate. It is a fantastic development with an upstairs bar and restaurant; all sorts of fantastic options—nice wines and the like—and a live venue area in the basement. Michiel de Ruyter and his son, who constructed Lyric Lane, are very passionate about live music and were very distressed about the reduction in the number of live venues in any metropolitan area these days, so they built one! Lo and behold, it is fantastic. WAYJO is performing, in the

basement at Lyric's Underground, a series of jazz concerts followed by a jam session on the first Sunday of the month, starting this month. The session will feature a guest act on stage at 7.00 pm and a jam session from the band. It has concert music; all sorts of fantastic jazz music. It is a really great opportunity to see WA's youth come together and perform some remarkable music. Ricki Malet, musical director of *WAYJO Minter Ellison Monday Night Orchestra*—that is the full title of that particular performance—is thrilled to have the band out and the opportunity to debut before full audiences. According to the website, he said —

“It's so great that we could salvage some performances out of the year. The band have worked really hard over lockdown and since rehearsals started back at the end of July. We're really excited to be able to showcase them at this amazing venue.”

They are two really fantastic groups in my electorate. Of course, I cannot possibly stand here and talk about the arts and this wonderful opportunity we have in WA without mentioning the West Australian Ballet company. I have not been to see West Australian Ballet for a while. It used to invite me down to rehearsals. I got so intimidated by the amazing athleticism of ballet dancers rehearsing in their tights that I could not bring myself to go down on a regular basis! They really are remarkable athletes and they are beautiful performers.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Yes, I think so.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Yes, *The Adventures of Snugglepoot and Cuddlepie*. I am very proud. There was a lot of federal money at one time, I think under former Minister for Defence and federal member for Perth, Stephen Smith. He managed to make quite a helpful contribution to get that underway. I think also the former Liberal government, under Colin Barnett, helped put the WA Ballet company into that venue. The Royal WA Institute for the Blind used to be there on Guildford Road years ago. The WA Ballet company has done amazing things with the building. It is now an architecturally stunning building and the interior is gorgeous. I am very proud to have such an innovative and professional group in my electorate.

Before I sit down, I should also mention some of the place activation activities that also feature the arts and music and the like in my electorate. I am sure we all have examples of good place activation groups in our electorates. For me, LACE—Local Arts and Community Events—which runs the Maylands Street Festival, is particularly professional and innovative. It runs an amazing festival every second year. The streets at both ends of Maylands are closed off, at Eighth Avenue between Guildford Road and the railway line. There are performances and all sorts of community activities. It is a really great day. At the other end of my electorate is the Bayswater station redevelopment. Metronet has been doing amazing work with some community groups. I should mention the Baysie Rollers, who, for those of us who are old enough to know what that refers to, are a fantastic community group that specifically runs community activation in the streets, parklets and shops in the Bayswater area. Metronet is keen to work with the Baysie Rollers to see those activities continue through the station development, which is going to be several years long.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis:** When you first mentioned Baysie Rollers, I thought you were going to refer to a pop group of your youth. I am so glad you didn't!

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** I could probably sing the member a few lines.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis:** No, no!

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** I will not, member for Hillarys.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis:** That is something that should stay well archived.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** I should enunciate better. It is the Baysie Rollers, as in the abbreviation for Bayswater; not the Bay City Rollers.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis:** I thought it was your generation anyway.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** I would have worn tartan had I been serious about that, member!

The Baysie Rollers run the Baysie Arts and Street Fest in the main street of Bayswater, and I hope that that continues. I really urge the government to make sure that Baysie Rollers are resourced throughout the next few years to do that work, because they have some really remarkable activities.

That is probably all I have time to refer to at the moment. It has been a great opportunity to feature some wonderful cultural activities in my electorate. I wish I could have talked about this for another two hours. It is a fantastic opportunity. I wish this bill the very best. It is a fantastic innovation and congratulations, minister.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts)** [8.30 pm] — in reply: Thank you, Acting Speaker. It is good to join you tonight as we debate a very important bill. Can I say first of all that I think the arts sector in Western Australia will be very pleased to know—I mean this seriously—that tonight we have had a chance to do some something that we rarely get a chance to do in this place; that is, debate the importance of the

arts to our Western Australian story and our Western Australian community. We have had that chance tonight. It is very pleasing that so many members took the opportunity to use the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 as a means of demonstrating their strong support for the sector, and to underpin and underline the importance of the sector to the unique Western Australian story. I thank members from all sides of the house for doing that.

I also acknowledge and thank, because we may not need them tonight—I understand we will not be going into consideration in detail—four people in the Speaker’s gallery who have been enjoying the experience. They will probably give me a review of the performances at some stage in the future. I acknowledge Mr Luke Stevens from the Department of Culture and the Arts, Ms Margaret Butcher from the Perth Theatre Trust, Mr Glenn Hall from the Perth Theatre Trust, and also my senior adviser from the Department of Culture and the Arts, Caroline O’Neill.

I want to briefly run through and acknowledge the contributions of members. First of all, let me just say that, as with many arts endeavours, a lot of members wandered from the script of the bill itself. However, I am pleased that the Presiding Officers allowed that to happen, because it gave members of the government and opposition parties an opportunity to highlight the importance of the arts.

I appreciate the support of the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA. I thank the lead speaker, the member for Hillarys, for his support of the bill. He highlighted a range of issues, including the fact that this bill will ultimately replace a bill that is no longer fit for purpose. The member highlighted that the cultural landscape throughout Western Australia is very exciting and important. His assessment of the bill was that it will create a much more flexible, fit-for-purpose and effective entity—the Arts and Culture Trust. I thank the member for Hillarys for his contribution.

The member for Warren–Blackwood spoke about the importance of performing arts infrastructure in regional Western Australia in particular. He also mentioned the importance of valuing our artists no matter where they may live in Western Australia. He also highlighted, of course, that we in Western Australia are very lucky to have throughout all our communities—be they regional or metropolitan—a vast array of people who are passionate about their craft and skill and who want to share that with the communities in which they live and work. That is a very important thing. A number of members highlighted the importance of our culture and arts landscape in the context of the big challenge that faces Western Australian and Australians in the COVID-19 experience. Indeed, I have said many times and in many places, and it has been shared by others, that as we respond and move through this recovery phase and, indeed, recover from the COVID-19 experience, and prepare, unfortunately, for similar such experiences in the future, it will be the arts and culture landscape that will assist and ensure not only our mental health and wellbeing and healing, but also our capacity and opportunity to share in those experiences and to tell those stories. The arts do that so well in all genres, even in writing. Western Australia has many gifted writers and has a wonderful writing history. Our current and past performing arts practitioners are renowned throughout the world for their skill and their tremendous attributes as performing artists. Our dancers, be they in ballet or contemporary dance companies, also match the best in the world.

A number of members highlighted tonight the tremendous excitement in the Western Australian screen industry at the moment, as it takes advantage of our isolation and government investment initiatives such as the Western Australian Regional Film Fund, which ensures that films such as the one mentioned tonight—*The Furnace*—which premiered as the only Australian film in the Venice International Film Festival in the last week, are made. Many other films that have been made in regional Western Australia have taken advantage of funding through Lotterywest, Screenwest and, of course, the Western Australian Regional Film Fund. A number of members highlighted some very successful productions, many of which were filmed in the regions. Of course, they showcase the beautiful parts of Western Australia, be they *Dirt Music*, which was filmed in the Kimberley and featured Lombadina and Esperance, where filming also took place; *Breath*, of course, another movie filmed in WA, which was set in the great southern; *His Happiness*, which was filmed in Albany; and *Rams*, which was also filmed in the great southern. These films were made in regional Western Australia because of the investment from the WA government and, indeed, the Western Australian Regional Film Fund.

I was very pleased to hear that the National Party also supports this legislation. I appreciate that. The member for Perth talked about the challenges we face to ensure that we get audiences back into our venues, places and spaces, and performing areas post-COVID, and the need to continue to promote the City of Perth as an important part of that arts and culture landscape. He spoke very passionately about the importance of the Perth Cultural Centre. I appreciate the member for Perth’s efforts as chair of the task force that has been charged with overseeing how we integrate those wonderful iconic elements of the Perth Cultural Centre, including, of course, the magnificent new Western Australian Museum, or Boola Bardip, which, of course, means “many stories”. The new Museum will be spectacular when it opens on my birthday on 21 November. Western Australians will be proud when they have an opportunity to see what has been created by the new Museum project. That will be part of the centrepiece of the Perth Cultural Centre, along with the government’s commitment to activate the roof space on the Art Gallery of Western Australia. I pay tribute to Colin Walker, his team and Janet Holmes à Court, as board chair of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, who are very much focused on making sure that the gallery will focus on sharing Western Australian artists’ stories. We have a significant state collection, but only seven per cent of it is on display. Our state collection is remarkable, and we want to see more of it and more Western Australian artists celebrated in our Art Gallery of Western Australia. Mr Walker and the chair, Janet Holmes à Court, are very much committed to that. In December this year, we will be able to open the rooftop, which will be an activated space in the

Perth Cultural Centre and will add to the vibrancy of that wonderful asset. The state Heath Ledger Theatre is part of that precinct and is home to a number of our performing arts companies, including the Black Swan State Theatre Company and our wonderful Western Australian children's theatre, Barking Gecko Theatre.

I highlight my disappointment with the federal government's decision—this has been aired by a couple of members tonight—to downgrade the humanities and the arts in the university sector by increasing the fees. I think that will mean that many Western Australians, and Australians, who aspire to study humanities and the arts will not have that opportunity. That is very, very sad. Coupled with that decision are other recent decisions by the federal government. I have written to the federal minister about the erosion of support for children and young people's theatre in Australia. Unfortunately, Barking Gecko Theatre, which is a remarkable theatre entity in Western Australia, did not receive funding from the federal government. That is very sad, because if we are to build an audience and pave the way for the passion and love of the beauty of live performance, particularly live theatre, it must be done from a very young age.

The member for Kingsley highlighted very clearly the importance and connection of theatre and the arts more broadly to our educational institutions. When children are exposed to quality live arts performances in all of its genres at a young age, we excite them. I think we have a great opportunity to capture their excitement and imagination for the rest of their lives, which can only be good. Countless examples of research show how important and effective exposure to high-quality art experiences in all its forms can have on the mental health, growth and development, and academic achievements of young people. There is time now, particularly as we face the challenge of COVID in our nation, to return to and look very closely at the role the arts play and the even greater role that they can play in the education of our children. I firmly and strongly believe that, although I am a bit biased because I am a former drama teacher. It is important for people to understand that the arts are not necessarily to be seen as a standalone or an isolated element of education; they are an opportunity for learning across a range of spectrums. We know that the jobs of the future will require a greater emphasis on the creative aspects of the humanity of human beings. Which genre does that best and has that at its very heart? It is the arts and cultural genre that does that so well. If we look at how we will continue to improve literacy levels in children and young people, we need only look at the beauty and effectiveness of high-quality literature, production and presentation. We look to our Australian and Western Australian writers, and we look to create opportunities for people and children to communicate. How can we do that? It can be done through the storytelling that comes from the arts in all its genres, be it dance, visual arts, drama, the circus or whatever. It ignites the passion and the love of arts in children. If ever an investment is required, that is where it would have a great opportunity and a great pay-off.

I am pleased about the passion of members tonight. I was very impressed with the member for Belmont, who highlighted her brief but, it seems, lost opportunities when she was in the Macedon players, or whatever it was. She got up on stage and was involved in that. The member for Mount Lawley is a strident supporter of the arts in Western Australia, particularly in his electorate, which houses many creatives. The member highlighted the specialist visual and performing arts program at Mount Lawley Senior High School. It was impressive to hear that that program has been operating out of Mount Lawley Senior High School for over 30 years. It has given many young people an opportunity to explore and share their creative endeavours and tour the world, which is tremendous. The member for Mount Lawley also has a number of other important cultural assets in his electorate. Often it is only in debates such as this that we, as members of Parliament, learn more about each other. One of the sad things is that we can be here for 20 years—I have been—and not find out things about members until opportunities like this or until members leave or, even worse, we have a condolence motion for them in years to come. I was very pleased to hear the member for Kingsley's passionate comments about the screen industry. I think she is a little modest about her theatrical and performance skills. I know that she has appeared in a film because she told me that last week or the week before. Was it a film?

**Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski:** It was film and TV shows.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The member for Kingsley has appeared on screen. She talked about the opportunities the arts give and create for people from all backgrounds. The theatre and performing arts are a great leveller. It does not matter how much wealth a person has, or lack of it; creativity occurs across all demographics and backgrounds.

The member for Mirrabooka highlighted the incredible importance of our multicultural communities and the tremendous richness that they bring to our Western Australian story. A lot of that is through their creative and artistic endeavours, which, as we know, our multicultural communities are keen to share with us all. I thank the member for Kingsley; I was so pleased that she shared with us her knowledge of the screen industry and its importance. The member for Mirrabooka and I have had some very good debates, but she is very passionate about the arts and the importance of the arts. She issued a warning, and it is a timely one, on the digital issue, which I think is important. Of course, we have found during the COVID pandemic that a lot of our creatives, if you like, committed to a digital presence. The member for Mirrabooka referred to an article in her contribution and challenged the new trust entity to be very cognisant of the issues around making sure that, as she said, the artists and artisans do not give their art away for free. I think that is a very important point.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis:** Massive.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It is a very important point. I always use the analogy—I am not anti-plumber—that when someone rings up a plumber, they do not always question the cost. That is the profession; that is the going rate and they pay it. But how often do we hear about our artists being required to do things for free? I might remind people that whenever there is a disaster—we saw this with the fires, pre-COVID, in the eastern states—apart from the magnificent volunteers across our communities and the first responders, another group that says, “We want to step up and help” is indeed the artists and performers. They said, in the case of the fires, “We want to get up here and support the effort to assist communities that have been devastated.” I thank the member for Mirrabooka for her contribution.

The member for Central Wheatbelt, the Leader of the Nationals WA, highlighted the success of the film *The Furnace* and the importance of arts in regional WA. Regional WA is very, very lucky; it has a tremendous wealth of talent, experience and, indeed, endeavour. It also has a very good network of performing arts spaces and art centres. In the north of our state in the Kimberley, we have some remarkable Indigenous arts and cultural centres, which showcase the unique art from those parts of our state. I am very pleased that one of the components of our \$76 million recovery package is a focus on Indigenous art. We will make sure that we create a portal so that those artists can get a genuine income for their work, their work can be marketed in a much more effective and efficient manner and the benefits can go directly back to the artisans and artists from those communities.

This is something we should be very proud of in Western Australia. There was a great exhibition last year in the Art Gallery of Western Australia called *Desert River Sea: Portraits of the Kimberley*, which showcased tremendous Kimberley art. As Australians, we should all be so proud, thankful and grateful that not only does this place under this ancient sky that we live in have the oldest living culture, but also the artistic endeavours and products from our oldest living culture tell unique stories, and we want that to be told even further. It is what makes us unique in Australia; it is one of our most unique stories that we can share with the rest of the world. I think it was the member for Perth who highlighted that international visitors and people from other parts of Australia come to Western Australia and want an Indigenous experience, and, invariably, they go home disappointed or unable to find a genuine Indigenous experience. We know that the talent and the quality is out there, but we just need to make sure that we showcase it even better, because that will have huge benefits for not only the artists themselves, but also how we tell our story to the rest of the world. Whether we tell it in film, dance, visual arts or writing, it is a unique story to tell. That is why so many of us need to be aware of how tremendous this sector is for our cultural life. It is critical.

One thing that I think COVID-19 has taught us all is the importance of human relationships—the importance of who and what matters in our lives. Invariably, it reminded and continues to remind us that it is about those relationships we have with loved ones. I am sure that many of us took an opportunity to rediscover the things that are beautiful in our lives. Invariably, they are our paintings and our written scripts. Invariably, they are the creative aspects of what makes this world and humanity so unique. The member for Central Wheatbelt highlighted the importance of music—the universal language. I am very pleased that this government continues to support the contemporary music fund, for example, with a \$3 million commitment to support Western Australia’s musical endeavours.

I was very impressed with the member for Thornlie. I thought we were going to get an extended personal reading of a new play. I think his idea is exceptional, as we look to 2021, which will of course be 100 years since Edith Cowan’s accession to this place as the first woman elected to an Australian Parliament. The member made an impassioned suggestion that *With Fire in Her Heart* would be an interesting piece. I know Caroline from my office is probably going to request a copy of the script to peruse. I am not sure whether there will be a role for me; I do like to play cameo roles.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** Premier Mitchell!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Premier Mitchell; I could, yes. While we are talking about Edith Cowan, I also want to highlight that before the last election, I was very pleased that I played a role in helping to save Edith Cowan’s house, which, of course sits across the way from Parliament. I think the address is 40 Malcolm Street. It has been saved, which is really good. It has been heritage listed and protected. There will be some development, but the house itself will remain—it is the white house just across the road from Parliament. I understand that Edith Cowan lived there while she was a member of this Parliament, and because there were no toilets or facilities for women here, she would quite often need to go home. Luckily, home was 100 metres or so away. I thank the member for Thornlie for his very strong support of the arts; I appreciate that.

The member for Geraldton talked about the importance of an alliance between regional cities and the capital. I thank him for his contribution. Geraldton has some very good venues. I think one is called the Euphorium. I was in Geraldton only recently. I have to say that our country towns and regional cities can play a critical role not only in the recovery, but also by supporting their creative endeavours. I am very impressed with the Euphorium. It is not government funded but it delivers a whole range of programs. It was also involved in Funtavia, a festival that could not take place this year but will hopefully be up and running again next year. I urge local governments to look at those creative entities very closely and to support them, because they can help local governments to rebuild, nurture and encourage their communities.

I want to highlight that because of COVID, a number of our regional performing arts centres remain closed. That is sad, and I again urge local governments, particularly those that oversee those centres, to continue to look at ways

to open their doors, because they should be open. Even though some of the auditoriums will be restricted in terms of the number of patrons, we need to find ways of activating them under the current phase 4 conditions. There is no reason for them to stay closed. I encourage local governments, including my own in the City of Mandurah, to do that.

I thank members for their support of the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020. I want to quickly summarise what the bill does. I want to acknowledge the former Minister for Culture and the Arts, my predecessor, Hon John Day. I am very pleased that he plays a key role both in sitting on the board of the Art Gallery of WA and as chair of the board of the State Library of Western Australia. This bill is bipartisan in its gestation. We are very pleased that the bill will pass through this house and go to the other place and hopefully be passed before the end of the year.

The reform is for the betterment of the state. The current Perth Theatre Trust Act prevents the Perth Theatre Trust from moving beyond the narrow role assigned to it, which is to manage theatres. As members have highlighted, this bill will give the new entity a much greater scope of endeavour to deliver quality to the sector.

This is the first major legislative reform in the culture and the arts portfolio since the introduction of the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979. All the members who spoke on this bill have made history. This is the first culture and the arts bill of any magnitude that has been debated and passed in this place since 1979.

The bill will transform the PTT into a new authority to be known as the Arts and Culture Trust. The Arts and Culture Trust will have greater responsibilities, broader powers and more flexibility to manage and care for the development of cultural assets, as highlighted. It will allow me as minister, or ultimately the trust through ministerial support, to declare places and spaces as cultural places. That includes outdoor spaces, such as the Perth Cultural Centre. This will benefit the cultural institutions and the buildings that they care for. Access to the collections will be linked to a purpose-designed contemporary statutory authority with a focus on arts and cultural assets. There will be a streamlining of governance, and a more strategic focus on the management and maintenance of assets. It will facilitate short-term events and opportunities that may arise within the cultural and artistic sector.

As I said, it will give the minister the power to declare any part of the state a venue. For example, under the jurisdiction of the new trust, for an activity like *Highway to Hell* we could declare Canning Highway a culture and the arts place and have designated boundaries. That would make things a bit easier.

Finally, I think we all want our children, no matter where they live, to experience the beauty and wonder of all the arts and cultural experiences that this state has now become famous for. We want our kids to experience the beauty of dance and the beauty of music in all its forms. We want our kids to see Western Australian writers, artists and performers. We want them to see Western Australian films. We want them to understand and experience all those things that make Western Australia unique. We want our children to celebrate our Indigenous industry and our Indigenous artists and performers. We want them to celebrate and see the beauty of Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, our Noongar performance entity. We want them to wonder at a performance of Barking Gecko Theatre, and also of our Western Australian Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. There are very few puppet theatres left in Australia. We have one. It has a very strong history. We should be revelling in that and celebrating that. We want our kids to see an opera from the West Australian Opera. We want our kids to hear the music of our West Australian Symphony Orchestra and to see the ballet. That is magnificent. It is world class. Our kids will be able to see that, with their parents and grandparents, under COVID-safe conditions, at the AWESOME Festival during the school holidays. It is happening in Western Australia. As the Premier said in question time, it is not happening in places like Victoria and New South Wales. They cannot have gatherings such as that. We are able to do that. We can see our local talent and local performers performing to Western Australian audiences. That is beautiful. That is so important. We should celebrate that.

I thank all members for their contributions tonight, and, more particularly, for their ongoing support of the arts sector in Western Australia. Please keep doing that. Please keep advocating for our creative talents. Members, please share the stories in your electorates of the talented people in your communities, because you and they—all of us—are part of an enduring Western Australian story that we should be very proud of.

I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.

*Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Minister for Culture and the Arts)**, and transmitted to the Council.

*House adjourned at 9.05 pm*

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### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

#### TRANSPORT — FREIGHT AND LOGISTICS COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**6325. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the Freight and Logistics Council of WA, and I ask:

- (a) What are the criteria for appointing transport operator members to the Council;
- (b) Are there any Western Australian based transport operators represented on the Council; and
- (c) If no to (b) does the Minister have any plans to appoint a Western Australian based transport operator to the Council?

**Ms R. Saffioti replied:**

- (a) Membership of the Freight and Logistics Council (FLCWA) is open to persons aged 18 years or over who support the objects and purposes of the FLCWA; and have extensive relevant knowledge, experience and/or expertise relating to freight and/or logistics activities, transportation and/or infrastructure in or impacting upon Western Australia.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) Not applicable.

#### TRANSPORT — ROAD TRAINS

**6326. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to incidents involving road trains on WA roads, and I ask:

- (a) In 2019, and 2020 to date, how many incidents involving road trains on WA roads have there been;
- (b) What is the breakdown of the incidents in (a) by permit type; and
- (c) What is the breakdown of the incidents in (a) by incident type?

**Ms R. Saffioti replied:**

- (a) 127 (to 13 August 2020).
- (b) The breakdown of the incidents in (a) by permit type was as follows:

Accredited Mass Management Scheme Level 1	4
Accredited Mass Management Scheme Level 2	3
Accredited Mass Management Scheme Level 3	12
Containerised Cargo – Long Vehicle & Road Train	1
Order / Notice	101
Performance Based Standard (PBS)	6

- (c) The breakdown of the incidents in (a) by incident type was as follows:

Animal Strike	5
Crash	51
Load Restraint	1
Near Miss	3
Rollover	45
Vehicle Maintenance	3
Vehicle Fire	5
Vehicle Separation	9
Other	5

#### WORKSAFE — ROAD TRAINS

**6327. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Industrial Relations:**

I refer to incidents involving road trains on WA roads, and I ask:

- (a) How many transport operators have been investigated by WorkSafe for potential work safety issues related to this; and

- (b) How many transport operators have been issued with warnings by WorkSafe related to this?

**Mr W.J. Johnston replied:**

- (a)–(b) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 6328.

**WORKSAFE — ROAD TRAINS**

**6328. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Industrial Relations:**

I refer to incidents involving road trains on WA roads, and I ask:

- (a) How many transport operators have been investigated by WorkSafe for potential work safety issues related to this; and
- (b) How many transport operators have been issued with warnings by WorkSafe related to this?

**Mr W.J. Johnston replied:**

- (a) A search of the WorkSafe Information System Environment (WISE) using the term “road train” for the period 1 January 1995 to 28 August 2020 provided a total of 864 investigation activities, noting there may be more than one activity within any investigation. Furthermore, there is scope for significant variability in how a transport operator’s vehicles are described and thus this may not be a complete list.
- (b) A search of WISE using the term “road train” for the period 1 January 1995 to 28 August 2020 identified 12 Improvement Notices and 3 Prohibition Notices. There is scope for significant variability in how a transport operator’s vehicles are described and thus this may not be a complete list. A search for the term “road trains” will only yield a result if that specific term is used.

**PORTS — MANGROVE COVE — BUNBURY**

**6329. Ms L. Mettam to the minister representing the Minister for Ports:**

I refer to Mangrove Cove Stage 2, and I ask:

- (a) What is the Bunbury Port’s preferred future use of this area; and
- (b) Will future development of this area limit the Bunbury Port’s future use or expansion in any way?

**Mr D.A. Templeman replied:**

- (a) The Southern Ports Authority has no preference for how Mangrove Cove Stage 2 is developed.
- (b) No.

**TRANSPORT — JURIEN BAY MARINA**

**6330. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Transport; Planning:**

- (1) At what stage is the planning for improvements to the Jurien Bay Marina?
- (2) Has a groyne been considered to protect the marina:
- (a) If so, is it designed;
- (b) What is the estimated cost; and
- (c) When will construction commence and finish?

**Ms R. Saffioti replied:**

- (1) The Department of Transport (DoT) has completed extensive data collection, modelling and study work, commissioned two independent studies into potential modifications to the northern breakwater and undertaken several trials to improve water quality.
- (2) Yes.
- (a) A preliminary engineering design has been prepared for a 150 metre extension to the northern entrance breakwater.
- (b) A preliminary cost estimate has been prepared, with an upper estimate of \$7.8 million.
- (c) Construction works are estimated to take approximately four to six months.
- Commencement will depend on securing necessary environmental and budgetary approvals.

**KEYSTART — LOANS AND CLIENTS**

**6331. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to Keystart and ask, for each of the past five years:

- (a) What is the total value of loans made by Keystart;
- (b) What is the average value of a Keystart loan;

- (c) How many clients have a Keystart loan, in total;
- (d) How many new clients signed up with Keystart for a loan;
- (e) How many clients have refinanced their loan with another lender; and
- (f) How many clients have paid off their mortgage in full?

**Mr P.C. Tinley replied:**

Answers to questions C, D and F include loans equitably assigned to Bendigo and Adelaide Bank in 2016 as these customers continue to be serviced as Keystart's customers.

- (a) Total value of loan approvals made by Keystart:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Loan Approval Value \$</b>
2015–16	\$878,857,210
2016–17	\$750,592,789
2017–18	\$981,979,833
2018–19	\$792,366,780
2019–20	\$982,400,375

- (b) Average value of a Keystart loan rounding to nearest \$1000:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Average Loan Value \$</b>
2015–16	\$353,000
2016–17	\$344,000
2017–18	\$352,000
2018–19	\$347,000
2019–20	\$349,000

- (c) Keystart loans held by households at the end of each reporting financial year:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>No. of accounts</b>
2015–16	17,533
2016–17	17,489
2017–18	18,553
2018–19	19,344
2019–20	20,445

- (d) Number of applications formally approved by Keystart for each of the reporting financial year:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>No. of applications</b>
2015–16	2,489
2016–17	2,180
2017–18	2,789
2018–19	2,286
2019–20	2,816

- (e) Number of closed accounts for each of reporting financial year:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>No. of accounts closed</b>
2015–16	2,801
2016–17	2,255
2017–18	1,715
2018–19	1,474
2019–20	1,641

- (f) Number of clients who paid off their mortgage in full:

Financial Year	No. of accounts paid out by clients
2015–16	120
2016–17	164
2017–18	117
2018–19	130
2019–20	104

## KEYSTART — LOANS AND CLIENTS

**6332. Mr D.C. Nalder to the Minister for Housing:**

- (1) What is the number and percentage of Keystart clients with defaulted accounts for each month from, and including, January 2020 to, and including, June 2020?
- (2) What is the number and percentage of Keystart clients with accounts over one month in arrears from, and including, January 2020 to, and including, June 2020?
- (3) What is the number of Keystart client homes repossessed for each month from, and including, January 2020 to, and including, June 2020?
- (4) What is the amount of interest earned on Keystart loans for each month from, and including, January 2020 to, and including, June 2020?

**Mr P.C. Tinley replied:**

Data on Questions 1 to 3 include loans equitably assigned to Bendigo & Adelaide Bank in 2016 as these customers continue to be serviced as Keystart's customers. Question 4 does not include these loans as interest is collected for the benefit of Bendigo & Adelaide Bank.

- (1)

Month	Number of loans	Percentage of total loans
January 2020	258	1.29%
February 2020	248	1.23%
March 2020	273	1.35%
April 2020	309	1.52%
May 2020	400	1.97%
June 2020	570	2.79%

Figures are based on accounts which are in arrears 90 days plus or in hardship with an arrears status of 90 days plus. This figure does not include mortgages in possession (MIP).

- (2) Excludes loans where Keystart has taken possession of secured property.

Month	Number of loans	Percentage of total loans
January 2020	565	2.83%
February 2020	611	3.04%
March 2020	736	3.64%
April 2020	950	4.68%
May 2020	1481	7.29%
June 2020	1859	9.09%

Figures are based on accounts which are one month in arrears including hardship accounts but excluding MIP's.

- (3) The report shows the number of households affected by repossession.

Month	Number of loans
January 2020	13
February 2020	19
March 2020	8
April 2020	8
May 2020	10
June 2020	3

(4)

Financial Year	Interest earned \$000
January 2020	\$18,731
February 2020	\$17,671
March 2020	\$18,814
April 2020	\$17,680
May 2020	\$18,422
June 2020	\$17,942

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS —  
CODE OF CONDUCT — COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

**6333. Mr D.T. Redman to the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services:**

I refer to the recently released Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) code of conduct which is mandatory for DFES employees and volunteers, and ask:

- (a) Can the Minister confirm the process that must be followed for local regional volunteers to invite their local member into their DFES facility for a social (not official) occasion;
- (b) What is the consequence for a volunteer who invites a local member into their facility for a social occasion, but has not followed the protocol described above;
- (c) What protocols must be followed for those members of parliament who are volunteers for local emergency response organisations;
- (d) I note the Commissioner for Emergency Services recently said they encourage employees and volunteers of emergency service organisations to engage with their local member. Can the Minister describe what they are allowed to talk about, that is not in breach of the code of conduct;
- (e) Can the Minister confirm whether the following topics fall under the category of “Department business” and therefore cannot be discussed by DFES volunteers with their local member of parliament:
  - (i) Facility upgrades;
  - (ii) Safety issues with either facilities or operations of an emergency response;
  - (iii) Organisational culture within the workplace of an emergency response event;
  - (iv) Organisational structures involving interaction between career employees and volunteers;
  - (v) Bullying matters arising from interaction of career staff and volunteers;
  - (vi) Expense of Emergency Services Levy funds; and
  - (vii) Expense of government funds on emergency services; and
- (f) Has the Minister received communication from emergency service volunteer organisations on the matter of the gag order on communicating with MPs:
  - (i) If so, how many;
  - (ii) Can the Minister name the organisations who contacted his office; and
  - (iii) Were the organisations supportive or against the gag order on talking to MPs?

**Mr F.M. Logan replied:**

- (a) Volunteers can engage with their local members and invite them for a social occasion, however they should always seek the permission of the Department prior to issuing an invitation as the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner has a statutory responsibility for Brigades, Groups and Units that are under DFES management.
- (b) Such matters would be resolved through communication and education in the first instance.
- (c) If they are attending in their capacity as volunteers they are fulfilling their duty and there is no requirement to report attendance.
- (d) Any local issues other than Departmental business and operational matters.
- (e) (i)–(vii) The McGowan Government has provided volunteers with additional support and forums for issues to be raised to expedite a resolution. All examples provided are Departmental business. It is important that operational and Departmental matters are raised through appropriate channels, including DFES regional and metropolitan staff, Volunteer Liaison Officers, Volunteer Associations, and Volunteer Advisory Committees.
- (f) (i)–(iii) There is no gag order. Not applicable.

## POLICE — ROADSIDE DRUG TESTING — SOUTH WEST REGION

**6334. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Police:**

- (1) How many roadside drug tests were conducted by WA Police in the South West Region in:
  - (a) 2018;
  - (b) 2019; and
  - (c) 2020 to date?
- (2) How many roadside drug tests were conducted by WA Police in the Margaret River Region in:
  - (a) 2018;
  - (b) 2019; and
  - (c) 2020 to date?

**Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:**

The Western Australian Police Force advise:

- (1)
  - (a) 5 850
  - (b) 5 660
  - (c) 2 766 (to August 2020)
- (2) Figures for the Margaret River Police sub-district are not available through the WA Police Force system due to a locality data entry issue.

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES — SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

**6335. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:**

- (1) How many Senior Executive Service (SES) staff have been employed by the Department of Communities for each of the past four financial years?
- (2) How many new SES positions have been created at the Department of Communities, in the past three years, and please provide details of:
  - (a) the job title and business unit of each new position; and
  - (b) the pay scale?
- (3) How many SES positions have ceased at the Department of Communities, in each of the past four financial years, and please provide details of:
  - (a) the reason for the cessation of the position;
  - (b) the job title and business unit of each position; and
  - (c) the pay scale?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

This answer covers multiple Ministers' portfolios, including Disability Services, Seniors and Ageing, Volunteering, Housing, Veterans Issues, Youth, as well as my Child Protection, Women's Interests, prevention of Family and Domestic Violence and Community Services portfolios.

This answer also encompasses the Department of Communities and the legacy agencies whose functions were amalgamated into the Department of Communities from 1 July 2017.

This answer was compiled using HRMOIR report using Q1 and Q4 for each financial year.

- (1) Senior Executive Service (SES) staff employed by the Department of Communities for each of the past four financial years:

Financial Year	Number of SES Staff	Agency
2016–17	45	Legacy Agencies integrates into the Department of Communities (Department of Housing, Child Protection and Family Support, Disability Services, Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Department of Local Government and Communities)
2017–18	37	Department of Communities
2018–19	38	Department of Communities
2019–20	40	Department of Communities

- (2) Please see tabled paper for a list of SES positions that have been created at the Department of Communities in the past three years as at 30 June 2020. This table was compiled using HRMOIR report using Q1 and Q4 for each financial year. [See tabled paper no [3641](#).]
- (3) Please see tabled paper for a list of SES positions that have ceased at the Department of Communities in each of the past four financial years. This table was compiled using HRMOIR report using Q1 and Q4 for each financial year. [See tabled paper no [3641](#).]

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES — OFFICES

**6336. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:**

I refer to the relocation of the Department of Communities to Fremantle, and ask:

- (a) How many staff are employed by the Department for each of the last four financial years;
- (b) How many staff have roles where their primary workplace is the Kings Square offices;
- (c) How many staff have roles where they are required to work at the Kings Square offices from time to time;
- (d) How many hot desk work spaces are available;
- (e) How many staff have an assigned, private office;
- (f) Please provide their job title and business unit;
- (g) How many private offices are available for “hot desk” staff to use;
- (h) How many meeting rooms are available and what is the capacity of each meeting room;
- (i) What was the cost of the refit including furniture of the new building; and
- (j) What other locations are staff working from and how many staff are at each of these locations?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

- (a) The total headcount by year (2017–2020) is as per the table below.

This answer encompasses the Department of Communities and the legacy agencies whose functions were amalgamated into the Department of Communities from 1 July 2017.

Agency	Year	Total Agency Headcount
Department for Child Protection and Family Support	2017	2,713
Housing Authority	2017	1,799
Disability Services Commission	2017	1,625
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,137</b>
Department of Communities	2018	6,155
Department of Communities	2019	6,387
Department of Communities	2020	6,380

- (b) 1,510 Communities employees and 150 contractors.
- (c) Not all Department of Communities staff are required to work from the Kings Square offices. However, if Communities staff need to attend Kings Square, like all WA Government employees, they are able to work from the Fremantle office Government Hub, co-located with Communities in Kings Square.
- (d) There are a total of 1612 workstations, comprising 1436 primary workstations and 176 alternate workstations. Work points are functionally specific and designed for particular activities or types of work, with 90% of primary work points allocated for focused activities and 10% of alternate work points allocated for collaborative activities.
- (e) 26
- (f) Job title and Business Unit for staff with offices; 30 June 2020

Position title	Business Unit
Director General	Office of the Director General
Assistant Director General Aboriginal Outcomes	Aboriginal Outcomes
Executive Director Organisational Transformation	Aboriginal Outcomes
Executive Director Outcome Systems and Partnerships	Aboriginal Outcomes
Assistant Director General	Strategy and Partnerships

Executive Director Contracting	Commissioning and Sector Engagement
Assistant Director General Commissioning Sector and Engagement	Commissioning and Sector Engagement
Executive Director Sector Engagement and Development	Disability Services
Assistant Director General Disability Services	Disability Services
Executive Director NDIS Operations	Disability Services
Executive Director Intergovernmental and Analytics	Policy and Service Design
Executive Director Housing and Homelessness	Policy and Service Design
Assistant Director General Policy Service Design	Policy and Service Design
Executive Director Inclusion	Policy and Service Design
Executive Director Children and Families	Policy and Service Design
Assistant Director General Integrity Standards	Governance, Integrity and Reform
Executive Director State-wide Services Regional and Remote	Service Delivery Metropolitan Communities
Executive Director Metropolitan Services	Service Delivery Regional and Remote Communities
Assistant Director General Regional and Remote	Service Delivery Regional and Remote Communities
Assistant Director General Metropolitan Services	Service Delivery Metropolitan Communities
Deputy Director General Community Services	Community Services
Regional Executive Director	Community Services
Deputy Director General Governance, Integrity and Reform	Governance, Integrity and Reform
Chief Information Officer	Governance, Integrity and Reform
Chief Finance Officer	Chief Finance Officer
Chief People Officer	Chief People Officer

(g) All offices are available when not in use.

(h) Meeting rooms

Size	Capacity (people)	Number of rooms
Very small	2–3	5
Small	4–6	24
Medium	8–10	12
Medium/Large	10–12	1
Large	20–25	13

(i) As at 13 August 2020, the total fit-out expenditure is \$23.7 million.

(j) There are 4,870 staff located at 181 locations other than Kings Square. [See tabled paper no [3642](#).]

#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES — STAFF SALARIES

#### 6337. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the Department of Communities and ask, for each of the past four years:

- What was the budgeted cost for staff salaries;
- What was the actual cost of staff salaries; and
- What was the percentage growth (or decline) in salary expenditure?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

- (a)–(c) The Department of Communities was established on 1 July 2017. The budget and actual salaries cost for 2016–17 in the table below has been provided for comparative purposes only and represents combined data from the former Department of Child Protection and Family Support, the Housing Authority, the Disability Services Commission and components of the former Department for Local Government and Communities.

	<b>2016–17 \$'000</b>	<b>2017–18 \$'000</b>	<b>2018–19 \$'000</b>	<b>2019–20 \$'000</b>
<b>Budgeted salaries cost</b>	521,494	576,502	519,285	581,280
<b>Actual salaries cost</b>	520,259	572,179	538,427	579,719 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Percentage change in actual salaries cost</b>	–	+10%	–6%	+8%

<sup>1</sup> The 2019–20 Actuals for Department of Communities are yet to be finalised. Actual expenditure to 30 June 2020 is accurate as at 26 August 2020 using preliminary results for 2019–20.

## HOMELESSNESS SERVICES — FUNDING

**6340. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:**

I refer to the media statement of 4 December 2019, titled “Record funding boost to help homeless find Common Ground”, and ask:

- (a) how much of the \$34.5 million set aside for Housing First initiatives has been spent to date;
- (b) please provide a breakdown of that expenditure; and
- (c) how many people have been housed since 4 December 2019, as a result of the additional Housing First funding?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

- (a) The Department of Communities is currently engaged in procurement processes to purchase services necessary for the delivery of the Housing First Homelessness Initiatives. The funding was allocated to Communities from 1 July 2020 for the 2020–21 financial year. As such, no funding has been spent to date.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) Not applicable.

## HOMELESSNESS SERVICES — COMMON GROUND FACILITIES

**6341. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:**

I refer to your media statement of 15 July 2020, titled “WA’s first Common Ground finds a home in central Perth”, and ask:

- (a) how much were the acquisition costs of the land in Perth, where the Common Ground will be located;
- (b) who was the previous owner of the land and if it was the State Government, which Department held the land;
- (c) has any consultation been undertaken with neighbouring residents regarding the facility:
  - (i) if no to (c), why not; and
  - (ii) has a consultation strategy been developed in respect of the facility and if yes, will you table a copy of the same;
- (d) when will construction begin on the Perth facility and what is the expected completion date;
- (e) what percentage of occupants in the Perth Common Ground will be homeless; and
- (f) what percentage of occupants in the Perth Common Ground will be low-income tenants?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

- (a)–(b) The first Common Ground facility will be located on Lot 801, Hill Street, East Perth. This site is State Government owned land; owned by the Department of Communities (Housing Authority).
- (c)
  - (i) The Department of Communities (Communities) held a community information session in East Perth on 26 August 2020, with a further session to be held on 3 September 2020. These sessions provide an opportunity for residents, business owners and services to discuss the Common Ground model.
  - (ii) Communities is currently finalising a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy to support the successful design and community integration of a Common Ground model.

- (d) It is estimated that the first Common Ground facility in East Perth will commence construction in the 2021–22 financial year. Once a full building design brief is developed as part of a co-design approach with the community services sector, the estimated completion date will be determined.
- (e)–(f) Within the standard Common Ground model, a typical facility houses approximately 50 per cent formerly homeless residents and 50 per cent low income earners. This is the goal for the East Perth facility.

#### HOMELESSNESS SERVICES — FUNDING

#### 6343. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to your media statement of 15 July 2020, titled “WA’s first Common Ground finds a home in central Perth”, and ask:

- (a) Can you please provide a breakdown of the \$6.8 million expenditure on specialist homelessness services, including details of:
- (i) the organisations which have received funding;
  - (ii) the value of funding to each organisation;
  - (iii) the purposes of the funding; and
  - (iv) whether the funding is ongoing, or a one-off grant?

#### Ms S.F. McGurk replied:

- (a) [See tabled paper no [3643](#).]

#### HOMELESSNESS SERVICES — COMMON GROUND FACILITIES

#### 6344. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to your media statement of 15 July 2020, titled “WA’s first Common Ground finds a home in central Perth”, and ask:

- (a) please provide the addresses of the alternative sites which were considered for the Perth Common Ground facility and subsequently ruled out;
- (b) please provide the reasons why each alternative site was considered less suitable than the Hill/Wellington St location; and
- (c) please provide the addresses of the sites which have been identified as options for the second Common Ground facility?

#### Ms S.F. McGurk replied:

- (a) The Department of Communities (Communities) reviewed the following sites for compatibility against the Common Ground essential and desirable site criteria:

Lot 801, Hill Street, East Perth.

Lots 251 and 252, Wellington Street, West Perth.

Lot 300 Delhi Street, West Perth

Lots 76–78 Brown Street, East Perth.

- (b) All identified sites were evaluated against weighted criteria.

With regard to the four specific properties, the Lot 80, Hill Street site demonstrated optimum alignment when assessed against the Common Ground site criteria, whilst also demonstrating immediate availability.

Lots 251 and 252, Wellington Street site was considered less suitable against the criteria. It presented development challenges, for example a sewer line which would need to be designed around or re-located during building works. This would incur increased costs while also having a negative impact on timeliness for the project build.

Lot 300 Delhi Street site was considered less suitable against the criteria. It was occupied at the time of the site analysis and has a building on site which would need to be demolished to allow for a fit for purpose Common Ground building to be developed. This would increase costs and delay construction commencement.

Lots 76–78 Brown Street site was considered unsuitable as it is currently occupied with a 99-year lease in place.

- (c) Communities is engaging with Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to explore opportunities for a second Common Ground facility. The following LGAs have been shortlisted based on estimated homelessness figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing (2016):
- (i) Stirling
  - (ii) Fremantle, and

(iii) Mandurah (for the Peel region).

Communities is engaging with these LGAs to obtain current rough sleeper data and better understand homelessness support requirements within their localities.

#### HOMELESSNESS — LORD STREET OVERPASS

**6346. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:**

I refer to the recent decision by the Public Transport Authority to erect a barbed-wire fence underneath the Lord Street overpass in Perth, and ask:

- (a) did the Minister for Transport make you aware of this decision, prior to the fence being erected:
  - (i) if yes to (a) on what date or dates was this matter discussed with the Minister for Transport and what was the form of communication (i.e. phone, email, letter);
- (b) were you or the Department of Communities made aware of the complaints of antisocial behaviour:
  - (i) if yes to (b) on what date or dates were the Department or yourself first notified; and
  - (ii) if yes to (b) did the Department of Communities engage in any outreach with the homeless individuals using the overpass for shelter and please provide details of the same; and
- (c) was the Department of Communities afforded any opportunities to engage in outreach with the homeless individuals, prior to the fence being erected:
  - (i) if yes to (c), please provide details of the same?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

- (a) No.
- (b) The Department of Communities (Communities) was not aware of specific complaints relating to that particular location, but was aware of historic complaints about antisocial behaviour linked to the pedestrian underpass and reports that people were sleeping rough in the general area. Services funded by Communities have provided outreach to people rough sleeping in the area in the past.
- (c) No. However, since Communities was first made aware of the issue on 31 July 2020, services funded by Communities have visited the area almost daily and will continue to visit the area to offer support and assistance. Services have advised that people sleeping rough in the area have declined offers of support or assistance.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**6347. Mr D.T. Redman to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to the recently announced \$66.3m toward “renewable energy technologies” as a boost to the WA recovery, and ask:

- (a) Can the Minister outline the source of the funds: in particular whether it is Royalties for Regions, consolidated funds or funds from a government trading enterprise (GTE) (e.g. Horizon/Western Power balance sheet);
- (b) Can the Minister identify, what if any of the \$66.3m of funded initiatives were budgeted in the 2019–2020 state budget (including GTE internal budgets) to be expended over the forward estimates 2019–2020 to 2022–2023;
- (c) If there were initiatives budgeted, can the Minister describe the procurement process (including key dates) where projects were tendered to the private sector;
- (d) With reference to the 50 stand-alone power systems (SPS) and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), can the Minister outline when the contracts were/are being let;
- (e) If the contracts for the SPS and the BESS have been awarded: who has won the contract/s, when were they issued the advice they were successful, and what is the nature of the battery technology being used;
- (f) If all/some of the project funds were budgeted in the 2019–2020 state budget, can the Minister outline the forward estimate projections of expenditure of the \$66.3m; and
- (g) Other than the remote community expenditure, can the Minister outline the allocation of the regional components of the remaining funds?

**Mr W.J. Johnston replied:**

- (a) Horizon Power (Standalone Power Systems and Battery Energy Storage Systems):  
\$44.5 million – borrowings.
- Synergy (Solar Panels on Social Housing and Schools Virtual Power Plants):  
\$10 million – appropriation.

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (Clean Energy Futures Fund):

\$10 million – appropriation.

Public Transport Authority (Solar Panels on up to 60 rail and bus stations):

\$1.8 million – appropriation.

None of this funding is from Royalties for Regions.

(b) None of the projects were budgeted as a part of the 2019–20 State Budget process.

(c) Not applicable, please see response to (b).

(d) 50 Standalone Power Systems (SPS):

Horizon Power has ordered 20 SPS from CPS National under an existing supply arrangement. CPS National was selected as Horizon Power's preferred SPS provider in an open procurement process in 2018.

Horizon Power is examining its procurement strategy for the remaining 30 SPS and will make a decision later in the year.

9 Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS):

Horizon Power is establishing a procurement strategy for each of the proposed towns.

As the power supply arrangements (e.g. an independent power producer is responsible for supplying power) are different between towns, contracts for each individual town will be issued by Horizon Power progressively over the next few months, with a focus on enabling local spend and local contracting opportunities.

(e) Not applicable, please see response to (d).

(f) Not applicable, please see response to (b).

(g) 50 Standalone Power Systems and 9 Battery Energy Storage Systems:

Horizon Power has demonstrated experience in dividing tranches of work, including civil engineering works vegetation management and operation and maintenance, amongst regional providers to maximise the use of local suppliers, create local jobs and support opportunities which help build thriving communities.

Clean Energy Future Fund (CEFF):

CEFF takes applications from all over Western Australia.

Solar Panels on Social Housing:

Targeting 30 per cent of system installations to be in regional areas, depending on suitability of Department of Communities housing stock.

School Virtual Power Plants:

Synergy anticipates 10% regional component.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING — FORRESTDALÉ

#### 6348. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to your media statement of 28 July 2020 regarding the Forrestdale affordable housing project, and ask:

- (a) how many of the 178 lots released under the first four stages, will be retained by the Department of Communities for:
  - (i) social housing; and
  - (ii) affordable housing;
- (b) how many of the approximately 554 lots in total, will be retained by the Department of Communities for:
  - (i) social housing; and
  - (ii) affordable housing;
- (c) what is the estimated completion date for the first four stages of the project;
- (d) what is the estimated completion date for the entire project;
- (e) what is the approximate lot size of blocks available for:
  - (i) approximately \$155,000; and
  - (ii) approximately \$321,000;
- (f) please provide a breakdown of housing diversity in the south-eastern metropolitan corridor;

- (g) what housing diversity is lacking in the south-eastern metropolitan corridor; and  
 (h) what additional housing diversity will this project provide?

**Mr P.C. Tinley replied:**

- (a) (i) A maximum of 1 in 9 lots will be retained by the Department of Communities for social housing, equating to approximately 19 lots.  
 (ii) Up to 25 lots.
- (b) (i) A maximum of 1 in 9 lots will be retained by the Department of Communities for social housing, equating to approximately 60 lots.  
 (ii) Up to 77 lots.
- (c) The estimated completion date for the first four stages of the project is mid-2022, subject to market conditions.
- (d) The estimated completion date for the entire project is 2029, subject to market conditions.
- (e) (i) 180m<sup>2</sup> lot costs \$155,000 in Mahala Stage 1.  
 (ii) 535 m<sup>2</sup> lot costs \$321,000 in Mahala Stage 1.
- (f) The Australian Government's 2016 Census of Population and Housing (the Census), conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, indicates Perth – South East had the following housing breakdown:

**Dwelling Structure by Number of Bedrooms**

<b>Perth – South East (SA4)</b>	<b>0–1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4+</b>	<b>Not stated</b>	<b>Total</b>
House	0.7%	4.3%	30.8%	42.1%	1.4%	79.3%
Semi-detached	1.1%	4.1%	8.1%	1.7%	0.5%	15.4%
Unit/ apartment	1.2%	2.2%	1.0%	0.1%	0.2%	4.7%
Other/not stated	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>44.0%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- (g) The 2016 Census indicates that, in comparison to Greater Perth, the South Eastern Metropolitan Corridor had:

- fewer dwellings with less than two bedrooms;
- fewer medium to high density dwellings; and
- More three or more bedroom single detached houses.

While 44 per cent of dwellings in the South Eastern Metropolitan Corridor have four or more bedrooms, only 27.7 per cent of households have four or more people residing, and one to two person households make up 55 per cent of all households.

Accordingly, in the South Eastern Metropolitan Corridor, but also in Greater Perth, there is arguably a lower supply of compact one to three bedroom dwellings than required.

To address this issue Communities is leading the development of a new WA Housing Strategy 2020–2030 that will create a more sustainable and responsive housing system for WA. The WA Housing Strategy will call for all sectors to work together to improve housing choices and pathways, and also improve access to suitable and affordable homes that respond to current and future need.

The WA Housing Strategy will be supported by three implementation plans: an affordable housing implementation plan, a remote and regional implementation plan and a social housing framework.

- (h) The development provides a diverse selection of lot sizes and configurations that offers a range of housing possibilities, including front loaded terrace, small and traditional lots as well as rear loaded cottage lots.

In terms of lot sizes, the development will consist of:

180m <sup>2</sup>	5%
213m <sup>2</sup> –270m <sup>2</sup>	13.1%
300m <sup>2</sup> –375 m <sup>2</sup>	63.8%
413 m <sup>2</sup> – 468 m <sup>2</sup>	14.1%
505m <sup>2</sup> – 535m <sup>2</sup>	4.0%

## PRISONS — OUT-OF-CELL HOURS

**6349. Mr S.K. L'Estrange to the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services:**

- (1) What was the average of adult out of cell hours during 2019–20 at the following facilities:
- (a) Acacia Prison;
  - (b) Albany Regional Prison;
  - (c) Bandyup Women's Prison;
  - (d) Broome Regional Prison;
  - (e) Bunbury Regional Prison;
  - (f) Casuarina Prison;
  - (g) Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison;
  - (h) Greenough Regional Prison;
  - (i) Hakea Prison;
  - (j) Karnet Prison Farm;
  - (k) Melaleuca Remand and Reintegration Facility;
  - (l) Pardelup Prison Farm;
  - (m) Roebourne Regional Prison;
  - (n) West Kimberley Regional Prison; and
  - (o) Wooroloo Regional Prison?
- (2) How many lock downs occurred at the facilities listed in (1) during 2019–20?
- (3) In relation to (2), how much time did lock downs total for each facility during 2019–20?

**Mr F.M. Logan replied:**

(1)–(3) [See tabled paper no [3638](#).]

## PRISONS — CAPACITY AND POPULATION

**6350. Mr S.K. L'Estrange to the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services:**

What was the total capacity and total offender population in each prison facility in Western Australia as at 1 March 2020 and 1 August 2020, and what proportion was on remand at those dates?

**Mr F.M. Logan replied:**

Table 1 – [See tabled paper no [3639](#).]

## CORRECTIVE SERVICES — INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

**6351. Mr S.K. L'Estrange to the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services:**

- (1) As at 1 August 2020, by prison, how many prisoners were awaiting completion of their Individual Management Plan?
- (2) As at 1 August 2020, what was the longest time a prisoner had been waiting on the completion of their Individual Management Plan?
- (3) As at 1 August 2020, what is the average time a prisoner has to wait for the completion of their Individual Management Plan?
- (4) As at 1 August 2020, by prison, how many prisoners had been waiting longer than the 28-day timeframe set out in Adult Custodial Rule 18 and 785 for their Individual Management Plan?

**Mr F.M. Logan replied:**

- (1) As at 31 July 2020, the number of prisoners awaiting completion of their Initial Individual Management Plan (IMP) (by prison) were;
  - Acacia – 265.
  - Albany – 66.
  - Bandyup – 23.
  - Boronia – 1.
  - Broome – 2.
  - Bunbury – 54.

Casuarina – 56.  
 Eastern Goldfields – 16.  
 Greenough – 6.  
 Hakea – 47.  
 Karnet – 5.  
 Melaleuca – 4.  
 Pardelup – 1.  
 Roebourne – 21.  
 Wandoo – 8.  
 Wooroloo – 24.

- (2) As at 31 July 2020, the longest time a prisoner had been waiting on the completion of their Initial IMP was 21 months for an appeal class prisoner awaiting an appeal decision.
- (3) Corrective Services do not record the average time a prisoner has to wait for the completion of their Initial IMP. To calculate this figure would require the review of each IMP during the specified period and would take significant human resources to do so.
- (4) As at 31 July 2020, the number of prisoners that had been waiting longer than the 28-day timeframe set out in Adult Custodial Rule 18 for their Initial IMP (by prison) were;

Acacia – 241.  
 Albany – 62.  
 Bandyup – 21.  
 Bunbury – 50.  
 Casuarina – 25.  
 Eastern Goldfields – 11.  
 Greenough – 4.  
 Hakea – 21.  
 Karnet – 4.  
 Melaleuca – 1.  
 Pardelup – 1.  
 Roebourne – 15.  
 Wandoo – 6.  
 Wooroloo – 23.

#### PRISONS — ASSAULTS

**6352. Mr S.K. L'Estrange to the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services:**

- (1) What were the prisoner on prisoner assault and serious assault rates for 2019–20?
- (2) How many prisoner on prisoner assaults and serious assaults occurred in WA prisons in 2019–20?
- (3) What were the prisoner on officer assault and serious assault rates for 2019–20?
- (4) How many assaults and serious assaults on prison staff occurred in WA prisons in 2019–20?

**Mr F.M. Logan replied:**

- (1) The prisoner on prisoner assault rate was 8.35 per 100 prisoners and the serious assault rate was 1.09 per 100 prisoners for 2019–20.
- (2) There were 581 prisoner on prisoner assaults and 76 prisoner on prisoner serious assaults occurred in WA adult prisons during 2019–20.
- (3) The prisoner on officer assault rate was 1.38 per 100 prisoners and the serious assault rate was 0.22 per 100 prisoners for 2019–20.
- (4) There were 96 assaults against officers and 15 serious assaults against officers in WA adult prisons during 2019–20.

Please note: During 2018 the Department of Justice (the Department) conducted its own internal audit of KPI data in relation to the “rate of serious assaults per 100 prisoners”, which estimated the under-reporting of serious assaults to be at approximately 27 per cent. This led to the Department taking a number of steps to tighten its reporting standards, enhance the software used to record incidents, and strengthen quality assurance processes around incident reporting and recording. As a result, the way data is entered for assault statistics was updated during the early part of 2018–19 and therefore recent data is not comparable to preceding years with the exception of serious assaults data.

SCHOOLS — SERVICES — WARREN–BLACKWOOD

**6353. Mr D.T. Redman to the minister representing the Minister for Education and Training:**

I refer to government contracts for the provision of specific services into state government schools in the electorate of Warren–Blackwood, and ask:

- (a) In each school in the Warren–Blackwood electorate, who has the contract for:
  - (i) Checking and maintaining RCDs;
  - (ii) Provision of maintenance and servicing of fire equipment;
  - (iii) Provision of termite control/management;
  - (iv) Servicing and maintenance of air conditioners and exhaust fans, including winter shutdown services; and
  - (v) Servicing and maintenance of water coolers and drinking fountains;
- (b) If these services are not contracted, then who provides the services and what is the process for determining who provides the service;
- (c) How regularly are the services tendered for supply, and how wide is the school catchment for each contract; and
- (d) What provision is made for local suppliers to secure the delivery of these services?

**Mr P. Papalia replied:**

- (a)–(d) As the matter relates to contracts procured and managed by the Department of Finance, a response will be provided by the Minister for Finance.

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 6354.

SCHOOLS — SERVICES — WARREN–BLACKWOOD

**6354. Mr D.T. Redman to the Minister for Finance:**

I refer to government contracts for the provision of specific services into state government schools in the electorate of Warren–Blackwood, and ask:

- (a) In each school in the Warren–Blackwood electorate, who has the contract for:
  - (i) Checking and maintaining RCDs;
  - (ii) Provision of maintenance and servicing of fire equipment;
  - (iii) Provision of termite control/management;
  - (iv) Servicing and maintenance of air conditioners and exhaust fans, including winter shutdown services; and
  - (v) Servicing and maintenance of water coolers and drinking fountains;
- (b) If these services are not contracted, then who provides the services and what is the process for determining who provides the service;
- (c) How regularly are the services tendered for supply, and how wide is the school catchment for each contract; and
- (d) What provision is made for local suppliers to secure the delivery of these services?

**Mr B.S. Wyatt replied:**

The Department of Finance advises:

Contracts for the specific services at school sites in the South-West/Great Southern (including the Warren–Blackwood electorate) are split into three geographical zones:

Zone 1 – Albany and surrounds;

Zone 2 – Bunbury and surrounds; and

Zone 3 – Narrogin and surrounds.

Sites in the Warren–Blackwood area spread between Zones 1 and 2.

- (a) (i) Wembley Electrics (Zones 1 and 2);
- (ii) Paull and Warner Resources (Zone 1) and Chubb Fire and Security (Zone 2);
- (iii) Bug Busters (Zone 1) and Allpest (Zone 2);
- (iv) AMEK Engineering (Zone 1) and ENGIE Services (Zone 2); and
- (v) AMEK Engineering (Zone 1) and ENGIE Services (Zone 2).
- (b) These services are all contracted and service a range of State government agencies, including the Department of Education.
- (c) Individual contracts for the services listed in (a) were tendered with a contract term of up to three years. The contract for checking and maintaining residual current devices includes options to extend the contract term up to 10 years. Schools in the Warren–Blackwood region are spread across two delivery zones (Zones 1 and 2).
- (d) These services were all procured through public open tender. Splitting the region on geographical lines is intended to maximise opportunities for small to medium and local businesses.

#### HOMELESSNESS — OUTREACH SERVICE TRIAL — MANDURAH

##### **6355. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the City of Mandurah's two-year trial of a homelessness assertive outreach service, and ask:

- (a) when will the trial commence;
- (b) what is the model of operation and what sort of outreach services will be delivered;
- (c) who will deliver the service;
- (d) how much funding is being provided by:
  - (i) the WA Police; and
  - (ii) the City of Mandurah; and
- (e) will additional staff be employed to staff the service?

##### **Mrs M.H. Roberts replied:**

The Western Australian Police Force advise:

- (a)–(e) The Western Australia Police Force are liaising with the City of Mandurah in relation to the Mandurah Homelessness Assertive Outreach Service. The State Government has allocated \$350,000 for the service.

#### HOMELESSNESS — OUTREACH SERVICE TRIAL — MANDURAH

##### **6356. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:**

I refer to the City of Mandurah's two-year trial of a homelessness assertive outreach service, and ask:

- (a) has the Department of Communities had any input into this program, and if yes, please provide details;
- (b) is the Department of Communities providing any funding to support the program, and if so, how much;
- (c) why are the WA Police involved in this project;
- (d) what is the expected cost of the program over the trial period;
- (e) what sort of outreach services will be delivered;
- (f) how many beds are available in Mandurah/Peel region for people experiencing homelessness; and
- (g) will any additional homelessness beds be provided to support this program?

##### **Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

- (a) The Department of Communities (Communities) is a member of the interagency homelessness group co-ordinated by the City of Mandurah and has provided input to the development of local initiatives to address homelessness, including the assertive outreach trial.
- (b) No.
- (c)–(d) Funding for the assertive outreach trial is being provided by the WA Police.

- (e) The City of Mandurah's assertive outreach service will:
- directly approach people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to encourage them to access available services
  - connect clients to drug and alcohol, housing, health and mental health services through referrals or other appropriate means
  - provide clients with the skills, information and options they need to be empowered through a case management approach
  - develop networks and work collaboratively with support services and government agencies to provide a seamless service, and
  - develop close working relationships with the City's Ranger services, City Security officers and local businesses to maintain up-to-date information on trends, issues and needs in the area.
- (f) Communities currently funds the following services in the Mandurah/Peel Region:
- Calvary Youth Services Mandurah Inc to provide a youth accommodation service in the Peel Region with a capacity of 11 young people.
  - Pat Thomas House Inc, trading as OVIS Community Services, to provide a Family and Domestic Violence accommodation and Support service with a capacity for six women with or without children.
- (g) The City of Mandurah's assertive outreach trial will be supported by investment in additional homelessness accommodation and support services under the Housing First Homelessness Initiative (Initiative). Under the Initiative, \$34.5million over five years is available to house individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness using a range of housing options, including private rental subsidies, with tailored, wrap-around supports. Communities is working closely with the City of Mandurah to align the proposed assertive outreach trial with the accommodation and support that will be delivered under the Initiative.

#### CORRECTIVE SERVICES — INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT PLANS — INDIGENOUS PRISONERS

##### **6357. Mr S.K. L'Estrange to the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services:**

- (1) As at 1 August 2020, by prison, how many Indigenous prisoners were awaiting completion of their Individual Management Plan?
- (2) As at 1 August 2020, what was the longest time an Indigenous prisoner had been waiting on the completion of their Individual Management Plan?
- (3) As at 1 August 2020, what is the average time an Indigenous prisoner has to wait for the completion of their Individual Management Plan?
- (4) As at 1 August 2020, by prison, how many Indigenous prisoners had been waiting for longer than the 28-day timeframe set out in Adult Custodial Rule 18 and 785 for their Individual Management Plan?

##### **Mr F.M. Logan replied:**

- (1)–(4) This information is not extracted or collated when monitoring overdue prisoner assessment documentation.

#### HARDSHIP UTILITY GRANT SCHEME

##### **6358. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:**

I refer to the Hardship Utility Grant Scheme (HUGS), and ask:

- (a) How much was the state government expenditure for HUGS in the 2019–20 year;
- (b) How many recipients received funding in 2019–20 via:
  - (i) Water Corporation;
  - (ii) Synergy;
  - (iii) Horizon Power; and
  - (iv) Alinta Energy; and
- (c) What was the total spent in 2019–20 on HUGS grants for:
  - (i) Water Corporation bills;
  - (ii) Synergy bills;
  - (iii) Horizon Power bills; and
  - (iv) Alinta Energy bills?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

- (a) \$4,968,270.00
- (b) (i) Water Corporation: 646 grants  
(ii) Synergy: 6,827 grants  
(iii) Horizon Power: 462 grants  
(iv) Alinta Energy: 661 grants
- (c) (i) Water Corporation: \$326,501  
(ii) Synergy: \$3,815,494  
(iii) Horizon Power: \$348,249  
(iv) Alinta Energy: \$319,767

**HARDSHIP UTILITY GRANT SCHEME****6359. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:**

I refer to the Hardship Utility Grant Scheme (HUGS), and ask:

- (a) How many recipients applied for funding in each of the past four financial years; and
- (b) How many recipients received funding in each of the past four financial years?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

(a)

Financial Year	HUGS Applications
2016–17	40,321
2017–18	56,604
2018–19	16,219
2019–20	10,341

(b)

Financial Year	HUGS Applications approved
2016–17	39,012
2017–18	55,038
2018–19	14,096
2019–20	8,936

**JUVENILE DETAINEES — INDIGENOUS****6360. Mr S.K. L'Estrange to the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services:**

- (1) How many Indigenous youths aged 10–17 were incarcerated in Western Australia as at 1 July 2017, 1 July 2018, 1 July 2019 and 1 July 2020?
- (2) What proportion of the total population of 10–17 year old prisoners were Indigenous as at 1 July 2017, 1 July 2018, 1 July 2019 and 1 July 2020?

**Mr F.M. Logan replied:**

- (1) (i) 104  
(ii) 122  
(iii) 94  
(iv) 70
- (2) (i) 72%  
(ii) 77%  
(iii) 76%  
(iv) 71%

## ENERGY — STANDALONE POWER SYSTEM

**6361. Mr D.T. Redman to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to various contracts let for the construction and delivery of standalone power systems (SPS) and community batteries under the Minister's portfolio responsibilities, and ask:

- (a) Can the Minister list the various battery technologies used in the deployment of SPS and community batteries in any government contracts under his portfolio, including:
  - (i) How many of each technology used;
  - (ii) Where they have been deployed; and
  - (iii) What companies had/have the contract for their delivery;
- (b) What is the government's policy on utilising the various battery technologies that exist in the market;
- (c) Is it the intent of the McGowan Government to ensure there is an active effort to ensure a variety of battery chemistries are deployed in government contracts for services:
  - (i) If yes, what is the strategy/policy; and
  - (ii) If no, why not; and
- (d) Is the government aware that some battery technologies could in the future provide a strong value chain of locally supported jobs and mining interests more so than some other technologies:
  - (i) If so, what is the strategy to ensure this full supply chain assessment is valued in any government decision to support a particular battery chemistry?

**Mr W.J. Johnston replied:**

- (a) (i) The battery technology used in the deployment of SPS and community batteries listed in (ii) and (iii) is Lithium-Ion.
- (ii) Standalone power systems (SPS)

A total of 42 SPS have been deployed by Western Power to date, in the following locations:

Shire of Mukinbudin

2 x Elachbutting

Shire of Manjimup

2 x Lake Muir

Shire of Yilgarn

4 x Bodallin

Shire of Mullewa / City of Greater Geraldton

2 x Tardun

1 x Pindar

4 x Mullewa

Shire of Lake Grace

2 x Newdegate/Dunn Rock

Shire of Broomehill–Tambellup

19 x Tambellup

Shire of Jerramungup

2 x Gairdner

Shire of West Arthur

1 x Moodiarrup

Shire of Kojonup

1 x Mokup

Shire of Plantagenet

1 x Kendenup

Shire of Gnowangerup

1 x Gnowangerup

A total of 25 SPS have been deployed by Horizon Power to date, in the following locations:

Goldfields–Esperance Region

Esperance LGA

- 2 x Mount Ney
- 1 x Neridup
- 3 x Beaumont
- 11 x Condinup
- 2 x Scaddan
- 2 x Cape Le Grande
- 1 x Esperance (Depot)
- 1 x Cape Le Grand National Park

Ravensthorpe LGA

- 1 x Fitzgerald National Park

Gascoyne Region

Exmouth LGA

- 1 x Exmouth

Community batteries

The first community battery in Australia was launched by Synergy in April 2016 at Alkimos Beach. Western Power subsequently installed community batteries at Meadow Springs, Falcon and Ellenbrook. More recently, Western Power has installed additional batteries at:

- Ashby, Wanneroo – in operation
- Two Rocks, Wanneroo – in operation
- Canning Vale, Gosnells – in operation
- Vasse, Busselton – in operation
- Kalgoorlie, Kal-Boulder – in operation
- Ellenbrook (Westgrove), Swan – in operation
- Port Kennedy Rockingham – in operation
- Yokine, Stirling – in operation
- Parmelia Kwinana – in operation

All of these batteries are installed and connected, bringing about network benefits, and will operate as community batteries, also enabling the provision of a residential product.

Western Power also has a large-scale community battery in Perenjori (providing reliability services) and a behind-the-meter battery in Margaret River.

(iii) The following companies had the contract for Western Power's SPS construction and delivery:

- Hybrid Systems
- BayWA r.e
- Optimal Group Australia

The following companies had the contract for Horizon Power's SPS construction and delivery:

- Energy Made Clean (EMC)
- Magellan Power
- Complete Power Solutions (CPS) National
- EMC Asset Management (EMCAM)

The community battery installations were designed, constructed, installed and commissioned by a local company West Australian Alternative Energy (WAAE). Western Power has recently conducted a process to establishment of a panel of vendors for the procurement of community batteries.

- (b) The Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Roadmap, developed by the Government's Energy Transformation Taskforce, outlines a plan for the integration of high levels of DER within the power system while ensuring safe, secure and affordable electricity for consumers. It has been developed in response to the power system and network risks presented by high levels of DER in the South West Interconnected System.

To respond to these imminent network issues, Western Power will need to invest in traditional network infrastructure, storage or other alternative solutions.

The DER Roadmap identified the requirement for installation of 10 community batteries to alleviate network constraints during 2020, deployed initially as a pilot. The batteries listed in (a) above were installed in line with the DER Roadmap. In accordance with the DER Roadmap, a plan will also be developed later this year covering 2021–24 for Western Power to obtain additional distribution storage services (and installations where services do not emerge) across the SWIS to meet emerging network needs.

The DER Roadmap policies are agnostic with respect to the technology and battery chemistry deployed, instead focusing on the most efficient solution that meets technical requirements.

The Government's Energy Transformation Strategy is reforming the Wholesale Electricity Market to provide for the integration of new business models and technologies, such as storage, in all parts of the electricity value chain – from the provision of network and market services to the provision of services to individual consumers. Like the DER Roadmap, these reforms focusing on enabling any battery technology to participate where it can provide the services required by the power system.

- (c) Government agencies consider a range of factors in making procurement decisions on goods and services including battery storage. The procurement framework enables any available technologies to be offered.
- (i) There are no specific policies regarding the selection of battery technology
- (ii) A range of relevant policies and strategies apply to the procurement of battery storage including the State Supply Commission's:

Value For Money policy, which includes consideration of cost and non-cost factors, including the technical capabilities of the offered product or service;

Open and Effective Competition Policy, to provide suppliers with fair and equitable access to government supply opportunities whilst maintaining the transparency and integrity of government procurement; and

Buy Local Policy and WA Industry Participation Strategy, which aim to maximise opportunities for local Western Australian businesses and give preference to tenderers where they can demonstrate benefits to local and regional economies.

The establishment of the Western Power battery panel will also ensure that there is regular market testing for new requirements by a key purchaser of battery storage in Western Australia, so as technologies advance there is an opportunity for them to be utilised. The battery panel will be refreshed annually.

- (d) The McGowan Government understands the opportunities various battery technologies presents for Western Australia and created the Future Battery Industry Taskforce in May 2018 to identify and increase all aspects of the industry.
- (i) The McGowan Government launched the Future Battery Industry Strategy in January 2019 to increase Western Australia's participation across the battery value chain from mining and processing to manufacturing and adoption of battery technologies.

#### COMMUNITY SERVICES — HOMELESSNESS SERVICES — TRANBY CENTRE

#### 6362. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the additional \$500,000 to expand the opening hours of the Tranby Centre to 7.00 am – 7.00 pm, 7 days a week, and ask:

- (a) On what date did the expanded operating hours commence;
- (b) How much money has been spent on the project to date;
- (c) Are the extended hours still in place:
- (i) If no to (c), why not and what are the current hours of operation;
- (ii) If no to (c), on what date did the extended hours cease and for what reason/s; and
- (iii) If no to (c), what surplus funds are available and have these funds been returned to the Department;
- (d) Is the Uniting Care West website list of the operating hours, as 7.00 am – 2.30pm weekdays, 7.00 am – 12.00 noon Saturdays and 12.00 noon – 5.00pm Sundays, accurate; and

- (e) What alternative drop-in centres are available for homeless people:
- (i) after 2.30pm on weekdays;
  - (ii) after 12.00 noon on Saturdays; and
  - (iii) before 12.00 noon on Sundays?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

- (a) 21 October 2019
- (b) \$500,000 (excluding GST)
- (c) No.
  - (i) There has been an ongoing assessment of the 7:00 am – 7:00 pm, seven days a week service model by Uniting WA in consultation with the Department of Communities since its commencement. As a result of this assessment process, the 7.00 am – 7.00 pm, seven days a week service model has continually been adapted to meet community need and address issues as they arise, including the commencement of the City of Perth Moore Street homelessness services site.  
The Tranby Centre’s current service hours are:  
Monday to Friday 7:00am – 2:30pm,  
Saturday 7:00am – 12 noon  
Sunday 12 noon – 5:00pm.
  - (ii) The extended hours ceased on 20 July 2020. Service hours were changed as some aspects of the 7:00 am – 7:00 pm, seven days a week service model duplicated services provided at the City of Perth Moore Street homelessness services site.
  - (iii) There will be no surplus funds due to an increase in costs following commencement of the 7:00 am – 7:00 pm, seven days a week service model. These increased costs are associated with additional security guards and support workers required as a result of the service reporting increases in people attending the service due to increased referrals from other agencies and antisocial behaviour in and around the area of Tranby following the commencement of increased services.
- (d) Yes.
- (e) The following drop-in centres and alternative services are available in the specified times:
  - (i) After 2.30 pm on weekdays – City of Perth Moore Street Homelessness Services, plus outreach workers in the inner-city area (5.00 – 8.00pm)
  - (ii) After 12.00 noon on Saturdays – Outreach services are provided by the Salvation Army and the Street Chaplain.
  - (iii) Before 12.00 noon on Sundays – City of Perth Moore Street Homelessness Services.

**CORONAVIRUS — SOCIAL HOUSING ECONOMIC RECOVERY PACKAGE**

**6363. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the Social Housing and Economic Recovery Package, and ask:

- (a) when will the independent oversight committee be established;
- (b) what membership will comprise the committee; and
- (c) have the terms of reference been established and if so, will you table a copy of the same?

**Mr P.C. Tinley replied:**

- (a) It was established on 17 July 2020.
- (b) Membership comprises senior representation from:
  - Department of Communities
  - Department of the Premier and Cabinet
  - Department of Treasury
  - Department of Finance, and
  - Department of Training and Workforce Development.
- (c) [See tabled paper no [3640](#).]

