



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTIETH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2020

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 12 March 2020

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 12 March 2020

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) took the chair at 9.00 am, acknowledged country and read prayers.

PAPER TABLED

A paper was tabled and ordered to lie upon the table of the house.

CULTURE AND THE ARTS — *PULSE PERSPECTIVES 2019* EXHIBITION

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [9.02 am]: On Tuesday evening, I attended the opening of *Pulse Perspectives* at the Art Gallery of Western Australia with parliamentary secretary Hon Samantha Rowe, MLC. It is an annual exhibition of art from WA's recently graduated year 12 students. It never fails to inspire and provide an incredible insight into the talent, promise, passion and concerns of our young people. This year the exhibition attracted just under 300 submissions from which 44 works by student artists from 29 schools across WA were selected and are now on display.

The exhibition opening was a fantastic event represented entirely by young people who were articulate and passionate about the arts and the positive impact the arts have played, and will continue to play, in their lives. The speakers included Grace Crogan, a recent graduate from John Curtin College of the Arts whose work *A walk to school* is in this year's exhibition. Grace is a member of AGWA's Pulse Youth Advisory Panel, which is a sensational initiative designed to ensure programs for young people are shaped by young people. Grace was joined by Cezera Critti-Schnaars, who starred in the Perth Festival production *Hecate*, and Ruby Cownie, whose work was represented in last year's exhibition. Noongar artist Sharyn Egan is creating a collaborative artist activation to which visitors can contribute every day while reflecting and connecting on mindfulness, positive mental wellbeing and the increasing value of the arts.

The importance of visual arts and the arts more broadly for our younger generation, and indeed all of us, cannot be underestimated. In the words of the young speakers from the night, Cezera Critti-Schnaars said, "It can be a protest. It can be a declaration of love, an exploration of oneself or an idea." Grace Crogan said, "The arts are a catalyst for social change. I am yet to be exposed to another practice that connects people in such a way as through public art—deeply, personally, intimately, globally." The following words are attributed to Ruby Cownie: "Art is so applicable to your life experiences from the way we view beautiful details in everyday life to our creative problem solving, our curiosity and our discerning tastes. Creativity is such a pivotal skill and can be genuinely used anywhere you go."

I encourage everyone to head to the Art Gallery of Western Australia to experience *Pulse Perspectives* for themselves and engage with the world through the talented and thoughtful minds of our young artists.

COMMUNITIES — FOOD RELIEF LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [9.05 am]: I rise to inform the house of the Food Relief Leadership Roundtable that the Premier and I hosted recently at Hale House. We were joined by the Western Australian Council of Social Service, along with representatives from the community services, food relief, government and commercial sectors, including Coles, Woolworths and IGA. This was the first gathering of its kind in Western Australia. The aim is to deliver a coordinated and collaborative approach to managing food insecurity and better nutrition outcomes for vulnerable Western Australians.

The Food Relief Leadership Roundtable was established in response to the recommendations of the "WA Food Relief Framework Report", which I launched in October last year. The report found that charitable food services in Western Australia had all recorded increases in the demand for food relief. It also noted that the food relief sector continues to face challenges in meeting demand, despite excess food waste in many parts of the state. The round table provided a forum to discuss ways to ensure that the sector is properly resourced to respond to the increased complexity facing people experiencing food insecurity. The discussion focused on the various ways in which community services, retailers and other industry partners can contribute to support vulnerable Western Australians. In particular, there was a shared desire to connect services and resources more cohesively to reduce service isolation and provide better outcomes for the community.

Now the work begins to set up a coordinated and collaborative approach to manage food insecurity and provide better nutrition outcomes for vulnerable Western Australians. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the work on the Food Relief Framework, which brings us closer to meeting the challenges of food insecurity in our state and developing long-term solutions to this problem.

CORONAVIRUS — MINING INDUSTRY RESPONSE*Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum*

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [9.07 am]: I advise members that the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety is collaborating with the commonwealth and the Western Australian Department of Health to provide advice to WA mining operations on how they should manage their response to COVID-19. On advice from the Department of Health, the State Mining Engineer has issued directions to all WA mining operations to, as a matter of priority, activate their site policy and infectious disease management plan, which is a key component of the site health and hygiene management plan; and to ensure that quarantine and isolation protocols are in place and activated for personnel who are potentially at risk.

Under the Mines Safety and Inspection Act, mine managers must report matters that have the potential to cause serious injury or harm to health, including infectious diseases. Mine sites are required to report confirmed diagnoses of COVID-19 to DMIRS. To date, no cases have been reported. Many sites are reporting unconfirmed COVID-19 cases, as well as self-imposed and company-directed quarantine for people who have recently visited countries classified by the Department of Health as high risk. On 4 March 2020, the State Mining Engineer directed mining operations to appoint an infectious diseases manager. This person should be regularly visiting the Australian Department of Health and the WA Department of Health websites for up-to-date information on COVID-19's status, actions and restrictions. The importance of infectious disease management plans has been reiterated with clear guidance on what to include in plans and what sites can do to reduce the risk of the infection spreading. Sites have been reminded to ensure that they have developed contingency plans to manage the potential impact of a reduction in the available workforce and asked to consider: How will sites deal with higher workloads, changed duties and the management of fatigue as a result of some members of the workforce being placed in quarantine or isolation? What contingencies are in place to control exposures to agents such as dust and fibres as a result of limited supplies of face masks?

On 6 March 2020, senior officers of the mines safety directorate attended a meeting hosted by the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia, along with key WA mining industry executives. The meeting discussed what the industry's response to COVID-19 should be from a public health perspective as well as its potential other impacts. Communication with mining operations and peak industry bodies is ongoing.

Updated information and protocols for managing COVID-19 will be distributed to all sites as new information comes to hand. DMIRS is working with others in the resources sector more broadly and is liaising with other regulators, such as the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority, to ensure a consistent approach to this community issue. I understand that DMIRS is in the process of writing to operators of onshore petroleum and major hazard facilities as part of a coordinated approach.

HORIZON POWER — “RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN” 2019–21*Statement by Minister for Energy*

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [9.10 am]: On 4 March 2020, I had the honour and pleasure of attending the launch of Western Australia's regional electricity provider Horizon Power's "Reconciliation Action Plan" 2019–21 in the remote community of Warmun, in the East Kimberley region. Western Australia's public sector, including our government-owned utilities, has a unique opportunity to lead the way and influence the community in achieving reconciliation with the First People of this nation. Reconciliation action plans are a tangible commitment to mutual respect and strengthen relationships with, and create opportunities for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The development of Horizon Power's RAP is the culmination of 18 months of work with Horizon Power staff and representatives from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, demonstrating a meaningful commitment to reconciliation.

Key deliverables of the plan include introducing a comprehensive cultural education program for all employees; additional training and procurement opportunities for Aboriginal people and businesses; an increase in the Aboriginal employment rate from 4.5 per cent to seven per cent over two years, including the appointment of an Aboriginal graduate and an Aboriginal person to management, traineeships, and the development of mentoring structures and retention targets; review and strengthening of engagement practices through a new engagement strategy; and key performance indicators for the executive, aligning to the RAP's deliverables. Horizon Power's commitment to reconciliation is aligned with the state government's themes on Aboriginal advancement, regional development, employment and training. I look forward to advising the house on the progress in achieving the RAP's commitments.

In May 2019, the state government announced funding to link the critical importance of building resilience and capacity of Aboriginal communities and individuals with economic participation. A number of strategic initiatives are already well advanced to improve social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people through partnership and collaboration and this was evident to me during my time in Warmun. I was delighted to see tangible evidence in Warmun of Horizon Power's commitment to reduce the cost of power and carbon emissions by investing in renewable energy. This is an exciting time for Horizon Power, its employees and the community as a whole, as we continue together on the path to reconciliation and a sustainable energy future.

I table the “Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan”.

[See paper [3259](#).]

YOUTH WEEK WA 2020

Statement by Minister for Youth

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Youth) [9.13 am]: I rise to inform the house of the recent appointment of the 2020 Western Australian youth ambassadors Haseeb Riaz and Zahra Al Hilaly—leaders among their community who will champion the Youth Week WA 2020 activities. Alongside the Youth Week WA planning committee, Propel Youth Arts WA and the Department of Communities, Haseeb and Zahra will promote, support and develop Youth Week WA. Both Haseeb and Zahra have made their mark in a number of areas and are committed to making the community a better place for young people and a place in which young people can thrive.

Haseeb is 19 years old and is enrolled in a direct pathway position to the Doctor of Medicine course at UWA. He is also currently working as a coordinator for Dr YES, running high school peer-to-peer health education sessions to equip students with healthy harm-minimisation and decision-making skills. He has also promoted the organisation’s work in health education for young people in the Kimberley. Zahra is 19 years old and a first-generation Australian. Her parents were refugees from Iran and Palestine. She is studying a double major in law and journalism at Murdoch University. Zahra is a member of the national youth advisory group for White Ribbon Australia, a youth advisory committee member for Headspace and the Red Cross, and a past member of the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia as a Shout Out speaker.

Youth Week WA is the single largest celebration of young people in Western Australia. The event provides the wider community with the opportunity to listen to young people, celebrate their positive contributions to the community and hear about issues that affect their lives. Youth Week WA is a fantastic opportunity for young people to express their ideas and views, showcase their talents and achievements, and raise issues that are important to them. This year Youth Week will be held from 17 April to 24 April, and I encourage all members to promote the stories and experiences of young people in their electorate throughout the week and get involved in those fantastic events.

INNOVATION VOUCHERS PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Innovation and ICT

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Innovation and ICT) [9.15 am]: I rise to inform the house that businesses around Western Australia can now apply for a state government grant to help commercialise their innovations, helping diversify the state economy and create jobs. Applicants can access up to \$20 000 to be put towards research and development, product development, technology transfer and intellectual property, and commercialisation support services. The WA government recognises that small to medium-sized enterprises have great ideas but that it can be difficult taking those ideas and turning them into sustainable business opportunities with real commercial outcomes. The Innovation Vouchers program is designed to help innovators overcome some of those hurdles on the path to commercialisation.

Last year, 15 vouchers were awarded to Western Australian SMEs across a wide variety of sectors to give them the leg-up they need to turn their great ideas into products that make money and generate WA jobs. Protective Innovations, a Malaga-based protective equipment firm that received a voucher in 2019, used its grant to develop a marketing strategy for its innovative products. It has since grown from three to 10 employees and will this year showcase its goods at CONEXPO in Las Vegas in March. Jandakot-based Electro.Aero, a 2018 IVP participant, used its \$20 000 voucher to develop a propulsion system for sustainable aviation, Prototype ElectrDuct15. The firm has now submitted a patent for the system, secured several domestic and international customers, \$500 000 in angel investment, and grown from six to nine employees.

Applications for the 2020 Innovation Vouchers program close on 25 March 2020. The Innovation Vouchers program, funded through the McGowan government’s \$16.7 million new industries fund, is supporting new and emerging businesses in WA to create jobs and diversify the economy.

SCULPTURE BY THE SEA — FUNDING

Grievance

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [9.18 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Culture and the Arts. I thank the minister very much for taking my grievance. My grievance relates to the Premier’s reported recent remarks to the founder of the iconic Cottesloe *Sculpture by the Sea* event, Mr David Handley, as quoted in *the Subiaco Post* newspaper on 15 February 2020, urging Mr Handley to move the event from Cottesloe Beach or risk losing funding. The news article states that the Premier suggests that Scarborough Beach might provide a better alternative location. Suggestions have also been made that the Premier’s own electorate of Rockingham could be an alternative location. What the Premier and minister may not understand is that long, flat sandy beaches, such as Scarborough Beach and Rockingham, are not conducive to hosting internationally recognised artistic events such as *Sculpture by the Sea*.

Renowned Australian sculptor Mr Ron Robertson-Swann, OAM, head of sculpture at the National Art School in Sydney and a founding member of the visual arts board of the Australia Council for the Arts, explained in detail why Cottesloe is the ideal setting for displaying sculpture. The unique geographic features of Cottesloe beach give the artists a variety of physical environments with which to engage and the public has different vantage points to explore. As Ron put it at the launch of *Sculpture Inside* last Thursday night, large spaces swallow sculptures.

The event founder, Mr David Handley, put it succinctly when he was quoted in the *Subiaco Post* responding to the Premier's suggestion that the event could be relocated in order to be considered for extra funding. He said —

“To the inexperienced, one beach may look like the next for staging an internationally recognised sculpture exhibition.

“However, this is like saying you can play an AFL game on a rugby oval because you have two teams trying to get an odd-shaped ball from one end of the field to the other with goal posts at both ends ...”

Some people may forget that it was Cottesloe's natural amphitheatre, grassy areas and shady trees that was the reason Perth beat Brisbane to stage the *Sculpture by the Sea* event in the first place. Cottesloe Beach's physical setting of the groyne, the Indiana Tea House and the small area of beach beneath the grass parkland benches creates a natural amphitheatre that is theatrical and exciting for the viewer to view from a distance and at height and then to explore the sculptures up close. Similarly, north of Indiana, the area is divided nicely into a mixture of small sites for modest-scale sculptures and areas for large sculptures on the bottom terrace and the sand where, again, the viewer can see the sculptures from up high and then up close. To put it simply, Cottesloe Beach has visibly limited space with interesting levels and corners, which is something that the Premier's reported preferred locations of Scarborough or even Rockingham do not have. This variety of environments excites artists from around the world to exhibit in and is the reason the exhibition is known around the world.

The view that a world-class sculpture event can be staged on any beach regardless of the setting is the metaphorical equivalent of someone viewing a metal sculpture and then stating that they could have done the same thing simply because they own a welder. The setting is a critical part of the whole event, just as creativity is the key to art. In fact, the Premier may not be aware that there are currently around 100 copycat exhibitions across Australia. However, none of these exhibitions is known outside their immediate community, and they do not have a national, let alone international, reputation. Western Australia has a very unique location in Cottesloe, which provides for an internationally renowned *Sculpture by the Sea* exhibition. Cottesloe is the only beach in the metropolitan area with ready access to a train station, which is only 850 metres away. This allows people from all over the metropolitan area to take a short walk to the event, or they can catch the free Cottesloe CAT bus.

Sculpture by the Sea attracts over 200 000 visitors and provides our state with \$6.3 million in direct spending and \$13.7 million in total spending from interstate and international tourists who visit Perth specifically for this exhibition. Some 800 international tourists and about 2 700 interstate tourists visit this event. In comparison, the Festival of Perth, which receives around \$7 million in state funding, attracts fewer than 500 000 visitors to the free events and generates a reported \$9.28 million in direct spending. The *Highway to Hell* event, which the Minister for Culture and the Arts featured in, received \$700 000 in funding, and the most generous estimate of the crowd participating in that was 150 000 people. The view that somehow the government has given the event a start and it should now be able to survive with no government funding is not applied to other important similar free public art events such as the various state theatres, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Western Australian Museum, the Festival of Perth and other similar events.

Given Cottesloe Beach's unique setting and the significant community and financial benefits that the event brings to our state, I urge the minister to reinstate the Lotterywest funding or otherwise provide replacement funding to ensure that Western Australia does not lose the internationally iconic event of Cottesloe's *Sculpture by the Sea*.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [9.23 am]: I would like to thank the member for Cottesloe for his grievance this morning. I want to deal with an assumption that he made in his final comment about the government not wishing to continue to fund. The government does fund *Sculpture by the Sea* and has done for some time. Indeed, the government contribution for this year's event includes a three-year funding agreement from Tourism WA and Lotterywest, and the federal government makes a contribution of \$95 000 via the Australia Council for the Arts and the Town of Cottesloe makes a contribution of \$10 000 and has also traditionally purchased one of the sculptures for around \$7 000. *Sculpture by the Sea* is an important event; no-one denies that. I do not accept the member's surmise that the government is seeking to abandon it. However, quite frankly, *Sculpture by the Sea*, like any other entity, has an obligation to seek a range of funding opportunities. As the member is well aware, previously, in the 2018–19 period, it lost a major and significant sponsor. At that point in time, through Lotterywest, a significant top-up was provided because that major sponsor had been lost, and the government responded fairly immediately. But the reality is that the government already makes a significant contribution to a Sydney-based not-for-profit organisation that has provided some outstanding artistic and cultural endeavour that features sculpture.

I turn to the member's comments about the Premier. Let me say something that I have repeated numerous times to the media: what the Premier said is that it is time, given that no new major sponsors have come forward, to re-look at the funding model and, indeed, to consider other opportunities, including other locations. That is what we have said. I accept and understand the comments of the eminent Sydney-based sculptor that the member quoted. But let me say this: why would we not still look at other opportunities that exist along our coastline? As I said yesterday, let us not be afraid of the opportunities that exist in other parts of the metropolitan area. The Premier said quite specifically—I endorse his comments—why would we not at least talk to local governments that have already said that they are interested in talking to the organisers about this? Indeed, I have talked to the Mayor of the City of Stirling. He said that the council would love to talk about what it could offer. He even said that it would offer significant money—a lot more, I might say, than the Town of Cottesloe contributes. Maybe it is time the Town of Cottesloe itself says, “Okay, what do we provide? Can we come up with more money?” If it is so important that it stays in Cottesloe, what is that local government's responsibility to ensure that it stays there, if, indeed, it is the only place in Western Australia it should remain? The City of Stirling, as I have said, the City of Rockingham and the City of Fremantle have also said that they are interested in staging this event. By the way, the City of Fremantle already has its own event, which it contributes to without any government funding. Even my own community down in Mandurah has some magnificent waterways that would be able to accommodate such an event.

Dr A.D. Buti: We could do it at Champion Lakes!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We could. The simple fact is that we are telling the organisers to start looking outside the square. There is no reason why they would not go and talk to the City of Stirling.

If Scarborough is not suitable, for reasons highlighted by the eminent sculptor, as the member knows there is a whole range of reef and rock formations along the coastline north of Scarborough that are different from a wide sandy beach, which has been highlighted. I cannot understand why they at least do not want to have a chat to those local governments. I will tell members something: if they are going to offer \$100 000 or \$200 000, there is the funding shortfall. Have a talk to them. I really cannot understand why they would not at least have a discussion with the Mayor of Stirling, the Mayor of Fremantle and the Mayor of Rockingham about opportunities. That is what the government has said.

The member made a comment about other events in comparison. *Highway to Hell* was a one-off event, held on one day. It was attended by over 150 000 people in one day. It was a different event. It was a cultural gathering, almost an urban guerrilla warfare arrangement—a tribal experience. It was totally different from *Sculpture by the Sea*. The comparison that the member made in an attempt to justify one above the other is superfluous. It does not make sense.

Let us just remember that we will continue to support high-quality artistic endeavours in all forms because we understand the important role that they play in cultural life. Of course, one of the great advantages and one of the great things about *Sculpture by the Sea* is that it showcases a significant number of Western Australian sculptors and that is what I am interested in. That is an issue that we will continue to talk about. I am happy to continue to talk, but one of the things that Mr Handley needs to do is understand that the government already makes a significant contribution and has over time, and that there are local governments that are saying, “Come and talk to us. Talk about the future of *Sculpture by the Sea* and whether another location is not only appropriate, but could actually expand the audiences that it already gathers.” Let us look at getting more audiences to those sorts of experiences.

CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME — GERALDTON SCRAP METAL

Grievance

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [9.30 am]: My grievance this morning is to the Minister for Environment, who, of course, is represented here by a parliamentary secretary, the member for Baldivis, and I thank him for taking the grievance. This grievance is from one of my constituents. A letter that we received from him reads —

My name is Ivan Mondello I'm the owner of Geraldton scrap metal I have operated in Geraldton for approx. 18 years ,in the early years I was my own best Ali Can customer but as any small business owner dose I put in long hard days to get to the to a point I am proud to say that SO FAR THIS YEAR alone I have saved over 11ton of ALUMINIUM CANS from landfill . They have been collected from community groups, lions clubs, Men Sheds' sporting clubs school P&Cs, and residents from Green head to Carnarvon and even Exmouth from MT Magnet to Meekatharra and even the little Three Springs footy club.

He is, effectively, collecting cans from across about 20 per cent of Western Australia. The letter continues —

But now with absolutely no local discussion and myself not been great with Government English —

I sympathise with Ivan, with not being good at government English myself —

I did not get the opportunity to take part in the WARRRL scheme That is fine due to what I have since learnt about it . however I struggle to understand if we are serious about recycling why can existing business not be subsidised the same as the chosen ones. Geraldton scrap metal pays 75cents per kilo for Aluminium cans I process and transport them to Perth to sell for \$1.05cents per kilo.

He shares what he gets back with all the community organisations that he collects the cans from. The letter also states —

After 18 years hard work my own Government puts my 2 fulltime workers and myself on the doll que I get to watch some one else get rich on my hard work all in the name of fake recycling.

I take steel cans they don't they take stubbies because brewers pay(Coca-Cola or is it WARRL)but they don't take wine bottles, its all the same glass.

My question is Can anything be done to save Geraldton scrap metal and true recycling.

PS

So far I have not allowed plastics into my yard as we only truly recycle around 10 to 15% of it the rest is hidden in landfill or in sheds burning to the ground yet the manufacturer of much of them is at the helm

I think he is referring to the people on the board of this new body.

The other point that Ivan makes in an email is that removing aluminium cans from him will further damage his business because of the other things that come with him getting aluminium cans. It reads —

As I have previously stated I put a lot of work into building that side of the business for two reasons first because as the word gets out that you look after people so well with their can's, the fund raisers pop up and start collecting again in bulk the second is once the fund raisers have started all the scrap metal enthusiasts hear about it and start looking at your prices.

Therefore, if he loses the cans, no doubt it will end up costing more jobs and, as he says, maybe even his own. I acknowledge that I have written letters to the minister and he has replied to me and to Ivan himself.

Ivan has been in business for 18 years. He has built a successful business. I have been to his yard. It is totally organised—very neat and tidy. Walking around there, I think it is quite amazing what is wasted. People like Ivan get out there and build a business by the sweat of their brow. There are batteries, air-conditioners and all kinds of metals. He has created an entire business, however, out of the cans. He builds the cages and delivers them to the people who give him the cans. He shares the money with the organisation. As I have said, he takes the cages out as far away as Green Head, Carnarvon, Exmouth, Mt Magnet, Meekatharra and Three Springs. He then brings the cans back to Geraldton, presses them up, puts them onto pallets and delivers them to Perth. This fundamental part of his business disappears with this new model, and I do not think he has received a fair go. He mentions that he does not speak government English, and I sympathise with him in that. I suspect that he did not fully understand the forms when he had to fill them out. He has mentioned to me, and obviously someone has mentioned this to him, the federal government rules that sit around what is called competitive neutrality. My understanding of that is that the government cannot compete with private businesses and put them out of business. Therefore, if I do not have any luck here with this grievance today, that is where I will be taking this further on Ivan's behalf. As an MP, I have seen the federal government rules used and I have helped people use these rules against a council venture that would have been competing with the private sector.

When looking at another recycling operation in Geraldton, it came to me how wasteful we are as a community. Different levels of government place every obstacle they can in the way of people who see recycling as an opportunity. It is, of course, much easier to shove it all into landfill. I say, thankfully, that we can no longer send our rubbish to China and Indonesia like some kind of white overlords who have the right to do that. I think it is about time that we faced up to these issues.

I am greatly disappointed with the implementation of the scheme. I have always supported it, and I was impatient for it to come in. I always wondered why it would work in South Australia but apparently not in Western Australia. However, I am sceptical about a process that does not seem to be transparent, and could see a local business that took 18 years to build thrown down the chute. It seems like active discrimination against a successful, hardworking small business man.

I am trying to save from this crazy bureaucracy someone's business that has taken 18 years to build. On top of no crayfishing in town since 25 January, no Chinese tourists and a stupid toilet tax that would close down caravan parks and motels, I am wondering whether the government listens. I am interested to hear whether it has something useful to say.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.36 am]: I thank the member for Geraldton for his grievance and the courtesy of some notice of it. I appreciate that. I have read Mr Mondello's correspondence, and I will come to that in a moment.

The government went to the previous election with a commitment to establish a container deposit scheme if elected, and I am pleased to say that that policy is on track to be delivered on 2 June this year. The scheme will have the highest ratio of refund points to population of any container deposit scheme in Australia, and this will make it the most accessible in the country. Beverage containers account for 44 per cent of litter volume in Western Australia, despite being made from easily recyclable materials such as glass, plastic, aluminium and cardboard. Container deposit schemes around the world have a proven track record of reducing litter, and WA's scheme is designed to maximise recycling and opportunities for social enterprises.

The objectives of the scheme are to increase the recovery and recycling of empty beverage containers, reduce the number of empty beverage containers that are littered or sent to landfill, ensure that suppliers of beverage containers take product stewardship responsibility in relation to their products, provide opportunities for social enterprise and benefits for community organisations, create opportunities for employment, and complement existing collection and recycling activities for recyclable waste. It is estimated that over the next 20 years, WA's containers for change scheme will result in 706 million fewer littered drink containers, 5.9 billion fewer drink containers sent to landfill and 6.6 billion more containers being recycled. The scheme will also create new businesses and employment opportunities across the state, and provide a new way for all our charities, schools, local sports clubs and other community organisations to raise money. The scheme is expected to create more than 500 jobs across the state, and many of these jobs will be targeted at employing people living with a disability, the long-term unemployed and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

WA Return Recycle Renew Ltd, or WARRRL, was appointed by the government to run the scheme. WARRRL is responsible for establishing a collection network that meets or exceeds the minimum network standards set by the government. WARRRL is a not-for-profit company, and the revenue from the sale of returned materials will be returned to the scheme to recover costs. The scheme has been designed with input from an advisory group with representatives from recyclers, the waste sector, the beverage industry and environment and community groups. It has also drawn on experience from schemes in Australia and around the world. When the scheme launches on 2 June, it will have at least 172 refund points operating in every region of the state, from the Kimberley to the great southern. At the end of its first year of operation, the scheme will have at least 229 refund points, and at that time Containers for Change will reach 99 per cent of the state's population.

To establish the collection network, WA Return Recycle Renew Ltd ran an open-market procurement process from July 2019 to October 2019 inviting individuals, companies, charities and local governments wanting to operate container refund points to apply. The procurement process for the collection network included direct contact with scrap metal dealers to invite participation in the network. I am told that nine scrap metal dealers applied to operate refund points, of which four were successful, and three have now accepted offers from WARRRL.

I am advised that Mr Mondello made an application to be in the initial group of refund point operators. There was significant interest in the procurement process, and it was well subscribed and highly competitive. Unfortunately, Mr Mondello's application was not successful. I understand that this was because the application did not meet all the specified refund point criteria, which were based on the scheme's legislated objectives and obligations. I understand that WARRRL has provided detailed written feedback on how Mr Mondello's application rated against each evaluation criterion. I am also told that the initial minimum network requirement for Geraldton has now been met. WARRRL is now focusing on other areas that require additional refund points to meet the minimum network requirements. The Minister for Environment has also written to Mr Mondello suggesting that he consider submitting an expression of interest for these other areas. Refund points are nominated for the towns of Dongara–Port Denison, Northampton, Morawa, Kalbarri, Mt Magnet and Meekatharra. There may also be opportunities to establish a mobile service to smaller towns. Mr Mondello has also been encouraged to consider seeking a role through WARRRL as an approved recycler.

The scheme design and procurement process in WA will deliver a collection network operated by a diverse range of business and not-for-profit organisations. An array of refund point types will be available in order to provide the greatest convenience to the community. These include over-the-counter depots that provide on-the-spot refunds and bag drops that provide the convenience of a drop-and-go facility with refunds deposited into customers' nominated bank accounts. Mobile refund points and reverse vending machines will also be in operation. Currently, selected refund points include about 40 per cent non-profits, social enterprises, community groups and Aboriginal corporations; 40 per cent commercial entities; and 20 per cent local governments. I understand from WARRRL that all except two of the 67 commercial operators selected to date to operate refund points are small to medium-sized family-owned and operated businesses.

I believe the scheme will play a crucial role in changing community participation in recycling in this state. The McGowan government is working hard to deliver the best scheme in the nation, with the best access to refund points of any scheme in Australia. Containers for Change will create positive change for our environment by encouraging people not to litter and provide opportunity for schools and community groups throughout the state to raise funds.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Grievance

MS E. HAMILTON (Joondalup) [9.43 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Health concerning palliative care. Following the report of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, a number of recommendations were made. I draw the minister's attention to recommendation 7, which states —

The Minister for Health should facilitate the establishment of an inpatient specialist palliative care hospice providing publicly funded beds in the northern suburbs of Perth.

I was pleased to hear that following this recommendation, the McGowan government allocated \$9 million for an additional 10 inpatient palliative care beds in northern metropolitan suburbs. I have been and will continue to call for these 10 inpatient beds allocated for the northern suburbs to be placed at Joondalup Health Campus. It is critical that they are made available to patients in the northern corridor as a matter of priority. We all know that Joondalup Health Campus is a good hospital; however, we recognise the rapid population growth in the northern corridor. This is why the McGowan Labor government is committed to investing in the hospital to meet demand and we are delivering a major upgrade and expansion. This will include additional emergency department bays, additional inpatient beds, new mental health beds, additional operating theatres and additional car parking bays. I am particularly proud that we have already delivered a 10-bed mental health observation area and a 12-bed stroke unit, both of which are being well utilised and are providing comprehensive and quality care to patients, but there is still more to be done in palliative care.

I know that this is a very important issue for residents living in the Joondalup electorate, and I have been speaking with them about this for some time and also with several of my colleagues in neighbouring electorates, including the member for Wanneroo and the member for Girrawheen. Over the past six months, the member for Wanneroo and I have been circulating a petition calling for these additional palliative care beds to be located at Joondalup Health Campus. To date, over 1 000 local residents have signed the petitions that have been tabled in this Parliament.

To put a face to the reason that we need palliative care beds in Joondalup, here is the experience of one of my local residents Terry and his late wife, Ann. I met Terry and Ann, residents of Joondalup City North, some time ago when I was doorknocking. I heard from them that Ann was not well and that health care in the northern suburbs was going to be even more important for them as they were embarking on a very difficult journey. They shared with me that Ann had been diagnosed with stage 4 renal cancer that had spread to her lungs. After fighting the cancer for 18 months, Ann became a patient at Joondalup Health Campus, then last month the decision was made for Ann to access palliative care. Quality health care close to home was very important for Terry and Ann when I spoke to them. Terry was living just around the corner from the hospital, which made visiting Ann very accessible. With already trying circumstances, Terry was notified by the hospital that it was unable to provide the palliative care for Ann that was necessary in the next steps in Ann's medical needs. Terry contacted my office and spoke to me about the location options that were presented to him that he and his family could choose to send Ann to receive that palliative care she needed. They were the Kalamunda hospice, the Claremont hospice or a nursing home. For Terry and his two sons, ensuring Ann received the care that she needed urgently was at the forefront of their minds, so last month the difficult decision to transfer Ann to the Kalamunda hospice was made. But the move was less than positive, as Terry, who I remind members lives just minutes from Joondalup Health Campus, was now required to spend a significant amount of time travelling to Kalamunda to spend time with Ann. Also, living on a pension, the cost of travelling was becoming a challenge, let alone the time in the car, which meant less time with Ann. The family raised their concerns about having to transfer Ann with medical staff at the Kalamunda hospice and, fortunately, Ann was transferred back to Joondalup the following week. This was a very traumatic experience for Ann and challenging for her family. Ann passed away on 19 February.

The family have since spoken to me about the importance for their beloved Ann to have passed away with dignity, close to home and with her family. This is the experience of one family in my electorate, but it reflects the common needs of my community for palliative care services that can be accessed close to home. I am of the view that we need to continue to invest in palliative care and the way in which it can be accessed. There should be more choice for patients and their families, particularly around where they will receive this care, as a hospital setting may not be the choice that everyone would make. With the voluntary assisted dying debate fresh in our minds and the challenges of individuals and families facing end-of-life choices, I trust that the minister is doing all that he can to ensure that more palliative care beds come online in the northern suburbs as quickly as possible. I urge him to locate these palliative care beds at Joondalup Health Campus. My community and the communities of neighbouring electorates including Wanneroo, Girrawheen and others will benefit if the McGowan government makes the commitment to establish the new public inpatient palliative care beds at Joondalup Health Campus.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [9.48 am]: I thank the member for Joondalup for her grievance today and, member for Joondalup, on behalf of the government, please pass on our condolences to Terry. I am sorry Ann had those experiences in her dying days. Obviously, this is an important focus for us. It was an issue brought into sharp focus for us by the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, which highlighted the importance of palliative care. The story of Ann and her final days with Terry really underpins just how important it is that we have a system able to respond in a compassionate way to people facing end-of-life choices. That is one of the reasons the McGowan government is making a record investment to strengthen palliative care services across the state—so that the sickest and most vulnerable Western Australians will be better supported. Since the 2019–20 state budget, the government has invested a further \$58.8 million for end-of-life choices and palliative care. Work is underway by an end-of-life and palliative care project team at WA Health to address all the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices. This work is progressing in tandem with the implementation of the “WA End-of-Life and Palliative Care Strategy 2018–2028”, which is the guiding

document, or principles, for the long-term palliative care plans of the Department of Health. Of course, this was informed by the work of the sustainable health review. Both of those strategies recommend respectful and appropriate end-of-life care and choices.

There will be an investment of \$30.2 million to expand regional palliative care services, which is an important focus of the palliative care strategy. Multidisciplinary teams will provide care across each of the regions. There will also be central after-hours nursing support from the WA Country Health Service telehealth hub, which will use high definition video consultation to support our nurses, particularly home-visiting nurses, in regional areas. That will make sure that they have the expert support and advice they need. There will also be a \$4.3 million expansion of metropolitan-based services.

In addition, the government accepted the joint select committee's recommendation regarding the need for inpatient palliative care beds in the northern suburbs, and has dedicated \$9 million of the total expenditure to an additional 10 inpatient palliative care beds in north metropolitan suburbs. I note the member's vote of confidence in the Joondalup Health Campus, and I thank her for her acknowledgement of the work we have done to expand services there and, of course, the important work we are doing in the significant redevelopment of Joondalup Health Campus. There will have to be a procurement process for those 10 inpatient beds, and that procurement process is being undertaken at the moment. We anticipate a number of providers will be looking to provide that service and there may or may not be a capital component in relation to their work. However, I am aware that there is capacity in our system and in the private health system, so there should be an opportunity to bring these beds on as quickly as possible. As the experience of Terry and Ann attests, we must do so as quickly as possible. We need to make sure that we have better services in the northern suburbs. I note that Ann spent some time in the hospice at Kalamunda Hospital. That hospice does terrific work, and we are still working on the idea of the hospice being a centre of excellence for palliative care in Western Australia, drawing upon both its experience and its expertise in palliative care.

This goes to the heart of what the member was saying: palliative care is about end-of-life choices. We used that expression a lot in the debates held in the second half of last year. It is about end-of-life choices, so we want to provide people like Ann with the opportunity to receive palliative care closer to home. Of course, the joint select committee made very strong recommendations around the gaps in our services, primarily in regional areas and north metropolitan suburbs. We will move heaven and earth to make sure that we provide those beds as quickly as possible.

I acknowledge the advocacy on this issue of the member and the members for Girrawheen and Wanneroo. We understand that we have to get on with this work. I certainly appreciate the member's grievance this morning, because it brings into sharp focus the human aspect of this issue. I will endeavour to keep the member, and other members of Parliament, updated on those beds for the northern suburbs.

CORONAVIRUS — MT LAWLEY COMMUNITY

Grievance

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley) [9.53 am]: My grievance this morning is also to the Minister for Health. It concerns the coronavirus, or COVID-19. Unquestionably, this virus will affect our whole community, but there are particular reasons that I raise this issue on behalf of the community of Mt Lawley. As the minister knows, a number of health professionals and allied health professionals live and work in my community—doctors, nurses, general practitioners and pharmacists. The GP clinics in my electorate include GP on Beaufort; Third Avenue Surgery, down the road from Mount Lawley Primary School; Lindisfarne Medical Group; and DR7 Medical Centre in Yokine. The pharmacists in my electorate include Beaufort Chemist, across the road from our electorate office on the corner of Beaufort and Walcott Streets; McKenzies Compounding Chemist, which is a little further up the road; and The Dispensary, on the corner of Beaufort Street and Third Avenue, across the road from Third Avenue Surgery. We also have many health professionals working in our public hospitals, like Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Osborne Park Hospital. I take a moment now to commend the work that they and the professionals working in our private hospitals, like St John of God Mount Lawley Hospital, have done in response to the coronavirus.

The "Western Australian Government Pandemic Plan" describes at-risk groups at paragraph 2.8.3, stating that people living in close communities such as nursing homes may also be more vulnerable. I note the 17 retirement villages in the electorate of Mount Lawley. An above-average proportion of our population is aged over 65, including the people living in those nursing homes. The minister can see that the electorate of Mount Lawley is well aware of COVID-19. However, the initial response from my community has been incredibly heartening. There is the Mt Lawley Community Facebook page. Members would be aware of this and probably have something similar in their own communities. The Mt Lawley Community Facebook page has been a great site of community endeavour in the last couple of days. Members of the community have posted on the Mt Lawley Facebook page that they would assist those who were confined to their residences by, for example, making deliveries to them or doing grocery shopping for them. It calls to mind an article on the situation in Italy that I saw on *The Guardian* website yesterday. It was an opinion piece by Jamie Mackay titled "Under coronavirus lockdown, Italy is finding a fragile sense of solidarity". I will come back to that article later, but I wanted to highlight for members, and for the minister, this sense of solidarity that is emerging in Mt Lawley.

As the minister would be aware, we also have some fantastic innovators and entrepreneurs who are trying to see whether their endeavours can assist the government and health professionals in identifying this disease. I have spoken before about Brian Leadman's company ResApp Health Limited and the work that it does. ResApp is a smart phone application that can detect respiratory disease—upper and lower respiratory tract infections. I understand that Mr Leadman and his company are trying to identify a signature cough so that COVID-19 can be identified. The struggle at the moment is that in order for the algorithm to work, Mr Leadman and his researchers need access to a significant sample set of patients, and in Australia we have only had just over 100 confirmed cases. The World Health Organization overnight declared a pandemic, so we need a few things. We need the existing testing regime to be accessible. There are two PathWest collection centres close to my community, in Leederville and Osborne Park; PathWest has its mobile collection facility; and the state government has opened new COVID-19 clinics at Royal Perth and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospitals.

When I come to consider this government's response to COVID-19, I refer to an article titled "Going global" published in the Leaders section of *The Economist* last week, which states —

IN PUBLIC HEALTH, honesty is worth a lot more than hope. It has become clear in the past week that the new viral disease, covid-19 ... will spread around the world.

The authors of the article go on to note three things that the government in China has done well in order to contain the spread of the disease. Firstly, it provided clear unambiguous communication at an early stage. Secondly, governments can slow the spread of the disease and flatten the spike of the epidemic, which means that health systems are less overwhelmed. That not only flattens the spike, but also delays the spike. Thirdly, it is necessary for us to prepare health systems for what is to come. I take the examples that are outlined in last week's article from *The Economist* and note the steps that the government has taken to address those three things, but the fact remains that as a son of two parents who are in their 70s and as a dad of two boys who are both less than 10 years old, the spread of this virus remains a particular concern. My grievance to the minister this morning is this: What can be done to support the health and allied health workers who live and work in Mt Lawley? What can be done to provide comfort to seniors living in retirement homes? What can be done to promote the nascent community solidarity that we are already seeing through the Mt Lawley Community Facebook page as we tackle this virus?

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [10.00 am]: I thank the member for his grievance this morning. It provides me with an opportunity to update the chamber on the current count in Western Australia. We have no new cases in Western Australia as of this morning, which is a very pleasing result, particularly as we see the spread of the virus around the world. As the member observed, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic. That changes nothing for Western Australia. We have been on pandemic footing for some time now, and we are implementing our plans and strategies to protect the Western Australian community as best we can. Yesterday, the Premier and I released our pandemic plan to inform members about what we are doing in this space. Obviously, there is a range of issues, which I will come to shortly, that will be very informative for the member's constituents.

The President of the United States has banned all travel from Europe to the US. That is obviously a step change—a significant development in the issue. From this layperson's perspective, I suspect that that will have absolutely no impact at all in the spread of the disease in the US as it is already well and truly experiencing sustained community transmission of the virus. From that perspective, I think Trump's announcement is more about appearance than effective public health policy, but I understand that the President has to make these decisions. I also saw that Tom Hanks and his family have got coronavirus, and they have been holidaying in Queensland. They are about to extend their holiday by another good two weeks, I would suggest, and that underpins just how quickly this virus can take hold.

The pandemic plan identifies vulnerable groups within our populations that we have to be very cognisant of in serving the community. As the member observed, he has a lot of retirees and residential aged-care facilities in his electorate, and they are a particularly vulnerable cohort. This is a reason I was at the Aegis aged-care facility in Como on the weekend, highlighting the importance of ensuring that we protect vulnerable groups within our population. Obviously, older people and people with compromised immune systems are the most vulnerable to COVID-19. That is why it is important that we are very cognisant of the impact that this will have upon people in our residential aged-care facilities. We have been doing a range of work to ensure that we have good hygiene and infection control regimes in all our residential aged-care facilities, and making sure we take every opportunity to limit the impact on it.

The member for Mount Lawley appropriately acknowledged his community and the commitments it has made to look after each other. This is what we have to do. We are all in this together; this is a community effort. We can make sure that we hold off this disease if we all take the opportunity to look after ourselves and our personal hygiene habits. People need to wash their hands and cough or sneeze into the crook of their arm or into a tissue, and throw that tissue away. Do not do as I did at a press conference the other day, which is to momentarily choke on a bit of lunch that I had wolfed down just before the press conference and spontaneously cough into my hand. Cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or into a tissue. If people are unwell, if they are experiencing any cold or flu-like symptoms, they need to make sure that they do not have close contact with others, their family, friends, and in

particular, aged-care residents in those facilities. This is a time that people should not visit older people in a residential aged-care facility. We love our parents and we love our grandparents, but if we are unwell, it is very important that we do not take those bugs into those facilities.

The member mentioned the ResApp. We have been doing some work with Dr Leedman and his team to try to access that sample data, but he needs about 100 unwell people with COVID-19 to try to get those signature messages. I am sure they will be able to assess that group, unfortunately, in good time, but not as yet. The ResApp is a great little health innovation that is Western Australian grown. Brian Leedman and his team are doing a great job in promoting that around the world.

The COVID clinics are an important part of what we are doing. I want to clarify a point that the member for Baldivis raised with me in the corridor yesterday. We have COVID clinics in each of our adult tertiary hospitals—Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Fiona Stanley Hospital. They are going well. Yesterday, just over 750 people attended those, slightly fewer than the first day. I think about 400 people were tested. Yesterday, we also announced our new collection centres for people suffering from respiratory illness and suspected impact of COVID-19. Those clinics are dedicated for people with suspected COVID symptoms or impacts. We do not want them to go to other clinics. I apologise for misleading the member for Baldivis on that. We want people to go to these dedicated collection centres. That may mean a certain amount of inconvenience to those patients, and I acknowledge that, but it is important that we keep them away from other people who are attending PathWest collection clinics.

Finally, #FlattenTheCurve is the new hashtag. I am embracing it. Everyone who is on Twitter, look at #FlattenTheCurve and see how we can all work together to push off and lower the impact of this disease.

POLICE — GOVERNMENT PAY OFFER

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys) [10.07 am] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the following motion to be moved forthwith —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for its “disrespectful” pay offer to our frontline police and calls on the government to urgently provide police with a fair and decent wage deal, especially in the context of an impending global coronavirus pandemic.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I will not have any interjecting.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I believe there has been an agreement as to time to debate this motion.

Standing Orders Suspension — Amendment to Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [10.08 am]: I move —

To insert after “forthwith” —

, subject to the debate being limited to 10 minutes for government members and 10 minutes for non-government members

Amendment put and passed.

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion, as Amended

The SPEAKER: As this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need an absolute majority in order to succeed. If I hear a dissentient voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Motion

MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys) [10.09 am]: Mr Speaker —

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mount Lawley, I call you to order for the first time. There will be no interjecting, please.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: I move the motion.

This has been an absolute disaster of the government’s own making for the last three years.

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Burns Beach, I call you to order for the first time. This is a suspension of standing orders. Any more of this and I will just keep calling you to order and you can go home early.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: In the lead-up to the state election three years ago, when this government was in opposition, it promised police officers that it would give them a 1.5 per cent pay increase. The same promise had been made to them by the Barnett government. Police officers were comfortable with that. When the Labor Party came to power, it completely pulled that offer off the table, despite having given a direct commitment that that is what it would give police officers. It demoralised police officers. We have been through this before. We know that some police officers, particularly in regional areas, ended up paying more for an increase in their rental housing than they got in wage increases. Every day they stayed in those regional areas, they started losing money and their families were less able to afford the basics of life.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the first time. I am not putting up with this. I will continually call people to order and then I will throw them out.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Our community relies on our police and we rely on them to keep us safe every single day. They walk into danger when we are in danger. They are there to protect us. The fairest thing we can do is give them a fair pay increase. They had to cop that unfair increase in 2017. Come the negotiations in 2019, it was the same old, same old. This government has no respect for police officers. That is why police officers are so demoralised. They are overworked, underpaid and completely and utterly demoralised.

The government delayed the pay offer. It eventually offered police another \$1 000, which is much less than the 1.5 per cent that they were promised and that they deserve. It was put to a ballot of police members. Under the WA Police Union rules, it was put to a ballot. The police union rules clearly state—I think it is rule 10G—that for a ballot to succeed, 65 per cent of all people who vote must support that ballot, otherwise the ballot fails; it lapses. That is exactly what happened here. Police are fed up with this government. Police are not prepared to accept the government’s offer. The Minister for Industrial Relations and the Minister for Police ought to have known what the police union rules were. They knew from the start of the negotiations they had to get to a point whereby 65 per cent of police officers would say yes to the pay deal. They did not; they rejected it. In fact, when we count the total number of police officers across the state, only 39 or 40 per cent voted in favour of it, which goes to show us how few police officers have any respect or trust for this government, this Premier and this minister, particularly the industrial relations minister.

If that were not bad enough, what happened today? The industrial relations minister is a unionist; he ought to know the union rules. The rules of the police union have been followed. Instead of saying, “Okay, the police have rejected the offer —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, you have a representative on your side to put your point of view. The member is putting his side’s point of view. I will not tolerate any more.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Instead of the minister accepting that the ballot failed under union rules and the police had to go back to the negotiating table and start again or go to arbitration, he came out and launched an unprecedented attack on the leadership of the police union. It is unbelievable. These are the people who the minister is meant to be negotiating with. These are the people who represent our frontline officers.

On Tuesday, the police minister came into this place and delivered a ministerial statement on the important role that the Commissioner of Police and police officers in this state play in responding to crises like the impending global coronavirus pandemic. She said that we are expecting these people to protect us in the toughest of times. Not only do we disrespect them, not only do we take pay offers off the table and not only do we not give them a fair pay increase, but also when, by their own rules, police officers reject the offer made by the government, the government does not say, “They are the rules; we’ll start again” or go back to the table and do the honourable thing and give them a fair pay increase; they attack the messenger—they attack the police union. It is not good enough. Police expect to be treated like first-class citizens, not third-class citizens, and so do police union members. Imagine if someone on this side of the house attacked union officials in the way the government has today. It is an absolute disgrace. This situation further demoralises the same people we are expecting to protect us. It is up to Mark McGowan and the Labor government to step up to the table.

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Members should not be called by their names; “the Premier” is the correct term.

The SPEAKER: You should call him the Premier.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: It is up to the Premier and this Labor government to step up to the mark and give police officers the pay increase that they deserve.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition) [10.16 am]: Mr Speaker —

Ms S.E. Winton: Shame!

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

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, this is not a funny issue.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Member for Wanneroo, thank for your interjection. I have a conga line of police officers lining up to speak to me everywhere I go, saying, “We made a mistake.” Their mistake was that they believed Premier Mark McGowan when he was in opposition, who said that he would give them a 1.5 per cent pay rise.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: You cannot use the member’s name here. Standing orders require that we are referred to by our title, not by our personal name.

The SPEAKER: I think she said, “the Premier, Mark McGowan”.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, that is correct. She cannot call him that. She has to call him the Premier.

The SPEAKER: It is not a point of order.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please, let us get this over and done with.

Debate Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The government is trying to derail the opposition’s pitch on this very important issue. The fact remains that police officers are coming to the opposition in numbers saying, “We made a mistake in believing the Premier when he was Leader of the Opposition, promising us a 1.5 per cent pay rise. We voted for him because he said he would give us a 1.5 per cent rise, and he reneged on that promise.” They are angry about it. The other thing that they are angry about is that the government ran a redundancy program through the police and it has not replaced the police officers. The minister keeps coming in here saying that the government has recruited additional police officers but the police annual report shows there were 25 fewer police officers as at 30 June 2019 than there were in 2017.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Police!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We have fewer police—police who were promised a pay rise and not delivered a pay rise. They were working extremely hard and the government is expecting them to do additional overtime to deal with some of the crime and law and order issues out in the community. They are not getting any appreciation from this government for the work that they do—none. The union has been in negotiations with the Minister for Industrial Relations in good faith since February last year. It has taken an entire year to get to a point whereby the union put it to their members. According to the union’s media release —

The offer was presented to the 6357 eligible members and only 39 per cent supported the proposed replacement agreement.

All members in marginal seats in the outer metropolitan areas need to put some pressure on their leadership. It was reported that the president of the police union, Harry Arnott, said —

“Our Members don’t trust the McGowan Government not to change the state wages policy and they believe the \$1,000 is simply disrespectful,” ...

That is what Mr Arnott said.

Ms R. Saffioti: What should it be?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Minister for Transport, it should be what the government promised them. It promised them 1.5 per cent. The government was elected on a promise —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Your own leader is on her feet and you are interjecting. I want to hear what she is saying, not what you are saying.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: It should be what the government promised them. It made a promise to the police in the lead-up to the election that it would deliver them a 1.5 per cent pay rise and then it said, “No. You are the same as every other public servant and we are going to restrict you to \$1 000 a year.”

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Burns Beach, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That is what the government said: “You’re just the same as every other public sector employee.” Police officers are not the same as every other public sector employee. They are the people who will

have to go out there, gloved up, and apprehend people who are disobeying a quarantine order. They are the ones who are dealing with the meth addicts in the community. They are the ones who are dealing with domestic violence issues and getting in very dangerous situations between people involved in a domestic violence altercation. They are the ones who are out there mopping up after car crashes and advising families that their loved ones have died. All they want is what the government promised them—1.5 per cent. That is all they want. They want the government to come good on the one promise it made to police—a 1.5 per cent pay rise. That is what they want the government to do. They want it to deliver what it promised. It is not that hard. It is not that hard to be respectful of the efforts of our police officers to keep the community safe. How are they supposed to do their job?

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer) [10.21 am]: The state wages policy was developed after we came to government and saw the state of the finances that the Liberal–National government had left to the people of Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.S. WYATT: There is not a minister in this government who would not love to do what the former government did, and that was spend without consequence. That is what the former government did. It capitulated at every turn to every union that demanded anything over eight and a half years. As a result, it ran up the largest operating deficits the state has ever seen and had our debt trajectory on the way to \$44 billion. When we came to government, we had to set a very tough wages policy, but it also was, and still is, appropriate because of what wage growth is doing in the broader private sector. Indeed, by and large over the last three years, private sector wages have declined, and those people certainly do not have the job surety of those in the public sector. We had to apply that to police, nurses, teachers and civil public servants—all good Western Australians working very hard for the people of WA. That policy is appropriate. It is not something we enjoy doing, but when a government spends without consequence for eight and a half years and drives the economy into recession, that is the inevitable outcome. It is easy for opposition members, who do not care about financial management, to come in here and demand that we give more. But the reality is that the policy is fair, and we made it crystal clear that it was to survive for four years, and that is the case.

The Western Australian Police Union has, in my view, accepted the offer. The membership has accepted the offer; 62 per cent of members have voted in support of it. I listened to Mr Arnott on the radio this morning, and that is on the back of a very high turnout of votes, so 62 per cent of members have supported it. I will say by way of aside that if we were to amend the state Constitution and say that the WA Liberals can win an election only if they get 65 per cent, what would they say? The question the Liberals have to answer is: what is their wages policy? What is it? How much will they pay? It is not just a police question; it is about the entire public sector workforce. How much will they pay, because the heat is now on them? If they do not like this policy, they have to tell me how much it should be and how they are going to fund it.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Industrial Relations) [10.24 am]: I cannot believe the audacity of the member for Hillarys. What a disgrace! The Liberal Party runs around Australia attacking union officials because they do not listen to their membership. That is the claim. The claim of the Liberal Party is that there have to be special restrictions on union officials because they do not listen to their membership. The membership of the WA Police Union overwhelmingly endorsed the wage offer that we made to them. Let us understand why the wage offer was sent to them. It was because the union executive endorsed the outcome of the negotiations. This package was supported by Harry Arnott and the executive of the union. That is the reason it was given to the membership. People forget that this has taken a long time. I agree that the police union's behaviour in the negotiations has delayed the offer going to its members. Normally, ministers do not personally involve themselves in the actual sit down across the table with the union, but on this occasion, because of the attitude of the police union, I have. On 15 January 2019, 21 May 2019, 15 August 2019, 29 August 2019, 28 October 2019, 5 November 2019 and 21 November 2019, I personally met with the police union in my office to discuss these matters. In August, I thought we had an agreement, but clearly we did not. That is fine; I am not objecting to the fact that we did not have a final agreement. On 21 November 2019, we had an agreement with the police union, but it would not put the agreement to the membership until the drafting was complete. That is not the normal practice, but we accepted that. Then there was an argument about the wording of the drafting.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Senior Commissioner Kenner had to convene a meeting so that the police union and I could meet. That is unprecedented. The Minister for Industrial Relations personally attended the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission. That has never happened before. That is how seriously we took this matter. It has been an unprecedented approach. We had an understanding from that, and that understanding was that the police union would put the matter to its members and it would be bound by the decision of its members.

After the vote, it suddenly rejected it because, unlike the election of the president, who needs to win only 50 per cent plus one of the participating members, 81 per cent of people did not vote no. Let us understand this: fewer than 19 per cent of police officers in Western Australia voted against this arrangement. Fewer than one police officer in five rejected the government's offer—and no wonder. It is a great offer. It is carefully calibrated to the particular circumstances of police officers. Yes, it is \$1 000, but there is a lot else in the deal, and that is why police officers accepted it.

The Leader of the Opposition, Liza Harvey, asked the question about the wages policy and what happened two years ago. The police union and the membership agreed to the last offer and that offer was registered and is still in force. This idea that what happened in the first round of negotiations somehow needs to be held to account is in the past, because the police union members agreed to that deal, it has been implemented and they have been paid.

Let me make it clear. As far as I am concerned, on 15 August, the police union should have put the agreement to the membership. The reason we are here in March and do not have a concluded position from the union is the behaviour of the union leadership. It is not the government that has caused the delay. We have always said that all we wanted to do was have the union membership vote on the agreement. Finally, after delay and obfuscation by Harry Arnott, we have finally got to that position. Unfortunately for Mr Arnott, the overwhelming majority of people who voted voted in favour of the government. As I understand it, 62 per cent voted in favour of the agreement, but Mr Arnott has now come up with an artificial construct to say why he is rejecting the views of his own union membership.

I cannot believe —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is similar to releasing Turkish migrants into the community—the rules are the rules. Sometimes we have to look beyond that. Let me make it clear: if the union had told me at any of those meetings that it would implement the agreement with only 65 per cent of the vote, I would have asked the commission to conduct the ballot, because if the commission had conducted the ballot, it would have been 50 per cent plus one wins. Do not come in here and tell me artificial stories made up by a man who is disappointed because he was not representing the interests of his own membership. I do not lightly criticise union officials; being a union official is a tough job. But Harry Arnott has let down his members. The reason that police officers have not received a wage rise, back pay, extra holidays and improved conditions is because of Harry Arnott, not anything else. I cannot believe that the member for Hillarys and the Leader of the Opposition, Liza Harvey, want police officers to go without extra leave and a wage rise. The Leader of the Opposition's position is that she does not want police officers to get extra leave; that is her decision and she should be ashamed. She is not putting the interests of Western Australians or police officers first. She is putting a narrow-minded political issue first and she is following the advice of the member for Hillarys and that is not a good idea. The police members have made a decision; 81 per cent of police members have not rejected the deal, which is fabulous. I appreciate their support.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (17)

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

Noes (33)

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

Pairs

Mr K.M. O'Donnell	Mr M. McGowan
Mr R.S. Love	Mr M.P. Murray

Question thus negated.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Council Membership

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had appointed Hon Robin Scott to fill the vacancy on the Joint Delegated Legislation Committee following the resignation of Hon Charles Smith.

FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGISLATION REFORM BILL 2019

Third Reading

Resumed from 11 March.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [10.35 am]: I wish to continue my brief contribution to the third reading of the very important Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill 2019, which deals with major reform in the area of family and domestic violence. I will continue my remarks about the courage that it takes women to leave domestic violence situations because, as we know, the most dangerous time for a victim of family domestic violence is when they attempt to leave. Obviously, one of the contributing factors as to why it takes women so long to escape the perpetrator of the violence, being their partner, is their financial insecurity—a lack of real employment—and also a shortage of safe places to go, such as refuges and so forth. I reiterate the statistics on the number of women and children who find themselves homeless as a result of family and domestic violence. Something like 72 000 women and 32 000 children across the country find themselves homeless. There is an advertisement on television at the moment about road safety in which a man is asked to provide an acceptable number of people who die on the roads every year. He comes up with a figure—I cannot remember it off the top of my head, but it is something like 77—and then out walk 77 members of his family, loved ones and friends. The man gets really emotional and chokes up. We need a similar approach in WA to remind the public that these are real people, not just statistics. Seventy-two thousand women is more than the population of some regional centres; it is a huge number of women. It is like the old saying: if we could see the faces of victims, it would be much harder to turn a blind eye. We must remember that the statistics represent people; actual lives are being lost. Every week, one woman in this country dies from family domestic violence, which is 52 women a year. How would members feel if 52 women were in this chamber right here, right now, women whom they knew and loved? It is absolutely abhorrent to picture that. We need to take the time to think about those people, their faces and the lives lost.

I come to the point that I think societal attitudes play a critical role in our lack of action around domestic violence. I think a big part of that has to do with social media commentary, definitely media commentary, and it certainly does not help when those on the frontline take the side of the perpetrator. I refer specifically to the inspector who made abhorrent claims straight after Hannah Clarke's murder. It was Inspector Mark Thompson, who held a number of media conferences regarding the murder of Hannah and her three kids. I will quote an article from the *Brisbane Times*, which states —

“Our job as investigators is to keep a completely open mind,” Inspector Thompson said on Thursday.

“We need to look at every piece of information and, to put it bluntly, there are probably people out there in the community that are deciding which side to take, so to speak, in this investigation.

“Is this an issue of a woman suffering significant domestic violence and her, and her children perishing at the hands of the husband, or is this an instance of a husband being driven too far by issues that he's suffered by certain circumstances into committing acts of this form?”

Those comments are absolutely appalling. That was some of the most disgusting commentary I have ever seen in my life around this really sad topic. In her final anguished moments, as she was ripped from the burning car—still alive but in agony—Hannah Clarke said, “He poured petrol on me.” But this inspector wanted us to keep an open mind that Mr Baxter may have been pushed too far. This is one of the worst examples of victim blaming I have ever seen. Shortly after that, the media jumped on his bandwagon: “NRL star, poor thing, did not have access to his kids.” He did not have access to his kids because he was violent and had broken restraining orders. He had kidnapped one of his daughters. There was a reason he did not have access to his children.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, I will just remind you—I am sure it is a mistake on your part—that we are on the third reading so you need to restrict the contents.

Ms C.M. ROWE: I will draw my comments to a conclusion, but I simply wanted to —

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am not closing you down; I am just saying keep within the normal constraints of a third reading, thank you.

Ms C.M. ROWE: Yes, absolutely. I touched on this in my contribution to the second reading debate—that we can do a lot as a government, and I believe that the Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill is transformative in the way it gives us the ability to really protect women. It will provide tangible outcomes around preventing further murders from domestic violence. However, if we do not have attitudinal change within our society, we will never see an end to this abhorrent treatment of women and children; we will continue to see women die. I strongly implore

the community and those in this chamber, as community leaders, to call out this victim blaming because it is simply not good enough. As I mentioned in my second reading contribution, there is always that comment to women, “Why don’t you just leave?” We need to call it out time and again whenever we hear that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Corrective Services, I think you are probably distracting the speaker. Thank you.

Ms C.M. ROWE: Domestic violence is incredibly complex. It is incredibly difficult for women to try to leave and it is very dangerous. This dialogue that seems to pervade our media, certainly some social services and the police force, as I have just highlighted here, around a woman’s failure to protect is incredibly damaging. It makes it harder for women to take the critical step of trying to leave due to the fear that they will not be believed. “Why didn’t you just leave earlier?” If a woman does not have trust in the system, and does not have trust that she will be believed, of course it is less likely that she will take those steps to try to leave and start her life again. I wanted to make that point.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge that Hannah Clarke was desperately trying to leave, to start her life again and had moved in with her parents. Tragically, she had recently put up a social media post saying —

“I don’t respond to people who dictate to me or try to bring me down, I am a survivor, not a victim. I am in control of my life and there is nothing I can’t achieve.”

Sadly, that is not the case. She did not survive; she could not survive because her violent husband, who continued to breach violence restraining orders, would not allow her to make that break and start her life again, and I think that is terrible. That line, “I am a survivor, not a victim”, stays with me.

We really failed Hannah. I am really proud of this legislation because I think it will save lives and I commend the bill to the house.

MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys) [10.45 am]: This is the third reading debate so I will limit my contributions to that. First of all, I have some comments around the consideration in detail stage. I thought that was a useful process. As I outlined in consideration in detail, the amendments to clause 6 and clause 112 of the bill arose out of some discussions we had at a briefing on this bill that had been organised by the minister’s office before it was debated in this place, and I think that was a useful process. I thank the Attorney General and his office for taking on board the comments made at the briefing and amending the bill to ensure that clause 6 and clause 112 provide a fair amount of certainty, particularly clause 112. The amendment will be far more enabling than the original provision in relation to the powers of a judge in directing juries, and I think that is a good thing.

The other amendments that were passed in consideration in detail also included adding some clauses. As the Attorney General pointed out, these are precursor amendments in some ways to a process that is about to be developed to assist in electronic lodgement more generally across our court system. The Attorney General himself indicated that the new clauses that were being added were based on the wording of drafting instructions for legislation that still has not appeared before this house. Despite best endeavours, we know that during the drafting of legislation, words change, so I think we both agreed the other night during consideration in detail that it would be great if those words remained the words. If they change, we will have to revisit them. I am sure Parliamentary Counsel will understand that if they do change the wording through this drafting process of whatever bill is in train to assist with the eLodgement of court documents, the necessary amendments will be then made to the Restraining Orders Act, which is being amended by this bill before us. I see the Attorney General has his hand up.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Your other suggestion was about the numbering of those points when we took out clause 6. Do you remember?

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Yes, I do.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Clauses 5 to 7?

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Yes.

Mr J.R. Quigley: It has all been corrected.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: That will be corrected by the elves who run around and fix things up after us.

Mr J.R. Quigley: It’s done now.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: That is good to know for when the bill comes out. I think we removed proposed section 300(6) of the Criminal Code. The Attorney General tells me that the numbering will simply be fixed up; we do not need to do anything procedurally. That is a good thing. I think that consideration in detail was useful. Some things came out of it in relation to reviews. There will be a review after the third year. In a lot of our processes, particularly in the area of court reform and law reform generally, too often we internally review our processes rather than shining a light on them by external review. I do not necessarily think that external review must always be built into legislation. However, in relation to some of the novel approaches that are being introduced, particularly around shuttle mediation conferencing for contested family violence restraining order matters and perhaps around

some of the new offences that are being created, an independent evaluation at some point might be useful, whether that is conducted by a university or someone else. I note that the Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland talked about some of the changes in Queensland. The introduction of the specialist courts in Queensland has been followed up by a series of evaluations. They are on their second evaluation and are awaiting a third. They are independent evaluations; that is, someone else is looking at what the specialist courts are doing, rather than the courts simply looking at their own internal procedures. I think that is sometimes useful, so I hope the government takes that on board.

As I stressed in my contribution to the second reading debate, and as other members stressed, a lot of this depends on the resources committed to it. Family and domestic violence is a horrific and ongoing problem; it is also multifaceted. Some members explained the multifaceted nature of the violence itself, the precursors to the violence and, just as importantly, the ongoing and lasting impacts on victims. We need a whole-of-system approach rather than working in silos, and we need significant commitment to new funding. The Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence mentioned the Orange Door program in Victoria, which is a new program, so it may or may not necessarily work. The Orange Door program is part of that \$1.9 billion commitment by the Victorian government, and is about providing all the wraparound services in a one-stop location, so that people are not running off to legal advice for family matters in one instance and legal advice for violence restraining orders in another, or financial advice, housing advice and the like. That is something that needs to be monitored, because perhaps those sorts of one-stop-shop processes will make our system far more client-centric and, in particular, victim-centric than it is at the moment, as it is operating in separate silos.

Government members talked about the commitment the government has made, and I acknowledge that commitment. Both the Attorney General and the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence referred to the \$53 million committed across a wide range of areas, and that is welcome. The Attorney General talked also about \$52.3 million for electronic monitoring, and that is welcome too. I think we have all agreed that electronic monitoring should not be an alternative to imprisonment; it should be just one more tool in the armoury to monitor offenders when they are in the community. That is certainly welcome, but it is nowhere near the \$1.9 billion that Victoria has contributed already. Especially when we consider some of the challenges in regional and remote Western Australia, we know that it costs us a lot more to deliver services.

I was moved by the member for Kimberley's recounting of her own personal experience, from both the perspective of her own family and the impact it has had on her and her family, but also on some of the broader community. She spoke about an immigrant lady and the impact that a combination of family and domestic violence and living in what to her was a completely foreign culture and foreign land had on her life and how it spiralled out of control, and how it was Aboriginal women's services that were able to pick her up. It goes to show that the problem is magnified by the distance in regional and remote communities, and it is magnified by the sheer lack of volume of services. However, that should never be an excuse for not delivering those services. Even the Productivity Commission recognises that it costs more to deliver some services in Western Australia because of its remoteness, but those communities should not be treated as second-class citizens. They should be given the same opportunity to access the services they require, especially in an area as serious as family and domestic violence.

The Attorney General in his response to the second reading debate indicated that one of the reasons police would not be able to issue more police orders is the enormous workload on police officers. The opposition acknowledges and accepts that. I point to Victoria, because a lot of experts tell us to look at what Victoria is doing. I hesitate to use this phrase, but it has been said to me by people in the sector that Victoria is introducing the Rolls-Royce model of response to the needs of victims and families who have been subjected to family and domestic violence. The Victorian government, outside of an election cycle, has announced that it will employ more than 3 000 new police officers. That is on top of the \$1.9 billion that it has committed in its response to the royal commission. It recognises that the pressures on the service delivery agencies, including police, are so great and that family violence is such a core part of police work, especially frontline work, that they need more numbers. They cannot keep stressing the system and imposing more and more obligations on the same people.

There is no doubt that it is resource intensive—absolutely resource intensive. However, the alternative is worse than committing the resources. We have a bipartisan spirit on the legislation. Let us hope that we have a bipartisan spirit on committing the sorts of resources that are necessary. The budget is coming up, and I look forward to seeing what the government will commit in this space. That translates to some of the other features we talked about. The Attorney General stressed that all new courtrooms, some of which were built recently and are currently being built, will be built with victims in mind, and it will be central to the design of a court that it provides facilities for victims. That is great. That is fantastic. But do we simply wait until we need to replace the Perth Magistrates Court or courts in Midland, Rockingham, Joondalup or Mandurah? That could be decades away. That could be generations away. Apart from just ensuring that the design of all new courtrooms is appropriate, we need to look at the design of our existing courtrooms and retrofitting them. It will be expensive. We, as a society, will have to commit resources. However, if we believe that that is the best way to treat victims—and I think it is—to give them an opportunity to come to court without having to confront their perpetrators and without that added fear of re-traumatisation, then we do need to commit those resources.

I was recently at the Bunbury court, which is a good court and it is working hard. A possibility exists there for a second entry, but that second entry has not been used for a long time because it has been incorporated into office space, storage space and the like. It may well be that if an audit is done and we look to see what can be done, in some cases it may not be as expensive as we think. We might not need a whole redesign, but to just make it work for victims. I hope the Attorney General and the people in the Department of Justice keep this in mind as they implement it.

I was struck by the contribution of the member for Mirrabooka. The member for Mirrabooka is obviously well entrenched in her community. She spoke about some of the impacts that family violence had on a member of her community who unfortunately was murdered. She spoke also in glowing terms of the work that the women's refuge workers do through the City of Stirling. I do not have personal knowledge of what those refuge workers do, but I have knowledge of what other refuge workers do across the northern suburbs, and every single person who works in that space deserves enormous credit. They are wonderful professionals, but they are also empathetic professionals. These people give their heart and soul and are doing wonderful work to help rebuild the lives of traumatised and damaged people, and we need to support them.

The member for Mirrabooka focused on the issue of the hospices falling under the auspices of the City of Stirling in some way or other—perhaps the member for Balcatta would understand the arrangements better than me, given his former role as deputy mayor of the City of Stirling—and therefore the employment arrangements mean that the workers in those refuges are encompassed in the city's local government award structure and the workers have access to enterprise bargaining agreements through the City of Stirling's processes. That is fantastic. We want these people to be properly rewarded for the work they do. Again, this is bipartisan. The member for Mirrabooka stressed that these people were therefore entitled to greater pay and better conditions. It struck me that as we are having this debate about family and domestic violence, this is an example of the real impact of industrial relations decisions. The Minister for Industrial Relations has flagged, through a report he had commissioned last year, that he wants to stop local government authorities from accessing those federally controlled award systems and enterprise bargaining agreements, despite the local government authorities clearly indicating that they want to stay in the system they are in because it benefits them and their workers. The member for Mirrabooka pointed out that it benefits their workers. Local government is saying, "We're happy with our current industrial relations arrangements. They're working for us and they're working for our workers." Therefore, happy workers means better service delivery, especially in an area as important as women and children's refuges. I hope that the Minister for Industrial Relations was listening to the member for Mirrabooka's contribution—not to me—when she said how the existing industrial relations systems are working perfectly well. Not only that, they are being lauded as best practice. I do not think they need to change. It would be horrendous if we ended up removing some of the benefits that workers like the people the member for Mirrabooka was talking about are getting at the moment. We would like to see those benefits extended to more people rather than have them removed from those workers. I highlight that example because I listened intently to that third reading contribution and I picked up on that issue. Again, I make that point just to emphasise that the people working in this space are not exactly highly paid in many cases. Whether they are working as duty lawyers, support workers in courts, workers in women's refuges or anywhere across the system, or running behaviour change programs, they are not always the best-recompensed people in the world, and certainly not in our community. But they are doing magnificent work and deserve strong recognition and credit for the work they do.

I do not think this bill will be the end of the reform process required to make sure that we properly address family violence. As I indicated, my own committee is looking at this space. Our work is not running over the top of this bill; it is complementary to the work of this bill. I look forward to at some point elaborating to Parliament and the community the further steps that we can take after we implement this legislation. I am probably, at the very least, sceptical that the shuttle mediation conferencing model is the best we could have done. I want to be very, very clear that I accept that it is better than what we currently have, but I am not necessarily sure that it should be a set-and-forget model. I am happy to see it implemented and commenced, but let us perhaps independently evaluate it and then look at some of the other perhaps more radical reforms—I know the member for Mount Lawley is not in the chamber, but he is often taken aback when I use the term "radical"—that have taken place in other jurisdictions and which seem to be preferred by people in that sector to the one we are doing. With those comments, I again say that I think this has been a useful debate. I hope that the changes we are making go some way towards effecting the cultural change that many people spoke about, so that we try as hard as we can to make sure that there are no more victims, the victims who do unfortunately endure family violence in the future are dealt with in our system much better than they were in the past, and we focus on healing those victims and making them feel as though the system is working for them and not against them.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [11.05 am] — in reply: I rise to give my contribution to the third reading debate to wrap up the Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill 2019, which is like an epoch—in the sense that this is a game changer. We know it is a game changer because it has been embraced by the sector—by those who represent women's interests and victims of domestic violence. It is long-awaited reform. As I said in my earlier speeches, the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia made recommendations as

long ago as 2014, but lamentably when we came to government they had not been attended to. This latest tranche of amendments before Parliament attends to those matters, except the ones that have a policy differential between the commission and the government—for example, domestic violence courts, which we are not in the economic position to restore. I note that the former Chief Justice publicly lamented their passing when the Barnett government closed the domestic violence courts. I thought those courts had the utility that the member for Hillarys referred to; that is, dedicated magistrates in domestic violence who conducted a court exclusively for domestic violence victims. Certainly, the victims liked the court. But that moment has passed us by for the foreseeable future. Now the courts run a dedicated list for family violence, at least in the metropolitan area, but it is not a restoration of the dedicated court, which was measured on how much recidivism occurred. I do not know that that was the only measure that should have been applied, because clearly victims were much more comfortable coming forward to the dedicated domestic violence court for the very reasons that the member for Hillarys expounded in his speech.

The member for Hillarys was right in his contributions to both the second reading debate and the third reading debate when he said, “You need real resources to stem the tide.” In my second reading speech, I went through some of the resources that we have activated across government. When I say across government, as I have previously referred, it is across the Western Australia Police Force and the Departments of Communities, Health, Justice and Education. Members might recall that those initiatives include the respectful relationships teaching support program in schools, which is partnered with the Department of Education. We have added two extra women’s refuges to the network and a second residential behaviour change program for male perpetrators, where they can go over a time to be re-educated, and, we are establishing two domestic violence one-stop hubs. The member for Hillarys spoke about the Rolls–Royce system that is being rolled out in Victoria. As the Attorney General, I would like to see many parts of the Victorian system in Western Australia, but we have different challenges in Western Australia, not the least of which is geographical, and the second of which, at the moment, is economic. The member for Hillarys might correct me, but the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence reported only four years ago.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: A bit less than four.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes; he concurs. I read the report. I have not read it recently, but I have read it and gone through all the recommendations. It came out with, as the member for Hillarys referred to it, an optimum system, and immediately after the report was handed to the Victorian government, Premier Andrews announced an \$850 million dedicated response to the findings of the royal commission, to start with.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: Then they doubled it.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes, it started with \$850 million and then it put it up again. I know that I am making this speech next to the Treasurer, and our capacity in Western Australia to have me announce this morning a \$1 billion package to deal with this is already turning him white, and he is looking up at me in wonderment.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Wonderment!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Appearing before the Expenditure Review Committee and asking for \$1 billion to do this at this stage of our economic cycle is beyond our reach, and beyond our reach geographically too.

One of the features of the Victorian system, which I just referred to, is one-stop hubs. I was really attracted to this part of the royal commission report, which outlined a wraparound service. The member for Hillarys would be very familiar with the Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre, which was, I think, an initiative of former Victorian Attorney-General Mr Rob Hulls—a good reforming Attorney. His government started the Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre. I think it was in an old refurbished factory.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: It had originally been a boot factory, then it had been used as part of a technical college.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It is in a repurposed building on a corner in Collingwood.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: It’s not on the corner.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I thought it was a corner. There goes my memory.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: It is close to the corner; next door to the Tote Hotel.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Which hotel?

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: The Tote Hotel—a famous punk hangout.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: In any event, there are wraparound services at the Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre. Housing, health and education are there. When a magistrate has a person before them, they can refer them to an agency and get a report back immediately, so that the court is getting feedback from the departments at the court.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: I have a peer there.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I trust as counsel and not as the accused, member for Hillarys!

All its services are wraparound services, and it was, I think, from the Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre that the royal commission drew on the idea of having the same for its domestic violence court, where different agencies are available to draw upon and support victims of domestic violence, and to redirect perpetrators into change programs. When we think of the challenges we have in places such as Port Hedland, throughout the Pilbara and in Newman, where the Martu people are coming in from the Western Desert in the Kimberley and East Kimberley, we think of many of our Indigenous women who are subjected to domestic violence, often fuelled by alcohol, sometimes by the perpetrator, sometimes the victim imbibing as well. The community has seen the most tragic outcomes of this, most recently in the case of Ms Jody Gore, who was the subject of domestic violence for some 12 years prior to the incident in Kununurra where she tragically stabbed her perpetrator in the chest, resulting in a life sentence for murder. We have addressed that in a number of ways. I want to pause on that case for a moment, because there are a couple of things I would like to say. The bill will change what judges are required to do during a trial and what judges may do during a trial for directing a jury on the lasting impacts of domestic violence and how that may affect the accused over a time leading up to the instant at which she—because they are usually female victims—reacted at the time of a further incident of domestic violence. We all know that in Jody Gore’s case, her perpetrator, a former partner, once again assaulted her a couple of times at a party before she snapped and stabbed him.

The other factor, not just the amendments we are bringing in regarding jury verdicts, is this seminal change that will require police to issue a formal offence report number to every case of domestic violence reported to them. During his contribution to the second reading debate, the member for Kalgoorlie gave us some anecdotal accounts of his time in the Western Australian police service and his attendance at domestic violence incidents. There was a disturbing element to it. I am not criticising the member, because attitudes have changed, but the disturbing element was that, he said, “Sometimes if we got a call to a domestic violence incident, we had to step in between them and calm the situation down as a police officer.” That, of course, is no longer acceptable. This is why I say this is the changing of an epoch; it is no longer acceptable for the police to move into a domestic violence situation and calm the situation down. It requires the attending officer to take a formal report of domestic violence and advise the victim of the offence report number. This also came out of the Victorian royal commission. I am not being personally critical of the member for Kalgoorlie for acting in that manner. That is the way the police used to handle domestic violence—go and try to cool it down. But it did not solve the problem, and after the police withdrew, often either the next day or the next week, there would be another eruption and the victim suffered further. As I said in my second reading speech, what drove and propelled me into this space with such commitment was the Ombudsman’s report on the police response to domestic violence, in which the Ombudsman—the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations—reported on the death of baby Charlie in Broome. That particular case was etched in my mind when drawing the drafting instructions for this bill. It is relevant in the third reading speech in that it deals with why we need to issue offence reports.

In the case of the death of baby Charlie, I remind the chamber in short form what happened. People in Broome reported that a naked Indigenous female was on a street corner screaming. Police attended and, as I recollect, four police were soon in attendance. She was taken into a neighbour’s yard and offered a blanket, as I recall, to wrap around herself. At the rear of the carport down the driveway, she was interviewed by a police officer. She was hysterical. From my recollection, she had obviously consumed a portion of alcohol. I do not know how much. At the top of the driveway, other police were speaking to neighbours. A neighbour gave an officer an account of having witnessed baby Charlie’s mother being assaulted outside her home by her former partner. That was an eyewitness account of an offence of assault in circumstances of domestic violence. The woman at the top of the driveway was hysterical and yelling. She was cautioned, and told that unless she cooperated, she would be arrested. She was yelling about the whereabouts of baby Charlie. The police responded by arresting her for disorderly conduct in the street, and conveyed her to the Broome Health Campus, where at least two officers stayed to guard their prisoner, their prisoner being baby Charlie’s mum. Meanwhile, the grandfather attended Broome Police Station, also demanding that the police urgently find baby Charlie. He became agitated at the police’s lack of response for his petition. He was threatened and told that unless he left police premises, he, too, would be arrested. He urged the police to triangulate—that was not his word—that is, to use the former partner’s mobile phone in a process called triangulation, whereby three mobile towers can be used to pinpoint the location of a phone. The police declined to do that because they do it only when a life is in danger. They had no evidence, according to them, that the baby was even missing. We now know that whilst that was happening, the domestic violence offender was driving south with baby Charlie. Somewhere south of Broome—God rest the little man’s soul—he murdered his son. While Charlie was being murdered, his mother, who had been screaming and yelling for the police to locate him, was a prisoner in Broome hospital on a charge of disorderly conduct for being in the street naked and yelling for him. She fled the house because of the violence. She did not have time to put on her Broome Cup dress. She fled for safety. She was arrested and held a prisoner whilst her baby was being murdered. Then inquiries were made. What did the police think? The police were at the top of the driveway talking to neighbours who witnessed the assault. They asked those officers, “What did you do about the domestic violence? Did you put it in an offence report? You heard

about it from the neighbours.” They said, “No. We could see another officer interviewing the victim further down the driveway near the carport. We assumed that that officer would be taking a report of the domestic violence”, so the baby’s life was hanging on an assumption.

Then inquiries were made at the Broome hospital. What history did the baby’s mother give the hospital staff? Lo and behold, what did she tell the nurses? She said that all her injuries were the result of an assault by her baby’s father. When asked what was done about that, the staff said they treated the injuries and looked after the prisoner. They did not report it to the police because they brought her to the hospital. They assumed that police knew what had occurred as they were the ones who brought her in. A second assumption was made whilst the baby was being driven south to the destination of murder.

Let us look at this legislation. The officer at the top of the driveway, who received the report of domestic violence from the neighbour, would have been required by force of law to formally report that incident. I cannot remember the words that mum said to the officer who had her under the carport down the end of the driveway, but having received a contemporaneous complaint of domestic violence, he would have been required by force of law under this bill to formally report that incident. Whether he believed the victim or not, it is not his position to decide on the credibility of the complainant. What difference would that have made? When grandad came into the police station demanding action to look for baby Charlie, the station officer, the officer in charge, would have been in possession of information that the baby had gone missing during an incidence of domestic violence. When he asked for the police to locate baby Charlie’s father by triangulating the telephone through the relay masts, there would have been a different response. There would have highly likely been a different response, because the standard criteria across all the carriers—I am not sure whether it is Optus or Telstra, as they both operate up there, and there might be a third one—is that they will not triangulate quickly in response to the police unless someone’s life is in danger. Had the police at the station known, which they should have by that time, when granddad came in begging for help, that baby Charlie had disappeared in the middle of a domestic violence incident with the perpetrator of that violence, there is a high chance that baby Charlie would be alive today. I quietly weep at his demise and the circumstances of his demise, given that there were all these missed opportunities to recognise that his life was in perilous danger. It is just incredible that, from that contact, the person who was arrested was the victim. The person who was held in custody was the victim. Of course, this sort of conduct was repeated recently—I am having a senior’s moment because I have forgotten the name of the victim.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: Are you getting the dollars from the stimulus package that the Prime Minister announced?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Me? I am just hoping I am not getting the bug, because I am in the drop zone, having been over the big seven 0 and having suffered pneumonia and been hospitalised. No-one is going to cough within three metres of me without trouble!

The situation is that a beautiful young pregnant woman was assaulted by her partner and complained of domestic violence. He was charged and a hearing date was set. On the hearing date, the complainant failed to appear as she was in hospital because of something to do with her pregnancy. The court was so informed; nonetheless, a bench warrant was issued against the victim. Months later, when her mother was driving along the street in her car, she was stopped and informed that her daughter had a bench warrant out for her arrest. The daughter naively went to the Armadale Police Station and said that she was in hospital on that day and they said, “We don’t care; you’re under arrest”, and so they arrested the victim.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Is that the Ronan case?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes, that is it. Thank you, member for Dawesville, for that assistance.

This pregnant lady was arrested, conveyed in a police vehicle and held in a lock-up. She was made to strip, squat and cough, as though she were a drug carrier. This was the victim. When she was presented to the court the next morning, represented by Legal Aid, and it was all explained, the court—I have never heard it in court before—fell over itself in apology to the victim. We raised this with the Commissioner of Police, and I am certain that under our new Commissioner of Police and the guidelines he has now issued, no victim of domestic violence who fails to appear in court will face, as a first response, an arrest. The perpetrator was on bail and the victim was in the lock-up.

This requires a great cultural shift, and this bill provides the architecture for that cultural shift, but it will require the community to come along with us and with other groups in the community to bring about this cultural shift. We feel it now when we pick up the newspaper and watch the television. With the prominence that these cases are getting and the revulsion that the community is feeling, I hope that we are at a pivotal point at which we will not see the sorts of cases that I have referred to today and that the legal system really will work to protect victims. We have done this by allowing for electronic filings under the bill. The member for Kalgoorlie said that that is a fantastic method of substituted service for the police when they cannot find the perpetrator. The member for Kalgoorlie said that this would have saved half of his working life or thereabouts in chasing these people. We have brought into Parliament a system that should help change.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

FAMILY COURT AMENDMENT BILL 2019*Second Reading*

Resumed from 28 November 2019.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [11.36 am]: I rise to contribute to the second reading debate on the Family Court Amendment Bill 2019. It is opportune and timely that the debate on this bill follows on from the debate on the Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill 2019, because the measures in this bill fit within the government's whole approach of trying to assist victims of family violence, and I will go into that in a moment. The explanatory memorandum to the Family Court Amendment Bill 2019 states —

On 5 December 2018 the *Family Law Amendment (Family Violence Cross-examination of Parties) Act 2018* (Cth) passed both Houses of Federal Parliament, amending the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) to provide protections for victims of family violence during the cross-examination process in all family law proceedings.

Further on, the explanatory memorandum states —

It is the usual custom for Western Australia to amend the *Family Court Act 1997* (WA) to mirror any amendments made to the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth). This ensures that the parents of ex-nuptial children and people who were in a de facto relationship are treated in the same way as married couples.

Before I go into the contents of this bill, it is interesting that that had to be put into the explanatory memorandum. We are quite unique in the Family Court system in Australia because we have our own Family Court of Western Australia. All other states come under the commonwealth Family Court jurisdiction. The history of this goes back to when the Family Law Act 1975 was passed by the commonwealth Parliament under the Whitlam government. The emphasis was to ensure that we had a no-fault divorce scheme. Western Australia decided that it would not join the federal Family Court scheme. At the time, the Solicitor-General was Sir Ronald Wilson, who ended up becoming Western Australia's first High Court Justice. He was very strong on state rights. Of course, the Premier at the time was Sir Charles Court, who also was always prepared to stand up to the rest of Australia. Sir Ronald Wilson's view that we should go it alone was supported by the Attorney General at the time, Ian Medcalf, who was the member for Nedlands or whatever the seat was at that time. So we had our own Family Court.

It is interesting to look at the constitutional arrangements for family law in Australia. The Family Law Act, which was passed in 1975, has constitutional powers—marriage power under section 51(xxi), divorce and matrimonial causes power under section 51(xxii), and incidental power under section 51(xxxix) of the Australian Constitution. Those constitutional powers allowed the commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 to be passed by the commonwealth Parliament to have constitutional power over the rest of Australia. Of course, territorial power was another head of constitutional power in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. But Western Australia went alone. At the time, that provided Western Australia with certain advantages over the other jurisdictions, because de facto relationships were not covered by commonwealth constitutional powers. The Western Australian Family Court could deal with de facto relationships because it was not governed by the commonwealth constitutional power. There were problems in other jurisdictions in that respect. By 1 March 2009, people in de facto relationships were able to access the federal family law system for post-separation parenting arrangements, via the referral of that power by the various states of Australia to the commonwealth under the constitutional referral power of section 51(xxxvii). For all intents and purposes, the Western Australian system mirrors the federal system. Due to the referral of de facto powers from various state Parliaments to the commonwealth, the commonwealth Family Court has the jurisdiction to deal with property law matters. It should also be stated that de facto relationships can also be governed under the general common law of equity and trust.

The Family Court Amendment Bill 2019 basically mirrors the federal Family Court jurisdiction and is important legislation. Members may not have paid much attention to the bill because they see it as purely a procedural matter, but it is incredibly important because it will ensure that people who have been subject to family violence do not have to endure further violence during the cross-examination phase of any matter before the Family Court. This bill is reflective of the Family Law Amendment (Family Violence Cross-examination of Parties) Act 2018 and prohibits personal cross-examination in family law proceedings in certain circumstances. The parties involved in an allegation of family violence in a Family Court proceeding will be prohibited from directly cross-examining each other in the following circumstances: when either party has been convicted of, or is charged with, an offence involving violence or a threat of violence to the other party; when a family violence order, other than an interim order, applies to both parties; when an injunction made under the Family Court Act for the personal protection of either party is directed against the other party; or, if the above circumstances do not apply, the court in its discretion makes an order that the parties cannot cross-examine each other. The court may make such an order on its own initiative or upon application from either party or an independent children's lawyer. In those circumstances, cross-examination will have to be done by a legal practitioner. Members can obviously understand why the commonwealth instigated its legislation and why we are replicating that legislation in the bill before us. When two parties are before a family court proceeding, the alleged perpetrator is allowed to cross-examine the alleged victim. Members can understand the trauma that places on the victim. The emotional trauma placed on the victim

could be immense and it furthers the violence that the victim has had to endure. This has been a long time coming and has been spoken about for many years. It is a very important measure, because one of the ways that perpetrators have been able to retain control over a victim in family law situations is by instigating family law proceedings and cross-examining their victim partner. Limiting cross-examination to a legal practitioner in the circumstances that I mentioned is a worthwhile measure.

But, of course, this should not be the end of reforms to the way domestic violence and the proper treatment of children are handled in the Family Court system. In this regard, we can look no further than the 135th report of the Australian Law Reform Commission dated March 2019, “Family Law for the Future—An Inquiry into the Family Law System: Final Report”. People who perpetrate domestic violence have a control or power issue, and we are trying to limit that power by preventing direct cross-examination of the victim. But another way that that power can be retained and continued is when the perpetrator continues to instigate proceedings in the Family Court. When custody of children has been granted to the victim, usually the mother, in a Family Court matter, one way that the non-custodial parent and perpetrator—I am not saying that the non-custodial parent is always the perpetrator, but in the situation in which they are the perpetrator—can continue to have power and inflict abuse is by instigating proceedings against the victim in an attempt to have the custody orders changed, which places more pressure on the victim. There could be a situation in which the perpetrator is self-represented and not incurring legal costs, while the victim is represented by a private lawyer or a lawyer from Legal Aid—if they own property, a caveat can be put on that property to delay the payment of legal fees in the Legal Aid system. The continuation of proceedings in the Family Court allows the perpetrator to continue to abuse and have power over the partner. The Australian Law Reform Commission report made a number of recommendations about this situation and the whole issue of the custody of children. Before I talk about that, I have major concerns about the way federal Parliament has set up its review of the family law system, because Senator Pauline Hanson of One Nation is on the inquiry committee and she has made clear statements about her views on Family Court battles between partners over the custody of their children. I have major concerns with the views Pauline Hanson has expressed because if we look at her history, we can see that her political philosophy has generally reflected her personal experiences.

When she became a member of Parliament many years ago, she made some incredibly derogatory statements about people of Asian origin and Aboriginal people. However, she ended up being imprisoned as a result of funding issues. I think Tony Abbott was involved in the legal movement to prosecute Pauline Hanson and she went to prison where she interacted with prisoners, many of whom were Aboriginal women, and she seemed to change her views about people who were in prison and about Aboriginal women because she had had personal experience. In the situation now confronting her, she is relying on the experience of her son. I do not know the particular circumstances but she has talked about how she believed her son had been unfairly treated in the Family Court scenario. Her views appear to be very negative towards what she perceives is a very biased attitude of the Family Court. She believes the court always favours the mother rather than the father.

Section 60B of the commonwealth Family Law Act is replicated in section 66 of the WA Family Court Act. It refers to the best interests of children being met by ensuring they have the benefit of both of their parents. Both parents should have maximum involvement in raising their children. That is considered to be in the best interests of the child. That may be so in some cases but it may not always be the case. Pauline Hanson has said that she believes the “victim” always gets the children. That should not be the situation. It should be what is in the best interests of the child, not what is in the best interests of the adults before the proceedings. The Australian Law Reform Commission has made that quite clear. The federal government and the federal Attorney-General need to consider the whole raft of recommendations and findings of the Australian Law Reform Commission report and, hopefully, we will follow suit if they make some positive changes in that respect.

The Family Court also looked at the issue of preventing people from instituting frivolous proceedings being used as a back way of trying to maintain control and abuse of people who are already victims. The Australian Law Reform Commission report recommended —

The family courts should be able to deal with the misuse of systems and processes of the family law system separately from the need to establish that such conduct may also amount to family violence.

[Member’s time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Furthermore, in its submission, the Family Court said that the court should be able to exercise the power when it “forms the view that the further institution of proceedings against that other person may have a detrimental effect on that person’s wellbeing or detrimentally affect that person’s parenting capacity”. They are very important matters.

The commonwealth Attorney-General, Hon Christian Porter, responded to those recommendations and findings of the Australian Law Reform Commission. He said that we need to ensure families requiring the assistance of the courts are able to have their matters dealt with as quickly, efficiently and cheaply as possible. I do not think that should be the main priority. The main priority should be the best physical and emotional wellbeing of the child. That should be paramount, as also should be reducing the continuing abuse of victims of family violence.

The bill before the house is a very significant bill. It follows on from the Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill, which we have just been debating and has been passed. This bill is also very important to that area and should be supported by all sides of the chamber.

MR K.M. O'DONNELL (Kalgoorlie) [11.54 am]: Greetings, Acting Speaker. I, too, rise in support of the Family Court Amendment Bill 2019. From the outset, I agree with the member for Armadale that the child's welfare is paramount. I thoroughly disagree that the victim in Family Court proceedings should automatically get full custody of the child or children.

This bill provides protection for victims of family violence during the cross-examination process in all family law proceedings. That is very good. A ban should be placed on the personal cross-examination of victims by the perpetrator in family violence and family law proceedings. That came out of the Council of Australian Governments' national summit back in 2016. Various things could cause additional trauma and have an adverse impact on victims. It can be distressing for victims if they have to personally cross-examine the perpetrator. Police do not normally get involved in Family Court matters but they are involved in the Family Court in guarding, protecting and making sure everything is okay. Police also see it through the Magistrates Court when restraining orders are sought against the husband, and during evidence in criminal prosecutions, due to violence against members of his family.

When a victim is about to give evidence, they walk within metres of the perpetrator. As the member for Armadale said, the perpetrator—predominantly “he”—has power and control over his victims. It can be very daunting and traumatic for victims to have to walk past the perpetrator. In some instances, victims do not want to do that. Whenever I was involved in a wife or a family member giving evidence against a husband, I advised them to turn their chair so they were looking at the magistrate or the judge. On many occasions, the lawyer or the offender wants the witness giving evidence to stare at them so they can eyeball them and have power and control over them so that their evidence is not reliable.

In the old days, upstairs in the Kalgoorlie courthouse, there were only L-shaped seats. Everyone sat on the bench and they were all in together. The offenders, witnesses and victims were all together. Sometimes they were advised that an office was available that the victim could sit in to keep away from the offender. However, if the lawyer wanted to interview one of their clients, they had precedence, and when coming out of the office, the victim had to walk past or sit near the offender or perpetrator. That was not good. When it was time for court to finish, I made sure that I met the wife or the child and accompanied them to the waiting room, or whenever they felt they required that. I have gone into court and been ready to go with our evidence; the witness has been called, but the witness has got cold feet and left. There is nothing worse. The offender or his lawyer would get up and ask for the case to be withdrawn because the victim had not turned up. However, the victim not turning up was understandable.

This bill will prohibit personal cross-examination in family law proceedings in certain circumstances where either party has been convicted of violent offences or threats of violence to the other party. That is acceptable and understandable. A family violence order other than an interim order can apply. I agree with that. For anyone who does not know, if somebody wants to take out a violence restraining order on a person, they have to make application to the courthouse and go before a magistrate and give evidence. The magistrate listens to only one side—the person who applies for the restraining order. That then becomes an interim order until the perpetrator or respondent requests the hearing so that he can give his side of the story. It is better having just the final order, the family violence order. The court in its discretion may make an order that parties cannot cross-examine each other. That is good. I like that if they do not meet the criteria, there is a fourth criteria; that is, the court in its discretion can make a decision. I am all for that.

The cross-examination must be conducted by a legal practitioner if a ban on direct cross-examination applies. That is a no-brainer. We do not want to see perpetrators saying, “Can I get a friend to stand up before the court?” No; it is not interested in that. The qualified legal practitioner must abide by guidelines and rules, and the cross-examination must be held in a professional manner.

Another element of the bill I like is that the court may consider it appropriate to direct that the cross-examination be conducted by way of video or audio link and/or allow the alleged victim to have a support person with them. That is a very good provision. Many times people have told me about police interviewing a victim in the street or a driveway, as the Attorney General said. That is fine; they tell us what has happened, but in some instances by the end of the conversation they do not want any action taken because they are scared. Having a video or audio link or having the person in another room or building, or even in another town, to give evidence is a good provision and we need to put the ball in the victim's court rather than in the perpetrator's court.

Where possible, parties should obtain their own legal representation. If a party is unrepresented they will be advised to obtain representation and will be referred to Legal Aid. That is fantastic; however, I note that the commonwealth family violence and cross-examination of parties scheme is administered by Legal Aid. Legal Aid Western Australia received funding for that initiative for 2018–19 and half of the funding allocated for 2019–20. Everybody in this place knows it is fantastic when funding is allocated, but it is not a bottomless pit and it is possibly not ongoing. I dare say that if the family violence and cross-examination of parties scheme is inundated—there is that possibility

when business is booming and more and more people go through the Family Court—what will happen if Joe Blow and Sally have their hearings at the end of the financial year, or the calendar year, whichever the scheme provides, and they are told that the funding is exhausted? That is why I say that it is not a bottomless pit. Let us say that \$3 million is allocated—I do not know how much it is—and that is all utilised by the lawyers, well and truly before time. If the commonwealth government says that it has put in, and that is it, will the state step in to ensure that funds will be available for everybody? That is one area that needs to be looked at to ensure there is a guarantee. If the wife is working, for example, and does not have much cash but is just paying off the home loan and paying the bills and is living from pay to pay and does not come under the provisions of Legal Aid—some people do not, whether it be the perpetrator or the victim—will the state government ensure that there is money in the coffers to fund anybody when the court says they need representation?

This is another bill with which I agree. From my experience, anything to help victims of crime and those involved in disputes before the Family Court is a good thing.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.05 pm] — in reply: I rise to respond briefly to members' comments. I thank all members of the chamber for their contribution. The Family Court Amendment Bill 2019 has received bipartisan support, and for very obvious reasons: it is another measure that protects victims of family violence by changing the Family Court Act. I note that the member for Hillarys lamented the fact that the Family Court Act of Australia had been amended and that we were just a little bit behind. Of course, we are the only state that has its own Family Court—the Family Court of Western Australia. We are the only state that has its own Family Court and that decision was taken many, many years ago. As I recall, in the 1970s, with the inauguration of the Family Court Act of Western Australia, the then Western Australian government decided not to cede its powers to the commonwealth in that space, but to inaugurate its own court and it did so with an agreement with the commonwealth that the commonwealth would fund the judicial officers and premises, which are located, of course, in the Federal Court building. Although there has been some little time lag from time to time in amending the Family Court Act of Western Australia, that little time lag has been a price well worth paying in the sense that we have a system that is envied by family law practitioners from other jurisdictions.

We now have a list of practitioners who are available to be called upon and to be assigned to represent a victim during a case that involves family violence. This funding has gone to the Legal Aid Commission and there are 14 in-house lawyers at Legal Aid and 27 private lawyers who are on the cross-examination scheme list to manage the workload created by this scheme. Once trial directions have been made and a scheme lawyer appointed, the lawyer will prepare the matter for trial and represent the party for the whole of the Family Court trial and not just for the cross-examination of the other party. The funding under the scheme also provides for parties to attend late intervention dispute resolution conferences and parenting and financial matters at Legal Aid Western Australia. Parties are always represented at those conferences and the conferences have a very high settlement rate. Parties are asked to make a contribution to the cost of legal representation depending on their financial circumstances.

The recommendation about cross-examination emanates from the royal commission and the Law Reform Commission's report. On my sitting down it will have completed its passage, apart from the vote on the third reading stage. I once again thank all members for their contribution. This together with other reforms that we passed this morning through the Legislative Assembly, the Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill, are two pieces of legislation that complement each other. This bill in particular complements what we have already passed this morning for the protection of victims in a courtroom scene and in settlement conferences. I acknowledge the contribution of all members and thank them for that. I commend this bill to the chamber.

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 J.R. Quigley (Attorney General)**, and transmitted to the Council.

ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL 2019

Second Reading

Resumed from 27 November 2019.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.10 pm]: I am not the lead speaker for the Liberal Party on the Electricity Industry Amendment Bill 2019. The shadow spokesperson on energy will be the lead speaker and he will determine and state the Liberal Party's position on this bill, but I am sure we will support it. From the perspective of a former Minister for Energy, I would like to make some comments about the process we are pursuing here. In terms of direction, intent and detail, the legislation is consistent with what the previous government was promoting.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It's only taken about 15 years!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It has been over many years—okay. In fact, much of this goes back to discussions held in the 1990s. Indeed, I remember the policy of the Labor government in the 1980s and then the subsequent Liberal–National government in the 1990s was to promote not only full electrification of the rail system, but also integration of all the generating facilities at that time. Since then, they have expanded significantly. So this is a long-term policy. In 2008, when we came into government, there was a need for and therefore a proposal to expand generating capacity, particularly in light of the very large expansion of iron ore production. Indeed, after that, production expanded even more, with Fortescue Metals Group’s expansion and Roy Hill coming into play. It had been obvious for many years that there were potential gains from having an appropriate network in the Pilbara servicing at least the port facilities, but also all the other commercial expansions. There were huge gains from having a common approach and coordinating generation facilities, distribution and transmission. To date, that has not been achieved very effectively for a variety of reasons, including the history and unique position of the Pilbara. For example, Rio Tinto has a very large standalone network servicing its facilities that it, quite rightly, considers to be an integral part of its operations—inseparable. Rio Tinto steadfastly refused to hand over the operation of its generation, transmission and distribution facilities, which it fully purchased and built for its facilities, to some other entity that might have different objectives to it—that is, to produce iron ore in huge volumes in the most efficient manner. Of course, there is also the challenge that it is a very competitive area, with rivalry between BHP, Rio, FMG and Roy Hill. It has been very difficult for governments, or anybody else, to get them to sit down at the table and coordinate their activities, particularly if they think—as Rio clearly has until now—they have a comparative cost advantage in the operation of their electricity system. It has been a very difficult exercise.

We also have the mix of very large-scale baseload iron ore and gas facilities. On the other hand, we have small cities, such as Port Hedland and Karratha, many of which are highly subsidised. It is an area with very high construction costs and high wages. In the past, gas has been very difficult. This bill progresses in a practical, stepped manner towards a future—but to some extent now—electricity system in the north west, which has evolved to be coordinated, planned and integrated to the extent possible. I will talk about standalone power systems in a minute. The legislation does this by recognising the status quo and the differences, and that for some time there will be standalone operations that are not fully integrated—particularly with Rio and others.

As a minister, I worked hard pursuing this result, as have the previous and current Ministers for Energy. Encouraging Horizon Power and Alinta Energy to start sharing facilities and bringing them together in this bill is a sensible move. Also, adopting light-handed regulation—a major focus of this bill—is appropriate. In particular, the legislation will allow the existing producers to opt in or to opt out, rather than forcing them to participate. This is absolutely essential. In the past, it was one of the impediments to developing a north west integrated system. One of the biggest challenges that this bill addresses is the problems with adjusting the system. Horizon Power is the dominant provider, but Alinta has owned a plant for some time, with its capacity contracted to BHP to a large extent. BHP was not taking the full volume of energy from the plant, so Alinta had a potential excess energy supply. With the TransAlta arrangement—I will talk about a bit of the history—we faced the problem that Alinta had surplus generating capacity and it could significantly undermine Horizon by selling energy at a much lower cost. We had an issue. The government has addressed this by coming up with an additional tax—we will discuss this in consideration in detail of the bill—that tries to take into account Horizon’s appropriate and necessary additional costs in providing the baseload generating capacity for the total area. Essentially, Horizon has a responsibility, in a de facto sense, to provide energy for the area. Through the TransAlta agreement, it has contracted for a large amount of gas for many years. I will make a few comments on the contract. Horizon has tried to allow Alinta to use its existing facilities, but has made sure that its customers also account for Horizon’s cost of being a provider of last resort. Personally, I think they have gone about that in an appropriate way. It is an appropriate move. We will explore some of the details of that.

Before I go to the standalone power issue, I would like to discuss a little history. In June 2019, we had a debate on the TransAlta arrangement. That was a very difficult one. When we first came to government in 2008, I was not in cabinet at the time, but I remember that the Minister for Energy had extensive discussions with me about the proposal for Horizon Power to build, own and operate a 150-megawatt power station in the Pilbara. We had some legitimate concerns about that and about predicting future demand, particularly with those large lumpy loads coming on from the iron ore industry and given the iron ore industry’s desire to not participate in a Horizon Power power station, which Rio said it absolutely would not do. We also had some concerns about Horizon Power, which at the time was in a very expansive mood; that is, it saw itself as a monopoly provider of energy in that area. We made the correct decision to go carefully, step by step, to build the capacity. That saved the state billions of dollars. If we had built a 150-megawatt power station, as Horizon wanted, it would have come under government debt, but also, firstly, it would have been when gas prices were very high, and secondly, we would have had substantial excess capacity in the intervening seven years. As it turns out, the forecast for demand that underpinned the Horizon Power power station did not pan out. Quite wisely, we incrementally expanded temporary power to fill the gaps, to make sure that we had sufficient energy at a lower cost. When demand grew, when temporary capacity on a per unit basis was higher, we then went to the TransAlta arrangement. That was in the Pilbara, where nothing is cheap. A 150-megawatt power station came onstream in 2017, some six or seven years after it was predicted by Horizon

Power. That just shows us how difficult it is in a place like this, where we have to plan for future electricity infrastructure capacity. While there is a potential for coordination, it will always require, to some extent, a role for the state. Again, the approach that the government has taken is consistent with the one that I pursued as Minister for Energy, which is consistent with the overall aim of previous governments and the previous Minister for Energy. There are some issues that we will discuss at the consideration in detail stage.

Standalone power is an interesting issue. It has been growing rapidly. In government, we decided we would take the route to start experimenting with standalone power. The central issue is that the technology for standalone systems, as opposed to large-scale energy systems on the grid, are changing, particularly with a combination of batteries, small generation units and solar. Our grid also expanded significantly in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Some of that is not functioning well with the additional load on the end of them. Some have to be repaired, and it is now time to look at replacing them or substituting standalone generating capacity for distribution lines. A problem in the way we operate the electricity system, nationally and in the state, is that it is based on the assumption that there is a difference between generation and distribution and transmission. Distribution and transmission is a national monopoly, and our regulations prohibit Western Power from going into generation. This bill starts to address that. Some interesting questions arise about how far to go into that. What are the conditions upon which we allow it, and, also, who makes the decision and what is the cost? In government, we experimented with, I think, seven of these standalone power units, mainly as experimental measures to try to figure out which works best. Some need three-phase power more than others. One of our real issues was that people who entered those grids were reluctant to give up the grid because they were not confident that standalone power would be as effective or that the cost would be the same, and in each case they insisted that the standalone power system be built to augment rather than replace the grid. I believe this bill focuses on standalone power systems replacing the grid, but we will talk about that at the consideration in detail stage.

Another issue will be who owns, operates and decides the economics of these standalone power systems, and who makes the decision to build them. I am sure the minister has had many people lobbying him about concerns that the monopoly provider, whether it be Synergy or Western Power, will start going into a new profit line, if you wish, particularly since Western Power has all the data on the relative cost of the grid versus the standalone power system. It will be in a position to dominate that market if allowed to do so. That is a legitimate issue. We on this side would like to see more competition, but not so much in transmission—we accept the national monopoly position, but it is being eroded by standalone power, as this bill recognises. However, we think this is potentially a good source to allow greater competition into the electricity system. I am not sure whether this bill will inhibit that option. We will discuss it at the consideration in detail stage later today or in the future.

There are also substantial issues relating to whether standalone power is going to be used to wind back the grid. As the documents around the bill say, most of the standalone power systems will be used to service an existing single facility. Standalone power systems will not be microgrids; that is a different issue. Most of them will be at farms, I assume. I do not know whether they will be put into places where there is an existing grid that needs to be augmented or replaced, or whether the standalone power system will be built and the grid then removed. This will be a big issue in the rural sector, and one on which we will have to tread carefully. When I was the Minister for Energy three years ago, the data that I saw to move toward standalone power systems was positive. It will be interesting to hear from the minister the response from the rural sector about its confidence in being induced or forced to have a standalone power system. It is a decision we have to make; we cannot maintain both. I agree with that, but it is a transition that is of concern.

Another thing I would like the minister to respond to that I referred to and that we can go through it at the consideration in detail stage is: who makes the decision and what is the transparency of the decision? The legislation will give the Economic Regulation Authority the regulatory power to include standalone power systems in its regulatory structure; it would be part of its regulatory capacity. But the ERA will operate in advance, not on specific projects. In broad principles, I think the sector, whether it is the providers or the users, will be interested in some sort of transparency about the processes by which Western Power shifts to standalone power systems. Again, it is not the case that we are against this move; it is absolutely the right move that we need to make in this state. The committee report enforced that view and the process by which the regulatory decision-making process is pursued.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr M.D. NAHAN: If we get this wrong, we will potentially have a great deal of resistance to the adoption of standalone power systems, and that will be at the cost of not only consumers, but also others.

Another interesting issue is that we price our grid on an averaging basis. We have one of the largest and most expensive grids in the world, in the south west interconnected system. It covers a large area; it is very long and spread out. Some of it is getting old. A lot of it was built in the 1960s. We replaced a hell of a lot of the wooden poles but the lines are very long and thin and come into the issue of repair and maintenance. We price our grid; we average it. I am not sure how Western Power make decisions about the grid, but effectively the cost to the consumer, through Synergy or otherwise, is the average cost of the grid itself, even though at the end, the cost of providing that grid is much higher. That is a significant factor in giving incentives to consumers to switch from the grid to

a standalone power system. How will we deal with this issue? It is a very important issue. I am not arguing for changing our pricing mechanisms to our consumers; I am just saying that this is a factor that Western Power should consider because it was given a mandate to provide those services at the lowest possible price. If the grid on a farm down in Esperance costs significantly more than a standalone power system, it behoves Western Power to take that into consideration. On an average basis, it might not work. We really have to look at the pricing issues. I would like the minister, whether in consideration in detail or otherwise, to discuss how we will address these issues, both in practical terms through Western Power or through transparency and communication to consumers. It is a very important issue indeed.

I will not say too much more. This bill progresses a process that has been thought about for a long period. In the 2000s, because of the boom and the cost of energy, a large number of miners were very worried about not only Horizon Power's monopoly tendencies, but also, more importantly, their inability to control their own costs. One of the lessons that I took as energy minister is that when we reduced Horizon Power's head office staffing by 60 per cent, I did not get a single squawk from the consumers. In fact, we distributed them to the regions outside the Perth-based service. Since then, I think Horizon Power has been more sensible and open to achieving the objective of providing energy most effectively and securely at the lowest cost rather than building its own empire. Back in the 2000s, one of the major impediments of moving down this route was industry's concern that Horizon Power is an empire builder. I hope that view does not return.

The bill moves down the path at a time when most of the basic electricity infrastructure in the Pilbara is in situ—it is already built and not much more is required. It is grandfathering existing systems in a way that is already accepted, with no force—all agreement. It positions the north west interconnected system so that when there is another expansion or a replacement of the electricity system, it can be done in a more integrated manner. It also picks up the standalone power system that Western Australia excels in. Horizon Power has more of these standalone power systems than any country in the world. We have a lot of mines and mining operations doing the same thing, which allows them to start competing with the grid as a source of delivering electrons to isolated regions. It is a good bill, and I am glad it is finally coming through.

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [12.35 pm]: I stand to make my contribution to the Electricity Industry Amendment Bill 2019. I wish to say up-front that the opposition will be supporting the government in the passage of this bill. I will not go into its history. The former Leader of the Opposition, the member for Riverton, spoke very well and referred to his time as the Minister for Energy and the work that was being undertaken in this area. We do not want to question the intent of the bill, just some of the detail and try to get a better understanding. I have spent time discussing this bill with industry. There is broad-based support within the industry for the passage of this bill, albeit there are some concerns about how it will be practically applied. That is where we would like to focus.

I would like to share a couple of things. We are concerned that a new tax will be introduced, despite the government promising that there would be no new taxes. The temporary access contribution is a new tax. Some of the questions that we will have off the back of this legislation are: How does the government ensure that Horizon will drive efficiencies within? Will this allow Horizon to rest on its laurels, when what we need to see from our utilities is them ensuring that they are delivering the most efficient and effective service possible to the community and providing safeguards for it? Will it provide an opportunity for Horizon Power to be at the forefront of driving efficiencies within its business? We question why 1 200 megawatt hours was chosen as the number of contestable hours. We would like to understand the basis for that. We can compare it with the south west interconnected system, which is opened up to competition at 50 megawatt hours. There are subsidies in the north west interconnected system and it is unlikely that it would ever be competitive down at the consumer level, so we understand why it is at the higher end, but we would like to hear from the minister why 1 200 megawatt hours was chosen. Some industry bodies raised this issue with me, asking whether it allows for a review in the future. It started at a much higher level in the SWIS and it slowly stepped down over time. From a pragmatic perspective, that makes sense. Industry has asked me whether it is open for reviews to be carried out in the future to look at that threshold amount.

We will want to look at things to do with the TAC to understand what minimum amount charged in dollars will be applied to get an understanding and appreciation of the implications, and how much revenue is forecast, why the rate of 10¢ was chosen and how it was determined. We would like to understand that level of detail. We may be able to discuss some of these things in consideration in detail, but we also understand that the minister may be able to cover off some of those issues in the reply to the second and third readings, hence I want to list these things for the minister to take note of so he can share that information at the appropriate time.

We also would like to gain an understanding, if possible, of how many businesses are above that 1 200-megawatt hour threshold and the percentage of total businesses or how many businesses are below 1 200 megawatt hours. I want to get a sense of that offer. We know that there are large users in the north west interconnected system but we would like to understand what opportunities this creates for industry in the Pilbara.

The other area is the regulated asset base. Obviously, one of the risks is that we have a high assessment of the asset base. That could be a negative for competing interests that want to come in and could undermine the intent. We want to understand how the valuation of the network will be determined, and ensure that it is an independent

assessment to give it credibility, because one of the risks in this process of opening up to competition is that if an assessment results in a very high valuation, that can put a large cost impost on competitors accessing the network. This is the level of scrutiny that we want to apply.

Coming back to the temporary access contribution, is there a limit on how long the TAC will be applied or the circumstances under which it will be applied? They are basically the questions.

There is one question about Horizon. Will Horizon offer differential network pricing? We have seen this in the south west interconnected system in that what consumers are being charged is different from what businesses that are subject to the competitive marketplace are being charged. We want to understand how the network pricing to customers compared with its own internal policy price it offers customers will be audited and enforced. We want to know about not just the intent, but how the undertakings of Horizon in the competitive marketplace compared with how it deals with consumers who do not have access to that competition will be audited and enforced. We do not want to see the transfer of pricing in that subsidies are provided to the higher ones and the lower ones that do not have access to competition pay for it.

That is essentially the direction of the questions that we will ask, but, all in all, we think that this is an important step forward.

That was to do with the part of the legislation that deals with the NWIS. The other part deals with battery storage. Again, we support this. We understand the challenges within the network, particularly with the surge in the take-up of solar panels and the impact that that is having on the network—what they call the duck curve—and we understand the need for the network to put in battery installations. I understand that the government has initiated some of these already, but this will provide greater security. I understand the importance of, and the logic behind, that. The question that arises is: how will this be applied from a competitive marketplace perspective, particularly in end-of-grid situations when there is a move to standalone storage? Will this allow Western Power to start generation and therefore be a competitor in this marketplace; and, if so, how will that work and apply? The last thing we want to do is create an environment in which people who are already providing those systems cannot compete effectively for those opportunities to provide standalone power grids for people in the community. We want to make sure that that remains a competitive marketplace so that people can get the best possible deal and opportunity when it may be prudent to reduce those end-of-grid situations because of surges or cost of delivery. We want to make sure that that opportunity is there for the competitive marketplace.

They are really our questions that I have flagged before we go into the consideration in detail stage. That is the reason we will go into the consideration in detail stage. The minister may be able to answer some of these questions either in his response to the second reading debate, and we hope that he can, or during the consideration in detail stage. Obviously, we have not given him a lot of notice at this time. Essentially, we support the bill and look forward to its passage.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [12.43 pm]: I am obviously pleased to make some comment on the Electricity Industry Amendment Bill 2019. I thank the minister for the briefing that we had; it was quite comprehensive material. Anything to do with energy always has a level of complexity to it. I do not purport to have the knowledge to drill down into a lot of this, but I have an understanding of some of the basic principles. Obviously, first and foremost is the north west interconnected system and its access arrangements. The Holy Grail of all governments has always been to try to get a full and integrated network and be in charge of energy in the north west, given the public and private ownership of that network, the fact that people like to keep their cards in their own pocket and the government has only a certain number of strings that it can pull. Certainly, this is one step to allow access by others to parts of that network, which hopefully is one of the precursors to something a little more integrated than it has been.

Having an independent system operator, which is the other part of this bill, makes a bit of sense. Although this system is nowhere near as complex as the south west interconnected system, it nevertheless requires balancing to maintain all the ancillary services to ensure that the network stays in place. That is important. I think having an independent system operator to achieve that in a more coordinated way is a good thing.

The minister has been somewhat masterful in how he has made the pitch for the temporary access charge. Not that long ago, he railed very hard against the opposition and said that the take-or-pay contracts in place had forced the government's hand and it had to do something to respond to that. I note that the funds that are aimed to be generated from this temporary charge will contribute towards only some of the challenges that Horizon faces. I think everyone recognises that once there is competition in that space, everyone will move to take up the big players and, of course, Horizon has an obligation to the mum-and-dad consumers, which will always be the most challenging aspect for it from a bottom line perspective. The minister played out that argument and blamed the opposition for what happened, but he has now come in with a temporary access charge as a consequence and said, "It's not our fault; it's their fault." I am not sure that I agree with that. There was recognition in the briefings that one of the big challenges that Horizon faces is that its bottom line will be somewhat dictated by its obligations to the mum-and-dad consumers. It will be interesting to see how that plays out and to see what level of take-up there is by the big end of town. That might have some impact on Horizon's bottom line. The member for Bateman mentioned that how long the charge will be in place will be dictated somewhat by the market. That has been interesting.

I also found another aspect of the briefing interesting. This regime will have an interaction with those companies that have state agreements. The Nationals WA has run reasonably strong arguments in saying that state agreements are big hidden pieces of information that no-one gets to see, yet they are critical to everything that happens in our state. When the negotiations were held on the changes to the regulations for access arrangements, the government had to ensure that they did not conflict with the state agreements that are in place. The companies were not given the state agreements to look at; the government just made sure that it had contact with them: “Are you happy?” They said yes and they went away. Again, the sacrosanct nature of state agreements remains. I have some understanding of why that is the case, but transparency should be the outcome here.

It is my understanding that the TAC is going to affect 30 to 40 customers; in other words, it is not a terribly big base. I do not know exactly who they will be, but I am sure the minister will make some commentary about that.

A number of issues will arise from this. The status of the contestability thresholds that are put in place will be important as this plays out over time. There is some suggestion that there be a cap on the temporary charge. Certainly, the minister will need to outline whether the government might be open to having some sort of cap on that charge so that at least anyone operating in that space knows some of the parameters that they will face going forward. Of course, one of the other issues from Horizon’s perspective is the assessment of the starting point for the regulated asset base. Obviously, there is reference to that over time, but it will be reasonably important to ensure the efficiency of any investments that are made.

The bill also deals with an issue close to my own heart; that is, some of the challenges that we face on the south west interconnected system. As I understand it, the basic principle in this legislation is that instead of replacing aging Western Power poles and wire assets, which, in some cases, is a fairly substantial investment given the amount of end users in some of the more remote parts of the south west interconnected system, typically the fringe-of-grid areas, Western Power will have the scope to look at and test alternative arrangements, such as standalone power systems and/or batteries, from a business viability perspective. Some technology is coming on very fast. I might add that not only is it very fast, but also it has shown to be very competent in achieving some of the reliability goals that regional Western Australians often hold up as a great challenge. I have said in this place before that technology is now presenting commercially viable solutions to some age-old issues. We used to attack Western Power about the reliability of its poles after pole-top fires and other issues, but it now has some technical solutions. This is the first step—there is a lot is happening in the energy space; the minister knows that more than I do—but it is not a bad first step.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1345.]

MADGE HITCHINS

Statement by Member for Hillarys

MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys) [12.50 pm]: I wish to highlight the significant milestone reached by one of my constituents, Mrs Madge Hitchins, from Padbury. Madge turned 100 on 3 February this year. She is still a very active member of our community and, as a member of three dance clubs, she dances every week and still has great fun. I recently caught up with Madge for a cup of coffee to celebrate her great milestone and she told me some amazing stories. One of the stories that stood out to me was that when Madge turned 80, her family were concerned that she was living alone so they built a granny flat at the rear of her son’s house. Madge stayed there for a few years but did not really enjoy living there. One day, aged 84, she asked her son whether he could swap his vehicle for a few days so that she could go for a drive in his large four-wheel drive. Madge returned the vehicle to her son eight months later! In that time, Madge drove around Australia, as far north as Cape York Peninsula, across the Birdsville Track—where she got a flat tyre—and back to Perth. Since returning from this joy ride, her family has not encouraged her to move out of her home. She is still happy living in Padbury. Madge has witnessed extraordinary events and done remarkable things in her lifetime. I wish Madge continued good health, happiness, many good years ahead and lots of dancing!

LIVELIGHTER HARVEY HARVEST FESTIVAL AND MANDURAH CRAB FEST

Statement by Member for Murray–Wellington

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [12.52 pm]: I take this opportunity to showcase the south west region to all members and challenge them to experience the highlights of our beautiful communities. Why would members not want to visit our slice of heaven? This Sunday, 15 March, is the LiveLighter Harvey Harvest Festival, the longest-running harvest festival in the south west. Local produce, cooking demonstrations, live music and family friendly entertainment will be on offer, all with the atmosphere of Italy! Come and be a part of the great stomping competition or the street theatre or sample many of Harvey’s iconic true paddock-to-plate brands. With a nostalgic Italian feel, there will be something for everyone. Why not stay a while in this gorgeous area? Our beautiful region has a great selection of accommodation options and experiences. Members can immerse themselves fully to truly experience the peace, tranquillity and culture of our relaxing and stunning south west region.

Also being held this week on 14 and 15 March is the Mandurah Crab Fest, the largest free event in Western Australia. This fantastic event attracts more than 100 000 locals and visitors and showcases culture, the location and the blue manna crab. With fantastic cuisine, performances, children's entertainment, cooking demonstrations and heaps of celebrities, this is a fantastic event for everyone.

I pass on my congratulations to all the organisers and volunteers of these fantastic events and thank them all for the important services that they provide to our community. The south west region has so much to offer, and with all this in our backyard, I urge members to grab their friends and family, holiday close to home and support local accommodation and hospitality businesses. I hope to see members around our stunning south west this weekend. They should check out the Do it in WA website for their next staycation.

KATANNING BUSHFIRE

Statement by Member for Roe

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [12.54 pm]: On 7 February this year, a fire started north west of Katanning. That afternoon and evening, farms, buildings and fences were damaged, but thanks to the incredible efforts of volunteer firefighters, the fire was contained. However, the following day catastrophic fire conditions developed with winds at 50 kilometres an hour and the temperature above 40 degrees Celsius. As the fire and conditions intensified, the community braced for what soon became an out-of-control bushfire heading straight towards the town. The battle continued long into the night with a strong westerly pushing the fire right to the edge of the town on two sides.

I cannot name them all but I would like to make special mention of a few people and places who were invaluable during this time: our shire president Liz Guidera, who went above and beyond; shire CEO, Julian Murphy; Cindy Pearce, chief fire control officer; Matt Kerin; volunteer fire control officers, Dale Douglas, Geoff Stade, Norm Flugge, Ian Coleman, Alan Wilson and Chris Quartermaine; local business owners Tania and Clint Edwards; the Katanning Hub Community Resource Centre; Kobeelya Centre; and Nyabing Country Women's Association.

At the peak of the fire there were over 300 firefighters, water-bombers and soon a Boeing 737. One home was sadly lost, and others damaged. Over 4 000 hectares were burnt, 80 kilometres of fencing was destroyed, 50 power poles were down, and livestock was lost. Response teams included volunteer farmers, and bush firefighters from across WA and surrounding shires. Thanks also go out to BlazeAid, which did not hesitate to send a team of volunteers.

MEMBER FOR WANNEROO — SERVICE

Statement by Member for Wanneroo

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo) [12.55 pm]: Yesterday marked three years since I was elected as the member for Wanneroo and a member of the McGowan Labor government. I have sat here in Parliament as the voice of Wanneroo for 178 days. The McGowan Labor government has passed 123 bills. As a government, we have been busy in this place and courageous in this place to introduce laws that make a difference. They are: voluntary assisted dying; container deposit scheme; no body, no parole; family and domestic violence reforms; revenge porn laws; redress scheme for victims of child sexual abuse, and much more. I have hosted dozens of school and community groups here to bring the Parliament to the community. I have delivered on every single election promise I made to my community. They are \$115 million for overpasses at Ocean Reef Road and Joondalup Drive; \$31 million for dualling Wanneroo Road; getting Ingham's Enterprises to relocate from the Wanneroo townsite; \$5 million for a new gymnasium at Wanneroo Senior High School; \$400 000 for Tapping Primary School's undercover area; upgrades to Wanneroo Districts Netball Association; certainty to the agricultural industry; upgrades to Wanneroo Showgrounds; a dog park in Sinagra; science labs in four of my schools; upgrades to Limelight Theatre; a bus for Wanneroo Amateur Boxing; a bus for Wanneroo high; upgrades to Joondalup Health Campus, including mental health beds and the stroke unit; an urgent care clinic, and much more.

I continue my first love and have visited and taught in dozens of classrooms in my schools and at Primary Extension and Challenge. I have attended hundreds of meetings at my clubs, schools, and community groups. I have knocked on doors, held extended trading hours and held mobile offices and public forums. My office has helped hundreds of individual residents with their issues and I have hosted dozens of ministers and the Premier in Wanneroo. I said what I would do and I am doing what I said. I am giving it my all every single day as the member for Wanneroo.

KALGOORLIE ELECTORATE — AWARDS

Statement by Member for Kalgoorlie

MR K.M. O'DONNELL (Kalgoorlie) [12.57 pm]: The 2020 City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Citizen of the Year went to a very worthy recipient—Michael Worthington, whom I nominated. Michael set up the Worthy Parts expo and auction in 2018 after the collapse of a previous mining expo, with the purpose of bringing the mining industry together to support the economy. Through the expo, the Mining Legends project was born. The project led to a rebuild of an underground loader, made entirely possible by the donation of parts and time by various mining providers throughout Australia. The loader sold for \$600 000, which was donated to the Goldfields Esperance Community Trust and Miner's Promise. The Kalgoorlie-Boulder Bega Tobacco Action Team was awarded the Bob Elpick Medal by the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, for their great work in assisting Aboriginal

people to quit smoking. The Eastern Goldfields cricket team brought home the Boan Cup after winning the WA senior country week A-section final in January. The Kalgoorlie–Boulder team’s 54 kilometre-run victory against Bunbury and districts broke a 16-year drought since 2004. Also in January, a team of 50 kids from the Eastern Goldfields Little Athletics Centre brought back a 103-medal haul from the Little Athletics WA Country Championships: 35 gold, 34 silver and 34 bronze. Kambalda-raised McKenzie Dowrick made history in February when she debuted with the West Coast Eagles first Australian Football League women’s fixture—a 27 point loss to the mighty Collingwood at Victoria Park. Wizard Pharmacy Kalgoorlie has been named a finalist in the national 2020 Pharmacy of the Year competition. The pharmacy has been recognised for its innovative approaches from branching out from the norm to suit community needs.

HIGHWAY TO HELL

Statement by Member for Bicton

MRS L.M. O’MALLEY (Bicton) [12.58 pm]: On Sunday, 1 March, Canning Highway became the world’s longest stage for the historic *Highway to Hell* concert. Over 150 000 people lined the 10 kilometres of Canning Highway closed down to host the final event of the 2020 Perth Festival, a huge community gathering to commemorate 40 years since the death of Fremantle-raised AC/DC lead singer Bon Scott. The valley zone from Stock Road, Palmyra, to Petra Street, Bicton, had a special feel, as this was the stomping ground for a young Bon. Right in the heart of the Bicton electorate, it absolutely rocked out to the ACADACA vibe. I say thank you from the constituents of Bicton to Perth Festival Director Iain Grandage, organisers, volunteers and the McGowan government for this once-in-a-generation community event. I would also like to highlight the significant positive financial benefits of the event on the businesses and organisations along the Bicton section of Canning Highway. One of these is the Bicton–Palmyra RSL sub-branch. Situated opposite the Leopold Hotel, the sub-branch is a historic but modern, inclusive and family-friendly place that threw open its doors to welcome the *Highway to Hell* crowds. In that one day of bar trade they took 12 times what they usually do on their normal best day of trade. When I visited that day, customers were 10 deep at the bar. The president, Kevin Hastie, told me this much-needed boost to their working fund means they can now plan ahead with confidence. On behalf of the president, I thank the committee, the awesome volunteers who pitched in to help and the visitors to the Bicton–Palmyra sub-branch who were typical of all those who came to *Highway to Hell*: respectful and patient and just happy to be part of this really special event.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CORONAVIRUS — STATE ECONOMY — FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE

135. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Deputy Premier:

I refer to the clear and detailed \$17.6 billion stimulus package announced by the Prime Minister today. Where is the state government’s stimulus package and why is it taking so long to roll out, given that jobs are being lost and small businesses are closing right now?

The SPEAKER: Minister for Health. Deputy Premier. Acting Premier! Any of the above!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

See what I mean, member for Moore? The deputies never get the credit they deserve!

I am very happy to answer the question from the Leader of the Opposition, because it is an important one. The Premier is in the eastern states today to meet with other chief ministers and the Prime Minister to discuss how they can work together in lock step to make sure that we, as a nation, will overcome the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic. It is very important that we have all levels of government and all sides of politics working closely together to ensure that we get over this issue that we are all confronting as a community. It is good that the Prime Minister has come out with a stimulus package; it will augment the work we have already done to stimulate and provide incentives for the Western Australian economy so that, to the extent we can, we will insulate the Western Australian community from not only the health impacts, but also the economic impacts. That is why, on 10 February, the government announced a \$12.85 million package to support the local tourism industry. The Premier was on the front foot. The Premier is already out there, providing his details on that. That package was warmly welcomed. Tourism Council Western Australia said —

Western Australia has moved quicker than other States to respond to the coronavirus travel ban and secure new marketing deals to support the industry.

The industry went further. Australian Hotels Association WA CEO, Bradley Woods, commended the government and said —

“The challenge we are facing in WA is unprecedented and so it requires an extraordinary response by Government, which is what makes today’s announcement so encouraging,” ...

The McGowan government saw the threat that COVID-19 represents to the Australian community and the impact it could have on the Western Australian economy. That is why we have acted. In addition, measures taken last year

to stimulate the economy included a cut to payroll tax, with another cut due on 1 January next year; stamp duty rebates of \$50 000 for off-the-plan developments; a \$200 million maintenance blitz for every school in Western Australia; an \$81 million maintenance blitz for hospitals in WA; and \$150 million to create a new social and affordable housing package. These are all about shovel-ready projects to engage small businesses in the community, particularly in our regional communities. The McGowan government has acted. We are the leaders, and that is recognised by the tourism industry. That is why we are well placed to respond to the COVID-19 epidemic.

CORONAVIRUS — STATE ECONOMY — FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE

136. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Deputy Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Will the state government's stimulus package include a freeze on cost-of-living increases, increases in hardship payments and seniors' rebates, and a payroll tax holiday for small business?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

The Premier has already said that we will continue to look at any measures that are necessary for making sure that we assist the WA community to meet the challenge. I have just read an exhaustive list of projects and funding that we have undertaken, and the tourism industry's response, which is welcoming of that. That stands in sharp contrast to those on the other side. What have they had to say about what we have provided in our stimulus package? What are their measures? Their first measure is to build a toll road. That is their solution—to build a toll road rather than actually provide any leadership. In addition, they are going to put ads on the backs of buses. If that does not take the cake, their latest measure is to bring back the Red Bull Air Race, which, as we all know, folded globally last year!

We will take a lot of advice. We will take advice from the Chief Health Officer on the health impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic; we will take advice from industry, which is why the Premier met with members of the resources sector yesterday; but the one group we will not take advice from is the sorry mob opposite!

CORONAVIRUS — TESTING

137. Ms E. HAMILTON to the Minister for Health:

Before I begin, I would like to welcome members from the Easybeat Walkers group in my electorate, who are in the public gallery. On behalf of the member for Southern River, I acknowledge the students from Caladenia Primary School as well.

I refer to the state government's response to COVID-19. Can the minister update the house on the increase in testing for COVID-19 and how Western Australia's health services are working to improve response times for those who return a negative test?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I am very pleased to repeat the advice that I provided to the Parliament earlier today. More than 2 000 tests have been undertaken in Western Australia and there are no fresh positive results as of this morning. That is a great outcome and, quite frankly, as we all know, the longer we can contain and isolate this viral outbreak without community spread of the virus, the longer we will put off and flatten the peak. That is an important message that we all must heed, which is why we, as a community, are in this together.

The Department of Health continues to tool up to make sure we are ready to assist the community to protect them from the impacts of the coronavirus, which is why today I made further announcements about what the government will be doing to make sure we better serve the community. As of today, we will be providing results via SMS to those people who receive negative results after having been tested for COVID-19. Those who have undertaken COVID-19 tests are self-isolating, and it can take between 48 and 72 hours for them to get those results back, so we want to make sure we get that information out to them as quickly as possible. We will provide an SMS service that will give that information out to individuals who have a negative result, and also provide links and hotlines for where they can go to get more information about that.

It can take clinicians up to about 20 minutes per phone call to inform patients of a negative test result. By the end of this month, we will be testing around 1 500 people a week. As members will appreciate, that is a big body of work, so we will now be able to do it much more efficiently through the SMS service, and get those important members of our workforce back on the beat and make sure they are undertaking other tasks to continue looking after members of the community. This is an important development as part of our COVID-19 clinics that we have rolled out this week. We had almost 800 people attend those clinics yesterday, and over 800 on Tuesday—so, mercifully, not as many people came yesterday as they did on Tuesday. Obviously, over the next 24 hours we will start to see the results of those extra tests that will be undertaken at those COVID clinics over the coming days.

Obviously, it is important that we continue as a community to work together to make sure that we keep on top of this. That is why the government has done its level best to make sure we keep everyone informed, including those opposite, with regard to the COVID-19 virus. We provide briefings on a regular basis. Our most recent briefing to the opposition was, I think, on Tuesday of this week. We will continue to provide information to members where it is required.

So it was a bit disappointing to hear the member for Dawesville in a media conference today provide more critique and more sideline chatter about how the government is responding to the COVID-19 virus.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.H. COOK: I was particularly disappointed that after we had provided information to the member for Dawesville about what we are doing at the crab festival this weekend, to hear him make remarks with regard to the information. He said, essentially—to paraphrase what he said at his press conference—that we should be putting out public health messages and making sure that we are working with the hundreds of thousands of people who turn up to make sure they get the message. That made me think, “That’s a jolly good idea! I wonder where he got that idea from?” Then I remembered: That is right; we committed to provide him with information about the crab festival and what we would be doing as a government to protect people there. I look at an email that I forwarded to the member for Dawesville from the Department of Health just yesterday —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.H. COOK: It was advice from a gentleman in the Department of Health that says —

I spoke with City of Mandurah earlier this afternoon about measures they are considering for Crabfest this weekend. It’s evident they have undertaken considerable planning and preparation on top of their standard risk management for the event. This includes enhanced handwashing facilities and stations, deployment of hand sanitiser, signage and advisory materials, increased stringency around food prep and serving, regular cleaning and disinfection, on site cleaners and inspections by EHOs through the event.

So, good idea, member for Dawesville—and now we know where he got it from!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.H. COOK: The Premier and I have been at pains to stress to the community that we are in this together. We have to work together. We will continue to work with the opposition to make sure it has the information that it needs to critique. We treated the opposition as adults. They behave like children. Really, member for Dawesville, grow up! Let us be adult-like. Let us all work on this together, because together we will get through it. We will flatten the curve in the future. We will best serve the Western Australian community if we all work together on this. The member for Dawesville should not make cheap little political points to try and insert himself into the daily narrative by taking the information that we provide to him and using it in the public domain.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

CORONAVIRUS — MODELLING

138. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Minister for Health:

I refer —

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the second time. It is not funny. It is a serious issue.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I refer to the Premier’s unwillingness, or inability, yesterday to provide estimated figures on coronavirus numbers. I note that in New South Wales, the Chief Medical Officer today estimated that 1.5 million people in New South Wales were likely to become infected. Is the minister in a position to provide similar modelling or figures to the people of Western Australia?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question, because it is an important one and goes to the issue of the modelling around the COVID-19 virus and the way that it is informing the advice that we get from the Chief Health Officer. The Chief Health Officer is a member of what is called the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, which is an assembly of all the chief health officers and senior medical advisers in the community, who come together on a daily basis to consider the advice that they provide to the government. That advice goes to the question of travel advisories and to the issue of travel bans and what needs to be done to continue to inform the Western Australian and the Australian community about how we respond to this virus.

An outfit called the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity does the modelling. The member would have heard the Premier’s response to some of the advice that we got from that modelling. If we do nothing, or if we do not respond appropriately, we will see this virus start to pick up in late April, with sustained community-based transmission taking place in late April through May, with the view being that it will peak in about August. That is what is so important about what we are doing now, which is the containment and isolation phase. The more that we

can actually do that, we can get away from these figures that suggest that 25 per cent of people will get coronavirus. The vast majority of that 25 per cent, if we are unfortunate enough to see that, will experience mild to bad flu symptoms, and so they will go about their lives. There is a cohort of the population—between two and three per cent—of older Western Australians or those with compromised health and immunity for whom this will be very dangerous. That is why it is so important that we, as a community, respond now. The more we can do now to contain and isolate, the more we can put off that peak and the lower that peak will be. It is called flattening the curve. That is why we have to continue to work together. That is why it is so important that people observe good personal hygiene—handwashing, by making sure that they take the opportunity to wash their hands regularly; and good cough and sneeze hygiene, into the crook of their arm or into a tissue and throw that tissue away. Above all, if people are feeling unwell and have cold and flu-like symptoms, they should make sure that they stay at home and limit their contact with work and school and their older relatives. It is so important that we do this, because the longer we can do it, we can make sure that we minimise the impact on the community.

The member for Dawesville is pointing to modelling that the Doherty institute continues to update and continues to inform the AHPPC. That modelling shows that, yes, this could be very serious if we do not get on top of it now. That is why we have to work together, and that is what has made the work that the Department of Health is doing so important.

Remember, members, we have had over 2 000 people tested in Western Australia, and we have had nine positive results, all of which have come from a known source or an overseas source. We have had no community-based transmission of the virus. Every day we can say that is another day that we can put off suffering and death within our community.

CORONAVIRUS — MODELLING

139. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Would the minister be willing to provide an estimation to this chamber of what those numbers might be if we do not flatten the curve, and what measures the government is going to take?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I thought the Minister for Health was the expert on health. It looks like everyone else on the right-hand side is. Start the question again, please, and no interjections. It is a serious issue.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I appreciate the Minister for Health's response. Would the minister be willing to provide an update to this chamber on what those numbers might be and what actions the government will be taking, including an expanded public awareness campaign, which is exactly what I have asked for, starting with the Mandurah Crab Fest?

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

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

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

As the member would be aware, we have a public awareness campaign on foot at the moment, and we are very much looking forward to the federal government joining us with its bigger, louder message so that we can continue to provide a nuanced message through our campaigns that address the specific needs of the Western Australian community. We are out there now getting that information out into the community.

Member, I will undertake to provide to members the public links to the Doherty institute so that they can see what it has to say, but I am loath to provide the member with that further information. Like we did earlier this week when we had the Chief Health Officer or a member of his team come in to provide information, I will do so again. Members, we need to have as much information on our hands as possible. We are the leaders that the community is looking to to help steer it through this issue. That is why we need to limit the sideline political commentary. We need to limit the opportunities to alarm the community. We have a responsibility to provide good clinical evidence-based information out there in the community. If any member wants more information from the department or from the Chief Health Officer, please let me know and I will make sure that it is available to everyone.

JOBS — RAILCAR MANUFACTURING

140. Mr R.R. WHITBY to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating jobs and supporting local businesses by bringing railcar manufacturing back to Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's commitment to local railcar manufacturing will ensure Western Australians have the skills and expertise to support and grow manufacturing throughout Western Australia?
- (2) Is the minister aware of anyone who does not support local railcar manufacturing in WA and is threatening to once again destroy the industry?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I am sure the minister can answer without interjections.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Baldivis for that question and his focus and commitment to local manufacturing in Western Australia.

(1)–(2) Earlier this week we turned the sod on the \$46 million railcar manufacturing and assembly facility in Bellevue. It was great to be out there to see certainty brought back to industry and see local workers building that facility. At least 50 per cent of our railcars will be manufactured here in Western Australia. It is a \$1.25 billion contract that will create certainty and bring back the railcar manufacturing industry to Western Australia. Why? Because Western Australians can do it. Western Australians should be building Western Australian trains. We took this policy to the last election. At the last election, members opposite believed that Western Australians were not up to the job. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition once again outlined that the Liberal Party does not support local railcar manufacturing. In her speech yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition said —

... what we will not do is heavily subsidise industries where the State has no comparative advantage, nor bring back industries from a bygone era.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: She went on to say that our investment was unsustainable, that we should not support a failed manufacturing industry, and that it was a waste of our money.

Mr W.R. Marmion: We'll see!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We will see, alright.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Liberal Party is turning its back on essential tradespeople in Western Australia. What other trades are involved in building trains? They are engineering, mechanical and electrical fitting, and welding. Somehow, the Leader of the Opposition does not support these tradespeople. She believes that their work is from a bygone era and that everyone involved in these industries throughout Western Australia should not be involved in them. According to the Leader of the Opposition, their work is from a bygone era.

What else did the Leader of the Opposition say? She said that we had not released the cost of the program. The Leader of the Opposition is wrong. She said that we had not developed a business case. The Leader of the Opposition is wrong. She said that the railcar industry was subsidised. The Leader of the Opposition is wrong. Our railcars are cheaper than the ones members opposite paid for. The worst and most misleading statement from the Leader of the Opposition was that our facility was simply going to fit out trains from Victoria.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is absolute disregard for workers and manufacturing industries in Western Australia. The idea is that Western Australians should not build their own trains. Leader of the Opposition, who should build our trains? There is no answer, but she does not support Western Australians building our own trains. It is an absolute disgrace.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition talked about industries of a bygone era. She should look around. All the Liberal Party does is bring in policies from a bygone era! We are out there creating real jobs and members opposite are talking about air races that have been cancelled around the world. That is where the Liberal Party is at today with its performance on the economic front. The Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity yesterday to prove her economic credentials. From all reports, she demonstrated out there what she demonstrates in this place every day: she is not across the detail; she is not across the economics; and she is not across the finances of this state.

CORONAVIRUS — STATE ECONOMY

141. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Treasurer:

I refer to the impact that COVID-19 is having on regional small businesses, which already face high costs. Will the Treasurer implement an immediate reduction in water and electricity charges to help sole traders and mum-and-dad businesses survive the difficult period approaching?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

As the Deputy Premier has already pointed out, a range of decisions have been made by the government since at least mid-last year to support small businesses in Western Australia. I note that most of them have been opposed by the opposition but, nonetheless, we proceeded with them. In respect of power and water bills, I think the member is saying he wants a drop in business rates; is that what he is asking?

Mr V.A. Catania: A reduction for small businesses.

Mr B.S. WYATT: A reduction—okay. I think the member wants a reduction in the business tariffs; is that what it is? The member needs to provide some detail in his question.

Mr V.A. Catania: The cost of water and electricity in regional WA is through the roof.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr V.A. Catania: Reduce the price.

Mr B.S. WYATT: For businesses—okay. I want to remind everybody of what happened during the global financial crisis: the former government increased power bills by 26 per cent.

Mr S.A. Millman: Shame!

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is what happened during the global financial crisis.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mount Lawley!

Mr S.A. Millman: Oh, come on!

The SPEAKER: Yes, I will come on and I will call you to order for the third time.

Mr B.S. WYATT: We will not be increasing power bills by 26 per cent like the former government did in the heat of the global financial crisis. We have a budget coming out very soon that will have a range of responses and a range of incentives to support businesses and Western Australians regardless of where they live.

CORONAVIRUS — STATE ECONOMY

142. **Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Treasurer:**

I have a supplementary question. Why will the Treasurer not cut water and electricity costs now instead of waiting until regional businesses, which are already struggling under the weight of this government's increased charges, go to the wall?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

I watched a range of businesses go to the wall when the member for North West Central and the Liberal Party increased the land tax three times in 18 months. That imposed enormous costs on small businesses all over Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have been trying to think back about whether the National Party at the time called for the cutting of power bills. I do not seem to recall that.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, you asked a question. Listen and you might learn something. I call you to order for the first time.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I do not seem to recall that. We will not be imposing three increases in land tax on the small business sector of Western Australia. I will commit to that for the member. That was the policy of the conservatives in government —

Mr V.A. Catania: I am talking about the virus and the impact it is going to have on small business.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member for North West Central has not talked about that.

The SPEAKER: I call you to order for the second time, member for North West Central.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member for North West Central has not talked about that, but with every decision that we make, as a government committed to jobs and restoring economic growth after members opposite drove it away from this state —

Mr V.A. Catania: I'm talking about the impact the virus is going to have on small business.

The SPEAKER: I will tell you the impact: I call you to order for the third time. You are on your way. Do not push me!

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member did not ask me about that; he asked about power bills. I am trying to tell the member that we will make a decision about power bills at budget time, as we always do. I give the member this commitment: we will not do what his government did; that is, increase power bills by 26 per cent in the heart of the global financial crisis.

ABORIGINAL BUSINESSES — PROCUREMENT

143. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

My question, which is better than the last one, is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

The SPEAKER: No preamble, member.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating more job opportunities and improving economic conditions for Aboriginal people. Can the minister update the house on the success of this government's procurement policy and its efforts to provide more opportunities for Aboriginal businesses?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

One of the policies that we took to the election, and I am pleased to say has been very successful, was our Aboriginal procurement policy. It was very much designed around ensuring that Aboriginal businesses across Western Australia—regional and metropolitan—get the opportunity to access a small part of the very significant procurement spend of government each year. Over the years, a range of different policies have tried to promote Aboriginal businesses, but, to be honest, they have not worked. Over the years, we have seen very small and infrequent contracts awarded to Aboriginal-owned businesses. We held our second Aboriginal Business Expo last week, with some 280 Aboriginal businesses being married up with the effort of government spending. That is working. Our target—it is a small target—for the first year of the policy was one per cent of contracts being awarded to Aboriginal-owned businesses. That has come in at 4.77 per cent in year one. We report that by agency. What we see is that some agencies have done very well and some agencies have not done quite so well, but the point is to ensure that those agencies that are not meeting those targets are certainly encouraged to do so. That has resulted in some 179 contracts with a total value exceeding \$167 million. It is around triple the number of contracts awarded before the policy was introduced.

I want to make the point that this is not just small contracts that we are talking about. We have contracts up to \$97 million through the WA Country Health Service, Minister for Health, which is a very, very good contract for the provision of health services across the Kimberley. This is the practical reality of what can happen when one has a policy, puts effort into that policy, develops it in opposition, takes it to an election and implements it. That is why we are now seeing Aboriginal businesses in Western Australia having more opportunity for contracts; as a result, there is more opportunity to bring on Aboriginal people, because we know that Aboriginal-owned businesses are more likely to employ Aboriginal people; as a result, across Western Australia, we are seeing very, very good outcomes. Now that we have moved to two per cent, we want to not only see extra effort from those government agencies that have met the target to continue to do so, but also ensure that those agencies that have not met the targets can learn from other agencies and Aboriginal businesses and learn from those expos so that we get that sort of work flowing into Aboriginal businesses, create jobs, create opportunity and continue the economic growth that this state government has managed to return to our state.

CORONAVIRUS — PANDEMIC PLAN — AGED-CARE FACILITIES

144. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Deputy Premier:

I note the number of COVID-19 cases is starting to accelerate. In the event that sustained community transmission triggers the pandemic plan —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Around the whole world, as a matter of fact, as members well know.

The SPEAKER: I do not think the question is being asked to 12 people on this side. It is only asked to one person. It is a serious issue. Just listen. Start again.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Thank you. I note the number of COVID-19 cases is starting to accelerate. In the event that sustained community transmission triggers the pandemic plan —

- (1) Under those circumstances, will all aged-care facilities go into lockdown?
- (2) What has been communicated to the not-for-profit sector, families, staff and residents given this may occur at relatively short notice?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

(1)–(2) The member is correct; the COVID-19 virus is galloping across our globe. We have nine cases confirmed in Western Australia and no reported communication of that disease within our own community, so we are in a very good position. We are already in our pandemic plan. We know that the World Health Organization declared the global pandemic yesterday, last night, but essentially, throughout Australia, all governments have been pretty much at pandemic status pretty much since Scott Morrison, the Prime Minister, announced as much some time ago. I think amongst the Chief Health Officers there has been a certain amount of scratching of the head about why it has taken the World Health Organization so long to respond.

The pandemic plan anticipates that at some point we are going to have to undertake a certain amount of either isolation or social distancing. Those decisions will be taken as the Chief Health Officer advises us as we go through. The member is right to point out that people in residential aged-care facilities are a particularly vulnerable cohort. This was a point that the member for Mount Lawley, who is now trying to do his best to behave himself, made earlier today in a grievance. We will not automatically shut down residential aged-care facilities, but in discussions with them, we have talked to them about making sure that they have hygiene controls in place; that they are prepared to exclude relatives who present to the aged-care facility with flu-like symptoms and look unwell; and certainly to educate the relatives and people who are visiting aged-care residents, to make sure they understand their personal responsibilities. It may be that we have to close down certain facilities, as in isolate them, but it is more likely that what we will do is remove people from aged-care facilities once they have started to exhibit symptoms, isolate them and then reintroduce them if they prove negative. But these things will all be undertaken with the advice of the Chief Health Officer. The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee is currently drawing up national guidelines for cancelling events and things of that nature, so we will wait to be informed by that.

Members, we are very wise to appreciate that the COVID-19 virus represents a significant threat to our community. There is no aspect of our lives that will not be impacted by this, which is the reason the Premier appointed me as lead minister in our pandemic response, and I have been working with all the agencies to make sure that they are communicating with their sectors. The Department of Communities will be working with its not-for-profit partners to make sure that they have plans in hand. One of the issues around residential aged-care facilities is workforce. That is going to be a big body of work that we do, and I think the Premier will be engaging with his colleagues on that very issue as he meets with the Prime Minister and others over the coming days.

CORONAVIRUS — PANDEMIC PLAN — AGED-CARE FACILITIES**145. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Deputy Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. I thank the Deputy Premier for that response. The not-for-profit sector is already at breaking point prior to the coronavirus. How is the sector meant to provide services to the aged, the homeless and the vulnerable if the pandemic plan is triggered?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

That is why we are working closely with all our partners. We all work hard in the community. For many of us, business as usual is a tough day at the office, and that is why it is important that, as a community, we will respond to the COVID-19 virus. Whether it is our friends and partners in the not-for-profit sector, whether it is our teachers working in our education sector, whether it is doctors and nurses working on the front line who will be receiving many of the patients who are impacted by COVID-19, we are in this together; we have to work together and make sure that, as a community, we get through it together.

MINING AND RESOURCES SECTOR — RED-TAPE REDUCTION**146. Mr K.J.J. MICHEL to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:**

I would like to welcome the teachers and year 6 student leaders from Port Hedland, South Hedland, Baler, South Newman and Newman Primary Schools who are in the chamber gallery with us today.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to drive more activity in the Western Australian mining sector and support industry in creating more local jobs. Can the minister outline to the house what the government is doing to cut red tape for businesses and encourage more exploration in WA?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I am pleased to receive the question and I note the strong commitment to the mining sector from the member for Pilbara. The people in the Pilbara are very lucky to have such a high quality representative here in Parliament.

We are very lucky that Western Australia continues to be one of the principal places to receive investment in the mining sector anywhere in the globe. I note that one of the reasons for that is that we have a strong regulatory framework that provides certainty to people. In fact, I was surprised that the Fraser Institute recently found that 100 per cent of people who they surveyed in the Western Australian mining industry were either confident or

highly confident that they would receive the permits that they had applied for, which is an extraordinary thing, and 100 per cent of mining executives believed that they would get their projects approved in Western Australia. This is the only place in the world that was shown to have that rating in the Fraser Institute survey. But we are not resting on our laurels. I am very pleased that the director general of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety is co-chair of Streamline WA, which is looking to see how agencies can reduce their regulatory arrangements to make things faster for industry. I am very pleased to say that DMIRS has been able to reduce the time frame for the approval of programs to work. Currently, it has a target of 30 days. From 1 July, that will be reduced to just 15 days.

This is another step forward for the government in Western Australia to support the resources sector. Supporting the early stage exploration industry is very critical because that is where the next big thing is always found. Every mine starts with an exploration project, and it is said that 100 exploration projects are needed to get one successful mine, so we absolutely have to continue to focus on that area. I am very pleased to say that the department's most recent quarterly report showed that 95 per cent of prospecting licences were finalised within the target time; 96 per cent of exploration licenses were finalised within the target time; and 98 per cent of program-of-work applications were finalised within target time. It is very good that we are now further reducing those target time lines for the program of works. Of course, I want to make it clear that the outcomes for the department are included in a quarterly report that is shown on the website, and so we continue to be completely transparent on our achievements in this area. It sets out what the targets are and how we are going against all of our targets. It is just good news continually here in Western Australia. We know that there is going to be global disruption from COVID-19, so we have to concentrate on working with industry to make sure that our industry can play a strong role in supporting jobs and the workforce in the state.

BUSHFIRES — KATANNING AND SOUTH WEST

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

I refer to the recent bushfires in WA that have burnt through approximately 1.5 million hectares of land and affected many communities.

- (1) Has the minister had a conversation with Emergency Management Australia about exemptions to disaster recovery arrangements so our communities can access Australian Taxation Office relief and other forms of assistance?
- (2) Is the minister aware that 417 visa holders, volunteering in Katanning and regional WA with BlazeAid's relief and fencing efforts, are being forced back to the eastern states where exemptions have been negotiated by state ministers?

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Let us hear the answer, member for Warren–Blackwood.

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

Despite the fact that I have written to the member for Roe on this very matter, because he has asked me about it, I am not 100 per cent sure, from that question, whether he actually read the response that I gave him.

Mr P.J. Rundle: I read it.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I then question why the member has raised this question in the house. The reason I say that, member, is because it was all laid —

Mr R.H. Cook: Did you have pictures?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I did not put cartoons in, maybe I should have done.

It was all laid out there and I really cannot understand why the member and his federal colleagues in his area cannot get it through their heads that the disaster recovery funding arrangements have been put in place by the federal government.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Roe, you have a chance for a supplementary.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It seems to go right the way through those members' heads, from here to here and out the other side.

The SPEAKER: Member, just answer the question, please.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The disaster recovery funding arrangements follow the same conditions that are in place for the normal disaster recovery arrangements in this state when there is a flood or a bushfire or whatever.

Mr D.T. Redman: These were arrangements from BlazeAid. Pick up the phone!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will get to BlazeAid in a second. He asked the government a two-part question.

The first part is about the recovery arrangements and whatever relief that comes, whether it is a loan, subsidies on interest or any other form of support, as a result of those bushfires. All those conditions were laid down by the federal government. If the member has a problem with them, go and raise it with my federal counterpart.

Mr P.J. Rundle: You're the minister.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That member is an MP. Raise it with the —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: — Nationals member, who happens to be the federal minister for emergency services who wrote out those conditions.

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: You are an MP —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, do you want to hear the answer or not?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: You represent those people in that area; get off your butt and write to those people, write to our counterparts —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister, speak through the Chair, please.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Write to your counterpart —

The SPEAKER: Through the Chair, minister.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: — who is —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

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

Mr F.M. LOGAN: — the federal emergency services minister who set those conditions out if you have a problem with them.

Ms M.J. Davies: Why does every other minister manage to have the conversation?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No. I have written that to you.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I have written that to you. I have also raised the very issues that you have raised with that federal minister, and they are being raised again today by the Premier in the Council of Australian Governments meeting. What are you doing? What are those members doing? That is what I have been doing. The member for Roe is the local member; what has he been doing? He has been doing nothing. With respect to —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the third time.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: With respect to Liz Guidera, who is the president of Katanning shire, and who spoke to my office, I texted back and forth with her yesterday about BlazeAid. I made it very clear to her that the 457 visa issue is a federal issue. It is immigration, so take that up with the local federal member.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood!

Mr D.T. Redman: Start doing your job!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Why do you not do something, member for Warren–Blackwood?

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Like the guy behind you —

The SPEAKER: Order, minister! Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the first and the second time, because you are too busy talking to hear me say it the first time. Minister, speak through the Chair, please.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Nationals WA members seem to be long on talk and short on action—as normal. They talk a lot in here. Try to get them to represent their members —

The SPEAKER: Members of the National Party, I do not want to have to throw you all out, but with the way you are going, the only one who has any class today is your deputy leader!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

As I have said —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: As I have said, members of the National Party are long on talk and short on action. They can represent their constituents by taking these issues up with their own political colleagues in Canberra, and they fail to do so. I have done it, and, with respect to the Katanning issue, it is still ongoing and still being raised. Basically, I am doing the work for the member for Roe, down there, in his own constituency. I would like him to now get up and say thanks.

BUSHFIRES — KATANNING AND SOUTH WEST

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

Mr Speaker, I am appalled by that response.

The SPEAKER: No preamble, please.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a supplementary question. I know the minister has written to the federal minister. Considering that every other state has negotiated special arrangements with that minister and his department, when will the minister intensify his efforts to seek federal assistance for fire-affected regional communities?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

If the member is unaware of those issues federally—that is probably an excuse—but I would ask the member not to mislead the house, because what he has just said is absolutely untrue. Those disaster recovery funding arrangements that have been put in place by the Morrison government have not changed at all. They apply to every single state. If the member has any evidence whatsoever of those things changing, I would love for him to actually produce it because we certainly do not know anything about it.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Every other state has got —

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No, they have not, member. The member still cannot get his head around this issue. No matter that I set it out clearly in writing for the member, he still does not seem to understand it. I will give you a briefing, mate, if you just do not understand that much, and I will walk you through what you clearly just do not know.

WATER CORPORATION — FEES AND CHARGES

149. **Ms L.L. BAKER to the Minister for Water:**

I refer to the responsible financial management of the McGowan government that has allowed us to keep increases to household fees and charges at the lowest level in 13 years.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the government is supporting households in being more water efficient and further lowering their water bills?
- (2) Could the minister advise the house whether he is aware of anyone making incorrect or misleading statements about household water fees and charges?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for Maylands for her question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I want to hear this.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Just to recap for the house, the previous Liberal–National government put water bills up by 66.8 per cent, including by 28.3 per cent in its first year, which, as the Treasurer has indicated, coincided with much of the global financial crisis. We can compare that with the first three years of this government. There has been a 14.6 per cent increase in water bills, including an increase of only 2.5 per cent in last year’s budget, which is the lowest increase in over a decade. In addition to that, we have reduced by over 60 per cent the number of households that have had their water cut off for non-payment issues. Under the previous government, 2 500 households each year had their water reduced to a trickle because they could not pay their bills. We have now reduced that number by over 60 per cent because we are much more proactive in the way in which we deal with hardship cases.

Members may have heard the Leader of the Opposition on Friday. I will give a bit of context. Each year, the Bureau of Meteorology puts out a national performance report for urban water utilities. The “National Performance Report 2018–19: Urban Water Utilities” came out last week. The Leader of the Opposition jumped on Channel Nine and

said that this report says that it costs \$547 to deliver the service—that is, water—to a Western Australian household, but households are paying \$1 547 for the service, so the government is overcharging by over \$1 000 per home. Of course, the report said nothing of the sort. According to the report, the typical household bill in Perth is \$1 547 a year and it says the operating cost of delivering the service to each home is \$547 per year. The Leader of the Opposition has subtracted one number from the other and got a thousand bucks and said, “You’re overcharging by a thousand bucks.” Of course, the Leader of the Opposition should know that the operating cost of providing water to a household does not include the capital cost of providing that service.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe!

Mr D.J. KELLY: The operating cost is what it takes to run the service once it is built; the capital cost is what it takes to build the service. We do not get the desalination plants for free, we do not get the dams for free and we do not get the pipes for free. They are called capital costs. We have to include that in the cost.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, I heard you three times and no-one laughed. I call you to order.

Mr D.J. KELLY: If the Leader of the Opposition was also across the detail, she would know that the Water Corporation had other obligations put in place when the Water Corporations Act was passed by a previous Liberal government—for example, tax equivalents. The Water Corporation pays an equivalent tax rate to a private enterprise. All those things are costs that the Water Corporation is required to recover when it charges for water. The Leader of the Opposition was given two figures out of this report, subtracted one from the other and went on telly saying, “You’re overcharging people by \$1 000 a year per household.” Leader of the Opposition—wrong, wrong, wrong. She then went on to say on Channel Nine that the government chose to put water charges up by seven per cent when it knew it was already overcharging. Again, I have not seen a seven per cent increase in water charges any time recently.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Not since the Libs were in power.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Not since the Libs were in power, the Treasurer correctly informs me. The Leader of the Opposition saw in the executive summary of this report that prices had gone up in Perth by 7.2 per cent. She clearly did not read the rest of the report, because the body of the report has a completely different figure—it says 3.9 per cent. When we saw that figure, we saw that the executive summary was clearly wrong, so we contacted BOM. Matthew Walker, BOM’s water reporting unit head, sent us an email dated 10 March, in which he says —

In the report, a typical residential bill for Western Australia utilities was erroneously reported in the Executive Summary as a 7.2% increase but should have been reported as 3.9% as per page 23 of the report.

Clearly, either the Leader of the Opposition deliberately misled the public or she just does not understand the details.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Minister, you cannot say “deliberately misled”, so withdraw.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am sorry, I thought I said “either”. She clearly —

Several members interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The opposition can tell us —

The SPEAKER: Minister, withdraw.

Mr D.J. KELLY: My apologies, Mr Speaker. I withdraw that remark.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.J. KELLY: I will let the Leader of the Opposition explain why she went on Channel Nine last week and gave some completely wrong information to the public. Did she simply not read the report? The only explanation I can see is that it was given to her by the opposition spokesperson for water.

The SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr D.J. KELLY: If the Leader of the Opposition is going to rely on information from the member for Cottesloe, she is in serious trouble.

CORONAVIRUS — STIMULUS PACKAGE

150. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Deputy Premier:

I refer to a public announcement by FurBaby Cafe, and I quote —

We have ... invested everything, to fight against Western Australia’s failing economy, in order to keep FurBaby going and keep all the staff in employment. With the upcoming global recession and coronavirus crisis upon us ... we are shutting down ...

Why is the government not immediately instigating a broad-based economic stimulus package for small businesses to deal with the failing economy and now the coronavirus pandemic?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question because it really underpins the importance of the message that the Premier has been providing to the Western Australian community. Unlike others who have a more, shall we say, alarmist perspective on what members of the community should be doing, the Premier's advice to the community has been resolute—that is, this is not the time to walk away from your local cafe, this is not the time to stop shopping at your local business and this is not the time to not go about your lives normally; this is the time to continue to move around in your community and support local businesses and shops. It is important that people remember that COVID-19 will put pressure on us all, but the best way that the community can respond to that is to continue to observe good, simple instructions from the Chief Medical Officer, continue to make sure we practise commonsense and continue to stay calm. Regrettably, there will be an economic impact as a result of COVID-19, which is the reason that Western Australia is so well served by the stimulus package that the government already has in place. The commonwealth government is now joining us in providing support to the local economy, and that is welcome, because it means that we have governments of all levels and persuasions working together for a great outcome for Western Australia. I just reiterate the words of the Premier: continue to go about your lives as you have. Understand the risk, listen to the message and act with commonsense, but above all, continue to support your local businesses in your community.

CORONAVIRUS — STIMULUS PACKAGE**151. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Deputy Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. With jobs being lost now, how come the government is not delivering a stimulus package to support small businesses? Is the state government simply sitting back and relying on the federal Liberal government to do it for it?

Several members interjected.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: This is serious.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

Mrs A.K. Hayden: Go and talk to your small businesses.

Mr R.H. COOK: I know that if the member is going to come into the small business portfolio, she has to know more about the Red Bull Air Race than she has demonstrated so far. If the member is to enter the debate, she will need to do her homework and get across her brief. Do not come into this place trying to preach economic stimulus without having the track record of this government, which has already cut payroll tax, with another cut due in January next year, and has already introduced stamp duty rebates of up to \$50 000 for off-the-plan developments to help our local businesses and building industry going forward. We have undertaken a \$200 million maintenance blitz for every school in WA, including the schools in the member's electorate, where local businesses can go and do small-level work, which will generate jobs and enable them to spend their hard-earned cash in local businesses. We provided another \$80 million for hospitals right around the state. No state government has done more than this one to stimulate the economy and try to insulate small businesses and other businesses in the community from the impact of COVID-19. Thank goodness for the McGowan government, because if it were left up to the Liberal Party after the way it left the state's finances and drove the economy into the ground, we would all be doomed.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.

ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL 2019*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [3.00 pm]: I will pick up from where I left off before 90-second statements. I was talking about the impact this bill will have on the south west interconnected system. One component was not anticipated—it came out of the blue—and is not something that I will fight over, minister. When a set of poles and wires in a deteriorating state is up for replacement in an area with a relatively small number of customers at the end of a line—in some cases, only one customer—Western Power would normally be constrained by regulations to replace those poles and wires with a new set. However, once this bill passes, Western Power will have the scope to at least give consideration in the appropriate decision-making process to a standalone power system as a potential source of energy for that customer. That is the scope for Western Power for people who are already connected to the grid. However, an issue remains for people who are not connected. The only option for them will be to connect to the grid with poles and wires at a considerable cost. This is an emerging issue for regional Western Australia, although it is not a new issue. We in the Nationals and on this side of the house support strong regional equipment initiatives and do not want public utility settings that constrain the expansion of regional

Western Australia. What might loosely be called the headwork costs—the new connections—can be quite substantial. In our mind, that can constrain regional development, particularly in those parts of the state that are experiencing organic growth. I think the state has an obligation to allow organic growth to occur. I can understand taking a different approach for a leapfrog development that would entail a significant investment by the state. However, where growth is occurring in a managed and sustained way, it makes sense for the costs to be kept at a fair and reasonable level to support our regional development objectives. That is one of the challenges when considering the next steps to take.

The Economics and Industry Standing Committee's inquiry into microgrids found that there is the potential for consumer protection issues when moving to alternative energy sources and modifying community-owned arrangements. Certainly, in this case, state-owned assets will have that potential. I do not have access to the sensitive information that the government has about Western Power's network ownership structures. Our policy going into the last election made sense, but that will not be the position of the minister, I am sure. Consumer protection issues, whether applied through regulation or through state-owned structures, are important.

I will take some licence and talk about the future network, which will be hugely important. New technologies can provide an alternative to connecting to the network. If they do provide an alternative to connecting to the network, those who get their energy from an alternative energy source will not contribute to the network charges, and that is a big issue. We do not want people disconnecting from the energy grid en masse because that would mean fewer people sharing the cost of the network. Regional areas, as a proportion of the customer base, are a higher proportion of the network. I think 52 per cent of the network supplies to something like two or three per cent of the customer base. This will be an increasing issue. We will still need to move electrons around. I am not sure whether we will need the big transmission lines that we used to need, given that energy will come from different sources, but we will still need the grid. Incentives to maintain connections to share the cost of the network will be important, particularly when new technology comes on stream. We know from trials that a lot of that technology is now playing a significant role in enhancing and supporting the network.

The Nationals will support this bill. We will raise a number of issues, such as those the member for Bateman highlighted, in the consideration in detail stage on behalf of our constituents. We want to see the opportunity for technology to play out in the network, which is based on a very old model. Given those changes, this legislation certainly goes one small step towards assisting in the better delivery of services, particularly for reliability issues in some of the thinner parts of our network.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [3.06 pm]: I rise to talk about only one aspect of the Electricity Industry Amendment Bill 2019. I am not across all the details of the information on the Pilbara. I rely on the wise judgement of the member for Warren–Blackwood to guide our party on those matters. I will talk about the final part of the bill that relates to facilitating new technologies in Western Power's network. The minister's second reading speech states —

Separate to the Pilbara reforms, and also included in this bill, are amendments to facilitate the use of standalone power systems and energy storage devices in Western Power's network.

I highlight that in 2014, when I was newly elected to represent Kalbarri, there were a series of disastrous power outages in that town. As a result, Western Power looked at all the maintenance it had done. It had put silicon on the lines yet the power source was unreliable. It got to the point at which the town was chock-a-block full of orange and white generator boxes because Kalbarri had a completely disastrous summer during the school holidays and Easter was looking problematic. I pay tribute to the then Minister for Energy, Hon Mike Nahan, because I presented a grievance to the Parliament about that very matter. After that grievance, he thought about the issue, had some discussions and approved government funding to develop what might be called a microgrid in Kalbarri, based roughly around the development of a battery storage device in the town. Under the Liberal–National government, significant local generation from a private source was to go into that device. That would have meant the town could be isolated from the grid. The town is on a very long feeder line. I will comment on something the member for Warren–Blackwood said about those lines in a minute. The proposal was to have a significant source of local energy production. The line could then be used to flow electrons north and south so that if there was an excess of electricity, that could flow into the grid and be bought by consumers further south.

That was really good. Unfortunately, the current project is not quite so good, because all there is is a battery and after a couple of hours the power disappears. It will help to meet many of Western Power's regulatory outcomes because it takes out a lot of those little spikes, brownouts et cetera, but it does not account for the lengthy outages that might go for up to a week. They cannot be guaranteed to not happen; whereas, under the other plan they may.

Throughout that process, I had the opportunity to talk to Western Power's CEO—there have been a number of CEOs in that time—and many others about the issues that Western Power faced to put this battery in place. This was seen as some sort of test to see how far they could go with the regulations—stretching it far enough so they could have a storage system in Kalbarri. I am very pleased to see this. I assume from my discussions with the member for Warren–Blackwood that this will indeed help facilitate matters in future and make it more simple. Another town where this is also happening is in Perenjori where there is a battery storage system that relies on the

grid to keep it charged, but with encouragement for the local community to put in place solar power et cetera to be fed back into that. A couple of towns in the midwest could have also benefited from this technology, but I believe more local generation is needed in both cases. Anyway, it is a good start.

I am pleased to see that the bill provides for more frequent local generation in the future. I think of other towns such as Mullewa, where there has been a long run of disastrous power outages, and Dongara, the town where my office is. Quite often my staff go home because there is nothing they can do when there is no power. Oftentimes we are told that there will be no power due to a planned power outage; then it does not happen but we go home anyway, only to come back the next day to find there is no power then. These are little problems that happen in country towns. There are now two feeders running in to Dongara and the power is a little more reliable than it used to be. It is the same for Jurien Bay, Cervantes and other coastal communities, which have been badly affected previously. Some things can be done on the network to improve power reliability, but putting in things like these storage devices and having more local power generation is a very, very good way of doing that.

I will now talk about standalone power systems. Standalone power systems may have been introduced by this government, but they were being talked about well before. I am pleased the government has rolled them out and I compliment the minister on the 57 that are in the process of being rolled out at the moment. That has been a great outcome instead of having long spaghetti-like feeder lines as there are in country areas. My farm in Badgingarra used to be on the very end of a feeder line. It came from Moora, via Dandaragan, and meandered its way to Badgingarra and a whole heap of farms before finally ending up at my place. If there was a fault anywhere on that system, there would be no power on my farm. Sometimes the provider would think that the system was fine because there was power everywhere else, but we would have no power. We could often go five or six days at a time without power. As farmers, we had to put in place our own mechanism to deal with that, in terms of generators et cetera. Due to the unreliability of that system, as a farmer and resident I would now never go to Western Power for an extension of a system in that area. If we wanted to put in a bore and we needed power, we would put in solar power. If we wanted to put a house in an isolated section of our land, we would put power in with batteries, which are cheaply available from many independent sources. I do not think Western Power should go hunting down that road unnecessarily. There are plenty of other companies that can do new installations and the costs for Western Power to get into that space would be a bit over the top; I would leave that to the private sector. But if somebody wanted a connection, I guess they would be entitled to ask for it and Western Power would have to provide it. But I suggest there are far more cost-effective ways of doing that than using Western Power, which provides the Rolls–Royce of power. I have a system on the farm that cost me about \$19 000 and it works fine. I dare say, a Western Power system would be a lot more expensive.

I want to question something that the member for Warren–Blackwood said. I think he said that we should make sure that people continue to contribute to the distribution network just because it runs past their area; is that what the member was saying?

Mr D.T. Redman: No, it is not.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is good, because there is a whole network running through miles and miles of places where people used to live, where they do not live anymore, that may be de-energised. That cannot be removed very easily because it is a capital cost and is there just in case somebody wants to connect. There is a view that there is a power system there and people can use it. Standalone systems are a great way of providing that “in-case mode” if somebody wants that. I believe that that unnecessary infrastructure should be removed because I do not know how keeping that in place is an efficient way of running the system.

I am very pleased to see the changes in the bill and I commend that section of the bill to the house.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [3.14 pm] — in reply: I appreciate the support of the Liberal and National Parties for the Electricity Industry Amendment Bill 2019. I look forward to having a conversation in consideration in detail, but I will just go through a couple of things. The first is that the temporary access charge in the Pilbara is not a tax; it is a charge. There was a court decision on the east coast that made that clear. This is not a tax. If it were a tax, the Clerk would require that the bill be put in two parts, because we cannot introduce a tax in one bill; there must be a standalone bill. The Clerk clearly agrees with the government that the TAC is not a tax—I just wanted to make that clear—it is a charge. The bill will be recovering costs and is designed to recover the financial costs borne by Horizon. I am happy to go into detail on that, but it is trying to recover the costs created by the South Hedland power station, which significantly increased Horizon’s fixed costs in the Pilbara. The problem is that when Horizon lost customers to other providers, those fixed costs remained. Of course, we do not want customers of alternative providers unnecessarily paying higher costs. We are not recovering all the costs of Horizon; we are covering about two-thirds of the cost. That gives Horizon an incentive to continue to reduce its costs because it has to bear about a third of the costs.

I also want to make it clear that there will be no increase in price for those contestable customers, because they will only move if their new bill is lower than their existing bill. Their new bill will be the charge from their new provider plus 10¢. They will only move to that new provider if their new charge plus 10¢ is lower than their existing charge. Customers will pay more than they theoretically have but they are still going to be paying less than they actually do. Does the member see the point I am making?

Mr D.C. Nalder: My concern was more that if Horizon played games with the asset assessment and that then pushed prices up.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is the regulatory asset base question. I will get to that in a second.

Mr D.C. Nalder: I was combining the whole lot into one.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The RAB and the TAC are different things.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Where they can't be competitive?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is correct. The RAB is in respect of fixed assets. We are recovering it through the same.

Mr D.C. Nalder: You're just combining it?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, but the TAC is just for existing fixed costs for the operation. The biggest thing is the South Hedland station. It will be reviewed annually and has to be approved by the Treasurer. There is an expectation that it will decline over time, and that is the position we have taken to industry.

Mr D.C. Nalder: As they drive efficiencies?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As Horizon performs better over time and as the generation profile changes over time. For example, imagine there was a new block load in the Pilbara that took on the obligations of the South Hedland power station. We could get that obligation off the book of Horizon and, therefore, there would no longer be an issue. Unfortunately, of course, the problem is that some block loads in the Pilbara have been looked at and the costs are so high that operators would rather build a new plant rather than take on the South Hedland plant. That is one problem. That deal is so out of the money it will continue to cause trouble for a long time. However, the member is absolutely right: we will not go above 10¢, and we hope that over time it will reduce. With regard to why we chose the cap at the level we did, when we were discussing this internally, I asked, "What would 30 per cent of volume in the north west interconnected system be?" This was the figure—1 200 megawatt hours, which means that 30 per cent of the load will be contestable. When contestability started in the south west, it was not at 50 megawatt hours; it was a much higher figure. We have chosen that figure because there has to be enough for the competitor to make it worth their while. We thought that 30 per cent of volume was a fair enough figure; I asked what it would be, and that was the figure they came up with. It is absolutely the expectation that that approximately 1 230-megawatt hour figure will come down over time.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Just with that 30 per cent, is that five per cent of customers, 10 per cent of customers?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is 30 or 40 customers; it is quite a small number of customers.

Mr D.C. Nalder: I imagine it is a small percentage, but a large volume.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, large volume. I have some advice here. Obviously, we do not want to say exactly who the customers are, but it is 30 to 40 customers. There are some large industrial loads, port loads, a few other big operators and a couple of large supermarkets, to give the member a picture.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Supermarkets qualify?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Large supermarkets, yes. It is the north west; large supermarkets have a large load, with freezers and stuff, and then, of course, the air-conditioning load is pretty big up in the north west. That is the idea of the temporary access contribution. It is not a tax; it is a charge. If it were a tax, it would have to be in a standalone bill. We had advice that we could actually do it administratively, but for a range of reasons, including transparency, we have decided to include it in the legislation so that there can be no doubt about its parameters.

In respect of the regulatory asset base and the access charges, the light-handed access code will set out principles under which network prices will need to be set. Horizon Power and other network businesses that will, in the future, be subject to regulation will need to publish how they adhere to these principles. Network pricing will be based on negotiation between access seekers and, initially, Horizon. If the parties cannot agree on a price, an independent arbitrator will determine efficient prices in accordance with the pricing principles.

It is a light-handed process because to go through a full access arrangement like Western Power does would mean that the cost of regulation would be so high as to be ridiculous. We have tried to make it a simple process so it is nice and easy. The initial RAB will be specified in the light-handed access code at the start of the regime. We are seeking independent advice from the Western Australian Treasury Corporation to scrutinise Horizon's proposal for its initial RAB. Advice has been sought on different options and impacts on prices for customers. The value will be set with reference to certain principles that are outlined in the light-handed access code. These consist of accepted economic principles that are routinely applied in the regulation of third party access to infrastructure.

It is a lot easier here, because there are only two parties. In the future there might be more, but it is basically just Horizon and Alinta at this stage. Energy Policy WA has worked very hard to come to an arrangement that is not overly prescriptive, because that would increase costs, but that provides a proper outcome for the parties seeking

access. It has been reported to me—I do not know what has been said to the member—by Alinta that it has found Horizon to be much more engaged over the last short period. There have been certain management changes at Horizon. We have extended the interim arrangements in the north west interconnected system once, and that was done in a cooperative fashion between Horizon, Alinta, Rio Tinto and the others that are impacted by those changes. We have had quite a good level of cooperation getting to this point. Obviously, we would like to get this done as quickly as possible—nudge, nudge, wink, wink, upper house!—because if we can have it enacted by 1 July, we will not have to do another temporary set of changes for the north west interconnected system.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Just on the base evaluation, is the assessment an independent assessment?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is independently assessed by Western Australian Treasury Corporation.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Okay.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: With regard to the standalone power systems, the first thing I will say is that if a person wants to disconnect from the network and install their own standalone power system, they are welcome to do so. The member for Moore said that he has a \$17 000 unit that is not provided by government. He has made that arrangement himself and uses it for whatever purpose. Any farmer can go and do that right now, and if it is a new connection, they can do it themselves. Of course, it would mean that they would not get the benefit of Western Power providing it as part of their bill from Synergy. What happens with standalone power systems is that Western Power cannot bill the customer. The customer will still be billed by Synergy and there will be a commercial relationship between Synergy and Western Power to recover Western Power's costs through Synergy, in the same way that they do for other infrastructure that Synergy uses.

The advantage of this over what the member for Moore has is reliability. They say that the difference between 95 per cent reliability and 99.8 per cent reliability is a whole lot of money. This is a network reliability standard for a standalone power system, so of course they are much more expensive than the \$17 000 unit. The good news is that the first 57 will be cheaper than the six that I think the member for Riverton did when he was minister, and we expect the next 100 to be cheaper again than the first 57; we think we can drive costs down.

On page 128 of the report of the microgrids inquiry is this chart that the member should have a look at. I have it here, and I will table it in a minute, but I will talk to it first. It is one of my favourite pieces of paper. It is a heat map showing the costs of connection on the Western Power network. We can see that the lovely dark green in the metropolitan area represents less than \$10 000 over a 30-year connection. The dark red out in the wheatbelt represents more than \$240 000. We can see that there is an embedded subsidy from metropolitan Western Power customers to wheatbelt Western Power customers—it is 24 times the amount. That is not a negative; I am not saying that that is a bad thing, I am just making that point. But because of that very high cost of service in the wheatbelt, even if it is expensive to put in network-equivalent infrastructure, it is still cheaper than replacing the poles and wires; it would cost \$240 000, plus maintenance, over 30 years. The figure we all quote is, I think, 51 to 52 per cent for three per cent of customers. There can be a very significant reduction in overall costs by putting these in. Of course, people are not going to rush out and do it tomorrow because it is only at the point at which replacement would otherwise take place.

Interestingly, after the recent Yanchep fires, the CEO of Western Power made the point that even though the feeder line into Yanchep was completely burnt to the ground and there was no capacity to carry anything, it had the line back up within 36 hours, which is an extraordinary achievement and just shows us how good those linesmen are who work for Western Power. Of course, we put the lines back up because that is the kit that is sitting in the warehouse. Maybe in five or six years' time we will have different options. What we might do when that happens is put temporary generation in while we do a plan to create a microgrid, because that might be a better outcome than spending the money on replacing the poles.

As the technology becomes more mature and more embedded in the business, we will be able to make better decisions about how to respond to the changing nature of the grid. They call it de-meshing the grid, if that is the right term. They now have a grid planning tool that drives the way they look at the engineering, and they can see that it will break up into smaller and smaller parts. It will be more nuanced. There will be different solutions in different locations. The Kalbarri microgrid was, of course, kicked off by the member for Riverton when he was a minister. I am not sure what the member for Moore was talking about, because we are just implementing the plan; we have just about finished that. There is a network battery for Perenjori, which, as the member said, is the best. That is not a microgrid, but Kalbarri is a microgrid.

The member raised private generation. People can use private generation today to join the network. There is no legal question about private generation joining the grid. As the member for Riverton knows, most of the generation over the last 20 years has been privately owned. If somebody felt they could make money by sticking a generator somewhere, they could test that up and see whether they can make a business out of it.

I will table that document now—it is worth having a look at, if the member is interested.

[See paper [3260](#).]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In respect of the rolling out of standalone power systems and the implications for the grid, it is not about winding back the grid; I think that was the term that the member for Warren–Blackwood used. It is about applying the right technology at the right location. I am not quite sure about the member’s question about new connections.

Mr D.T. Redman: On the grid, as you grow, there are fairly substantial headwork costs for new customers to come on. Where it is organic with natural expansion, I would have thought there is a state obligation to pick that up. I can understand if you are leapfrogging. That is an issue that is emerging.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The challenge is that, in the regulatory framework, Western Power cannot pay for infrastructure unless it is required by the grid. The challenge is that where there are new obligations and new load is coming onto the grid, in theory that new load should pay for the upgrade. The challenge is when it is an incremental upgrade that leads to significant additional cost. This is a challenge right across Australia. It is one of the big debates in the regulatory space. What the member is saying is that if his neighbour has a standalone power system and he cannot be connected to the grid because the wire no longer runs near enough to him to be connected to it —

Mr D.T. Redman: Yes. I am talking about expansion. If a business wants to come onto the grid, in many cases the cost of connection in metropolitan Perth is very different from the cost of connection in regional Western Australia.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes. But that is a function of the cost of connecting in different locations, if the member sees what I mean, because each customer is expected to bear the cost of their own connection.

Mr D.T. Redman: Of course, and we are saying that is constraining regional Western Australia.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Of course, but that is actually the aim of the regulatory framework. The aim is to drive efficient use of the infrastructure. That is one of the challenges. If we move away from that, we potentially end up with inefficient use of the infrastructure, which pushes up the average cost.

Mr D.T. Redman: Unfortunately, the whole of the infrastructure is in Perth and nowhere else. It is very centralist in itself.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is about who pays. The idea is that additional infrastructure is paid for by the users of the additional infrastructure. It is a challenge in the whole area of fixed asset regulation. In the gas pipeline industry, the goldfields pipeline is unique because it is partly covered and partly uncovered. The whole debate about that is currently live today in the Economic Regulation Authority with the owners of that asset. There are no simple solutions in the fixed asset space.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Can you comment on the battery issue and what is included and what is not?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It would probably be easier for me to do that in consideration in detail. The whole point here is that we are trying to recognise more parts of the system for Western Power in its regulated asset base. That is the trick here. Western Power has \$1 billion or whatever a year of regulated income. The more we can use that to do things, the better it is. We have to try to reduce the average cost of service by using what we are doing anyway. If Western Power does more of this and less of that, we can bring down that average cost.

Dr M.D. Nahan: These are common themes across Australia. This was the debate at the national level to try to facilitate and address the natural monopoly issue. Is some of what you have drawn on in this bill drawn on from national issues?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We are in advance of everybody else. I met with Energy Networks Australia last year some time, and it made the point that this is really a Western Australian story. Tasmania and Victoria are not going to have many of these standalone systems. New South Wales might have 100 or 200. South Australia might have a few hundred. Queensland will probably have a couple of thousand. We will end up with 6 000 or more. It is a Western Australian thing. There is a real business opportunity here, and we are trying to work with the private sector, through Western Power, to make sure that the business opportunities are executed in Western Australia, for the future as well.

Taking on board the comment from the member for Warren–Blackwood about the ownership of Western Power, I make the point that one of the reasons we can move ahead of the game here is because we own it, so we do not need to have a debate about who does what and who sends the bill. On the east coast, there is always a debate about is it network, is it retail, is it a new model, and how do we provide competition? As I say, if somebody wants to do it themselves, they can do it now. There is nothing to prevent somebody from doing it themselves. It is just that if they do it through us, for them it will be at low cost, because they will just have to pay their electricity bill, and the benefit for the network is that we are reducing the cost to serve our most expensive customers.

I think that is it, unless I have missed something.

Mr D.C. Nalder: There is a broader question, and it is probably a bit hard to deal with this in consideration in detail, but it is around the pricing mechanism for the two-thirds of the volume who sit below. Is there a risk that Horizon Power will put the cost burden on them to subsidise up above to retain the 30 to 40 in the top third?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Horizon's cost stack is very big. It is clearly significantly higher than the cost stack of its potential competitors.

Dr M.D. Nahan: It is substantial.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It will be interesting. This is the same debate we had about the amalgamated Synergy. It is not worth doing a regulatory framework for a couple of hundred megawatts, if the member knows what I mean—it would not make any sense—but we are going to continue to drive Horizon to try to reduce its costs. I made the point the other day in Geraldton with the Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney) that the great news is that for the first time ever, technology is moving in Western Australia's direction, because these new renewable technologies are now being done at a lower price, so we can make sure that we can take advantage of all that.

I told members that this is my favourite piece of paper. My second favourite is a book that I have been given —

Mr D.T. Redman: The microgrid inquiry report!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, of course! No. It is a list of costs to serve for Horizon. That drives the decision-making. We then know, with the energy transformation strategy for the SWIS, how much it will cost to provide electricity to any particular location in the state. We, effectively, have only one balancing point. If we had more balancing points, we could make better investment decisions. Effectively, we now know that better for Horizon as well. We have a better understanding of its cost structure and, therefore, how we can use technology to drive out costs.

Thank you all very much. I look forward to having a conversation in consideration in detail.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 3 amended —

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I want to go through a few general points to understand the definitions. I do not have any problem with the definitions per se, but I want to explore what is and is not included in the definition of “stand-alone power system” on page 6. Paragraph (b) of the definition reads —

which are not connected to another electricity network (other than that of the customer or customers);

If a farm has a Western Power network going to it now and the network needs some upgrading, either demanded by Western Power or the customer, under this definition the standalone power system has to be disconnected from the grid; is that the issue? If so, why?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, that is correct. If it is still connected to the grid, it is not a standalone system. Of course, the technology could be used, but it would not be a standalone power system. Western Power is getting into the business of creating electricity, which, as the member knows, is not what it does. Therefore, there has to be a restriction on Western Power not to compete with people who otherwise provide electricity. This is the mechanism to do that. It has to be disconnected from the grid and not feeding back into the grid.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: My experience is that, at least initially, people might want a grid connection and a standalone system. I will give a couple of examples. Farm A or business A is on the grid now. If it is connected to the grid, it does not have to be a system of the same scale, potentially, as a standalone system. That is one issue. The second issue is that once the grid has been cut out and a standalone system has been put in, other farmers who might expand in the future are locked into standalone systems. There will be issues of scale. I stand to be corrected on this, but I think a standalone system would not have the scale of throughput that the grid distribution system would have. Once the grid is cut, future extensions to that grid would be locked out.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I appreciate the point that the member is making. I think it is part of the point that has been made by the member for Warren–Blackwood. The member is probably correct. The point is that the cost of providing the power through the grid is no longer the lowest cost option. Therefore, it would be more expensive not to disconnect the grid. Does the member see what I mean? This is now a lower cost option. People will have to think about what they will do for expansions and new demand in the future, but whatever that is, it will not be just keeping the grid up, because the grid is not the lowest cost option anymore.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Further to that line of questioning, Bannister Downs Dairy is an example in my electorate; it is just out of Northcliffe and is fairly isolated. It has quite a big load and it had a fairly substantial expansion recently. It had to upgrade its power source because of a capacity issue. It was already connected, so it was a capacity upgrade. It was going to be charged a sum in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. As it turned out, it assessed its load and it knew that it would be a big payer, so it came in pretty cheap. That highlights the hybrid option, which is, even having a thin line that does not carry the capacity to the facility, it still might be cost-effective for Western Power to put

in a battery of sorts if there are varying demands over the day. That might be more cost-effective than upgrading the lines. I wonder whether there is scope in this legislation that would allow for that hybrid-type option in which new technology could be brought to bear significantly more cheaply than a capacity upgrade. That could cater for the spikes in load that, within a dairy, would be at different times of the day, but is not a consistently large load.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I want to emphasise that the expectation is that in a decade there will be 6 000 of these. There are 1.2 million connection points—I think that is the right figure. It is close enough. We are talking about a very small number compared with the whole thing. A dairy will not be served by a standalone power system. Under the current regulatory framework, Western Power could already put in a battery to support that type of situation.

The Walpole situation was one of these things. One of the problems in Kalbarri was the big swings between summer and winter. The whole idea of the microgrid is to overcome the peculiarity of a particular feeder. This is not about those types of situations. This is about an individual customer—an individual farmer or an individual house. A farmer might have a shearing load at a certain time of the year that is significantly larger than it is at other times of the year. I saw a small one of these out at a factory that served electric fences. It was pretty small. These are not intended to provide power to a large facility such as a dairy. This is for an individual farm.

Mr D.T. Redman: They could put in a big battery to augment that supply.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Who knows? I am not an engineer. There will be a lot of engineering solutions. This is aimed at low-load individual customers and when it is appropriate, based on the alternative, because it is not as though Western Power is just going to run out and do it. In theory, with the six that were done by the member for Riverton and the 57 that we have done, the wire is still there, because that way they are still connected to the grid and they meet all their tests. This is to get away from that issue. Interestingly, when the people in Esperance who got it from Horizon Power were first offered it, nobody wanted it, and now it is what people prefer. As members know, I went down and saw them.

Mr D.T. Redman: They took so many years to get off their old systems that they just —

Dr M.D. Nahan: You mean “get on”.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, they used to have these—what are they?—48-volt systems.

Mr D.T. Redman: They were 32-volt systems.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: They were 32-volt systems, and they spent all this time getting on to the 240, and now we are cutting the 240.

Mr D.T. Redman: See the history.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, we can see the history. But I went down there to do the formal ribbon cutting. If the best alternative is to have a hybrid system, that is still going to be available. Currently, standalone power systems are effectively excluded. I suppose the challenge at the moment is that Synergy could do them, Western Power could not; however, Synergy can only send people the bill for the A1 or whatever regulated tariff, whereas Western Power has access to the regulated income that the Economic Regulation Authority allows. This stretches the costs over more people and is therefore a more effective outcome.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I would just like to explore Western Power’s role. If one goes to a farm and puts in a standalone system, Western Power is there because it is going to provide a higher reliability than if someone did it themselves at a higher cost.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Western Power can stick it on the regulated asset base and average it across the grid. That should be a positive for the people in the wheatbelt.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, and in the city too.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, to the extent that it is required. The purpose of this is to take the grid away.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Why? Is it just a regulatory impediment?

Mr W.J. Johnston: No.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The grid exists now and it provides a secondary backup. All these standalone systems have batteries, solar, gas or diesel, or whatever. A fourth—the grid—would be good.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, I can explain that. This is a specific set of circumstances. If a grid continues to be there, it is going to have to be maintained; therefore, the costs are still there. Members will remember that I tabled a paper that stated that the 30-year cost of connection is over \$240 000. If we put in the standalone power system and left the grid there, there would be no advantage, because we would still be paying for the maintenance of the line. It is a choice, because we have to get the saving, and the saving is not having the line. There is an advantage for the farmers because they can get the cropping area back from underneath the line, and that can be quite significant.

It improves not only safety, but also reliability. The member for Moore talked about the challenges of being at the end of the line, and why he did it himself. One gets away from all that, because one has the reliable power from the system rather than the wire. It also reduces the bushfire risk. At the moment, one of the challenges is that if a transient hits the line and it trips, we cannot even look at the line if it is a high-fire danger day, so we go 36 hours without having the line re-energised, which is what happened up in Geraldton. Obviously, Western Power's first priority is to not burn everybody's house down or start bushfires. That is another advantage. There is less bushfire risk; improved safety on farms, because there are no overhead wires to catch farm machinery; the farmers get cropping space back, because they do not have to leave space for the passage of the overhead infrastructure; and they get much improved reliability because the power is coming from outside their house rather than 500 or 600 kilometres away in Collie.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This is really just for the record. Can the minister confirm that in moving from a poles and wires solution to a standalone power system solution, there will be no changes to the tariff arrangements for the customer? Secondly, who will send them the bill?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, the tariff question is completely separate, and Synergy will continue to send the bill because Western Power cannot retail electricity. That is fundamentally why we have had to do this—we had the challenge of who gets the advantage. Western Power is getting an advantage because it is lowering its average cost, but Synergy still needs to bill its customers.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: If a farmer decided for their own reasons that they would like to have the line continued, they could make the decision to put the standalone power in themselves, like the member for Moore did, and maintain the grid. Is that true?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes. I mean, people can do this today. Except for the very fringe-of-grid, I think there is a very, very strong reason why people would want to stay connected to the grid. I think it is a better outcome. But these are unique circumstances. Remember, I am talking about 6 000 or maybe 10 000 connections over time out of 1.2 million. It is not going to be the normal way to get electricity. It is great that we are moving first. We want to make sure this better outcome is allowed, rather than having the regulations direct the outcome.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: A whole heap of points come up once we start opening up the discussion here. There is another point now: when a line needs replacement, that is the trigger point under this legislation meaning that Western Power will have the scope to offer up an alternative. We know that farmers have different levels of development. There might be farmers who might want to expand in five or 10 years, or if they have children coming back to the farm, whatever it might be, and the demand today for their power needs is significantly less than what it may be in the future. If there is a decision today by Western Power very separate from the farmer to have a standalone power system as distinct from maintaining the lines, in five years, when there is a need to build a big dairy or expand a feedlot—whatever it might be—which needs substantially more power, is the farmer disadvantaged by this? Indeed, going back to the first decision, do they have a choice? As the member for Riverton said, if they wanted to stay connected to the grid, would Western Power be obliged to make the necessary investments for them to do so?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Do not forget that, currently, if a farmer needs to upgrade their infrastructure, they are going to get a headworks charge, going back to the discussion we had. If a farmer went from a 10-kilowatt capacity to a 20-kilowatt capacity, they are probably going to have a headworks charge for that increase anyway because there are probably impacts back through the grid. Because it is a long line, it will probably be more expensive for someone in the wheatbelt than it is —

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Does the consumer have a say in that decision or is it purely Western Power's economic decision?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am talking about the current framework.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: No, when this comes into place, so when the line is up for replacement, is that just straight out Western Power's decision?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, not at this time. Look, in a decade's time, probably, but not at this stage. We are working very cooperatively with people.

Mr D.T. Redman: Offering people a choice?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Obviously, Western Power has to make a decision based on the financial position of the business, but, no, we are not going places and telling people what to do. This is one of the interesting things: we are now getting people asking for them, coming to us and saying, "Why aren't I getting one?" We think it is going to be years before we get into this trouble about people not wanting them. When my friend the member for Riverton first offered them down in Esperance, there was resistance. When I went down there the other day to cut the ribbon, there was celebration. There has been a marked change in attitudes, but we are not at the stage yet of telling people what to do.

If a farmer cuts the line and has a small system and then needs more power later, they are modular, so the farmer can add power later on the same basis as the existing overhead, whereby the customer still has to pay for the infrastructure when they change the infrastructure.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Just further to the member for Warren–Blackwood’s point, along the line, there will be farmers at different stages. The point is that it may be that two-thirds of them want to go to standalone, but a third do not, for some reason. I imagine that Western Power and Synergy are working on ways to make the system cheaper, and there may be incentives for them to do so. But how does that work in a situation where it is not just an isolated end of a line; it is actually a line that gets taken out? How does one work through that process of whether one can move to it? What choices do people along that line have?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No. Clearly, because of the costs, it will have to be all in or not. A line cannot be partly replaced, because if one-third of customers are with the line, 100 per cent of the customers may as well be with the line because it is cheaper to do it that way. But as I have said, at the moment, we are not talking about rolling out the first six. We have now done 57. We have announced that we are doing another 100. It is going to roll out slowly; we are not forcing this on people. However, the saving is in reducing that 51 per cent figure for the overhead providing the three per cent of customers. Imagine if we could take out one half of one per cent of those customers, that is 15 per cent of the overhead, and that gets a very significant saving, which is then shared to the system.

I make it clear that often when these reforms come in, whether it is energy market reform or the 2004 reforms from Eric Ripper, there is a question about cost. It is not about reducing costs; it is about making sure costs climb slower over time, remembering that today, just like in the past, Synergy does not fully recover its costs, so we are trying to reduce the future risks of higher costs. Cost and price in our system are not the same thing. This is a debate about costs, not a debate about a price.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: To understand the process, Western Power would put a proposal to a farmer about increasing costs to the grid and it will put a proposal to that party or adjacent parties to move to a standalone system. Then the customer has the ability to accept and reject right now.

Mr W.J. Johnston: At this stage, yes.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: If the customer wants to have a mixed system with the grid, they can build their own and that is their cost. I am just trying to understand the process, that is all. That is all reasonable and we have to go slowly, slowly to catch the monkey. We are following where technology is going; it is the appropriate thing to do. If we scare the horses, they are going to be hard to catch again, and so I have no problem with this at all. Then the cost to the customer would be no different than the grid. The standalone power system is amortised across the regulatory asset base and therefore the charge through Synergy will be the same. It hopefully will be better for Western Power, but the customer will not feel any different, unless, of course, they choose a standalone mixed system for which they will have to pay for the grid itself. Is that all correct, as I understand it?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I am curious about farmers opting to go to standalone power. It is an option that is available to them. Who pulls the poles and the wires out? Will that be Western Power using a contractor or will a farmer be allowed to take it out themselves? Farmers have complained to me about the cost of doing this. If they buy another property and there is a homestead there that is no longer used, and the farmers have been paying for the poles and—as the minister has said, they are a nuisance—farmers have complained to me about the cost of pulling out the poles when that time comes.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: At the moment, when Western Power installs a standalone power system—remember, by the end of the current round it will be only 63 systems—the wires are still up. At the moment, the way that we are doing work around the regulatory problems is to leave the wire intact. The wire is de-energised but it still exists. At the moment, that is the situation. In the future, clearly the wire and the poles will not be needed, so after this legislation changes, there will not be an obligation to keep the wire and the poles in place. It would obviously be better for Western Power if the customer wanted to keep the poles to use them for another purpose because that would be cheaper and the farmer could do whatever he wanted with the poles. But, technically, those poles belong to Western Power, as do the wires.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This is a slight twist on the question from the member for Geraldton. In a circumstance in which this decision is likely to be made, and I know that the systems in Esperance and others are a quarter of a million-dollar systems. They are very robust. They are just about bulletproof. They cater for fairly big loads—in most cases just for a domestic supply and perhaps a shed. I am a bit like the member for Moore; I have an off-grid system for my house in Denmark and the full cost of that was \$50 000, which is substantially less.

Another substantial saving for Western Power is—although I did not have grid connection, so that was a big driver in the headworks cost—if someone has a connection and there are decisions before Western Power, does the customer have the option to take the \$50 000 grant from Western Power and take a system that is robust enough for the customer but does not actually fall within the remit of the utilities?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is a good try, but no. It is not actually a saving because it produces the asset base and the customer is not involved. Therefore, no, that is not an option. But we are trying to use new technology to provide a better service. If I were a farmer, I would appreciate that. If people want to do their own thing, they can do it today. We are not making them do it, but I think they will find that this is the best value for them as a farmer.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Western Power does a little forward planning. I am assuming that it has all of these pilots happening now.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No pilots—stage one.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I did not think that under the thing it was allowed to do it, therefore, it would have to call it some sort of trial or pilot. I thought that was the language one had to use to allow it to happen, but I am not testing that. Projecting out the likely take-up as it knows all its customers, have there been any projections on savings to Western Power; and, if there are savings, would the minister table those projections?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No. I have not seen projections of savings.

Mr D.T. Redman: It doesn't exist or —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If there are projections, I have never seen them. But it could be worked out. I think one of the challenges is that I would be disclosing how much they would cost and, at the moment, Western Power has not disclosed that. There is a saving, but because there are only 6 000 customers, it is not a significant saving. Let us assume if the average cost of service is \$240 000—which is on the heat map the member has in his report—and it is assumed, just as a figure, that we are saving \$50 000 a customer. that is \$300 million over 30 years. Given the size of Western Power, it is important, but it is not core to the business. As I keep saying, it is about trying to avoid future costs so we can keep control over the costs to the system, and it provides much better outcomes to the customers. With the members for Moore and Geraldton and the member at Walpole complaining about grid reliability, these people get metropolitan-style reliability out of these systems.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I have a couple more technical questions that I think I could ask elsewhere, but I would get lost. How does the Economic Regulation Authority treat this? What we are doing to a great extent is substituting operating for capital. I cannot say that I fully understand all the ERA's processes. It has always maintained the regulatory asset base, which is split into a number of sections including maintenance and new works. How is the ERA going to do this? It is important that it has methodology to make sure there are no impediments to it rolling out into the future, and the ERA's methodology can be an impediment.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I could not have said it better myself, could I? I will just get out what the member said in *Hansard* in the past, quote what he said about the Economic Regulation Authority and agree with him. I did it last time; yes, that is right. The reason we are doing this is to make sure that the ERA recognises this as part of the regulated asset base. One of the challenges with the 63 that have been done—the member's six and my 57—is that it is not clear how the ERA would treat it. It is being done through a workaround, which we have discussed, but this is to make sure of that before the 005 code happens so that it is clear. Like the ERA does for everything else that Western Power does, it will have to make an assessment of the economic efficiency. We think it is only going to be small number of customers because they are expensive pieces of kit, but with a 30-year life, they are cheaper than renewing the overhead.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Another bane in the minister's portfolio is the safety regulator. It required us to replace all the poles. I wish this technology had existed back then as we would have saved hundreds of millions of dollars. Is it on board with this also? If so, how has the government made sure it is on board?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is not a brand new concept; it is just a new delivery. It is a new name. Many of these businesses grew out of the uninterruptible power supply industry. It is well understood that the unique bit that Western Australia is doing that nobody else is doing is to get everything to work together as one unit. Solar panels are established technology. Batteries are an established technology. A diesel generator is very old technology. The trick here is the monitoring and orchestration to get it all working and to give good reliability. There is no challenge in the safety regulatory space.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: An upper house committee report —

Mr W.J. Johnston: "Unassisted Failure".

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes; that report highlighted a real weakness of the system. There is no doubt about that. When we had a couple of goes at substituting for replacement of the poles and wire, the regulator was rather truculent at times. I wonder, for instance, whether it might say that it agrees with the government looking at replacing it with standalone systems, but that it has to fix up the grid. Once Western Power gets an edict like it had in the past from the regulator, it will have to replace it. Once all the new capital has been put into replacing it, whether they are poles or otherwise, the government is locked into it in the future. Could subsequent changes be made to the energy safety regulator to facilitate that?

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, we do not need to.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The minister does not think it is necessary to do so, okay.

The ERA creates its own methodologies. I do not know which organisations advise the minister on energy policy. Is somebody else going to make a submission to the ERA on the formation of the policy or is the minister going to leave it up to the ERA?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I love discussing these things with somebody who is deeply embedded in the architecture. Of course, now we are changing the code, and so we are able to apply the code, as we have, at the time the 005 comes along. Of course, as part of its submission, Western Power will explain what its methodology is and the ERA will assess that and make a decision. Without wanting to start a fight with anybody, I was surprised with the 004 code that there was a final decision and then a final, final decision. I encourage everybody to have a clearly transparent process for 005 so that when we get to a decision, it does not come as a surprise to anybody and we can then just implement it without too many hiccups.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 10 put and passed.

Clause 11: Section 104 replaced —

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The proposed section on page 9 relates to the code, and I assume this code is in part 8 of the act. Proposed section 104A(4), starting on line 27, states —

A stand-alone power system cannot be a covered network on its own but it may, in accordance with the Code, be treated as part of the covered network to which it is an adjunct.

I assume that that is trying to differentiate between a microgrid and standalone power system. Otherwise, what does that mean?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is so there does not have to be a code for each separate standalone power system; they are just part of the overall network. Otherwise, we could end up with a bizarre outcome by which there are 6 000 separate codes. It is just part of the network; it is not separate. We could imagine there is a standalone power system. ABC energy company comes along and says it wants to sell electricity across the network because it is a standalone power system and it wants to put a generator next to the one that is already there and connect to the wires and provide power. Obviously, that would be ridiculous, so the standalone power system is part of the broader network. Whoever owns the network, it is part of that.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 12 to 18 put and passed.

Clause 19: Part 8A inserted —

Mr D.C. NALDER: I have a number of questions so we might jump around a little bit, but I refer to proposed section 120H, which is headed “Public comment on amendment or replacement of Pilbara Networks Access Code”. Proposed subsection (2) states —

Before exercising the power, the Minister must make the proposed amendment or replacement available for public comment in accordance with subsection (3).

It also says what the minister must do, but he must have regard to any submission made. Is there any obligation on the minister to take into consideration what has been suggested through those submissions? In the past I have seen that although a minister must have regard for them, they can totally dismiss them, which is what they tend to do. I am trying to understand what is trying to be achieved by this proposed section, because a minister can just totally dismiss any submissions from anyone and say the obligations of the code have been met. There may be good reasons that some of those suggestions should be taken up.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is a question of administration law. If a minister is required by law to publish reasons, the decision is dismissible, whereas if they do not, it is not. There is an absolute right to make the decision, and therefore the decision cannot be challenged. However, if there is any other arrangement, the decision can be challenged because the minister might have been wrong in the reasoning, so we do not want reasoning; we just make the decision and the decision is implemented. Of course, this is the power that the minister currently has and has had since 2004, so it is an established practice in the Western Australian energy system. I note that there is a much more complicated decision process on the east coast. The code over there is made through a process. On occasion—although not regularly—I repeal and replace the code for the SWIS. It is not controversial because everybody knows what I am trying to achieve and it is done in consultation with the industry, but we do not want to restrict the minister’s capacity to do that because we could end up in a potential legal challenge. It is important that it be an unfettered right.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I refer the minister to proposed section 120C. I am sure that he has a copy of the explanatory memorandum. The last dot point on page 45 of the explanatory memorandum states —

- In terms of setting the initial Regulatory Asset Base (RAB), a key component in price setting:
 - Horizon Power’s initial RAB will be prescribed in the PNAC; and
 - for other covered networks, the NSP will determine the RAB in accordance with specific principles and parameters set out in the PNAC ...

Will Horizon’s initial RAB be subject to the same principles and parameters as set out in the Pilbara networks access code?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes. We talked in the second reading debate about the process for establishing the regulatory asset base for Horizon. I will get a report that recommends an outcome and explain why there are any variations from the specific principles in the PNAC. If there is a particular reason for it being different, that will be explained to me.

Mr D.T. Redman: So there will be a difference?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, I am not saying that there will be; I am saying that if there is a difference, that will be explained to me.

Mr D.T. Redman: So you are not certain whether there will be a difference?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We are still going through the process at the moment and the access code is not complete.

Mr D.T. Redman: Can the minister explain why there might be a difference between Horizon's initial RAB and Alinta's?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I certainly can. Effectively, two networks will be covered: the Horizon network and the Alinta network. The Alinta network is not long. Other networks in the Pilbara will not be covered unless they want to be covered. When they want to be covered, a set of rules will have to apply to them. The challenge for a future covered network will be very different from the challenges for Horizon's network.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I seek clarity about what will be in and what will be out of the network. I understand that the system includes, largely, Horizon's network and Alinta's network. That will be the covered system. Under my watch, the negotiations between Alinta and Horizon were often acrimonious and longwinded. In the medium term, what is intended to be included in the coverage, and does Alinta agree with the process today?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is a great question. It is funny because the map that was put in my folder has a pen mark showing the east Pilbara link, which, of course, does not exist, with a question mark next to it! Someone must have used the map to explain something to someone else and that is what has been given it to me. That is quite amusing.

It is a question of the system operation. Obviously, the system operation will be broader but the economic regulatory access is the Horizon network and the little bit of the Alinta network access. As the member quite rightly said, that access negotiation was acrimonious. The application was made just after the member for Victoria Park took over but for the whole time the member for Southern River was the minister there were arguments in the specialist media about this. The Western Australian government would love to have more of the Pilbara covered but, let us be honest, we have three rail lines next to each other; the level of cooperation in the Pilbara has been limited. There are some really exciting opportunities right now. I am talking to a number of businesses about why I think they should use a third party access model for the overhead infrastructure that they want to build right now, but I do not know whether they will do that. There is no change to the criteria. The shadow minister has been talking to some people in the Pilbara and a number of them have told him, I am sure, that they are happy with this because they are not being forced into it.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I think it is absolutely right to bring in Alinta and then provide a system for others to come in, incrementally or otherwise. It is the only way to do it. We must recognise the differences and acknowledge that the status quo remains for the contractual arrangements. That is no problem whatsoever. Alinta has only a very small network.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It is not all their assets, just that one.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Does it include the Alinta facilities going to the BHP Billiton facility?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, it is the 22 kilometres they inherited from BHP.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20 to 25 put and passed.

Clause 26: Part 9B inserted —

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The temporary access contribution is a component of opening up the market to the north west interconnected system. The minister has described who will not be subject to that, depending on what happens in the market and for how long the TAC goes for. One thing that has not been mentioned and that might give confidence to those who will be chasing access and will be subject to the TAC is to know that the TAC will not be changed to their detriment. I asked in the second reading debate whether consideration had been given to providing for an upper limit or even whether the minister could make a statement in Parliament that it is not his intention for the TAC to go up. The intention is certainly for it to go away over time. Can the minister give some assurance to those who want to move into the market that it will not change to their detriment?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is a great question. I have a letter from Jeff Dimery, the managing director and CEO of Alinta, dated 13 December 2019, which I will table, in which he sets out Alinta's report for the Pilbara electricity reforms. Obviously, we gave the business a copy of the bill as part of the consultation process. I spoke to him personally after the bill had been introduced into Parliament, at least in its finalised form. He had access to a copy

and I asked him to put his position in writing. I have written to all the potential players in the Pilbara—those who own the networks—and invited them to comment. I do not think anyone wrote back but we certainly invited them because this is a serious question and we wanted to make sure that there were no negative outcomes, because we do not want to get stuck in a political debate about something that we think is very important. I will table this letter in a moment. We cannot charge more than the historic cost. Although we have not currently disclosed that amount, there is a figure and we can explain that to the people who need to know. The TAC will be 10¢ and I have committed that it will not be more than 10¢. It could come down over time but it cannot go up over time. I am being encouraged to say that it can be adjusted for inflation.

Mr D.T. Redman: So no more than 10¢, adjusted for inflation?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, but the expectation is that it will come down over time. Obviously, Alinta wants it to see it come down quickly, just as it wants to see the contestable threshold come down over time. Our undertaking is that the cap will be 10¢, adjusted for inflation. That is our undertaking to Alinta and I will make that undertaking here as well. The expectation is that it will come down over time in the same way that we would like to see the contestability threshold adjusted over time.

[See paper [3261](#).]

Mr D.C. NALDER: I understand that there are probably good reasons for this, but I notice there are no time limits at all. Can I get the minister's thoughts on whether we should have kept pressure on Horizon to get its act together so that there was a time limit of, say, 10 years?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The cause of the TAC is the South Hedland power station arrangement. That will run for another 23 years. If the member wants to help me find someone who wants to take that power station off our hands, I would look forward to it. I am sure that the member with his wonderful business background could engineer a deal.

Mr D.C. Nalder: I know what they are prepared to pay for it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member knows that that is the challenge for us. We have a problem in that we are way out of the money on a brand new power station, the contract of which is 27 years with 23 to go. However, as demand in the NWIS increases, there will be opportunities. As I said in the second reading debate, Horizon has pitched that capacity to various players. Unfortunately, I also pointed out that those players tell me—I do not know what they say to Horizon—that they could build something brand new at a cheaper cost than they could use the power station. I would like to get rid of it tomorrow, so if the member could help me with that, I would look forward to it.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This might be a global question, but could the minister give me his best response. Can he confirm what customers will and will not be subject to the TAC? I know that already has been included in the tariff structure of Horizon's current customer base, but can the minister provide some clarity for the record?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: While the advisers get my Q&A, the people who pay the TAC are those contestable customers in the NWIS. Alinta already provides electricity to customers in the north west. That is an existing arrangement. The TAC will be paid in respect of those 30 to 40 contestable customers in the NWIS. Those 30 to 40 customers include large export-oriented customers, hospitals, education institutions and large retailers such as supermarkets—the same entities that I mentioned before. Existing customers of Alinta will not pay the TAC because, however their power is getting to them, they are already going through those systems to get to them. The TAC will be paid by those customers currently buying from Horizon. As I mentioned previously, why can I guarantee that none of them pay more tomorrow than they do today? It is because they will only move from their current offer if the alternative offer is better. I do not say the “Alinta offer”, because it could be from anybody. As it happens, Alinta will be the only ones offering, so guess what? But it is not aimed at Alinta; it is aimed at everybody in the system. Nobody will pay more for electricity after this comes in than they do today, because if they are a Horizon customer and will not choose to leave Horizon, and whatever they are paying today, they will pay. If they leave Horizon and go to another provider, then they will pay the TAC.

There is another little interesting thing. If Horizon offers them a contestable offer, they will have to pay the TAC to get the Horizon contestable offer, because even Horizon will have to pay the TAC for contestable customers. It is already in its cost structure. I know it sounds unusual that I can guarantee that nobody will pay more, but I can guarantee that nobody will pay more.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Does the calculation of the TAC include unused but contracted capacity with TransAlta facilities?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: There has always been a problem finding out how much capacity there is. Horizon has systematically overestimated demand. It built too much and probably anticipated that the large users, particularly the ports, would take it on. They did not. What will happen if in the near future TransAlta's generation, for whatever reason, is used up? Part of the fixed cost is the excess capacity Horizon pays for but does not use. Will the TAC go down if, in fact, that excess capacity is consumed by parties other than Horizon?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The aim is to have the TAC come down over time. That is what we are absolutely aiming to do.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Has the minister stated somewhere that if the excess capacity that underpins the first estimate of the TAC gets eroded, he will respond by lowering the TAC?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Absolutely, if Horizon Power's costs come down over time, then we will reduce the TAC. The TAC is designed to get us out of a hole. I do not want to go into conversations that I have had with individual companies, but the member understands that there are only a certain number of companies up there. The great thing about the Western Australian energy sector is that we would be lucky if there are 100 people involved at a senior level, so we all know who to talk to. I have had extensive conversations personally with everybody who will be impacted by this legislation. I am not saying that people are happy; I am saying everybody understands what we are doing and accepts that it is the way forward.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 27 to 29 put and passed.

Clause 30: *Electricity Corporations Act 2005* amended —

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I understand that in this clause there are amendments to the Electricity Corporations Act to deal with the contestability threshold.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Is that in clause 30?

Mr W.J. Johnston: We are on clause 30, page 64.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I am not sure whether it is in here. There are amendments to the Electricity Corporations Act in respect to the contestability threshold.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Have I got that wrong?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Okay.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Does the member want me to explain what it is?

Mr D.T. Redman: Yes.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It provides extra authority for Western Power to do these things. Western Power can only do things that it is specified to do under the legislation, so this clause allows it to do this new thing, which is to provide the standalone power systems. That is what this clause will do.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I was going to ask a question about batteries before, but we voted on that clause too quickly. Although it does not come under this clause, I would like to ask my question. Some of the preparation documents indicate that batteries would be included in the regulatory asset base on only the distribution rather than the transmission; am I right? If I am wrong, please tell me; and, if I am right, why?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The use of batteries in the system is, of course, evolving rapidly. As the member knows, the rollout of batteries is happening now. We are doing 10 now and we announced one the other day at Ellenbrook. We will see where they go next in the distribution level, but there is still a debate about their applicability to Western Power or an energy company at the transmission level. I was talking to someone the other day who has a proposal for a solar farm, and they said that they were going to include a battery in their solar farm. I also cut the ribbon at the Badgingarra solar farm. They have made it clear that they might do other things in the future on the site—perhaps battery or maybe even a peaker. There is a lot of flexibility around. It is not clear exactly where batteries fit into the transmission system, but there is no question that it is better understood in the distribution system, so as stakeholders confirm exactly where we are going there, we will react.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I am just going to test my knowledge here again; I might have been given some poor advice. Clause 30(5) refers to some changes in the Electricity Corporations Act 2005, the effect of which is to ensure that a contestability threshold can be phased in in the Pilbara. It is initially set at 1 200 megawatt hours. Is that the case?

Mr W.J. Johnston: We can already do it. It's not new.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is already available?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Is there any mandatory process under which the government is looking at reviewing that threshold over time?

Mr W.J. Johnston: For the NWIS or SWIS?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The north west interconnected system.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The letter from Alinta makes it clear that it wants us to look at the question of the thresholds. That is a live issue; I said in the second reading debate and here that it is an administrative decision, and I have made a commitment that, over time, we will look at that. We are doing 30 per cent of volumes on the NWIS to be contestable from the implementation of the legislation. There is a clear understanding that we will look to see what further work we do on contestability in the NWIS in the future. In the SWIS, again, I have said publicly that it is something I would consider as a reduction in the small business threshold, from 50 megawatt hours to a lesser number, but there are many complexities with that—some raised by the member’s inquiry—because of indebted networks. There are no easy answers for taking it below 50 megawatt hours, but yes, in respect of the current NWIS, the first threshold will come down over time.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The minister has set the threshold at 1 200 megawatts. It will be nice to see what the profile of —

Mr W.J. Johnston: There is no profile.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: No profile of the customers that sit under that?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes, sorry.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: If it is dropped down, who is captured and who is dropped off? Obviously, keeping it as high as possible is good for Horizon’s business case, but I am interested to see what the profile is. The minister picked 1 200 as a figure. Does he have that information, and would he make it available to us?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I cannot give that information because I do not have it. If we had made the threshold lower, the temporary access contribution would have been higher, because the impact on Horizon would have been bigger.

Mr D.T. Redman: It makes sense for Horizon’s business case to have it higher, but I am interested in the changes as you bring it down.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is a practical decision. We needed to have the threshold sufficiently low so that there was a business case for someone to compete against Horizon, so I literally asked Energy Policy WA, “What would the figure be for 30 per cent of volume?” I thought 30 per cent of volume would probably not be a bad point to start, and it came back with that figure of 1 230. There is an understanding and out-loud commitment that we want to bring that level of 1 230 megawatt hours down over time. Obviously, if a large supermarket is covered by the 1 230, that must mean that a small supermarket would come in at some point below that, so we are keen, over time, as we deal with the challenges we have, to bring that threshold down. That will benefit existing and potential investors in the electricity system and businesses in the Pilbara, where energy costs can naturally be quite considerable.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 31 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.

Third Reading

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [4.45 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [4.45 pm]: I thank the minister for his time this afternoon. We see an opportunity for the state to utilise innovation and technology to really drive costs down over the long term across our utilities. The opposition believes that this is a step in the right direction. We want to see the progression of opportunities for people in end-of-grid networks, and we believe that increased competition in the NWIS is a positive outcome. Congratulations to the minister on this bill, and we look forward to its safe passage through the other place.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [4.46 pm]: Along the same lines as the member for Bateman, I suspect this is probably one of the slightly easier of the reforms on the minister’s table; a number of others are coming that will be a little more challenging in terms of the regulatory settings as we look at some of the things we inquired into in the microgrid inquiry. There is a massive opportunity to find a balance between the revenue that our utilities have to maintain to look after their asset base, and bringing innovation to the table in some of those market areas. That will be a great challenge, and I certainly look forward to playing our part in opposition to make sure the government gets it right. A lot of our areas are subject to those opportunities, and we certainly want to see that played through. That will take a lot of discussion and a lot of good work from some very smart people behind the scenes, and, hopefully, what is brought to the table either this year by the government, or post-election by us, will be good for regional Western Australia. There is some complexity in the NWIS; I think the holy grail of trying to get an integrated network is one that still eludes government, but, hopefully, that can happen in time.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [4.47 pm] — in reply: I thank the opposition for its support of the legislation. Energy policy is always complicated, and the challenge is that if we change one thing, it impacts on 100 other things. This legislation is a significant reform, but as the member for Warren–Blackwood said, it is not the end of reform. I want to congratulate and thank Energy Policy WA for its work in getting the bill to this stage. It has been an incredibly complicated process. The member for Riverton outlined the fact that people have been talking about this type of reform for 30 years. I am very lucky that the Treasurer, who was Minister for Energy for two years before I took over, had done a lot of work in this space, so I was able to just pick up the work that he had done and negotiate with industry partners and bring the legislation forward with a broad support. It is a great outcome. Thank you, everybody, for your participation in this debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS PRICING AMENDMENT BILL 2019

Returned

Bill returned from the Council with an amendment.

House adjourned at 4.49 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

COMMUNITY SERVICES — HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY — COMMON GROUND FACILITIES

5953. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Child Protection; Women’s Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services:

I refer to the announcement to build two “Common Ground” facilities, and ask:

- (a) How many people will be accommodated at each facility;
- (b) Please provide a breakdown of the proposed number of bedsits, 1 bedroom apartments and 2 bedroom apartments and otherwise at each facility;
- (c) How many bedsits/apartments will be allocated for low-income tenants and/or social housing (in each facility);
- (d) How many bedsits/apartments will be allocated for people experiencing homelessness (in each facility); and
- (e) Of those bedsits/apartments allocated for people experiencing homelessness, what percentage will be available for individuals with:
 - (i) complex support needs; and
 - (ii) high support needs;
 - (iii) low–medium support needs?

Ms S.F. McGurk replied:

- (a)–(e) The number of people accommodated in each Common Ground facility, including the number of bedsits and apartments, will be determined once the building sites have been confirmed, due to site specific restrictions that may apply. Common Ground facilities in other Australian jurisdictions typically accommodate up to 100 people and have an equal mix of low-income tenants and people experiencing homelessness. All people are supported through on-site case management and individualised support services to help them sustain their tenancies.

COMMUNITY SERVICES — WAGES

5969. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health:

- (1) Have any organisations contacted the Department of Health and/or Mental Health Commission indicating they are under financial stress as a result of the Fair Work Commission’s Equal Remuneration Order (ERO)?
- (2) If yes to (1), please provide details of:
 - (a) the organisation;
 - (b) the date on which the department was contacted; and
 - (c) whether the organisation has had its contract renegotiated as a result of the ERO;
 - (d) how much additional funding was provided to the organisation?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

Department of Health advises:

- (1) No.
- (2) (a)–(d) Not applicable.

Mental Health Commission advises:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a)–(d) A small number of organisations have contacted the Mental Health Commission through a number of avenues, including their contract managers, to raise issues in relation to sustainability and more specifically the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO). There is no formal register of this contact.

Since 2017, the Western Australian Council of Social Service, Community Employers WA and other key community services sector organisations have been raising concerns that ERO wage increases are having an impact on the ability of the sector to sustainably deliver services.

In response, the Government approved \$1.9 million in supplementary funding for the 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24/7) National Housing and Homelessness Agreement services for the 2019/20 financial year. The Government also reinstated the original Non-Government Human Services Sector indexation calculation which had been wound back by the former Government. This represents an increase of approximately \$30.2 million in funding to the community services sector over the next four years.

On 5 December 2019, a global provision was announced of up to \$15 million per annum from 2019/20 to 2022/23 for supplementary funding for community services organisations to meet the immediate cost impacts of the ERO.

COMMUNITY SERVICES — WAGES

5970. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Treasurer; Minister for Finance; Aboriginal Affairs; Lands:

I refer to the Fair Work Commission's Equal Remuneration Order, and I ask:

- (a) can you please provide a list of all community service sector contracts with an award that pre-dates 1 July 2013, including the:
 - (i) provider's name;
 - (ii) date the contract commenced; and
 - (iii) end date of the contract;
 - (iv) value of the contract?

Mr B.S. Wyatt replied:

- (a) The Department of Finance is currently conducting an audit of all community service sector contracts to collate this information. As such, we are unable to provide the requested information at this time.
-

