



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTIETH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2020

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 13 February 2020

Legislative Assembly

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

The SPEAKER: Members, do we have any petitions?

Mr D.C. Nalder: Lots.

The SPEAKER: Fake news, member for Bateman—fake news. No petitions? The standard is dropping on a daily basis!

PAPERS TABLED

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

“STATE OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SECTOR WORKFORCE 2018/19”

Correction — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) [9.03 am]: I have received a letter dated 19 September 2019 requesting that an erratum be added to the “State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce 2018/19” report, which was tabled on 10 December 2019. The erratum addresses an error on page 15 of the report in which FTE figures for the Gascoyne and Great Southern regions were transposed. Under the provisions of standing order 156, I authorise the necessary corrections to be added as an erratum for the tabled paper.

[See paper [3209](#).]

BILLS

Notice of Motion to Introduce

1. Prisons Amendment Bill 2020

Notice of motion given by **Mr F.M. Logan (Minister for Corrective Services)**.

2. Financial Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

Notice of motion given by **Mr B.S. Wyatt (Treasurer)**.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Magistrates Court of Western Australia’s Management of Matters Involving Family and Domestic Violence — Extension of Reporting Date — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) [9.04 am]: The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee has resolved to extend to 25 June 2020 its inquiry into the Magistrates Court of Western Australia’s management of matters involving family and domestic violence.

AUSTRALIAN CORRECTIVE SERVICES MEDAL — RECIPIENTS

Statement by Minister for Corrective Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Corrective Services) [9.05 am]: I rise to recognise the achievements of outstanding public servants in the corrective services field who were recently awarded the Australian Corrective Services Medal. The Australian Corrective Services Medal is awarded to personnel who have shown outstanding commitment and dedication to contributing to the safety and security of the prison environment and the rehabilitation of prisoners in their care. Mr Samuel Dinah is recognised for his work in helping families concerned about a relative in custody. This work makes a significant difference to Indigenous people involved in the justice system and their families. Ms Cassandra Gilbert is recognised for her work across various positions, including her work as an adult community corrections manager in the Pilbara and Kimberley. It is a role that makes a big difference in not only keeping the community safe, but also helping to turn an offender’s life around.

Mr Benjamin Leadbetter is recognised for his work with the Special Operations Group, dealing with high pressure situations during prison incidents and emergencies to restore good order and security without significant injuries to staff or prisoners, thus ensuring the safety of prison staff and prisoners during critical incidents. Mr Gregory Little is a prison support officer and a highly respected elder of the Noongar Boodjar whose work plays a major role in the management, leadership and mentoring of the prisoner peer support team focusing on preventing suicide and self-harm. This paves the way for the rehabilitation of prisoners so they are better equipped to reintegrate into society. Greg was also the 2019 national NAIDOC Elder of the Year. Ms Leith Thomas, assistant superintendent, offender services West Kimberley Regional Prison, is recognised for her work in prison addiction services and prisoner employment. Her great relationships with communities mean she is well placed to put prisoners into the programs that suit their skills and educational levels.

Through all areas of the Departments of Justice and Corrective Services, officers work hard in often challenging situations and I would like to congratulate in particular our recent medal recipients on this prestigious recognition and thank them for their service.

TOURISM — CORONAVIRUS

Statement by Minister for Tourism

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism) [9.06 am]: I rise to inform the house about how the McGowan government is responding to the impact of recent Australian bushfires and the coronavirus outbreak on Western Australia's tourism economy. It has been a particularly rough start for 2020 for tourism operators not only in this state, also but nationwide. Initially, we encountered the devastating bushfires on the east coast and subsequent international media coverage, which has led to inaccurate perceptions that Western Australia is also decimated by fires, resulting in some cancellations and soft forward bookings, particularly in regional areas. Tourism WA was working on strategies to counter this effect when the global outbreak of coronavirus took hold, creating a substantial and widespread impediment to travel across the world. In recent weeks, many countries, including Australia, announced an immediate suspension of Chinese inbound flights. This announcement, together with decisions by several airlines to suspend flights into Australia for an extended period, has seen an immediate decline in visitor numbers and spend in Western Australia.

The McGowan government recognises the devastating effect this drop in tourist numbers is having on many Western Australian businesses providing goods and services to our visitors, particularly those that focus on the Chinese inbound traveller. As a result, the government has announced funding totalling \$4.85 million to be invested in domestic marketing campaigns to encourage visitors from the eastern states to visit Western Australia and residents to holiday at home and support local operators. Tourism WA has negotiated deals with travel partners and secured federal government support to have campaigns up and running as soon as possible to limit the effects the coronavirus outbreak has had on international travel. Opportunities to secure more conference and incentive travel events, encourage visits by cruise ships and undertake trade roadshows in international markets to promote the fact that WA is open for business are also being progressed.

Given the anticipated decline in people travelling this year, the decision has been made to postpone delivery of a home-grown signature event that was originally scheduled for later this year. The inaugural event is now expected to take place in 2021 at an appropriate time when it can succeed and grow. Although the state's tourism industry has been impacted by bushfires and the coronavirus, Western Australia is well placed to rebound with work well advanced on international and domestic marketing campaigns, and other activities to drive visitation, grow the economy and create jobs.

YMCA YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Statement by Minister for Youth

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Youth) [9.09 am]: I rise to inform members that applications for the YMCA Youth Parliament are now open until Sunday, 22 March. I urge all members to encourage young people in their electorates between the ages of 15 and 25 to apply and be a voice for their community. Participants learn about writing legislation and speeches and will present their bills while role-playing in Parliament House during a week-long camp. The program aims to educate, empower and encourage young people to take an active role in their community by advocating the views of their electorate at a state level. A high level of political engagement is not necessary. We want every young person who wants their voice to be heard to apply and have a go. I, for one, look forward to meeting what I am sure will be a talented and motivated group of young people, some of whom would definitely give some members in this house a run for their money.

Youth Parliament is a fantastic opportunity for young people to comment on government policy and make recommendations to the government on the change young people want to see. School-age children who participate in the program can have their participation count towards their Western Australian Certificate of Education by recording it with the Curriculum Council. I once again encourage all members to promote this great initiative. It is a fantastic hands-on way to learn about the political process and what it is like to be a politician.

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from 12 February on the following question —

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [9.10 am]: I stand in response to the Premier's Statement with a primary focus on what is occurring with the state's finances and the economy. At the outset, I would also like to share with the Premier his concerns for the people of China and extend our prayers and thoughts as the government and the people of China tackle the serious challenge of coronavirus. I would also like to acknowledge the other statement that the

Premier made about the bushfire crisis around Australia and the tremendous work that our volunteers have done in supporting people and families who have faced challenging times with the loss of loved ones and property, particularly homes.

Today's focus will be on the state's finances and the economy. In looking at the state's finances, I give credit where credit is due. The state government has done a good job to maintain tight controls over the general ledger expense account. It is interesting to note that although this government has maintained a level that is consistent with that delivered by former Treasurer Mike Nahan, it has failed to achieve what it set out in the budget. In the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*, the expense forecast for this year has increased from a 1.5 per cent forecast growth in the budget to 3.1 per cent. This has been the trend year on year. It makes it difficult to believe the numbers that the Treasurer espouses come budget time when every six months after the budget, the government doubles that forecast. I understand that a lot of this comes off the back of the higher iron ore prices that allows the government to spend more. Nonetheless, to see the expenses double every year above what this government forecasts in the budget should be of concern to the government and something that should be looked at more closely. For the expense forecast to increase from 1.5 per cent to now three per cent this year is a general concern. It is still at a consistent level with what the former government did. The growth in general expenditure for the three years of this government is \$1.5 billion; that has been the increased annual spend over those three years. Over the last three years of the former Liberal–National government, there was a \$1.5 billion increase in annual spend. Over the last six years, state governments have been consistent in their management of the expense lines.

Looking more closely at the revenue line, the Premier talked about getting this state's finances back on track. One hundred per cent of the surplus experienced by this state government is courtesy of two factors: one is the increase in iron ore royalties; and the second is the increase in the GST as a result of the fix from the federal government. That is it! The improvement in the state's finances is not due to a masterstroke by this state government. As much as members opposite like to create the rhetoric that it is all about their good work, they have been very fortunate. The GST needed to be fixed; we are 100 per cent supportive of that. Back in 2015, when we knew that there would be challenging times for the state as it moved from construction to production, we also saw iron ore prices crash, which dramatically reduced royalty revenue. In December 2015, the price of iron ore dropped below \$US40—yesterday it was \$US85—but in 2015–16 the price averaged \$US52. This year we are averaging \$US91—a difference of nearly \$US40. According to Treasury, every \$US1 adds nearly \$80 million to the bottom line. If we applied the \$US40 improvement average for this year to the 2015–16 year, it amounts to a \$3.2 billion increase as a result of just the increase in the iron ore price, excluding the GST factor. Based on those iron ore prices alone, the former state government would never have had a deficit, and that is without the GST fix. The government can spruik all it wants about how fantastic it has been on financial management, but the reality is that we and the press know that it has been very fortunate with the iron ore price. We, the press and the state know that the federal government fixes the GST. Based on those two items alone and excluding what the iron ore price is doing this year, the budget forecast was \$US73.50. But if we add to that the iron ore price and the GST fix, the budget forecast for those two items alone is \$4.35 billion more than the 2015–16 actual. With the actual price being nearly \$US20 higher so far this year, those two line items contribute in excess of \$5 billion, which is approaching \$6 billion more than what the state received in 2015–16. This begs the question: if we are achieving this level of surplus, why has debt not been paid down further and where has the money gone? That is a question that will be asked more and more as we proceed through this year. I will start to ask more questions about where this money has gone.

I will move on to talk about the budget. Yes, the budget is in a healthier position, but the government has been very fortunate to achieve that position because of things that are outside its control. The state government does not control global iron ore prices—not one iota—and it was the federal government that fixed the GST. But the government does impact our state economy based on the actions and the policy decisions that it takes. The Premier talked about growth in the gross state product. The primary driver of gross state product is our exports. Our exports have been driven by the investment and policies of former governments to drive construction, particularly in the mining and gas sectors. That is now flowing through the system. The expansion of iron ore to shift upwards of 800 million tonnes that then flows through in greater royalties for this state is courtesy of the actions of former governments, not the current government. The result of the construction phase experienced during former governments and the pain they went through with the sudden demand for workers and all the other issues that came from that is that higher exports are now flowing through and impacting positively on GSP. When we look more closely at the domestic economy, excluding those exports—state final demand—the economy is contracting. It contracted by one per cent last year. The Premier says that the economy is great and fantastic but the reality is that it is courtesy of the actions of previous governments, not the actions of this government. When we look at what is occurring underneath in the domestic economy, it is contracting and things are not as good as this government would like to portray. That is the concern from this side. I would really struggle if the Premier took a balanced position and said things as they really are, but what he says is so heavily biased one way. I understand that the government needs to put a spin on things and put them in a positive light—I get that—but it is so biased that we are left with no other option than to spend all our time arguing the negatives because of a lack of balance in what the Premier presents. Many households out there are struggling. The number of households that have their utilities

disconnected in a 12-month period does not double over a two-year period if there is no issue in the underlying economy. The number of energy disconnections does not go from 10 000 to more than 20 000 in the space of 12 months if there is no underlying problem within the domestic economy. What is worse is that Digital Financial Analytics has highlighted that we are now at a record level of the number of households that are suffering mortgage stress at 152 000. Every few months we come out with a new record—152 000 households mean that 33 per cent of households with a mortgage in Western Australia are under mortgage stress. The definition of “mortgage stress” is those households in which monthly expenditure exceeds income, which is not sustainable. No wonder we are seeing increased levels of stress. What is the government’s response to that? There is not one. The government does not acknowledge the issue. All we hear is, “We’ve got the finances on track. Look at us, the economy is fantastic!” as it beats its chest and does not acknowledge that the fantastic economy is courtesy of the actions of former governments. The government is laying claim for something that it has not done. In the meantime, some households are seriously struggling. Furthermore, the Digital Financial Analytics report states that the rate of expected mortgage defaults in Western Australia over the next 12 months will be 4.2 per cent when the national average is forecast to be 2.2 per cent.

Western Australia is facing serious headwinds relative to the rest of the country. What has this government done to acknowledge that and what is its underlying action plan? I will have a closer look at that. As I said yesterday, some of the government’s policies over the last couple of years have had a detrimental effect on the Western Australian economy and that is what the government should be taking responsibility for. Again, it fails to acknowledge that: “Don’t look too closely here.” Let us look at the impact of the decline in the international student market because of the change to Perth being a regional migration status, which the government consequently backflipped on after a lot of pressure from the opposition and the university sector making strong pleas that the issue needed to be resolved. The impact has been a decline of 12 000 international students and, according to Labor’s document, 4 000 jobs. The economic impact has been \$750 million stripped from the Western Australian economy. Can members imagine an extra \$750 million a year flowing through the Western Australian economy? That is quite sizable and would make a large difference.

It was fascinating to hear the Premier talk about the risk of coronavirus. I acknowledge the risk posed by coronavirus—no doubt. I am concerned about it, but it is not the root cause of the issues that exist within the Western Australian domestic economy today. Coronavirus has the potential to create massive issues going forward—I do not question that whatsoever and I do not mind acknowledging that. I am talking about the government’s failure to acknowledge the issues that are prevalent in the domestic economy today. The decline in the number of international students has created a massive problem. As the fourth largest industry in Australia, last financial year it contributed \$37.5 billion to the national economy. Our population share is 10.3 per cent. Therefore, one would hope that we would have 10.3 per cent of the market share, but we do not; we had 7.5 per cent but it dropped to 5.5 per cent. That two per cent drop is where we have lost \$750 million a year. If we could grow it back towards 10.3 per cent, that would add \$2 billion to our domestic economy. Given that it is the fourth largest industry in Australia, the focus of the government should be to at least achieve our population share, which would mean an extra \$2 billion a year flowing through our domestic economy. Those students rent rental properties so there is a flow-on effect on rental demand. There is also a flow-on effect on property purchases, because parents were purchasing properties in students’ names because under the rules, students on student visas and people on 457 visas could buy existing properties. That issue has had a flow-on effect on the property sector.

I go back to coronavirus. A report today stated that the impact of coronavirus on Australian tourism—we heard the Premier talk about this—is estimated to be around \$6 billion nationally. Our population share, if we are achieving a 10.3 per cent market share of total tourism, would be \$600 million. I just shared with members the impact of the decline in the number of international students as \$750 million a year. The Premier is spruiking concerns about tourism, and rightly so—I do not shy away from that being an issue—but he ignored the impact of the decline in the number of international students, which will have a greater impact on our economy than will a decline in tourism. I am putting the Premier’s comments into proper perspective and outlining the impact that this issue is having on our economy.

Moving forward, I turn to the impacts of some of the government’s policies. The government introduced a foreign buyers tax. All Australian states were doing the same thing but we were facing completely different circumstances, particularly from Victoria and New South Wales, which were faced with a rampant demand from Chinese buyers of houses in Sydney and Melbourne and which escalated prices and created affordability issues in those states. They had a totally different issue from the issue we faced here of declining house prices since 2014. We stood in this Parliament and told the Premier in our second reading responses that we would not oppose the foreign buyers tax bill. We understood the intent of what the government was trying to do and we supported that intent. But the timing of it was wrong and we argued that it should be deferred because the housing industry was on its knees and this measure would only further erode the demand for housing properties and put a further downward demand on housing prices. That is what we said. The government accused us of putting the interests of foreign buyers in front of Western Australians. We said, “No, we’re not. We’re trying to underpin the existing housing industry, which is a large contributor to our domestic economy, particularly because of the number of jobs involved in the housing

industry.” We said, “Just defer it.” The government said that we were putting the interests of foreign buyers in front of those of Western Australians but we were not; we were thinking about the Western Australian economy. We were not against it in principle, just the timing of it. What did we see at the end of last year? We saw somewhat of a backflip on that policy. The government has been strong to claim that it is still receiving revenue from foreign buyers.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.C. NALDER: But the reality is that the government provided greater rebates than it collected from the foreign buyers tax because not only has it given foreign buyers a 75 per cent rebate on the foreign buyers tax, it has given them a 75 per cent rebate on stamp duty of up to \$50 000-odd, which means that on properties under \$720 000, foreign buyers are getting greater rebates than what they are paying in foreign buyers tax. The government will still be collecting some foreign buyers tax revenue even though it is giving it back in stamp duty. The government is muddying the waters and creating an image of the foreign buyers tax while it is giving foreign buyers an incentive to buy in Western Australia. I find that ludicrous. That had an impact on existing property owners who had already commenced construction and did not have access to that. Properties that were finished and on the market had to discount quite heavily to sell their properties, which was unfair. I do not believe that it was the right approach to take in the first instance.

We have seen a couple of backflips. I refer to payroll tax. Yesterday, the Treasurer stood in the chamber in response to my comments and said that we are opposed to the payroll tax subsidy, but we are not. We support the payroll tax subsidy. I wanted to put that in perspective because the reality is that the subsidy amounts to \$170 million over the forward estimates. Yet, the increase in the assumed payroll tax over the forward estimates is \$170 million. The government is saying that this will have no cost impact to the state. If we look at the forward estimates of the assumed growth in payroll tax from the budget, we will see that the payroll tax subsidy works out to about six per cent to seven per cent of the increase in payroll tax that the government is assuming it will collect from businesses over the next four years. It is a minuscule impact on the overall payroll tax that businesses pay. Some benefit will be got by 11 000 businesses and I am happy for those businesses for getting that. I do not suspect that will flow through to increased employment in any of those businesses given that it works out to about a total of \$9 000 maximum, I believe, for any given business. I am not sure how the government calculates that will flow through to additional employment. Nonetheless, some businesses will benefit, but my view is that this was a political play rather than an economic play. It has not improved the economy in Western Australia. Massive amounts still need to be done to stimulate our domestic economy.

I want to take this opportunity to talk about another policy position of this government that is undermining the housing industry and the housing sector—that is, the Keystart loan book. I am a supporter of Keystart loans and the work that the state government and the organisation of Keystart do to assist first homeowners and people who would otherwise struggle to save up a deposit, allowing them to access financing from other financial institutions. I think the state government helping people to get a home loan and get into their first home is commendable. Again, I support Keystart. However, the interest rate Keystart holders are paying is too high. I am not saying that the policy that was established was wrong. It was right in its time. The policy that was established was to look at the average standard variable rate across the four major banks and apply that as the Keystart rate. But one needs to look at what has happened in the financial sector over recent years to understand the issue that has now been created. I raised this issue with the government last year and it has chosen not to do anything about it. As interest rates have fallen over the last few years, major banks have not been passing those falls through to the standard variable rate, so there has been a gap between underlying interest rates and the standard variable rates offered by the major institutions. The major banks are increasing the discount they provide on the standard variable rate. Over the last 10 years the discount that can be achieved has gone from 70-odd basis points through to around 180 basis points. I will not get into the motives of the banks. I think it may have something to do with apathetic borrowers who may not be aware that they can get better rates. We need to encourage consumers to continually check their rates and check with competitors to see whether they are getting the best deal. Because the banks have gone down that path there is a disconnect between the rate that Keystart holders are having to pay and the rate that people can get in the marketplace. The government says, “So be it”—that when people build up their deposit they can shift over to the major banks. That is the intent of Keystart. We want Keystart holders to shift their loans to other banks so we can lend more money to other people who are struggling to get started. I understand the incentive in keeping it slightly higher than people can get in other institutions. It creates an incentive for people to seek out other institutions and migrate across. However, we have had continual falling property markets, which the government has exacerbated by its own policies. These struggling buyers are paying upwards of two per cent higher rates than are available through other suppliers if they could establish a deposit. We know they cannot establish a deposit, but we are charging them up to two per cent more. The average mortgage is over \$400 000, which means that people who are struggling to save are paying in excess of \$8 000 a year more to Keystart than they would to other financial institutions. If we take into consideration the falling property market, they are in negative equity. In the last five years, all new customers of Keystart are in negative equity. They cannot migrate to other financial institutions unless they win Lotto. That is not fair and it is not right. The government is happily allowing them to pay an extra \$8 000 a year. These people are struggling to save. These are the people who we are supposed to be

helping. It is a bit like what the government did with the hardship utility grant scheme. The government closed it down and said that people were rorting the system. What did we see? We saw the number of people being disconnected from their power more than double. It went from 10 000 people to 20 000 people. These are people who are struggling to pay their bills. Do members see a trend here? On top of that, people who are struggling to pay their water bills are being charged a penalty interest rate of 11.7 per cent. These are people who are struggling to make ends meet. Does the government get the message here? Western Australia counts for 12 of the top 20 suburbs for mortgage default. We have an overweight position of people who are struggling to make ends meet. There are 152 000 homes that are suffering from mortgage stress. What do we hear from the government on this issue? There is zero—zilch—acknowledgement of this issue existing in Western Australia. People who live within eight kilometres of the central business district, or on the river or the beach are generally doing okay. But people in those outer suburbs are hurting and struggling. We have seen zero acknowledgement from this government. Its policies have further driven down housing prices, which I talked about earlier. The government is not only smacking them when they are struggling to save and make ends meet, but also creating policies that affect the equity and investment that it encourages them to undertake. The Premier stood up 13 or 14 months ago and said that it was a great time to invest, so people should buy a house now. Subsequently, in the next 12 months property prices dropped. People are struggling to make ends meet and they are paying a two per cent higher interest rate than they would if they could go to another financial institution if they could get a deposit, which they cannot because they have negative equity. Does the government see the problem that it is creating? On that basis, I would like to move an amendment.

Amendment to Question

Mr D.C. NALDER: I therefore move to amend the question before the house. I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for the longest and deepest house price fall in WA history and hurting households with massive cost-of-living increases

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition) [9.37 am]: I rise to speak to this amendment. The member for Bateman has done a tremendous job in detailing just how mean and heartless this McGowan government is. When we look at the cumulative effect of the decisions of this government, such as the decisions about Keystart, the hardship utility grant scheme, utility pricing and the water tax, we can see very clearly why people in the outer suburbs and in the community are saying that WA Labor has turned its back on hardworking Western Australians. It has turned its back on the people who need it the most. The only people listening to them at the moment is the WA Liberal Party. That is what they are saying. I articulated a number of these issues yesterday in my response to the Premier’s Statement, so I just want to go over a few things. To add to what the member for Bateman articulated, we have been calling for this government to do something to arrest the shrinkage of Western Australia’s domestic economy with an economic stimulus of some sort. The government’s responses have been ill-thought out and ill-timed policies. First we had the stamp duty package that was for only apartments that could be purchased off the plan, which has left 2 600 apartments stranded in a very flat property market. In fact, it is a property market that is going backwards because the average median house price in Western Australia is now 5.7 per cent lower than it was 12 months ago. We have declining housing prices. There are 2 600 stranded apartments as a result of that policy. People wanting to buy an investment apartment or to downsize into an apartment are buying off the plan, and those developments will not start construction until 60 to 75 per cent of off-the-plan purchases have been achieved. It could be several years before any of that construction starts, and in the intervening couple of years while people are trying to take advantage of the stamp duty concession to buy off the plan, none of the existing apartment stock owned by Western Australians will be sold because there is no stamp duty relief on them. The 2 600 empty apartments in constructed buildings will not be sold, nor will the apartments in buildings currently under construction. It is just a ridiculous policy.

There was a lot of hoo-haa about payroll tax relief. I will build a little on what the member for Bateman said about payroll tax relief. I was talking to a small business owner the other week who was rejoicing at the fact that because his business had shrunk so much, he was no longer eligible to pay payroll tax; he was under the threshold. He went to the Office of State Revenue to say, “I’m under the threshold now. I shouldn’t have to pay payroll tax.” The Office of State Revenue said, “Well, actually, you need to pay it for the next year so that we can make sure you stay under the threshold, and then we’ll give you a refund in a year’s time.” How does that help anyone? This is a business owner who has made people redundant so that he can get under the payroll tax threshold to try to ease up the cash flow, and the Office of State Revenue is saying, “Oh, poor family business. You’re laying off staff; your turnover’s shrinking. You’re no longer eligible to pay payroll tax, but we’re going to slug you for it for the next 12 months anyway, and once you’ve proven that your business really is on its knees and you can’t employ people, we’ll give you a refund at the end of the year.” Who does that? How heartless is that?

I turn to utility pricing. We have talked about this because the community is talking about it to us. People are on payment plans. This government has form in this area. When we came into government in 2008 and inherited the previous government’s budget, we found that Mark McGowan, as part of the previous Labor cabinet, had decided

to hold electricity prices stable for seven years. When it realised that that was unsustainable—it had been highlighted by the opposition at the time that taxpayers were subsidising electricity costs—it anticipated in its budget 10 per cent price increases, year on year on year, to cost reflectivity. That budget, in its forward estimates, had increases in retail electricity prices of 10 per cent every year.

What do we see now after a Labor government got in again? It won in such a landslide that it became arrogant in the extreme and figured that it would be all right, Jack, for at least two terms, so it jacked up fees and charges in its first few years, thinking that it would have time and that people would forget about it. It jacked up the supply charge; it is about double. That affects the most vulnerable people, because they cannot not have electricity supplied to their houses. It also increased the cost of consumption of electricity and reduced people's eligibility for the hardship utility grant scheme. People have to be absolutely on their knees before they can even access HUGS.

All these decisions are really hurting households. There is an \$850 a year increase in the cost of living for households that have no money to spend on anything they want to spend it on. They are spending all their money on water, council rates, electricity bills and school costs. They have no discretionary spend left, which is impacting on other sectors of the economy such as retail and hospitality and service industries. This is the pickle that the economy is in because of the decisions of this government.

For the government to then come out and say, "We're thinking of holding electricity prices stable for the next year", in an election year, how cynical is that? Does the government really think that consumers out there are going to say, "Well, that's okay. You've jacked up the price of supplying electricity, you've jacked up the cost of electricity consumption for my household, but if you're going to hold it steady for a year, I'll vote for you again"? For goodness sake. They know what the government is going to do. If the government gets back in in March 2021, it is going to jack it up again, because it will have to. Synergy has had a writedown of \$650 million, and the government has nothing else in the kitty to reform the electricity sector and have some kind of influence on these price rises—nothing. It has no options other than jacking the price up—no regulatory reform, no market reform, and no ideas about competition to try to drive these prices down, so the only way they can go is up, and consumers know that.

The Economic Regulation Authority is saying that this government is taxing households \$400 a year by overcharging for water. Government utilities are supposed to have a service recovery ethos by which consumers are charged the cost of delivering the service. But Western Australian householders are being charged \$400 a year as an extra water tax, and the government's own Economic Regulation Authority has highlighted that. What do we hear in response from this government? Nothing, because it is banking the dividends from the Water Corporation and banking the dividends from Synergy to prop up its budget. That is what it is doing, to spend on goodness knows what other priorities. Consumers out there in the outer suburbs are certainly not feeling the love from this government at all.

I will not go further into issues in the housing market because my colleague the member for Churchlands will articulate that; that is his portfolio area. But this is a warning to the government. It has left it too long to do something to arrest the demise of Western Australia's domestic economy. It now has a double whammy. We have had seven quarters of negative growth in the domestic economy, coming from a low base. To top it off, we now have the coronavirus issue, which will just make it so much more difficult to arrest the decline in the domestic economy, the hit to consumer confidence and the lack of investment in Western Australia as a result of the decisions of this government. It has left it too long. The housing sector keeps on saying, "Were bumping along the bottom; things have got to change." We have been hearing that now for three years, and they have not changed; they are getting worse, and the lack of action from this government is adding to that problem.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [9.47 am]: As we have already heard from the member for Bateman and the Leader of the Opposition, the housing situation in Western Australia is in crisis, and this government has failed the housing sector. When the government fails the housing sector, it is failing families, mums and dads and people out there who want to get their first home. It is failing all of them, and they are all its constituents. The Labor Party came into government in March 2017 promising to turn things around. It came into government in March 2017 saying to the people of Western Australia, "Trust us. We will fix the economic situation, we will grow jobs, we will improve your standard of living, and you will have a better Western Australia and a better lifestyle under us." The truth is far from that; it has gone backwards. From day one in March 2017 when the government was elected, it started going backwards further and further, and it has not stopped, yet every single press release the government puts out on the economy is telling people the opposite. The data does not lie, so who do the people trust? Do they trust the government telling them that everything is okay, or do they trust their own situation—the reasons why they are going into mortgage default, cannot pay the rent, cannot build a house and cannot find a job, and why their kids are leaving Perth to go to Victoria, Sydney, Brisbane or wherever? That is the reality that they are facing. What this government has done just in its first three years proves to the people of Western Australia that it has not got the ticker, it is not up to the task and it does not know how to manage an economy. All it has done throughout those three years is look in the rear-view mirror and say, "Look at that former government; it had debt. We are fine fiscal managers; we're going to get rid of that debt and that's why we're going to make the economy better for you."

There is a massive disconnect between that approach and the approach of improving the economy. Getting its own books in order is one thing, but at what cost to the people of Western Australia? There is a time and a place for the

government to make sure that it utilises economic stimulus. If it wants to be fiscally conservative, that is great; it can do that, but it needs to have an alternative. It needs to attract foreign investment and private sector investment into this town to get things ticking along. It needs to be creative. There has been no creativity from this government. All we have heard is whinging about the former government for three years. That is all the people of Western Australia have heard—whinging about the previous government. The previous government, in dire economic circumstances, faced a GST return of 30¢ to 32¢ in the dollar and iron ore prices had crashed from well over \$120 a tonne to well below \$40 a tonne at one point. The then government had massive fiscal problems to deal with, but at the same time, it was growing Perth and Western Australia with infrastructure that was needed. I am not talking about signature projects; I am talking about road, water, electricity, school and hospital projects—things that governments must invest in that will have a return over the next 50 to 100 years and things that the population needs. When a person's kid gets sick, they want to be able to take them to a hospital that works and is staffed by doctors and nurses who know how to do their job.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: So when the government cuts the ribbon on Perth Children's Hospital, member for Girrawheen, let us not forget who built it. It was a Liberal–National government that built Perth Children's Hospital. I can tell members that every parent who takes their child to that hospital says thank you.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: We know what happened to the Carpenter government, member for Girrawheen. It lost the 2008 election because it did nothing. That is why it lost. Members opposite have learnt nothing from that experience. They have done nothing in three years, and they continue to do nothing. All they do is whinge. They love their social reform agenda, but they are not focusing on the most important social reform agenda issue of all—making sure that everybody can get a job. That is the number one reform issue and that has been evident in this government's management of the housing sector, which I will get into now.

How is the housing sector going? Perth home values have dropped by 6.8 per cent over 12 months, the second biggest change in any capital city after Darwin. The Perth median house price to September 2019 was 1.5 per cent lower than that in the June 2019 quarter. It is going backwards. We can look at some of the media reporting on this. There is an article by Nick Butterly and Josh Zimmerman headed "Dire numbers that put us back in time". The member for Girrawheen will love this because she is a big fan of the Keating era. It states —

State property registrations have plunged to their lowest in almost 30 years, matching levels last seen during Paul Keating's infamous "recession we had to have" in 1990.

The Weekend West can reveal the number of land title documents handled by Landgate in 2018–19 was the lowest since the 1980s and early 1990s, providing further evidence of the dire state of WA's housing market.

That is what this government has done to support the housing sector. It has simply sent it back to those dire times of the early 1990s. It is absolutely remarkable. It is the government throwing policies up on a whiteboard or on yellow Post-it Notes and saying, "Let's do that." It introduced the seven per cent foreign investor surcharge at the same time that it got rid of the regional migration scheme. What happened? Apartment builds stopped. Surprise, surprise! University enrolments for foreign students dropped. Surprise, surprise! The whole time, this was linked to the government's jobs bill, which was a farce. It tried to tell the community that it would help create jobs. It is not helping construction workers who need jobs constructing apartments that the parents of foreign students might buy for them while they are studying at Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University or the University of Western Australia. Instead, the students stay in their aeroplane and fly east because the government gave Perth the same capital city status as Sydney and Melbourne, and we could not compete with that. The economy was in downturn and this government decided to put the boot into it. That is the intelligence that was applied to that policy. What was really remarkable was how the government decided to deal with that. It decided that what it did with the regional migration scheme was a bad idea, but it spun it as though it did not do it. It made out that the federal government did it, but it wrote the letter to the Prime Minister saying that it wanted this change. It wrote the letter to the Prime Minister saying that it wanted to get rid of Perth's regional migration status because jobs for Western Australians are more important, but then it realised that it was losing jobs because of it, so it went public and said, "We've asked the Prime Minister to give us regional migration status; aren't we great economic leaders?" That was after two years of failure. That is the approach that this government takes. It does a bit of whiteboard activity, works out a bit of spin that it can throw out in a media release—one of its 1 300 media releases for the day that tell us that it is having a meeting—and then, after it has gone bad for two years, it puts out another media release saying how good it is because it is going to change it.

The government thinks that the people of Western Australia are stupid. They are not; they are a wake-up to its nonsense. As my colleagues have said time and again, that is why all the government backbenchers and some of the non-backbenchers who are sitting on margins of six per cent or less are very worried. We saw a nine per cent swing in the outstanding member for Darling Range's seat when she won the by-election because the people had

had enough after just one year of this government. We are three years in and we are doubling down on all the government's bad decisions. So how good do members opposite think we are feeling this year in the third quarter? We are feeling pretty good.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Armadale is the only one who shows any enthusiasm.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: The member for Armadale is the only backbencher who should be on the front bench and he is the only backbencher on that side who does not have to worry, because he is on the biggest Labor margin. What is he on in Armadale—about 74 per cent? He does not have to worry about his job. Even the people in Armadale are saying to him that they are doing it tough under his government, and he knows that because he has them front his office every week telling him that. He knows perfectly well that house prices in his area have plunged to below 1990 levels. He knows that people in his area have mortgages but the value of their property has gone backwards, so they now owe more to the bank than the value of their property. They are struggling to keep a job to pay the mortgage, so they are under mortgage stress, with the possibility of mortgage default. The member for Armadale knows that, and that is all happening under his government's watch. The sooner he can get himself on that front bench and the sooner he can start getting the government to start turning out some policies that will grow the economy, grow jobs and support his constituents, the better. I do enjoy his interjections. Feel free to do it again.

I will move on to some of the real issues that the property industry is concerned about. It was very concerned about the government's approach to the stamp duty exemptions. The industry asked the government to talk to it, and when the government decided to introduce the seven per cent surcharge, it told the government about its concerns. What did the government do with the seven per cent surcharge? It decided to do a backflip on that. Again, it was another little whiteboarding effort, with no real depth of thought or consideration of stakeholders' views on what it was about to do. The government created another drama. It is almost like the government thinks it is fixing a situation, but it is actually making it worse. It was reported that the stamp duty relief that the government provided could backfire on the unit sector, and it did. The property sector said that it wanted changes made so the government created a \$29 million scheme that it said was aimed at stimulating the struggling property sector by allowing a rebate of up to 75 per cent for purchasing off-the-plan apartments if they were bought before construction started. However, surprise, surprise, because the government did that whiteboarding over coffee at a half-hour meeting, and because its ministers are too busy writing press releases about other nonsense, the government forgot to realise it had picked a winner. It suddenly picked off-the-plan apartments as a winner but it forgot about the whole pipeline of construction that was already underway. That meant the buyers were going to ask themselves, "Hang on. Why would I buy something that is already under construction when I won't get the rebate? If I keep the money in my pocket and buy one off the plan, I will get a rebate. I'll do that." What then happened? It meant that investors with construction going on could not sell their apartments. That was pretty smart! We know that if the member for Armadale was on the front bench, he would have said, "Hang on a second, cabinet. Hold your horses. You're picking a winner. You're not looking after the rest of the sector. Don't you think we ought to look at the second-order consequence of this policy before we announce it?" The government does not consider second-order consequences in its policy deliberations because it is interested only in spin. All the government is interested in is getting its message out so that it has a headline so people think it is doing something. That then creates more problems that the government has to unwind in the future. The government is a mess. It is a disorganised rabble. The backbenchers have had enough because they will lose their seats and we are happy as Larry because we will take those seats. The government will be on the opposition benches in just over a year. Enjoy this year of discontent among your own team and of being a rabble and whiteboarding and making Post-it Note policy on the run. Enjoy that, because the people have had enough. We are hearing it and seeing it, the public is seeing it and the media is finally catching on to it. Everyone is aware that all the government is about is spin. That is all it has to offer and the market is suffering because of it.

There is so much material, I wish I could go all day. What about the other thing that impacts on households? I want to hand over to the member for Darling Range shortly because she wants to speak on this too. She has a lot to say because she hears it firsthand. The impact on this government's cost-of-living hikes for electricity by 19.6 per cent, water by 14.5 per cent, public transport by 15.25 per cent, and motor vehicle registration by 7.9 per cent all add to household stress. That is why we had 1 332 property possession applications in the Supreme Court over 2018–19. That is why Synergy and Horizon Power cut off more than 22 000 customers for unpaid bills. That is one in every 60 customers. In addition, the number of disconnections has more than doubled in the last three years. There is a reason for that. It is because the government is not managing the economy and people are hurting. That is why Real Estate Institute of Western Australia figures show that 12 per cent of Western Australian homebuyers owe more to the bank than the property is worth and it is also why half of all loan balances in negative equity are in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, with more than half coming from WA. That is why 72 per cent of Commonwealth Bank customers in negative equity are from Western Australia or Queensland, with more than

half from here, and that is why personal insolvency agreements in Western Australia had an 18.4 per cent increase in 2018–19. That is also why in October 2019, Digital Finance Analytics saw 138 761 homes, or 32.5 per cent, under mortgage stress, with 13 270 at risk of default. They are damning statistics of a government that has lost touch with the people who elected it. They are damning statistics of a government that is out of touch with how to fix the situation and they are damning statistics of a government that does not care. It is more interested in itself and its spin than it is in solving the problem it needs to solve, and that is the housing market.

MRS A.K. HAYDEN (Darling Range) [10.04 am]: I stand and support the amendment moved by the member for Bateman. To refresh everyone’s memory, the amendment reads —

and this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for the longest and deepest house price fall in WA history and hurting households with massive cost-of-living increases

We have heard figures from the member for Bateman, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Churchlands. What I want to share with everyone is the reality of the poor decisions that have been made by this government from the very day it took office. The member for Churchlands raised the first decision made by the Premier on his first day in office when he wrote to the Prime Minister asking the federal government to remove Perth from the regional skilled migration scheme. What a silly, silly, silly decision. It was so silly that even he had to admit it and go back and write a secret letter to the Prime Minister asking him to reinstate it. Did he ask for it to be reinstated properly? No. He tweaked it only a little bit to look like he was doing something when in fact he was doing nothing. He saw the damage and wondered how he could spin it. The government spun it to look like it was doing something but it did not do it properly, asking for it to be reinstated only halfway, thereby making no real impact on, and not helping or benefiting the number of, international students coming to Western Australia or the jobs that that can create in Perth.

In my maiden speech I told everyone in this chamber why I was elected, what the concerns were on the street and that I would stand at every opportunity and remind members of those concerns. I had hoped that in the year and a half that I have been here that the government might have started listening. It is not listening to the facts but I had hoped that maybe it was listening to the community out there, which is hurting. The number one issue in Darling Range and our outer regional suburbs is the cost of living. This government went to the election in 2017 promising there would be no new taxes and no new fees. What has it done? It has done the opposite. It has increased the cost of power, water and car registration by \$850 a year. The people of Darling Range cannot afford this government. The message by the federal Liberal government during the election campaign was “The Bill you can’t afford”. I know that a campaign hits the hearts of households when a 10-year-old comes up to me on the street and says, “Excuse me, Alyssa Hayden, what is the Bill mum and dad can’t afford?” A 10-year-old came up and asked me that question. That is because when he sat around the dinner table, his mum and dad told him, “You can’t do two sports this year, son. We can’t afford to go out and do the things we normally do anymore.” Children are hearing their mum and dad talk about not being able to pay the bills. As we have heard, over 20 000 homes have had their power cut off. What are mums and dads telling their kids when the power is cut off? They are saying, “The power’s cut off because we can’t afford to pay the bill. We can’t afford to have your special night out this week. We can’t afford to let you play two sports this week. We can’t afford to buy you new shoes for school this year. We need to tighten the belt on everything.” The bill the WA community cannot afford is Labor. They cannot afford Labor and government members are just not listening. They are showing what a heartless mob they are.

On top of all that, our small businesses are getting hit three times with the cost of living. They are getting hit at home, at their business and by their customers, because their customers have no discretionary money left in their pocket. They cannot go out and spend money in the retail shops. We are seeing retail going down all over WA, in the CBD and in our suburbs. Retail is going down with shops shutting every five minutes. Members can say that is because of online shopping, but that is not the only thing affecting retail. It is mums and dads and seniors and households having no money left in their pocket. Business owners are paying for the increase in the cost of living at home, at work and by their customers not coming through the door because they have no money left to spend. Businesses are getting hit three times because of the increase in the cost of living under this government. What happens when a business gets hit? It has to stop employing staff. I talked to some businesses in Armadale who had to lay off over half their staff in the lead-up to Christmas. That is not an easy decision for those businesses. Their staff are their family and before Christmas they had to say, “Sorry, guys, we have to let you go.” They were letting them go because they did not have the work coming through the door because people did not have the money to spend. Those who lost their jobs were also hit with the mean-spirited McGowan Labor government’s cost-of-living bills. They could not send their kids off to another day of sport or spend money on extra activities over the Christmas holidays. Every day that they struggle to pay their bills they remember how the government turned its back on them, after promising not to introduce any new taxes or fees.

Household values have been going down as well. On average, households in Western Australia have lost \$100 000 from the value of their homes. That is a conservative figure. I talk to people and look at housing issues in Darling Range. Right now, houses are dropping in value by \$300 000 to \$400 000. That is a massive whack from people’s investments. A person’s home is their nest egg. They put everything into their home. The Australian

dream is to have a home amongst the gum trees, but I can tell members that the value of homes out there has dropped and people are in mortgage stress. They cannot pay their bills. They have been hurt by the government's sad punishment of people who need access to the hardship utility grant scheme. The government has not listened for three years. The Premier said in his statement that this government is just getting started. We can tell that it has not done anything in three years! It has done absolutely nothing and it has been ignoring the community. The government may think that it can freeze prices now and buy back votes, but it is a little too late. The people of WA have suffered long enough under this government. They are not going to last one more day. It is a little too late. It shows that this Premier is totally incompetent in delivering on his promises. He is an incompetent leader and has been incompetent in providing for the people of WA. I commend this amendment to the house and thank the member for Bateman for moving it.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee — Minister for Housing) [10.11 am]: I feel compelled to respond to the parts of the amendment to the question on the Premier's Statement that relate to my portfolio. I have a particularly deep and passionate interest in the housing sector in Western Australia. The wording of the amendment moved by the member for Bateman is quite interesting. The amendment condemns the government for the longest and deepest house price fall in WA history. One thing that seems to be missing from this amendment and which we need to correlate with that statement is that under the previous government this state incurred the longest and deepest level of debt it had ever witnessed and the greatest amount of debt that any state in the Federation of Australia has ever had to endure.

Mr D.C. Nalder: You've grown it!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: It came to book under the previous government. We inherited over \$40 billion of gross debt that had been delivered as a result of the incompetence of those opposite, who were trying to run two governments! Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Every member on this side knows that those opposite actually had two cabinets. We know that at the point of connection between the green team down there and the blue team over here, they could not put together two competent ideas to produce an outcome that the people of Western Australia needed. We cannot go past the 2013 election, when the people of Western Australia decided that the Liberal–National government could have one more go. Then what happened? That government put its foot on the throat of this economy and drove households into near oblivion.

One thing that members opposite need to take responsibility for, in creating the sort of heartache that we have had to try to fix, is the way it treated land in this state. We can never forget the previous government's three land tax increases. I will go through some of the detail. I want to make sure that I record in *Hansard* the basis of some of the problems with the Western Australian economy that we are in the process of fixing.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: You've had three years to fix this!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: No. These things are a flywheel, my friend; it takes time to get momentum. The McGowan government has the trust of the people of Western Australia because they know that it delivers on its election commitments.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: We are delivering on every election commitment that we made.

In the couple of years leading up to the previous government's first land tax increase in 2013, just before it went to the election and duped the people of Western Australia into thinking that it had their back, private dwelling building approvals were growing at a healthy rate of 49 per cent. Well done; big tick! The previous government then significantly increased land taxes by 15 per cent over the next year. It killed the market by 15 per cent because of the land tax increase. Then it had another crack in 2014. After a short lag, investment fell again—by 10 per cent in a seven-month period.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: No; listen to the facts, my friend. The market then stabilised.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Look, the market stabilised and there was a modest recovery. That was good news. I am giving the whole story; I am not just cherrypicking this. But the previous government was not done with it yet. It had another crack. It had its foot on the throat and started to turn the heel. In 2015, it hit the market again. This was the third time that the previous government went back to that well because of the massive growth in expenses that it had to cover up. It smashed the market into oblivion; it killed the market. It started in 2015. Three times the previous government put the market down for the count, and it never really recovered. The market plummeted 24 per cent in a nine-month period. The total decline was around 50 per cent. The previous government killed the

industry by 50 per cent in three goes. Members opposite need to take some responsibility for the fiscal wreck that they left. They have to take some responsibility for the debt that they left and the amount of work that had to be done for the economy to recover and to start moving towards what the industry always called for, which was some sort of support.

We have to understand these three land tax increases. I will dwell for a moment on what that actually meant in dollar terms. The member for Darling Range is very keen to tell us what happens on the street, what individuals tell her and about her innate connection with the small business community. Under the Liberal–National government, the tax bill for a taxpayer with taxable land worth \$500 000 would have increased from \$180 in 2013 to \$500 in 2016. At the other end of the scale, for taxpayers with a significant investment in taxable land worth \$1 million, the land tax bill increased from \$630 in 2013 to \$2 730 in 2016. That was a 333 per cent increase in three years. We inherited this. We came to government with this massive debt and this massive increase in expense growth. Under the previous government, there was year-on-year expense growth of more than eight per cent. We have delivered sub-two per cent expense growth since coming to government. That is how fiscal control is put in place to ensure that the government has the capacity to respond to the industry. How has it responded? It has responded in spades, not least of which by understanding what is actually happening in the market, and the effects of the Hayne royal commission on lending and credit arrangements for all Australians, particularly in the two-paced economy between the east and west coasts of Australia. We had a market-led decline on the east coast and a credit squeeze challenge here in Western Australia, where households could not get credit because of the implications of the findings of the royal commission. We have to have regard for that. Banks and lending institutions have tightened their rules on credit ratings and credit worthiness. Banks will not entertain lending to people in certain postcodes in Western Australia, principally because of the restrictions on lending or the credit worthiness of customers. We have to take this into account.

We have a unique situation in Western Australia with the 30-year success story of Keystart. Those whose applications qualify for Keystart pay a two per cent deposit on houses valued up to \$480 000. We changed the limit. We made sure that it included people further up the income spectrum, so that families could get better access to it. We also increased the lending capacity of the Keystart book by more than \$900 million. We are writing more than 2 000 loans a month. Figures for defaults and arrears, which the member for Bateman might want to focus on, have been consistently below the industry average for the entire time. The number of mortgages in arrears and default is improving as I speak—I got the snapshot yesterday. That is always a challenging environment. Keystart has the capacity to support and create the fiscal fitness that the clients need to ensure that they can manage their opportunity to attain home ownership. We have also extended for another six months the changed income criteria, and I can happily report to the house that 20 per cent of all Keystart applications are at that higher income bracket. So, we are responding to it.

That is on the credit side. On the construction side, which is the particular area that we are focused on, the building industry is facing a challenge. The previous government clearly delivered an oversupply of labour. Everybody acknowledges that. The market moved away, and net migration moved away, and that created a challenge. We are in a recovery. There is some growth in net migration. The housing market is starting to move, and equity is starting to build, and it will build. The issue that particularly concerned me was that people in the trades would not be occupied and would not have the mobility to move to other sectors of the economy. It was essential that we kept them on the supply side of the housing equation by making sure they had work to do. However, when we have an oversupply of housing, the last thing we want to do is add to the retail end of that market. The McGowan government therefore initiated a \$150 million program to deliver social housing. As a result of that stimulus to the construction industry, we created over 300 social houses. That is having a direct and immediate effect. We went to contract, and, within three months of that announcement, 300 social houses were built that would not have been built previously.

The reason we are able to do these sorts of thing is that we on this side have fiscal discipline. We have met the significant challenge of keeping expense growth at below two per cent. That significant achievement should be acknowledged and rewarded, and it will be rewarded when we get to the election next year. I have every confidence that the government of Western Australia will be acknowledged and rewarded for the work it has done to slow the wreck of an economy that the former government left it with, and turn it around, make a positive out of it, and focus on the sorts of issues that Western Australians want us to focus on. We look forward with some relish to that day of judgement next year, because we have such a good story to tell about the sorts of things that we take seriously in the Western Australian economy; not the least of which is how we are improving trade and investment through things like the Asian Engagement strategy, the Diversify WA strategy, and, when it is released, the Brand WA strategy, which will identify all the opportunities in the emerging markets that will help diversify the economy and ensure that we create a sense of robustness within our economy that will provide the capacity to respond to its cyclical nature. We will never get past the fact that we have a \$115 billion behemoth in our resources sector. There is no counterpoise to that. There is no equal and opposite industry sector to that. The next closest is agriculture, at \$9 billion. We need to create sustainable jobs outside the resources sector—maybe leveraging off it, of course—to make sure it survives the cyclical nature of our economy.

We have a plan. It is working. It will take time. We think we have the trust of the people of Western Australia, and we think we will get the ultimate outcome that we are seeking.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer) [10.23 am]: Of course we oppose such a ludicrous amendment to the Premier's Statement. What a whiny bunch this opposition is! We would have thought the opposition would have a certain sense of shame. After having put us into the only recession in history in 2016–17—the Liberal–National recession—and after giving us the largest debt and operating deficits in history, after increasing the cost of living by the largest amounts in history, and after increasing land tax by the largest amounts in history, we would think that mob opposite would have a sense of shame. Instead, they come in here and say, “Don't mind the fiscal and economic wreckage we gave you; that's something we can't talk about any more.” I did not hear any mention of why the former government inherited an unemployment rate of 2.9 per cent and drove that up to 6.4 per cent during the largest commodity cycle boom in our history. I did not hear any mention of why the former government increased the youth unemployment rate by 200 per cent, from five per cent to 15 per cent, during the largest commodity cycle boom in history. We would have thought there would be a sense of shame. There was a 26 per cent increase in power bills in the former government's first year in office, which is more than we have done in three years. We would think there would be a sense of shame. Members opposite are without one iota of shame.

I know, and my colleagues know, that the reality is that the history of the fiscal and economic vandals opposite, being the Liberal Party of Western Australia, is well known to the people of Western Australia. That history is not that long ago. The people of Western Australia know the efforts this government has made to turn the economy and finances of this state around, and it has been a success. Of course we would like to have stronger economic growth and of course we would like to have stronger property growth. It is interesting that every time we do something—usually demanded by the opposition in any event—the opposition opposes it and complains about it. I have never seen a Liberal Party oppose payroll tax cuts. I have never seen a Liberal Party oppose stamp duty cuts. I have never seen a Liberal Party oppose—interestingly—the reinstatement of the financial counsellors who were cut when the former government was in power. I do not understand what this mob opposite stands for. The drop in property prices that the opposition now complains about has been happening since 2014–15. It is a terrible thing. I will go through some of the data in a minute, but the data around that is starting to get better. It is interesting that 60 per cent of the fall in the median house price occurred under the former government. However, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Bateman did not mention that when they sat on the government side of the house. They did not utter the words “house prices” or “negative equity” when they sat on this side of the house and did all that damage.

I want to remind people of the Liberal Party policy to reduce house prices by imposing three increases in land tax in just under three years. That put a wrecking ball through the property sector. I have gone through this a few times previously, but I want to remind everybody of what those increases in land tax did to private dwelling building approvals. We are only now starting to see signs of recovery from that. In fact, the shadow Treasurer was complaining about Keystart, Minister for Housing.

Mr P.C. Tinley: Yes!

Mr B.S. WYATT: Apparently our Keystart efforts are not good enough either and are having a negative effect.

This is the year when the rubber hits the road. It will be interesting to see the kinds of things the opposition is proposing to cut. I know it is proposing to cut the foreign buyer surcharge. We will be campaigning on that. I know it is proposing to cut the 75 per cent rebate. We will be campaigning on that. It will be interesting to see whether the Liberal Party will support the \$1.6 billion that the Leader of the Nationals WA said yesterday is the starting figure before it will walk up to the chequered line with the Liberal Party. I note that the Liberal Party did not speak to the amendment that was moved by the National Party yesterday. That is another question that needs to be asked.

I remind everybody that in the couple of years leading up to the first land tax increase in 2013, private dwelling building approvals were humming along. They were growing at 49 per cent. The impact of the first land tax increase was that private dwelling building approvals moderated significantly, down to 15 per cent over the next year. In 2014, the Liberals had another go at increasing land tax. That had an immediate impact, Minister for Housing. The number of private dwelling building approvals fell by 10 per cent. Not only did the Liberal Party turn a 49 per cent growth into a 10 per cent contraction, it then had another go. That third go was the biggest single increase in land tax in history. The property market has still not fully recovered from that. The market plummeted a whopping 24 per cent in just nine months. The total decline was 50 per cent. That is what the Liberal Party did. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that the policy intent was to reduce property prices. It has certainly had that impact, as we have seen. The median house price, Minister for Housing, between 2015 and 2017—remember, this is following the three Liberal Party increases in land tax—went from \$547 000 to \$508 000, a \$40 000 drop, and it has continued to drop; there is no question about that. However, I make the point that these things are always on a curve and that 60 per cent of the drop in the median house price in Western Australia occurred under the former government. Not once was that mentioned when members opposite sat on this side of the chamber. It was difficult to come in after a recession had been created by the Liberal Party and with a property set like that. It takes time to turn around. The Minister for Housing outlined the issue around supply that was confronted during the boom period the Liberal Party deliberately brought to an end. Supply came on at huge rates. We had a period of supply that continued to come into the market when population growth effectively stopped, so, of course, there

were going to be issues around demand. But that, again, is why a decision was made around the stamp duty rebate. The only people I have heard complain about it and say they are going to cut it are members of the Liberal Party of Western Australia. It is bizarre!

Yesterday I quoted an article during the debate that I want to quote again, because it is about someone who has some skin in the property sector game. In an article in the *Business News* on 20 January this year, just last month, Gavin Hawkins from Edge Visionary Living made an interesting comment that reflected on the apartment market and the impact of that 75 per cent stamp duty rebate. I quote —

“The stamp duty rebate has been really significant,” ...

... not just for those projects that are pre-construction. It has obviously been a huge benefit for those projects, particularly as overseas sales have picked up ... but I think it’s got people re-examining all projects, whether they are pre-construction and the rebate applies, but we’ve noticed it’s also flowing over to our projects that are under construction.

... the rebates have got people talking property again and there is a flow-on effect to projects under construction.

“It’s been really positive ...

All those people who have skin in the game, whether they are looking now to fund a build or pre-construction, are very excited. I have quoted at length the Property Council of Australia, the Urban Development Institute of Australia, the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia et cetera—all those who are investing—but now, interestingly, it is having a positive impact on builds that are already under construction. This is what the Liberals are going to cut. What an interesting policy proposition from the Liberal Party. I want to put on the record—I made this point yesterday about a very good policy that the Liberals are going to cut—our view on the foreign buyer surcharge. We in the WA Labor Party think that foreign buyers of property should contribute to the infrastructure paid for by Western Australians. We are actually tracking ahead of what we thought and it is raising more revenue, and there are more transactions than we thought there would be at budget time. As at 19 January 2020, the foreign buyers surcharge has raised nearly \$12 million from 375 taxable transactions against our entire year’s revenue of \$19 million. We are tracking ahead of schedule and I expect we will end up raising more money from that surcharge than we were expecting at budget time. Incredibly—I know people might find this surprising—the Liberal Party’s projections that there will be not one transaction have proven to be untrue. Who would have thought that there would be zero investment from foreign buyers into the WA residential market as a result?

Mr P.C. Tinley: Who knew!

Mr B.S. WYATT: In fact, we now have the lowest rate in Western Australia. If anything, we have an incentive, Minister for Housing, with the lowest foreign buyers surcharge in Australia.

Before I turn to the cost of living, I want to get on the record some interesting data coming out around the housing sector. There is no doubt that we have pulled a range of policy levers, usually to the great anger of the Liberal opposition, to try to stimulate housing construction. The Minister for Housing has been very active in this space and, I think, has been very successful in a range of government policies to try to stimulate construction. Obviously, the lending criteria for Keystart has been extended, and that has been very well supported by the property sector. I have already referenced the 75 per cent stamp duty rebate. The Minister for Housing always likes money to spend on housing, so there is the \$150 million package that was announced late last year. But, importantly, after the Liberal government’s policy to deliberately reduce house prices—it was quite successful—house prices are, touch wood, beginning to show some signs of improvement. Again, according to Domain’s December quarter, prices have increased for two quarters, which is the first back-to-back quarterly rise in six years. Six years, members—remember, we were not always around during most of those six years and we were not the ones who did the land tax hit on the property sector.

CoreLogic has recorded a 0.4 per cent increase in the three months to January and, in addition, data released by REIWA shows a significant increase in property sales. Indeed, for the first time in at least six years, stamp duty transactions for this financial year are tracking as per the budget. Transactions are actually increasing. That is what REIWA has been highlighting—a significant increase in property sales—and I hope we are all familiar with the low rental vacancy rate, which declined to 2.4 per cent in the December quarter. That is why we see now, almost on a daily basis—whether it is in the daily newspaper or property online publications—a lot more optimism for property prices in 2020, because we have a scenario in which population growth is increasing, the supply has by and large now been absorbed, rental vacancies are declining and there is now demand for property in Western Australia. It is not actually technically very difficult to understand why that is the case. This has not happened in the last 12 months—60 per cent of that decline happened during the term of the former government.

Of late I have had a bit of a look at another couple of interesting datasets that are referenced, usually incorrectly, by the opposition around mortgage arrears. When we look at the time frame around mortgage arrears in Western Australia, we find that the damage was done very much under the former Liberal–National government.

Interestingly, Michele Bullock, who is assistant governor of the RBA, in a speech last year—I was expecting a question about this last year but I very rarely get questions—released data that the value of arrears, Minister for Housing, increased around 150 per cent under the previous government. I thought, because of the opposition's newfound interest in bankruptcy data, that I would look at the bankruptcy data on repossessions. The opposition looked at the bankruptcy data from only the last 12 months, of course, and not bankruptcy data from over the last five years, which highlights the fact that bankruptcies increased by 86 per cent during the term of the last government. It is in the Supreme Court where repossession data of arrears turns into actions and possession is taken of property. The Supreme Court data highlights—this is good data because it is easy to get from the Supreme Court—that repossessions peaked under the previous government at 1 500, after increasing by 812 in a very short period of time. Then after the three land tax increases over two years that I referenced—again, a deliberate policy of the Liberal Party to reduce house prices, as the member for Nedlands confirmed—possession applications rose 54 per cent. By passing that on—it is always passed on—people were forced out of their houses. That is what the Liberal Party did. They did that, not us. The Liberal Party increased Supreme Court possession applications by 54 per cent.

I then turned to the data from Standard and Poor's, which is more good data, because, again, I heard arrears mentioned in relation to 30-day arrears. The vast majority of 30-day arrears do not end up in possession applications in court, of course, but the number of 30-day arrears increased by 93 per cent in the last term of the Liberal–National government. I referenced yesterday that diabolical second term of the Liberal–National government—the one that drove us into recession et cetera. It also increased 30-day arrears by 93 per cent.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Who was the Deputy Premier?

Mr B.S. WYATT: By way of an aside, who was the Deputy Premier? The then Deputy Premier, who is now Leader of the Opposition and is interested in state final demand, at no point, as Deputy Premier, saw state final demand grow—not one quarter; not one year. Economic growth is unknown to her. She did not see it; she did not know what it looked like whilst in government.

The reality is that we all want increases in house prices. To be honest, I remember quite distinctly when I first became the member for Victoria Park that housing increases were so dramatic, they forced a lot of people out of places they had lived for years. But we want those declines to stop, and we are starting to see data that confirms that. Again, it is not complicated: as the population grows, supply is absorbed and, importantly, the economy continues to grow, and we will start to see that happen. That data, whilst early, suggests that is the case and that the Liberal Party's smashing of the property sector with those three land tax increases hopefully has had its impact and we will start to see property prices continue to rise over 2020. That is certainly the expectation of, by and large, the property sector in all of its most recent reports.

There is another point I want to make in my final few minutes. This opposition knows no shame talking about the cost of living. Give me a break! I want an election campaign in which I am talking about the economy every day, in which I am talking about the finances and in which I am talking about the cost of living every day, because I am going to remind every Western Australian of something that they are very, very aware of. They are very aware of the fact that the Liberal–National government increased power prices by 90 per cent. They know that, and they know it happened in one year alone by 26 per cent, which is more than we have done in three years. They know that water, sewerage and drainage charges increased by 66 per cent. They know that car registrations increased by \$183 a year. They know that the Liberal–National government imposed \$1.5 million in land tax increases that smashed the property sector. They know that; they know. Not only was the hardship utility grant scheme slashed, it was not funded. One of the first things I had to do when I became Treasurer was to fund HUGS, and now the opposition complains about HUGS not being made more accessible. It was not funded. One of those classic things that the Liberal Party did at the time was to say that it was only a \$2.5 billion deficit—“That is all it is that we are leaving you, Mr Wyatt, only \$2.5 billion.” That was based on not funding HUGS. It was also based on a power bill increase of seven per cent every single year for four years—every year. If the former government had not done that, I tell members what, its deficit would have been a lot larger.

The opposition talks about creative accounting. Give me a break! This is the mob that could not count up and in the end gave me a bunch of red ink that was not even accurate. The former government cut funding for financial counselling. At the same time the Liberal–National government was not funding HUGS, it was not giving Western Australians access to counselling for that key issue to try to ensure that people were not just getting cash, but were working out how they could manage their family budgets. The Libs got rid of that. The Leader of the Opposition did that. That was at the same time that she imposed a 500 per cent increase in TAFE bills on families. That is what she did.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr B.S. WYATT: There is no doubt —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Both sides, please.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Can I have an extension please?

The ACTING SPEAKER: No, unfortunately, it is an amendment. You have 35 seconds.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Either way, with the economic data and the finances, at every turn, everything is better under this government than it was under the former government. That is the reality. As I wind down in this last minute, I am looking forward to question time when I get questions on the housing sector, questions on the finances and questions on the economy, because every single time I will be able to point out that when it comes to financial management, economic management and a lower cost of living under this government, as the last 20 years have shown, Labor always delivers.

Division

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

Ayes (16)

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

Noes (38)

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

Pair

Dr D.J. Honey

Ms J.J. Shaw

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

MR K.M. O'DONNELL (Kalgoorlie) [10.48 am]: Greetings, Mr Acting Speaker. I would like to talk about my electorate and the recent fires. The fires started in my electorate well before Christmas. There were several, and some even joined together. Firefighters, volunteers, station owners and workers fought these fires from November last year. There were several closures at different roads from this period, including Eyre Highway, goldfields–Esperance highway, also known as the Coolgardie–Esperance Highway, and Hyden–Norseman Road. This occurred before and after Christmas and into the new year. Our office monitored the fires and shared Department of Fire and Emergency Services info the whole holiday period. I even visited the Coolgardie evacuation centre and spoke to truck drivers and those receiving meals before Christmas, and attended various DFES briefings. During this time, many travellers were stuck for days at a time or held up. Many travelled longer distances, with over eight hours of extra travel, just to reach their homes or holiday destinations or to return to work. These included alternative routes to Kalgoorlie and Esperance via Hyden Road. They also tried bush tracks along Trans Access Road and “Outback Highway”. Some even talked about travelling to Kununurra to get around the fires. By 5 January 2020, several roads had been closed for days, and, in effect, all major exit and entry points into Norseman—roads north, south, east and west—had been closed for some time. They were isolated for 12 days. By the way, I support any road closures that were made because they were made to ensure that people were kept safe. There is no criticism of the agencies involved. My staff and I flew to Norseman to attend a community meeting; we could not drive. We met with shire representatives, including shire president, Laurene Bonza, and chief executive officer, Peter Fitchat. People there were upset, including the travellers, because there had been no answer to the question about when the road would reopen. Most people, especially the residents of Norseman, understood the situation. Emergency agencies dealt with this situation well. It seemed that people in Norseman had up-to-date information.

On Sunday, 5 January, a gentleman by the name of Russell Smith from the eastern states contacted my office to alert us to the fact that there were a lot of travellers stranded in Kalgoorlie–Boulder—we were aware of that, but we were not aware of the number—who, according to them, had no information, apart from Department of Fire

and Emergency Services information and normal emergency updates. Seventy-five people were stranded at the local caravan where he was staying. The following Monday, everyone was due to be back at work because the holiday period was ending. That day our office began fielding calls and emails from people either stuck in my electorate—mainly in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Coolgardie, Kambalda and Norseman—or people from those places and others in our electorate who were stuck in the eastern states, mainly in Ceduna and Streaky Bay in South Australia. That day the road had been briefly opened to free up those stuck on the highway at various roadhouses, but it seemed that a lot of people were still unable to get home. It seems that a lack of communication about road closures was a big issue. The biggest and most common theme I heard from Western Australian people who were stuck in the eastern states was that they contacted the office to say that they had reached the South Australian border—some had not reached there and were stuck in Ceduna—and were told that they could not go any further. They said they were totally unaware that the road was still closed and said that there was a distinct lack of information. It seemed that many just thought it was a little road closure that had not been reported or that the message had not gotten through. There was a common theme among those who were stuck. They were running out of funds because it was the end of their holiday. Sometimes people do not budget for long delays. They were overdue for work, due back for medical appointments or needed to get back to family and pets—the list goes on. Some had been stuck for nine days or more at that stage. People asked for assistance. Most had not complained before. People wondered whether they had done the right thing in staying put or staying on a major road so as not to put stress on the number of people stuck on the border or Eyre Highway. Many people felt unfairly treated because those who had gone to the border highway were escorted through by convoy that day. Minister Logan flew to Eucla to witness the clearing of the border and to see the number of trucks and stuck travellers. However, the true number of stranded travellers and affected trucks was far higher than anyone anticipated, as we were about to find. It seemed that once the 300-odd people travelling in trucks and cars were cleared that day, the state government thought that that was it and the road could be reclosed, as it needed to be because the fires flared up within an hour of the convoy moving off.

Meanwhile, because people were stuck in my electorate, my office was still fielding calls. They were in my electorate and whether or not they were from my electorate, they needed help. I had my office contact Minister Logan's office that afternoon on 6 January to explain the situation—that we felt that a large number of travellers from both my electorate and other parts of WA were stranded in the eastern states. We asked what assistance there was. The minister's office called us back just before 5.00 pm and informed us that they would be attending a meeting that afternoon and would update us. They said they would also get in contact with Minister McGurk's office. We informed them that we were thinking of starting a traveller register to see how many people were stranded and in difficulty. My staff and I were fielding calls and emails when we left the office at 6.30 that night. Nadia, my electoral officer, put a post on Facebook that night to say that if people were stranded in the electorate or could not get into the electorate, they should contact the office. We were unaware of what was about to be unleashed. I wanted to assist to people, but before we knew it, people from all over WA who were stranded on the other side of the border and people from all over Australia who were stranded in my electorate contacted us. It started immediately. That post alone attracted more than 57 000 views and more than 300 shares. Imagine the number of people who are not on Facebook and did not even see it.

Mrs A.K. Hayden: Or they did not have a signal.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Correct—no signal. I am not all over Facebook technology and I am not internet savvy, as many members know, but for a little electorate office in Kalgoorlie with me and two staff, I have been told that that is a lot. Our suspicions were correct: a lot of people were stranded and needed help, but even I was about to be shocked by how many.

One of my staff rang me at 7.00 Tuesday morning on her way into the office to say that I might need to get in early because we had been inundated with emails and calls. I thought that that might have been 20 calls. When I got into the office, the phone was ringing off the hook and more than 100 emails were already sitting there. There were hundreds of comments and messages on Facebook. We ended up receiving 200 emails that day. People did not know where to go or who to call. DFES updates about the fire and road closure status were great, but they did not say, "Hey, if you need help, this is what you need to do." Once again, it came through loud and clear that they could see information on the DFES website, but no-one warned the travellers, especially those stuck in the eastern states, that they could not get through. They were caught completely unaware and were still out there days later. The transport industry relying on that highway and other roads was also grinding to a halt. When the Leader of the Opposition and I met with a company the following week, we were told that the road closure had cost it more than \$750 000. No-one can insure against that.

Once again, our office spoke with the offices of both Ministers Logan and McGurk to update them. We told them about our register and how it was growing. Maybe they thought we were exaggerating—who knows?—but they did not seem to grasp how many people we were dealing with. We were given a Department of Communities phone number to use in our updates for those on our register, but we were told to use it at our discretion. We gave it—posted it—to everyone because who were we to distinguish those who needed help from those who did not? At this stage the number was only for those Western Australians stranded on the other side of the border, but we released it generically. That day I fielded many of those phone calls myself.

I will describe some stories. A family with six foster kids was stuck in Kalgoorlie and had to sleep in a tent in 40-degree heat. Another lady who was stuck—she was in her car for days—was stuck with her husband who has Alzheimer's who became increasingly distressed and confused. Another stuck family had three autistic kids. A woman lost her job because the small company she worked for could not keep her position open. People missed weddings and funerals. It went on and on. Some eastern states people who were stuck in Western Australia lost their homes in fires.

Meanwhile, the register grew and grew. We contacted the offices of Senator Lynda Reynolds and Minister David Littleproud regarding disaster funding. We appreciated their advice and cooperation. Each day, funding was announced for those affected by bushfires; however, WA was ineligible—as it apparently still is. We kept updating our Facebook page and sending emails to those on the register. We started to get replies that people had contacted the Department of Communities but it could not help. We told them to try again. In the meantime, my staff contacted local relief agencies to see what help they could give if our state government could not help. I decided to see whether I could assist myself and my office decided to hold a community meal on the Wednesday night to assist the eastern states travellers who were stranded in our electorate. I am so proud of my community: straightaway, businesses and individuals contacted the office to see what they could do to help. I also contacted both Qantas and Virgin to see whether they could assist with cheap airfares to help get people home. The number of stranded people on the register continued to grow and the stories got worse. Wednesday was another long day. We again tried to find out whether we could get help for people. The Department of Communities had by this stage a 1 800 number that people from WA could use. However, this apparently was not an option for many with pre-paid mobiles or those in areas with poor range.

People continued to contact the office. We contacted the local governments in Ceduna and Streaky Bay in South Australia. One of the chief executive officers had put up his own hand-painted sign to say to travellers, "Don't go any further; the road is closed." Why did any state government department not contact the shires in the areas in other states in which Western Australians were stuck? Why did they not contact other state departments of communities or the equivalent and say, "Hey, we know you have bushfires over there, but you also have people stuck in WA because of fires, too"? I was still trying to get help for people to find ways to travel back, contacting ministers' offices here in Western Australia and federally, but we were advised that the help must start from and be directed by the WA state government. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services continued to be outstanding, and I commend it for that.

The community event was held and it was a great night. A hundred people turned up and they were fed and looked after. DFES attended and updated people so they could be aware of what was going on. It was great throughout. We had Jody and Gavin from the local Salvation Army there to advise them about funding. The Department of Communities also came and helped people. By this stage, we were on board to help people from the eastern states, which was good. The department handed out a flyer with information that included my phone number, and that is what this is about: this was a non-political, bipartisan effort, and I commend that government department for including my Facebook page in its additional information and updates. My whole idea was that we do it together; no-one gets accolades, and everyone gets out there. I thought that was great.

The following morning I spoke with Ministers Logan and McGurk, who both rang me. I was chuffed that Minister Logan rang me. I have spoken to various other ministers since I have been in government and many of them have given me advice that I have run with, and I appreciate that. However, although I felt good when Mr Logan rang me, by the end of the conversation I did not feel so good.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Sorry.

Dr A.D. Buti: Why, he is asking.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: The minister said to me, "Let me give you a piece of advice."

Mr F.M. Logan: I did try.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes. He said, "Kyran, let me give you some advice. These people are not from your electorate. They don't vote for you. Move on." He said, "Cut them loose."

Mr F.M. Logan: No, I asked you to move on.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I understand that they are not in my electorate, but I was trying to help whoever needed help. At no stage did I ever mention that I am Liberal. At no stage did I ever lay blame. At the meal I did not put any Liberal banners up and there was not one word at that community meal to say that this was a political thing. We did not do that. I put my hand on my heart in saying that. When I got the phone call from Minister Logan, I was really, really pleased; I really was. I thought he would say, "All right, you've got this going. We're doing this; can you do this?" "Yep, beauty. We're there to help. Whatever you want me to do." I just think it was wrong. I was disappointed. I held him in high regard, but once we cross the white line, that is it. I just need to say that, minister.

I then had a phone call from Minister McGurk regarding the phone number we were handing out. She mentioned to me about speaking to one of the heads of the Department of Communities, which I did, and we were grateful. On the night of the meal we worked together, and that was good. When I was on the microphone to the people in the park, the Department of Communities was there and I said it was good to have it there. At no stage would I ever say, “Oh, hold on, I’m going to do all the talking. This is Liberal and the Liberals are all out there to help you.” Never, ever. I did not wear a shirt with “Liberal” on it; sorry, Minister for Tourism, but that is just a fact.

Mr P. Papalia: Did you have “Kalgoorlie” on it, though?

Mr K.M. O’DONNELL: All right.

At no stage were any ministers criticised; at no stage did I ever say anything about any of the ministers. We said we were just as frustrated when people contacted us, voicing their frustration and disappointment at the lack of help and information they had received from the government. When I flew to Norseman, they said that not one minister had been there, but then I ascertained that the minister was coming to my electorate the next day. I was disappointed that the minister’s staff did not even advise me about that. I believe I got a 99 per cent hit there.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr K.M. O’DONNELL: I really thought we were doing the right thing and that we could have worked together in an instance like this. I see on television people saying, “This is not a time for political grandstanding”, and I agree. I hope, going into the future, that members in various electorates in the regions can work with ministers and government departments.

The road was then opened, and to say we were all relieved would be an understatement. People have been fighting fires since November. During this whole process I was in contact with local governments in my electorate. They did a great job. They had been battling fires since November last year, and there was money and funding flying everywhere from the feds.

I just remembered: I said that we never branded Liberal, but I want to bring up one point. We sent an email to a doctor who was coming into this state and was stuck at the border for days. He was not happy. He sent us two emails, and the reply was the only email my electorate officer sent with Liberal branding. It stated that I had suggested sending his concerns to Ministers Logan and McGurk and also to Premier McGowan. She then put down below some of my Liberal Party colleagues—various shadows, for communities, emergency services, health, and transport, and the Leader of the Opposition. That was the only time we used the word “Liberal”, and that was to one individual. We were told by the government, “Tell people, if they have any concerns, to contact their electorate and their member.” I do not think my electorate officer did anything wrong. She just provided that if he had any further concerns. He was the only one we told that; we did not direct anyone else to contact a government minister, at all.

There was money and funding flying everywhere from the federal government; my perception was that it appeared that the WA government was not interested in that. It did not assist local governments to get that funding. A \$240 000 threshold for one event should be over the whole region and for the whole fire season, not six fires counted individually. These fires were on different fronts that joined up. They were fires that flared and re-flared; they were fires that joined shires and local governments. They should be able to use the fire season as one event, and once the amount is triggered, they qualify. Often these fires roll into one, but the criteria are not calculated like that. A shire with a small budget, like the little Shire of Dundas—Norseman is there, needs different criteria, formulas and percentages from those of big local governments. Just like other funding, the criteria need to be fluid and there should be some ministerial discretion. I have said in the media that I would love to see whatever criteria they have for disasters and have one more line for special or extraordinary circumstances to allow those local governments to underwrite it if they do not meet the thresholds. If they do not meet the thresholds, they just think, “Oh, well, we’ve got nothing.” But for little shires like Dundas, which have hardly any money and are using all their reserves to help fight fires, it is not fair, and they are hurting very badly.

Do not forget that local government is the first to attend these fires and also is the body that often must end up looking after the fire when responsibility is handed back to local government from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. A lot of fires start on crown land yet local government bears the burden. The state government needs to address these issues and be more responsible for what happens on crown land. It cannot leave local government to look after these huge areas on their own just because there are not a lot of people or votes out there. We need to learn from these incidents and to better manage people, not just fires. We need better lines of communication between states when people get stranded and major highways are closed. We need better support for local governments and better avenues and channels made available to them to source funding. We need state governments to work with local governments to help them whenever possible. We need better road networks and viable alternative routes. The government needs to listen to those asking for help and those giving it, and not bury its head in the sand. There is a big, wide state out there. It is not just in the city that people notice the supermarket shelves are bare. I do not do this for votes or pats on the back. My staff did not work 15 to 17 hours a day for the whole week for that either. I can tell members that I have hundreds more emails of thanks. They were still coming in the other day from people saying thank you for how we helped. We

do not help just for the thankyou. How many thankyou did the minister's office get from those stranded travellers? If we had done this together, we would have been thanked together. Let us do more next time and learn from this. The minister's office has more resources than my office.

I would like to talk about alternative routes. I spoke to some people who said that because Eyre Highway was closed, people were travelling to Norseman from all directions. Some people in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie were talking about driving back to Perth and all the way up to Kununurra to try to get around because there was no end in sight to the fires. However, with a cyclone brewing up north at the same time, people shelved that idea. Up north, people had issues because of the cyclone. Because of flooding on the "Outback Highway" out of Laverton, that road was closed, along with Eyre Highway. Every road into Western Australia was either closed or had the potential to be closed because of the cyclone up north. We need alternative routes. I am glad that the federal and state governments are working to upgrade the "Outback Highway" and seal it completely. The quicker that is done, the better.

Again, I implore the state government to look at budgeting to upgrade the Trans Access Road. We need people to travel through Eucla and be able to make a sharp right up to the railway line and then make a sharp left. That will help not only tourists, but also pastoralists and trucking companies. We cannot have a highway closed indefinitely and everyone just banked up. A lot of the produce that comes to Perth arrives from the eastern states. Truck after truck after truck was sitting idle. We saw it happen nine months earlier in Coolgardie when 100 trucks were banked up because the highway was closed. We can say, "We'll be right", but we need alternative routes. One family could not wait for the highway to open so they drove in their sedan along the Trans Access Road. Every tyre was ripped. They drove on rims until they could not drive anymore. I am told there was a family of three in the car and they had just five litres of water. They were lucky the temperature did not reach the 40s, because five litres of water would not have lasted a family of five for very long at all. That is why we do not want people to make their own way or try a new road that they do not know.

I would like to see the Aboriginal affairs office reopened in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. It was closed back in 2018 and still has not reopened. We need that reopened. We need staff from there integrated and talking with locals about incidents and also helping them and directing them. The mob have to ask the police where to go, and the council rangers are saying the same thing. They are being asked because no-one else is there. We need an Aboriginal affairs office reopened in Kalgoorlie–Boulder.

I will touch on the budget. I have stood in this place before and brought it to the government's attention. My electorate of Kalgoorlie has been placed either last or second last in the first three budgets this government has handed down. It places last or second last compared with the other regions. I have sat back and watched my good friend in the Pilbara get allocated nearly \$1 billion.

Mr F.M. Logan: Did you say \$1 billion?

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: It is nearly \$1 billion.

I hope that in this budget we show improvement and move forward. I would be happy with being third last or fourth last, but I would love it if we could rank in the top three and the Treasurer gave us specific money, not just money that goes everywhere.

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: Specific like an MRI machine? Isn't that what you got? You got nothing except an MRI machine?

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: An MRI machine is fantastic, but we are talking a couple of million dollars.

The Treasurer said the government has spent a lot of money on roads in our area, and I appreciate that. Everyone deserves that. I am referring specifically to different things for us.

Amendment to Question

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Therefore, I move —

That the following words be added after "noted" —

and this house calls on the Premier to stand down the Minister for Emergency Services for grossly failing in his ministerial responsibilities to the people of Western Australia, in particular during the recent goldfields bushfire emergency

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition) [11.17 am]: I rise to contribute to the debate on this amendment. The Liberal opposition had a number of speakers lined up to outline why we believe the Premier should stand down the Minister for Emergency Services for his mismanagement of the bushfire disaster. The member for North West Central has some supporters in the Speaker's gallery waiting to hear his speech. To that end, and to not keep his guests waiting for too long, I will be the only speaker from the opposition to speak on this recent amendment.

I think every member in this place would appreciate that the member for Kalgoorlie has a heart of gold and wears his heart on his sleeve. He absolutely shamelessly represents every one of his constituents and he extends a helping hand to every person in need who crosses his path. He has a heart of gold and he is as kind as the day is long.

When most cabinet ministers were on holiday, the member for Kalgoorlie found Western Australia in the grip of a disaster.

Mr P. Papalia: You disappeared over Christmas.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No, I didn't. I will show you my diary.

The member for Kalgoorlie sought advice from my office during this time because he needed some assistance about what he needed to do for these travellers. His hardworking staff, Nardia Turner and Christie Tan, worked with the member for Kalgoorlie. People were knocking on his door saying they had a real emergency in Kalgoorlie. The bushfires had cut off the Coolgardie–Esperance Highway and Eyre Highway for an unprecedented period of time. That highway was closed for 12 days. At one point, vehicles were queued for several kilometres at the border because they could not get through because the road was closed.

Mr F.M. Logan: That's not true.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: There is footage of it, minister. The member for Kalgoorlie called me and asked what he should do. He had started a Facebook page for stranded travellers and had been inundated with emails and phone calls. His phone was ringing off the hook and he did not know what to do. He said that he was going to contact the Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Community Services after seeking advice from my office, and that is exactly what he did.

I flew to Kalgoorlie around 10 or 12 January just to go and meet with some of these people and understand the impact of this road closure on that community. The member for Kalgoorlie took me to visit Jodie and Gavin at the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army in Kalgoorlie had handed out \$10 000 worth of fuel, accommodation and food vouchers to travellers from the east coast who were stuck in Kalgoorlie. The member for Kalgoorlie outlined some of the horrendous circumstances of those families. One family with six foster children stayed in a tent in Kalgoorlie in January in over 40-degree heat. There was the lady who could not explain to her husband with Alzheimer's what was going on. Travellers who were stranded and trying to get back to the east coast had a number of issues. Western Australians stranded on the border of South Australia at Bordertown, Ceduna and other places were getting no information from the government. The only information they received—we saw photographs of it in the media—was on a sheet covering an orange bollard, which had the words "WA border closed" written on it. No information was coming through. The only information those travellers received was because of the efforts of the member for Kalgoorlie and his Facebook page. It was an absolute disgrace.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, you will have your chance.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Emergency Services, you will have your chance to reply. Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We have brought this amendment to Parliament because of the disgraceful comments this minister made to the member for Kalgoorlie when he was trying to help people. The member for Kalgoorlie dipped into his own pocket to provide a barbecue dinner for people who were stranded and had run out of money. They could not afford to put fuel in their vehicles. The member for Kalgoorlie provided a meal for them. Did the government provide a sausage sizzle for them? No; it was missing in action. The Premier and the minister were missing in action, and that is not good enough. To add fuel to the fire, to coin a phrase, there was a temporary reopening of the highway. What did we see? The minister flew in to get a happy snap—a media moment—to show that the highway was open and 300 vehicles were being escorted through. Do members know what that did? It sent a message to everyone queued up on the other side of the border that the road was open. That sent a flood of vehicles heading west, with people trying to get back to work, their families and their pets. However, the fire flared up again and they got stranded at the border. They had reports of the minister hopping out of a helicopter and saying that the road was open, but they then did not hear any further information from the minister. Did he speak to any of those stranded travellers? No.

Mr F.M. Logan: Don't mislead this house. You're supposed to be a Leader of the Opposition. Stop telling lies!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister!

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I have a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr R.S. Love): Thank you; I am handling it. I know what you are saying.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: What was I about to say?

The ACTING SPEAKER: You were about to say that he is interrupting.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: No, that was not what I was going to say.

The ACTING SPEAKER: What are you saying?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am saying that the minister just said that the Leader of the Opposition was telling lies, and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

I met with some travellers who were stranded in Kalgoorlie.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Emergency Services, I call you for the first time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker; I expect the minister is sensitive about this issue because he knows that he was missing in action.

I met with some of the travellers who were stranded. I also spoke with some constituents of the member for Kalgoorlie who had made it back to Kalgoorlie. One of those travellers had been stuck at the border for five days. He was going to lose his job, so he drove back to Adelaide, parked his vehicle on a friend's front lawn and flew from Adelaide to Perth to Kalgoorlie so that he did not lose his job. He now has to find a way to fly back to Adelaide to retrieve his vehicle. Many travellers had similar stories. He is more than \$5 000 out of pocket. That is just one individual. Another family was stranded with two grandchildren. They lived in their car at Caiguna in 40-degree heat for days. They ended up having to cancel a trip to New Zealand for a family wedding because they had used up all their money. They were buying little bottles of water for \$6 a bottle because of the scarce resources at that tiny little roadhouse at Caiguna that was trying to cope with hundreds of stranded travellers. Where was the Premier? Where was the minister? Where was the relief and comfort for the people who were stuck there? They were missing in action, and that is why we have moved this reasoned amendment.

The effects of this road closure were felt not just by those individuals; this has had an economic impact on the state of Western Australia. Western Australian producers had to dump produce that they had tried to get across the border to east coast markets. Those producers are collectively out of pocket by millions of dollars because they could not get their produce to the east coast. It also impacted the trucking industry. One business alone in Kalgoorlie has lost \$700 000 and has not even counted up the overtime owed to drivers who were stuck for 12 days with trucks full of goods that were unable to make it across the border to get back to Kalgoorlie. That is \$700 000 lost by just one trucking company. Craig Smith-Gander from the Western Roads Federation had a lot to say about this, too. I understand that he is still waiting for an audience with the government so that he can explain the impact of that road closure on the transport industry.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Tourism!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The government has not approached him to find out about the impact; he is waiting to get an audience so that he can try to explain the impact of more than 300 truckies being stranded for days and losing subsequent business.

Mr F.M. Logan: You're making a political statement out of bushfires. It's a disgrace!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This is the nonsense that we get!

Mr F.M. Logan: You should hang your head in shame.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Emergency Services, you will have your chance.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This sort of nonsense infuriates me! The opposition raises valid issues in this Parliament. We do not politicise things.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The Minister for Emergency Services and Minister McGurk accused the member for Kalgoorlie of pulling a political stunt because he dared to tell an angry traveller that they could write to the ministers and complain, and gave them their email addresses. Because he gave them their email addresses so that they could complain, the ministers accused him of pulling a political stunt and politicising the issue. That is exactly what people do. When ministers do not perform and the government lets people down, they write to ministers. That is our job in this place. Ministers should not tell the member for Kalgoorlie to cut people loose because they are never going to vote for him.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That was shocking advice from a minister to a local member!

To quote from an ABC online news article —

Western Roads Federation chief executive Cam Dumesny said closing the vital route for nearly two weeks was unprecedented and would have significant consequences for the state's economy.

“We have a lot of our produce growers here in WA who were sending their seasonal produce across to the east,” he said.

“Because of this closure, they've probably missed a fair chunk of their profits for the season.

“It'll take some time to stabilise.”

Mr Dumesny applauded DFES, police, volunteers and the communities who supported the stranded motorists.

I would like to put on the record the Liberal opposition's appreciation of the efforts of those volunteer firefighters, career firefighters and police officers, and also of the volunteers in the communities of Ceduna, Eucla, Caiguna, Bordertown, Esperance, Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie who actually put these people up, fed them and gave them shelter when the government was missing in action. I commend all of them; they did a terrific job.

Mr Dumesny then said —

... the state would “need to take a deep breath once this is over and have a hard look at how we've managed it”.

We need to learn some hard lessons about how we look after people, sustain them, and keep them updated about what is going on. The reason the opposition has raised this is that this was a difficult time. Fires were raging on the east coast, and they absolutely dominated the news. To put this in context, travellers had been stranded for five days on the other side of the border. They were told to go to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' website to get information about the road closure. That is really useful. They have no money, and their phone battery is dead because they have been stuck in the middle of nowhere for so long, so they have no way of accessing the information. What were those people supposed to do? Luckily, a few people in the roadhouses were able to get the member for Kalgoorlie's Facebook page up and find out what was going on.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The member for Kalgoorlie acted in an outstanding fashion in managing those stranded travellers.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

THE ACTING SPEAKER (Mr R.S. Love): Minister!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will touch on another issue that sits underneath this. The local governments that were managing the bushfires, the Shire of Dundas, and the volunteers are out of pocket. The transport industry is out of pocket. Small businesses are out of pocket. The stranded travellers are out of pocket. They have no ability whatsoever to access any kind of emergency relief. The state governments on the east coast have gone in to bat for those businesses that suffered secondary impacts from the bushfires by providing bushfire relief funding to help them with some of their out-of-pocket expenses. However, the people I have talked about have received nothing from this state government. The shires have received no additional funding. This state government is not talking to the commonwealth about the opportunity to provide relief funding for the people in this state who have been affected.

Mr F.M. Logan: You know that, do you?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That is what they are telling me.

We do not take these things lightly. I was incensed when I heard the Minister for Emergency Services say to the member for Kalgoorlie, “They're not your constituents. They're not going to vote for you. Cut them loose.” That is appalling. That is why we have moved this amendment. That is the standard of this government. This government has let the people of Western Australia down in every area. The government had one opportunity to shine in managing businesses that were out of pocket and helping travellers who had been stranded by the bushfires that had cut off Eyre Highway for an unprecedented 12 days, and what did we get—a helicopter that flew in, and a photo shoot, and then crickets. It is not good enough.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services) [11.33 am]: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for allowing me to respond to and add to this amendment.

This is disgraceful. I have never, ever heard something like this in this house. I have never heard it. I have never heard an opposition politicise emergency services. Just think about what has been going on in the eastern states. Has any opposition—Labor or Liberal—in Queensland, South Australia, Victoria or New South Wales attempted to do what the Leader of the Opposition has done today? Has any opposition done that? No. That is because the one thing we do not do—it is bipartisan—is politicise emergency services. The reason we do not insert ourselves, as politicians, into emergency services is that we can provide bad advice and wrong advice, and someone may die.

The member for Kalgoorlie tried to insert himself into the incident on Eyre Highway. This is how it happened. The member for Kalgoorlie inserted himself into the emergency services incident because he was asked to do so by the Leader of the Opposition's office.

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Yes, he was.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Settle down.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I know that because one of its own members told me.

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: One of its own members from the upper house told me.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I am not making it up.

Point of Order

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Mr Acting Speaker, just on what the minister said, I firmly believe he is misleading Parliament in that comment.

Dr A.D. Buti: How would you know?

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I know that my electorate officer did that Facebook page, not the LOOP. The LOOP did not do it.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr R.S. Love): Member for Armadale! Member for Kalgoorlie, would you like to continue raising your point of order or have you completed it?

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I just want to say that I believe he is misleading Parliament in that comment.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Armadale! There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I was told quite clearly by a member of the Liberal Party that he had been asked to raise the issue of what he said was poor government performance on Eyre Highway, and to politicise it, and he refused to do so. What the member for Kalgoorlie forgot to add as part of his discussion about the two phone conversations that we had was that he told me that he had been put up to it. When I asked the member for Kalgoorlie who had been doing that, he said it was a federal Liberal minister. I said, "Name who it is." Does the member for Kalgoorlie remember that? Yes, he remembers. I said, "Who was that?", and the member for Kalgoorlie said, "I can't tell you, but they have suggested to me that I criticise the state government." The member for Kalgoorlie should not tell me that he has not politicised this. I have got one of his upper house —

Mr K.M. O'Donnell interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Of course he did. He told me that. I am not standing here telling untruths. I am telling the member exactly what happened.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Transport! Enough.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: An upper house member of the Liberal Party told me that they had been asked to intercede in this issue to make it bad for the government over the bushfire on Eyre Highway, and they refused to do so. I then had the member for Kalgoorlie advise me in our conversation that a federal Liberal minister had also asked him to make it look bad for the government. The Leader of the Opposition now has the audacity, for the first time ever —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands, and member for Darling Range.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: For the first time ever, I think, in Western Australian history, the Leader of the Opposition has politicised emergency services. She is now saying, "No, we were not doing that. The member for Kalgoorlie was acting out of the kindness of his heart." The problem, member for Kalgoorlie, is that when we put so much on

Facebook, people can take screenshots. I have some screenshots of the member for Kalgoorlie's electorate officer, Nardia Turner, replying to Scott Morrison, "This is great"—with a handclap emoji—"but we need you in WA. The electorate office I work in is inundated and our State Govt isn't interested."

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Do not tell me it is not politicising it.

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: A federal minister was advising the member for Kalgoorlie to make it bad, and his electorate officer was facebooking Scott Morrison asking for intervention! For God's sake! Do not tell me that it was not politicised. I feel sorry for the member for Kalgoorlie. He knows I like him, and I feel sorry for him and the way he gets used. I think it is appalling. I remind the member that he was once a policeman—I presume that was in Kalgoorlie as well. If someone, whether it was another MP—it does not matter from which party—or a member of the public was putting stuff out there on Facebook about an incident that the police were dealing with, would he be happy about that? No. Would the Commissioner of Police be happy about it? No. Would he take action on it? Yes, he would. This is no different. I tell members what I said to the member for Kalgoorlie, and he can confirm this, with respect to how he deals with the people who come to his office. I said, "Kyran, mate, just send them down to the incident control facility where the Department of Communities is. They will look after them. There is no point in you getting involved. If your office gets requests or inquiries, you don't have to take them on." Member for Kalgoorlie, remember, I said that to you. It is not your job. Pass them on to emergency services. Pass them on to the Department of Communities. Pass them on to the volunteers who are down there. All the volunteers, whom the Leader of the Opposition just referred to, were down at the incident control centre. That is where they should have gone. I said to the member for Kalgoorlie, "Kyran, if you want to keep going down this path, when you complain about people who believe they have lost money, no worries. If you want to take that on, I will send them all to you and you can deal with them for the next six months." Does the member for Kalgoorlie remember I said that to him? I was pleading with him to stop getting involved. I was telling him to do the right thing and send those people to the professionals. That is what I said. It is disgraceful that he put himself in there.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: That's what he did.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No, he did not. He and his electorate officer drew up a list of people, they claim, and then started to act on it. That is not what he should have done. Does the member for Kalgoorlie remember what I said? I said, "Take that list of 800 people and give it to the Department of Communities. They will contact them; they will fix them up", just as they were doing in Esperance, where there was an evacuation centre; just as they were doing in Norseman; just as they were doing in that spot halfway between Norseman and Esperance, where the Department of Communities had set up another centre; just as they were doing when they were going to every petrol station, when they were going to every campsite and talking to people putting up signs, and letting people know what was going on. There was no feedback from anybody that said they were not getting the right communication. If the Leader of the Opposition is saying that they were, she should put that in writing to the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. We will make it very clear exactly what we did and what they did as great emergency services, making sure people knew exactly what was going on at the time.

At the end of the day, that road was closed. The fire, as the member for Kalgoorlie knows, kept on coming. It went down overnight and then roared back to life the next day. That continued to occur. They opened the road for three days—not even three days; it was just over a day—to get 300 people out from the various places along the Eyre Highway. The next afternoon the fire took off again.

Leader of the Opposition, I was not in Norseman at that time. When the road finally reopened, I was in Norseman to thank all the people who were involved in getting that road open and putting the fire out, so just get the facts right. The Leader of the Opposition comes into this chamber all the time and simply makes things up. She makes them up. That is the why I was getting frustrated with her. It was not true. If she does not believe me, put whatever she likes in writing to me. I will back it up with both the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and the volunteers on the ground, who will confirm what I have said. Stop walking in here and just politicising and making things up.

At those various stations across the Eyre Highway, at Caiguna and all the others, helicopters were going in every day taking in supplies, from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. Did the Leader of the Opposition know that?

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Yes.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: So why did she say to this house that people were left there in 40-degree heat and were paying for expensive water, with no information? Why did she say that? She knows that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and all its equipment took every single one of them, yet she walked in here and said the opposite. Why did she say that?

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: She is supposed to be the Leader of the Opposition. We are going to an election in 12 months and people are supposed to trust what the Leader of the Opposition says. She is now admitting that what she said in Parliament a minute ago was untrue. She knows it is untrue. She has just admitted it. It is unbelievable for the Leader of the Opposition to simply come in here, spray me as the minister, say whatever she likes and then when I put the facts to her, say, “Oh, yes; that’s right.” It is just really unbelievable. Members of the Liberal Party should not have to put up with this. It is damning those people out there—the volunteers, the career firefighters, and the SES and St John Ambulance workers, who did a remarkable job. That fire was unbelievable.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The Leader of the Opposition flew over it; I went into it. I saw what the fire was like. Fire has a unique pattern of behaviour out on the western woodlands. The fire dies down overnight when the dew comes in and then it roars back to life during the day. It was a very, very difficult fire to deal with in the western desert. It was just the nature of where it was. Those firefighters did everything they possibly could.

The road was closed. I went on TV—the member for Kalgoorlie saw me—and made no apologies for not opening that road and for asking the commissioner to open the road. I make no apologies for it. Only a few years earlier, three truck drivers died when people made a mistake and opened a road too early. The trucks drove into the fire and three truck drivers died. At those various places, like Caiguna and others, there were lots and lots of trucks. They are not able to turn around. They are road trains. Once they go, they go. They would not have found a space to turn around if the fire was there. That is the reason the road was closed.

It is unfortunate people lost money and it is unfortunate people were put out—of course it is. But what can you do about it, Leader of the Opposition? Do we tell them to go and do something dangerous and to take a risk? People were trying to get onto the railway line—that is what the Leader of the Opposition was talking about—and were trying to drive around the fires. They ended up getting bogged and being pulled out by the police and other emergency services. People who should have been involved in fighting those fires were out on the railway line trying to get people out of the mud that they had bogged themselves in. That is not what they should have been doing. Any information, member for Kalgoorlie, that you provided to those travellers could easily have been very, very wrong and put them in danger. As a policeman, the member for Kalgoorlie would never ever have done that, would he? He would not. So why did he do it as an MP?

Mr K.M. O’Donnell: Only information. They did not know the roads were closed.

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: This is just —

Several members interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Honestly —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is the reason —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! We are hearing from the Minister for Emergency Services.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is the reason that we do not insert ourselves. I do not insert myself in the front line of emergency services, because I am not a professional. I leave that up to the people who know what they are doing. I do not involve myself. I just make sure that they get the right equipment, get the right funding and do the right thing. I do not try to tell them what to do. That is what I said to the member for Kalgoorlie: “Do not involve yourself.” I say that every MP: “Do not involve yourselves in emergency services.” Let them do what they want to do—what they have to do. They are the professionals. Otherwise, someone could end up losing their life. The Leader of the Opposition, after being requested to do so by the member for Kalgoorlie, flew up to go and see the incident control centre. I said no. Why did I say no? I said no because there were a lot of people there, the fires were still going and they had an enormous amount of work to do. We did not want the Leader of the Opposition, me or the member for Kalgoorlie in that centre basically stopping people from working. I still made available a briefing and the opportunity to go to the career fire station and talk to the regional office so the members could know what was going on, but, no, they could not go to the incident control centre. What did the member for Kalgoorlie do? He went public and started whingeing about it. He put it on his Facebook site and started whingeing about it. Did the member see the response to his own Facebook post? I will tell him. Here are a few. Here is one from Rob Hollingshead. He wrote —

Why didn’t he go to Norseman where all the action was

Oh! That’s right they did not want polliies, or their media circus, getting in the way either.

Graeme Clayton wrote —

SES have done their best at short notice to show you both around and get your head in the papers and still your not happy. Seriously, stop whinging!

That was another one. It goes on. There is Misty McGinley. These are probably constituents of the member for Kalgoorlie. She wrote —

Everyone at the SES ... was busy. Bloody busy and really don't have time to shake hands with MPs. Let them do their jobs!!

Hennifer Thompson wrote —

Kyran wanted a photo opportunity and is sour he didn't get it?

That is what people really think about politicians who try to assert themselves into emergency services. They see them as try-hards and they see them simply trying to make politics out of it.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Churchlands!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: What the Leader of the Opposition said is going to be put out there to all those people who did their very best for this state. They will be absolutely livid with her.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [11.52 am]: I just want to clarify a few points that have been raised in this debate, because, as has been identified, I had some role in this incident, and certainly my department did. The Department of Communities has responsibility for coordinating incident control centres where there needs to be some evacuation or some community support, emergency relief and the like. All the feedback I have received is that the department did a fantastic job coordinating that effort in what were obviously chaotic and difficult circumstances, not least of which that the nature of the emergency was such that we did not know when it would abate. We did not know how long people were going to be there. There was certainly frustration from members of the public who were holed up in Norseman. I thank the Department of Communities and its senior staff, who do a good job.

The frustration really came when the member for Kalgoorlie, as well-meaning as he may have been, essentially focused on trying to relay information himself, not only about the fires, but what was happening with the road closures, and not referring people to the emergency services website. That was the main concern; that is, he really needed to direct people immediately to get the most up-to-date information that could be available from the emergency services website, rather than trying to coordinate that himself. As a former police officer, the member for Kalgoorlie should have realised that. I think the Minister for Emergency Services has expressed our frustration that the member for Kalgoorlie, and certainly his office, really tried to assert themselves in a political way in trying to service some of these people. That was very frustrating. The member for Kalgoorlie relayed information to me that there was some pressure on him to politicise this issue. To his credit, he did not want to do that, and he was trying to do his best to service people in his community or people he could see were frustrated by the road closure. As I say, as well meaning as that was, it was frustrating to us in community services, and also the government offices and services on the whole, that he was not referring people both to the emergency services website and information or the community services incident control centre to get the support available to them, but rather was trying to relay some of that information. It was unmanageable. His office is not equipped to do that. It did not have the information, did not have the resources, and chaos ensued.

Can I also make clear to the Leader of the Opposition that we got a lot of good feedback because the Department of Communities was providing emergency relief. It does that on a case-by-case basis. It provided food vouchers, fuel vouchers and accommodation vouchers when people needed them. That emergency relief was available and we do that on a case-by-case basis, as is the responsible thing to do. The Leader of the Opposition is not across this detail. She needs to be aware. I draw people's attention to the debate yesterday when she was talking about emergency relief and saying that WA has record levels of homelessness, which is not true. She then also said a number of times in the debate yesterday that 500 000 Western Australian families were being helped by the social services sector. She talked about half a million people each week needing help to put food on the table and that contracts were being cut to services.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Are you quoting from uncorrected *Hansard*?

Ms S.F. McGURK: No, I am referring to the debate. She said that 500 000 Western Australian families were being helped by the social services sector—that is what she said.

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I believe the minister is quoting from uncorrected *Hansard*.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I am happy to put it down and say that I remember the Leader of the Opposition saying on more than one occasion in the debate yesterday that 500 000 families were receiving support from the social services. I thought that was a strange thing for her to say.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr R.S. Love): Minister, are you quoting from *Hansard*?

Ms S.F. McGURK: No, I am not. It was my recollection.

Debate Resumed

Ms S.F. McGURK: In fact, according to the 2016 census, there are only 644 000 families in the whole of Western Australia. In fact, the Foodbank figures, which I think the Leader of the Opposition was referring to, say that 500 000 meals were given out each month; it was not families who needed help every week. So get it right, Leader of the Opposition—get it right.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: That is uncorrected *Hansard*.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Is the Leader of the Opposition going to correct it? More than one person heard it around this chamber. We all heard it. Is the Leader of the Opposition going to try to correct the *Hansard* now—is she? It will be interesting to hear the audio. It will be very interesting to hear the audio.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, thank you!

Ms S.F. McGURK: With those sorts of mistakes, the Leader of the Opposition should be across that sort of detail. She is constantly trying to play little games in the chamber here, with the Premier supposed to know some obscure, arcane figure from a budget footnote, and the Leader of the Opposition says he is not across the detail, which, of course we know is not true. The Leader of the Opposition needs to be aware of that sort of detail if she is going to play those sorts of games. That was the frustration with the member for Kalgoorlie; that is, he was trying to relay detail about the very difficult, frustrating and, as the Minister for Emergency Services has said, dangerous situation on the Eyre Highway. We worried that not only was there a risk of putting people in harm's way, but also it did not help the situation. It was particularly the member for Kalgoorlie's office. There was an email I was frustrated about from the staff member Nardia Turner, who said —

Kyran has been contacting Govt Departments and Ministers all day trying to get help.

She listed the ministerial email addresses of Fran Logan and Simone McGurk. I have no objection to that; members of the public have every right to them. She also gave out Mark McGowan's email address and I have no objection to that either. What we do object to is that the emergency services numbers were not given, which is what needed to be done. Nardia Turner from the member for Kalgoorlie's electorate office said, "Lastly, my Liberal Party colleagues, who have been in constant contact with my office trying to assist as well", and then she outlines the names Liza Harvey, Zack Kirkup, Steve Thomas, Tony Krsticevic and Libby Mettam as all being in constant contact trying to supply information. I can tell members that if I were in an emergency, I would want the phone number of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, not the phone number of the Leader of the Opposition.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney) casting his vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (18)

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

Noes (39)

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

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for North West Central.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [12.04 pm]: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! If you are having a conversation, could you take it outside, please.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I rise today to draw the house's attention to recent news reports of a multitude of issues surrounding the Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation, or BTAC, which is an Indigenous company, and the oppression suffered by its members—some of whom are in the Speaker's gallery today—at the hands of the company's tyrannical chief executive officer, Matthew Slack, who is being propped up by a board of puppet directors and protected by high-powered Perth lawyer Martin Bennett. Thalanyji are the traditional owners of an area that is in and around Onslow and they are best known for having a native title deal with Chevron for Wheatstone.

After years of countless pleas for assistance by its members, on 10 January 2020, the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, which governs Indigenous companies, finally appointed a special administrator to take control of BTAC. On 31 January 2020, a special administrator released the preliminary findings, which only just scratch the surface of what I classify as the extreme squandering of Indigenous corporation money. ORIC, which put the organisation into administration, has found several potential breaches of the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, including registering members without directors' approval; registering members without written applications; failing to follow the basic requirements of annual general meetings, such as allowing members to check register details and tabling previous minutes for member approval; failing to hold AGMs within five months after the end of the financial years 2016–17 and 2017–18; failing to conduct all normal business required at the 2016–17 AGM, such as the appointment and remuneration of an auditor; having less than a required minimum number of member directors; failing to nominate and appoint directors in line with corporation rules; failing to obtain signed consent forms for members to act as directors; providing related party benefits as loans without member approval; failing to lodge audited financial statements for the financial year 2017–18 on time despite extension; and directors neglecting to exercise their powers and discharge their duties with care, due diligence, good faith and the best interests of its members. That is why I am raising this pretty serious outcome for the Thalanyji corporation and its people. There have been quite a few media reports about this situation and the neglect of organisations such as ORIC, which has not acted in a way to protect organisations such as Thalanyji.

I have a statement from BTAC members. I want to set out their plight in trying to effect change to ensure that their funds can be protected and the organisation can function in the way that it is meant to function—that is, to look after its members. I have a statement that has been agreed to and signed by many members of Thalanyji. It reads —

We, being the members of Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation ... who are proud indigenous people of Thalanyji Country, are being oppressed by the CEO of BTAC, Matthew Phillip Slack and the complicit BTAC board of directors.

We state the following in relation to the conduct of Matthew Slack and the directors of BTAC:

1. That BTAC and its CEO are managing BTAC's affairs "for the benefit of the board and CEO and related parties and in a manner which is oppressive, unfairly prejudicial to, or unfairly discriminatory against other members".
2. That BTAC and its CEO have prevented a fair re-election of the board so they can perpetuate these practices.
3. That BTAC has destroyed Ms Trudy Hayes' business and defamed her in publications to members.
4. That various BTAC members, including Ms Hayes, have had their nominations to the board rejected on spurious and improper grounds.
5. That BTAC chairman ... approached a number of members who had signed a members' resolution for the election of a new board.
6. That Marlon Hayes signed a statutory declaration where he stated he was paid \$1000 to withdraw his support for the resolution and the documents to withdraw his support was hand delivered to him ... also signed a statutory declaration —

To that effect. The document continues —

7. That BTAC's financial reports detail a number of related party transactions (including writing off more than \$1m as doubtful debts) without obtaining the approval of BTAC members as required.
8. That the 2017 financial report of the BTAC Charitable Trust shows that BTAC owes the charitable trust \$3.7m, which is referred to as a "loan". A possible explanation for this is that BTAC appropriated charitable trust funds for its own purpose and retrospectively accounted for it as a loan.
9. That there was a complete write-off of a loan to Thalanyji Management Pty Ltd, of which Mr Slack is a director.
10. That the BTAC CEO and others have engaged in lavish spending on BTAC corporate credit cards. This includes the CEO staying in the presidential suite at the Shangri-La Hotel in Sydney, Crown Towers in Perth (at \$908 a night) and trips to the US costing tens of thousands of dollars. Many of the CEO's trips did not appear to be work related.

11. That the BTAC CEO has threatened to sue some Thalanyji members for complaining on Facebook about donations made by BTAC to Telethon.
12. That Fusion Training and Security Pty Ltd—which operated out of BTAC office at 9 Havelock St and is majority-owned by BTAC special counsel Matt Hansen—has been engaged for security services to gain a VRO against Trudy Hayes who is 67 years old and frail. But Fusion did not hold a relevant security agent licence in WA at the time. A lawyer from Bennett & Co represented the CEO at the VRO hearing.
13. That the CEO of BTAC claimed to be indigenous to obtain the job as CEO of BTAC and told ABC reporter he was of Noongah Heritage, but there are serious doubts about this.
14. That the CV of the BTAC CEO says he has a Bachelor of Science Aviation from Edith Cowan University—but ECU has no record of this.
15. That the CV of the BTAC CEO states he has Advanced Diploma in Leadership and Business Management from UWA—but UWA does not appear to have any record of this.
16. That the CEO claims to have a Bachelor of Business Management and a Diploma in Electrical Engineering but there are doubts about this.
17. That the CEO of BTAC has been using BTAC money to engage Martin Bennett to threaten members and take them to court,
18. The CEO of BTAC is a compulsive liar.

This sets out the concerns and it has been signed by many of the members of Thalanyji. They are all raising concerns about the propriety of the CEO. They mention the CEO's CV, and how he acquired the job of CEO of Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation. As I said, there have been many media reports in *The Australian* about whether his CV is legitimate. I have a copy of his CV if anyone would like to see it.

I quote now from an article by then WA chief reporter at *The Australian*, Andrew Burrell, from April 2019 —

An investigation by *The Australian* has found the resume Mr Slack used to apply for the BTAC job appears to contain a number of untruths.

According to his 2016 resume, he earned a bachelor of science aviation from Perth's Edith Cowan University. His lawyer said last week Mr Slack "was enrolled" at the university, but ECU has no record of Mr Slack graduating with this degree or any other qualification.

The document said he had an advanced diploma in leadership and business management from UWA, but the university had no record of him graduating with this or any qualification. It also noted he was "presently studying" for a bachelor in laws at the University of Southern Queensland. A spokeswoman for USQ said Mr Slack had never graduated from the University and was not a current student.

In his employment history, Mr Slack said he worked for the WA Health Department in senior IT roles in 2010 and 2011, as "executive director" and reporting directly to the director-general. A Health Department spokeswoman said it had no record Mr Slack was ever directly employed there.

That was back on 8 April 2019. As I said, I have a copy of Mr Slack's résumé. The cover lists his full name as Matthew Phillip Slack and gives his address and contact details. It also reads —

Defence Clearance: Top Secret

Perhaps the Minister for Tourism might be able to enlighten me as to whether one can have a "top secret" defence clearance?

Mr P. Papalia: You can, but this individual I have great concerns about. Some of the claims he has made with respect to his military career I have concerns about.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: That is good to hear, because that is why I am raising this today. Everyone should be concerned about this individual, who has potentially—allegedly—fleeced an Aboriginal organisation of millions of dollars. His résumé lists him as having "Defence Clearance: Top Secret" and "Police Clearance: Secret". Under "Qualifications and Training", the résumé lists "Bachelors in Law (USQ)", but as I said, USQ has not heard of him. It also lists "Advanced Diploma in Leadership and Business Management UWA", but UWA has not heard of him. It has "Bachelor of Science Aviation Edith Cowan University", but ECU has not heard of him. His CV is pretty impressive, but I can honestly say after the digging around that many have done that this CV is completely false.

I have a letter dated 27 March 2019 that states —

I Frances Hayes —

Frances Hayes is here in the Speaker's gallery —

was the main point of contact with the recruiter Emanuel Gheradi in relation to interviewing and appointing a new CEO of BTAC, in which we ultimately appointed Matthew Slack. I attended both interviews of Matthew Slack, the first being at approx. 1:30 pm on Thursday 18 February 2016 and the second being the following Tuesday.

...

The CV of Matthew that Emanuel emailed me on 15 February 2016, was the same CV that we relied on in both interviews of Matthew. No alternative CV was presented. There is no way we would have allowed Matthew through first interview round or appointed him if he provided an alternative CV, which would have revealed he is a compulsive liar, ...

...

We would have no trust in him.

That letter goes on. That is one of the members of the BTAC board who interviewed Matthew Slack when he applied for the job of CEO.

I will read an email from Emanuel Gherardi, who was a director and part of the company that assisted BTAC in recruiting a CEO. I want to read it out because, as I said, we have seen the CV and a lot of it, if not all of it, has been falsified to get this job. People who are of Aboriginal descent would take some of his claims pretty personally. A Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation application of 5 February 2016 states —

Hi

I spoke to Matthew yesterday regarding who his people were. Matthew is the guy we'd discussed that might be a good fit. He's currently working as a CEO, studying Law and is of Aboriginal descent.

He's given me a bit of an explanation below. Not sure what you think?

I'm meeting with him on Monday.

Here is the history that Matthew Slack has provided. It states —

My history is a little odd, I have a strong connection with people from Yawuru (but we cannot really seem to explain the connection) I would have the strongest connection to the Nyoongar people, My grandfather taken from his mother a Nyoongar woman working on a large property in Wagin, we have struggled to find much of a family connection beyond her but my grandfather returned to WA after the war and found two of his relatives and we found she came out from Pinjarra and believes she was a Bindjareb woman but her father was from the Pilbara, the lands I feel most connected to are all around us being the Gnaala Karla Booja (mid west).

Matthew.

If that is not making a claim he is Aboriginal, I do not know what is. I will read out another piece written by Andrew Burrell from *The Australian* of 9 April 2019 in which he reports —

There are also grounds to question claims Mr Slack made to recruitment specialist Emanuel Gherardi about his indigenous heritage. In an email sent on February 5, 2016, Mr Gherardi told Ms Hayes he had spoken to Mr Slack about “who his people were”. “He's ... of Aboriginal descent,” Mr Gherardi wrote.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The article continues —

Wayne Nannup, chief executive of the South-West Land and Sea Council, the main body for the Noongar people, said he had tried to contact Mr Slack to ask him about his heritage, but had not heard back.

“We have researched this and can find no evidence (that he is Noongar),” Mr Nannup said.

It is concerning that Mr Slack has identified himself as being of Aboriginal descent. We have the investigative report by Andrew Burrell, WA chief reporter of *The Australian*. I will read what is of consequence in a lengthy letter he received from Bennett and Co. It states —

Dear Mr Burrell

Matthew Slack – Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation ... (BTAC)

...

In his capacity as Chairman of BTAC, Mr Hayes has told you plainly that he interviewed and hired Mr Slack based on Mr Slack's “understanding of [their] business”. Mr Cyril Hayes told you he was aware of the allegations regarding Mr Slack's CV. He said that when he had made the decision on behalf of the BTAC to employ Mr Slack:

- 1 none of the qualifications that you ask about were on the version of Mr Slack's CV that was given during the interview;
- 2 at no time during the employment interview did Mr Slack mention he has indigenous heritage and this was not a consideration to his employment.

It has got me buggered, because from what I have just read out I am pretty sure that Mr Slack clearly outlined that he was of Aboriginal descent. Frances Hayes' testimony is that Mr Slack's résumé, of which I have a copy here,

was the same as was presented in the interview. Who is telling the truth? Is it the lawyer being paid by Mr Slack to protect him or is it Frances Hayes or the members of Thalanyji who have been able to find out whether Mr Slack's CV has any element of truth? We all know what happens in this chamber if members mislead the public about CVs—people find out. On this occasion it has happened again and people have found out. Clearly, Mr Slack has misled the people who interviewed him and, ultimately, he has misled the people of Thalanyji.

That is his CV. The organisation has been placed into administration, and the special administrator has released information about the period from 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2019 showing that BTAC had spent \$3.3 million on legal fees—I repeat, \$3.3 million of members' money was spent on legal fees. The sum of \$1 million was spent on flights alone, and another \$1.2 million was spent on accommodation and meals. We understand that that does not cover the frequent bookings of the presidential suite at the Shangri-La Hotel in Sydney by the CEO, Matthew Slack. It also shows a cost of \$550 000 in security guards and systems for the CEO, Matthew Slack, who the administrator understands at one time had three security guards on active duty in his office. That is what is being audited. That is what the administrator has shown happened over two years. That calculation does not include the credit card use. There were a number of personal expenses claimed including iPads, lingerie, boxes at the football, restaurants, valet parking, and charges that I have been told also includes strip clubs, based on the description on the statement. Money was also spent on expensive accommodation—as I said, the Shangri-La—and Crown hotels. Most of this credit card use occurred over that time. I have been told that the average spend has been between \$15 000 and \$20 000 each month. Remember, this CEO has a base salary of \$250 000. Members can add to that the \$15 000 or \$20 000 of what has been recorded. It is a very complicated situation looking at the Bujurabayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation but we have no vision on the businesses that have been formulated to perhaps be used as vehicles to top up one's wage or do something else with that money. That is a topic for another day because I do not have enough time to go through it all. There should be an investigation by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission into those companies and there should be a forensic audit into Thalanyji to find out exactly where this money has gone, because it was a fantastic deal that Thalanyji had with the resource companies. It was a fantastic opportunity for its members to do something for themselves, their kids and their kids' future, and that will now be taken away, unless action is taken.

I am not saying there is any untoward link towards members, but it is concerning when the fund is meant to be for the Thalanyji children. The main purpose of the Thalanyji trust, for which BTAC is a trustee, is to cover the medical expenses of Thalanyji people. Instead, according to the special administrator's report, this money was squandered by Matthew Slack and BTAC. As a result of some of these issues, a two-year-old who was battling leukaemia in hospital was denied assistance from BTAC, a woman was denied funding to assist with chronic ear problems that required specialist help, and another person was denied funding assistance for chronic eye problems. The list goes on.

This questionable CEO—one could call him a fraudulent CEO—also made donations to political parties. Unfortunately, the Labor Party has been caught up in this. There are media reports that nearly \$60 000 was donated to the Labor Party. The Labor Party may or may not know where this money came from, but it should. Almost \$60 000, in two lots of \$27 550, was given to the Labor Party. People were denied access to health services by this fraudulent CEO. This person likes to hobnob with the rich and famous and political people and to spend money. I would have thought that this was not in the remit of any Aboriginal organisation, and especially Thalanyji, whose remit is to look after its members. I have photographs here of Matthew Slack hobnobbing with the Premier of Western Australia, Hon Mark McGowan. Members can clearly see in this photo that I am holding up that Matthew Slack was trying to build a relationship with the Premier of Western Australia. There is also a photograph of him with Bill Shorten. This is what people get when they donate money to the Labor Party. Another is a photobomb by "Kevin 07" of a picture of Leo Ashburton, a former board member. Another photograph is of Matthew Slack with Hon Pierre Yang, another Labor member. A post on Twitter states —

Thalanyji CEO, Matthew Slack, sat down with the Leader of the Federal Opposition, Bill Shorten, to have a candid discussion about the issues facing the Indigenous community and in particular our Thalanyji People.

This post also contains a photograph of Matthew Slack with Bill Shorten. Another post is headed "'Working together for a better future': Labor Party Cabinet Dinner—14th June 2018" and states —

BTAC Directors and Guests were personally invited by Hon. Premier Mark McGowan and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Ben Wyatt, to attend a Labor Cabinet dinner. It was a great opportunity to showcase the Thalanyji Pastoral Company, cultural issues and caring for country.

It goes on. There are more photos of the people in this organisation.

Many people wrote letters to the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations asking for its intervention. There are letters from February 2018 and 19 October 2018. It goes on and on. However, there basically has been no response from ORIC to those members up until now. This could have been stopped years ago. Lawyers have been involved in writing letters about moving motions at board meetings to change the board and sack the CEO. That has fallen on deaf ears. I will go back to the \$3.3 million that we know has been spent on lawyers. There is a letter from Bennett and Co to the board saying that it had done things wrong, it was null and void, and it therefore

could not move the motion to sack the CEO. It is great to have the Attorney General here. People have written to the Attorney General to outline their concerns, but there has been limited or no action. There has been no action from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. There has been no action from the Minister for Regional Development, Hon Alannah MacTiernan. This issue has been brought to the Premier's attention, but there has been no action. We need action, members. This matter should be referred to the police.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.34 pm]: That was a great presentation by the member for North West Central on a major issue. That is what Parliament is about.

This is the last Premier's Statement that I will comment on. I will focus on a number of issues and provide a quick summary of some of those outlined by my colleagues in terms of the economic outlook and the government's response to it. I will focus on education in my electorate and also make a few comments on planning, which is my current shadow responsibility. I add that I am new to this portfolio.

One thing that surprised me in the Premier's Statement, first of all, was the Premier's claim to be an economic wunderkind who is tackling an economy that was absolutely struggling. After the decline of the mining boom, the collapse of iron ore prices and the GST rip-off, our economy was hit by the largest cut in revenue and activity of any economy since the Great Depression of the 1930s. I was the Treasurer; I saw it. Under my three-year watch, state revenue declined in absolute terms by over nine per cent. It was the first time a state had experienced a decline in revenue since the Great Depression. Victoria almost did in the 1990s, but Western Australia got hit with the mother of all declines in revenue. The economy was in domestic recession. People were struggling. People were leaving. Population growth went down and we were rapidly coming off an investment boom. We had a struggle to deal with it. We lost the 2017 election because of the economy.

The McGowan government had a landslide victory on the basis of a number of claims. The Premier said that he was going to address the decline and reverse the cuts in a way that would not significantly increase fees, taxes and charges. That is why he won. We regularly hear a rerun of the 2017 election campaign from the Treasurer and others in this place, including the Premier. Well, mate, you were elected three years ago. What have you done? One of the first statements the Premier made was that Western Australia was in the worst recession since the 1930s. The member for Churchlands outlined quite clearly that the Premier played the political cycle rather than the economic cycle. He hit the economy hard, with major increases in fees, taxes and charges—things that he had promised not to do. The government likes to talk about land tax. Has the government cut any of the land tax increases put in by the previous government? No; it maintained them and increased the metropolitan region improvement levy, which is a land tax. There have been payroll tax increases and increases in duties.

Ms R. Saffioti: No, we didn't.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, the government did.

Ms R. Saffioti: No, we didn't.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The minister should check the budget.

The government also went on with some brain-dead activities. One of the first things the Premier did was to change the regional migration system. Everyone knew that one of the major factors of demand, particularly in housing but also in a range of aspects of our economy, was population growth. This government put a stop to that growth. The government was repeatedly warned that its decision would have an impact on housing, the supply of labour and international student demand, but it did it anyway. It said that it would not have an impact. Do members know what happened? It had a significant adverse impact on the areas that the government had identified were needed to diversify our economy—that is, international students and tourists. This was stupid, but the government was playing the political cycle and not the economic cycle.

The big question at the next election will be not what happened from 2008 to 2017 under the Barnett government—that is history—but what this government has done. If we listen to the Premier's Statement, the government has created a miracle. The Treasurer said he is looking at the data and cannot find a single bit of data that shows other than that the economy is on the up and up. I ask Western Australians, and we will ask Western Australians, "Do you feel it? Do you feel the improvement? Do you see the improvement in jobs? Do you see the improvement in your house values? Do you see the improvement in confidence?" I think the answer, as was the case in the electorate of Darling Range, will be a comprehensive, "No." The government has not done what it promised to do. Hype will not work. The people of this state know what happened, because they are paying the bill for that. They are looking for the jobs. They are suffering the consequences of this government's actions.

This government is very lucky, in the sense that the federal Liberal–National government has bailed it out in unprecedented proportions. Imagine if Minister Morrison, and Turnbull before him, had not bailed this government out—the economy of this state would be in severe decline, and this government would be going out the door in a year's time. One of the first things the Labor government did was rip up the largest contract that was ready to go, Roe 8, with thousands of jobs; members opposite can debate how many. Why?

Mr W.R. Marmion: It had been started.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes. We started it. The government just ripped it up. Luckily, the commonwealth allowed it to redirect the money. The government then promised to spend \$5 million on Metronet, when it had no money to spend. It had promised to pay down debt. The commonwealth paid for half of that, so the government was saved again.

We then had the GST redistribution, which the government said when in opposition was not relevant, because the issue was expenses, not revenue. The federal Liberal–National government is pouring money into this state at an unprecedented level. Without those things, this state’s economy would be in a mess, and this government would be headed out the door. It would not be able to do what it has promised. The problem is that this government has been treating the households of Western Australia as political pawns. The government will be held accountable for that. The people of Western Australia will not forget that.

I now want to talk about education. That is an area of great importance in my electorate. We have had a great debate about education. In my view, education is the former government’s greatest achievement. Yes, we built the stadium, and we did a lot of other good things, which the McGowan government whinged about when in opposition but now takes total credit for, but that is what governments do. I will go through our achievements in education. People will remember that when we came to office in 2008, we had outcomes-based education. That was a disaster. It was not based on outcomes. It was some sort of ideological game that had basically been drummed up by educationalists. We abandoned that, thankfully.

We also had a long-term trend of parents saying they do not trust the public sector and want to send their kids to the private sector. There was continual loss of market share, if you like, from the public sector to the private sector. I do not mind that. In fact, I fully support a dualistic education system. The problem is that people who have educational aspirations for their children but do not have the income to send their children to a private school will be disadvantaged if we do not better fund the public education system. Education is the greatest ladder to success. It is the greatest mechanism by which we can have a coherent society into the future. Investment in public education is absolutely essential, and we did that in droves, with reforms.

The first thing we did was massively increase teachers’ wages. Teachers in Western Australia were among the lowest paid in the country. Under our government, they became the highest paid in the country, and they still are. The issue is that if we want to draw the best educationalists into our education system, we need to pay them appropriately. We did that, at great cost, for which we were criticised by the then Labor opposition. We also increased substantially the expenditure per capita for students in our public education system, by five, 10 and on some measures 20 per cent higher than the national average. We put money into the education system. We also increased the expenditure on capital works and new schools. We had a growing economy. We had to spend that money. We increased the repair and maintenance budgets. We repaired in particular the older and tired high schools that represent the bulk of students in public secondary education in our state. We invested in those schools, because they are the foundation of our public school system.

We also made reforms. We put in place the student-centred funding model. We supported students with needs. We gave a Gonski. We did not just have people walking around with signs. We put our money where our mouth was. Importantly, we came up with something more revolutionary—which all the other states and the commonwealth are now coming to—and that is independent public schools. We gave schools the power to decide and optimise their characters. That was a roaring success. For the first time in 20 years, we completely reversed the departure of students to private schools. We increased the market share of the public sector. That was a great achievement. That will be our legacy. Yes, people like the stadium, the museum, Yagan Square, Perth Children’s Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital and Midland Health Campus, but it is the education changes and investments we put in place that will drive the state’s future.

During that period, there was quite a lot of investment in my electorate. My electorate has two of the largest and most successful high schools, and therefore feeder primary schools, in this state, Rossmoyne Senior High School and Willetton Senior High School. I also had Lynwood Senior High School, a great little high school, but that is now in the member for Cannington’s electorate. I used to be on the board of that school, and I will say more about that later. Willetton Senior High School now has 2 600 kids. Rossmoyne Senior High School has 2 400 kids. When we add that up, that is 5 000 kids. That is a lot of kids. They are fine schools. They have always been rated at the top.

The local Labor Party member during the entire term of the Barnett government was Hon Sue Ellery. Her office is right next to Willetton Senior High School. She knows that school really well. She knows the importance of that school. She spoke up repeatedly about both those schools. In fact, during the last term of the Barnett government, she made 23 statements about the lack of funding for Willetton and Rossmoyne Senior High Schools. The most pointed one was in 2013, when she derided the Barnett government for cuts to those schools. They were not actual cuts; she admitted that. We had put in an efficiency dividend that pulled back expenditure from the forward estimates, because those schools did not grow as fast as we had hoped. We should compare what happened in that period with her time in government. She demanded that we spend additional money on not only Willetton Senior High School, which we had committed to rebuild, but also Rossmoyne and Lynwood Senior High Schools. She criticised us for not going that. Every month, she had her miscellaneous workers’ union troops outside my office waving signs saying “Stop Nahan’s cuts to schools”, or “Rebuild Rossmoyne Senior High School.” She did that every month for four years. I do not know who paid them, but they were out there. What did we do in that year?

First of all, we committed to rebuild Willetton Senior High School, and we had completed all but stage 3 when we lost government. We put \$11.8 million into rebuilding it. It was a great achievement. As a result, by the way, that school is rated by *The West Australian* as the top school in the state, the first time a public school, other than Perth Modern School of course, has been rated number one, above Christ Church Grammar School and the Jewish schools—above all of them. That was a result of our investment.

What did we do after the expenditure trims that year? We increased funding per student in schools by 3.4 per cent, an increase of \$513 a student. Where were the cuts? There were none. Also in the forward estimates, we increased expenditure by a further \$19.2 billion. We put in place, on a per student basis, five per cent increases per year, and—you know what?—whilst we were in government, we met them. We did the talk and we did the walk on education. What has she done? She came in when she got the opportunity —

Mr P. Papalia: Who is “she”?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I am afraid Hon Sue Ellery is a woman.

She finally got what she wanted. She got re-elected and became the Minister for Education and Training. Then what did she do? Did she put the money where she said she was going to? What happened in the last three budgets, and particularly in the latest budget, which it is the most important because the government is loaded with money? The government said it had to cut in the first two budget years, and it did, but this budget is in surplus—the GST reform is done, the commonwealth has funded the government’s Metronet project and iron ore prices are near a record high in Australian dollars. The government has the money. What did she do?

Mr P. Papalia: Who is she?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The Minister for Education, mate. The minister is her shadow; he should know. What did the minister do? She put no new money into the public secondary education system. Expenditure per student growth is zip—not a cent. She inherited forward estimates with large increases. But that is not all.

[Member’s time extended.]

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Let me tell members what she did in what she says is her own electorate—the Riverton electorate. What did she do to the schools there? One of the first moves she made was to stop the rebuild of Willetton high school. She cut \$11.8 million out of it. Do you know what she said about 24 classrooms that were provided for in the last part of the build? She said, like Marie Antoinette, “Give them cake. We’ll give you some new demountables.” That is what she did. For four years she campaigned. Every move I made, she was there campaigning for the rebuild of Willetton high school. When she got a chance to support and do what she promised, she reneged and cut the funding that she had come out before and supported. She supported, significantly, the so-called student-centred funding model and promised to increase the amount of money that went to our schools. She did not do that. The government then reduced funding for big high schools. That meant that for every school with over 1 200 kids, funding per child is reduced by \$1 157. That means that this year \$1.6 million will be removed from Willetton and \$1.4 million will be removed from Rossmoyne Senior High School—\$5 million over the forward estimates. If we put that together with other cuts, \$22 million has been ripped out of schools in her own electorate, which she spent four years saying she was going to spend more on. Why did the government do that?

She also cut \$50 000 from administration grants and tried to cut the gifted and talented program, which is a really important program and has been very successful. Luckily, we stopped that. She also withdrew funding for awards for academic achievement. Come on! Give us a break! These are your kids. Who is she helping? Who is she governing for? After all those years of complaining about our so-called cuts, when we were actually spending record amounts, and supporting and pushing for more capital funding for Lynwood, Rossmoyne and Willetton Senior High Schools, she cut \$11.8 million from Willetton. Who did she help? She, of course, is related to United Voice—that is how she got here. She is number one on the Labor Party’s South Metropolitan Region’s ticket. The delegates of the Labor Party put her there, but I would suggest that it was the delegates of United Voice. United Voice has been paid off by this government very handsomely. When we were in office, one thing in our favour was that we inherited and continued to have the highest number of educational assistants in schools of any state—between 25 to 40 per cent more than the national average, it depends. We did reduce the number of educational assistants at one time but only in one program. A number of educational assistants had been put into a specific program—basically, peanut allergies. It was then decided that it was not appropriate to have a single person in the school to address that, so they trained everybody in schools and so those positions became redundant and those people no longer had a job. What did we do? We cut some assistants from that project but enhanced the number of education assistants who could work across the schools. We did the right thing. But the new Labor government came to office and put in 300 new education assistants. The justification for that was it was a good idea. The reality is it was a payback to United Voice.

The government also tailored the wages policy of \$1 000 a year to ensure that the miscellaneous workers of United Voice got a two per cent-plus wage increase every year, above inflation and above everyone else. It advantaged them because of their wage rates. The government also hired United Voice to implement a training program for 300 new EAs to ensure that they became union members. It then employed large numbers of United Voice workers throughout the bureaucracy. She paid off the people who actually got her there—that is, number one on the Labor Party’s

South Metropolitan Region upper house ticket. They are better off. They are all right, Jack! But she abandoned the people of the electorate she alleged and repeatedly says she represents. She has left them high and dry. She has cut funding when she promised to increase it. That, the people of Riverton will never forgive her for—never.

The most cynical of all has been the government's recent exercise in which it has cut the regional migration system so that it impacts on international students, particularly Chinese students who are not coming here anyway in large numbers. The government had to do something, so it cooked up this plan to give select Chinese students special access to elite high schools, and to sell it to them. We do not know how much that is going to cost—I have heard they will be charged between \$15 000 to \$18 000 a year—and it will be just for Chinese people from the People's Republic of China, not Chinese people from Malaysia, Singapore or Indonesia. I do not know why they are doing this just for China, but what it is really doing is selling access to our most successful high schools, for cash. Those schools are full. The numbers that the minister provided to me show that Willetton has 2 600 enrolments this year and its capacity is 2 600. Next year, that is forecast to go above 2 800. It is full. Churchlands is full. Rossmoyne is full. Shenton College is full. But the government is selling access to those schools. This is coming from a person who has spent her life arguing against privatisation, arguing for public education and promising to do it, but what does she do? She is selling access to schools for a price, which I think is higher than it costs to go to most private schools, to select people from overseas.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 576.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TOURISM — PERTH GLORY — STATE BRANDING

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

I refer to the revelation that the government is paying Perth Glory to use the word “Perth” on its jersey at the Asian Football Confederation Champions League.

- (1) How much taxpayers' money was spent?
- (2) What return does the Premier expect on the taxpayer investment?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Start again, Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to the revelation that the government is paying Perth Glory to use the word “Perth” on its jersey at the AFC Champions League.

- (1) How much taxpayers' money was spent?
- (2) What return does the Premier expect on the taxpayer investment?
- (3) Did the Premier know Perth Glory was sold before committing taxpayer's money?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members on my right!

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(3) Firstly, can I say what a terrific football franchise Perth Glory is. Last year, I went to the semi-final, one of the most exciting evenings of sport I have ever been to. I went to the grand final, which was not so exciting, but the great thing was that Perth Glory did Western Australia proud in the national football competition. I was very pleased to have been invited and to have supported the club. The Asian Champions League is one of the biggest sporting competitions in the entire world. It has a viewing audience of up to 1.5 billion followers—1.5 billion people. For the first time ever, the Glory has been accepted as part of it due to its performance last year. It will now play teams such as the Tokyo team, which is apparently a fantastic football team; the Shanghai team; and the Korean team based in a city called Ulsan. The Glory will be playing them. It will go to Tokyo next week, come back to Australia and there will be movement of the team around whilst it plays. On any given match, there are at least 50 million viewers. There will be around 600 million digital followers, and there are enormous opportunities to promote Western Australia due to the branding opportunities available. We think that is a great thing for tourism, particularly in the environment in which the novel coronavirus has had a significant impact on tourism in Western Australia and the bushfires have had a significant impact on tourism across the country. We think it is an outstanding thing for us to be involved in. In terms of any ownership matters, I am unaware of those, but it is still the Perth Glory, it is still our team and it still has Perth-based players.

In terms of the Leader of the Opposition's other question, the costs of these sorts of things, as is traditional—she is a former tourism minister; she knows—are not revealed because to do so would put the state at a commercial disadvantage.

TOURISM — PERTH GLORY — STATE BRANDING

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

I have a supplementary question. If selling the Perth brand on the international stage is important, why has the Premier sold “Perth” out of Perth Arena and Perth Stadium?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Minister for Sport and Recreation, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

That is another extraordinary segue.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Prior to the state election, we indicated what we were going to do there. An extremely significant return was generated for the taxpayers of Western Australia. We have to remember that this was in an environment in which we inherited \$44 billion of Liberal–National debt.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I am sure you want to hear this answer.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Across the forward estimates that is tracking down to around \$34 billion. That is a nearly \$10 billion turnaround in debt under this Labor government, because the Liberals and Nationals were such appalling financial managers.

COLLINS-CLASS SUBMARINE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Mr Speaker!

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys.

Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Sorry! I have got it the wrong way around. The member for Baldvis.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I make mistakes!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: We are pretty quick.

36. Mr R.R. WHITBY to the Premier:

My question is one that the people of Baldvis will be very keen to hear. I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s unprecedented efforts in securing more defence industry jobs for Western Australians and its ongoing fight to secure the Collins-class submarine full-cycle docking work.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on this government’s efforts to secure these defence maintenance jobs?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house whether he is aware of anyone who is threatening WA’s opportunity to secure this work?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for Baldvis for the question. He knows how important this contract is for Western Australia. The economic benefits are enormous. We expect up to 3 000 jobs will be created in Western Australia when and if we secure this work, and an injection of over \$8 billion into the Western Australian economy. We are determined that all Collins-class submarine maintenance comes to Western Australia, and that includes the full-cycle docking of the submarines. They are based here, the crews are based here and the strongest industry is based here. South Australia does not have the workforce capacity to deliver full-cycle docking at the same time as building 12 new submarines and a surface ship construction program for new frigates. It does not have the resources to do it. If full-cycle docking remains in South Australia, there will no doubt be delays. Obviously the Collins-class is a very important defence asset for Australia, and I would hate to see their capability jeopardised. We already have a very highly skilled workforce at Henderson. We have a large ex-service community. We have an industry with offshore oil and gas that is very capable, and a shipbuilding industry on top of that to do all the other maintenance work on the Collins-class as well.

We have invested \$2.4 million in a new TAFE shipbuilding training facility at Naval Base. We have reduced TAFE fees for people to get into these courses and committed a business case to the commonwealth with very significant investment in infrastructure and training designed to support this program. We were expecting a decision late last year, but we are still waiting and we are still hopeful that a positive decision will be made for Western Australia. As the decision drags on, I am concerned about some of the threats being made, in

particular the Centre Alliance party in South Australia and a Senator Rex Patrick, who is essentially trying to politically blackmail the federal government. Senator Patrick is threatening to block not only the federal government's anti-worker so-called "ensuring integrity" laws, but all legislation if the Collins-class full-cycle docking contract comes to Western Australia. We are now in a bizarre and shocking position nationally, in which senators from South Australia—no doubt elected by very few people—are threatening our state using a form of legislative blackmail. The anti-workers' laws should not go ahead, and they certainly should not be used as a bargaining tool to damage Australia's defence capability and Western Australia. I urge the federal government and Western Australian federal ministers such as Christian Porter to make the right decision and not trade Western Australian jobs for their legislative agenda, and to not pass laws that hurt low-paid workers.

DANGEROUS SEXUAL OFFENDER — LIAM TIMOTHY HUTT

37. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Attorney General:

Before I ask my question, on behalf of the member for Cottesloe, I would like to welcome into Parliament today the year 11 students from Scotch College. It is a very, very good school.

How exactly is the Attorney General's dangerous sex offender legislation the toughest in Australia, given that paedophile Liam Timothy Hutt, who was jailed in 2018 for stomach churning child abuse material, only served half his sentence and has now been jailed again for further child sex offences?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

I thank the member for his question. The offence that Hutt was convicted of was not sexual assault, which would bring him under the Dangerous Sexual Offenders Act, but rather the possession of child exploitation material, which was a series of disgusting photographs involving children. He had been convicted of this offence previously and was serving a period of parole when he offended again. When police executed a warrant, they found in his possession a mobile phone, which was against his parole order, and a series of disgusting images on that mobile phone. He was then taken into custody and prosecuted for that series of offences, for which the court imposed a further two-year sentence and ordered parole. He does not come under the dangerous sex offenders legislation per se, but I have discussed this case with the Director of Public Prosecutions, and I just want to inform the Parliament that we are still within the 21-day appeal period.

I would like the community to understand that with these types of offenders, it is very important to keep supervision on them after release, and because he is not within the dangerous sex offenders legislation, he does not even fall within the legislation that the previous government brought in, which was for post-sentence supervision orders, because it is not a violent offence. However, by the time Hutt has served his time in jail—a year with parole; as I said, upon which he will be supervised—hopefully the other place will have passed our High Risk Offenders Bill. I think that has been amended to the High Risk and Serious Offenders Bill. Applications will be able to be made in relation to offenders such as Hutt similar to under the Dangerous Sexual Offenders Act. There is no doubt, and there can be no argument, that the dangerous sex offenders legislation, which we amended, which the former Liberal government refused to amend to reverse the onus of proof and refused to have presumptions against bail, and voted against us on our amendments—when we came to government we brought in the toughest DSO laws in Australia bar none, and members opposite know it. Hutt's possession of child exploitation material is the crack in the floor. But we have a bill that the member and the opposition voted for—thank you very much—currently on the floor and being debated in the upper house, and, hopefully, that will pass into law and people like Hutt will fall within the rubric of the new legislation.

DANGEROUS SEXUAL OFFENDER — LIAM TIMOTHY HUTT

38. Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS to the Attorney General:

I have a supplementary question. Based on that answer, can the Attorney General assure the public of Western Australia and this chamber that if that high-risk offenders legislation is passed by the other place as currently drafted, it will apply to the crimes that Liam Timothy Hutt was recently sentenced for?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

When I discussed this recently with the Director of Public Prosecutions, she said, "Well, he won't fit within the Liberals' —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Hang on! She said, "He won't fit within the Liberals' post-sentence supervision order, but it will be one of those offences that will qualify, or make him eligible, for the high risk offenders further detention orders." I cannot give that guarantee at the moment because I do not know what the opposition is doing in the other place. They might butcher the bill; I do not know.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys, I call you to order for the first time. You are having a great conversation there, but your question is over.

JOONDALUP HEALTH CAMPUS EXPANSION

39. Ms S.E. WINTON to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's investment in quality health services throughout the northern suburbs, including the extra \$100 million it has now committed to Joondalup Health Campus —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

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

Ms S.E. WINTON: — as well as a new health centre in Yanchep.

- (1) Can the minister please update the house on the work underway to not only expand Joondalup Health Campus, but also develop a new health centre in Yanchep?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house on how these projects will ease pressure on both emergency departments and health services throughout the northern suburbs?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. Indeed, in December last year, I was joined by the members for Wanneroo, Joondalup and Girrawheen and other great representatives of the northern suburbs to announce that the government was committing a further \$96 million to progress the Joondalup Health Campus expansion. This will be a fantastic boost for health services in the northern suburbs, which continue to grow and put pressure on our emergency departments. Architectural design for the expansion has commenced and construction is due to begin midyear. The entire build is expected to be completed sometime in 2025. This is a major redevelopment of the Joondalup Health Campus, none of which had been started since the last time we had a Labor government. It includes 30 new mental health inpatient beds that the then McGowan opposition campaigned for strongly in 2013. It is great to see that injection take place. There will be 12 additional emergency department bays, member. That means we will have that expanded capacity in the ED at Joondalup, which we all know is very busy. There will be an urgent care clinic; 90 inpatient beds; six new critical care beds; 362 new parking bays, which I am sure will come as a huge relief to members of the public and staff who work at that hospital; and two new theatres for that campus. The estimated total cost of this expansion is set at around \$256.7 million, of which \$158 million has been provided by our good friends and partners the commonwealth government. We are working together with the commonwealth government to make sure that we boost health services in the northern suburbs.

But we go further; we are very proud to announce that we are committing \$8 million to join with the commonwealth government and Edith Cowan University to begin the expansion of health services in Yanchep. In partnership with the Yanchep Beach joint venture, we will be initiating a new integrated health facility at Yanchep. Not only integrated between primary, secondary and outpatient care with community health services, but also with our transport system. It will be a short walk from the Metronet service that will be extended to Yanchep. This is the future for health care in the northern suburbs. It is based upon strong investment, good planning and making sure we have a government that does the hard yards to ensure that we have the resources necessary to make it happen. This will put patients first in the northern suburbs of Perth. We can do it because we have great members, such as the members for Wanneroo, Girrawheen and Joondalup, who are making sure that people in the northern suburbs get the health care that they deserve.

WESTERN POWER — POWER OUTAGES — GERALDTON AND MIDWEST

40. Mr I.C. BLAYNEY to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to recent power outages that have impacted about 8 000 Western Power customers who are resident in my electorate of Geraldton and throughout the midwest, with some experiencing power outages for more than five days a number of times over the summer. Has the government considered increasing the paltry \$80 compensation to customers who experience outages for more than 12 hours; and, if not, why not?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

Thank you for the question, member. I appreciate the problems that people experience when they are without power. In a modern society, it is very difficult. Most people now have their homes completely set around the use of electricity, and when they are without power, it is always a struggle. I was pleased to receive an invitation from the Mayor of Geraldton to come to Geraldton to talk to constituents. I know that the member has been in conversation with the mayor as well, and I look forward to coming to Geraldton with Western Power at an agreed time to meet with residents and businesses up there and discuss the issues that the people of Geraldton have experienced over this summer.

It is always difficult to deal with such a long, thin, electricity system. Pole-top fires and other problems are constant in Western Australia. I am pleased to say that whilst the number of pole-top fires is now lower than it was in 2013–14, there is still more work that Western Power can do. I was pleased to meet with Western Power yesterday to talk about this issue of dealing with pole-top fires in our unique environment here in Western Australia. It is

important to understand particularly that the closer a pole is to the coast, the more common a pole-top fire is going to be. It is about five years since Western Power started using silicon to coat the poles. It appears that the performance of the silicon has not been to the standard that was expected in those coastal areas, so Western Power is adjusting the way it performs maintenance on poles to ensure that there is a higher concentration in areas such as in the member's community of Geraldton. The good news is that there should be a continued improvement in the quality of performance of the Western Power infrastructure in the member's community. For inland communities, the good news is that new technologies are being applied to the network, such as standalone power systems, that will see a significant improvement in the reliability of power. We are investing. I look forward to the passage of the electricity reform legislation. I acknowledge that the shadow minister and a representative of the Nationals WA have recently been briefed and indicate that they are supporting the legislation. That legislation will again allow for new technologies to be used by Western Power to even further improve the quality of service that people in Western Australia receive from that very important state-owned enterprise.

With the \$80 payment, it is not considered appropriate at this moment to change that, but I am happy to listen to the member's constituents when I come to Geraldton. I certainly will not be very pleased to hear their experience, and if we need to look at that matter, I would be happy to do so.

BUSHFIRE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

41. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to protecting the community against the threat of bushfires through investment in mitigation, including the \$18 million it is investing to deliver and build Australia's first Bushfire Centre of Excellence.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the work now underway to deliver this nation-leading facility?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how the Bushfire Centre of Excellence will provide valuable research into the prevention and management of bushfires not only for Western Australia, but also for the rest of the country?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

I thank the member for her very, very strong support for the Bushfire Centre of Excellence on Lakes Road in her electorate. She has done extremely great work to get it to where it is today.

- (1)–(2) 30 January this year marked the sod-turning ceremony for the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, the first of its kind in Australia. The contract has been awarded to regionally based Perkins Builders, which the member for Bunbury will be very happy with. The contract to build a state-of-the-art centre is \$18 million in total, including staffing and training. This is really where we should be going. The Bushfire Centre of Excellence came out of our response to the Ferguson inquiry. Members will remember that the Ferguson inquiry was basically left on the shelf for the incoming Labor government to deal with. Nothing had been done in that space. We have addressed all the recommendations and opportunities. Only three opportunities and three recommendations are still being worked on at the moment; the rest have all been applied. One of the ideas that came out of that inquiry was the concept of taking forward the skills, knowledge and capacity of our firefighters, and all the associated volunteers around firefighters, on how to deal with bushfires as the climate dries out and the seasons get longer—basically, how do we go about doing it? The Bushfire Centre of Excellence is all about updating the skills of existing career firefighters and all the associated volunteers to deal with what is a growing problem for the whole of Australia. We have seen what has happened in the eastern states, with enormous bushfires created by years of drought and, in many cases, sometimes failure to mitigate. There are examples of failure to mitigate bush that should have been mitigated. We have never been in that situation. Regardless of which government has been in power, there has always been a commitment to undertake mitigation, particularly through parts of my life, with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and the like. The centre will look at how we can lift the level of skills in the area of mitigation when we are dealing with a drying climate and a lengthening of the bushfire season; how we can broaden out those skills, particularly for the number of people who will be needed in the future to deal with these incidents; and how we can learn from the traditional fire practices of Indigenous people. We will be employing local Indigenous people and others from around the state to incorporate traditional fire practices. Fire has been used as a tool for tens of thousands of years, and we will look at how we can bring those practices and that knowledge into our training program at the Bushfire Centre of Excellence.

The training for mitigation will increase as a result of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence. In the mitigation that is done, Western Australia, as I have said in this house a number of times, is spending more on bushfire mitigation than any other state in Australia. The McGowan government committed \$50 million to bushfire mitigation. That is \$15 million for those local governments that undertake a bushfire risk mitigation plan.

Mr D.T. Redman: It started with the Liberal–National government. That's when it started.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It did not start. It started at Jerramungup.

Mr D.T. Redman: It started with the Liberal–National government.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The member is a smart bloke, but he just does not get it right sometimes! It started with John Iffla down in Jerramungup. Do you know him? Down in Jerramungup. That is where it started.

The SPEAKER: Minister, through the Chair, please.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The bushfire risk mitigation plan, which is unique to Western Australia and is being rolled out by this government, has now reached 35 local governments, we have awarded 70 grants of over \$14.3 million, and those local governments have undertaken 1 890 activities across Western Australia to make their community safe. That is absolutely unprecedented in Australia. The other \$35 million is for undertaking bushfire mitigation on unallocated crown land. The member for Kalgoorlie raised an absolutely disgraceful —

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The member’s question was in relation to the development of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence in Nambeelup, nothing to do with the district of Kalgoorlie.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Excuse me. I know there are a lot of experts here, but he is still talking about it. You did not even give him a chance to finish.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It was pre-emptive, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I will pre-emptively say no point of order. Minister, I am sure you will get to the point very, very quickly.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will. It was raised by the member for Kalgoorlie and the Leader of the Opposition in that disgraceful amendment that was brought to this house earlier this morning about the incident out there on the Eyre Highway, about the need for assistance for shires like Dundas and Coolgardie with the unallocated crown land that is in their area and their ability to deal with it. That is what the \$35 million is for. Significant money has already been spent there and I have been working with the Shire of Dundas to try to help it even more. The Leader of the Opposition said, “You never wrote at all to the federal government, you’ve done nothing. Even you said that.” This is what I said to David Littleproud on 29 January.

The SPEAKER: Minister, there are other ministers who would like to get questions up today.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I just want to finalise this, just so the member is aware. I wrote —

Since your Government’s announcement,

This is the federal government —

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

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will get to the end. To continue —

I have had numerous enquiries concerning eligibility criteria for accessing the grants and support. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services Western Australia, has advised me that the support is being coordinated through the newly established National Bushfire Recovery Agency ... and access to the criteria are based on existing Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements ... though there is some doubt as to the precise arrangements given the newness of the agency.

Can you please provide confirmation of the precise eligibility criteria, including whether the Shires of Dundas, Esperance and Coolgardie may be eligible for assistance, including small businesses and interstate transport companies that have been impacted.

The member should not come in here and say that we did nothing. I have already written on behalf of him, and on behalf of those shires, to try to get those businesses, small businesses and the people who are affected, some assistance from the federal government.

Tabling of Paper

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The minister appeared to be quoting from an official document. I ask that he table it.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I do not care; yes, I will table it. It is a letter to Littleproud. I have no problems at all. The member can get it from him.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: There was more than one page there.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No—this is it. I was quoting from the letter, smarty.

[See paper [3211](#).]

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE — UNEMPLOYMENT

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Mr Speaker.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: It is the member for Girrawheen's question. I know you like to hog the stage, but — Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: To err is human, to forgive, divine. Member for Dawesville.

42. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Premier:

I refer to the bridging the gap report that was released by the Prime Minister yesterday. I note that the rates of unemployment for Aboriginal Australians have deteriorated under this government. Why is that the case? Does the Premier consider that to be a failure of his leadership of the state?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Obviously the release of the "Closing the Gap" report—not "bridging the gap"—by the Prime Minister yesterday was disappointing for all Australians. Although there have been some modest signs of improvement in some areas, clearly all governments and businesses across Australia need to do better. We have taken some significant steps to improve the lives of Aboriginal Western Australians wherever they may live, including a target in government employment, and also a significant ranger program and a range of other training and workforce programs to get Aboriginal people involved in the workforce. Clearly it is a very long road, and I think the report yesterday demonstrated that.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE — UNEMPLOYMENT

43. Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Why does the Premier continue to ignore and fail Aboriginal Western Australians by abolishing government departments responsible for promoting their interests, by failing to deal with sexual abuse in the Pilbara and Kimberley, by failing to address the rise in incarceration rates of Aboriginal people, and by failing to respond to the coroner's inquest into child suicide in the Kimberley region?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is not a supplementary question.

POLICE — MOBILE PHONES

44. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to ensuring that WA's police officers have the resources they need to help keep the community safe. Can the minister update the house on the roll-out of mobile phones to Western Australian police? Can the minister advise the house how this is helping police in the valuable work they do to protect our community?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for Girrawheen for her excellent question and for her support of WA police officers, which has been ongoing for many years, particularly her support of those police officers who have been injured in the course of their duties. Despite the harsh economic terms we inherited from the Barnett-Harvey government, we have had an unparalleled investment in the Western Australia Police Force and we have been able to provide our police with the resources they have needed for some years—resources that were denied to them by the former government. I refer to things like the rollout of stab-proof vests, which obviously aid our officers by improving their safety, and body-worn cameras are something they have been asking for for years. Last year I announced that we would roll out mobile phones to police officers. That announcement was disparaged by the Leader of the Opposition in November last year. She said, "They don't need mobile phones. What use will they be?" Let me tell members how fast we have managed to roll them out. We have rolled out some 3 800 mobile phones in the metropolitan area and in regional areas, and they have been very welcomed. They have a range of applications based on those phones that are proving to be invaluable in the field. They can perform ID checks and risk assessments. They can search the police database and they enhance officer safety in the field. I will give one example. This is a \$34 million-plus investment in our police by our government.

I heard recently that Senior Constable Cartmill in the Kimberley and police dog Hank were responding to a situation about 40 kilometres from Broome near a roadhouse. They were in thick scrub and it was dark—it was night—and he was calling for assistance. He was able to use the OneForce locator app on his mobile phone. There were no landmarks or other things that would normally occur to identify where he was. Using that OneForce locator on his phone, two police cars were able to pull up in a very short period and identify exactly where he and the dog were. It was of phenomenal assistance. I will highlight what Senior Constable Cartmill said. He said —

They literally just tracked me on the app and pulled up next to me in the middle of nowhere. It provided a real sense of security as I've previously had major issues achieving exactly this when I'm out with the dog.

So thank you for helping to make my workplace safer and easier to operate in. It is appreciated.

I note too that recently a Swiss tourist in the Karijini National Park was able to be located, partly because she had a personal locator beacon, but also when police had that on a map, they went out on location, could not see her in the first instance, turned on their location device on their phones and from that it was able to be readily ascertained that they were about 500 metres away from the lost tourist. Those phones are proving to be invaluable in all kinds of ways in the field. They are enhancing officer safety and they have been welcomed by all police officers who have received them in our state.

CARNARVON FASCINE

45. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the recent public rally of 110 vessels and 300 people onshore in response to years of inaction by the Labor government to reopen our waterway, Carnarvon Fascine. Does the minister accept that the state government is the owner of the waterway and, therefore, it is the government's responsibility to come up with, and fund, a permanent solution?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for North West Central for that question and for his re-engagement on all issues Carnarvon once again. He has rediscovered Carnarvon after a couple of years in which he was not that involved in council issues such as the fascine, but it is good to see him back. Let us go through the history of this. In 1995 a deed of agreement was signed between the state government and the shire that stated that the fascine would be the shire's responsibility. Who was in government in 2015? The Liberal and National Parties were in government. In 2015 the shire sought to have that deed of agreement rearranged to ensure that there was joint responsibility. What did the Liberal–National government then say? It said no. The state government refused to engage and take any responsibility.

Mr V.A. Catania: You're the owners.

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

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Since we have been in government, I have agreed to reconsider the deed and have joint responsibility—things that the previous government refused to do. Secondly, we funded the shire to undertake a proper study to determine what would be the long-term solution to address the fascine issue. An amount of \$30 000 was provided. That report is finalised and we will receive it over the coming weeks and months. Hopefully, we will be able to determine a short-term and long-term —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They were in government for eight and a half years. They built a boat ramp —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for North West Central to order for the third time. I know you want to get thrown out, but you are not going to be.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Let us face it, the member disengaged with Carnarvon because he did not want to engage with the council for a couple of years. Now he has come back. We have been at it. We are looking at the deed. We are looking at short-term and long-term options and we funded the study to make sure that we get the real solution for the fascine.

CARNARVON FASCINE

46. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Transport:

I have a supplementary question. Carnarvon businesses and the community are suffering as a result of this minister's inaction for nearly three years.

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: He is making a preamble.

The SPEAKER: It is not a question.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central! You were only on two, so that makes three now.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water! I call you to order for the first time.

YAMATJI INDIGENOUS LAND USE AGREEMENT

47. Ms J. FARRER to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

I refer to the historic Indigenous land use agreement that this government signed with the Yamatji native title community last week.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what this agreement means for the Yamatji people?
- (2) What economic and social benefits will this agreement deliver to that community?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

- (1)–(2) Those in the house yesterday may have heard my brief ministerial statement about what I think will be the most innovative and significant native title outcome in Australia. It is not as large a scale as the Noongar native title, but certainly it is an extremely innovative outcome for a very complicated native title. For those who have been following it, and I know that the Deputy Premier was very keen to see this outcome, of the five claims that were settled as part of the agreement, some have been in the Federal Court of Australia since 1998—a long time. A lot of people have passed away on that journey but this is without doubt a very significant agreement. The recognition of the non-exclusive native title rights over a number of culturally significant land parcels includes, of course, the right to live and camp on the land and to visit and maintain sites of significance, and to hunt, fish, take resources, conduct ceremonies and invite others onto that land. There were two components. The court judgement recognised the native title and the Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement has been some two years in negotiation. It is worth over \$440 million and includes \$325 million in cash, the transfer of commercial land, tourism opportunities, access to housing properties for sale, leasing or development, and a strategic Aboriginal water reserve for use, lease or trade. Importantly, we are providing a business development unit to help the Yamatji people and corporations establish or develop their own businesses. The key to this process will be in the implementation. The government partnership committee will be co-chaired by a director or the CEO of the prescribed body corporate and the deputy director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. This is very important to ensure that the benefits are rolled out over time.

This process started in August 2017 with our initial offer from the state. I appeared with the state negotiating team a couple of times before the Federal Court to ensure that this progressed in a timely manner. I want to acknowledge the traditional owner negotiating team comprising 12 members of the Yamatji leadership who were incredibly sophisticated and determined to ensure that they negotiated with the state a very good outcome, and that has certainly been the case. I want to acknowledge as well on the state side two people: Debbie Fletcher, who led the state negotiating team and came up with what I think is an outstanding outcome; and Kate Alderton, the head of the Aboriginal policy coordination unit in government. By way of an aside, the old Department of Aboriginal Affairs has been replaced and I think the member for Dawesville is officially the one person in Western Australia who wants that back, going by his question in question time today.

I want to make one final comment around native title. As we enter the phase now that sees the rise of prescribed body corporates and, in due course, the end of representative bodies, as is appropriate, it has been a very productive time in native title. Over three years of McGowan governance, we have resolved 47 native title claims, 41 of which were by consent. These determinations cover 551 000 square kilometres. I do not make this by way of a critical comment, but it will give members some context. In three years, we have resolved 47 native title claims. In eight and a half years under the former government—I am not saying it was bad—there were 41 claims. We have really lifted the effort around consent determinations ensuring that native title is resolved. We are now in the scenario in which we know that there is a compensation liability on state governments, the exact nature of which is still subject to, I suspect, a few more High Court decisions. This, for the Yamatji people, will be incredibly significant. For the people of Geraldton in their entirety in the midwest—make no mistake—this is an economic stimulus package. This means that the Yamatji people are right in the guts of economic decisions in the midwest and every single person who lives there will benefit from this outcome.

HOUSING — BUILDING APPROVALS

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

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Western Australian home building approvals are continuing to fall and have reached the lowest levels in almost 20 years. When will the Premier admit that his measures to boost the housing market have failed?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The government has put in place a range of measures to support home building in Western Australia. Last year we rolled out the Keystart initiatives to ensure that there was more availability of finance, in particular for first home builders but not exclusively. That showed some success last year, so we extended it at the end of last year for at

least another six months so that more people have access to finance. There has been a significant problem nationally post the royal commission into the banks in that the availability of finance has declined. The state government, where it can, has picked up the slack with the Keystart initiative we took. Late last year, on top of that, we announced the housing package, which was a \$222 million building package combined with a range of initiatives to support people who are challenged and homeless, with some common-ground facilities and wraparound services and the like.

The reality is that when it comes to house price falls, over 60 per cent of the house price falls took place during the last term of government. All the recent indications have indicated that there has been some improvement in the housing market and we look forward to a continued improvement, but that requires a range of things. One is that all the excess capacity that was provided over the boom years, and there was a lot, is taken up. Another is that people are able to get finance and there is continuing population growth in Western Australia. We look forward to all those things happening. Just as a side note, as I have said numerous times, I note that the Prime Minister has just extended the travel ban with China, so I expect this issue to go on for some considerable period. We have significant headwinds and significant challenges before us in light of that. I am positive about the future of the housing market. I think it is a good time to buy. I do not think we should talk it down. I urge people who want to get finance to see Keystart.

HOUSING — BUILDING APPROVALS

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

I have a supplementary question. What effective economic stimulus packages or measures will the Premier implement this year to try to help the struggling housing market?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

If the member had listened to my answer, I just said that. It is an odd thing: a person says things and they are asked to repeat them. As I said, at the end of last year, we announced a significant housing package and the build program will take place over the course of this year and the next. I announced an extension of the Keystart relaxation of rules to allow more people to get access to housing finance. We are putting in place planning initiatives to allow more innovative and high-density developments around the city. I know who does not support it; the Liberal Party does not support it. The housing industry is absolutely fearful of the Liberal Party coming back into office. The Liberal Party does not believe in higher density. It does not want to see more people living in proximity to job opportunities and rail lines. We are building Metronet. We have rail lines being built. Six new rail lines are underway. This morning, the shadow Treasurer said that he does not support the stamp duty cuts that we made last year. That is what he had to say last night or this morning. He even questioned the payroll tax cuts. What is going on with the Liberal Party?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: What is happening with the Liberal Party? It opposes stamp duty cuts. It opposes payroll tax cuts. It does not support development throughout the suburbs. What is going on? The Liberal Party appears to be becoming some sort of anarchic, socialist, utopian party that does not support anything occurring anywhere at any point in time. Liberal Party members are turning into bananas—build absolutely nothing at any time anywhere. They are turning into bananas; that is what is happening to them. They do not support anything.

I will close on this: let us remember that when the Liberal Party was in office, it put up land tax three times. As we learnt from the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, those three land tax increases were deliberate and designed to drive down the price of houses. The deputy Liberal leader, the prominent person that he is, belled the cat. It was all designed to drive down the price of houses. That is the legacy we are dealing with. We are not going to listen to and take advice from the bananas opposite.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [2.51 pm]: Before the lunchbreak and question time, I was talking about education and the failure of the Minister for Education and Training to adhere to any claim she has made over the last four years, particularly in her electorate, where she promised to enhance spending on the large high schools. As a result, she has cut \$22 million from those schools, which are, without doubt, some of the best, if not the best, public schools in our city and educate more than 5 000 children. Excellent!

I would now like to get on to my new shadow area of planning. It is new to me. It is a very important area. It deals with probably the most important issues for businesses and households—that is, what they can and cannot do on the land upon which their houses and properties are built.

Mr D.T. Punch: You've just realised that?

The SPEAKER: Member!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes. I heard the comment. I do not think the member realises this.

The planning system here has evolved. It has some flaws. I have to congratulate the Minister for Planning for the green paper that she commissioned by Evan Jones and co. It is an excellent one. All I do is ask her to implement it in full—not to have a study or a working group. The planning scheme has significant failures and the way it is being implemented and impacted by the minister is creating chaos. I know that members opposite like to say that we do not like buildings and high-rises. The reality is that in our eight and a half years, we made a large number of changes, specifically to facilitate infill developments, particularly with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority and the development of those types of urban renewal projects, which I think should be the increasing focus. We did more to revitalise the city of Perth, which is our most important city, and make it a world-class place to visit and live than any other government in history. That is an area in which this government has let the state down. Go into the city and look. What investment has been made in the city under this government's watch? By the way, the Museum is one that I signed off on as Treasurer. It was not this government. It is part of the \$40 billion of debt that members opposite decry. In other words, when they decry the \$40 billion of debt, they should decry and complain about the Museum that is about ready to open. We revitalised the city like no other government. We need to continue that. This government does not have a plan, but it talks a lot.

More importantly, the system needs to be reformed. The Minister for Planning is creating chaos throughout our suburbs. The member for Cottesloe highlighted what she has done in Subiaco and Nedlands. What she is doing there is pure bastardry. She is destroying the livelihoods, the future and the house values of those people for no good technical reason. In Wanneroo east, she is making changes that are necessary. In Stoneville and Parkerville north, where a large development is pushing into the fringes of the city in an area where it should not be considered, particularly because of bushfires, she is saying that she cannot do anything. In Nedlands, she is overriding them and saying, "Do it." Up there, she is saying that she cannot do anything. She is acting in a capricious manner. She is destroying the livelihoods and futures of those communities. She is also destroying community support for infill developments and confidence in our planning system. The only conclusion I can come to is that she is doing it out of spite and for political motivations. We need a planning system that is clear, long term and fair. The local community needs to support it. We need infill development, but not at all costs. Importantly, we need to start focusing on the city of Perth. It is our capital city. It is where people visit and do business, and this government has left it to decay. We need a change of government to once again revitalise Perth and make it no longer Dullsville.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren-Blackwood) [2.56 pm]: I rise, as everyone else has in this first week of Parliament for 2020, to make my reply to the Premier's Statement. I have been taking note of some of the speeches that members have made. I thought the member for South Perth did a very good job of his speech. He made the point that it would be the last speech—we held our breath when he said that—he would make as a member of Parliament on the Premier's Statement.

Mr T.J. Healy: Not you, too!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: No, I am not going to do that.

Mr T.J. Healy: So what are you saying?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I am going to tell the member that a few people who sit behind me will also be making their last address in Parliament on the Premier's Statement. As the rot sets in over this year, other members, as they chime in with commentary, will be sitting on the edge of their seats, waiting to fall off the other side as we get to the 2021 election. They will be busily signing notes saying "Merry Christmas" and "Happy Birthday" to all the people in their electorates. I can see the member for Jandakot is busily writing his. There will need to be a lot of those and they will have to land hard, because we know that the pendulum is starting to swing back this year. As night turns to day, this will be the last opportunity for a bunch of people who sit behind me to make a contribution to the Premier's Statement in the Parliament of Western Australia.

I want to get on to an agenda, however. First of all, a couple of statewide issues and a couple of national issues are worth mentioning, and they have already been mentioned by many members. In the national sense, I am talking about the terrible droughts that have been occurring on the east coast over the last 12 months or so and the challenges that those communities are facing. Indeed, there has been very strong support for them from the people of Western Australia in the plight that they are going through. Of course, in recent times there have been the terrible tragedies from bushfires that have been described to me as unprecedented and the challenges that those communities are going through in responding to that and rebuilding. In a quirky sort of way, floods in some of those communities are also causing some challenges. I highlight that to say that, as a community and a state, we are thinking of them. Volunteers from Western Australia have also taken the time to go over east and engage in that, and I think that is absolutely outstanding.

Many of my colleagues, and I am sure other members of Parliament, have made donations, whether it be through dinners in Parliament or whatever it might be, to support fundraising for funds to go over east and support those communities, because we know that one day it will be our communities and we will be looking for support from

others. They are going through a terrible set of circumstances, which is something that we are all thinking about. That said, I think that we have had a relatively good season. I live in a part of the world, in my electorate, where we fear bushfires over the summer period. Although we have had a number of fires, the response has been quick, and most of those fires have not turned into anything substantial. My colleague the member for Roe had fires in his electorate, which just touched on the northern boundary of my electorate in the Stirling Range, and were some of the most significant fires. Katanning is pretty close to the member for Roe's house. I saw pictures of that that were quite substantial. Again, some of the fires that were in some of the southern suburbs of Perth were fairly substantial, but I think that we have largely dodged a bullet.

We are not out of the fire season yet, but I must say that one of the most significant things in Western Australia is the policy settings, which have come from the Liberal–National government and is now clearly supported by the Labor Party, for the level of prescribed burning that occurs in our state forests to ensure that we actually reduce the fuel loads to a sufficient level so that it takes much of the risk away from those landscape-level fires, which is a significant threat that actually exists. We all have sections of reserve in our community, which from time to time needs to be burnt, but in the south west, in particular, if those landscape-level bushfires get a run-up, they can be devastating. A bit of prescribed burning happened in the north of Denmark—the community that I live in—late last year. It actually had a bit of criticism. But living in Denmark now, with that area having been burnt, gives one some comfort that there certainly is a level of protection.

I spoke to a very senior politician in our party over east who said that Western Australia seems to get this stuff right compared with the policy settings they have over there. I reiterate to the government of the day that ensuring we keep a level of policy support for the level of prescribed burning to take some of the risk away from the community is really important. In these times, the fires over east give us some reflection about the importance of that. It is not hard after a while finding out that we can lose sight of that, and even in my community there is some debate about it, but it is something that I strongly support and something that needs to be a fundamental part of what we do. Investments that we made in government and investments that the government is making now to ensure that we meet those burning targets is very critical.

Regarding the cyclone up north going through Karratha, once again, we feel for the community. A bit of a rebuild is happening up there. The rains are quite welcome in the context of the cyclone that went through. But one point that attracted a lot of criticism from the government—it talked about wasted spending in royalties for regions—was the Pilbara underground power project. Having that project in place now and having underground power in communities such as Karratha and Port Hedland means that when those cyclones go through, they are able to get things back up and going quickly. Not too many people sitting up there in Karratha now would not have been happy to have underground power, which we know is quite a natural part of the south and south west in metropolitan Perth, but it would take a bit of effort to install in a place such as Karratha.

Another statewide trend, and probably a national trend, is how water issues are being elevated in importance. The security of water supplies to communities is important. Denmark is one of those communities, having one of the highest rainfall areas in the state. Many communities, such as the member for Roe's electorate, the wheatbelt and south west electorates, are somewhat under stress. Ensuring that water remains front and centre in town municipal supply security is critical, as are supplies for irrigation. The south west irrigation districts—I have Manjimup and Pemberton in my area—are realising that water is a challenge, and the importance of good, transparent regulation around that is critical; hence, things like the water resources legislation, which needs updating, has to be on the table. We made efforts when we were in government, but we were not successful, and I know that the Minister for Water has the same challenges. He stood up in August 2017 and said, "I'm going to do this because you couldn't," and we still have not seen it. I hear from industry that it is unlikely to occur in this term of government, so that certainly has to be put on the agenda as soon as possible. Water supplies are challenging and the member for Roe has been on that case, but the more general point is that it is important to elevate water's status as a key resource within our community right across the board. We made efforts during our term to put out a state water strategy and to research where water was and was not, to support the agriculture sector in particular, but water has to have the status that it deserves in a dry climate like Western Australia where it is such a critical resource to us. I have not seen that, and I think that if a message were to go to the government, it would be to raise the status of water because it is a touchy point for all of us.

Much of the discussion about the economy on this side of the house accurately reflects what is happening in our communities in that people are doing it tough. It is the Achilles heel of the government. It is one thing to look at the finances and respond objectively to the state's financial situation; it is another thing to respond to the economy. The economy is in such a state that people are finding it hard to get the level of work that they need. Wage growth is not there. We are seeing some unfortunate behaviour in Perth and in my electorate with the use of meth and other drugs. A lot of these things are symptomatic of a tough economy, and focusing on the economy is critically important. We would like to see some discussion about the strategy that the government is taking with the economy, but we understand that it cannot control everything in that space. There should be some discussion about what might be put in place to give the economy some sort of stimulus at a point in time to acknowledge that people are in fact doing it tough.

In the broader area of agriculture, the coronavirus is something that we cannot control and the reality is that with our links to China, in particular, it is going to have an impact on us. It is having an impact on us in tourism, and it is going to have an impact on us in agriculture. How long that will last is a bit of an unknown, but certainly there are threats that are out of our control, which only reinforce the challenges that we have with the broader economy, and put things under somewhat of a stress. I think there are some bumpy roads coming ahead in the short to medium term. We want to see the government put strong strategies into place and invest accordingly. This is a unique time in our economy in Western Australia and some decisions need to be made and specific actions need to be put in place in response to that.

In the agricultural space, there are some threats. The live trade issue is a threat for the industry in Western Australia. This government is seen as a threat to that, because it wants to shut down live trade. We do not see that as acceptable. We see that there are processes in place to support that and to ensure that we have the best animal welfare standards. Indeed, Western Australia is coaching other countries in animal welfare issues. Another threat that sits there is the banning of glyphosate. The Environmental Protection Authority reported on its assessment of glyphosate. If members are not familiar with the word “glyphosate”, it is Roundup, which is widely used in the agricultural sector in gardens, and it has been deemed to be okay. We are seeing signals from this government that that is something that it is concerned about, and that is a threat to the agricultural sector.

There is ongoing pressure on supermarkets, which have monopoly power, which is the power over supply, and we are seeing that play out in the dairy industry.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I have a number of dairies in my electorate —

Ms M.J. Davies: And eggs.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is playing out in the egg industry as well. A number of dairies in my electorate are somewhat under threat. Big organisations can put pressure on a small supplier because it does not have as many choices, because an isolated market like Western Australia makes that very challenging. Where the markets do not play out and are not level, the government has to have some sort of intervention, and I am not seeing the government putting strategies on the table for those two examples. Again, threats, as we move into the last year of this Parliament. We certainly want to see signals that that will be on the improve.

I will talk about some of my shadow portfolio areas. A lot of changes are happening in the energy space. One of the strong examples is the issue of microgrids and some of the renewable energy battery technology coming into play. For the first time, we are now seeing technology that can offer solutions for some of the real challenges in regional areas, particularly fringe-of-grid areas, reliability of supply and meeting demands, when long lines go down. Technology is there now to resolve that in a carbon-positive way.

As we move through some of the debates in the next couple of weeks about some of the reforms the Minister for Energy is putting in place, we need to keep in mind that we should allow scope for innovation and third-party investment in that technology in Western Australia. We need to allow for that technology to hit the ground in the areas that need it with innovations that solve many of the problems we have all grappled with—even when we were in government—with solutions that are now available that were not before. I am talking about charges such as the headworks charges, that great negative play on regional development. A person on the fringe of grid who wants to extend and build something that needs energy has to pay a big headworks charge to support upgrades to get the capacity to that point. I understand why that happens. The cost of how it all works has to be shared, but it does not play out in Perth, it plays out in regional Western Australia on the fringe-of-grid areas as a big suppressant to economic development. Technology is now moving into the space where it is becoming an asset in those areas where it can supply solutions to the broader energy network. We need to make sure that the regulatory environment is in place for those things to happen in such a way that regional Western Australia can be an asset rather than a liability to the networks and ensure that it can play its role. As an adjunct to that, it must support regional development in doing so. Technology is starting to provide solutions that it did not have before. We hope the government will ensure that some of those intractable issues that emerged in the past can be solved with technology as it comes to the table.

My other shadow portfolio is Aboriginal Affairs. I take great interest in this area. I must say that I do not ask a lot of questions on the area. I hold a personal view that it is not a space that I particularly want to politicise. I am keeping informed through a range of meetings. I go to the Yule River meeting at Hedland every year and ask the government questions on notice about some of its activities in this space. As a member of Parliament, when I come to do my retirement speech I do not want to look back at my time and say that we have not shifted the dial. I will do my bit, whether it be from opposition supporting the government or from government, to do the things to make sure we do. A lot of things have happened, but I do not think that, collectively, we have done a good job. We saw recently the announcement about where we are at with the Closing the Gap targets. As the Premier said today, there is not a lot to be positive about. On the surface, it does not seem to be hard but it is very challenging. I am putting on the table once again, in a quiet sort of way, my support in getting some action so that we do not see the level of suicides we have seen in the past, and we see improvement in education and domestic issues and challenges,

particularly in more remote areas where there is crowding in houses and some of the social consequences that come from that. We need to do better in that space and anything that results in maybe doing something differently, will, in the main, have my support.

I will not go into Treasury deeply, but, clearly, government having a better outcome with GST and iron ore prices has been a windfall and has made the Treasurer's commentary easier.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.T. REDMAN: As the shadow Treasurer said, if the GST replacement had applied during the previous government's time, it would have been running surpluses in the last part of our term. As mentioned in debates on the last day or so, the Nationals have recently been disappointed about where royalties for regions sit in the game. We had a meeting in Denmark recently with the Minister for Water about Denmark's water supplies in a community that is very sensitised to that, and a government decision. It was the right decision; it was on our agenda at some time to build a pipeline from Denmark to Albany. However, the community was not told that it was under some water stress. The water minister told the community that the state pays a subsidy to the Water Corporation to supply water to maintain the uniform pricing tariff, which is about \$20 a kilolitre. It was said as though it sounded like a gift to the community. "Be quiet; listen to us; you get a subsidy here. We'll do this, so be happy." On the other side of that argument when members opposite came to government, Denmark lost a wastewater recycling project. The wastewater from the wastewater treatment plant in Denmark, which currently spills into the Wilson Inlet, has been redirected to municipal ovals, the golf course and the WA College of Agriculture. The amount of \$15 million was canned by this government and this minister. The subsidy we talked about down there is now paid out of royalties for regions. The subsidy the minister was telling the community was a gift to the community from the government is the very reason Denmark lost its wastewater recycling project. Denmark wants to see water recycling play its part in reducing the high cost of water and easing the challenge of providing those supplies. It was a good meeting to have and I support the minister, the Water Corporation and the Department of Water in going down there. However, with regard to those subtle messages, I think sometimes the community needs to be brought up to speed with what is happening behind the scenes in this government.

I will pick out my topics because I think I will run out of time if I am not careful. There have been some fairly big impacts on retail. Across my electorate from Denmark to Margaret River in particular, the summer retail season has not been too bad, but some of the inland areas have done it tough. In a retail sense, last winter, almost across the board, was one of the worst it has had. Denmark and Margaret River have probably experienced some of the best they have had. Retail is cyclical, which makes it challenging; nevertheless, there has been a broader impact on retail.

In Manjimup we are seeing some investments come onstream on the back of our SuperTowns initiative, a project this Premier did not like when it was rolled out. However, investments have fundamentally changed the status of Manjimup as a community that wants to see investment and is now getting it. A site has been purchased in Manjimup for a hotel development. The same investor is investing in apartments. Investment is going into a distillery, a brewery and a backpacker hostel in the town and recently the Power Up Electricity Museum has opened, which is fantastic to see for those who have not seen it. Stuff sitting in sea containers for years was mobilised under the SuperTowns project, and is now an asset to visit. All investments are welcomed while knowing there is a bit of a tough backdrop. Now we are seeing that Manjimup is a destination rather than a thoroughfare. It is not just an industrial centre that supported heaps of towns around it. My colleagues, the Leader of the Nationals in Northam, and the member for Roe in Esperance, are all seeing the benefit of those past investments.

I see that the Minister for Tourism is now in the chamber. I railed pretty hard about the Busselton Margaret River Airport project. Melbourne flights are not far away. I think 25 March is when the first plane will land. The member for Vasse, who is an advocate for that airport, is also here. On 25 March, when the first plane lands from over east, sadly, the people who get off the plane will walk into a tin shed. The lounge is a tin shed, and that is sad. The City of Busselton has secured an airline visit three times a week for three years, which is not an insignificant commitment—but tourists will land and go into a tin shed. I do not want the flight arrangements to fail; nor does the member for Vasse. We do not want it to fail. We want it to be the starting point of some vibrancy for the tourism sector in the south west. Here is a solution: I know that \$10 million was sitting in the Minister for Transport's portfolio—hopefully it is still there—that might support that. Certainly the Minister for Regional Development said if we got the airline, she would pay for the upgrade of the terminal. But she reneged on that, so that was a backflip. Here is the solution for the Minister for Tourism. He has the Collie Futures fund. He is prepared to pay for people in Collie to be taken on a bus all the way to the Greenbushes mine, nearly 100 kilometres way. What about putting \$10 million from the Collie Futures fund into the Busselton terminal upgrade as a benefit for the region and support what the minister has been railing hard on—that is, all the trails that go in and around Collie and the tourism assets that Collie has? Why not support sharpening the point of the airline that will be bringing people in from the eastern states, to get into the tourism assets that we have and assets that the government has been promoting and investing in? Why not take money out of the Collie Futures fund to do that? That would be a really good discussion to have with the people of Collie, and something that actually can make a difference. There are decisions about Collie that

the government has backflipped on; I mentioned one of them yesterday. The \$30 million that the government was going to use to build a biomass energy plant, and the \$30 million for a solar farm in Collie were all reneged on. In fact, the government did not even go to market to see whether there was any interest. It did not even go out to market to test it. I would have thought Collie would have liked that, because it is used for energy production. It has the transmission lines. That would have been a good investment. It did not do that, it reneged on it. Put \$10 million from the Collie Futures fund into the terminal upgrade at Busselton, and make sure that it is a good experience and promote the hell out of Collie as a destination for people to come in and land. There is a solution.

What do we reckon Bridgetown thinks of the idea of trucking people from Collie up to Bridgetown? It is not that happy, because the Shire of Bridgetown–Greenbushes, the Shire of Boyup Brook, the Shire of Donnybrook–Balingup, the Shire of Nannup and the Shire of Manjimup have been working hard to say, “Righto, how are we going to plan for and manage this big influx of a workforce into Greenbushes?” They have been managing that with the South West Development Commission on its side. That planning is going into auditing of housing and all the assets that the community has to make sure that it can support that. Now, right out of the blue, the government is strongarming Talison Lithium to say that it wants it to employ people from Collie, “and by the way, we’re going to pay for a bus to go pick them up.” I find that deplorable. It is totally in conflict with any sort of regional development focus that those portfolios should have.

There are a couple of other issues. A youth mental health services program has been run by a general practitioner down south. It is called the 3 Tier Youth Mental Health Program. Sadly, it came to an end at the end of December last year. It was supported by a bunch of schools. I made a grievance to the Minister for Health and I got him to meet with a range of people. Unfortunately, the government has not been able to keep that going. That is a program of early intervention in mental health areas, and we are seeing a big emergence of challenges, particularly in Margaret River and in and around my electorate for reasons I described before: partly to do with the economy and partly to do with a range of other issues; nevertheless, on issues that are emerging. Having early intervention at a school level is fundamental and really important. It is happening in the Peel region—a three-tier mental health program. It is under review now to check out where it is at and how well it is going. I am confident that it will be positive. It is just a shame that we did not get some bridging funding to keep it going at the end of last year. But the Shire of Manjimup has chosen to fund it. The Shire of Manjimup is choosing to fund an early intervention youth mental health program in its shire, because government is absent in this space. It is a bit like what is happening across the wheatbelt, where shires are funding doctors to keep them in their communities. It is so fundamental to them that they are choosing to stump up and put their money on the table to make it happen. That is sad, in an environment in which these challenges are emerging everywhere we look. This early intervention bit is hard to invest in, but it is really important. When the current Minister for Tourism was in opposition, I remember him talking about early intervention strategies in the context of corrective services. In principle, he was quite right. When we take that stuff to Treasury, it does not particularly like it because we cannot demonstrate that we are getting bang for our buck. It wants to see the acute response. These areas are hard to invest in, but they are so critical. I encourage the government to look at that.

Yesterday the government responded to the parliamentary inquiry that I triggered and I was involved with. It was very pleasing to have the support of the member for Swan Hills in getting it up in the committee. It was the inquiry into the regulation of short-stay accommodation in Western Australia—the Airbnb issue, as it has sometimes been described. I am really happy with the government response. There is still work to be done; it is complex. The government needs to work through some things that we did not have the resources in our committee to resolve, or put up recommendations. In the most part, that is in and around mechanisms of how to get a registration process up for those unregistered, and particularly un-hosted accommodation providers, and indeed how we can force or leverage online programs to have a registration number for registered accommodation providers. They are all the things that we talked about that the established accommodation providers were raising with us—strong for me out of Margaret River and Denmark—and I am really pleased to see the response. We will be monitoring this. The outcomes are yet to be seen; they are not entirely visible yet, but certainly the commentary so far is good. A statewide registration scheme is supported. There is recognition that no-one wants to target those mum-and-dad providers who rent out the back room. They are not sensitised to anybody: they are not sensitised to the established accommodation owners, they are not sensitised to me, and they are, in many cases, pensioners who are making a few extra dollars from a couple of spare rooms that they have. That is a good thing to have. We are ensuring that the settings are, in a regulatory sense, a light touch, but we touched on those areas that make a difference to ensure that if someone has invested millions of dollars, in some cases, in established accommodation in those tourism towns, and they are registered—they are meeting all the compliance requirements for occupational health and safety, fire and insurance and all those things that are important—there is no unregistered provider up the road doing it without having to meet all those requirements. I understand the commentary from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia that this is over-intervention. I do not agree with it, but I understand it, and I think a light touch is the approach the government is taking, which is on the recommendations of the committee. I am looking forward to there being a bit of a positive outcome in the accommodation space as it applies to Airbnb and those online platforms.

I want to close in the last 30 seconds on a comment in a media release from Mick Murray, the member for Collie–Preston, in the lead-up to the last election. He said —

Let me be clear—Royalties for Regions will continue under a McGowan Labor Government ... Labor is determined to see Royalties for Regions spent wisely to maximise the benefits for the regions.

What he did not add to that is that it was going to be used for budget repair and to pay for a uniform pricing tariff for water in Western Australia. That is the greatest con that we have seen from this government in this term of government, and it will pay for that at the next election.

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [3.27 pm]: I look forward to presenting my fourth response to the Premier's Statement for this Parliament. It is a good stocktake of the three years until now. What we will see in the rest of the year is a run down towards the next election. I was going to start the address off with the old Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times"; however, I did a bit of research and discovered that it is not Chinese.

Ms M.M. Quirk: It's not a Chinese curse.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: It is not Chinese. Exactly, member for Girrawheen.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Robert Kennedy's speechwriter had heard of it.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Yes; there you go. All those people thought it was a mystical, amazing old Chinese curse, and it was not. It was tracked back to England in the 1930s, but that is as far as it goes. We would all be familiar with the phrase "black swan events". It is quite appropriate for Western Australia of course to have black swan events, and no doubt recent events in China are, in my book, black swan events. What has happened in China will cause quite a bit of uncertainty for a few months and maybe quite a bit longer. This is a big issue for Geraldton because of our crayfishing industry. Geraldton Fisherman's Co-operative exports about 60 per cent of Australia's lobsters, and these days 97 per cent of them go to China. It is quite an amazing operation that takes a lobster off the ocean bed in the morning, and 24 hours later it is on a plate in China. Unfortunately, the Chinese market closed on 26 January due to the coronavirus. The virus is the sixth of these type of viruses that we have had in the last few decades. We have had severe acute respiratory syndrome, the Middle East respiratory syndrome, Nipah virus, Zika virus and the Mexican swine flu. As *The Economist* noted the other day, it will not be the last. The local Indian community, many of whom are medical people, invited me to see a film not that long ago about the outbreak of the Nipah virus in Kerala state in India, which is where a lot of them come from. That also originates from bats. It was a three-hour subtitled film, which was pretty hard going to watch. In that particular case, they did not know where the virus came from and in the early days, with crowded hospitals and everything, it was looking absolutely terrible, but they got on top of it. That example gives me hope that the measures that China is taking on this virus will be effective. Of course, it follows the devastating impact from the African swine fever on the Chinese pig herd for farmers and consumers. The hope is that soon the numbers of people being diagnosed with the infection will peak and go into decline.

I have been to China five times since 1995 and I am a keen reader of Chinese history. I am always amazed at how the country has performed since the reforms of Deng Xiaoping. China has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and it is expected to be the largest economy in the world by 2030. History tells us that the Chinese are very stoic and get on top of problems, despite great suffering. All we can say is that we hope this virus can be beaten in a couple of months; if not, the consequences for a lot of regional Western Australia will be quite dire. I find the photos of empty streets in Wuhan quite eerie. If the virus continues to spread, decisions will be taken to not reopen factories and businesses at the end of the new year holidays, which could have quite a severe impact. The other day I read about two car plants in Korea that have just been shut down because they cannot get some of their components from factories in China.

It is clear that wild animal markets are a problem. I, and I am sure a lot of other people, will welcome the government in China getting serious about this trade and putting traders out of business. One good thing that will come out of that will be less impact on endangered species throughout the world.

Finally, I will quote former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd from *The Australian Financial Review* the other day; he said —

"What I find striking is the level of complacency about the potential impact on the global and Australian economy given the impact of the virus on China."

I think that is very true. I think a lot of people are watching this situation with a great deal of concern.

When our lobster market closed, our processors immediately stopped receiving and fishermen stopped catching. The lobsters being held in the tanks can stay there for a couple of weeks, but then a decision will have to be made on whether to process them or try to sell them live. I have noticed that the fishermen have been quite calm and rational about this situation. The market closed on 26 January and, obviously, they will not have any income until the end of March at the earliest. They have said to me that it is just like SARS. They remember quite clearly what happened 20 years ago with SARS. Then, of course, we had the race to fish. As soon as they were clear to fish again, they went out and caught as many crays as they could, and the price crashed when fishing resumed.

This time they are looking very carefully at how to start off again and at some kind of probable extension in time for their quota this year. There will not be a mad rush to fish, so the price will not crash to \$10 a kilo like it did previously. I attended a Western Rock Lobster Council meeting in Geraldton yesterday, and I expect the council will take a set of well-thought-out measures to the minister soon to hopefully ease back into their markets. I would like to congratulate the fishermen and the fishing bodies for their logical, rational and well-managed processes and consultation.

I, too, want to talk a bit about the bushfires that, thankfully, this year have been mostly in the eastern states. I would like to acknowledge and pass my sympathies on to those who have lost friends and family, particularly the families of the firefighters. I spent 25 years as a member of my local brigade, and every time I saw that vision of fires from the east, I was glad that where I lived there was none of that sort of country to fight fires in. The east has had a run of dry years, which has resulted in very dry conditions, which coupled with high temperatures and strong winds causes devastating conditions. Personally, I do not have any trouble accepting that greenhouse gas emissions of CO₂, methane and nitrous oxides are leading to higher temperatures worldwide. In the last 12 months, the world has seen other shocking fires. There were fires in Siberia last year that burnt an area the size of Belgium, also massive fires in Brazil and most years we see massive fires in Indonesia.

A point frequently made in the greenhouse debate is that people should accept the science, which I do. That is why the view being put around by the Greens at the moment that Australia will have some kind of effect on the outbreak of these fires by reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions while the rest of the world continues on its merry way increasing its emissions is ridiculous. I challenge the Greens on that. Di Natale said it, and I am sure Mr Bandt, or whatever his name is, would agree with him. Give us that science or show it to us, because I actually do not think it exists. The Chinese are building new coal-powered power stations. So are the Indians. Even the Japanese are building 21 more coal-fired power stations. After Fukushima, they decided to phase out nuclear power and replace it with coal.

Another point that has been made strongly by many people who fight fires is that the phasing out of commercial logging in native forests and turning them into national parks is making the job of fighting fires much harder. Loggers have the skills and equipment, and they put in tracks to make hazard reduction burning and back-burning much easier, but, unfortunately, we are fast losing these skills and capabilities. It was interesting to see strong support for that position from the forestry division of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union the other day. It recently declared that locking up native forest has an impact on our ability to deal with fires.

Australia has done a huge amount of work on fire research, including fuel reduction burning, housing design, and how communities can be put in fire-prone places more safely, but a lot of this research has been ignored or forgotten. Earlier, members spoke about the Eyre Highway. I think we surely will have to have a decent firebreak either side of the highway where it is heavily treed because we really cannot afford to have the Eyre Highway closed for 11 days. I look forward to seeing the federal government's royal commission report, and I suggest that this will be one report that should be read and implemented.

On energy, Geraldton has quite a bit of renewable energy. I had a proponent in my office the other day who was looking for support for geothermal production of energy. Apparently, it is potentially quite reasonable in Geraldton. Although we built the first stage of the 330-kilovolt powerline from Pinjar to Three Springs for potential renewable energy, we need stage 2, which will cost about another \$170 million.

I would like to touch on a couple of agricultural issues. About a year ago, regional WA was shocked at two incidents of serious cattle losses due to a lack of water on a couple of stations—Noonkanbah in the Kimberley, where maybe 1 000 head were lost, and Yandeyarra in the Pilbara, where probably about 1 200 were lost. On 5 January 2019, Minister MacTiernan was quoted on the ABC as saying that the livestock compliance unit was investigating Noonkanbah and would release a report in the coming weeks. To my knowledge, and that of other people I have asked, no report has yet to see the light of day and no action seems to have been taken against those responsible. Farmers have regularly said to me that if the government is serious about animal welfare and wants to impose higher standards on industry, it will only be taken seriously if it is seen to have taken action on the incidents on these two stations. I call on the government to release these reports so that systems can be put in place and tragedies like these do not happen again. It is also sad to see this level of mismanagement on stations when nearby companies like Hancock Pastoral are investing large amounts of capital to turn their properties into what the properties potentially are—the real engines of a strong, viable northern beef industry. I will also echo the comments of the pastoral industry on the Fitzroy River for the government to come up with some kind of water allocation for the Fitzroy. There is potential to come up with a win-win solution for all the people of that region that could involve hundreds or possibly thousands of jobs.

Another concern that is now being discussed almost daily in the media is the dire state of the Western Australian dairy industry. I had quite regular contact with the industry when I was the shadow minister, and attended a couple of its dairy innovation days. Our local dairy industry is small, but it is focused on being best practice and being as efficient as possible. They are very hardworking people, and it is potentially a valuable niche industry in Western Australia. The industry has never really recovered from the damage that Wesfarmers and Coles did when

they decided that milk should be sold in their shops for \$1 a litre. This is apparently how a free market in dairy works; a duopoly tells the industry how much it will pay. I find the government and ministers' inaction and disinterest in this industry baffling.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia's biannual economic forecast for Western Australia was released in January. Reading it, I think it quite accurately reflected what I have picked up around the state and in my electorate of Geraldton. It describes the economy as flat and states that the total hours worked in WA has remained flat since 2012, despite a nine per cent increase in population. Business investment has dropped 90 per cent over that period with the end of the resources boom, and the domestic economy has shrunk by 15 per cent. The report warns against relying on a fresh round of investment in the resources industry to turn WA around, pointing out that the value of the planned projects is just 20 per cent of those constructed between 2010 and 2013. Half of the planned projects are still awaiting final investment decisions, including Scarborough and Browse, but I think most of us are quite confident that they will be approved. Average household income is no higher today than it was in 2012, while in the past five years, expenses like electricity, water, property rates charges and childcare have all increased by more than 20 per cent. As others have said, the housebuilding market is very flat, or, in the case of Geraldton, extremely flat. Western Australia continues to just struggle along in the wake of the resources boom that occurred during the Barnett years.

The government is fond of criticising the increases in land tax that happened during the Barnett years, so I dug out the interstate comparison in the Department of Treasury's Overview of State Taxes and Royalties 2018–19. In the categories I would most likely expect to be charged, out of eight values, Western Australia was lowest in five of them and second lowest in three of them. Spare a thought for South Australia, whose land taxes are mostly double what is charged in Western Australia. I would also like to see the methodology that proves that the increases in land tax by the Barnett government led to the falls in house prices at that time. I think a lot of other factors were present at that time, and since most residential owners do not pay land tax, I do not think it had much of an effect on house prices.

I was quite encouraged by a press release I received the other day about the government's proposed rail access reforms—in particular, changing the asset valuation method and requiring published standard offers, better protection from unfair discrimination, increased transparency and making the regulatory process more efficient. I consider that the regime under which the CBH Group had to try to negotiate with Arc Infrastructure was ridiculous. How can a company be charged an amount to access a 100-year-old railway line that is worked out on the value of a brand-new line? How can the state lease out a line and then be powerless to do anything about it if the lessee will not use it or hand it back? I encourage the government to do all it can to make the regime fairer and to work to get as much freight as possible onto rail.

Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I know that the government is trying to fix the situation as it is, and I am being encouraging and saying that to whatever extent it can, it should push it as hard as it can. There is potential there for a lot of improvement; that is what I am saying.

There are a couple of local issues. One is aluminium can recycling. One of my constituents has a successful local business in Geraldton that has taken him 17 years to establish. He has built special cages that he takes to businesses like pubs and clubs. He dumps them outside; they fill them up with aluminium cans; he picks up the cans, takes them away, crushes them and puts them into bales and sends them to Perth. He gets about \$1 000 per tonne for his aluminium cans, and he passes a percentage of that back to the places where he leaves the cages. Unfortunately, he has been refused approval to be part of the new recycling scheme.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: This component is about 15 per cent of his business. I think this is really unfair. I have written to the minister about it and I am waiting for a reply. Here is a person who, over 17 years, has probably done more for recycling aluminium cans in Geraldton than anyone else has. They call aluminium cans "solid energy" because it takes so much energy to create an aluminium can. I think it is amazingly unfair that he gets left out in the dark when he has done so much to develop the industry.

I refer to power issues. In summers in the midwest we get a lot of power issues, and this is another summer when we have had quite a few. We get a combination of dust, no rain, humidity and dew, and it causes arcing, pole-top fires and blackouts. But a newer problem—once again, I will acknowledge it came in, I think, in 2013—is that the people fixing the lines delay re-energising them until they have met a certain set of fire danger criteria. I understand why they are doing that, but it means that the thing is fixed up and ready to go—we had this problem this year in Dongara—and then they sit for a day waiting for the gauges and dials to tell them it is okay to switch it back on. I say there has to be a better way. We cannot have towns of 3 500 people, or Kalbarri, which has 7 000 people in the summer, just left without power for days on end. It is unthinkable. We cannot do that.

We have very good work teams to fix the lines, but, unfortunately—once again, it was when we were in government—the communications local liaison position was abolished. That person's job was to go round and talk to people and try to sort out their power problems. We do not have anyone doing that job now. Another problem which flows on

from that is if I report a power problem here at five o'clock, say, I will not have any idea of when it is going to be fixed until sometime the next day. The work crew goes into the office at seven o'clock; that is when the office opens and that is when one is contacted to say when the power is going to go back on. If someone has a business—in this case, the brickworks—they do not know whether to ask their staff to come to work or say that there is no work for them to do because there is no power. It is quite a serious issue. I am told that our brickworks is sort of hanging by a thread now, which is a great disappointment. It has been there a long time. The Minister for Energy has told me that he will come up and attend a public forum convened by the City of Greater Geraldton about this, and I look forward to some useful exchanges and outcomes. It is not a lynching squad; it is just an exchange of views and knowledge.

I spent most of the first month of this year doing a detailed stocktake of the expenditure of the previous government, the Barnett government, in Geraldton, so no matter which way we look at it, Geraldton appears to have done its fair share of budget repair. On average, on specific projects, the Barnett government spent \$51 million a year, and the current government has been spending about \$38 million a year. However, that includes the provision of \$73 million for the extensions to the hospital, and a peg has not even been put in the ground yet, but I am assuming that that will go ahead. The previous government spent \$57 million on school buildings and this Labor government has spent \$550 000. The previous government spent \$36.7 million on TAFE buildings; the current government has not spent anything on those. The previous government spent \$9.3 million on emergency service facilities and Labor has spent \$2.3 million. The previous government spent \$3 million on heritage buildings and Labor has spent nothing. The previous government spent \$20.5 million on crisis housing and housing; Labor has not spent anything. It is a pretty similar story for sports facilities, beach erosion, major roadworks, the port and sewerage. That work will become public, so people are welcome to look at it and tear it to pieces. Of course, the figure that I worked on is the figure that appeared in the budget for that project, because, as is often said, if it appears in the budget, then it is real money.

Not included in that work was, as I mentioned before, the 330-kilovolt powerline to Three Springs, which, at \$419 million, was Western Power's biggest investment for 20 years. This reinforces Geraldton's power supply but it was not built exclusively for Geraldton. Having looked at the totals and the range of projects that we did during our eight and a half years, it is actually quite an amazing list, and I am very proud of it. Thank you very much.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [3.50 pm]: The Premier's Statement demonstrates that he still has the drive and passion for the task at hand and that he places the interests of Western Australians very much at the forefront. He knows that our ambitious agenda is a work in progress. That said, the McGowan government has achieved much, but there is still much to do and we cannot rest on our laurels. I was particularly pleased to hear the Premier's reference to climate change policy, which compares favourably to the head-in-the-sand approach of the federal government and Prime Minister Scott Morrison. As an aside, members might be interested to know that the Western Australian government under Premier Dowding was the first state government to have a climate change policy, and I was one of the authors. To still be having a problem addressing climate change at a federal level some 30 years on is somewhat perplexing.

We have a big year ahead and I will reflect on some of the issues that we will face in this chamber this year, and also some local issues of concern. We have certainly had an eventful summer.

I echo the words of other members to our many thousands of brothers and sisters in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria affected by bushfires: our thoughts are with you—likewise to the first responders, who are not only courageous, but work to the point of exhaustion. All Australians must be mindful that the psychological scars will not be as easy to address as the reconstruction of a house, a bridge or a school. Reminders of trauma will linger for many months, and even years. It will significantly incapacitate some, irreparably change the outlook on life for many, and inconveniently resurface unsolicited and unannounced. A royal commission will not do much to assist those people. What will assist is the ongoing allocation of funds raised for the medium and long-term needs of those affected by post-traumatic stress disorder. What will help is the presence of professionals within affected communities to make themselves available for counselling, as well as for the general community to conduct community-wide training in psychological first aid. This will enable others to recognise the toll of trauma in peers, neighbours or loved ones and urge them to seek professional help.

Closer to home, the fires in Yanchep required a massive effort to contain fires raging over four days and requiring another week of hard work to mop up. In the areas of peat, the fire is still alight underground. I am told that it is one of the largest fires ever in the City of Wanneroo, with a fire front of 15 kilometres running as far as Woodridge in the Shire of Gingin.

Earlier this week I received a briefing from emergency management personnel at the City of Wanneroo so that I could ascertain whether any issues needed addressing before the next major incident and which I might mention in this speech. As members are aware, in fires of this magnitude the Department of Fire and Emergency Services assumes responsibility as the incident manager. It is, however, all hands on deck, including local government brigades and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The firefighters worked in record-breaking heatwave conditions with Perth sweltering through three consecutive days above 40 degrees. More than 6 000 homes were at risk and had been saved, despite 13 000 hectares of bush having been burnt. One residence and a petrol station were destroyed and a number of other structures and power and phone infrastructure were affected. Fencing and,

of course, wildlife and parks and reserves suffered loss and damage. Hundreds of residents were evacuated or displaced with hundreds of homes being inaccessible for up to six days. By and large the integrated nature of the operation worked very well. The local government considered that at a command level a more inclusive approach would be welcomed, allowing more reliance on its local knowledge and expertise. Over the years this has been a common complaint and concern. I mention it only so that incident managers continue to be cognisant of these concerns. However, I am told that on the fire ground, optimal and constructive relationships between personnel occurred. I would like to raise a few issues in the hope that action can be taken.

As some members are aware, the area of the fire was littered with ordnance. During World War II pilots training at Pearce airbase would practise dropping unused shells in the vicinity. The effect of this is that fire crews are restricted to main roads and tracks to avoid the ordnance. It might be appropriate to make renewed representations to the commonwealth to request the clean-up and removal of that ordnance.

Animals could not be kept at evacuation centres. Smaller domestic pets were housed at council pounds, but the fees were waived. More problematical, of course, were horses. There was an incident in which three children on their own refused to leave their home under threat unless they could take their three dogs. Consideration should be given to reimbursing local government from the emergency services levy for the boarding of such animals. Better still would be to establish an online register in advance, as happens in some other states, so that people can volunteer to foster animals in emergencies.

While on the subject of volunteers, large incidents such as this one motivate others to volunteer to become firefighters. I understand that at Wanneroo dozens of people came forward but, of course, they cannot be deployed until they have been adequately trained and provided with personal protective equipment. However, to capitalise on the momentum of those volunteers, consideration might be given to additional ad hoc funding to local governments in these circumstances to put on additional training and to purchase the additional personal protective equipment after events like this.

Of particular concern were several incidents in which children were at home by themselves and crews had to run the gauntlet of the fires to ensure that they could be evacuated. I note that it was school holidays. Also, a blind man was at home by himself and his family were unable to reach him as the roads were blocked. Likewise, aged care residents were told by management, which was monitoring the situation closely, that there was no need to evacuate. However, some individuals received text messages suggesting that they should evacuate. The issues around vulnerable people who are isolated in their homes is a difficult one.

Finally, an issue raised in Keelty reports 1 and 2, and the Ferguson report, is the very real issue of a lack of coordination of communication in traffic management. That responsibility in this instance was divided between the City of Wanneroo, Main Roads Western Australia, the Shire of Gingin and the police. How is it that it is still not sorted?

Overall, the provision of water bomber aircraft, the allocation of every available appliance and crew and the experience and expertise of those managing the incident thankfully resulted in no lives lost and minimal property losses—an excellent outcome for which all those involved deserve our thanks and appreciation. More broadly, Australia-wide recent events starkly demonstrate the need for more fire bombers to be placed in Australia permanently. With climate change, fire seasons in both the southern and northern hemispheres are starting sooner and ending later. There is no longer the neat demarcation of being able to relocate and deploy a water bomber aircraft in the off season from northern to southern hemispheres and vice versa in line with chronological seasons. Now there is an overlap. For example, some of the most destructive wildfires in California in the last decade have occurred in its winter and fall: in Butte County in November 2018; Sonoma in October 2017; Napa and Sonoma in September 2015; and Ventura County in November 2018 and December 2017—the list goes on. Similarly, analysts in Canada observed that wildfire activity is increasing and fire seasons are getting longer. We can no longer anticipate that water bombers will be available when needed. We do not need a royal commission to know that. Although the federal government has already made a commitment to aircraft, an audit of whether that commitment is sufficient when fires are concurrently a threat in different states needs to be done.

Finally, on the devastation of fire, it is timely to make sure that we understand the disaster provisions of our insurance contracts. This applies to not only fires, but also cyclones and floods. *Choice* magazine is campaigning for a standardised definition of fire insurance. Its investigations have found that there is no standard definition of fire across insurance policies, which means that individual insurance companies are free to define fire however they like and those definitions can give them leverage to deny claims. When is a fire not a fire? According to *Choice*, a number of major insurers exclude damage from heat, ash and smoke if the home has not caught fire and the damage was not caused by a burning building within 10 metres. That means that scorching caused by a burning bush outside a person's home, for example, may not be covered. It found the worst examples of confusing fire definitions and exclusions in the policies of AAMI, Apia, Virgin Money, QBE, Coles, GIO, Youi, Budget Direct and ING, which are not small fly-by-night companies. *Choice* is starting an online petition to the federal government to pressure insurers to treat people fairly, especially since the banking royal commission. I, too, agree with *Choice* that this shonky loophole needs closing.

Throughout its term, jobs have been the focus of the McGowan government. I am delighted that this remains a priority in the Premier's Statement. I am gratified to hear that the McGowan government's commitment to pass industrial manslaughter laws will be met with the bill being debated in the chamber shortly. After all, having a job is one thing, but coming home safely at night to one's family is a fundamental right. I will discuss that issue at length during the second reading debate of the bill.

Just as workplaces need to be safe, workers need to receive a fair day's pay for their work. For that reason, I congratulate the McGowan government and Minister Bill Johnston for holding an inquiry into wage theft and committing to act on the 28 recommendations of the report released last December.

Wage theft, as we all know, is the systematic and deliberate underpayment of wages and entitlements to workers. The inquiry found that wage theft is occurring in Western Australia. The forms of systematic and deliberate underpayment identified included unpaid hours, non-payment of wages or allowances for work performed, underpayment of wages and entitlements, unauthorised or unreasonable deductions, and non-payment of superannuation.

Cafes and restaurants, contract cleaning, retail and horticulture were all identified as areas in which the likelihood of wage theft is higher. It is no coincidence that many of the employees in these industries are from migrant and refugee backgrounds, which makes this exploitation even more unconscionable.

Not only does wage theft have a significant impact on workers through financial hardship, it also impacts on businesses that do the right thing by creating an unfair competitive disadvantage for employers that correctly pay their employees.

The report concluded that the lack of detection of noncompliance and enforcement of employment laws, the intention of some employers to maximise financial return, the vulnerability of some workers and a lack of knowledge of employment conditions by both workers and employers were all factors as to why wage theft occurs. As I said, there were 28 recommendations. They included the establishment of a wage theft website to give information to Western Australian workers on their entitlements, which might be under a federal or a state award. That website would advise workers how to seek assistance, how to report wage theft anonymously, and how to seek unpaid superannuation. Also recommended was the development of effective information and education campaigns in consultation with unions and employers.

It goes without saying that there needs to be greater engagement with the commonwealth on various issues to address wage theft, including measures to facilitate cooperation between state and federal inspectors. Likewise, a labour hire licensing scheme needs to be actioned in Western Australia in consultation with the commonwealth, which has already committed to a national labour hire registration scheme for the horticulture, meat processing, cleaning and security industries—but it needs to go further than that.

The McGowan government has undertaken to give further consideration to wage theft being criminalised for the most serious forms of exploitative conduct in the national industrial relations system. I am delighted that shonky bosses will now be put on notice. Workers deserve and should expect the protection of the law, just like everyone else. Wage theft is fundamentally exploitative and unjust.

Speaking of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, I am delighted that following amendments the Small Business Development Corporation will be permitted to investigate and ensure contractors pay their subcontractors. This is an area in which small businesses are placed at a disadvantage. Additional laws, I understand, are being contemplated following the report by lawyer John Fiocco titled "Security of Payment Reform in the WA Building and Construction Industry".

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: These days a subcontractor can further subcontract work out. In the case of insolvency, those at the bottom of the pyramid are left high and dry with no redress because they have no legal relationship with the principal contractor. The Fiocco report endorsed the conclusions of an earlier report authored by John Murray, who noted that the most effective way that payments can be secured from misuse and the risk of head contractor insolvency is by implementing a cascading statutory trust scheme. It was concluded that only such a statutory trust would secure the payment of all subcontractors, including the most vulnerable who are at the base of the contractual claim.

I am heartened by the Minister for Commerce's pledge last year which reflects this approach. An article in *The West Australian* on 22 February last year titled "Attorney-General John Quigley promises laws to protect subcontractors' pay" states he pledged in February to introduce legislation this year to implement Fiocco's recommendations of a 15-day "pay or explain why not" deadline, cascading statutory trusts to protect payments down the food chain, and "an efficient and quick adjudication system" The article states —

In the decades since cascading statutory trusts were first proposed and now, he said, "we have had difficulties ... with insolvencies, subcontractors suffering when large contractors become insolvent and they are left swinging in the breeze".

Next on the job front is procurement framework reform. The Department of Finance is currently undertaking this. However, in my view, it should include an examination of the current requirements for contractors to employ apprentices. This is essential—first, to make sure our young people are given every opportunity to acquire skills, and, allied to that, to maintain the skills base which is diminishing post-boom as tradies leave Western Australia.

However, the requirement to employ apprentices is, as understand it, honoured in the breach. Large contractors are using the same apprentices concurrently on a number of large jobs. In other words, this distorts and subverts the very intention to ensure genuine and numerous apprenticeship placements and opportunities.

I will conclude with a number of local concerns. The first of these is a lack of a security patrol regime in the City of Wanneroo. The effect of this gap is the expectation of the community that police will address matters in the absence of security patrols. The city does have rangers, but they are not on patrol after midnight and their role is limited to enforcing by-laws, litter and illegal dumping, abandoned and off-road vehicles, unauthorised signs and the like. Residents are referred to police for hooning, antisocial behaviour, noisy parties and neighbourhood disputes. As members would appreciate, these are all priority 4, if even crimes at all, and, accordingly, police attendance would be available only after all the high-priority matters, such as serious assaults, family violence, an offender currently being on the property and so on, are dealt with. The effect of this is that minor, but nevertheless trying, matters get little attention. In the past, parts of my electorate have been in the City of Stirling and I strongly support the excellent work done by its security patrols, whose work is described on its website as —

We're committed to providing a strong sense of safety in our community by operating security patrols 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The City's security patrol officers:

- Monitor and report suspicious activity and antisocial behaviour
- Attend community disturbances such as noisy parties
- Conduct regular patrols of crime hotspots
- Report damage and vandalism in our streets.

In addition to the reactive work done by these City of Stirling patrols, a strong evidence-based crime prevention component has been based on firsthand information acquired by these patrols. I fully endorse the City of Wanneroo, which now covers a distance of over 658 square kilometres, adopting a similar approach. The current model simply is not working.

Now I turn to road infrastructure. To the north of Girrawheen, major interchanges are being built at the intersection of Wanneroo Road and Joondalup Drive and the intersection of Wanneroo Road and Ocean Reef Road. South of these intersections is Gngangara Road, which is the preferred route for a heavy volume of trucks coming from the east. These vehicles fail to observe speed signs and make crossing the road impossible, by either cars or pedestrians, some of whom are schoolchildren crossing to attend Madeley Primary School. The surrounding residential streets are used as rat runs to a light industrial area not otherwise easily accessible. Ultimately, it should be the subject of similar treatment to the intersections I have just mentioned, with the road being linked to Whitfords Avenue and Mitchell Freeway. This would certainly open up light industrial areas, enabling more local jobs and businesses to expand. Further complicating factors include the need to acquire properties to permit the final plans to be implemented and the fact that it is a joint responsibility of both local and state governments. In the meantime, as a matter of urgency, a number of remedial measures need to be put in place, and I am currently working with residents, the Minister for Transport and the council to progress these.

Yet another road that demonstrates that problems arise when state and local governments disagree on an approach is the eastern section of Landsdale Road. Traditionally, the road was almost semi-rural and the speed limit was 60 kilometres an hour. Now it is very much built up and although the 60-kilometre-an-hour signs have been taken down and the default position is that it is now a 50-kilometre-an-hour zone, it is not readily known or understood by residents and those using the road. Long-suffering resident Shane Pope has been campaigning unsuccessfully for some time. In an email, he put it to me thus —

The City of Wanneroo ... has previously requested for this road to be reduced to 50km/h which was not approved under the MRWA speed limit policy due to the high 85th percentile speeds which I understand as signage alone will have minimal effect on vehicle speeds.

Unfortunately this has left local residents with a 'fully built up' road ... that operates at 71km/h and the CoW will not construct LATM —

That is, local area traffic management —

measures along the road because their policy dictates that they can only assess roads based on the posted speed limit. This has resulted in the MRWA speed zone policy and the CoW LATM policy being in contradictory conflict ...

And he goes on. We are basically talking about a couple of signs, and the amount of correspondence and research that Mr Pope and I have done is incredible to have this amount of argument over a road. As he rightly points out, this section of road is near where students cross to go to Carnaby Rise Primary School, Hardcastle Park and Landsdale Early Learning and Enrichment. I am hopeful it can be resolved, but sometimes the amount of time taken on these issues is inversely proportional to the amount of work that is required for its resolution.

Finally, I want to quickly raise the vexed issue of school parking. Although all of us are familiar with these kinds of issues, which arise frequently, this week I was confronted with a new issue in this regard. A mum advised me that she does a school drop-off with a child with a disability. That child needs to be walked into class but does not have a physical impediment to walking. She told me that in Western Australia, eligibility for an ACROD permit is limited to persons who are unable to walk and always require the use of a wheelchair, someone whose ability to walk is severely restricted by a permanent medical condition or disability, or someone whose ability to walk is severely restricted by a temporary medical condition or disability. This child has none of those. Surely some commonsense can be brought to bear, as it is in Victoria and New South Wales, especially when I see many instances on a daily basis of the permit system being rorted. This is a case of a legitimate need that falls outside that category.

On that note, like the Premier and the rest of the McGowan government who will be working assiduously to fulfil our agenda, I, too, will be doing so. I hope the next time I speak, I can report progress on some of the issues that I have raised.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [4.17 pm]: Delivering—that is what the McGowan Labor government is doing for the people of the electorate of Bicton and right across WA. This government is continuing to deliver on the commitments that were made before the 2017 election. We are keeping our word. As we begin 2020, we on this side of the chamber do so with optimism, energy and focus. Over the past three years, our state has seen both hard times and good times. We on this side of the chamber greeted both with equal vigour, and we are well prepared for whatever is to come in 2020 because we are a united team.

My contribution to the Premier's Statement today will be one of reflection, as well as looking forward. As we move into 2020, I believe it is important we spend some time looking back at where we have been in preparation for navigating the road ahead of us. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Premier, ministers and all my caucus colleagues for their incredible efforts and achievements throughout the past three years, and I thank them today for their positive approach to leadership, policy reform and the delivery of our commitments. It is a privilege to serve my electorate here in Parliament as part of a diverse, dynamic and cohesive team. It is as important to me as it is to them that we remain mindful of who we are here to serve and the enormous responsibility that comes with that service. I would also like to acknowledge and commend the Premier and my colleagues who have spoken before me and thank them for their thoughtful and positive contributions to the debate. Although many on this side of the house waited patiently for their opportunity to speak, at least two important facts have already been established by those on this side of the house who did get the chance. I thank the member for Wanneroo for her articulation of these, and I quote —

... we said what we would do, and we are doing what we said.

She also said that the McGowan Labor government means sensible and stable government. As I look back over the time since the 2017 election, I see many great things that this government has delivered in my electorate of Bicton and across our vast state—things that are making both an immediate and a long-term positive difference to the people of Bicton and beyond. We have delivered to our schools. The recent rollout of the school's maintenance blitz funding is helping to improve the physical appearance, safety, access and amenity in schools across WA. Delivering on school maintenance was made possible because we are also delivering on budget repair. The school's maintenance blitz funding is tangible evidence of this government's commitment to good financial management. The McGowan government's careful, diligent and disciplined approach to the state finances means that every public school across Western Australia has received funding for vital maintenance works. All but one school in the electorate of Bicton is more than 50 years old, with at least two local primary schools having been built over 100 years ago. As we all know, ageing buildings require lots of work to keep them viable and fit for purpose. In all, \$724 624 has been committed to the school's maintenance blitz funding in the electorate of Bicton. Further, the two public hospitals that serve the needs of my constituency, being Fiona Stanley Hospital and Fremantle Hospital, have, between them, been the recipients of \$1.815 million of the hospital maintenance blitz.

The McGowan government is delivering science labs across the electorate of Bicton, with Bicton Primary School running its lab successfully throughout 2019, and plans are well underway for science labs to open in Attadale and Palmyra Primary Schools by 2021. We are preparing our kids for the jobs of the future by investing in science labs; science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and coding. As I mentioned earlier, many of my local public schools are ageing and can no longer cater adequately for the changing needs of their communities or meet community expectations as facilities of learning. Richmond Primary School will celebrate its centenary in 2021 and, quite frankly, its administration building was looking every bit of its almost 100 years. That is until just over \$700 000 was committed to updating the building to incorporate contemporary features while maintaining the

heritage exterior. It was a pleasure to attend the official opening late last year with the Minister for Education and Training, and join in Richmond Primary School's community celebration of its now fit-for-purpose administration building. Attadale Primary School opened its purpose-built early learning centre in 2019. It was wonderful to be at the official launch of the new school site-based early learning centre, and to see the facility in action with all the wonderful opportunities it opens up for the children.

Melville Senior High School is the only public secondary school in the electorate of Bicton. I was proud not only as the local member, but also as a parent and active member of the school's parents and citizens association, to see the completion and opening of its performing arts centre, which was committed to prior to the March 2017 state election. My daughter has just commenced year 7 at Melville Senior High School, so I was recently at the school simply as a parent at the parent information session for the incoming 2020 cohort. This was the first event to be held in the new performing arts centre, so I can personally attest to the excellence of the facility. I look forward to attending the official opening of the performing arts centre later this month. All of this school building and maintenance activity means work for local businesses and more jobs across the electorate of Bicton and beyond.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Melville Senior High School principal, Phil White, and staff and students on recently winning the Leadership Excellence Award at the Governor's School STEM Awards. It was a fantastic achievement and recognition of the school's dedication to excellence in the academic areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, alongside broad interest areas and disciplines embraced at this truly comprehensive public high school. As mum to a son who recently graduated from Melville Senior High, and a daughter who recently graduated from Palmyra Primary School—now commenced at Melville Senior High—I add my personal gratitude alongside those of the constituents of Bicton for the maintenance works, new builds and facility upgrades to the Melville, Bicton, Palmyra, Richmond and Attadale Primary Schools and Melville Senior High School.

At the conclusion of 2019, my son joined thousands of other young people right across this state who concluded their secondary schooling years. For him and his cohort, future work opportunities and further study options have become a necessary focus. The WA graduating high school class of 2019 and their parents are looking for direction from the higher education and training sector, and to government for reassurance of job growth and employment stability. I, along with the parents of high school graduates in the electorate of Bicton, was relieved and excited to hear the announcement on Monday, 14 October, that the McGowan government was reducing TAFE fees by 50 per cent. The announcement went on to explain that TAFE fees for 34 high-priority qualifications would be halved from 1 January this year. The fee reductions have made training more affordable for thousands of students and follows the Lower Fees, Local Skills policy that saw the TAFE fee freeze introduced by the McGowan government in 2017. The two-year initiative is designed to stimulate training in growth areas, supporting the WA economy. This exciting announcement for school leavers is another benefit of the McGowan government's budget surplus, which continues to deliver ongoing benefits across WA. This significant reduction in TAFE fees for selected high-priority qualifications at the commencement of this year's courses makes training more affordable for thousands of students, to the great relief of parents as well as the high school graduates of 2019. The \$53.5 million Lower Fees, Local Skills policy will ensure Western Australians can get the training needed for the jobs of tomorrow, supporting the WA economy. We will do this by capping maximum annual fees for targeted courses at \$400 for concession students and youth, and \$1 200 for non-concession students.

The Lower Fees, Local Skills policy means 50 per cent fee reductions to courses that align with emerging skills shortages, the state's economic diversification strategy, and important sectors of the local economy. These include aged and disability care, Metronet, civil construction, defence and cybersecurity, hospitality and tourism. This is already proving to be a winning strategy, with early data showing enrolments have increased by up to 84 per cent in the targeted courses. TAFE fees skyrocketed under the previous Liberal-National government, overseen by then minister for training, now the Leader of the Opposition, which led to some courses increasing by as much as 510 per cent, having a devastating impact on the sector and putting TAFE out of reach for many young people. The McGowan Labor government's Lower Fees, Local Skills policy is our commitment to right this wrong by making targeted courses affordable, and is part of our overall job-creating strategy. We are investing in job-creating projects across WA as well as in the people we need to build them.

Our school leavers deserve the best possible chance to get into training, or pick up an apprenticeship or traineeship. By reducing fees by 50 per cent, we are making training more affordable for students wanting to do courses that lead to in-demand jobs in WA. The skills that are now in short supply are learnt at TAFE and training institutions, and by reducing fees we are creating opportunities for young people to launch their careers by getting the skills that employers want, without expensive course fees. This, in turn, leads to more local skills and more local jobs. TAFE can also be an important alternate pathway to university. This is a great example of how the McGowan Labor government is leading the way in job creation, job security and career pathways for Western Australian school leavers.

Small business and medium enterprises are an incredibly important employer. SMEs represents around 97 per cent of all businesses in Western Australia, from manufacturing and business services to retail, hospitality, transport

and so much more. This sector is a significant employer and job creator. This government is continuing to deliver for the small business owners of Bicton and beyond. As someone with a small family business, I know firsthand how important it is that small business owners have access to resources, opportunity and support. In some parts of my electorate, income from small business ownership is the primary source of income for over half of the local population. I acknowledge the Minister for Small Business for his leadership in this area with the work that is being done in the procurement space through our commitment to local content on state government procurement via the implementation of the Western Australian Jobs Act. The small business owners of Bicton want the best opportunity to secure work and grow their businesses. The WA Jobs Act sets out the government's commitment to ensure that the \$27 billion spent annually on state government procurement maximises opportunities for local businesses and creates more jobs for Western Australians. The Western Australian industry participation strategy sets out the pathway to this opportunity. There is a renewed confidence amongst the small businesses of Bicton, a sense that our economy is on the up under this government's leadership.

Likewise, the changes to payroll tax have been another welcome announcement for the small business sector in my electorate. The delivery of payroll tax relief for WA businesses has long been called for by the sector. Our announcement on Thursday, 31 October 2019, proved once again that this government listens. This tax relief is made possible only due to the McGowan government's careful budget management, resulting in a payroll tax cut for nearly 12 000 small and medium businesses in WA, with around 1 000 businesses in Western Australia no longer being liable for any payroll tax, while also cutting payroll tax liability for an additional 11 000 businesses. The lifting of the exemption threshold to \$1 million over two years is music to the ears of the many small business owners of Bicton. These changes will provide \$170 million in tax relief over four years, with reduced costs for businesses expecting to lead to their ability to expand and create more jobs. By reducing the payroll tax burden on Western Australian small and medium businesses, we will lower the costs associated with the hiring of additional staff, and provide an opportunity for those businesses to reinvest. It is timely to note that \$535 million has been invested by the McGowan government in recent weeks to help stimulate the WA economy and create jobs for Western Australians, with the raising of the payroll tax threshold an important part of this investment. This is being made possible because we are delivering on budget repair, resulting in a budget surplus two years earlier than expected, a net debt of \$4.5 billion lower than forecast under the previous Liberal–National government, and WA is the only state where debt is declining. Good financial management is important to the people of my electorate, I know this because when I knock on the doors of Attadale, Bicton, Melville, Palmyra and East Fremantle, I am told repeatedly that this government is doing a great job managing the books—much better than the last lot.

Another area I am personally very proud that the McGowan government is delivering on is preserving our environment and building healthy and resilient communities. We are taking the challenges of climate change very seriously. As a long-term community environmental advocate and former health and fitness leader, it is in these matters that I am most emotionally connected and engaged. Wetlands keep our water cleaner, our air clearer, plus contribute to mental and physical wellbeing and provide a home for a diverse range of animal and plant life.

We came to government with a commitment to protect the Beeliar wetlands by stopping the Perth Freight Link. Roe 8 was to be the first stage of this flawed road project. This commitment has not, and will not, change. We said that we would do this and we are doing what we said. I also made a personal commitment to the people of Bicton to protect the open spaces adjacent to the Attadale foreshore, the Swan Estuary Marine Park shoreline, the internationally significant bird migratory routes, and the regionally significant bushland–wetland linkage from Alfred Cove to Point Walter. I am therefore personally proud that it was the McGowan Labor government that delivered on protecting important local open space by refusing to sell the crown land at Alfred Cove for the purpose of an artificial wave park. This has resulted in the continuous use of the crown land and the land adjacent as a vital natural buffer zone between the river and land. I take this opportunity now to recommit to the people of my electorate that I will continue to do all that I can as their local member to protect our local natural environment now and into the future.

The connection between a healthy environment and healthy humans is unmistakable. Healthy ecosystems provide the shelter, food, clean air and water that sustain all living organisms, including us. Climate change is real and as we bear witness to the devastating impacts of previous climate inaction, we know that a business-as-usual approach is not an acceptable option. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its third assessment report, concluded —

Overall, climate change is projected to increase threats to human health, particularly in lower income populations, predominantly within tropical/subtropical countries.

That summary went on to state —

Climate change can affect human health directly (e.g., impacts of thermal stress, death/injury in floods and storms) and indirectly through changes in the ranges of disease vectors (e.g., mosquitoes), water-borne pathogens, water quality, air quality, and food availability and quality. The actual health impacts will be strongly influenced by local environmental conditions and socio-economic circumstances, and by the range of social, institutional, technological, and behavioural adaptations taken to reduce the full range of threats to health.

Broadly, a change in climatic conditions can have three kinds of health impacts:

- Those that are relatively direct, usually caused by weather extremes.
- The health consequences of various processes of environmental change and ecological disruption that occur in response to climate change.
- The diverse health consequences—traumatic, infectious, nutritional, psychological and other—that occur in demoralized and displaced populations in the wake of climate-induced economic dislocation, environmental decline, and conflict situations.

There is no more compelling example of these impacts than this summer's devastating bushfires—off the back of years of drought—on the east coast of Australia, and those that closed the Eyre Highway and burnt vast areas of WA's Stirling Ranges, a biodiversity hotspot that supports over 1 500 plant species. At least 87 of those plant species are found nowhere else in the world.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: I am incredibly proud of the McGowan Labor government's willingness to tackle the challenges of climate change in the face of the Liberal federal government's complacency and inaction.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville, you have been doing so well.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Member for Dawesville! Minister! Member for Bicton, carry on, please.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Finished?

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Mate, I'm just getting started.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Although we urgently need leadership at a federal level to make any big impact, it is clear that will not be happening under a Morrison-led federal government. We therefore recognise that we cannot afford to wait for change at a commonwealth level. We also acknowledge that the state has an important role to play. That is why the McGowan government is taking action in a multi-pronged approach that includes the development of a new climate change policy that recognises Western Australia's vulnerability to impacts of climate change and our need to create a better environment for future generations. Our state is particularly exposed to impacts from national emissions policies because of its energy-intensive, resource-based economy. The actions needed to combat climate change present us with economic and social challenges but this Labor government cannot and will not be mired by the apathy and inaction of the Liberal federal government when it comes to action on climate change.

A number of climate-related initiatives are already underway in WA, including measures to enhance renewable energy, including renewable hydrogen; to develop strategies to secure our water supplies to offset a significant decline in rainfall, including recycled water and desalination; to accelerate the uptake of electric vehicles; and to unlock our state's significant carbon sequestration potential. A state climate policy will draw together and build on these measures. Consultation on climate change issues has formed an integral part of the policy development, with the calling for public comment on climate change issues and opportunities following the release of an issues paper last year. Public feedback by submission was sought on the issues and questions outlined in the issues paper to help inform the development of the state's climate policy. Further, in March last year, the McGowan government announced a Chief Health Officer inquiry to investigate the implications of climate change on health, including more frequent and intense weather events. The aim of the inquiry is to review the current planning and response capacity of the health system in relation to the health impacts of climate change, and make recommendations for improvement with respect to climate change mitigation and public health adaptation strategies. The statutory inquiry was a key recommendation of the climate and sustainability forum held in July 2018 and also one of the key priorities within the sustainable health review final report. The final report is expected by March this year. Its findings will form the basis of a new, coordinated health and climate change framework for WA, reflecting changes in climate science and national policy. Together with this government's achievements in landfill diversion and waste reduction, notably the ban on single-use plastic bags, introduction of the three-bin food organics and garden organics system and the upcoming container deposit scheme on 2 June, this government is taking action. It is evident that under the leadership of the McGowan Labor government, our state's precious natural environment will remain a top priority.

Two-thirds of the electorate of Bicton is blessed to be bordered by the beautiful Swan River, and we are incredibly fortunate to have several active and dedicated environmental community groups, including the Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group, the Bicton Environmental Action Group, the Friends of the East Fremantle Foreshore, Melville Senior High School's sustainability group, the Friends of Attadale Foreshore and Santa Maria College's

eco sisters. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many community volunteers dedicating their time, knowledge and skills to care for the natural places throughout the electorate of Bicton. I greatly admire the commitment of these individuals who go about their activities of weeding, planting, rubbish collection, revegetation work, citizen science data collection and many more important actions, despite rain, mosquitos or heat. It is a real joy to work side by side with some of these awesome individuals when my time allows. It is wonderful to know that some of these groups have been successful in receiving funding through this government's river care community grant program and natural resource management funding. I am proud to be a member of a government delivering the kind of environmental action my community expects.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to represent the people of the electorate of Bicton in the Parliament of Western Australia. It is an enormous privilege, one that I never take for granted. I am proud of what I have been able to deliver so far for my communities in my role as the member for Bicton, and I look forward to working hard, engaging with my local communities and achieving more for Bicton in 2020.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [4.41 pm]: I would like to make a contribution and respond to the Premier's Statement. In doing so, I would like to start by paying tribute to the many firefighters right throughout Australia who have been so busy battling those flames we have seen in the eastern states, in the area south of Kalgoorlie, and also in my electorate at the end of last year. A very difficult fire started at Yanchep then ran into the lower part of my electorate, affecting many rural subdivisions at places such as Sovereign Hill, Woodridge, Guilderton and Redfield Park, for instance. I would like to pay tribute to all those who were involved in fighting those fires, but also in providing support to the people who were evacuated from those areas and went to evacuation centres in Quinns Rocks and Gingin. I visited the Gingin centre on a number of occasions. I was very impressed with the dedication of Red Cross and other officials who went there and gave of their time, even so far as looking after people's pets for them and making sure that the dogs that showed up had water and food and were kept separate from the cats. I thought that was a great effort on their part.

The Minister for Emergency Services went to that evacuation centre in Gingin, as did the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. I thank all those officials for doing so. There were other fires, including at Mogumber, which happened to start around about the time that the Gingin fire was coming to an end. We were all very excited that the big plane arrived at the Pearce air base, and that was going to put out the Gingin fire and then the Mogumber fire, but in fact, they took it to Collie. We did not get to see the pink foam spreading over Moore, but it was exciting to think that those type of resources were being made available for the fight. The Mogumber fire had a pretty disastrous effect on a number of landowners, including one farmer who lost virtually all their farm being burnt. I think 3 500 out of 4 000 acres of property was burnt. Considerable losses were incurred, some of which may not be insurable. I know that the minister is here, although he is probably deep in conversation with the member for Roe at the moment, but my constituent in the Mogumber area has queried whether an announcement of \$75 000 towards fire-affected farms and businesses made federally would be available in Western Australia and what the process would be if it was. If the minister at some point would explain that to me, that would be good. I do not have time for it now, unfortunately.

Mr F.M. Logan: I was just explaining that to your colleague.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Good; that is great. I see the member for Roe there. I think he asked a question about this the other day. No doubt we will get that answer, because my constituent would very much like to have a feeling about that.

The member for Geraldton today asked a question about Western Power outages in his electorate. The power outages that affected his electorate are not unique to his electorate. My electorate surrounds his, and for many days, people from as far south as Mooliabeenee, which is between Gingin and Bindoon, all the way up to Yuna, north of Geraldton, were without power. Something in the order of 2 900 households were affected. Of course, we know that they get compensation—\$80 for an outage—but that seems to be a pretty small amount of money considering the effect that it has upon them when the power is out, and considering that power outages are generally longer than they were in the past because of changes in protocols that Western Power have about re-energising lines on days of high fire danger. That means that it might be several days after a repair is made before the line is re-energised, which means instead of being out of power for one day, constituents may be out of power for three, four or five days. The \$80 outage payment is inadequate in those circumstances. Moreover, customer safety is also at risk because of the dependence on mobile phones for telecommunications. Just to provide a bit of context on that, I had a farming property in Badgingarra with a very long landline that led to an exchange. There were quite a few problems with that landline and Telstra removed it and installed a digital service to a mobile tower as my landline equivalent. My research officer had similar issues on their family farm. A number of people do not have landlines, they now have phones that have been installed by Telstra that are not considered mobile phones, but they actually are. People have generally become very reliant on mobile phones. I dare say that many people now do not even have a landline and when they lose power, the telephones go out very quickly. I have heard of repeated problems with telephones in the electorate of Moore in the last year, or last number of years really, but it has been very bad in the last few months. Many towers are causing problems. Calls are dropping out and many other towers that have back-up batteries, which are stated to run from five to eight hours, virtually go out as soon as the power

goes out. In one case in the town of Greenhead recently, Telstra informed my office that batteries had been replaced, yet the same thing continues to happen as soon as the power goes out: telecommunications drop out. For a lot of people, as I said, they become reliant on those mobile phones, but moreover, Western Power tell people to keep in touch about what is happening via the app and online services, which they cannot access due to mobile phones being out. Also, a number of shires and local government authorities use the mobile phone services as a communication tool regarding fire harvest and vehicle movement ban information, which is sent out by text message. That has become very common. Without text message services, those communications are lost, and in many circumstances, the DFES communication systems are located at the same sites as those towers and are also running out of power. It is causing all sorts of communication problems for the firefighters.

That has been reported to me by the firefighters themselves. A few weeks ago, I attended a debrief on the Mogumber fire and someone asked whether the fire brigade could have access to a plug-in point at the tower because they could then take a generator with them to keep those communications going in an emergency. It is something they would like looked at in the future.

We know that the telecommunications and power situation has become dire. There has been no improvement in the situation over the years that I have been involved in state Parliament or before that, when I was a local government shire president. We had a lot of power supply problems throughout the Shire of Dandaragan as well. I note that today the minister spoke about the silicon coating of powerlines that has taken place in the last five years—well, that has been going on for much, much longer than that. I know some areas where it has had to be reapplied because the silicon has now deteriorated. That happened on the Kalbarri line in 2014, when there was a series of disastrous power outages in Kalbarri. I think that line had been silicon coated in 2008 and the expectation was that the silicon would have a lifespan of 11 years or so, but it did not last even half of that time. The silicon is not actually a cure for the situation and a lot more attention needs to be put towards maintenance. We see this cycle time and again; we read it in *Hansard* and see the efforts of local members and communities to highlight the problem, then an effort is made to make a better maintenance program, and for a while there are no problems, but then that falls away again.

I would like to talk about health. Fortuitously, the Minister for Health has showed up. We are still very interested to see the minister. He promised in about 2017 that he would come up and look at some of the facilities in my area that I have concerns about. We are coming towards the end of this term of government, so it would be lovely if he could come up to Green Head and Leeman, for instance, to see what is up there. I did communicate with the minister about the situation in those towns, and he has undertaken to see that the current arrangements with Silver Chain are reviewed to ensure that the services that the towns need are being offered. I have no problem with Silver Chain. It does the job that it is asked to do; it is the contract that needs to be reviewed. Also telehealth is not available at that centre because the bandwidth is not sufficient, which we have had confirmed. We need the bandwidth to be improved so that people in Green Head and Leeman can join the twenty-first century and have access to reliable health services.

There is another town that has had a few problems in the related field of dental health services. I asked the Minister for Education and Training a question about the removal of the dental van service in Kalannie. Members may know that schools are provided with dental services by a dental van that travels to various schools. The dental technicians look at students, assess their needs and do fillings and other things. If something really complex is required, they will write a referral for the student to go to an orthodontist or a more appropriate source, but basic dental services can be undertaken in those vans. The town of Kalannie recently lost access to a dental van and people are being asked to travel to Dalwallinu to access those services. Heading east, Kalannie is the last school before Beacon, so it has a large catchment area. I think it is unreasonable to ask those parents to drive to Dalwallinu. When I had children at school, the dental van used to come, the kids would leave their class and go to be assessed by the dentist, and then they would come back to class. At some stage later, they might go back for treatment. It would be back and forth like that. I do not know how that would work if people had to arrange to drive up to 100 kilometres for each child, presumably missing a whole day of school, to see the dentist. I think that is very unreasonable.

For the life of me, I cannot see why a service that has been there for all these years suddenly needs to be withdrawn. Has a group of schools suddenly appeared and the dental van is required elsewhere? Why is the dental van no longer showing up in Kalannie? In fact, in my electorate the number of schools has decreased. A couple of years ago, we lost schools at Buntine and Latham and, more recently, not in my electorate but just south, Ballidu lost its school; students from that school now go to Kalannie. There are very few schools in that area now, so it does not seem a big ask for the dental van to go to those schools to help look after the dental health of those students. I remind members that a number of families who immigrated from the Philippines live in the town of Kalannie, and they are not necessarily rolling in dollars. I know the common view of farmers of members on the Labor side of politics is that they are all millionaires and drive LandCruisers, but I can assure members that the townspeople of Kalannie are not necessarily in that group and they would find it quite difficult to pay for the trip to Dalwallinu. I asked about the cost of transport. It is quite clear in the answer I received that the payment for travel has to be made by the parents and there is no assistance to parents for that. I think that is really quite unreasonable.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): Excuse me, member, before you go on. Members, a number of conversations are going on around the chamber. Can you keep it down or take it outside, please?

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you. I have lost my place. I want to quickly raise the matter of the road system in my electorate. At the moment, as members may be aware, the project to extend Tonkin Highway is underway; it is called NorthLink. That will open very shortly and link the southern part of my electorate at Muchea straight through to airport. People will be able to travel at 110 kilometres an hour from Muchea to roughly about Ellenbrook and then continue at 100 kilometres an hour down the road to the airport with no traffic lights whatsoever. It will be a tremendous boost for the area. I expect that the industrial park the Shire of Chittering has designated for the area where Tonkin Highway will terminate and join Great Northern and Brand Highways at Muchea will be an important driver of the shire's economy going forward over the years. In the time that I have been a member of Parliament, well over \$400 million has been spent on the section of Great Northern Highway in my electorate from Muchea to Wubin. That is certainly a much better looking road; it was a terrible goat track before. It was very dangerous, but it is now a much more manageable and trafficable road. Of course, we look forward to the Bindoon bypass finally getting underway. I still have some constituents with issues that need to be resolved.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: Their circumstances need due consideration by the Department of Transport and Minister for Transport to ensure that they are not unduly impacted by that road system.

Toodyay Road is very important to road safety of my electorate. I asked some questions of the Minister for Transport to try to get some clarity on a range of sections of that road. I asked that minister a very detailed question. In fact, I got a reply that did not tell me very much. I do not seem to have it here, but, basically, it said that planning is well underway on the road. That is great, but I would like to see a safe road to Toodyay developed and delivered. Toodyay Road has been the scene of many devastating fatalities, many since I was elected. I really feel that, of any road in the state that needs urgent upgrade, Toodyay Road is that road.

I would like to thank the Minister for Road Safety and the Minister for Transport for their efforts on improvements of Indian Ocean Drive and the Brand Highway. That has made a considerable difference to safety. We will see what difference it makes to the record of serious accidents. Certainly, it has a much safer appearance, and people feel safer travelling on the road now than they did a while ago at least with the construction of the road. Driver behaviour is a different issue, which we cannot necessarily change overnight, but stronger police enforcement is something that is often asked for by my constituents, and I would hope that that continues to be at the forefront of the mind of the Minister for Police and the Western Australia Police Force itself. The police can have a presence on that road to ensure that people's behaviour is more moderate. I would suggest that sometimes they need to be out there at night a bit more. I see a lot of police presence on the road in the daytime; a lot of the very bad behaviour occurs later at night, and I do not see as much police presence on that road at night-time.

The Northam–Pithara Road is a road I mentioned here in Parliament the other day. That road is a link between the Great Eastern and the Great Northern Highways. As the name suggests, it runs from the town of Northam—the larger seat where the member for Central Wheatbelt has her office and base—up to Pithara, which is just outside Dalwallinu. It picks up the Great Northern Highway and the Great Eastern Highway as a link and obviates the need to go through to Perth, down Greenmount and back out through Muchea to get to the Great Northern Highway from the Great Eastern Highway. It has the potential to be a very important link, but at the moment it is in terrible condition, especially the section in my electorate, from Pithara south, which is very narrow and has a terribly high shoulder drop-off, so much so that if someone had a small vehicle, I think they would get stuck, belly up, if they went off the road. Of course, a driver has to do that if a road train comes towards them. This is the issue that needs to be addressed. There was a program in place prior to this government coming in for that road to be upgraded. This government, despite its claimed commitment to safer country roads, pulled the expenditure on that road. I hope that it remains somewhere on Main Roads' list of priorities and that it will be addressed, because it is a serious safety concern.

Another very common use for that road is that it acts as the ambulance transport route for transfers between Dalwallinu District Hospital, which really only has a basic level of service, down to Northam Hospital, which is the main regional hospital in that area. A lot of ambulance transfers occur on that road in very difficult circumstances, sometimes late at night. It is a very dangerous road, and it needs to be addressed.

I think the member for Geraldton and I would share a common interest in seeing work being done in the midwest on the road networks. There have been calls from shires in my electorate for improvements to the route that runs from Dongara up through Northampton. At the moment, the town of Northampton has all the heavy traffic on the North West Coastal Highway running smack bang through the town. It has a very, very narrow street in the middle of the town, with sharp corners. The verandah of the pub has been known to be taken out as road trains cut the corner going through the town. There is a lack of visibility because of that corner. It is very worrying from a pedestrian point of view as well.

The survey for the route of the Northampton bypass was done many years ago. It is supported by the shire and the community, and I think that project should be given significance by the state. I understand that Main Roads is looking at bringing triple road trains all the way down from the north to Muchea, just as it would be able to do on the Great Northern Highway with the completion of the Bindoon bypass. In order to do that, the Northampton bypass is a necessary precondition. This is highway number one—part of the national highway network. I understand that the federal government would fund 80 per cent of that. If the state was to make it a priority, present a plan and seek funding, I am sure it would be well regarded. I urge the state government to look very closely at the issue of the Northampton bypass, as it should all the road networks around Geraldton and down to Dongara.

The community at Dongara is interesting. It has the Brand Highway going through town—just on the edge of the town at the moment. If that road was to shift away from the town, it may have an effect on the town's economy as a tourism town, so it is looking at plans to extend Indian Ocean Drive all the way to Dongara. At the moment, it terminates about 22 kilometres south of Dongara and joins the Brand Highway at that point. It is looking very seriously at routes that would enable Indian Ocean Drive to come all the way to Dongara, which would ensure that the tourist route and the tourist traffic were separated from the heavy traffic all the way to Dongara. Then we will see what happens with the route that might continue further north in the Greenough and Geraldton area and also in the Shire of Chapman Valley and Northampton before it gets to the Northampton bypass. Whatever happens, whatever route is selected, the Northampton bypass is virtually unchanged by any of those considerations further south.

The Shire of Chapman Valley also has grave concerns about the safety of the Chapman Valley Road that runs out to Nabawa, Nanson and Yuna. That road is narrow. It is a mixed route for tourists, locals, school buses—even bicycles occasionally appear on that road—and a lot of road trains. The community also has grave concerns about safety on that road, so that is another area that I believe should be seen as an important investment from the government for road safety, because we know that our roads are getting busier. As more and more traffic heads to the Karratha area with developments up there, we would expect to see a spurt of road train traffic heading up the North West Coastal Highway because of that. We know, too, apart from this hiatus that is happening at the moment because of the coronavirus, that the route from Perth up to Kalbarri, at least, is very popular with Chinese tourists. The little white cars with the “No Birds” signs on the back until very recently have been very, very common on the road. That mix of traffic between international travellers, holiday-makers, residents and heavy traffic could be a lethal mix if there is not proper investment and it has not been properly separated and taken care of.

While I am talking about the issue of visitation from China, Pink Lake, which is in my electorate, is an area that has become a magnet for Chinese tourists. I went up there about a year or so ago and it was obvious that there was a problem. People were parking right on the main road and wandering on the road; there are no toilets and there is very little signage. People were just stopping anywhere along the road and walking onto the lake verge. Pink Lake is actually in a food-producing area—betacarotene is produced in that area. A very large lease is held by a commercial entity there and it is important that its health is protected not only for its environmental and tourism aspects but also its food production aspects. I have urged this, and I am glad to say that a degree of state involvement has now come to the fore in terms of planning to properly address, along with industry, those tourist interaction issues, including traffic and a lack of facilities. I think that some advances have been made. There are some very colourful signs to advise people not to use the bush as a toilet. It is interesting to try to communicate that in many languages! I leave it to members' imagination what those signs might look like, but it is about as basic as one could imagine.

The town of Port Gregory is just up the road. Tourists travel all the way to Port Gregory from Perth, which would be at least a six-hour trip if the driver never stopped, but when they get to within 300 metres of Port Gregory, which has toilets and a shop where they can buy an ice-cream and a drink, unfortunately they do not know the lake is there and they turn around and go back to Geraldton or Perth. The community of Port Gregory should be able to benefit from Pink Lake and its attraction to tourists. Also, the Port Gregory community would very much like someone to dredge the sand that now surrounds the jetty. It is sometimes a landlocked jetty at low tide. One side is almost virtually permanently landlocked. They have been trying to get a dredge to come there for many years. It is about time that that happened. It seems to be a bit of an anachronism to see the lovely concrete jetty, the ramps and everything around it, all encased in sand.

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

House adjourned at 5.11 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CAMPUSES — INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE**5483. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health:**

As at 16 September 2019, are there any unfunded critical hospital infrastructure maintenance requests and if so:

- (a) What is the maintenance request and at what hospital;
- (b) What is the total expected value of the request; and
- (c) How long has the request been unfunded?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

I am advised:

- (a)–(b) [See tabled paper no [3210](#).] See the tabled paper for list of works with projected cashflows.
- (c) Works are between 1 and 2 years old.

For the purposes of addressing the questions, Critical hospital infrastructure maintenance requests have been defined as those minor building works assigned an ‘extreme’ or ‘high’ risk rating as at 16 September 2019.

PEEL HEALTH CAMPUS — FUNDING**5718. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health:**

I refer to the response to Question on Notice 4525, and ask:

- (a) Can the Minister please confirm that construction has commenced:
 - (i) If so, on what date and what works have been undertaken thus far; and
 - (ii) If not, what stage is the work currently at, what date will construction commence, why has there been a delay and what is the expected end date?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

I am advised:

- (a) Construction has not commenced.
 - (i) Not applicable.
 - (ii) The project has been awarded. Construction is due to commence in early March 2020. There was a delay in the Licensing and Assessment Regulatory Unit assessment process. The project is due for completion by September 2020.

PEEL HEALTH CAMPUS — FUNDING**5719. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health:**

I refer to the response to Question on Notice 4524, and ask:

- (a) Can the Minister please confirm that the security upgrades have been completed:
 - (i) If so, what works have been undertaken and what was the start and end date of the works project; and
 - (ii) If not, what stage is the work currently at, what date will the security project commence, why has there been a delay and what is the expected end date?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

I am advised:

- (a) The security upgrades have not been completed.
 - (i) Not applicable.
 - (ii) The project is currently in the final stages of design documentation. Works are planned to commence on site in May 2020. The security upgrade was intentionally delayed to accommodate the building floorplan changes which are part of the Emergency Department and Short Stay Ward Upgrade. Expected completion of security upgrade is September 2020.

HEALTH — ELIZABETH HANSEN AUTUMN CENTRE

5722. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health; Mental Health:

I refer to the Elizabeth Hansen Autumn Centre (EHAC), and ask:

- (a) Can the Minister please provide an update on the transition status of the EHAC to an Aboriginal community service organisation; and
- (b) Is the Minister confident that the EHAC will still be fully transitioned away from Western Australian Country Health Service by May 2020?

Mr R.H. Cook replied:

I am advised:

- (a)–(b) I am advised that WA Country Health Service continues to work towards transitioning the Elizabeth Hansen Autumn Centre to the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector as soon as possible. The transition date will be dependent on the identification of a suitable provider. WACHS advises that a Registration of Interest has already been undertaken which closed on 31 January 2020.

MINISTER FOR HOUSING — PORTFOLIOS — LEADERSHIP WA

5763. Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup to the Minister for Housing; Fisheries; Veterans Issues; Asian Engagement:

Does any agency, commission, government trading enterprise, board or committee within the Minister's portfolios sponsor Leadership WA, and if so:

- (a) What agency sponsors Leadership WA;
- (b) How much does the agency spend annually in relation to this sponsorship;
- (c) What are the outcomes or benefits to the agency for this sponsorship; and
- (d) Has this sponsorship been reviewed or audited:
 - (i) If not, why not; and
 - (ii) If so, when was it last reviewed or audited and what were the outcomes?

Mr P.C. Tinley replied:

The Department of Communities

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 5764.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 5754.

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 5749.
