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Thursday, 18 May 2023

Legislative Assembly

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

VOLUNTEERING

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [9.01 am]: The economic, social and cultural value of volunteering in Western Australia is worth more than \$39 billion. Four out of five Western Australians actively volunteer to support their communities. The arts sector is no exception. Every day, thousands of volunteer hours are dedicated to making arts events and activities happen. The Perth Festival engaged over 40 volunteers who put in more than 800 hours in just those few short weeks, and Fringe Festival estimates that in the past year 280 volunteers put in over 4 000 hours to make the audience experience as seamless and enjoyable as possible. Events of this scale in this state could not happen without the tireless efforts of volunteers working, quite often literally, behind the scenes. However, it is not just at the big events where volunteers keep the wheels turning. Volunteers in emergencies and spontaneous situations such as the floods in the Kimberley play a critical role in ensuring that communities are cared for where they need it most. It was particularly heartening to see people working together to save the priceless 80–square metre Ngurrara canvas during the recent floods.

All year round, volunteers show up to support the arts in our community. They sit on boards and committees, sell tickets at the door, run social media pages, hang paintings, paint sets and sew costumes. From the major arts and cultural organisations to the local festival or community gallery, in schools and at the farmers' market, we find volunteers giving their time to creative activities. I take this opportunity to thank them sincerely for their tireless commitment to support the vibrant and engaging arts sector across Western Australia.

Unfortunately, since the COVID pandemic, the number of volunteers has dropped significantly. To support the recovery of the volunteering sector, the McGowan government launched its VOL_NTEER: We need U campaign in March this year. The campaign aims to revitalise the volunteering sector by encouraging Western Australians to get involved in volunteering. Making volunteering engaging and accessible for all Western Australians is important to ensuring a robust arts sector into the future. Recently, there has been growth in virtual volunteering as organisations embrace new ways to do business and connect with communities. Although the economic value that volunteering delivers is significant, it is equally important to acknowledge that not all transactions are financial and not everything of value has a price. As we know, volunteering positively impacts on mental health and social inclusion and presents significant opportunities for developing creative skills, people and ideas, and I encourage anyone considering volunteering in the arts sector to put up their hand. We need a whole-of-community approach to encourage and support volunteering in Western Australia and to ensure future engagement and participation in the arts.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND SURROGACY

Statement by Minister for Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [9.04 am]: I rise to update the house on progress towards Western Australia's new assisted reproductive technology and surrogacy framework. It is well understood that Western Australia's legislation governing reproductive technology and surrogacy has not kept pace with medical advancements and societal changes. Western Australia's legislation is discriminatory and out of date. In 2019, Dr Sonia Allan undertook a review of WA's legislative framework, resulting in 122 recommendations. The majority of recommendations were accepted, including ensuring equity of access for women who face impending infertility, single men, people in same-sex relationships, transgender people and intersex people. However, some questions remained outstanding, including how donor information should be managed and released, and whether people should be able to use a deceased partner's gametes or embryos.

In 2022, I appointed a ministerial expert panel chaired by Dr Roger Hart, an internationally recognised fertility expert, to conduct further targeted consultation on these outstanding matters. I am pleased to announce the release of the ministerial expert panel's final report and the government's response to its recommendations. The final report recommends a range of important reforms that will streamline access to ART and surrogacy and provide vital access to information for parties to donor conception. Western Australians should not have to travel interstate to start a family. Reciprocal IVF, whereby the egg of one partner is fertilised and carried to term by the other partner, will be permitted. This method is permitted in all other Australian jurisdictions.

A number of important safeguards will remain, including a continued ban on commercial surrogacy arrangements and cloning. Importantly, the government has accepted the MEP's recommendations relating to information for parties to donor conception. The MEP heard loud and clear that access to information is a priority for many donor-conceived people. Currently, people born after 2004 are able to access identifying information about their

donor. For those born prior to 2004, information can be accessed only if the donor has opted to provide it on a voluntary basis. This is a significant reform that will allow donor-conceived people to access information, where records are available, about their donors regardless of when they were born. Western Australia will be only the second jurisdiction to implement this change after Victoria's reforms came into effect in 2017.

I want to thank the people with lived experience of assisted reproductive technology, surrogacy and donor-conception who contributed to the report. Finally, I thank all members of the MEP for their valuable contribution to this final report. Their expertise in navigating complex medical, research and legal matters is greatly appreciated and is reflected in the considered and practical recommendations of that report.

AEROMEDICAL SERVICES

Government Response — Statement by Minister for Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [9.06 am]: In January 2020, the former Minister for Health requested that the Chief Health Officer conduct an inquiry into aeromedical services in accordance with section 228(1) of the Public Health Act 2016. This request followed a recommendation from a coronial inquest into the death of a seaman off the coast of Port Hedland that recommended an independent strategic review of the aeromedical, rotary retrieval services in Western Australia. The government has considered the recommendations and provided an initial response, which I now table, along with the report.

[See papers [1953](#) and [1954](#).]

Ms A. SANDERSON: Nine of the 10 overarching recommendations have been supported or supported in principle, and we have commenced work to implement these. Recommendation 10, which provides some rough estimates of potential funding needs, will require further consideration by government. We are now getting on with implementation—developing a 10-year strategic plan for aeromedical services; considering further those recommendations that require additional analysis and consultation with affected stakeholders; reviewing and revising the fixed-wing contract; and developing contemporary information systems and data to support a more coordinated and collaborative approach. I recognise the strong and enduring partnership we have with the Royal Flying Doctor Service Western Operations as our primary provider of fixed-wing aeromedical services. For over 90 years, RFDS has delivered high-quality care to communities across our state. In May last year, RFDS responded to its biggest mass casualty incident in a decade, providing urgent care for 18 of the 28 people involved in the Horizontal Falls boating accident, while managing to maintain normal operations and retrieve a further 18 patients across the state throughout the day. RFDS has not had a single severity assessment code 1 incident in the past year, despite the pressures of managing a global pandemic across the largest health jurisdiction in the world. I am confident that the recommendations from this inquiry will pave the way for a contemporary, fit-for-purpose, statewide and state-managed aeromedical service for WA through enhanced service provision and improved patient outcomes.

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY MINISTERS MEETING — PERTH

Statement by Minister for Road Safety

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Road Safety) [9.09 am]: Tomorrow I will be co-hosting a meeting of road safety ministers from all jurisdictions with the federal Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Senator Hon Carol Brown. This is the first time in Australia that a road safety ministers meeting will be held outside the infrastructure and transport ministers meeting. This will provide an opportunity for all jurisdictions to discuss a broader road safety agenda beyond safer roads and vehicles. Although safer roads and vehicles are vital to reducing deaths and serious injuries on our roads, this meeting is an opportunity for all ministers and relevant officials to collaborate and share information on road safety issues. There will be a focus on education and behaviour change, including mass media campaigns; the application of emerging and new technologies, including road safety cameras; and the capturing of data and sharing of information between jurisdictions.

After Western Australia was confirmed as the host jurisdiction for National Road Safety Week 2023, I met with the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport in Canberra last year when the idea of a meeting of relevant ministers was discussed. I would like to thank the assistant minister for her support in making this meeting possible. I would also like to thank all other ministers for taking the time to attend this important meeting. With National Road Safety Week 2023 coming to a close, it is only fitting that all states and territories come together to address this important issue. I would like to thank Mr Adrian Warner, the Road Safety Commissioner, and the team at the Road Safety Commission for their efforts in ensuring that National Road Safety Week 2023 was a success. I hope all road users have taken away a key message from this week, because everyone has a right to get home safe, every day—no exceptions.

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY — REGIONAL GRANTS

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [9.10 am]: I am pleased to inform the house that on Tuesday, 9 May 2023, I announced the recipients of the regional grant funding to host events on World Elder

Abuse Awareness Day, 15 June. Regional local governments and registered not-for-profit organisations around Western Australia were invited to apply for grants to hold events and activities during the week of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Metropolitan-based organisations were also eligible to apply to run in-person activities in regional areas.

Events planned include information workshops, education seminars, morning teas and art projects to support local people to work together to identify and respond to elder abuse in their local community. I am pleased to advise the house that the following 22 groups have been successful in their applications: the Shire of Harvey, Walpole Community Resource Centre, Walitj Aboriginal Corporation, Dumbleyung Community Resource Centre, Goldfields Aboriginal Community Services, the Western Australian Family Violence Prevention Legal Service, Mount Barker Community Resource Centre, the City of Albany, the Town of Port Hedland Libraries, the City of Greater Geraldton, South West Women’s Health and Information Centre, Northam Men’s Shed Inc, West Arthur Community Resource Centre, the Shire of Carnarvon, Ardyaloon Inc, Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation, the Shire of Bruce Rock, the Shire of Boddington, Advocare, Tambellup Community Resource Centre, Peel Community Legal Services and Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation. The grants program is being funded by the Department of Communities and managed by the Council on the Ageing Western Australia.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day has been officially recognised by the United Nations since 2011 and provides an opportunity for people around the world to unite in voicing opposition to elder abuse and the suffering it inflicts upon older people. This year, the tagline “Wise Up, Rise Up Against Elder Abuse” encourages Western Australians to find out more about elder abuse, recognise the signs, access support and take action in their own lives and communities to stop it from happening. For more information about World Elder Abuse Awareness Day events around Western Australia, search for “World Elder Abuse Awareness Day events” on the www.wa.gov.au webpage.

TOWN OF CAMBRIDGE — IN-PERSON VOTING

Grievance

MS C.M. TONKIN (Churchlands) [9.13 am]: I thank the Minister for Local Government for hearing my grievance. On 5 April 2023, the Town of Cambridge, which includes parts of the three state electorates of Churchlands, Nedlands and Cottesloe, determined by a majority of five to three to opt for in-person voting at the 2023 ordinary election. Under this decision, postal voting is restricted by requiring electors to register with the council for a postal vote rather than receiving their postal ballots automatically from the Western Australian Electoral Commission.

George Bray of City Beach, a constituent, was directly involved in preparing the legislation that gave all those on the electoral roll a vote in local government elections. This ensured that all voters, regardless of whether they own property, have a say in what happens in their local government areas, and all electors are given every opportunity to cast a vote without any barrier limiting their participation. Sending postal ballots to all electors prompts those who would not apply for a postal vote, or turn up to vote in person, to cast their vote. Making voting as easy as possible increases voter participation when voting is non-compulsory.

The decision by the Town of Cambridge to opt for the in-person method was extraordinary in several ways. Postal elections run by the WAEC are the standard for local government elections in this state and 14 such ordinary elections have been held in the Town of Cambridge since its establishment. The council’s decision was a significant change from a longstanding convention. The council made its decision in the full knowledge that opting for the in-person method would significantly suppress voter participation. The WAEC estimated that participation would decline from around 30 per cent to around 10 per cent. The town also knew this from its own experience at the last extraordinary Wembley ward election held in August 2022 when only 461 electors, or 4.5 per cent, voted when the council opted for the same election method that is now being imposed at the 2023 ordinary election.

The council’s decision means that sections of the elector community are disenfranchised by the optional postal voting method that requires electors to register with the council, in particular people who are registered as silent electors with the WAEC; those with disabilities who need assistance to register; those unable to sign their name; overseas electors; those who may be temporarily away from home, including FIFO workers; and those who do not wish to re-register for a postal vote with the council when they are already registered for a postal vote with the WAEC for state and federal elections. In-person voting disadvantages and disenfranchises older, less mobile people, those with disabilities and people who are time-poor and therefore find it difficult to attend in-person polling places.

Most disturbing is that the mayor, who faces re-election this year, has made vague and unsubstantiated allegations about postal voter irregularities and fraud. She has argued that the in-person voting method is therefore safer. There has been no evidence of postal voter fraud in the 28-year history of postal elections in the town. Voter suppression based on unsubstantiated allegations of postal vote fraud is something I never thought I would see in this country, let alone in my own backyard. It is like something out of the dystopian United States “Make America Great Again” cult playbook. Provisions in the Local Government Act deal with voting offences. If the council is aware of any such offences, they should have been reported to the police or the WAEC.

Both the Wembley West Leederville Residents Association and the Coast Ward Ratepayers Association are on the council record in supporting the postal election for 2023. The council ignored these significant community voices.

Perversely, the decision by the council was made without community consultation and based on the claim that community engagement is not required as the matter is purely administrative in nature with no external impacts envisaged, yet changes to the process and method of elections fundamentally affect our democracy. The lack of consultation might have gone unnoticed in an apathetic electorate, but ours is not apathetic. As a Wembley ward elector, I joined members of the Wembley West Leederville Residents Association who did what the council should have done. We went door to door and electors told us of their overwhelming support for reinstating the postal election. There has been spontaneous support from across the town. People who have little interest in local government care deeply about the cancellation of the automatic postal vote. The seemingly uninterested are interested in the restoration of their right to a postal ballot. Not only were electors prepared to sign a petition to ask the council to reconsider its decision at an electors' special meeting, but also a small army of people joined with us to canvass family, friends and neighbours to sign the petition. One woman single-handedly secured the signatures of 109 people who live at Mercy Village in Wembley. Residents of the Ocean Gardens retirement village in City Beach were similarly enthusiastic petitioners. People in the workforce or otherwise living busy lives value the postal election because they trust the WAEC and appreciate the ease with which they can cast their vote in a postal election.

To date, over 1 200 electors have signed our petition. We secured an electors' special meeting that is to be held this evening with more than the minimum 100 signatories, but we continued to ask people to sign the petition to make the extent of community support for the postal election clear to the council. The task of checking the signatories and their details and collating them for presentation to the council was undertaken by Jane Powell of the Wembley West Leederville Residents Association. Jane has my deepest admiration for her dedication to democracy in our community.

This evening at the electors' special meeting, we will be asking that the council decision of 5 April regarding the conduct of the 2023 local government ordinary election be rescinded and that the council resolves by an absolute majority that the method of the ordinary election for 2023 will be a postal election. This is the council's opportunity to demonstrate that it has listened, and to resolve to reinstate our postal election.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Local Government) [9.20 am]: I want to thank the member for her grievance and her advocacy for the local community. I want to be very clear that I am deeply disappointed and saddened by the Town of Cambridge and its approach to this important issue. Local government elections should enable the broadest possible participation. Let us be very clear: it is incumbent on local governments to ensure that people participate in local government elections.

I find it incredible and deeply hypocritical of the leadership of the Town of Cambridge that it made this unusual decision without conducting a substantial consultation process with ratepayers and electors. This is a substantial change in the way that local electors participate in their democracy. The response from the mayor and the council is extraordinary. To simply say, "We do not need any consultation" is absolute rubbish! It is a disgrace—an absolute disgrace! It is completely contradictory to the narrative of this mayor on a range of other processes that require consultation. The reality is that postal voting is widely regarded as the most convenient way for electors in urban areas to participate in elections.

I understand the town has made some arguments about postal voting increasing the risk of voter fraud. There is no body of evidence that suggests that this is the case. In fact, we can point to several cases that show that this kind of fraudulent action has been caught and dealt with appropriately when it has occurred. To say that there is widespread, systematic fraud in local elections is nonsense. There are strong protections in place against fraud and misconduct. The Local Government Act 1995 and other legislation provide for the prosecution of any person who seeks to interfere with the free and fair conduct of postal elections, or compromises the passage of postal materials. The act provides for disputes related to the conduct of elections to be fairly adjudicated by the Court of Disputed Returns. Complaints about the alleged conduct of individual candidates can be made to the returning officer or the Western Australian Electoral Commission directly. When we have seen isolated instances of misconduct in elections in other local government areas, this system of election integrity has resulted in prosecutions and other steps to ensure that the election of every council member has been on a fair basis.

The advice from the Western Australian Electoral Commission is that the town's decision to conduct an in-person-only election will have an adverse impact on overall voter participation. That is a fact. It cannot be disputed. We only have to look at the most recent by-election conducted by the town as an in-person vote, which saw only 4.77 per cent of people turn out—six times fewer than a typical turnout for a postal election. Even if the town can increase the level of participation in an in-person vote, even if it claims it can, it is likely that there will still be less participation than in a postal vote.

What is even more bizarre about the Town of Cambridge's position is that it intends to mail out information about the elections to every household, but it is not going to put the postal ballot in! Does anyone think that is normal? It is going to send out a postal pack saying, "Hey, there is a postal option, but we're not putting in a postal ballot. We're going to require you to come in person." I will let the community ratepayers ask why the Town of Cambridge is pursuing this perverse plan. Some said it is an attempt to deliberately bring down the number of people voting, for whatever reason. Others said that they will let the community and ratepayers make that judgement. I think that

if the town had conducted meaningful and proper public consultation, as it should, it would have a much clearer picture of the inconvenience that this proposal will cause the town's ratepayers and electors. I congratulate the residents who are now calling for an electors' special meeting. That is democracy in action, but I think that the whole of the community deserves better than an electors' special meeting because it is very clear that the people most affected by the decision to vote in person will be the same people who will not be able to register for the electors' special meeting. I believe that the town should consider these groups to ensure that they have their say on matters that affect them and their ability to vote.

This is not the only action of concern. The Town of Cambridge has also mysteriously decided to end live streaming of council meetings, which I do not think has been reinstated. I would have to check, but that is on the record, despite our reforms to mandate it. I thank the member, I thank the ratepayers and I do hope that common sense prevails in this matter.

LEEWIN–NATURALISTE NATIONAL PARK — VISITORS

Grievance

MS E.J. KELSBIE (Warren–Blackwood) [9.27 am]: I rise today to raise a grievance with the Minister for Environment; Climate Action concerning our much-loved Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park and I thank Minister Whitby for taking my grievance. Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park stretches from Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse in the north to Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse in the south, from Bunker Bay to Augusta in my electorate of Warren–Blackwood. The national park is home to glorious beaches, beautiful forests, awesome surf breaks, limestone caves and rugged coastline. It is an iconic tourist destination with many “Insta-worthy” spots, including Injidup Spa and Boranup Forest, along with the many caves available to explore.

It is WA's most visited national park, with 4.6 million visits last year. Let us put that into perspective and compare those 4.6 million visits with other national parks in Western Australia. Data from 2020–21 shows that Purnululu or the Bungles had just under 20 000 visits; Cape Le Grand, just over 200 000; Kalbarri, just under 480 000; Torndirrup, just under 500 000; and Karijini, just over 500 000. Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park had over 4.6 million visits in a year. That is a lot of people.

I recently attended the inaugural Capes Coastal Forum in Margaret River, hosted by Nature Conservation Margaret River. It was an excellent opportunity to hear from the individuals and organisations that work to care for our coastline. It was awesome to be part of an ongoing conversation about how, as a community, we can work together to maintain, protect and preserve our coastline into the future. It was an inspiring event full of optimism, but it also shone a spotlight on the threats to Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park, including invasive species, feral animals, erosion, climate change, habitat loss, uncontrolled fire and the impacts of humans.

Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park is home to the famous Cape to Cape Track—a trail that runs along the Leeuwin–Naturaliste Ridge. The Cape to Cape Track is an iconic tourism trail, which attracts people from across the globe and which I hope to complete one day. Looking after the track is tiring work—so the tireless Friends of the Cape to Cape Track tell me! It is an incredibly dedicated volunteer organisation that assists the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions rangers with upgrades and maintenance of the track, including helping with construction and repair of sections of the boardwalk, stairs, and bridges.

It has been said before that the park may be in danger of being loved to death, and I want to be part of a solution whereby we provide support and services to help sustain and protect the health and biodiversity of this amazing part of my electorate. It is one of the best natural assets and tourist destinations in the south west. The park is a destination where tourism operators and traditional owners have a mutual respect for “tread lightly” experiences that pay respect to Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park. I have been working alongside the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River, local volunteer organisations, DBCA representatives, local tourism operators and the Margaret River and Busselton Tourism Association to listen, learn and advocate for a sustainable future for Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park.

I know we are adding five million hectares to the conservation estate through our Plan for Our Parks initiative, taking action on climate and ending native logging in the south west, but I want to know what we are doing for the iconic Cape to Cape Track. I am proud to be part of the McGowan Labor government and I am passionate about being a champion for the local environment across Warren–Blackwood. I know the minister has been to the region on multiple occasions and people have been in direct contact with him, and I thank him. Today I ask the minister to please provide an update on what we are doing to help secure a sustainable future for this much-loved and iconic tourist destination.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [9.32 am]: I thank the member for Warren–Blackwood for her impassioned plea. She is a member after my own heart. We both share a deep passion and love for Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park. I, my family, nieces and nephews are often numbered in that 4.6 million. We would probably be counted a couple of times. The member is right; there is a danger of this most loved national park being loved to death by the frequency of visitation and the fact that it is in a part of the world where people often

do not even realise that they are in a national park because of the layout and form of the park. I just want to address the member's concerns and I pre-empt that I have some excellent news for her today—in no small part due to her advocacy. This is exciting and good news for one of Western Australia's treasured natural assets.

First and foremost, I want to thank the member for her advocacy and strident ambition for her electorate. There is no greater advocate for change in the south west than the member for Warren–Blackwood. The member has been described as a force of nature by many people I run into in that part of the world. The people of Warren–Blackwood are truly lucky to have her as their representative

In partnership with my colleague the Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism, I am pleased to inform the house of major upgrades for our beloved Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park. Under the McGowan government's national park tourism experiences development program, we will invest \$2.7 million in upgrades to the Cape to Cape Track. This project will both repair the track and improve visitor signage within the park. Only earlier this year, I was on a section of the track and I know it can be quite challenging. The track has been weathered and some of those signs are pretty hard to read, if they are there at all.

As the member pointed out, last year alone the park attracted more than 4.6 million visits, serving as a testament to its unrivalled beauty, boasting the pristine beaches we know well, captivating limestone caves, enchanting forest walks and a picturesque coastline that takes one's breath away—that is a very accurate description. The member for Warren–Blackwood has been a central player in this announcement. Her unwavering support for and dedication to preserving our natural surroundings has been instrumental in realizing these improvements to the Cape to Cape. I want to thank the member once again.

Make no mistake, Madam Speaker, this will ensure that this iconic trail remains a popular hiking destination, for not only locals, but also visitors from far and wide. Cabinet heard directly from the constituents of Warren–Blackwood when we visited there in November last year. We heard well and truly from that community meeting that members of the community wanted improvements to their trail. The phrase “the danger of being loved to death” was mentioned a number of times. I have some good news today: we listened to those concerns and today we are delivering.

To further enrich the experience for hikers and protect our valuable environment, we have allocated \$2 million to the 125-kilometre Cape to Cape Track. These funds will facilitate a range of improvements, including enhancing the track's surface, upgrading essential infrastructure, realigning the trail to safeguard culturally sensitive sites and implementing effective erosion management strategies. In addition, \$700 000 will be allocated to enhancing visitor signage, ensuring that all who venture can navigate the wonders of this trail with ease. I take immense pride in stating that this funding is part of the McGowan government's comprehensive \$17.7 million national park tourism experiences development program. We are committed to the development of new, environmentally sensitive tourism experiences within our national parks. It is through initiatives like this, alongside our visionary plan for our parks, as the member mentioned, that we strive to enhance and activate our conservation estate, protecting our environment for generations to come.

The Cape to Cape Track is an essential pillar of our south west region's tourism appeal. With these significant upgrades, we aim to secure its position as a premier tourist destination for many years to come. As we invest the \$2 billion into track enhancements and the \$700 000 in visitor signage, we are creating not only remarkable tourism experiences, but also valuable employment opportunities. By enticing more visitors to explore the wonders of Western Australia, we contribute to the growth of our local economy. Once again, I want to thank the Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism Cook for supporting this project. I again commend the unwavering efforts of the member for Warren–Blackwood. She is passionate and has the ability to listen to her local community and respond to their appeals. Together, we are ensuring that Leeuwin–Naturaliste National Park remains a source of pride for our great state and a testament to the beauty and ecological importance of Western Australia's natural wonders. I notice the member for Vasse and Leader of the Liberal Party has just entered the chamber. She is no doubt very much appreciative of these improvements to the national park in her electorate also. Thank you very much.

WESTERN POWER — POLE-TOP FIRES

Grievance

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.38 am]: I thank the minister for taking my grievance today on pole-top fires. Pole-top fires are becoming an increasing menace in my electorate of Roe. Pole-top fires have been around for decades, and while government strangles the funding of Western Power, reducing the money spent on infrastructure maintenance, we will see even more growth in the number of these incidents.

In Western Power's recent *State of the infrastructure report 2021/22*, it is acknowledged that the major cause of pole-top fires is leakage current, and these fires can spread to the ground or cause network outages. The report states —

Leakage current is electrical tracking from an energised conductor at the top of an insulator through an earth connection across an insulator surface. This electrical tracking can be caused by defective insulators or insulator surfaces being contaminated with pollution, in conjunction with surface moisture from sources such as mist, dew or light rain.

The report reveals that 382 pole-top fires occurred in the reported years of 2021–22. This was by far the greatest cause of failure performance in structures throughout the network.

This is not news to the farmers whose properties have been burnt out by fires caused by pole-top fires. Recently, I received correspondence from a local senior bushfire control officer in command of approximately 350 volunteer bush fire fighters in his shire. This year, five bushfires on the Western Power network have been started by pole-top fires, putting firefighters, the general public, buildings and properties at risk. Another fire control officer rang my office to say they had had enough of the pole-top fires, with 30 incidents in the Lake Grace shire, six in Kulin, and five in Pingaring. Apart from the frustration at the constant call-outs, they are having to wait for hours for Western Power crews to come out, without water, to deal with the situations.

On one occasion, it took five hours for Western Power to attend a burning pole. Upon arrival, they used the water from the attending volunteer, left the area and the fire reignited the following day, starting a bushfire that the local volunteers had to put out. I hear too many stories of farmers remaining at pole-top fires for hours to monitor them and put out sparks until the Western Power crew turns up. I am sure the crews are doing their best, but this is unacceptable.

This summer there were 14 pole-top fires in the Wagin shire. My office received plenty of phone calls from farmers sitting in paddocks, watching the lines sparking and causing fires. Following these fires in Wagin, the shire president voiced his concerns to the Economic Regulation Authority. I am told the response was, “We create regulations; we don’t police them.” A further question to the Department of Mines and Energy Safety on the rollout of replacement insulators was unanswered. The terrible fire in the Narrogin and Wickepin shires last year devastated 18 000 hectares and threatened the town of Wickepin. It was one of two fires that destroyed 60 000 hectares of farmland across several local government areas after igniting on the same day. Although the Corrigin fire started from other sources, the Narrogin fire started from overhead power lines coming together in windy conditions. In other areas of the state, more than 1 000 firefighters battled four simultaneous level 3 emergencies. Planes were deployed, and they made a huge difference. The career firefighters and volunteers were all put at risk because of these fires.

Fires start for a range of different reasons. We do not need fires starting from government infrastructure on top of the existing risks. I raised the issue of insulators with the Minister for Energy. I gave him information regarding line post insulator slanted sheds, which the manufacturer already supplies to Victoria, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. I am told that water dispersion plates should be fitted to all poles, regardless of insulator type, and that Western Power has not been fitting them for some years. The infrastructure report says that approximately 64 per cent of the network’s distribution overhead conductor population is more than 40 years old. This is an issue that has been happening for decades.

In the past, there has been cleaning of poles and insulators. If this is revisited, it could mitigate the risk of dirty insulators experiencing a misty rain event, causing a devastating fire during the summer months, until Western Power adopts a new insulator policy that negates the need for cleaning. I understand this practice was suspended in 2020 after a worker was injured, which is understandable. However, it is three years later and I would like to know whether Western Power has reviewed the situation. Investment in risk mitigation and a review of the insulators and water dispersion plates would save lives, properties, livestock and assets. Minister, I have had enough of farmers contacting me throughout summer and autumn, having to look after these pole-top fires that are jeopardising their farms and communities through no fault of their own.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [9.43 am]: I thank the member for his grievance. Pole-top fires is an important issue. Western Australia is unique in the world due to our overhead infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. To give an example, in California, to mitigate the risks in summer, they switch off the electrical infrastructure so that people in large parts of the state do not have access to grid-based electricity. We do not want to do that in Western Australia because it would mean that people would have to provide their own electricity for large parts of the year. In addition, we have a peculiar environmental circumstance. We are a large state. The south west interconnected system runs through a larger area than almost any other distribution system.

I have to make clear the difference between high-voltage and low-voltage distribution systems. The high-voltage distribution system is extremely reliable. There is rarely any trouble with that.

It is the low-voltage distribution system. When the State Energy Commission was established many years ago and took over the operation of the electricity system from local government, the low-voltage distribution system was rolled out across Western Australia. It was an engineering marvel that these poles and wires were able to be run across long distances. It is called earth return. At the time it was done, nobody in the world believed it was possible for a wire to go in one direction and not both directions. Most people believed, from an engineering point of view, that it was technically impossible.

As the member said, pole-top fires is a recurring problem. It was a problem when I was the shadow minister and a problem now when I am a minister. The member correctly pointed out that in 2020, we stopped the siliconing and pole washing. That happened because, in January 2020, a Western Power employee was injured while undertaking land-based siliconing and washing of live lines. This is the best way forward because if the line is de-energised to

do siliconing and washing, people lose their power. Western Power looked globally at whether there is another way of doing the line washing, because we cannot go back to land-based work. That process was welcomed when the former government was in position and I was the shadow minister. There are two things about that. Firstly, the siliconing did not last as long as expected. The experience in other parts of the world was that the siliconing would last over a decade. In Western Australia, it has shown not to last that long because of the peculiar circumstance of environment in this state. The second thing is we cannot do it in a live format because of the safety risk.

Western Power has regularly, over many years, used helicopters to wash the high-voltage transmission lines. That is a safe method because someone is not attached to the ground and therefore there is no risk when they wash the lines. Western Power is using helicopters to wash the distribution system. That is unique in the world. It is a major advance, but it comes with its own risk management challenges, because the helicopter is flying at very low altitudes in high-risk environments. It is not as simple a solution as the previous ground-washing methodology. It cannot be used in every single location that ground washing was previously used, but it is a significant improvement on no washing at all.

In some coastal areas—not necessarily in the member’s electorate—where the challenges of pole-top fires are even higher, we have done the washing by de-energising the line. That led to some complaints from people who do not like losing power for a day while we do the line washing, but it overcomes the problem of power loss due to the environmental circumstance leading to the pole-top fires. We are deeply aware of the challenges of pole-top fires. Statistics show that pole-top fires come and go—some years are bad and some are better. Often that is about environmental circumstances beyond Western Power’s control. Even when doing line washing, a nearby bushfire that is unrelated to the infrastructure can sometimes lead to having dust on the line, which is what causes the pole-top fires in the first place. Therefore, even washing in silicon is not a silver bullet. That is one of the challenges of providing electric power in regional areas. Another challenge is that in a more densely populated area, we can have two circuits; therefore, if we lose one side of the circuit, the other side of the circuit is still available to us. That is why in parts of the state that have very long line runs, like in the member’s community, more outages are inevitable. That is a function of geography; it is not a function of choice.

I cannot speak to the Economic Regulation Authority because it does not answer to me; it answers to the Treasurer. I would expect the ERA to have oversight over the decisions it makes, and I am sure it does. Safety challenges, are regulated by the Department of Commerce. It would be a conflict of interest if I were also the minister who looked after Energy Safety, so that comes under the Minister for Commerce. Obviously, I cannot comment on that. Western Power acknowledges the challenges. We are investing in it. We are using new technologies, and we are seeking to use new insulators to make sure these challenges are reduced.

WESTERN POWER — CONNECTIONS

Grievance

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [9.50 am]: My grievance is also to the Minister for Energy, and I thank him for taking the grievance. I rise today to grieve about the delays that a number of my constituents are experiencing with Western Power and new connections to the grid. I understand that the minister is well versed on this issue, having been asked a number of questions in the house previously and in responding to concerns raised by the opposition in various debates on the issue. I have listened with interest to the minister’s answers and given that he has only the time allocated within question time to respond, I felt that a longer format for addressing these concerns may assist me, my constituents and others who have been impacted by these delays.

If I may, I would like to raise four issues in the electorate to illustrate the point, and seek the minister’s feedback. Obviously, some of these issues may not be familiar to him today, and I am happy to take a response down the track if that is possible.

The Shire of Wyalkatchem is the first issue. The Shire of Wyalkatchem has received significant funding from the Minister for Water to upgrade its community dam to assist with stormwater capture and storage. It involved a pump installation and a chlorinator. This project was completed nearly eight months ago. For a time, the chlorinator was connected to an electric pump, which has since been removed. The shire is now managing a diesel pump, which uses about 200 litres a week at great expense to management and with not great outcomes for the environment. The shire has been told by Western Power that the project will not be connected until the end of June, if that is correct. That means that it will be 12 months since one government agency completed a project and another government agency has been unable to provide the connection. I cannot understand, when it is a government-to-government project, why there is not more discussion between the two organisations.

The second issue concerns a constituent from Cunderdin needing a connection to a new build for a home. On 31 March 2022, my constituent made their application to Western Power. There was a series of toing and froing. The application was lost. The payment was lost. Then, within Western Power, the person who had been assigned to the issue was reassigned, but the project was not reassigned to somebody within Western Power. My constituent has literally spent time on this from 31 March 2022 to 8 March 2023 and has then come to me after all that saying, “Can you please help? This is just beyond a joke.” Western Power has confirmed that the design should be complete

in mid to late March, which has obviously passed. Again, it has been over 12 months. There has been a whole raft of issues wherein the actual constituent has had to do all the following up with Western Power. There have obviously been some communication issues and continuity challenges within Western Power.

The third issue is the Tammin Golf Club. The president wrote to me on 30 January and said that he made an application to Western Power on 17 January. This is a new golf club. It is a great opportunity for the community. It does not have a lot of assets. It is where everyone comes together to manage the community, mental health, sport and all those things that are important in a small community town. The response from Western Power on 17 January states —

Your application is currently awaiting technical assessment from a Network Designer.

We are currently experiencing high volumes of work, as well as lengthy lead times for equipment delivery. Given this, we will touch base again week commencing 8th May 2023 and provide you with an update as to how things are progressing.

Once the technical assessment has been completed, we will then be able to provide an ETA for your design and construction.

Therefore, the golf club submitted its application in January. At that point, it received a response from Western Power saying that it will get back to them at the beginning of May, but that will not be when the design or application will be approved; that will be when the golf club will be told when to expect the approvals.

I find that remarkable, minister, and very frustrating for this community, which has put in a lot of effort to try to get this project up and running. The golf club is using all its own money and its staff were quite aggrieved that they would not be able to use that infrastructure for a long time.

The last issue is Bruce Rock Supermarket. I have stood in this place before and raised issues about funding for the Bruce Rock Supermarket. It is now out of the ground, the walls are up and the roof is on. It is getting there, but it has no power connection. The Bruce Rock Supermarket president wrote to me to say that he would really appreciate my assistance in trying to make sure that power is connected to the new Bruce Rock Supermarket. As the minister may be aware, it burnt down in 2020 and has been operating out of the town hall. The new supermarket should be completed by September 2023. The letter states —

Our engagement with Western Power commenced in September 2022 with an application for a connection of 230 Amps. Five months later, in February 2023, we received a connection offer of 110 Amps, which would be insufficient to power the supermarket equipment.

The supermarket needs 230 amps; the offer is for 110 amps, which is far less than what it actually needs, so it does not have an adequate allocation of power. Staff are also concerned that the time line will not be met and the community will be without a supermarket for another 12 months. This is not a good outcome for a small community where people are currently travelling and taking their business and all other requirements to the neighbouring town.

Firstly, I would really like an assurance from the minister. I have had some engagement with some of the contractors who deal regularly with Western Power. They have said that perhaps Western Power has been told to prioritise big government projects. Can the minister assure me that that is not the case? Secondly, is there some light at the end of the tunnel for these specific issues and the many more that have been raised by a number of members of Parliament on our side? I look forward to the minister's response.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [9.57 am]: I cannot comment on any specific case because I do not know the details, but I am happy to take those issues up. As I have done previously with people in the member's electorate, I am happy to visit them if we could find an opportunity to talk one on one.

There is no question that this is a frustrating and difficult problem. There certainly has been no instruction for Western Power to prioritise government projects. The problem is that Western Power normally receives about 3 000 applications a year, and, in the last year, it has received over 7 000 applications. The problem is that there is a 130 per cent increase in work. People might think that Western Power is just a government trading enterprise, but I make it clear that it is a commercial business. The fact is that there are more staff with Western Power now, in every aspect of the business, there are more workers in regional Western Australia in the south west interconnected system and there are more engineers and tradesmen with Western Power now than there was six years ago, and we continue to invest in staff. Unfortunately, when we have a 130 per cent increase in business, it is natural that some things take longer to clear that backlog, just like any other commercial business.

Western Power has engaged 10 additional full-time designers, including two who work exclusively on solar projects, so it is very important to bring them to market. Western Power has also put on eight new graduates in that area. Let us understand what needs to happen. A separate design needs to be done for each project. They have to be bespoke. There is no standard patent for any individual project. Of course, they are similar, and I am not saying that they are completely different each time, but they have to be done for that location. They have to be assessed for the network at that location and then they have to be finalised, again by engineers, before being implemented. The design has to be done in such detail as allows the construction of the project by the tradesperson on the site. Even what would be thought of as a simple project is, in fact, still quite complicated.

Again, I am not aware of the details of each of the projects that the member has raised in which a property has been burnt down and is now being renewed. It may well be that the customer wants a larger connection, which then leads to a range of challenges, one of which is that the capacity of the wire is the capacity of the wire. Therefore, if they are seeking a significant upgrade to the volume of electricity that they want, that can have a huge impact down the line for other customers. It may be that one of the challenges is the need to ensure that the design does not negatively impact on other people who use the same infrastructure. I make it clear that that is a challenge in the metropolitan area. In fact, it is a bigger challenge in the metropolitan area than it is in regional Western Australia because there is usually less excess capacity in the metropolitan area than there is in regional Western Australia, and Kwinana is the classic example of that.

We understand the challenges. The time frames are not acceptable and we are investing in the resources that we need, but this is a human resources challenge. Unfortunately for the clients of Western Power, Western Australia's economy is very strong and the skills that are being used by Western Power are exactly the same skills that are being used by our resources industry. Every day when we read in the newspaper about another resource project, we know that electrical infrastructure is included in those projects and the designers of those projects are the same technical people Western Power is seeking to employ. Unfortunately, the resources industry pays more than other sectors—the farming sector, as well as the government sector. It is a challenge finding the talent we need. Because Western Power is a big training provider under the current government, of course these industries also poach our staff, because we are doing the training that the private sector does not always do.

We have a series of problems here. I do not have a briefing note about the specific issues, but this is what Western Power has let me know. One of the challenges is land development. It has engaged with the land-developing lobby group the Urban Development Institute of Australia, and it is working through some procedures for engaging with land developers because it thinks that might assist. We are changing our contracting arrangements so that people have better visibility of the time lines that will be involved. We are also assisting with managing the supply chain. Again, we have had supply chain problems in not just electrical infrastructure, but also many industries. Tractors and cars are taking longer. A friend of mine told me that the car that they ordered 13 months ago is being delivered next week. It is the same in the electrical industry. It is hard to get the components for electrical infrastructure and therefore the time lines are longer. Western Power has created a quality assurance team consisting of five senior distribution engineers, aimed at reducing wait times. It has outsourced overflow work to a panel of contractors. It has outsourced 46 packages of work for about 345 projects—just as an example, 7 000 is a large backlog. It is making sure that the land development team is protected from other internal demands. It is working through the triage process with applicants, particularly community applicants, to make sure that we do our best.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Eighth Report — Budget briefing 2023–2024 — Tabling

Mrs L.M. O'Malley presented for tabling the eighth report of the Public Accounts Committee, titled *Budget briefing 2023–2024*.

[See paper [1955](#).]

CORRUPTION, CRIME AND MISCONDUCT AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)** on behalf of Mr J.R. Quigley (Attorney General), and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Leader of the House.

Second Reading

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [10.05 am]: On behalf of the Attorney General, I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The bill will amend the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003 to deliver two key reforms: firstly, to provide timely and effective appointment processes for commissioners and acting commissioners; and, secondly, to provide for the new position of deputy commissioner. The CCM act provides for the establishment of the Corruption and Crime Commission as the pre-eminent anti-corruption body in Western Australia, with functions in relation to serious misconduct by public officers, the confiscation of unexplained wealth and criminal benefits, and the investigation of organised crime. This bill represents the first tranche of work in the modernisation of the CCM act and will address the appointment process to ensure stability and accountability in the leadership and management of the CCC. Work on other reforms to the act remains ongoing.

The appointment process for the position of Corruption and Crime Commissioner begins with the requirement for a nominating committee to provide a list of three persons eligible for appointment to the Premier, who then submits

a recommended appointee to the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission for approval. Under the current process, the appointment can proceed only if it has the support of the majority of the standing committee and bipartisan support. Given the importance of the role of the Corruption and Crime Commissioner, it is appropriate for a degree of parliamentary involvement in the process for appointing the commissioner, and this is a feature common to all Australian states and territories. However, an identified flaw in the WA appointment process is that it is susceptible to inappropriate manipulation as a single member of the standing committee may block the appointment process indefinitely.

The standing committee consists of four members, each of whom has a single deliberative vote. The current requirement in the CCM act for both majority support and bipartisan support to approve a proposed appointment gives undue weight to a particular individual's vote in certain circumstances. When there is only one standing committee member from the opposition, for instance, that single member's refusal to support an appointment would result in an indefinite impasse due to the lack of bipartisan support. Members may recall that the Attorney General highlighted this flaw in the appointment process during debate on the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Amendment Bill 2021 in June 2021 when he noted that it had resulted in a lengthy 14-month vacancy in the crucial position of Corruption and Crime Commissioner. It was never the intent of Parliament for any one member of the standing committee to unilaterally wield the power of veto. This bill will remedy that problem. Clause 6 of the bill will insert new section 9C into the CCM act to confer on the standing committee a power of veto instead of the flawed requirement for positive bipartisan and majority approval by the standing committee.

Under new section 9C, the Premier will be required to refer to the standing committee a proposal to appoint a person to the position of commissioner. The standing committee will then have 14 days after the day the referral was made to respond, and a further 30 days if it notifies the Premier within the first 14-day period that it requires more time to consider the matter and determine whether to exercise the power of veto. Unlike the problematic current approach, section 9C will provide that the proposed appointment will progress unless the standing committee resolves to veto the appointment. Under the standing orders, a resolution by the standing committee requires a quorum of three committee members. As such, a single individual member would not be able to disrupt the appointment process on their own by simply declining to provide support. This new approach will reinforce the concept that the power of veto lies with the standing committee and not just any one member acting on their own.

The key benefit of the new section 9C approach is that it will address the identified problem in the current appointment process while supporting the standing committee's important function of scrutiny and its ability to prevent the appointment of an unsuitable person as commissioner when the standing committee believes this is appropriate. This approach is aligned with the processes in New South Wales and Victoria for the appointment of the head of their equivalent pre-eminent anti-corruption bodies.

Clause 12 of the bill also introduces new subsections 14(2A) to (2C), which provide that when the period of appointment for an acting commissioner is less than 12 months, such an appointment may be made directly by the Governor on the recommendation of the Premier without the need to go through the time-consuming processes of nomination and consideration by the standing committee. This will enable the timely appointment of a short-term acting commissioner to minimise periods of vacancy and address situations in which it may be inappropriate for the commissioner to act due to a perceived conflict of interest, for instance. When the appointment is for a period that is longer than 12 months, the new process that will apply to the appointment of the commissioner will also apply to the acting commissioner.

I now turn to the second key reform in this bill, the creation of the deputy commissioner position. It was recognised some 20 years ago by the Standing Committee on Legislation, which was charged with closely scrutinising the then bill during its passage through Parliament, that workload pressures would eventually require positions to be established to assist the commissioner in discharging their duties, in particular, the crucial non-delegable powers set out in section 185(2). This resulted in a requirement being included in section 226 of the act to specifically consider the need for the appointment of assistant commissioners in the next statutory review of the act. Accordingly, the statutory review, conducted in 2008 by Gail Archer, SC, as she was then, specifically considered the significant workload of the commissioner due to the volume of non-delegable powers, and recommended that the legislation be amended to "allow for the appointment of deputy commissioners to whom specific functions may be delegated by the commissioner, and who are able to act as the commissioner in the commissioner's absence".

This call for a deputy commissioner has since been repeatedly echoed in successive standing committee reports in 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2020. Although the reports often referred to such positions as assistant commissioners, it is clear from the descriptions within the reports that the term encompassed what the 2008 statutory review referred to as a deputy commissioner.

This bill delivers on the long-awaited deputy commissioner position to assist in managing the workload of the CCC and support impartial decision-making on an ongoing basis.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT (BANNED DRINKERS REGISTER) BILL 2023*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr R.R. Whitby (Minister for Racing and Gaming)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [10.14 am]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Liquor Control Amendment (Banned Drinkers Register) Bill 2023 will introduce amendments to the Liquor Control Act 1988 to establish a legislative framework in relation to the operation of the banned drinkers register in Western Australia.

In January 2021, the state government, through the Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries, commenced a two-year BDR trial in the Pilbara. Subsequent trials commenced in the Kimberley in July 2021 and the goldfields in March 2022. A further BDR trial is scheduled to commence in Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction in May 2023.

A BDR is a more targeted approach to harm minimisation and is aimed at restricting access to liquor in cases when individual consumption levels are causing harm. Since their inception, the trials have been run as administrative programs, and liquor licensees in the relevant regions participate on a voluntary basis and have been supported by industry.

As part of the existing BDR trials, individuals are placed on the BDR if they are subject to a barring notice or prohibition order or they voluntarily elect to be placed on the BDR. In areas where restrictions on daily purchases of alcohol are in place, the BDR is supported by a takeaway alcohol management system that records the amount and type of packaged liquor purchased by an individual in a 24-hour period and alerts sales staff when daily purchase limits are exceeded.

It is a priority of the McGowan government to reduce harm caused by the consumption of liquor, and the implementation of the BDR trials is consistent with the objects of the Liquor Control Act 1988 relating to regulating the sale, supply and consumption of liquor and minimising harm or ill-health caused to people due to the use of liquor. In this regard, in an effort to improve harm minimisation outcomes, in early 2022 a BDR working group was established as an advisory body to consult on the operation and improvements to the BDR. The BDR working group comprises state government agencies that have a role in supporting the minimisation of alcohol-related harm and includes the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as well as the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet, Communities, Justice and Health; the Western Australia Police Force; the WA Country Health Service; and the Mental Health Commission.

Consultation on options for ensuring the effectiveness of the BDR program was undertaken in late 2022 with key stakeholders, including community organisations, government agencies, industry peak bodies, licensees, liquor accords, local governments and members of the public. Responses showed that stakeholders were broadly supportive of the suggested changes to strengthen the BDR. In addition, an interim evaluation of the Pilbara BDR trial undertaken by the University of Western Australia identified a range of opportunities to enhance the program's effectiveness as a harm minimisation tool, including a need to enhance and expand registration pathways to the BDR.

After considering stakeholder feedback and the findings of the interim evaluation, it is believed the reforms contained in this bill will further support the operation of the BDR and improve harm minimisation outcomes. The bill provides for the establishment of the BDR as a register of people who are prohibited from purchasing packaged liquor and contains provisions to facilitate the issue of a banned drinker order that will prohibit an individual from purchasing, possessing or consuming packaged liquor for three, six or 12 months. The bill will also provide for additional pathways to include individuals on the BDR and expand the range of people who will be able to seek to place someone on the BDR. In this regard, in addition to the current arrangements, which include individuals who are subject to barring notices and prohibition orders, individuals who are subject to a banned drinker order made by WA police or the director of Liquor Licensing will be registered on the BDR. WA police will be able to make a banned drinker order for an individual for three, six or 12 months, depending on the circumstances and previous orders that have been made.

The criteria for the making of a banned drinker order by the WA police will include alcohol-related offending or offending that occurs while an individual is affected by liquor, including family violence that results in the issue of a restraining order and driving under the influence that results in a licence disqualification. In addition, an individual may be issued with a banned drinker order if they are taken into alcohol-related protective custody on more than one occasion or if they supply liquor to a person who they know is on the BDR. It is important to note that a banned drinker order made by a police officer must be authorised by a senior officer at the rank of sergeant or above. The director of Liquor Licensing will be able to make a banned drinker order based on an application by

a medical practitioner, social worker or other prescribed person. The criteria for the making of a banned drinker order by the director of Liquor Licensing will include whether the person is misusing or has misused liquor and that misuse is a serious risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of the person or another person. The director must also be satisfied that it is in the public interest to make the order. To support current arrangements, the bill also provides a formal mechanism for individuals to seek a self-imposed banned drinker order, which will register them on the banned drinkers register. Banned drinkers will have several avenues to appeal the issue of a banned drinker order. In the first instance, a banned drinker will be able to apply to the issuer of the order—that is, the Commissioner of Police or the director of Liquor Licensing. The second avenue of appeal will be to seek a review by the Liquor Commission.

The bill provides that the director of Liquor Licensing must keep a register of banned drinkers and establish an identification system for use by licensees for checking whether an individual is a banned drinker. To increase the likelihood of banned drinkers being identified, the bill includes a list of the types of identification that can be accepted for scanning at licensed premises, which includes drivers' licences, passports, photo cards or other forms of identification approved by the director of Liquor Licensing. Importantly, to support the effectiveness of the BDR trials, the bill provides that participation in the BDR trials will be mandatory by requiring that licensees and staff of packaged-liquor outlets in prescribed banned drinker areas must not sell packaged liquor unless the ID system has been used and the individual is not identified as a banned drinker.

An offence with a penalty of up to \$10 000 will apply to a person who knowingly supplies packaged liquor to a banned drinker in a banned drinker area. This will apply to licensees and staff of licensed premises in a banned drinker area as well as those who sell liquor online for delivery to a person located in a prescribed banned drinker area. The offence will also apply to any other person who knowingly supplies packaged liquor to a banned drinker—known as secondary supply—which is intended to address the issue of family and friends being coerced into buying liquor for a banned drinker. In addition to the monetary penalty, a person who supplies liquor in this manner could be issued with a banned drinker order. Although there is no offence for a banned drinker purchasing or attempting to purchase packaged liquor, WA police will also be authorised to seize and dispose of packaged liquor in the possession of a banned drinker.

The amendments contained in the bill also provide for a head of power to allow banned drinker areas to be prescribed in the regulations after the Minister for Racing and Gaming has consulted with the Commissioner of Police, the relevant local governments and any other person the minister considers it appropriate to consult, and is satisfied that the proposed regulations are in the public interest. It is expected the existing trial areas of the Pilbara, Kimberley, Goldfields, Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction will be prescribed in the first instance.

In an effort to ensure those individuals who are experiencing alcohol-related harm are aware of support and help services available to assist them, the bill will amend the privacy provisions in the act to allow the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to provide information about those services to people on the BDR.

Finally, as the amendments contained in the bill will support and facilitate the various BDR trials that are currently underway, the provisions relating to the legislative framework will have a sunset period of two years after the operating provisions are proclaimed. In this regard, the state government will continue to monitor and review the effectiveness and outcomes of the trials, and make a decision prior to the expiration of the sunset clause on whether to continue with the trials and retain the relevant legislative framework.

Alcohol-related harm is a longstanding and complex issue for which there is no one solution. The BDR trials are one of several measures in place in an effort to tackle alcohol misuse and protect Western Australians. The reforms contained in this bill are an important step in supporting the operation of the BDR to improve its effectiveness and harm minimisation outcomes for those most at risk. In addition to this bill, the McGowan government is currently reviewing WA's liquor laws to introduce a range of reforms to reduce alcohol-related harm in the community.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2023–24) BILL 2023
APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2023–24) BILL 2023

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 17 May.

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [10.24 am]: I rise today to speak on the 2023–24 budget and what it means to constituents, businesses, community groups, not-for-profit organisations and everyone else who lives or works in the electorate of Murray–Wellington. Last Thursday, 11 May, the Premier; Treasurer, Mark McGowan, handed down this year's budget. It coincided with the sixth anniversary of the day in 2017 on which I and many other members of this place were sworn in as members of the Legislative Assembly.

In the few days since the budget was handed down, I have attended various events, such as the Peel budget breakfast at our local Murray–Wellington sporting club, the Yunderup Sport and Recreation Club, and the south west budget

lunch at the Quality Hotel Lighthouse in Bunbury, at which I was engaged in many conversations with local government councillors, CEOs, business owners and members of the community. I heard about many marvellous things that have been achieved across the state and in the electorate of Murray–Wellington.

Murray–Wellington received record spending over the last six years. Many community members have stopped me on the street, called my office or spoken to me at community events about the clear difference they have seen since the once safe Liberal seat changed hands. Important infrastructure has been built. Regional roads have been maintained, improved and expanded to account for the rapid growth in the electorate. Schools have had maintenance completed during our school maintenance blitz, and received new or upgraded STEM and science labs. Sports clubs have received new lights under our Club Night Lights program funded through the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. That is just to name a few of the amazing grants and funding programs that our state government has to offer. It feels like I am heading out weekly to a community, sporting or recreation group, or one of the many other groups in Murray–Wellington, to announce a new project or funding to improve facilities or deliver services. I recently visited the Brunswick Junction Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services with the Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Stephen Dawson, to present the brigade with a brand new light tanker. I want to thank the Brunswick VFRS brigade, along with all the other emergency services within Murray–Wellington, for their outstanding service to our community and for keeping our communities safe and strong.

I had the absolute pleasure of attending the fifth birthday celebration of Peel Bright Minds, which assists local students to expand their abilities in the field of STEM. I had the honour to present the group with a \$100 000 Lotterywest grant to continue its work developing the best bright minds that the Peel region has to offer.

I also congratulate both the Shire of Murray and the Dwellingup 100 on receiving funds through the regional events scheme to continue both the Pinjarra Festival and the Dwellingup 100. Both are major events in the Shire of Murray.

Supporting local Aboriginal groups is a key commitment of the McGowan government. The Harvey Aboriginal Corporation successfully obtained funds through the Aboriginal business development and capacity building grant program to assist it to deliver cultural programs and services. These grant programs are not the big, flashy, headline-grabbing announcements we see for other projects, but they mean a lot to these small groups and organisations that normally run on the backs of hardworking volunteers or staff who go above and beyond what is required. That money goes a long way, and it would take a few sausages sold at Bunnings to match those grants. They mean a lot to people in the tight-knit, small communities of Pinjarra, Waroona and Harvey, and the other 48 towns in Murray–Wellington.

I want to congratulate the Premier; Treasurer on another outstanding budget that delivers for all Western Australians. The Labor Party has constantly been attacked by the other side for not being good at managing the state's or the country's economy and finances, but it has done a remarkable job of delivering yet another surplus while other states and economies around the world are getting more into debt. The government is also bringing down the large debt that was left by the Barnett Liberal government. There is still more to pay off, but we are certainly on the right track. Many members of the community have told me that they were traditionally Liberal voters but they had either converted to voting Labor because of our government's spending record or are pleased to see what is happening. I give credit to the Premier, every minister in the cabinet and all their hardworking staff: we cannot do it without their consistent support for the regions.

On reading the budget, I was pleased to see that it continues to deliver for the Peel and south west regions. Murray–Wellington sits in both regions. Harvey, in the south of the electorate, sits in the south west, while the Shire of Murray, the Shire of Waroona and the City of Mandurah, in the north of Murray–Wellington, are located in the Peel region. I am pleased to see the government's continuous cost-of-living support for residents, along with its significant investments in health, housing and Western Australia's transition to cleaner, stronger, reliable and affordable energy. This budget features a massive \$11.2 billion investment in regional infrastructure, as well as billions more in regional service delivery. The state budget includes \$4 billion in royalties for regions expenditure over the next four years on initiatives that will strengthen regional communities and ensure services remain close to where people live. Regional Western Australians will benefit from the McGowan government's \$715 million commitment to deliver further cost-of-living relief, which includes providing every WA household with a \$400 electricity credit and additional targeted support totalling \$826 for households that need it most. As part of our commitment to keep power and water affordable for all Western Australians, the McGowan government will spend \$2.7 billion over the next four years to subsidise the cost of providing water and electricity to regional communities.

The McGowan government is delivering a record \$2.7 billion additional investment in WA's health system. The 2023–24 state budget features a significant investment in regional health and mental health, including over \$2.2 billion per annum on regional health and mental health services, and \$28.5 million for initiatives to attract and retain key health and mental health professionals primarily to work in regional WA, with priority to be given to hard-to-staff sites.

The 2023–24 state budget strengthens the McGowan government's record investment in housing, including \$450 million into the social housing investment fund to deliver more social housing across the state, and \$12 million over four years to deliver more development-ready land throughout regional WA through the regional development assistance program.

There is major investment into WA's future. The government will tackle climate change through a \$3 billion package that will ensure that the state has cleaner, stronger, reliable and affordable energy into the future, as well as an investment in the environment. The initiatives include a \$2.8 billion investment to transition WA's energy system for a low-carbon future; \$18.8 million to continue the Healthy Estuaries WA program to improve the water quality of estuaries across the region; \$36 million to transition to new jobs to help deliver the historic decision to end native forest logging; \$22.2 million to assist industry to transition to the mandatory sheep and goat electronic identification system to bolster WA's animal biosecurity defences; \$20.2 million to extend vital drought resilience initiatives that will help futureproof Western Australian farms; and \$10.4 million to boost WA's emergency animal disease preparedness following overseas outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease.

The McGowan government's 2023–24 state budget continues to deliver on the WA jobs plan by diversifying regional economies, creating new jobs for the future and developing a pipeline of skills in the regions. Key initiatives include \$6.5 million to implement the *Aquaculture development plan for Western Australia*; \$2 million to the new industries fund to support regional entrepreneurs in the innovation sector; \$2.5 million to increase the travel and accommodation allowance for regional TAFE students; \$2.9 million to provide a weekly allowance for regional students who are studying a diploma of nursing; and \$6.8 million for upgrades at agricultural colleges across the state.

The McGowan government continues its record investment in regional road and transport projects. The budget contains a further \$407 million for regional road projects and initiatives, bringing the total investment over the next four years to \$5.3 billion. There is also a \$175 million boost to the regional road safety program, which is jointly funded by the commonwealth and state governments, so that it can continue to deliver lifesaving works on regional roads.

The McGowan government will help to build safe, strong and fair regional communities by providing \$11.7 million to continue the rollout of Target 120 across the regions, including in Mandurah; \$1.1 million to continue the respectful relationships teaching support program; and the provision of culturally appropriate services for victims of family and domestic violence in regional areas. The budget includes \$4.9 million for the regional athletes support program to help regionally based talented athletes meet their potential, and \$700 000 to continue the Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network of Western Australia to support regional women. The McGowan government will also invest \$77 million to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in WA, which includes support for the new Aboriginal cultural heritage services.

I was so excited about the next announcement that I had to call the CEO of Waroona, Mark Goodlet, and shire president Mike Walmsley as soon as I could. This budget also includes an extra \$2.4 million to complete the Waroona town centre revitalisation project. The McGowan Labor government had already committed \$1.3 million to the project, as well as a \$450 000 Lotterywest grant. This project will bring new life back into the town centre of Waroona and give tourists who are travelling through Waroona via South Western Highway the incentive to stop and spend money at the Waroona Country Cafe and newly refurbished Waroona Hotel, visit the many other small businesses and see the beautiful town that Waroona is.

I said it last year and I said it the year before—I have said it many times—but I will say it once more, loud and clear, for those opposite: that is not a bad commitment to the regions for a party that is accused by those on the other side as not caring about the regions. The McGowan government has more respect for our regions and has supported them more than any other government or party has done. We have the strongest representation in the regions with active, hardworking members who deliver on the McGowan government's commitment to our regions. Our government truly represents the regions. This budget builds on many of the great projects that are either already completed, funded or in the planning stage, or for which consultation is underway, such as the \$160 million redevelopment and expansion of Peel Health Campus, which we will also bring back into public hands; \$11.2 million for the new performing arts centre and sports hall at Pinjarra Senior High School, which is currently under construction and due to open in the coming months —

Mr D.A. Templeman: That is all because of you. You did that.

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: I thank the member for Mandurah.

There is also \$1.5 million for the new STEM building and \$72 million for the new Lakelands Metronet station, which is due to open in June. The budget includes \$250 million for the Pinjarra heavy haulage deviation, \$110 million to duplicate Mandurah Estuary Bridge and \$28.1 million for the expanded Common Ground facility to accommodate and support vulnerable people in Mandurah; planning is underway for all those projects. The budget also contains \$1.35 billion for the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, which is under construction. These projects are either being built or at the planning stage, yet we have a loud, misguided and outspoken opponent—namely, the federal member for Canning. The member for Canning has really gotten into his role of being an opposition member after being a key player in the ousted Morrison regime. He did nothing then and is just opposing everything now. He refers federal issues to state members' offices, stating that he is in opposition and cannot or will not help.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: I am not taking any interjections from the other side, thank you!

He loves being in opposition. All he does is oppose, abuse and denigrate people and projects. It is easy to criticise when you are not accountable. Like an electron, the member for Canning is always negatively charged. He attacks the people in our local hospital by focusing on issues that staff are working hard to deliver. Remember, member for Canning: the Liberal Party privatised the Peel Health Campus when it was first built. The Liberal Party —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: I am not taking interjections from the other side.

When the Liberal Party was in power and the then member for Dawesville, Kim Hames, was the Minister for Health, it let the infrastructure run down. It was the do-nothing party. Only Labor committed to bringing our hospital back into public hands and only Labor has committed a record \$160 million to transform our hospital into a truly regional hospital. We want to get it right for the future of our region.

Let us not forget about the Dawesville Bridge duplication project, which, again, has been committed to by the Labor government. The Liberal Party had years and years to do something about it, but it never committed to anything, not even when we had a federal Liberal government. Again, it was a do-nothing Liberal Party with its do-nothing members.

So, member for Canning; who is the real hollow man? The member for Canning is all bluff and bluster but there is no action when it counts. It was the Peel dream team—comprising me; the member for Mandurah, Hon David Templeman; and the member for Dawesville, the hardworking Lisa Munday—that secured the \$110 million to build the new bridge.

Mr D.T. Punch: Commendable.

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: I know! We are great, aren't we?

The planning, scoping and consultation is concluding. It is because of a Labor government that the bridge will be delivered —

Mr D.A. Templeman: They talked about it for so many years and did bugger-all!

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: That is it, member for Mandurah!

After years of talking about it, members opposite never delivered anything.

Another project under attack by the “electron member for Canning” is the Pinjarra heavy haulage deviation. After years of promises, the former federal Liberal government delivered funding for only stage 1 of the project. After intense advocacy from me and the Minister for Planning, Hon Rita Saffioti, the project will now be delivered in full by the McGowan Labor government with funding of \$250 million. That funding will deliver the whole project in one go, not in the four stages that the federal member advocated for. This \$250 million project has been pushed out to ensure that appropriate community consultation is undertaken with the Bindjareb traditional owners. We are doing the right thing and working with the Bindjareb people to undertake this project in a culturally responsible way.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: The deviation will require the construction of a road and bridge over the banks of the Murray River where it is believed the remains of Bindjareb traditional owners rest after the 1834 massacre. On 28 October 1834, a group of about 25 soldiers, police and settlers, led by Governor James Stirling, Thomas Peel and John Septimus Roe, killed—it is estimated—dozens of Bindjareb people. Accounts of the notorious massacre remain hotly contested, with Stirling's official account reporting that about 15 Bindjareb men were killed. Other accounts estimate that up to 80 Bindjareb men, women and children died. The Bindjareb traditional owners recently met to discuss the project's impact and collate any concerns to present to the government. The outcomes from the meeting, facilitated by Aboriginal Land Services, are currently being collated. The McGowan Labor government is doing this better—and guess what? There is more negativity, more slander and more insults from the member for Canning. The member for Canning needs to have a yarn with the local Bindjareb mob to understand the history of the region. He is out of touch and shows no respect for the Bindjareb people and, quite frankly, he is insensitive.

There is a common theme here, is there not? Labor builds and supports our communities and the member for Canning wants to tear it all down. He is like a child who walks off the oval with his football when he is no longer winning. Weekly, my office is swamped with accounts of the negativity that the member for Canning shares with the community. Frankly, people are sick of the vile and disgusting mistruths that he spews from his mouth and the insidious mail-outs that demand donations towards the sovereignty of our nation. He is being misleading and very deceptive in asking for donations towards protecting Australia when, in fact, they are for his re-election campaign—or is he going to rent a patrol boat and patrol the coastline of WA with the money donated to him?

As our country prepares to embark on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Voice referendum, I am again sickened and disgusted by the words coming out of his mouth. “Mr Electron”, the member for Canning, is negatively charged and sounds like a conspiracist incel who gets advice on the dark web. He uses phrases such as “The Voice will undermine the equality of citizenship”, “It will create a special class of citizens with more say and more rights

than the rest of us” and “It will undermine our Westminster style of government”. In one article, he compares the Voice with the House of Lords. For those who paid attention during the marriage equality debate it is not surprising that the member for Canning who said many homophobic and bigoted remarks during that campaign is now going to spew more vile and bigoted nonsense up until the Voice referendum. He promotes continuous negativity about the McGowan Labor government not delivering for the Peel region and not caring for our constituents. I ask the member for Canning: when have you ever cared for your constituents? He was on the wrong side of history when he voted against his constituency’s wishes during the marriage equality debate. Almost two-thirds of the Canning electorate voted yes to marriage equality. Where was the member for Canning when the Morrison government voted against easing cost-of-living pressures by slashing penalty rates that guarantee secure jobs and better pay? Where was the member for Canning when the Morrison government undermined the McGowan government during the pandemic by supporting Clive Palmer? Where was the member for Canning when the Morrison government voted against increasing and extending support for welfare payments? I could go on about the member for Canning and his unwarranted attacks on the McGowan government, particularly the Premier, and the member for Mandurah, the member for Dawesville and me. I make it clear that the member for Canning has never been on the side of his constituency of Canning. He has never delivered, nor has it been seen. We are all still waiting for his heralded meth action plan, which was promised in 2015. It must be due to come out anytime soon. Do not throw rocks at glasshouses. The member for Canning is not my member, nor does he represent the people of Canning. End of rant!

Several members interjected.

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: Moving away from the negativity, I acknowledge that this week is National Volunteer Week. Yesterday was Wear Orange Wednesday to thank our State Emergency Service volunteers. Murray–Wellington has so many amazing volunteers in its emergency services, community groups and other organisations that help our communities. I thank them all. They are the links in a chain that keep our communities safe and strong. Thank you always.

Tonight, I will be attending the Shire of Waroona Emergency Services Recognition and Thank You Dinner, which could be interesting because the member for Canning will be there!

Mr D.A. Templeman: You’ll do amazing!

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: I know. “Mr Electron”!

I will have the honour of presenting my husband, Charlie, his five years’ service medal. He is a lieutenant in the Preston Beach Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade. Congratulations, Charlie, and thank you to all brigade members for their friendship and comradeship. A big thanks to our chief fire officer, Steve Thomas, for his leadership and experience.

Lastly, I would like to end on a positive note and give a shout-out to a few local Murray–Wellington legends. Pastor John Coman recently participated in the World Transplant Games right here in Perth. He won gold in the 400-metre and 200-metre freestyle and bronze in the 100-metre and 50-metre freestyle. Greg Watts, the chief executive officer of local Murray–Wellington soil carbon solutions company C-Wise, recently participated in the 2023 Variety WA 4WD Bash and raised \$12 936 for his efforts. Harvey Bowling Club’s Calvin and Jason won gold and silver at the world impaired vision championships in Queensland. On behalf of the member for Mandurah, Hon David Templeman, I congratulate the City of Mandurah on winning the Top Tourism Town for 2023. Congratulations to the Shire of Murray for Dwellingup winning for the third year in a row the Top Tiny Tourism Town. We live in the best part of WA and represent the most beautiful region.

Lastly, I give a heartfelt thought for Paul Briggs and the Busher Boys for my good friend and Labor Party life member Trish Briggs. Trish passed away suddenly a year ago this Saturday, 20 May, the night before last year’s federal election. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think of you, Trish. Charlie, my office staff and I miss you and we will always love you.

I commend the 2023–24 budget to the house.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.48 am]: I, too, rise to make my contribution on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023. I start by noting that I, along with you, Madam Acting Speaker (Ms A.E. Kent) and a number of our colleagues, including the Premier and ministers, attended the federal Treasurer’s Leadership Matters breakfast with Hon Dr Jim Chalmers. I would like to start my contribution by reflecting on his positive comments about the work of the McGowan Labor government and, particularly, the Premier in his role as Treasurer. He gave us a statistic that I think is startling and highlights the incredible work of this government. He said that CPI in Perth in June 2022 was the highest in Australia, but in May 2023 it is now the lowest in Australia. He reflected on and gave a number of reasons for that, but I want to highlight the one that I feel most equates to what this government is doing for my electorate of Collie–Preston. The federal Treasurer said that, in a significant part, he put that down to the way that Western Australia has managed the energy system and kept power prices low, in comparison to what the eastern states’ energy system is currently undergoing and the prices they are currently paying and are likely to pay for energy in the future. In his speech, it was a stark contrast as he reflected on what is happening in Western Australia. I would like to begin my contribution by reiterating the federal Treasurer’s comments today.

I will go back and talk a bit about history, and that will then, obviously, come back to the point of my contribution today, which is the McGowan Labor government's support for, in my case, the seat of Collie–Preston. I would like to start by talking about the opportunity to “compare the pair”, a phrase my research officer likes to use often. I will start with three things I would like to compare and contrast. This is the old teacher in me coming out.

Mrs L.A. Munday: I remember those essays.

Ms J.L. HANNS: I know; we all remember those lessons. Let us compare the opposition's approach to the energy system with the current McGowan Labor government's approach. If I had to pick out the top three things I want to talk about from the opposition's energy policies or strategies, the first would be the Liberal energy policy of 2021, which was to close the power stations and the coal mines by 2025—almost unfunded by a coalition government. I say “almost” because it is in stark contrast to what this government has done and has committed to do in funding the transition.

The second point I would like to highlight is the other approach the Liberals took to the 2021 election and much more strongly to the 2017 election, which was the idea of privatising Western Power. That was a terrible policy and one that was resoundingly rejected at the election. Casting our minds further back—I want to make sure that members remember the number I am about to mention because it is significant—there was a point at which the Barnett Liberal government decided that it would restore the previously mothballed Muja A and B units at Muja power station. That was in response to the Varanus Island gas crisis, which we were plunged into due to the explosion at Varanus Island. The energy system was certainly facing significant challenges, but the Barnett government thought that the best way to approach it was to refurbish the previously mothballed Muja A and B, and get that up and running, and that would solve all the problems. A report commissioned by KPMG and tabled here in Parliament said that the post-completion review of the future Muja A and B project was put at a cost of \$308.4 million. The report was published in 2013. I am no mathematician, but I can only imagine what the inflationary rate would mean for that right now; it is probably in the order of nearly double that in today's money. It was a significant spend and undeniably an abject failure.

I would like to draw people's attention to the fact that in Parliament, the former Western Australian Premier Colin Barnett refused to confirm the amount of money spent on that particular project, but the former Minister for Energy Mike Nahan said that work was suspended on the project and he expected to deliver a report about the costs. He confirmed —

“It will be mothballed. At some stage it may be reactivated but I think that's unlikely.”

That is the bit he got correct: it was unlikely because it has not happened. It cost taxpayers a significant amount of money and contributed to the state of the finances that the McGowan government inherited in 2017, which were appalling, to say the least.

Here is where we compare the pair. I will now talk about the Labor government's approach to the energy system and how it has committed to transition. I will talk about that briefly today. We were able to put the transition in place because we corrected the state's finances and were able to commit to a significant transition package for the energy system, something that is desperately needed in Western Australia. Hon Mick Murray was the previous member for Collie–Preston, and he listened to the community. At that time, I was a shire councillor, and he listened to the council and the community who said, “We need dates for a transition. We know it will happen, but what we need as a community is to be certain about what that looks like.” They did not need an overnight closure, essentially, of the coal-fired power stations and the coal mines by 2025, with no transition plan. When the Liberal Party pitched that to the community, it had the community outraged. The Labor Party listened to the community, and, in response the Premier, the local member Hon Mick Murray and the Minister for Energy worked very closely with the community of Collie to plan the transition for our community.

Back in 2018, the Collie Just Transition Working Group was established, and that working group, which I have mentioned a number of times in the chamber, consists of state government representatives, local government representatives and, very importantly, local industries impacted by the transition, local unions, local workforce impacted by the transition, and general community members. As a community, we have worked through the issues over those years. In addition, the Collie Just Transition Working Group said that if the transition is happening on a large scale, the community needs significant support and funding from the state government, and that is exactly what the McGowan Labor government delivered for this community. The government funded the transition. I mentioned the fact that the Liberal's policy for the transition for Collie was virtually unfunded. Our transition package sits at around \$652 million to support and assist the community transition away from coal-fired power stations by 2030. That is significant. I will talk a little more about this shortly, but I want to mention the recent budget announcement about the government's commitment to build a big battery in Collie. That forms part of a \$2.3 billion package for the renewable energy system, and one of those systems will be located in Collie.

The upshot of all this is that my community got what it asked for. It asked for clear time lines for what the transition might look like. It asked for funding, and it got that funding. The funding is already happening and is on the ground. I will talk about some projects in a minute. New industries are being attracted to create new jobs and futureproof

our local economy. The funding is also shoring up the network for the entire south west interconnected system. What I think cannot be understated in all this is that we, as a government, are futureproofing my community and the south west from decisions that are often beyond our control.

I want to look at the facts around being able to set up a business that does not necessarily have green credentials. If someone is trying to set up a new industry that is not using renewable energy, it makes things incredibly difficult from an economic viability perspective. Decisions are made by private companies that are outside the influence of government, the workforce and the general community. That has been demonstrated over and over again. South32 just last year said it would transition from its coal-fired power station to a gas-fired power station to run its refinery, and, ultimately, to renewables. Griffin Coal is one of its main providers of coal, and there are certainly some challenges around the ongoing operations of Griffin Coal. I will talk about that in a minute. All this certainly says that this government has the interests of both the residents of Collie–Preston and the broader Western Australian community first and foremost in its mind.

As the member for Murray–Wellington said, opposition members are often very negative in their commentary around what the government is trying to achieve. The Premier yesterday described the attitudes of the opposition as “apocalyptic”. I thought that was quite appropriate because the term I use is “harbingers of doom”. There are some synergies there.

I draw members’ attention to comments by Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Leader of the Liberal Party in the other place. The Liberals have certainly had it in for Collie. That is absolutely apparent when we talk about the 2021 Liberal energy policy. We refer to it as a thought bubble because some of the comments Hon Dr Steve Thomas has made in Parliament as recorded in *Hansard* are back of the envelope calculations. The Liberals have had it in for Collie and their energy policy is one example of that. I will mention briefly the Liberal policy around the electoral reforms that were aimed to wipe Collie off the map entirely. Since 1904, Collie’s name has been proudly featured in recognition of its significance in Western Australia and the role it has played in developing the state. If the Liberals had their way, Collie would be no more in an electoral sense. The proposal is that the member for Roe would gain Collie. I am not sure how he feels about that; I am interested to know. At the previous election, the polling places in Collie had an 80 per cent or more majority to Labor. I am not sure how the member for Roe feels about that part of the redistribution.

Mr P.J. Rundle: That was the Liberals.

Ms J.L. HANNS: I did not mention the Nationals at all.

Mr D.A. Templeman: The Liberal Party is always looking after your interests!

Ms J.L. HANNS: Absolutely.

It takes me to my point that the Liberal Party does not take Collie seriously. On the one hand, it wants to close the power stations, walk away and redistribute boundaries so that the member for Roe ends up with Collie. I was astounded by some of the comments Hon Dr Steve Thomas made in the upper house this week about Collie. The uncorrected *Hansard* contains comments such as —

There are some issues around coal mining in Collie ...

Okay; no rocket science is required there. He goes on to say that it is something of a running joke, but that the joke gets better. Hon Dr Steve Thomas clearly does not live in Collie—he is the member for South West Region—so he does not appreciate that our community does not see it as a joke. It astounds me that he takes this approach. In the same uncorrected *Hansard*, he states that “my media in Collie on this is fantastic”—that is, on the coal situation. They are telling words that he uses—my media in Collie. I would like to ask him what he meant by that. I have here a collection of articles from the local media in Collie in which Hon Dr Steve Thomas is featured very regularly. I can tell members right now that I am featured nowhere near as regularly as Hon Dr Steve Thomas is featured; nor even is the Premier when he visits Collie. Hon Dr Steve Thomas makes comments in *Hansard* and in the local community playing up on the issues, but he does not demonstrate his support for the workforce in Collie. He does not support what this government is trying to do to prevent Griffin Coal from basically having to walk away with those workers losing their jobs. This government is not interested in that happening in my community. I commend the government for that approach, and I condemn the Leader of the Liberal Party in the upper house for his approach to this issue.

I will not go through the articles, although they are a very interesting read. He says, “Help the workers in Collie.” The state government helps the workers in Collie. He says, “You are spending too much money helping the workers.” He says, “Save Griffin Coal.”

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms J.L. HANNS: He then says, “Don’t save Griffin Coal; you’re spending too much money.” He says that the lights are going to go out and the government needs to buy coal, and when it buys coal, he says that it should not have bought coal and it was a waste of money. He quoted \$300 million as the cost to government. I take members back to the initial point I made at the beginning of my contribution; namely, that mothballed Muja A and B failed

to deliver for the energy system in Western Australia. Its cost was \$308.4 million in 2012 when a report was tabled in Parliament. Hon Dr Steve Thomas needs to be very careful about throwing stones in glass houses, as the member for Murray–Wellington alluded to in her contribution.

I place on record my absolute thanks to the work of the Just Transition working group in Collie. It has done an incredible job working in partnership with the state government, local government and all the people I have spoken about today. At his budget lunch last week in Bunbury with Hon Don Punch, the member for Murray–Wellington and me, the Premier said that Collie had been noticed by the federal government. The comments from the federal government are around Collie being the model for how to transition communities in this day and age.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The Prime Minister said it.

Ms J.L. HANNS: I was not going to name-drop; the minister is well placed to name-drop. That comment was made by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. There has been international interest in how transition for communities is managed when governments and/or private companies make decisions about changes to a local workforce and a local economy more broadly. I have worked hard as the local member for Collie to ensure that we attract as much funding as we possibly can for all the projects we are looking at in Collie. The state government has done an incredible job of funding up-and-coming industries. The Premier recently announced in Collie funding for Green Steel of WA and further funding for Magnium Australia. Those two projects are significant steps forward for the creation of new industries. International Graphite is doing amazing things. All these projects are around either manufacturing or the critical minerals strategy to help evolve not just the local economy of Collie–Preston and the south west, but the economy of Western Australia and Australia more broadly.

Today the federal government announced that it will continue to work in collaboration with the state government. Hon Madeleine King announced some projects today that will receive federal government funding. I am so delighted to be able to report that the federal government is also funding International Graphite, a project that will be based in Collie, and will also co-contribute to Magnium Australia to commercialise the pilot plant in Collie. That is incredible news on behalf of Western Australia and the people, workers and community of Collie–Preston. I am really proud to stand here and be the local member and say that I have, hopefully, had a hand in those things being achieved for my community. I absolutely have to say thank you to Hon Mick Murray for his incredible work in the initial stages to reach the point we are at today with backing from the federal government and a really bright future for my community.

My contribution so far has taken a whole lot longer than I was hoping it would, because I have lots of other amazing things to talk about. I want to speak to the increase in the community sporting and recreation facilities fund that came out of this particular budget. We are all approached as local members to ask for support in upgrading community sporting facilities and community recreation facilities. This fund is an incredible way to be able to do that. I was very pleased to see the start of construction on the Reg and Jocey Fishwick Pavilion in the Shire of Dardanup a couple of weeks ago. The Shire of Dardanup, Eaton Cricket Club and Eaton Junior Football Club are all partnering on this amazing new facility, which will bring their much-needed facilities into the twenty-first century—that is right? Yes, good—even into the twenty-second century, hopefully! I note that the member for Central Wheatbelt is also in support of this project. I know that she visited Eaton Junior Football Club and called for money to be put into that project as part of the previous election. I am really pleased to be able to say that we have delivered on that. The Shire of Dardanup has contributed a significant amount of money to that project. The state government, through the CSRFF, will fund \$700 000 for the construction of the new Fishwick pavilion. That is a huge step forward for local sporting facilities. It will allow the change rooms to be female friendly and will open up those facilities to a much wider range of sporting codes. I am really pleased that that is able to go ahead in my community.

Another thing that I would like to mention is that Capel Equestrian Park was previously awarded \$250 000 from the CSRFF towards a new build of its pavilion. The state government is working in consultation with the Shire of Capel to deliver that project.

The Shire of Dardanup was the beneficiary of support from the state government for the upgrade to its skate park that happened last year. It received federal and state government funding. I am of the opinion that we should try to get money out of the feds and it does not matter which party is in power—to us it does, but to the community it does not. Working really well as a local member in consultation with one's federal government counterpart means that greater and bigger things can be delivered for the community. CSRFF money was put into the pump track at the skate park. The Shire of Dardanup also partnered with Lotterywest and the federal government to achieve that fantastic upgrade.

The Shire of Dardanup president, Mick Bennett, has been a long-time member of the council; I think he has been a member of the local council for 34 years. He has just announced that he is not going to be running at the next local government election. I would like to take the opportunity to thank him for his tireless work on behalf of his community over those years. Having been a councillor, I know it is sort of like this job to a certain extent in that there are people who agree and disagree with the decisions that you make. It is a challenge for local government councillors, particularly in the regions where they literally make a decision in council and are then in the shopping aisle with the people who are unhappy —

Ms M.J. Davies: That is a part of local government, absolutely.

Ms J.L. HANNS: Yes. Councillors hear from those people who are unhappy with the decisions they made because they play footy with them and those sorts of things —

Ms M.J. Davies: You play footy with them, go to the supermarket, at the pub —

Ms J.L. HANNS: Yes, absolutely.

I also wanted to very quickly mention that on Friday last week, I went to Collie Hospital and had a tour of the facilities on behalf of Minister Sanderson, who was not able to get there. Collie Hospital reached practical completion and handover on Friday last week. That particular upgrade was a \$14.7 million investment into the Collie Health Service. It has a brand new operating theatre—I will talk about the outstanding theatre redevelopment in a minute—upgrades to the waiting room and reception, new consultation rooms, state-of-the-art telehealth technology and local artworks.

I would really like to say a huge thankyou to Barry who is the director of nursing at Collie Hospital. I think Barry told me that he has been a theatre nurse for 30 years. I believe that what Barry does not know about operating theatres probably cannot be known at this point in time. He was very excited—I passed his comments on to Minister Sanderson—because he was told that Collie’s state-of-the-art operating theatre is the most up-to-date in Western Australia as we speak, until the next operating theatre is opened. The really special thing about Collie’s operating theatre is that it was designed by Barry—I am actually getting goose pimples—who put those 30 years of nursing experience into practice to make sure that when a patient comes into the operating theatre, they are dealt with in the friendliest, kindest and most caring way, which is no surprise to anyone who knows any of our nurses or doctors in the health system. He is able to have a circular operating theatre system so that patients do not pass any point in the operating theatre more than once. What that means in terms of technology and the advances in the sterilisation processes and making sure that it is a safer operating theatre for patients and their ongoing care cannot be underestimated. I am really proud to be standing here as the local member for Collie–Preston, not just in relation to this hospital, but also in recognition of the outstanding and record spend on health in Western Australia.

I will leave the rest of my comments for another time and place. I will finish by saying that I absolutely commend the bills to the house.

MR M. HUGHES (Kalamunda) [11.17 am]: I rise to make a reasonably brief contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023. This morning I attended the breakfast at which federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers underscored the importance of the Western Australian state economy to the wealth and fortunes of the nation. I think it is important that we recognise the strong contribution that this state has made, certainly over the period of the COVID pandemic, to provide the basis for the federal government to have a balanced budget for the first time in many years and deliver some important support to large sections of the community.

I would like to begin by reminding ourselves of a few pertinent facts that underscore the demonstrated capacity of the McGowan government to continue the planned diversification of our state’s economy and manage the state’s finances well.

As the Treasurer outlined in his second reading speech, since coming to office in 2017, this government has seen over 220 000 jobs created, including 122 000 jobs since the 2021 election, prior to which the government had set a target of creating 125 000 jobs during this term of government. That is a significant achievement and it should not be something that we pass over lightly. It stands in strong contrast to the previous Liberal–National government, which saw a net reduction in the number of jobs in this state during its term in office. As it stands, the unemployment rate for the March quarter was a low 3.4 per cent, and it is forecast to remain in that position for the foreseeable future. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics information for the March quarter, we have 1 524 100 Western Australians in work.

Since 2017, this government has capably managed the state’s finances, again in stark contrast to the debt and deficit approach of the previous Barnett government. We all know the annual budget deficits of the Barnett government and the projected debt levels inherited by this government when it came to office in March 2017, so let us not rehash the details again. Prudent financial management is the hallmark of WA Labor. It is of interest to me that the new federal Labor government has picked up on the opportunity to bank what will be windfalls as a process of reducing debt over time. It is an important lesson for all jurisdictions to learn.

As it stands, our Western Australian economy is strong and our financial management also leads the nation. These facts cannot be disputed, despite the efforts of the opposition. The 2023–24 operating surplus is forecast to be \$3.3 billion, with projected surpluses forecast to continue over the forward estimates out to 2025–26. The result of getting the state’s finances in order is the capacity to support funding for the state’s future. Unlike the previous administration, the Barnett government, we are not burdening future generations with ballooning debt. As we have heard, the operating surpluses are enabling a record \$39 billion in infrastructure investment to be made over the next four years, including new and expanded hospitals; improvements to existing schools; construction of new schools for our new suburbs; continuing work on the transformational Metronet project, with major investment in roads across the state; and progress on decarbonising electricity generation for this state.

The budget places net debt at \$27.9 billion as at 30 June 2023, which is, in anyone's terms, a whopping reduction of close to \$16 billion in the projected deficit when Labor came to office. We have heard that this will result in something in the order of \$4.3 billion in interest savings. WA's net-debt-to-revenue ratio now stands significantly lower than that in other states. It is one of the features of the circumstances we are facing that was commented on by our national Treasurer this morning. This budget is the continuation of a carefully considered approach to Western Australia's future, building on our record of strong financial management to keep the WA economy growing, to create quality local jobs, to invest in key services and to deliver on our election commitments for all Western Australians.

Returning the state's budget to a sustainable footing has taken significant effort and discipline by the McGowan Labor government in its first term, and this has continued over the first two years of the forty-first Parliament. The government has kept its promise to maintain a healthy budget, to deliver quality services and infrastructure, and to keep fees and charges low, while ensuring that we have capacity to respond to unforeseen crises. Importantly, it has enabled the government to significantly contribute to easing the pressure on family budgets through a range of sensible and carefully crafted measures that synchronise with the announcement that was made by our federal colleagues.

By maintaining a steady and strong focus on local manufacturing production, by creating WA jobs and by investing in training for the jobs of the future, this government is delivering on its comprehensive WA jobs plan. I remember well when the opposition derided the WA jobs plan in the fortieth Parliament as ambitious. We were asked to quantify it: what was the basis of the projections? That cynicism has been dispelled. The jobs plan has proven to be achievable by a determined and responsible government, and includes a range of initiatives to further diversify the economy in areas like high tech, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and the defence industry. Whether it is investing in areas such as hospitals, mental health, social housing and homelessness services, providing for safer, stronger and fairer communities or addressing climate action and renewable energy, this budget is part of a coherent, long-term plan to make sure that our state has an economic future that is properly grounded and sustainable.

For the last six years, I have listened to members of the Nationals WA constantly deny that the McGowan government is committed to governing for the whole of WA, particularly the regions. It is a simple fact that under WA Labor, regional WA will benefit from a record \$11.2 billion investment in regional infrastructure, and, of interest, only nine per cent of this will be contributed from the \$4 billion allocated to royalties for regions. We were accused at times of simply robbing royalties for regions to support infrastructure in other quarters. It is not the case. This budget includes \$5.3 billion in regional road funding and billions of additional dollars for the delivery of quality regional services in health, education and policing across the state.

I was pleased to see that we are committing another \$750 million to significantly boost housing supply and housing choice initiatives in WA, with a particular focus on supporting those most in need. I am particularly pleased that this includes a \$450 million increase in funding to the social housing fund, which will increase the total number of social houses to be added to 4 000. Affordable and available housing is needed across age demographics, including for people who rent properties in my electorate. In that regard, I welcome the recent decision of Amana Living not to proceed with the demolition of the social housing units comprising Parry Village in Lesmurdie. I am very pleased that Amana Living has listened and that this decision has been reversed, as, perversely, it would have meant that the land would have been cleared of rental accommodation for the construction of a replacement residential aged-care facility. I will come to the question of land availability for aged care a little later in my contribution. That decision has meant that 40 social housing units that would have been lost to the district will be retained. In the process of embarking upon that project as originally envisaged by Amana Living, 26 of the units have remained empty for two years, with many long-stay tenants having been moved out, with all the unnecessary dislocation and upending of lives that this caused. I would like to reflect upon the fact that this not-for-profit was essentially looking at maintaining housing stock for the most needy. In what I think was a very short-sighted business plan, it made a decision that it could dispense with those important social housing units to provide what would be seen to be a more profitable income stream for that organisation. As a former teacher and a former principal, I am of course always very interested in seeing what we can do in education. This budget provides a \$960 million boost, close to \$1 billion, for education and training. In total, this year's budget spend to deliver quality education for the twenty-first century stands at \$6.4 billion, which is a record.

I reflect on the fact that when I made my first contribution to this house, I lamented that many of the schools in the electorate of Kalamunda had been overlooked for close to two decades. I now run through what this government has provided to the electorate of Kalamunda since 2017 to contribute to improving the quality of school buildings. A total of \$3.9 million has been spent on the maintenance blitz across the district. We often forget that we came to the conclusion that we needed to get rid of some of the maintenance backlog in our schools. A further \$530 000 has been expended in minor improvements to schools across the district; \$1.5 million has been expended on the administration upgrade to Kalamunda Primary School; \$1.1 million has been spent on an administration upgrade to Falls Road Primary School; \$2 million has been allocated to a science, technology, engineering and mathematics project at Lesmurdie Senior High School; \$1.7 million for STEM-associated upgrades at Kalamunda Senior High School; \$730 000 to Gooseberry Hill Primary School to upgrade existing classrooms and air conditioning;

\$18.09 million to rebuild Lesmurdie Primary School on its existing site; and \$26.3 million on a major upgrade of Kalamunda Senior High School. If my arithmetic is correct—I was an English teacher, of course, not a maths teacher—that is at least \$55 888 000 spent on school buildings in my electorate since we came to office. My electorate is grateful for the focus that Labor has placed on upgrading school facilities across Kalamunda.

The work to improve schools in my electorate does not end there. I appreciate the need to prioritise expenditure on school buildings and to balance upgrades to existing schools with the demand to build new schools to meet the needs of new communities; however, there is a need for this government to examine the suitability of classroom accommodation for early childhood phases of learning in schools in my electorate, particularly Glen Forrest Primary School. The existing facilities are not the best and the school would benefit from a major upgrade of its facilities, particularly the construction of a purpose-built early years learning centre. I am very, very pleased that the new Minister for Education, Minister Buti, has agreed to come out to the electorate and look at this on the ground. He will pay that visit on 1 August. He will also attend a combined hills and Bibbulmun school principals network meeting representing the 17 public schools that service my electorate. That will be hosted at Glen Forrest Primary School.

In addition to the significant first phase, I hope, the existing funded project at Kalamunda Senior High School requires a continuation of a phased redevelopment in the campus in accordance with its new master plan to include an upgraded manual arts facility and the consolidation of its performing arts accommodation. I strongly argue that we need to look at the quality of special purpose learning areas that look to provide skills for students who are not necessarily going on to take ATAR subjects, and that the program activity in our high schools could be more closely linked to the TAFE courses that they might consider taking up. There is a great opportunity for high schools in the electorate of Kalamunda to take advantage of the fact that we have our new railcar manufacturing facility in Bellevue, and to look at ways to both develop curriculum offerings and the facilities required at our school.

Mrs L.A. Munday interjected.

Mr M. HUGHES: I am glad the member agrees with that.

In conjunction with the hardworking member for Swan Hills, Jessica Shaw, MLA, I hope to prosecute the case for a comprehensive review of the facilities at Eastern Hills Senior High School.

There has been a massive boost in the health budget. I listen almost day in, day out to attempts by the member for Vasse, the Leader of the Liberal Party, to rug the efforts of this government in providing quality health services across our communities. She wants to see a crisis at every turn, and, again, as I was saying, not least in hospital services. The member for Vasse ignores the fact that we have one of the best hospital services anywhere in the world, meeting the needs of what is a very large geographical area. The opposition's claims, member for Vasse, are laughable. The facts are plain. Since coming to office, this government has increased spending on health by 33.4 per cent from \$8.8 billion in 2016–17 to \$11.8 billion in this 2023–24 budget. The mental health budget has had a whopping increase of 57.3 per cent in the same period and has received a record \$1.4 billion allocation in this year's budget. What more can we do to convince the member for Vasse that we are not undershooting the health needs of our community in the area where we deliver, not in the GP clinics, but in our hospitals and mental health services?

I will crave an extension. I was told maybe 20 minutes was the maximum, but I will indulge myself. Other members have done that, so I think I will extend that indulgence to myself, if I may. I might get whipped out of the chamber, but that is what I intend to do.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M. HUGHES: I am thrilled that previous budgets have provided significant investment in Kalamunda Hospital. It has already received a \$9.5 million allocation for staged work to create a centre of excellence for palliative care for the East Metropolitan Region. This work is all but complete and I look forward to the Minister for Health officially opening this major project in the next few months. I am also very pleased that this year's commitment to provide a \$1.2 billion investment in public hospital infrastructure means that in 2027, \$81.1 million will go towards the expansion of the public services at St John of God Hospital in Midland, which services my district, through the provision of 60 beds and three operating rooms to the great benefit of the district.

Members will be aware of my work in aged care—not that we needed to bring it to the attention of the government—ensuring that in light of the pre-election commitment of September 2016, we would be fast-tracking aged care in WA by establishing the aged-care working group. We produced an aged-care availability report in 2019, which this government has acted on. We looked at ways in which we could provide land suitable for aged care and potentially make it available to the market so we might have a more even distribution of residential aged-care facilities across the state.

I am editing as I am going, but I was pleased to see the construction of the long-awaited Hall and Prior residential aged-care facility at Karingal Green, which is now in its third year of operation. It is in the Forrestfield electorate but services my community. I am particularly pleased that Hall and Prior has established a home-care wing, so to speak—I would describe it that way—and has recently opened an office in the centre of the township of Kalamunda. Karingal Green home care provides 34 clients in the area with professional assistance to continue living safely and

independently in their own homes, which is the preferred option for many people now, rather than looking to go into an aged-care facility to receive that support. I have commented on this in a previous speech. By delaying entering aged care, people ensure that they enter when they have a greater level of comorbidity. But that, again, is probably something I can reflect on in a different speech. The home-care program is very flexible and offers services tailored to the specific needs and goals of the individual client. The program also offers in-home respite assistance to carers looking after those in most need in their own home. That is an important aspect of aged care that we often forget. Carers need opportunities to be unburdened from the responsibility of looking after their elderly loved ones. The Karingal Green home-care program is provided to people in a radius of 20 kilometres of Hall and Prior's principal site in High Wycombe.

I will cut this short. I wanted to talk about economic development in the hills and the work we are doing with the Pickering Brook sustainability and tourism strategy, but I will save that for another day. I am keen for the government to respond to the changing economic circumstances faced by orchardists in my area and do whatever it can to assist local governments to broaden permitted land uses that are compatible with the rural and agricultural amenity of the district.

As I begin the process of winding up, I would like to pay particular thanks to Hon Alannah MacTiernan for providing a dedicated senior departmental project officer to work closely with growers in the hills and the Swan Valley. I am deeply appreciative of the particular interest shown by our new Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Jackie Jarvis, MLC, who continues to look to practical ways to sustain horticulture in the hills for its strong potential for renewed growth and its links to associated tourism enterprises.

It was my privilege, on 4 May, to open the AusCider national conference held in Kalamunda on behalf of the minister and then join her at the conference dinner later that day held at Core Cider, which is one of the premier producers and hospitality venues in my district. A couple of days later, the minister was back again, giving her time to attend Canning Orchard for the inaugural long-table dinner to showcase our district's produce and culinary expertise. I look forward to working very closely with the minister over the next 18 months or so before the next election.

To wind up, the McGowan government was elected in 2017 with a solid plan promising a solid future for the people of our state. We have delivered. This budget continues the process of building on our achievements since we came to office. The WA Labor government is focused on Western Australia being a modern, inclusive society in which each Western Australian wherever they live is treated equally and afforded the same access to services and opportunities. WA Labor brought a fresh approach to dealing with the state's transport needs, including establishing our fully funded Metronet, facilitating transport-oriented development in the metropolitan region and creating long-term manufacturing and service jobs in my district, which will flow on into the future accruing benefits to the economy as a whole. Above all, we have benefited from WA Labor's achievable plan for jobs creation, reducing unemployment and dealing with the economic challenges the state faces as it responds to climate change and the need to move towards clean renewable energy. I commend the bills to the house.

MRS L.A. MUNDAY (Dawesville) [11.45 am]: I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023. I want to thank the McGowan Labor government for delivering the 2023 state budget with another year of record investment for people all over WA, particularly in regional areas such as my electorate of Dawesville. The electorate includes the suburbs of Dudley Park, Erskine, Halls Head, Falcon, Wannanup and Dawesville itself. With rapid population growth for over a decade and growing economic and tourism opportunities, there is a huge amount of potential in our area, and as a result we have seen an increase in demand for services and funding. Again, we have seen record investment in areas such as health and mental health, community safety, education and training, infrastructure and more—everything that our everyday constituents are looking for.

WA's stable and responsible budget management continues into 2023, and the McGowan Labor government is setting up the Peel region for the long term by diversifying the economy and creating jobs, boosting regional health and mental health investment by a record amount, and providing important cost-of-living relief to local households.

We are also providing \$712 million in cost-of-living relief to assist households, with the return this year of the \$400 household electricity credit to every WA household. My dad is a pensioner—after mum passed away, he went back to a single pension—and this will make a huge difference to him. He was very excited to know that he will not have to look at paying an electricity bill until probably the end of the year. In additional support, this year there will be an option of \$826 per household for those in our community who are doing it extra hard—how wonderful is that! It is good that the Premier; Treasurer has noticed it is hard for a lot of people.

The people of WA have again seen the difference that strong, persistent and decisive leadership from their government can make. This budget shows our state's strength. We are using our success to deliver for our future. I support this budget delivered by Mark McGowan, particularly with its focus on the Peel region.

I have been a member of Parliament for nearly two years now. I spent 20 years as an ambulance paramedic and more recently qualified as a registered psychologist. My experience in the areas of health and mental health and improving patient outcomes in our community are the reason I decided to enter politics. I am proud to be giving

my third speech on the state budget as the member for Dawesville with the knowledge that this state budget is set to include a record investment of \$2.7 billion in our healthcare system and mental health services across WA, taking the total additional spend since 2021 to \$10 billion.

The package will deliver \$28.5 million for workforce attraction and retention, including paying up to \$12 000 of HECS fees for 350 newly qualified nurses and midwives who commence employment in regional WA, with priority given to hard-to-staff sites, plus funding for wraparound support for up to 1 200 graduates in our hospitals. There is an allocation of \$75 million to address emergency department pressures and ambulance ramping, increasing the total spend to \$452.7 million committed in this term of government.

Our government is committed more than ever to putting patients first in regional WA. What does this mean for our Dawesville electorate residents? It means quality health care closer to home. Over the last five years, the Labor government has invested millions in regional healthcare infrastructure and will continue to do so. Something close to my heart is the extra regional paramedics being funded to help support our hardworking volunteers who give up their time for training and to work in their local towns. I was one of two paramedics who opened the St John Ambulance sub-centre in Dawesville some time ago. I think it was in 2010 or 2011. I worked to train and retain volunteers. As an aside, last night, I represented the member for Mandurah who is a life member of the Mandurah SES and the member for Murray–Wellington at a fun night to celebrate volunteers. It was Wear Orange Wednesday in recognition of their hard work. There was cake and games of two-up, and lots of awards were given out. I said to them last night that volunteering is super important for the community across the board, but I personally feel that the commitment is different for those who give up their time to volunteer in the emergency services field. Those people not only give up their time, but also put their mental health at stake, because they will often see difficult things that are really emotional. Sitting with people on often the hardest day of their life is quite tough. It is very meaningful and rewarding, but it can also be tough. I give a huge shout-out to all our emergency services volunteers.

Our government is funding extra regional paramedics through the modernised contract with St John Ambulance WA, which is amazing. That came into effect on 1 January 2023. The government will boost the number of paid paramedics in the bush by almost 31 full-time equivalents. The government is also dedicated to creating a flying squad roster of paramedics to help support regional volunteers. That is being funded under this contract to provide relief as well. My husband, Steve, who is a paid paramedic in the metro area, did some country relief in Kalgoorlie. The member for Kalgoorlie was saying how hard it is to retain paramedics. He was meant to be there for four weeks last year, but ended up staying six months to help support the permanent paramedics there. It is hard going out to the regions. It is a different kind of job. There is a lot of support in the metro area—backup ambulances are a phone call away—but paramedics in the regions sometimes go out for hours on end to places that have no phone service and no support, so it is just them and their crewmate. It can sometimes be difficult. It is really good that the Minister for Health is supporting country paramedics.

On Friday last week, the member for Mandurah, the member for Murray–Wellington and I held a state budget breakfast for the community. City of Mandurah Mayor Rhys Williams asked a question about where we are at with the Peel Health Campus upgrade. Before I go into that, I will list what is going to be delivered: 63 additional inpatient beds, 12 chemotherapy places, 20 mental health inpatient beds, one additional operating theatre, at least 15 palliative care hospice beds, more outpatient services, new builds of better medical imaging services and the introduction of a 10-bed mental health emergency centre. That is absolutely amazing. This is in addition to the expansion of the emergency department that has already taken place and the extra car park. Getting back to where we are at, it is probably easiest to quote an article from the *Mandurah Coastal Times* dated Tuesday, 16 May, headed “‘We’ve got to get this right’: David Templeman says Peel Health Campus redevelopment bill likely to increase”. The article states —

Mr Templeman said the history of Peel Health Campus was convoluted and had become a “political football” over the years, before reassuring attendees the State Government remained “absolutely committed” to the project.

“We’ve got to get this right,” he said. “We’ve got to get this hospital, and all of the associated health issues with having a major redevelopment of a hospital, right.

“This is going to be our one go at this.”

The member for Mandurah went on to say —

... intensive scoping work was being undertaken to ensure the hospital catered to both current and future demand.

“Will it cost more? I think it will,” he said.

“The scoping and the planning has got to be done in the most time-managed way as possible.

“Then, we need to have a commitment (on) the real timeline, about when we might see something happen.”

Mr Templeman said planning should be completed towards the end of the year.

“That will effectively determine what extra cost is going to be required, then we want to see that work start,” he said.

But Mr Templeman did not indicate whether there was any sort of timeline in the works.

“What I care about is making sure we get a hospital that delivers to the current and future needs of our growing population,” he said. “That is the critical factor.

“If it costs more, I will demand more. And I think that’s going to be something that’s going to have to happen.

“I can tell you absolutely, me, Robyn and Lisa are committed to make sure we deliver it. Because it has to happen for our community.”

I think the member for Murray–Wellington would agree, as I do, with the member for Mandurah’s comments. In a press conference on Tuesday, 16 May, our very hardworking Minister for Health reiterated the commitment of the McGowan government to the Peel Health Campus upgrade. At the press conference, a journalist said —

You mentioned servicing the southern corridor; Andrew Hastie is ... raising concern about the slow progress of the Peel Health Campus. Where is that at? Will you give us an update?

Minister Sanderson replied —

Well the Labor government has had a longstanding commitment to the Peel Health Campus, and I remind Andrew Hastie that it was a Liberal government who privatised it and we saw some disastrous outcomes from that. So the Labor government is doing a transition back to public hands and that will be completed next year. So all of those services will be delivered by the public health system. I also remind Andrew Hastie that it is his government that saw a decimation of general practice and bulk billing practices in the Peel region and did absolutely nothing to fix it. So there is pressure on the hospital there and we are working through that.

But we are committed to developing that hospital and we are going through that process now. There will be significant grounds work that we expect to start soon.

What is the saying, members? It is: be careful when pointing a finger at others, because there are three fingers pointing back at you. If we are going to shine a light on anything, I point out that the state Liberal Party had the perfect opportunity to address the needs of the Peel Health Campus when Dr Kim Hames held my seat of Dawesville from 2005 to 2017—a whopping 12 years. I think he was the Deputy Premier for a great deal of that time and he is also a doctor. If the Liberal Party had had the foresight to put even half our funding into Peel Health Campus infrastructure, the people of the Peel region would have a fit-for-purpose hospital to cope with the population now. Luckily for my region, the McGowan-led state government and our awesome Minister for Health have shown a commitment to making a difference. This government has handed down another massive budget surplus of \$4.2 billion for the current financial year. It is because of the Premier’s leadership and strong approach that we can now right the wrongs and invest over \$152 million into transitioning this health campus into a long-awaited regional hospital.

One last comment I will address is the completely fabricated and highly dangerous suggestion by the federal member for Canning and the state opposition that when patients are ramped at hospitals, they are ramped in the back of ambulances. That is simply not true. Yes, there is a ramping, but there is never any ramping in the back of an ambulance. The policy of St John Ambulance is that when an ambulance crew is ramped at a hospital, they are to take their patient either on a stretcher or in a wheelchair, or walk them, into the hospital. They are triaged into the hospital system as soon as possible, but the care of the patient remains the responsibility of the ambulance crew until they are handed over to the hospital. If a patient can come off the stretcher and into the waiting room, they are then the responsibility of the hospital and the crew can clear for another job. I was astonished by the federal member’s ability to stoop so low to score political points by misleading the public on every forum he could find, whether in the local newspaper, on social media or through a mail-out. It is political pointscoring like this that makes me concerned about vulnerable people in our community who might believe this rubbish and fail to call 000 in their time of need. During my 20 years as a paramedic, I have helped many elderly people who laid on the floor for hours overnight because they did not want to worry us. This fearmongering campaign that critically ill people are ramped in the back of ambulances is extremely dangerous, so much so that I wrote to our local paper to put matters right.

Our federal member has also told a huge pants-on-fire furphy about a constituent from my electorate being ramped in the back of an ambulance without food or water for eight hours. I cannot tell members the number of calls and emails I received from my ambo mates asking me to call him out, because his mistruths brought them into disrepute. How dare he suggest that we would leave a poor old lady in the back of an ambulance without meeting any of her basic rights; it was simply disgusting! A paramedic colleague of mine was so incensed by this insinuation that she does not care about her patients that she rang Mr Hastie’s office to complain. What transpired was a very interesting conversation and an admission by his staff that they might have embellished the story about Lyn. What a disgraceful attempt at political pointscoring.

To be clear, no patient is ever ramped in the back of an ambulance and critically ill patients are never, ever ramped—full stop. Anyone who is a priority 1—if they come in with lights and sirens—is immediately handed over to the department and put in a resuscitation bed. Priority 2 patients, who might come in with chest pain, a stroke or something like that, are immediately handed over as well. They might have to wait a minute or two for a bed, but they are seen by a doctor and a nurse straightaway and treated straightaway until they are stabilised. Priority 3 and 4 patients are different; they can be ramped. Those patients might have cellulitis or they might be a dementia patient with a fracture. Those people are ramped. They stay with us and we care for them; we take them to X-ray, we give them bloods, we can give them pain relief and we are in touch with doctors and nurses within the hospital. If they start to decline, they are handed over. At no stage is any critical patient left in any way, shape or form ignored in the back of the ambulance. It is simply not true.

Moving on to more positive comments, the 2023–24 state budget demonstrates major investments into WA’s future by tackling climate change through a \$3 billion package, ensuring that the state has cleaner, stronger, reliable and affordable energy into the future, as well as investing in the environment. Peel initiatives include the \$2.8 billion investment into transitioning WA’s energy system for a low-carbon future and \$18.8 million to continue the Healthy Estuaries WA program to improve the water quality of estuaries across the region.

From a local perspective, I have the pleasure to co-chair, with the member for Mandurah, the committee for Bindjareb Djilba, otherwise known as the Peel–Harvey estuary protection plan. This is a whole-of-government response to improve water quality in the Peel–Harvey estuary system in a way that responds to climate change impacts and the pressure of urban development and agricultural expansion. We have made a commitment, as the government of Western Australia, to implement this plan and work across local and state departments together, creating new and innovative ways to link land use, planning and development to water quality outcomes that support both human and environmental needs.

I will mention the people, other than me and Hon David Templeman, at the table who are investing their time and, just as importantly, their teams’ time and efforts. Trudy Evans is the senior environmental officer for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. Trudy is the stalwart. She does the hard work. She is the secretary to everything. She is like the right hand to David and me, so a big shout-out to Trudy for her support and help. We really appreciate it. There is also Simon Taylor, executive director, regional delivery, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation; George Walley, a Bindjareb Noongar elder and local environmental tourism business owner; Jane O’Malley, chief executive officer of the Peel–Harvey Catchment Council; Jacquie Stone, director of policy, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage; Andrew Ward, CEO of the Peel Development Commission; Brett Brenchley, executive manager, natural environment, City of Mandurah; Andrew Trosic, director, development services, Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale; Greg Delahunty, manager, planning and environmental services, Shire of Murray; Jason Mackay, principal, drainage and liveable communities, Water Corporation; Karen Oborn, director of infrastructure and development; Simon Hall, director, sustainable development, Shire of Harvey; and Mark Cugley, district manager, Swan coastal district, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mrs L.A. MUNDAY: There is also Heather Percy, principal research scientist.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Short.

Mrs L.A. MUNDAY: Short. Okay! There is a lot of other people. Thank you very much to everyone.

I give a quick shout-out to the Western Australian Seabird Rescue Group in Mandurah. I had the opportunity to head out very early one morning with Danny, Barb and Lee to go birdwatching, or more like bird checking. Seabird Rescue is a tight-knit network of seabird and waterbird rescuers based in our region. It was founded in 2003 in Mandurah. Every year, its members rescue and rehabilitate hundreds of waterbirds, including herons, swans and ducks. They are available 24/7 every day of the year, including Christmas and New Year’s Eve. These people are super-dedicated volunteers who man the hotline and turn out rain, hail or shine to rescue birds. So far this year, they have received 623 phone calls and rescued 334 birds. They are enthusiastic and they need more volunteers and support. Reports of distressed seabirds and waterbirds can go to the hotline (08) 6102 8464. I give a quick shout-out to Lee, Barb, Jo, Danny, Jacqueline and Bourke. There is only a handful of these people and they do an outstanding job in the Mandurah area.

I am proud of this state budget delivered by the McGowan Labor government and its commitment to invest in the Peel region, particularly in the growing electorate of Dawesville. We have seen many investments in the community, infrastructure, quality training and education programs and the much-needed expansion of our health and mental health care system to include more innovative services. It is clear that the McGowan Labor government has not forgotten about regional areas in this budget and has worked to ensure that we have the same level of access to, affordability and availability of, service delivery as the rest of the state. I am excited that my electorate will see the benefit of these policies for a long time to come. I want to thank the Premier; Treasurer for his investment in this state budget for the people living in the south west region and the people in the suburbs of the Dawesville region. I commend the bills to the house.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.04 pm]: I am pleased to provide a response to the government's seventh budget, the Premier's third as Treasurer. This is a budget he claimed was about sowing the seeds for a strong economy, providing for generations to come—a budget that should have delivered significant opportunities and provided a legacy for those future generations of WA on the back of the wealth gifted to the McGowan government during the greatest boom Western Australia has ever experienced. Instead, it was a budget of empty promises and missed opportunities—a missed opportunity to provide meaningful relief to our most vulnerable in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, a missed opportunity for taxation reform, a missed opportunity to diversify our economy and a missed opportunity to pay down the debt as was promised again and again when the Premier was in opposition.

The McGowan government has been the recipient of \$19 billion in surpluses over the past five years thanks to booming iron ore royalties and GST returns put in place by the former coalition government. Another \$11 billion in surpluses is forecast across the forward estimates period. This has nothing to do with good financial management, but rather a significant change in fortune thanks to the GST floor legislated by the previous Liberal–National government, coupled with huge global demand for iron ore and a sharp increase in its price, which has gone from a low of \$58 per tonne to a high of \$215 per tonne and is currently sitting at around \$US100 a tonne. This has delivered more than \$44 billion in royalties since this government has taken office. It is simply astounding that on the back of such a healthy budget position gifted to this government that this is the best the government could come up with—no inspiring ideas, no game-changing infrastructure and very little tax reform. This is a government that, despite the dollars pouring into its coffers and unprecedented control, has overseen a broken hospital system, a housing crisis and record levels of police leaving the force.

What this budget did deliver was more of the McGowan government's spin, building on its legacy of empty promises. One does not have to look very far to find the first glaring broken election promise—forecast debt in the forward years. When in opposition, the Premier promised Western Australians that he would repay debt slowly, like a mortgage, claiming he was a safe pair of hands with sound economic and financial management. The Premier used every opportunity to tell anyone who would listen how bad debt had become in Western Australia. This was promoted with a ridiculous so-called debt monster that accompanied the now Premier to his press conferences. Upon forming government, Labor took every opportunity to tell everyone how bad things had become, declaring WA's financial situation was the worst since the Great Depression and that everyone would need to contribute to budget repair.

After all the hard talk in seven years of the McGowan government, what has actually occurred? Debt is expected to fall to \$27.8 billion in 2022–23, down from \$29.5 billion at the time of the midyear review. Most would consider this to be a good outcome, given that debt was \$31.9 billion in 2016–17 when this government was first elected. Astoundingly, however, we will see debt rise to \$36 billion in three years' time, with the budget papers showing cash deficits every year for the next four years. It is simply beyond belief that after receiving \$19 billion in surpluses, debt will still increase under this government—a government that was elected with a promise and mandate to pay it off.

There is also an opportunity for tax reform. After all, there is no better time to reform state taxes and/or royalties than when the finances are doing well. As the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia has stated, Western Australia has one of the highest rates of payroll tax, or tax on jobs, in the country. Therefore, this budget could have been a great opportunity to address that, along with further reforms to stamp duty. Instead, it was another missed opportunity to throw our small business sector a bone in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis.

What about WA households? What part of the \$4 billion surplus recorded this year will be passed on to the thousands of Western Australians struggling to make ends meet and keep the lights on, particularly with so many people due to come off their fixed mortgages on the back of 11 consecutive rate rises in the last year? The government's \$400 electricity rebate will undoubtedly be welcome, but I question why the government, with such a healthy surplus, felt compelled to increase fees and charges on a range of services as well. This is a budget that gives with one hand and takes with the other. Western Australian households will have to find an extra \$150, on average, to pay for the increased fees and charges the government is slugging them for water, electricity and licensing fees, to name a few. The budget papers also highlight that these fees and charges are expected to increase by 2.5 per cent for each of the next three years, adding another \$167 in fees in 2024–25 and going up to \$175 in 2026–27.

These fees come at a time when approximately 528 000 energy customer accounts have debt, an increase of 104 000 accounts compared with June 2022. In addition, approximately 108 000 customer accounts are classified as having some kind of financial difficulty, which is an increase of 16 000 compared with June 2021. This has resulted in disconnections continuing to occur at alarming rates. Charities and not-for-profits have been carrying the load of the cost-of-living crisis; they are being inundated with requests for emergency food, housing and financial counselling support. The opposition alliance called for a \$300 million boost over the next two years to support them, but this was ignored by the budget. We are not the only ones saying that the government has this aspect wrong. A WAtoday article states —

Anglicare WA chief executive Mark Glasson said the state's strong economic position provided an opportunity to invest in long-term strategies to improve support for families in WA, but that had been lost with today's announcement.

“For those families that are in the midst of a cost of living and housing crisis this state has never seen before, there is very little in the way of long-term benefits for them in today’s budget,” he said.

“We needed a serious commitment to long-term pipelines of housing construction that is social and affordable, but that’s not in there.

“We needed support immediately available for people to secure their rentals now, so they don’t become homeless the next time their lease expires, but that’s not in there either.”

It is another missed opportunity to provide targeted relief to the agencies helping our state’s most vulnerable.

Although the McGowan government is now enjoying the significant windfalls of the resources boom, it needs to take a step back and realise that this is the result of the hard work of previous governments that opened up the state to trade and, more importantly, the hardworking people of Western Australia. No sound economic and financial management has been involved in delivering the outcomes Western Australia has received over the last three years. Instead, it has relied on two factors only: the higher iron ore price and the federal Liberal–National government fixing the GST. You would think that any Premier graced by such good luck would just keep quiet and enjoy the windfalls he has received—not ours, though. Instead, he chooses to rile the other states into potential action. Another WAtoday article states —

Western Australian Premier Mark McGowan has warned “wildly angry” states from attempting to dismantle GST reforms after his government posted one of the country’s biggest ever budget surplus on the back of booming iron ore prices.

...

In a chest-beating presentation filled with stark comparisons to the deficit-laden budgets of his eastern states counterparts, Mr McGowan declared if WA were its own country, it would be the second most prosperous region in the globe after China.

...

“If you compare us with other states, I kid you not, they will be wildly angry and will be wanting to undo the GST deal because they failed to budget properly,” he said.

I note that in last year’s budget speech the Premier bragged about how other state premiers looked like they had “swallowed a bumblebee”. These comments not only are unstatesmanlike, but also do little to alleviate the GST tension that exists between jurisdictions. The Premier is now using \$1.6 million of taxpayers’ money to employ three so-called GST fairness fighters to protect the windfalls he has been flaunting in front of our eastern states counterparts—what a ridiculous state of affairs.

We do not need to look any further than law and order to see this government’s failings to do the basics and keep our community safe. The government goes to great lengths to obfuscate the issues facing Western Australia Police Force and crime levels in our community. It says crime is trending down, but the devil is in the detail. The figures the government relies on are the result of falling drug-related offences, due to border restrictions, and people staying at home during COVID, which reduced property-related crime. A closer look at the statistics reveals that violent crime is up 14 per cent and family-related offences are up 34.9 per cent. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, WA has the highest rate of reported family and domestic violence-related assault offences against females across all states, with 1 254 assaults for 100 000 females reported to police in 2021.

I recently met with police and community members in Laverton and Leonora. These communities are crying out for support to address the increasing levels of alcohol-fuelled violence. There has been a 60 per cent increase in violent crime in Kalgoorlie, a 22 per cent increase in Laverton and a 32 per cent increase in Leonora. Towns across regional WA have been pleading to the McGowan government to help deal with the increase in youth crime, and their pleas continue to fall on deaf ears.

Unfortunately, our police officers also feel that their concerns are falling on deaf ears. This is highlighted by the alarming number of officers quitting the force, which can only be described as a damning reflection of the McGowan government’s treatment of our frontline workers. There were 473 police resignations in 2022, which included 128 resignations in November alone. Between 1 January and 14 February this year, another 61 officers resigned. This is the highest number in the state’s 189-year history. Parliamentary questions revealed that at the end of last year there were 182 vacancies, with 96 of those in the regions.

Our police are also struggling under the pressures of the job. In 2019, 777 personnel accessed mental health support. In 2022, 3 327 police officers accessed mental health support services. You would think that the stresses attached to the job would be ringing alarm bells for the government, but what does the government do? Rather than look at the figures and try to improve the morale and culture within the force or address workplace pressures, the government says, “Nothing to see here. We will poach new officers from overseas and cut mental health programs, including mental health first aid.” No wonder there is an exodus of police leaving the force; they simply do not feel supported in their jobs. The opposition supports WA’s policemen and policewomen, and the McGowan government should too.

I turn now to the state of the health portfolio, which has become a complete mess under the McGowan government. Lives are being put at risk unnecessarily. This is a government that effectively took a razor to the health budget in its first term in government, and now we are seeing a desperate game of catch-up in the health system, which is under incredible pressure. Is it any wonder that we have seven of the eight worst-performing emergency departments in the country, an elective surgery waitlist that has skyrocketed, and record numbers of ambulance ramping of more than 66 000 hours last year? One of the main challenges with ramping has been a lack of capacity in the system. The budget's planned additional 600 beds are good news but, as always, there is very little detail. I look forward to better understanding where these beds will come from and when they will be delivered, given that we had the lowest number of beds per capita in the country, going into COVID.

The \$2.7 billion for health and mental health announced in this year's budget is a great headline, but a quick look at the newspapers illustrates how misleading this is. Almost half is for capital works programs that will have no immediate benefit to our health system until they are completed. It also includes \$544 million over the next four years to start the women's and babies' hospital. After \$9.5 million has already been spent on this project—no doubt, for consultation, design and plans—the Minister for Health ignored it all and moved the project to a site 20 kilometres south of the river. This project has been talked about for more than three years, yet we are now back to square one. Where is the business case that says we should move the project? Where is the advice? How much of the \$1.8 billion allocated in initial funding for the project will be used to fund upgrades to the Osborne Park Hospital to bring it up to scratch? Will the scope of the project still include upgrades to the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, as outlined in the original plan? Significant issues and concerns around this plan have not been addressed yet, but we have seen the Minister for Health ignore concerns raised by experts and instead make a classic captain's call. The decision to abandon the original location of this hospital without consultation from health and amid a range of very serious public concerns from neonatal experts that the new location will increase the risk of death and disability for the state's most at-risk newborns is a major issue. The former head of the neonatal intensive care units at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women and Princess Margaret Hospital, Professor Karen Simmer, called this a dangerous decision. I am sure there are many who cannot speak up for fear of retribution who agree with her—and I bet the Minister for Health knows that. The \$760 million for general health over the next four years equates to \$190 million a year, while our overworked and overstretched emergency departments have been given \$75 million over the same period. An additional \$150 million for mental health will do little to address the chronic shortage of mental health services in this state.

It is simply astounding that funding for mental health prevention services falls to just 1.3 per cent in 2026–27. Given that the *Sustainable health review: Final report to the Western Australian government* states that prevention should be at least five per cent of the mental health budget, this is simply inexcusable. In the asset investment program this year we see a six per cent investment in health compared to 35 per cent in transport. It comes at a time when the sustainable health review also remains largely unfunded and unimplemented. That document provided a road map for the future of our system and if it had been implemented, perhaps the government would not be scrambling to address so many issues and problems.

The other health initiative announced in this budget included HECS–HELP to graduate nurses and midwives, but only if they move to the regions. What is missing in this budget announcement is where these critical and much-needed healthcare workers will live and incentives around that. It is another empty promise for an initiative that cannot be delivered without appropriate community-based housing and services.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L. METTAM: This brings me to training and skills shortages. One of the first decisions of the McGowan government in 2017 was to make changes to the state skills list and remove Perth as a regional centre. It does not matter which way we look at this. In the fullness of time this decision will be seen to be one of the worst policy decisions the McGowan government has made and it has contributed significantly to the skills shortages we are currently experiencing. The Premier gloated at the time that no longer could overseas workers be fast-tracked into bricklaying, tiling or electrician jobs. The impact of this decision saw skilled migration fall by 51 per cent in the first three years of this government, while training also fell by 17 per cent over the same period. Astoundingly, we are now trying to import migrants to fill those very trades that the Premier bragged about stopping. The Master Builders Association of Western Australia said that WA would need to attract around 26 000 tradies by 2026. That will include targeting more than 1 000 overseas tradies to move to WA, with financial incentives and tweaks to the visa system. This has created yet more challenges: how do we house the migrants this government desperately seeks to attract to build our houses, work in our hospitals and support our police?

Housing is one of the most significant challenges in the state with commencements falling to some of the lowest recorded this year. This is exacerbated by a lack of available private rentals and rent increases that are pushing families to the limit. Vacancy rates are currently below one per cent and many Western Australians are forced to live in tents or cars as they are unable to find appropriate accommodation. WA is now the sleeping rough capital of the country, with more than 2 315 people sleeping rough according to the latest census data on homelessness—a 114 per cent increase from 2016. It is all good for the Premier to stand in this place and say that we are one of

the most affordable places to live in Australia; however, that does not help families who have to find the additional money to deal with the highest capital city rental hikes in the country at 12.8 per cent a year. With a median rent of \$560 a week, renting is currently out of reach for many single-income and low-income households. When questioned on where the additional migrant workers who were being attracted to the state were going to stay, we were told that it was a conundrum but not to worry because they would live in shared accommodation. It is extraordinary that the McGowan government has allowed this crisis to get so dire that there is an issue of where to house the workers required.

Social housing numbers should also be an embarrassment for this government with the most recent figures highlighting that more than 600 fewer social housing dwellings are available now compared with the situation in 2017. This government has sold off more homes than it has built in the social housing space. It is a reflection of a government that has lost its way and is increasingly out of touch with the challenges Western Australians face. Having \$600 million sitting in a social housing investment fund does nothing to get people into the homes they desperately need now—nor does it provide any time frame for when more dwellings might be provided. The social housing list has grown from 15 072 households in 2017 to 18 963 households last year, which is almost 34 000 individuals who are waiting two years or longer to get a home. That wait is due to a blowout from the current 115 weeks to 130 weeks. This is a government that fails to deliver.

The McGowan Labor government's legacy will not be shaped only by the significant once-in-a-lifetime opportunities it has had to invest and build a better Western Australia, but rather by its failure to effectively do so. This Labor government is unable to build or deliver infrastructure; it is big on spin and empty promises but cannot deliver. The women's and babies' hospital was promised in 2020 but will not be delivered until at least 2029.

This government promised in 2017 to build three medi-hotels across the metropolitan region. Six years on all that has been delivered is four beds at Royal Perth Hospital. That is fewer than one bed a year for a key health election commitment to address the serious bed capacity issues in the system. After seven budgets, we are yet to see a single Metronet station opened, with an additional \$1.2 billion provided this year alone for cost blowouts. What started as a \$3.7 billion commitment is now a more than \$11 billion project. The only ribbon that has been cut was on the Forrestfield–Airport Link that was started by the former Liberal–National government. Westport's outer harbour project, which former Treasurer Ben Wyatt stated would happen last term, is funded only to complete a business case. The government's so-called flagship homelessness project, Common Ground, is still a patch of dirt three years after the East Perth site was secured. These are all projects that should have been at least in construction now but have failed to be delivered.

This budget also provides seed funding for the state's transition towards net zero. The alliance opposition supports the transition; however, there are significant challenges for industry and government, some of which relate to the decision that Western Australia's state-owned coal power stations be retired by 2030. The \$2.8 billion in this budget, which includes a 500-megawatt battery energy storage system in Collie, is a significant investment for the state and the local community. However, as the shadow Minister for Energy pointed out, the funding for the battery project and its benefits, such as how many homes it will back up on the worst energy days, is opaque at best. This major funding allocation came a day after the WA energy minister flagged a major expansion to the south west interconnected system, foreshadowing that more than 4 000 kilometres of new transmission lines would be required within 20 years. Transmission lines are costly and it is unclear who will pay. The minister stated that the current system was too small to accommodate an expected tripling in demand as the private sector begins transitioning to green energy to power heavy industry in WA. This represents a significant challenge to households and also for industry, given the significant costs associated with energy. Let us not forget that this government just attempted to increase household fees by stealth by increasing streetlight tariffs by 44 per cent. We all agree that we must reduce our emissions, but it remains a reasonable question: how much will the transition cost and who will ultimately pay?

Western Australia needs to be an open and competitive trade-oriented destination and jurisdiction, one that is nimble and responsive to changing markets and growing global demand. Demand has created a significant opportunity for this state, thanks to our critical mineral reserves and our reputation as a trusted and reliable supplier. Increasingly, demand for our resources is expanding beyond traditional commodities such as iron ore and gold. The pace of technological development has been accelerating and with it the demand for minerals critical to the defence, aerospace, automotive, renewable energy, telecommunications and agritech sectors. However, the ability for the resources sector to move into further processing on Western Australian soil is dependent on the ability to process these chemically complex raw materials competitively. This has been highlighted by the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, which stated —

“Western Australia needs a more focused approach to diversifying our economy, and one that leverages off the strength of the mining industry, with investment in downstream processing to realise greater value from our resources here at home.”

The development of critical minerals can enhance the state's strategic importance and geopolitical standing. Many countries heavily depend on imports to meet their critical mineral needs, which, as highlighted during the

COVID pandemic, makes them vulnerable to supply disruptions and price fluctuations. By developing a robust domestic supply chain, Western Australia can ensure its self-sufficiency and strengthen its position in global trade. In an increasingly competitive international environment, the McGowan government should be doing everything in its power to foster innovation, attract investment and create new economic opportunities in our state.

Finally, turning to my electorate of Vasse, we have seen the McGowan Labor government illustrate a lack of vision with no new funding for the expansion of the Busselton Margaret River Airport terminal or the redevelopment of Margaret River Hospital and emergency department upgrades, highlighting the government's out-of-sight, out-of-mind attitude to people living in regional areas. The Premier made a big deal about support for regional Western Australians, but the devil is always in the detail and the lack of detail for any major job-creation and infrastructure initiatives shows that this government has really run out of ideas. Budgets are supposed to be forward looking, but the biggest investments that the McGowan Labor government has committed to are largely road projects and other infrastructure projects already underway—nothing new and more of the same.

There was a missed opportunity to invest in upgrades to and the expansion of the Busselton Margaret River Airport terminal, which would have built on the region's international reputation, interstate capacity and the growth that the airport has already experienced as a result of the former government's commitment to the expansion project. The government spends millions on international and interstate advertising to drive tourism and jobs in our region, but it does little to back it up with a funding commitment for a more modern and welcoming airport. The lack of funding to upgrade Margaret River Hospital is a glaring oversight that exposes the government's smoke-and-mirrors commitment to people living in the region. The WA Country Health Service identified priority upgrades to the hospital more than two years ago, but nothing has been committed to.

In conclusion, this budget should have delivered significant opportunities and provided a legacy for future generations. Unfortunately, it has done neither. Instead, it simply highlights that the McGowan Labor government has done exactly what it promised no government should ever be able to do again and squandered the greatest boom this state has ever experienced.

MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany) [12.33 pm]: I am very happy to rise following the member for Vasse's contribution about the money spent in regional areas. I am proud to stand here as the member for Albany to highlight and bring attention to some of the projects that are happening in the region.

I was a bit miffed by my mayor, Dennis Wellington, with whom I have a very good working relationship. He came to the budget briefing with Minister Whitby in Albany on Friday. We also had some of the member for Roe's constituents from the great southern. It was a really great briefing. For the mayor to walk away saying it was a pretty standard outcome for our region was, I think, quite disappointing, given that we have \$37 million going to the Albany ring-road, which will really finish that project. He highlighted other things around mental health and I hope that I can highlight some of the contributions and money that will be spent in the regions on that issue and others.

This budget delivers cost-of-living relief for regional Western Australians. It is investing in infrastructure for regional health, housing, jobs and training. We are spending more than \$4 billion delivering the royalties for regions program. The McGowan government is delivering cost-of-living support for great southern residents while investing significantly in health, housing and the transition to cleaner, stronger and reliable energy. This budget features a massive \$11.2 million investment in regional infrastructure. That is an incredible amount of money that will also be spent on regional service delivery. Obviously, I have sat here, as many other members have, for the last few days as we have talked about the cost of living for households, including the \$400 electricity credit. Many constituents in the Albany community come to my office about the cost of living and housing; they are the two main issues that come through those doors. I think the \$400 credit and the additional targeted support of \$826 for the households that need it most are really good initiatives.

I want to turn to the regional airfare caps. The government has invested \$20.7 million to meet the demand for capped regional airfares. We are not having a great run with regional flights in Albany at the moment. I can put on the record that I am one of the many residents who has been caught up in the Rex Airlines delays—we say that we have been “Rexed” again!

Mr P.J. Rundle: What is the Minister for Transport doing about it?

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: It is funny the member for Roe should ask that because I was in a meeting with Rex a few weeks ago to talk about some of the issues that it is facing, like many others post-COVID. One thing that Rex does not do is highlight what it is actually doing. It has built its own flying school. Rex is training its pilots in Victoria. I did not know that, and it was very reassuring to hear about that. I know Rex is doing everything it can to ensure that flights are on time, but I acknowledge that they have not been. I am hoping that I can get home tonight —

Mr P.J. Rundle: The minister is putting on more flights, but we actually want reliability of the current flights.

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: Rex is meeting all of its contractual obligations. The contract is out for tender and I look forward to seeing who gets that. But I am grateful for Rex, and I do not want to see it go, because delivering four

flights a day to Albany is a really good thing for my region, businesspeople and me. I can get on the 6.30 flight to Perth on a Tuesday and spend an extra night at home to watch my kids play sports. I really hope that Rex can get back on track, because I think living in a regional area and getting four flights a day is quite incredible.

Mr P.J. Rundle: So do I.

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: Yes.

I hope I get home tonight; if not, that will be another story! I really want to acknowledge those capped regional airfares. To go from Albany to Perth and return for \$400 ensures that our community members can get to Perth to see family and loved ones, or maybe go to Coldplay if they can get tickets—whatever it might be that they might want to come to the city for. It is really important.

I acknowledge that our airline is used by people to get to medical appointments. That is another issue I see through my office. I am really grateful for the contribution through the patient assisted travel scheme. There will be times when people need to come to the metropolitan area to get health services. I explain to residents in my community that if they want the best of care, the specialists are sometimes in Perth. We have some significant people moving to our region to work in the hospital. I can see that in our community. Some of the parents of kids who go to school with my kids have really chosen to call Albany home. We are attracting some incredible professionals in the medical field.

Through the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, we are proudly training the next generation of doctors right in Albany with incredible professionals like Kirsten Auret from the Great Southern Palliative Care Service and many others. I really consider Albany to be a place where we have some extremely high level professionals in health, but I acknowledge that sometimes people need to come to Perth for other services.

Flying Doctor Day yesterday was great. I was able to host one of the families from Albany—mum, Sherie, and little Luna. Luna had to jump on a Royal Flying Doctor Service flight when she was eight days old, suffering from respiratory syncytial virus. My sister and my nephew and my dad have had to use the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It was really lovely to see that family and for them to really appreciate what the Royal Flying Doctor Service does in our regions.

One of the things in the budget that we have not really spoken about—I have not heard anyone else speak about it—is the doubling of the accommodation at Ronald McDonald House. When regional families have to come to Perth, it is pretty traumatic. My sister turned to me and said, “I have to pack all my things into this little bag and I have to get on the plane. What do I do when I get there?” It was only yesterday that Sherie explained that she had had the same experience and was transferred from Jandakot to Perth Children’s Hospital and they got separated. Ronald McDonald House provides beautiful support to families who are going through a hard time. I acknowledge the government for the extra \$20.7 million in funding over the next four years for that incredible facility that is there for regional families.

Another thing happening for the health system in Albany that is not very sexy or exciting is the addition of car parking bays. As anyone who goes to a hospital will know, extra car parking bays are critically important. We are adding 100 car parking bays to Albany Health Campus. This is a \$2.1 million investment that will complement the recently opened radiation oncology unit. We are also doubling the capacity of the dental service, which was an election commitment in 2021. I welcome that project going ahead; it is going well. I look forward to seeing the doubling of the capacity of the dental service.

Housing is a big issue in our regions. I am very proud of the organisations in the not-for-profit sector in Albany that work in our housing space. Advance Housing is an incredible organisation that has about 380 houses around Albany, Katanning and Kojonup. It runs an incredible operation. The Country Women’s Association has some empty holiday units in Albany. It was only on Monday that I sat around a table with people from Advance Housing, Anglicare, the local government and the Albany Community Foundation. All these agencies are hoping to enable this empty block of units to be changed into short-term accommodation. This was purely about looking at some of the properties that are vacant and enabling that to happen. I was sitting at the table with this incredible bunch of people talking about this program being driven by the Albany Community Foundation, which does great work in our community. Funding will be put towards bringing these apartments and little houses up to scratch in the hope that we can move some of our most vulnerable people into them as soon as possible.

I spoke about this at our budget briefing. What I like about our budget is that there is large and significant investment that is not pinned to a certain project. That is really good practice and common sense for projects that might be shovel ready or what the community needs in six or 12 months. It enables the minister to ensure that the projects can go ahead when they are presented. I know that some of the community housing providers are grateful and are looking forward to those different opportunities when the next stage of the funding round opens. I am sure that other members have people come to them with incredibly innovative ideas such as building modular homes—a gentleman wants to use a 3D laser printer to build a concrete house, which blew my mind—or using concrete tilt-up panels, which can obviously speed up the build time and get people into houses as soon as possible.

I know that I do not have much time, because I very kindly gave the member for Vasse the opportunity to go ahead of me.

Ms M.J. Davies: You could come back after question time.

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: I could do that actually!

I spoke briefly before about the \$37 million for the Menang Drive–Chester Pass Road grade separation. This \$37 million will finish the ring-road, which will mean that trucks will be able to use the flyover over the Menang Drive–Chester Pass Road intersection and make their way to the port without having to stop. I know that the community has wanted to see that project completed in its entirety, so I am really proud that the government has been able to find the additional funding to ensure that this project is completed.

The other thing that I thought the mayor might have picked up but he did not is the additional funding for the port. There is \$17.4 million for upgrades at the Southern Ports Authority and another \$6.8 million for electrical infrastructure at Albany port. Obviously, the port is one of our main pieces of infrastructure and it is right in the middle of our town, so it is really important we ensure that it is highly functioning so we can continue to export from that location.

I want to move on to sport. The member for Collie–Preston mentioned the boosting of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. I used to work for the Department of Sport and Recreation, and I am very passionate about ensuring that our communities have the best sporting facilities. We are increasing that funding. We are also changing some of the parameters around the amount that can be funded and the funding streams. Any member who has been in Parliament or local government will know the third–third–third strategy, which has been around for a long time. That will be changed slightly, which is quite exciting.

The other one is the regional athlete support program. We have undertaken to change the academy in Albany to the great southern academy of sport. A new committee was formed a few months ago. Peter Watson, the former member for Albany, is the chair, which I think is a great thing. The members of that committee range from Kathryn Slattery, a former Hockeyroo, to other members of our community and the great southern community. It is \$4.9 million. The great southern has not been getting much of a chunk of the pie. I look forward to seeing that academy grow. That funding will ensure that our regional athletes can compete on the same stage as metropolitan athletes. My daughter wanted to try out for the state soccer team and when she got to the trials, she found that she was the only kid from the regions, which blew my mind. It has a cost effect. Athletes have to miss out on attending their weekly sporting events if they want to make it to the next level. I hope that this funding can provide the same opportunity for our young children that has been provided for the talented people we have in our regions. I know that some of our sports do it well. The Storm academy and the basketball program are doing a really amazing job in the great southern. I look forward to that money being spent on our children so that they can compete on the world stage.

I would like to mention some of the other projects underway in the great southern. The performing arts centre at Albany Senior High School is nearing completion. It was great to take the Premier through it a few months ago. It is being turned from a basketball court and the place where we did our exams when we were younger into this incredible performing arts centre, with a stage, retractable seating and all the modern technology. It will also be open to the community to use. It is really fantastic that the students will be able to perform on the stage and also do other vocational education and training programs, including music and hospitality. There is a cafe where the hospitality students will be able to practise. That is nearing completion and I look forward to opening that facility with the Premier and the minister. We hope to attract some former students of the school. We might get former Premier Alan Carpenter or The Waifs—I do not know. We have bred some amazing people in Albany, so we will see who comes to that.

I would like to finish by talking about the new trade training workshop at South Regional TAFE. This is another amazing facility. Again, we are investing an incredible amount of money to ensure that we can provide the best infrastructure and opportunities for those people who want to train in our regions. That is \$22 million to create a new trade workshop that will host workshops for heavy diesel mechanics and working at heights. It will ensure that the next generation can live, work, train and stay in our amazing city. With that, I will finish—no, I will keep talking for a little bit longer!

Mr P.J. Rundle: Talk about the landslide.

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: The landslide, okay, I thank the member for Roe. There was a budget item for the landslide.

Mr P.J. Rundle: What about some compensation for those people?

Ms R.S. STEPHENS: Member for Roe, I have been doing some significant work with the community in Mira Mar. I am sure the member has read the report that was handed down.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2569.]

ESPERANCE ARCHIPELAGO OFFSHORE ANGLING CLASSIC*Statement by Member for Roe*

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.50 pm]: Esperance Deep Sea Angling Club's thirtieth Esperance Archipelago Offshore Angling Classic took place in next to perfect autumn conditions on Sunday, 12 March 2023. The inaugural Esperance fishing classic took place in March 1993 and has now grown to be the biggest fishing event on the south coast of WA. Over time the event has grown in popularity among the fishing fraternity, attracting participants from the goldfields, wheatbelt, great southern and south west as well as opportunistic eastern states visitors. In terms of the number of competitors, the Esperance classic rivals the state's biggest fishing competition, Exmouth's GAMEX. The thirtieth Esperance fishing classic saw 85 recreational fishing boats carrying 285 fishers take to the water before dawn in their bid to catch a winner. By the day's end, around 750 family, friends, supporters and fishing enthusiasts attended the weigh-in.

Club president, Corrina Worth, was well supported by a strong committee that helped organise the thirtieth anniversary event over the course of the last 12 months. Murray Johnson, Nigel Worth, Justine McDonald, John McCrea, Matt McCrea, John King, Gary Varcoe, Brett Paxton, Brett Thorp, Mike Spencer and Oli Stevenson all helped. The classic is a big day on the Esperance community's calendar. This year alone the Esperance Deep Sea Angling Club grossed \$140 000 from the event. Well done to the Esperance Deep Sea Angling Club.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK*Statement by Member for Albany*

MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany) [12.51 pm]: Earlier this week as part of National Volunteer Week I gave special thanks on behalf of Minister Dawson to volunteers in Albany and the wider great southern community who encourage, facilitate and support community life, including: Veronica Hare for her dedicated work with the Albany branch of the Arthritis Foundation; Helen Parry for her contribution to the Albany and Regional Volunteer Service and the Albany Public Library; Kevin Potter for his role at Chorus; Asha Bhat at Share the Dignity to help end period poverty; and Mary Anne Van Den Hoek at Animal Support Op Shop. Certificates of appreciation were also presented to members of the following volunteer community groups: Great Southern Badminton Association, Breakfast in the Park, Keep Albany Beautiful, Tummy Warmers and Share the Dignity. Long-serving volunteers were also recognised, including: Veronica Hare, Albany Breast Cancer Group; Desmond Beek, Sailability Albany; Lorraine Scott and Rosalind Sawyer, Soroptimist International Albany; Bob Symons, Ace Camera Club and the A-Team; Don Titterton and Barry Chapman, Keep Albany Beautiful; Ken Ewers-Verge; Findlay MacNish; Alice Rule, Keep Albany Beautiful; and Steve Marshall, Grace and Glories Ministries. I also presented two very special awards to two long-serving members of girl guides, Phyllis Mirco for 50 years' service and Marion Sewell for over 25 years' service. Thank you to all these incredible volunteers for giving of your time, energy, strength and compassion to the Albany community.

SAMANTHA KERR*Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt*

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.53 pm]: I rise to speak about the amazing Samantha Kerr. There are moments in sporting history that make the hair on the back of your neck stand on end, goose bumps rising because you know you are witnessing something spectacular. Anyone watching the Manchester United versus Chelsea match at Wembley Stadium on Monday would have felt that exhilaration. Not only is she an extraordinary talent—three consecutive FA Cups, three English league titles, two League Cups and a multitude of trophies and medals in the UK, America and Australia—she is also the person we want our kids and grandkids to become. ABC journalist Samantha Lewis said it best —

... the weight of Kerr's worth is not only measured in silver.

It is in the spellbound looks of the 77,000 people poured into Wembley—the biggest-ever crowd for an English women's club match—and the rising tide of their voices whenever she touches the ball.

It is in her name hot-pressed across the shoulders of a generation of young players practising volleys and back-flips in the garden.

It is in the flutter of the flag she carries into Westminster, into the Olympics, into World Cups: an entire nation captured in a name.

All of these moments layered on top of each other to create one of the greatest figures football has ever seen.

And on Monday morning, in the deafening din of a sold-out stadium, two seconds was all she needed. Two simple, glorious seconds to remind us that Sam Kerr has already changed everything, and that we are still here, holding our breath, watching her do it.

Thank you to Sam Kerr for giving us moments to celebrate as a nation—she is truly amazing and I have no doubt there is much more to come.

WATERLOO BUSH FIRE BRIGADE*Statement by Member for Collie–Preston***MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary)** [12.54 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker —

My, my! At Waterloo, the minister did deliver.

Oh yeah! They now have a brand new truck to keep the fires at bay.

And Laurie was honoured as well. A 60-year clasp—what a spell!

I am sorry I did not sing! Waterloo Bush Fire Brigade is an amazing volunteer brigade in Collie–Preston. It officially received the keys to its new 3.4 urban tanker during a recent visit by the Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Stephen Dawson, and me. Waterloo attended 27 incidents in the past 12 months so this state-of-the-art firefighting vehicle funded by the emergency services levy will be put to great use.

Laurie Hynes was honoured at the event for his dedication and commitment to Waterloo BFB. He was presented with his 60-year service medal. Laurie joined the brigade in 1968 and was captain for nearly 20 years. Service medals were also presented to Peter Bass for 45 years of service, Gary Edwards for 55 years of service and Bill Stone for 55 years of service. Another VIP at the Waterloo event was Kingsley Palmer who was awarded his 60-year service medal last year. If my maths is correct—it is not my strong point—that is a total of 275 years of service shared among five outstanding Waterloo Bush Fire Brigade volunteer fireys. In National Volunteer Week, I say a huge thank you to all the emergency services volunteers across the state and especially those in Collie–Preston for keeping our communities safe.

AVA SIMPSON*Statement by Member for Vasse*

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.56 pm]: Umpires are the lifeblood of community-based sport, and nurturing and supporting aspiring young umpires is important. This support and encouragement was on display in my electorate recently when 16-year-old Ava Simpson from the Busselton Netball Association was awarded the Busselton Freight Services rising sports star award for January for her passion and dedication to umpiring. Ava's umpiring achievements and her rapid rise through the ranks of local, state and national competitions has been remarkable. Since 2021, she has received the Busselton Netball Association most improved umpire award and the South West Netball Association encouragement award. She was selected to umpire at the statewide Origin Cup and, last year, was awarded the South West Netball Football League's junior umpire of the year. At 16 years, Ava also obtained her B badge at last year's Netball WA State Cup. There are only 20 such gradings awarded across the state each year. Ava's rapid rise in umpiring and her future potential to the sport was further recognised by her selection in the state umpire performance program and umpiring her first Gold Industry Group West Australian netball league under-20s game. Ava's achievements are clearly driven by her passion for netball and umpiring, which can become a lifelong vocation, and it is a credit to the South West Netball Football League and the Busselton Netball Association for nurturing and encouraging her. Congratulations, Ava.

NIC HASTINGS-JAMES — TRIBUTE*Statement by Member for Nedlands*

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [12.57 pm]: Today I pay tribute to social worker Nic Hastings-James who passed away on 25 April. Nic was known for his commitment to social justice, youth work and social work in WA, and was dedicated to improving the lives of and better serving young people via the network of services, legislation and systems. Linking the personal and political was a key facet of how Nic worked and lived. Indeed, Nic changed the face of youth work and youth services in Western Australia with many firsts. He was the first outreach worker employed by the YMCA. He introduced the Y's discos across metropolitan Perth, established a number of mentoring services and mentored the volunteer youth leaders himself. Nic was also a founding member of the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia, and, as it noted, "YACWA would not exist without pioneers like Nic." He was a founding member of the WA Association of Youth Workers, now Youth Work WA. He served on the boards of the Perth Inner City Youth Service, South Metro Youth Action, Ravenhill Youth Hostel and the Australian Association of Social Workers of which he was a lifetime member. He also worked for many years as a school social worker at John XXIII College. Nic supervised many social workers through their field education experience—more than 90 during his career—often taking on students who had struggled in previous placement experiences. He would nurture and grow their sense of self and confidence as new social workers. He did this for many people, including my husband, Steve. Nic is one of those people who truly left this world better than he found it. May he rest in peace.

*Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm***VISITORS — COURT GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND KALAMUNDA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL***Statement by Speaker*

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: I would like to acknowledge some guests in the gallery. On behalf of the member for Darling Range, I acknowledge the student leaders from Court Grammar School and their teacher, Mr Steve Dowie, in the Speaker's gallery today. Welcome.

On behalf of the member for Kalamunda, I would like to welcome the student leadership group and accompanying teachers from Kalamunda Christian School, who are visiting Parliament today. Welcome.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH STANDING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Support for Autistic Children and Young People in Schools — Terms of Reference — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.01 pm]: I would also like to advise members of the terms of reference for a new inquiry. I have been advised that the Education and Health Standing Committee has resolved to inquire into support for autistic children and young people in schools. In particular, the inquiry will consider —

- (1) The prevalence of autism in WA and projected demand for support in schools.
- (2) Current support available for autistic students in WA schools, including consideration of how —
 - (a) evidence-based practices are implemented across the school system; and
 - (b) school supports are coordinated with other service areas to respond to the needs of autistic students and their families.
- (3) Strategies in other jurisdictions that support school systems to respond to the needs of autistic students, and the applicability of those strategies to WA.

The committee will report to the house by 21 March 2024.

Separate from the inquiry, the committee has resolved to develop an issues paper on alternative proteins and to table a short report at a future date.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — MEETING

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

I refer to reports of a second Banksia Hill Detention Centre crisis meeting on 10 May that would be attended by the Premier, the Minister for Corrective Services, a representative of the Department of Justice and the Commissioner of Police, Col Blanch. Has this meeting occurred; and, if yes, what were the outcomes?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I had a meeting on the day after the riot at Banksia Hill Detention Centre. Present were the Minister for Corrective Services, the police commissioner, the head of the Department of Justice and a range of other staff members. We discussed various things that can be done, including the fact that we were bringing forward legislation to ensure that adult detainees would move to adult custodial facilities. We will introduce those laws. That is something that will proceed. We discussed a range of other issues surrounding the events on the day in question. I learnt a lot about what occurred on that particular evening and how the events came to pass. As I have said many times in this house—I will repeat it because it is important to note—it is very important that we continue to invest in measures to rehabilitate, educate, train and provide opportunities for detainees. I think it is an opportunity for those detainees in Banksia Hill to have some structure and routine in their lives and therefore some hope of turning around a life that has been punctuated by committing offences. That is point one.

Point two is that we will continue to invest in measures in the broader community, particularly the Target 120 program, to ensure that young people and families are given the opportunity to divert a pathway that is directed towards the justice system.

Point three, and I think it is important, is that everyone uses the appropriate language. The language needs to be about responsibility and consequence, and accepting responsibility for your actions. If no-one ever accepts responsibility for their actions or accepts that anything they do is wrong, people will continue to do the wrong thing. If excuses are continually made, how do people ever learn that what they are doing is not the right thing?

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — MEETING

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

I have a supplementary question. Will the Premier make all the outcomes of that meeting public to ensure that he can be held accountable for those promises that he has made?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

That is a very odd question. The government will continue to reform the system and invest in the things that I mentioned before. In this context, I would like to acknowledge the staff who work there because I do not think they get enough acknowledgement. I want to continue to acknowledge the staff who go to work in a difficult environment, where they are often subject to considerable stress and sometimes violence. I thank them for all their actions. As I said the other day, they go into this environment with altruistic motives. They want to make sure that

they provide an environment in which the detainees have an opportunity to turn their lives around. I do not think they should receive abuse or criticism. I have seen some commentary in which they do from people who would never dream of working in that environment. All I would say is that I think we need to thank those people who work in that environment—the first responders and all those people who do what is required to keep us safe.

STATE ECONOMY — DIVERSIFICATION

329. Ms R.S. STEPHENS to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant efforts to diversify and reform the Western Australian economy.

- (1) Can the Premier advise the house how this government's record investment in diversification initiatives is creating jobs for all Western Australians and positioning WA for a strong future?
- (2) Can the Premier outline to the house how this investment is expanding our export markets and supporting new local industries?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Albany for the question.

- (1)–(2) Over the last seven budgets, we considered and invested in diversification initiatives in our economy. The latest labour force data came out today. The number of people employed in Western Australia has climbed once again—to 1.53 million people. That is 220 800 new jobs since this government came to office—220 800 people in work since we came to office, with 124 000 of those jobs alone in the two years since the last state election. Obviously, providing a stable, reformist and progressive government has allowed for record investment and record employment.

The participation rate in Western Australia is the strongest of all states, averaging 69.1 per cent. The unemployment rate is the second lowest of all states at 3.6 per cent and the underemployment rate is the lowest of all states. In overall terms, today's figures were a very strong endorsement of the Western Australian economy.

As part of the budget, we have invested \$463 million in new diversification initiatives. That brings the total investment in diversification since the state election to \$3.8 billion. Some of the things in the state budget last week were investments in hydrogen; opportunities for green-briquetted iron; critical minerals; the sustainable geoscience investments package; investments in road, rail, electricity and ports; the industrial land development fund investments; investment in trade, with a new office in Texas; tourism initiatives; international students; defence and shipbuilding; investments in Collie; and investment in agriculture—a whole range of investments to diversity. Even a film studio will be on its way, connected by the Morley–Ellenbrook line. The Minister for Culture and the Arts will one day be starring in his own productions! In his next career, he will be out there starring in movies—an ageing movie star.

The opportunities ahead are massive. It is terrific that we have the economic and financial capacity to ensure that the Western Australian economy continues to strengthen and diversify.

PEEL HEALTH CAMPUS — REDEVELOPMENT

330. Ms L. METTAM to the Treasurer:

I refer to the Treasurer's announcement on 29 November 2002, exactly 900 days ago today, that the government would be redeveloping and expanding Peel Health Campus. In that time, the population in the region has increased significantly, and, with that, so has demand for access to quality on-demand and affordable health.

- (1) Is the cost of the Peel Health Campus project expected to blow out, as the member for Mandurah told the Peel state budget breakfast last Friday; and, if so, by how much?
- (2) When will the project be delivered?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, member for Balcatta!

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) The government has a massive rebuild program —

Mr D.A. Templeman: That you didn't do anything about.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Who is answering the question?

Mr M. McGOWAN: They are having an argument, Madam Speaker! I am just a bystander. Do you want me to continue?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I have two-thirds of the opposition interjecting.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is right. That opposition is a very unruly group.

We have a major investment program in health initiatives around the state. Before I get to Peel, the other day I was able to open the new Newman Hospital with the member for Pilbara. It is a terrific hospital. It is just a beautiful hospital. We are redeveloping Bunbury Hospital; I think that is \$260 million or so. From memory, the cost of redeveloping Geraldton Health Campus is \$170 million or thereabouts, and that is proceeding ahead. We are also developing Tom Price Hospital, Laverton Hospital, Joondalup Health Campus, Osborne Park Hospital, and we will build a new women's and babies' hospital by 2029 at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Peel Health Campus is one of the projects that we announced during the end of the last Parliament. A couple of things are happening at Peel. One component is the redevelopment, which is both public and private, and the other component is the transition of the services there from the private contractor to government. Both those things will take some time, obviously. Again from memory, the Peel Health Campus redevelopment will cost \$152 million to provide additional upgrades and services, which is a significant expansion of what was originally to be provided. It is a significant expansion in the budget. I am not the Minister for Health and do not have the exact details of where that is at, but it will happen.

This is a perennial set of questions. Things take time to build. We cannot just build a hospital on a slab somewhere and put it on the back of a truck and move it to the site. Building and rebuilding a hospital is a big exercise. It takes time in a very strong construction market. That is basically the reality of what we are dealing with in Western Australia because the construction market is incredibly strong. It is the strongest that anyone has seen. That includes major construction, public construction and residential construction, and in the mining industry. It takes time to build things. That is just a reality. I think 98 per cent of people understand that. That is one of the realities we are dealing with in Western Australia. I do not have the latest figures on the cost of the campus, but as we have outlined numerous times, the cost of construction goes up. It turns out that steel has gone up by 60 per cent, concrete by 250 per cent, and labour costs for non-technical labour has gone up 20 per cent and 50 per cent for technical labour. That is the reality of what everyone is dealing with both here and interstate. Some very interesting figures came out of Sydney the other day. The cost of two rail lines there has blown out by \$20 billion. The cost per kilometre of building a rail line in Sydney is somewhere between 15 and 20 times what it is here. Our construction market is great value for money compared with anywhere else in Australia.

PEEL HEALTH CAMPUS — REDEVELOPMENT

331. Ms L. METTAM to the Treasurer:

I have a supplementary question. When will this project actually be delivered, and why will the Treasurer not prioritise the delivery of this important project, given that it does not meet current demands?

Mr D.A. Templeman: We already are! The scoping work already has been finalised. You did nothing. Kim Hames was Deputy Premier and health minister and did bugger all!

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Mr D.A. Templeman: He did nothing—nothing at all.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I think you know what my point of order will be.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Yes. The only issue is that, yes, the Leader of the House was out of order with his interjections, and subsequently, after you got to your feet, the Leader of the Liberal Party decided to behave in exactly the same way. That is a lesson to both of you.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I am sorry to interrupt that conversation between you. I hate interrupting, particularly the triumvirate that we are facing. I studied Roman history. I think the triumvirate was Caesar, Mark Antony and Cassius, or something like that. We have the triumvirate over here.

Mr R.H. Cook: Which one is Brutus?

The SPEAKER: Et tu!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Which one is Brutus? We will not go there. Brutus may already have done his work!

All health construction is a priority, but to build a hospital properly takes time. The planning and the business case to make sure it is done exactly right takes time. There are examples of hospitals that were built in such a way that they have not stood the test of time because their design was wrong, and it then takes a lot to rebuild them and so

forth in due course. We want to avoid all those things. It takes time, but we are proceeding as quickly as we can. As far as I know, the answer to the question about when it will be built is that it will be built as soon as we possibly can. It is a priority, as is every other hospital project around the state.

CRITICAL MINERALS PROJECTS

332. Ms J.L. HANNS to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to drive WA's clean energy transition.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how the McGowan Labor government is working with the federal Albanese government to support the development of new critical minerals projects across WA, including in the Collie–Preston region?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house what these projects mean for local jobs in the Collie region?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question and congratulate her on the terrific announcement today by the federal government. It is another indication of the McGowan government's determination for a just transition for the Collie community and the Collie economy.

- (1)–(2) Today we saw a significant show of support from the federal government through the federal critical minerals development program in our efforts to diversify Collie's economy and secure long-term jobs in the town and the region. Western Australia has taken the lion's share of grants under the second tranche of the critical minerals development program, with seven of the 13 projects funded and nearly \$30 million out of the \$50 million allocated right here in Western Australia.

I also take the opportunity to acknowledge the great work of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy in his role as chair of the battery and energy storage strategy group and in the development of our future batteries and critical minerals industries. Two of the projects announced today include a \$6.2 million allocation for Magnium Australia's large-scale magnesium refinery in Collie and \$4.7 million has been allocated to International Graphite to advance its Springdale Collie graphite mine-to-market project. This money will help both those projects take significant steps. The important point is that these grants are on top of the initial project funding work that was undertaken by the McGowan government in its leadership around the just transition. The McGowan government has committed a total of \$7.28 million to the Magnium project over three funding rounds of \$280 000 in 2021; \$2 million from the Collie industrial transition fund, recently in 2023; and \$5 million from the Collie industrial transition fund for the establishment of the Collie pilot project. In addition, \$2 million was committed to the Collie Futures industry development fund in 2021 to support International Graphite establish its graphite micronising plant in Collie, which was officially opened in November 2022.

These are important projects. They are about how we will continue to grow the advanced manufacturing capacity of Western Australia and how we will continue to transition our economy to a new energy future. It is the leadership of the McGowan government that has allowed these grants to be made today and they build on the important foundational work the government has done.

We are about to enter the biggest transition that will introduce the most profound changes to our economy since gold was discovered in the Kimberley in 1885. It will leave no lives untouched in terms of what we will be doing in the future to decarbonise our economy, to diversify the economy as the Premier mentioned in his earlier answer, and as we continue to go to a decarbonised future. This is an exciting development and it is great to see that the federal government understands that Western Australia is not only the engine room of the Australian economy today, it will be the engine room of the future economy of this country. I am really excited by these allocations of funds. They are very important. Congratulations, member. We will see the transition in Collie taking large steps from here on in. It means that the current workforce there will have great jobs for the future.

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — ADULT OFFENDERS

333. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to the introduction of the Young Offenders Amendment Bill 2023.

- (1) Is it true that the minister's department is already empowered to apply to the Children's Court to remove 18 to 20-year-olds from Banksia Hill Detention Centre and shift them to an adult prison?
- (2) Has the minister's government used this power in the last 12 months?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(2) The current arrangement, as was detailed in my second reading speech, is that the Crown can apply to the courts. That was in my second reading speech, so if the member had paid attention, she would already

know the answer to that. I made it clear in my second reading speech and in commentary about the matter of public interest that was discussed on Tuesday that our view as a government is that it is not a question of discretion; it is inappropriate to have adults housed in the juvenile facility. Yes, that is true and, as I said in my second reading speech, there is an authority for the court in certain circumstances and on certain conditions to move a young person to the adult facility, but that is not the question that we are putting to the Parliament. We are putting a completely separate issue, which is that adults do not belong in the juvenile facility. I understand that there are people in the community who think adults belong in the juvenile justice facility, but I would expect that the Nationals WA agrees with the government: that it is not a matter of discretion and that adults do not belong in the juvenile justice facility.

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — ADULT OFFENDERS

334. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I have a supplementary question. If, as the Premier says, the 18-year-olds are part of the problem in Banksia Hill, why has not one application been made by the minister's department to the Children's Court in the last 12 months to remove a detainee of this age?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

If the member wants to vote against the legislation, that is up to her. If she does not agree with the policy position of the government, she should vote against the legislation. If she agrees with the policy position of the government, she should vote in favour of the legislation. I understand that there is a separate issue about the discretion, not of the government or the Crown, but of the President of the Children's Court. That is not what we are discussing in our legislation. Our legislation is unrelated to the current arrangements.

It is the born-to-rule attitude of this failed member. She failed as a minister, she failed as Leader of the Opposition, and she is failing in her thinking. The failure of her thinking here is that this is not a question of discretion: children and adults should not be housed in the same correctional facility. If the member thinks —

Ms M.J. Davies: You haven't even asked. It's just another opportunity for the Premier to stand up and make a big tough-on-crime announcement.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, I am sorry; there is clearly confusion in that interjection. This has nothing to do with being tough on crime. The point here is that we are discussing people who the court has said should be detained. We are not asking for more people to be detained. That is why the number of young offenders detained today is half that of what it was when the member was a minister. She believes that there are too many young offenders in detention, yet when she had a chance to do anything about it, there were twice as many young offenders in detention.

As I keep saying: if the member thinks that adults should be housed in a youth offending facility, she should vote against the legislation. If she agrees with the government that young offenders should be housed in the prison estate, she should vote in favour of the legislation.

TRANSFER DUTY CONCESSION

335. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to increasing affordable housing options for Western Australians.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's \$33 million investment in transfer duty concessions will give more Western Australians the opportunity to achieve their home ownership goals?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this initiative builds on other measures to boost the housing supply in WA?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I want to thank the member for his question.

- (1)–(2) As I have reported regularly to this Parliament, our government is using every lever it can to accelerate the delivery of housing in Western Australia. We have undertaken a number of different reforms to drive that supply. Under the Minister for Planning we have announced a second tranche of planning reforms to encourage, foster and facilitate the chipping away of barriers to density and infill. We have announced an infrastructure fund of \$80 million—\$40 million to support infill headworks, and \$40 million for infrastructure headworks for workers' accommodation.

Yesterday we introduced in Parliament legislation that will bring in a 50 per cent land tax concession for build-to-rent. Build-to-rent is part of the answer for facilitating more rental housing supply in Western Australia and it is based on successful models around the world. On Saturday I detailed one of the latest initiatives we revealed in the budget, which is the establishment of an up-front concession lifting

the stamp duty rebate, so to speak, for infill and density. In short, that means that there will be a 100 per cent concession for properties valued at up to \$650 000, lifted from \$500 000. That will taper off to a 50 per cent concession for properties valued at more than \$750 000. That means that we are creating an incentive for more density and more infill, and we know that is critical to creating housing choices in Western Australia.

It has been pleasing to see that major stakeholders have again embraced our reforms. I quote –

A great announcement to extend stamp duty concessions on off the plan apartments in the State Budget to support new apartment projects ... Well done

That is from a great friend of ours, Sandra Brewer from the Property Council of Australia and maybe a Liberal aspirant; but it is brilliant to see that at least some parts of the conservative movement recognise great policy and great reform.

We also had commentary in an article by the CEO of the Urban Development Institute of Australia WA, which stated —

Combined with already announced land tax concessions for Build-To-Rent which are now supported by recent Federal Government taxation changes, future supply of rental accommodation is also looking brighter following the budget announcements.

These are major stakeholders in the sector endorsing and embracing our reform. Again, I say contrast that with the opposition: six years, no policies; zero, zilch. You cannot find them; it is a bit like *Where's Wally?* It is missing in action. There is not one policy from the opposition for boosting housing supply. We would think that after six years it might have knocked something out. There is a very clear difference between that side and ours as we pursue every reform we can to boost housing supply in Western Australia.

CENTRE FOR NATIONAL RESILIENCE — BULLSBROOK

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

I refer to the Centre for National Resilience in Bullsbrook that remains under the management of the state government.

- (1) What will this centre provide for WA for the remainder of the 12 months of its management?
- (2) Noting the pressure on housing, workers' accommodation and social housing, with increases in homelessness, will these 500 beds remain empty or be used to temporarily supplement the government's housing deficit?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) Again, the week after the budget the member is asking me about a commonwealth government facility. It is very odd.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Okay, we will deal with that.

What happened, of course, is that the last federal government, the Morrison government, decided to build a facility, which it gave a very interesting term, the Centre for National Resilience. It is a bit like the United States Inflation Reduction Act. It does not really relate to what it does, but in any event, it decided to build that. Its investment started at, I think, \$250 million, and ended up, with the escalation of costs, at around \$400 million to build it out in Bullsbrook. The site it originally selected was Jandakot. It tried there and that did not work, which is probably understandable, so it moved the centre to Bullsbrook. The good thing out of that is, as a consequence, which we demanded, the federal government would put some scheme water into parts of Bullsbrook that did not have scheme water. That was one of the things that we secured from the commonwealth, which was a good thing. In terms of our agreement, it was to operate it for one year. If we want to do a cost–benefit analysis for the cost of I think \$13 million, we got a \$400 million investment into the state, with hundreds, if not thousands, of people receiving work and business out of it. That was a good economic benefit to the state.

In terms of its use, homelessness is an issue. We have an excellent minister who is dealing with it, providing additional homes, hostels and so forth. I think the idea that a group of homeless people would go out and live in the middle of the bush in Bullsbrook and there would not be problems is fanciful. Firstly, they would not stay and, secondly, it is not designed for those purposes. The number of services and so forth that we would have to have around it, particularly with people staying there, would not work. I think anyone who has any knowledge of this issue would tell us the same thing.

In terms of its other potential uses, we are continually looking for other uses. One of the things we need to do is realise that we do not want the state to then have to pay a building or mining company to put its workers there. If a company wants to use the centre, it should pay for it. If someone's business is going to bring in people from interstate or overseas, or provide us an opportunity for their fly-in fly-out workforce or what have you, they need to pay. We attempted initially to find a way in which industry would pay for the use of the facility, and we could not find any industry that would do that. We continue to search, but we have not been successful in that regard thus far.

CENTRE FOR NATIONAL RESILIENCE — BULLSBROOK

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

I have a supplementary question. What does the Premier predict will happen to the centre after September this year when the management arrangements come to a close, potentially?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

It will go back to the commonwealth. There are different levels of government in Australia. It will become its responsibility. I am not responsible for what the commonwealth does.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Will the Premier keep searching for uses?

Mr M. McGOWAN: If it asks us to look around for people to use it, we might be able to do that. I see the letters to the editor and so forth, “Put all the homeless there”, as though we should get every homeless person in Western Australia and put them on a bus, transport them out into the middle of the bush an hour out of Perth and put them into a facility that is not designed for that purpose.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr M. McGOWAN: It would be a disaster. It will not work. Members opposite just need to have people with common sense who will understand that. Ask people at any of the homeless services and they will tell the member that. It will not work in that environment in that location. That is just the reality. Members opposite have to be really naive to think that that would work. Sadly, the opposition is not very worldly-wise and it does not really understand how things work. That is the reality if we tried to use it for those purposes.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

338. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Disability Services:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s commitment to improving the lives of Western Australians with disability. Can the minister outline to the house what this government’s record investment in the National Disability Insurance Scheme means for people with disability and their families?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

I thank the member for the question and I am pleased to outline details of this government’s record investment to support Western Australians living with disability.

On 13 December 2017, the state government made the decision that Western Australia would join the commonwealth-administered NDIS and entered into a bilateral agreement with the commonwealth on the transition to a National Disability Insurance Scheme in Western Australia. Western Australia’s contribution to the NDIS is significant. More than \$900 million has been invested annually from 2021–22, and the 2023–24 state budget sees \$1.3 billion allocated to support NDIS participants. That brings WA’s total expected contribution to \$3.8 billion over the forward estimates. The increased funding reflects around 7 700 additional participants relative to the forecast that was set at the start of the state’s transition in 2018. The NDIS is a co-funded and co-governed national scheme that is now improving the lives of over 50 000 Western Australian participants as well as their families and carers, by ensuring that people with a permanent and significant disability find it easier to participate in and contribute to community life.

The McGowan government also acknowledges the role the state government has in supporting the sector, and it is clear that a well-supported disability sector is critical to the lives of people with disability. As a government, we are committed to continuing to support people with disability in health, education and all the service settings for both those receiving NDIS supports and those who do not. The state government took note of the experiences of other states that joined the scheme before us and we have taken a cautious approach to gradually transitioning services provided by the NDIS into joining the scheme. That measured approach has ensured that people with disability have not been disadvantaged. The state continues to meet its bilateral obligations and the NDIS market is enabled to mature.

Members would be aware that sustainability of the NDIS has risen to the national spotlight and resulted in the national cabinet agreeing to support a growth target of eight per cent by 2026. I want to reiterate the Premier’s assurances that the state government has agreed to working with the commonwealth towards steadying the significant forecast growth of the scheme, but this is not a cap on supports. Although many Western Australian participants report positive outcomes from the NDIS, we know that some implementation issues are impacting scheme performance and participant outcomes in Western Australia, so I want to assure members that the McGowan government will work closely with the commonwealth government to understand how it plans to meet the eight per cent annual growth target while ensuring that the NDIS does more to meet the needs of people with disability in Western Australia.

SOUTH WEST INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM — TRANSMISSION LINES

339. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the south west interconnected system demand assessment released last week and the conservative future-ready scenario that outlines the need for 4 000 kilometres of new transmission lines to meet generation demand.

- (1) How much will this cost?
- (2) When will the project go to the Economic Regulation Authority for consideration?
- (3) Is the government developing a consultation plan for landowners that are on the route for the proposed transmission lines?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(3) In respect of the Economic Regulation Authority question, which is part (2), if the Leader of the Liberal Party reads the demand assessment report, she will see that it explains that we will introduce a priority projects system so that the ERA will not be involved in the decision about which projects will proceed. That is an important step forward because we do not want to have unnecessary delays. The Economic Regulation Authority plays a very valuable role in reducing costs in the system. It makes sure that we do not build additional infrastructure that is not needed.

The AA5 process that has just been completed by Western Power is about making sure that unnecessary costs are not passed on to electricity users. It is very important to understand that if it were not for large industrial loads joining the south west interconnected system, we would not need to build these new transition lines; therefore, it is not appropriate for the existing, for example, residential or small business customers, to contribute to the costs of these new projects. That is why we have, as outlined in the report—again, if the member opposite had read the report, she would know the answer—a new procedure to deal with that. It is very similar to procedures started on the east coast for the national electricity market.

In respect of the first question about the expected total cost, we have a rough estimate. The project will be built over 20 years, so we do not currently have the sort of finalised costs that we would go to market with. That is why \$126 million is allocated to Western Power—so that it can do the necessary planning works, plus purchase certain long-lead items so that even if they are not used on a particular project, they will still be available for projects that Western Power knows it needs to do; therefore, those long-lead items will not be wasted, but we do not know specifically which one.

In respect of the third question about discussion with landowners, most of the landowners, of course, are traditional owners. The government of Western Australia has a deep commitment to work with traditional owners on access to land. We will absolutely, as we are obliged to do under both the Noongar and Yamatji settlements, and a pending settlement of another group, consult those landowners because we want to ensure they are satisfied with the choices that we make. We want to do that using a co-design approach—and likewise for potential rural landowners. It is a given that we do not have specific routes for any of the projects. We do not know what line it will take. It is still too early for us to engage, but, again, as we are required to do by law, we will engage with existing landowners as well.

SOUTH WEST INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM — TRANSMISSION LINES

340. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. As the minister referred to in his answer, what is the rough estimate of the total cost?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

It is a lot. We are not in a position to start publicly commenting. We are negotiating with the large industrial users that will have to pay for the infrastructure. We might have better ideas after Western Power has done the work. We do not have to fund every single project, because some projects are for the distant future. I am unlikely to be the Minister for Energy in 2043, which is the time line —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I was thinking you might still be answering the question then.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: You never know—only if the Speaker lets me!

We are a long way from that. There are four priority projects. One of those is mandatory renewable energy target, which has been on the books for years, and the other three are a reinforcement of existing infrastructure. We do not expect any of those to be particularly expensive, but we also have to negotiate with the users of the infrastructure to make sure that they are paying the true costs involved in the projects.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — ONE-STOP HUBS

341. Ms M.J. HAMMAT to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting victim-survivors of family and domestic violence.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the expansion of family and domestic violence one-stop hubs will allow victim-survivors to seek help, assistance and support in one location?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how the hubs are helping to keep Western Australian women and their children safe?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

I thank the member for Mirrabooka for the question. I want to acknowledge her strong advocacy and connection with her community. She truly is a member that knows her community well and advocates strongly for the services that her community requires to live wonderful lives out in that part of the world.

- (1)–(2) It was great last month to be with the member for Mirrabooka in Mirrabooka at the Naala Djookan Healing Centre to announce, as part of the 2023–24 state budget, \$13.4 million to continue funding both the Mirrabooka hub and the Kalgoorlie hub. I know the member for Kalgoorlie has received great feedback about that announcement. Importantly, that \$13.4 million means that those two hubs have funding until June 2027, which is a significant investment and provides confidence about that service being provided in those communities.

We know that the hub model introduced by the McGowan government, a first for WA, works because it connects victim-survivors of family and domestic violence with a range of services in the one place. Many members would know that one of the hardest things to do when you are a victim of family and domestic violence is to actually reach out. That is one of the hardest things to do and, in fact, one of the most dangerous times is when a woman reaches out to seek help. We have learnt that part of the problem with that is that victims have to constantly retell their story again and again as they seek out various services. This hub model works to stop that from happening and to provide a trusted, safe environment in which victim-survivors can go for a range of services they require to get their lives on track—services such as financial counselling, family and parenting support, creches, referrals to refuge accommodation, mental health support and also supports for legal counselling.

I am happy to let the house know that the hubs in Mirrabooka and Kalgoorlie have helped over 1 200 women since opening in 2020. At Naala Djookan, 629 women have been helped for family and domestic violence, and, importantly, a further 183 women at Mirrabooka have accessed soft-entry service. It is important that these hubs are not used solely as family and domestic violence services, but that they provide that soft-entry service—what I referred to earlier as a safe place—where they can seek help when they first start to come to that realisation that things are not right in their relationship. It means that we are able to support women earlier to prevent family and domestic violence from escalating.

It was really great to talk to the City of Stirling and the other service providers in Mirrabooka. The overwhelming feedback from victim-survivors who have used the services is that they are experiencing increased feelings of safety and choice and had timely access to the services, and, most importantly, cultural respect.

This budget also provides \$16.3 million to establish a new one-stop hub in Broome, which will also provide services to Derby and Bidyadanga. All in all, our election commitment to one-stop hubs is an investment of over \$64 million. The service providers in Armadale have been chosen. Hope Community Service and Yorgum Healing Services will be running the hub in Armadale. I know that the fit-out is happening at the moment, and we look forward to Armadale and Broome hubs opening very soon—next year.

I finish by emphasising again the McGowan government's strong commitment to the prevention of domestic violence since we have been in government, with over \$200 million of targeted investment based on evidence and based on stakeholder engagement and feedback. This year's budget alone sees \$52.5 million invested into this important area.

The SPEAKER: The member for Central Wheatbelt with the last question.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE CUNDERDIN

342. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Education:

If refer to budget paper No 2, volume 1, page 362. The line item, in part, is “Additions and Improvements to Agricultural Colleges”.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am being very specific, but the minister should know it because I have heard government members talk about it in their budget reply speeches.

The SPEAKER: Sorry. Just get on with the question.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is under the heading “Other New Works”.

- (1) Is funding for the Western Australian College of Agriculture Cunderdin included in this global amount?
- (2) If yes to (1), could the minister please advise how much funding is it and what will be delivered?
- (3) If no to (1), has Cunderdin agricultural college missed out again; and, if so, will the minister please explain why?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

(1)–(3) I assume the member is not coming to estimates next week?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am not taking criticism. I have just been criticised for not asking budget questions, minister. Get across your portfolios, please!

Dr A.D. BUTI: In regard to the question the member asked, the funding she is seeking for Cunderdin is not there at the moment.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE CUNDERDIN

343. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Education:

I have a supplementary question. Why do the minister and the Treasurer continue to reject business cases that have been put forward by the Department of Education for these essential works when other funds are being prioritised?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

Why does one develop a business case? One develops a business case to put an argument. Just because someone develops a business case does not mean it will be approved. We are in such a strong financial position because we take choices, we prioritise, and we determine year in year out through the budget process what we will fund for that year and into the future. That is what happens. There are many choices to be made, as the member would know from basic economics 100 —

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Sharpen up, minister!

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Dr A.D. BUTI: As the member would know from basic economics 100, there is unlimited demand and limited supply. That is why we have to make choices, and we have made the choice that we have made in the budget. I stand by the \$6.4 billion investment in education, which is much more than that the former government ever delivered in its time.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE — MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Report — Presentation

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [2.51 pm]: In accordance with the standing orders, I present the report of the management committee prescribing which parts of the estimates and off-budget public corporations will be considered by estimates committees A and B, and the time allocated for that consideration.

[See paper [1956](#).]

Adoption of Report — Motion

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I move —

That the report be adopted.

In speaking to this motion, at 1.00 pm today a meeting of great minds took place.

Mr W.J. Johnston: And you!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I love it. I hope Hansard got that one! That is a good one. I will pay that one.

A meeting of great minds did take place, and it was a brief but productive meeting. I will not go through the attendees now that I have been insulted!

The SPEAKER: I was going to say that I once had a teacher who said self-praise was no praise indeed.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, I know. That was probably a very, very wise teacher, you had, Madam Speaker.

What this committee considered was that the catering for that committee was poor, but then again consistent! What this committee did in the two minutes it had—in fact, if there were a study of meeting procedure and efficiency, this committee would be a good case study.

As a participant of the committee, I can report to members that next week the estimates hearings will take place in both this chamber and the other place. Today I have tabled the estimates committee timetable, including the various divisions for various portfolios that will be considered. I remind members with regard to the preparations for estimates that there will be a full complement of committee numbers, and, unlike last year, we will be sitting on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in both chambers for the prescribed time of 9.00 am to 10.00 pm.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.54 pm]: I just want to say that I am very pleased to be included as one of those great minds! I know the member for Central Wheatbelt enjoyed the brevity of the meeting. We are very supportive of this motion.

Question put and passed.

The SPEAKER: Those members wanting to have a conversation outside the chamber, can I suggest you move out because I would like to give the call to the member for Hillarys, and I would like Hansard to be able to hear her, and I would like to hear her, too.

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2023–24) BILL 2023
APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2023–24) BILL 2023

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [2.55 pm]: It is my pleasure to rise and make a contribution on the 2023 appropriation bills. I commend the Treasurer for handing down yet another strong budget that demonstrates responsible management of the state’s finances. The McGowan Labor government for the sixth year in a row has maintained a strong economy, again dismantling the falsehood that somehow only conservative governments are good economic managers. A number of current pressures created by global economic headwinds are impacting other states and countries around the world, yet Western Australia’s economy continues to be the strongest of all states and one of the top-performing economies in the world.

Through this budget, the McGowan Labor government will deliver initiatives to address the key issues and challenges facing our state. It will deliver cost-of-living support. It will provide further significant investments in our health system. It will address the housing shortages. It focuses on ways to decarbonise and continue WA’s transition to clean energy. Strong economic activity has seen WA employment climb to a historic high, with record full-time employment. This is in part due to more and more women going back to full-time employment, which is up by over 10 per cent. Our government’s strong budget position means we can focus on what truly matters to Western Australians. I feel like I have used the word “strong” at least five times already, but that one six-letter word really sums up the state of our budget. We have reduced our state net debt by almost \$16 billion compared with the projections left by the Liberals and Nationals, meaning that we will not burden future generations with mountains of debt. There is so much in this budget, but I chose to go over just some of the key highlights.

We have heard a lot from other members about the cost of living. Perhaps that is because it is the number one issue facing many of our constituents right now. There is no doubt that the rising cost of living has hit Western Australian households hard. With global inflationary pressures and national interest rate increases, many people are starting to feel the crunch, and a lot of people are not eligible for a commonwealth benefits, yet they are still doing it tough. This budget will provide cost-of-living relief to everyone. One of the ways it will do this is it will provide all Western Australian households with at least \$400 of energy bill relief in the form of two \$200 credits—one in July and one in November–December. This will make households better off than if we simply froze electricity bills. Constituents could save up to \$250 through these credits. It is worth noting that this is the third electricity credit in three years, which is upwards of \$1 400 in savings. These credits have been very well received by constituents in the Hillarys electorate. We will provide targeted relief to those who need it more, with \$826 of total support available for around 350 000 households.

One of my favourite graphs from the 2023 budget is the one that stipulates the electricity costs of each capital city in Australia. Electricity prices were illustrated in Perth as being far lower than in any other capital city, with the cost in New South Wales going up by over 20 per cent last year. This is down to the WA Labor government’s sensible decisions in the past to retain ownership of our electricity assets and have a gas reservation policy.

Another highlight is health. Our government is continuing to commit to putting patients first. Part of this budget is \$2.7 billion of additional investment in our health and mental health system, bringing the total new investment to \$10 billion this term. All this funding will help deliver quality health care for Western Australians. It will deliver more beds for our hospitals, more nurses, more doctors and reforms to ease pressures on our emergency departments. Australian Medical Association (WA) president Mark Duncan-Smith recently said —

... the \$2.7 billion spend on health and mental health would go a long way to improve long-running issues in the health system.

Dr Duncan-Smith says the promise to increase the number of beds and reduce hospital occupancy will help reduce ambulance ramping and deliver a safer and higher quality health system.

The total investment of \$10 billion over just three years is 18 per cent above the national average. Spending like this enables our government to embark on a series of major reform processes to address the root causes of some of the more challenging aspects of health delivery being faced in WA and across the country. The initiatives include the digitisation of medical records in every hospital and going electronic to futureproof WA hospitals; funding to attract and retain more workers in Western Australia; and alternatives to emergency departments, such as getting people into the National Disability Insurance Scheme and aged care. We are committed to phasing in nurse-to-patient ratios in every Western Australian hospital within two years, which is a historic reform. Ramping figures are down by 25 per cent compared with last year.

I have often spoken in the past about Joondalup Health Campus, the major hospital in Perth's rapidly expanding northern corridor. I will not spend too much time on that today, but it will receive funding of \$267.4 million for redevelopment to ensure that the hospital can continue to deliver what local residents need. This is a jointly funded project between the state and federal government.

Housing is another issue that is often raised with me by constituents in the Hillarys electorate. The signs of housing stress are clear across Australia and around the world. Although WA's situation is nowhere near as critical as the situation in the eastern states or overseas, there is no doubt that there are huge pressures on our housing system. In this budget, it was announced that an Office of Homelessness will be established to better coordinate the state's social housing stock. My office receives one or two emails a week alerting us that there might be a homeless person struggling somewhere in the electorate. We contact the Department of Communities, which will send someone from an outreach program to interview these people and put them in contact with crisis accommodation. It has worked successfully so far.

It has been heartbreaking to see the challenges that many all over our communities are facing, and supply is a critical pressure. We are moving ahead with development and planning approval reforms to ensure that more housing is created closer to the city and jobs. We are trying to get more quality multi-dwelling proposals that have the capacity to have a great design and provide an economic boost into many parts of the metro area. The Planning and Development Act 2005 will be amended to ensure strategic development approvals can be assessed faster and with more consideration of state significance. We need to get a pipeline of a mix of housing. Councils will retain the authoritative edge on good planning through managing their own town planning schemes to place developments where they would best succeed. WA's *Foundations for a stronger tomorrow: State infrastructure strategy*, released in July last year, looks beyond annual budget cycles and attempts to examine the situation in a holistic way to prepare us for the risks ahead. In 2020, 200 000 households required some form of housing assistance from the state government. By 2030, another 45 000 households will need that assistance. The strategy notes —

Housing affordability is an entrenched structural issue across Australia ...

In recent years, these factors have led to a spike in the number of people on the priority public housing waitlist. That is why this budget provides an extra \$750 million boost for housing supply and housing choice initiatives, and a \$450 million increase in funding to the social housing investment fund. We are thinking outside the box in funding successful new programs, such as through our announcement of the \$49 million 100 homes regional supportive landlord model.

As members will have noted in the news, Perth's building and construction industry requires extra support to build capacity to meet some of these challenges. Some of our biggest and best builders are at capacity and accepting no more work, so we need to ensure that this industry has the capacity to play a leading role in providing shelter for those who need it. That is why, in this budget, we announced \$48 million in training initiatives to boost the residential construction workforce. New apprentices will receive a \$2 000 training completion payment to kickstart their successful building careers. A \$55 million funding package will upgrade water infrastructure to open up new development potential for housing across Perth. We are increasing our social housing commitment to deliver 4 000 additional houses to ensure Western Australians can access shelter, and with it, a secure future.

Another area I want to talk about is our transition to renewable energy. The government is taking action on climate change with a \$3 billion investment, which will include delivering our plan to decarbonise electricity production and move towards cleaner, affordable and reliable energy. We know about the Kwinana battery energy storage system, opened by the Premier and the Minister for Energy, which stores and distributes green energy into the south west interconnected system. This high-tech energy solution is absorbing excess solar energy created by the wealth of small-scale rooftop solar across WA's metro area. Early last year, 3 000 extra homes were installing solar each month, adding another 191 megawatts of energy generation capacity to the south west interconnected system. Western Australia is a leader in solar energy and, as of June 2022, produced 815 watts of small-scale solar per WA citizen. WA citizens are doing the right thing when it comes to investing in renewable energy and turning their homes into miniature power plants. The state government is realising the potential of this energy revolution by investing more into these battery solutions. That is why the big-ticket item in this budget is the funding of an enormous 2 000 megawatt battery in Collie. A \$2.8 billion funding package will build this incredible new asset for WA's power security. When the sun goes down, these batteries will release stored energy back into the grid, providing renewable energy for WA households and assisting us to transition away from dangerous fossil fuels.

I am going to skip the section on hydrogen and go to transport, something that constituents in the Hillarys electorate might relate to more. There have been huge projects going on locally, both on Mitchell Freeway and Marmion Avenue, which I will touch on. Arguably, the most important infrastructure project that has been happening at a local level is the expansion of the smart freeway. Mitchell Freeway has had lane widening and although that has caused some disruption in recent weeks, constituents have already raised with me that they are now starting to see the benefits of having an extra lane.

It is important that as Perth grows we take a proactive approach to transport corridors to ensure that everyone can avoid the pain of congestion at peak hour. Constituents recently celebrated, as I said, the recent reopening of the Hepburn Avenue southbound freeway entry ramp. We have more and more coordinated signals and new electronic signs to display speed reductions and give motorists advanced notice of closures, but, more importantly, we are seeing more safety barriers, noise walls, emergency stopping bays and emergency breakdown lanes, and that will provide and minimise traffic flow disruptions and improve safety. Metronet is, of course, a major part of the planning process to avoid congestion, but we can deliver a fantastic experience for both public transport users and motorists.

Main Roads did an extensive survey back in 2021 asking for feedback on Marmion Avenue. Throughout that consultation, a number of issues were raised around intersections. The speed limit has now been changed. I have certainly had a few complaints about that, but the idea was that this would ensure minimal fatalities and reduce the number of accidents at those intersections, which had really increased in the last five to 10 years. It has not been a popular choice, but it is the responsible choice given the number of accidents and the history, as I have just mentioned.

In this budget, \$965 million has been invested in education and training. I am proud of that and very pleased that education has been a key focus in the electorate of Hillarys. The build for Hillarys Primary School is well underway and, hopefully, will be finished at the end of this year. The Springfield Primary School rebuild will go out to tender soon and, hopefully, it will be finished by March 2025. The Duncraig Senior High School rebuild is well underway as well. We have spent \$13 million to continue to attract international students back to Western Australia.

This WA budget has continued to put us in a strong position to support Western Australian families and communities and it continues our record investment in the state's future.

MS E.L. HAMILTON (Joondalup) [3.12 pm]: I rise to make a contribution on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the McGowan government's seventh budget, which delivers for my Joondalup community and the people of Western Australia. It provides support for households, businesses and our broader community while maintaining our commitment to responsible financial management. We are experiencing the strongest economic growth in nine years. We are paying down debt and a record number of Western Australians are in full-time work. Our Labor government is delivering the necessary infrastructure, investments and support to ensure our entire WA community benefits from our nation-leading economy so that the benefits are felt for generations to come.

A response to the budget speech from the member for Joondalup could not begin without talking about the significant investment in our health budget, given that my electorate is home to Joondalup Health Campus, which is growing rapidly and will become one of the largest hospitals in WA. A third of our state budget sees investment in our health system, and I commend the Minister for Health for her work in the portfolio. A record \$2.7 billion of additional investment is being delivered to our health and mental health systems. There are major upgrades and expansion underway locally, but what I am most proud to see with the investment in our mental health support and services is the investment in our new 110-bed mental health unit. Just recently, I toured the site with my parliamentary colleagues and I must say that this new site is state-of-the-art and a welcome addition to the northern corridor.

It will not be surprising to hear that there has been a growth in the need for mental health support for young people in particular. For some time, I have advocated for youth mental health beds, and this is being delivered. Most importantly, we are expanding support to help more people in the local community. This significant expansion of mental health services in our northern suburbs will see the mental health unit for the first time cater for young people aged 16 to 24 years and older adults aged over 65 years. The design of the new unit is drawn from extensive clinical and consumer input as well as incorporating the latest research to create a contemporary model of care that is recovery-based, with integrated hospital and community services to achieve the best possible results for consumers. It is clear that every element of the design of the new mental health unit will support consumers in their recovery.

The unit will provide an innovative light-filled environment with multiple recreation zones and large shared open lounge and dining areas, including visitor spaces. It includes landscaped courtyards, activity areas and a gymnasium. Centrally, a purpose-built recovery hub has been incorporated, which will allow patients to connect with their family and friends, community groups and peer support within a safe environment. This investment also expands our government's response to the infant, child and adolescent task force report by delivering further local mental health support for young people.

A large number of the staff who work at our Joondalup Health Campus, particularly the nurses and midwives, made their start in the profession locally at Edith Cowan University. ECU produces some of the highest quality

nursing and midwifery graduates in WA and is recognised as a top 100 nursing program worldwide. ECU also features WA's only nursing and midwifery degree. I joined the Premier and Minister for Health at ECU recently where they announced a \$28.5 million scheme to attract and retain midwives in our system. The scheme includes up to \$12 000 of payments towards HECS-HELP loans for 350 newly qualified nurses and midwives who start their career in regional Western Australia, with priority given to hard-to-staff sites. Funding is also included for wraparound support for up to 1 200 graduates in our hospitals.

We are delivering one of the most comprehensive and far-reaching skills and training policies in the country with our fee-free TAFE courses that are encouraging people to try a new career or to upskill. Our investment in TAFE locally is delivering a new \$20.5 million light automotive workshop at Joondalup TAFE. The new building will help train people in new and emerging technologies, including electric vehicles, drones and horticulture. Students are expected to begin training in the new centre from semester 2 of 2024. This will build on Joondalup's reputation as a centre for innovation. Again, the Premier was up in our electorate, along with the Minister for Training, earlier in the year, in about February, for a turning of the sod on this site. We were also joined by managing director Michelle Hoad and a number of students undertaking training in different fields. They included a young woman re-entering the workforce after a number of health challenges, but she explained in detail to us that she was really appreciative that she could jump straight into training using one of these fee-free courses. Try to say that a few times quickly. That is a tongue twister!

Our budget also continues to support the Labor government's delivery of the largest expansion of WA's public transportation network in a century. Our \$5.9 billion investment in Metronet will deliver 72 kilometres of new rail with 23 stations. I talk about Metronet, and have done for many years, because of the very important Yanchep railway line extension, which will connect the northern corridor with our Joondalup city centre. It is very important to connect people living in the north with Joondalup and our city centre, our growing CBD, to allow for the growth of our local economy. It has always been Labor governments that build heavy rail. The first 2.7 kilometres of track on this project were laid just on Tuesday, with a total of 14.5 kilometres of track slated for the northern extension of the Joondalup line. The new connection will drive further investment and economic activity across our northern suburbs and particularly in Joondalup.

Our investment in public transport also extends to buses. Joondalup is at the forefront of public transport innovation as the result of our trial of electric buses on local roads, something that I began advocating for with local residents in Edgewater in 2019. Joondalup's bus routes are now serviced by four new battery-electric buses as part of a trial of this new cutting-edge renewable technology. The trial is growing and we see these routes now extending to select suburban bus routes originating from Joondalup and Whitfords stations. In the first 12 months of this trial, the four electric CAT buses have carried more than 250 000 passengers and travelled more than 140 000 kilometres. They saved 230 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in the process.

Following the successful electric CAT bus trial, 18 new electric buses will be commissioned to service Perth's CAT bus routes. Also, electric charging stations will be installed at Elizabeth Quay bus station to support these new buses. The McGowan and Albanese governments are working together to manufacture WA's new electric bus fleet right here in Perth as part of a \$250 million state and federal commitment. Our government has put forward our contribution of \$125 million that will signal a new era for WA's bus services. This joint investment will ensure that the next generation of Perth's public transport will be built by local workers, with over 100 new jobs created by this initiative, and more than 300 existing workers transitioning to jobs in cleaner technology, all originating from the work we have seen in Joondalup.

An extra \$965 million has been allocated in this budget to education initiatives and training for jobs of the future. As a parent, I understand the importance of our children receiving a good education. There are 17 schools in my electorate. That is why I am pleased about this government's investment of \$325.1 million for the delivery of primary and secondary education, including increased supports for students with a disability and for eligible students with an additional language or dialect. This continues our previous budget's investment to support young people as we transition to new and emerging industries.

Joondalup is a hub for jobs of the future and innovation. Just last week I attended the 2023 Western Australia Cyber Security Awards. I had the honour of presenting the Outstanding WA Cyber Security Educator of the Year Award to Dr Michelle Ellis, who works at the Joondalup campus of Edith Cowan University, where she helps women and young people make the most of a career in cyber. Cybersecurity is front of mind in much of our community, as it is for individuals and some organisations. Joondalup is world-leading in the cyber capabilities that are being developed. We are training locally the global workforce that will be required.

With the increasing risk of data breaches, fraud and cybercrime, we know that it is crucial that individuals and businesses alike know how to protect themselves. I recently had the opportunity to welcome our federal Minister for Home Affairs; Cyber Security, Clare O'Neil, MP, to a roundtable discussion in Joondalup. We discussed how we are well placed to tackle the emerging challenges and opportunities in the cyber industry and, more importantly, to also grow the workforce that is required. Some outstanding work is taking place at ECU. One in five cyber

graduates come from our campus in Joondalup. Outstanding collaboration is already occurring locally as we develop this cyber graduate workforce and produce the skilled and knowledgeable professionals who will help protect our communities from cyberthreats.

There is a longstanding and strong relationship between Edith Cowan University and the TAFE sector. I am looking forward to seeing a connection with one of our local high schools when it offers certificate courses in cyber to students from the beginning of next year. I have been advocating and working closely with all the groups involved to ensure that we provide students with a seamless transition from secondary education to vocational studies, with the potential to complete tertiary studies, should they wish, giving more students an opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills and pathways required to help protect our digital world.

The McGowan government also increased the community sporting and recreation facilities fund by \$15 million. This will boost community participation in sport and recreation through the development of sustainable and good-quality facilities. We have a number of active sporting groups across all codes in the Joondalup electorate. It is very important that we increase support by way of funding to give kids every opportunity to participate in grassroots-level sport. I always said to my two teenagers when they were growing up that it is so important to be involved in an activity outside of school. Making sure students in our electorate have every opportunity to participate is fundamental. Since Joondalup is a relatively built-out suburb, we need to ensure that we are very clever with investments and opportunities for children to participate in all types of sport.

Earlier in the year, I visited Joondalup Bowling Club during an evening bowling session and looked at the greens. It was great to see all members of the community out and about. The club recently received CSRFF funding to convert its grass to a synthetic playing surface and install additional floodlighting. As a patron of Joondalup Bowling Club, it was a pleasure to attend its presentation dinner last weekend. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate every nominee and award winner and also congratulate Joondalup Bowling Club on achieving premier league status recently. I encourage all sport and recreation groups in Joondalup to keep an eye out for the next round of CSRFF funding, applications for which open midyear.

Another area I want to talk about relating to the McGowan Labor government's investment is the culture and the arts area. The Minister for Culture and the Arts is particularly fond of talking about the wonderful achievements of our local talent. I had the pleasure of attending a screening recently. I was invited by a local family in Connolly. Filmmaker and producer Tayla Burton and her two co-creatives, James and Sanjay, invited me to a screening of their film. The trio are students at SAE Institute Perth. Their film *Nothing Special* is a light-hearted superhero movie filmed in Pingelly here in WA. It has already received a wide array of commendations and awards, including the best action/superhero movie award at the Cannes Film Festival in France. The Labor government recognises the importance of artists and creative industries in fostering dynamic and active local communities. We are supporting local creatives like Tayla, James and Sanjay by progressing WA's first dedicated screen production facility in Malaga. This screen production facility will support our investment in WA's creative industries by attracting film, TV and screen projects to our state.

We are also delivering \$150.3 million for the redevelopment of Perth Concert Hall to provide the West Australian Symphony Orchestra with a permanent home and re-establish the site as a premium cultural precinct. My Joondalup community is home to the Joondalup Symphony Orchestra. I have had the wonderful pleasure of attending many of its evenings, particularly in the lead-up to Christmas, when I attended a wonderful family performance with my family. I am sure that this investment will have important flow-on effects for orchestras like this in my electorate. Investment in culture and the arts is a critical part of our plan to diversify our economy and create new local job opportunities for Western Australians. It will have an impact on electorates such as mine.

This budget also delivers another significant cost-of-living package to support every Western Australian household. A \$400 household electricity credit—our fourth since coming to government—will be delivered to every Western Australian. Households most in need will receive an additional credit, for a total of \$826 in support. For the first time, small businesses will receive the electricity credit. Eligible small businesses will receive a \$650 credit on their energy bills. This is expected to benefit around 90 000 businesses, including many in the Joondalup electorate. There are around 13 000 small businesses across the City of Joondalup. I try to be very active and engage with them in a number of ways. I regularly involve myself in shout-outs on social media and Go Local raffles to engage our local community to support local businesses. A great network of businesses support and engage with community sporting groups through donations and sponsorships in the northern corridor.

Over Christmas I joined the award-winning restaurant Chapters Bistro at its Christmas lunch for vulnerable and disadvantaged locals. The lunch was a massive success. For many attendees, it was the first time they had enjoyed a Christmas meal at a lovely restaurant like that. Chapters Bistro won an award for best European restaurant at the 2022 WA Restaurant and Catering Awards for Excellence and a bronze in the National Restaurant and Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence.

As a local member of Parliament, it is great to receive so much support for the activities I hold and for events like Australia's Biggest Morning Tea that I will be hosting later this month in support of the Cancer Council WA. I am receiving wonderful support from our business community, which is great to see. This is the sixth Australia's Biggest

Morning Tea I have held. It will also be a celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of Australia's Biggest Morning Teas held by the Cancer Council here in WA. We will have a guest speaker, Kristina Coomber, from the Cancer Council. It is wonderful to be able to engage our local year 10 students from Mater Dei College who will be coming to work some of their community service and volunteer hours at the event. Again, there is wonderful networking and collaboration happening locally.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms E.L. HAMILTON: I also want to acknowledge that this week we are celebrating a couple of notable events, activities and special days. Just yesterday, we celebrated Wear Orange Wednesday to acknowledge the wonderful support of the SES and organisations like the Wanneroo–Joondalup State Emergency Service that supports our WA community in times of need and challenge. I also want to acknowledge that tomorrow is National Walk Safely to School Day. I will be walking with our Minister for Early Childhood Education to Beaumaris Primary School. This day encourages families and students to take every opportunity to walk to school and get active when they can. I note also that tomorrow is P&C Day WA. We will acknowledge the fantastic organisations and parent groups that work hard to support our local students in schools. I give a big shout-out and thankyou to everyone. I acknowledge also that it is National Volunteer Week.

I will bring my contribution to a close by congratulating the Premier; Treasurer on this budget. We have a stable and progressive government that is creating local jobs while setting up the state for a very bright future. I commend the bills to the house.

MS C.M. TONKIN (Churchlands) [3.31 pm]: I rise this afternoon with pleasure to support the second reading of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2023–24) Bill 2023 and the Appropriation (Capital 2023–24) Bill 2023. It is a bit of a tongue twister. This budget delivers for all Western Australians on cost-of-living assistance; investments in health and mental health; affordable housing and addressing homelessness; climate action; economic diversification; infrastructure; education and training; safe, strong and fair communities; community cultural and sporting infrastructure; and investments in regional WA. These commitments are made in the context of world-beating economic management and fiscal responsibility.

I am proud to be a member of the McGowan Labor government because it is a government that demonstrates commitment to Labor's social, economic and environmental values, while delivering surpluses and paying down debt. These are values that resonate in my community because they are the values that the people of my community tell me are important to them. Our government is here to make life better and fairer for Western Australians, and to ensure that the next generations inherit a state in which they can prosper and enjoy opportunities. As a grandmother of three grandchildren in this state, I am especially committed to this agenda.

How does this budget deliver what is important to the people in the Churchlands electorate? It may surprise some, but we are a community of haves and have-nots, but I am proud to say that we are a community that is full of contributors. Those people, regardless of their personal circumstances, join in, volunteer, enjoy participating in sport and recreation, revel in the beautiful natural places by which we are surrounded and want to make life better for others. It is also a community that values quality education and the opportunities it brings. It is concerned about access to needed health and mental health services and supports, and understands the challenges of the rising cost of living and housing affordability. It is a community that knows that we must take decisive action on climate change.

Children in the electorate of Churchlands enjoy access to some of the finest primary and secondary schools in the state. This year's budget increases funding to WA schools by \$500 million to a total of \$6.4 billion. This includes the ongoing construction of stage 2 of Bob Hawke College, which will enable the doubling of the school's capacity, with more classrooms, a performing arts centre, dance and visual arts studios, and music and media rooms. The opening of stage 2 will reduce the pressure of numbers at Churchlands Senior High School that are already beginning to trend down. My grandson, who is 10 and attending West Leederville Primary School, is very much looking forward to attending Bob Hawke College. I am sure that by the time he gets there in a couple of years, it will be a fantastic finished school with all the stages developed.

The design and eventual construction of new STEM classrooms at Churchlands Senior High School is underway. These classrooms will augment the quality of STEM education at this school. Churchlands has an amazing extra curricula STEM club that extends the innovation, technical and scientific know-how of students. They will relish these new STEM facilities.

We have many health and medical professionals living in the Churchlands electorate. We are very grateful for their dedicated work. Investment in our public health system is therefore a high priority, with an additional \$2.7 billion in this budget, bringing our total new investment since 2021 to an amazing \$10 billion. Western Australia has the highest per capita spending of any state on our hospitals. We are spending 18 per cent above the national average, but this government has always been digging deep to do more, and this budget is a reflection of that attitude. Mental health is of particular concern for people in Churchlands, so the additional \$420 million spend will be welcomed. This includes \$201 million to expand mental health services, and a much-needed boost of \$219 million to upgrade Graylands Hospital.

Cost-of-living supports are broadly welcomed in our community. State government fees and charges have been limited to an increase of 2.4 per cent in 2023–24, which is well below inflation. It is well below the sorts of cost increases that are being imposed on people in other states. The \$400 energy bill relief for every household will be very helpful. Those eligible for the energy assistance payment will receive total additional support of \$826. This is well targeted to those most in need. The seniors cost-of-living rebate will also be increased in line with inflation to \$104 for singles and \$156 for couples. Small business will also benefit from a \$600 credit on their power bills. This cost-of-living assistance is of great value to the people in our community.

People in my electorate are vitally interested in addressing climate change, and many are playing their part by investing in reducing their household emissions through electrification by installing solar panels; using efficient electric appliances, including cooktops; and installing heat pumps for heating water and for air conditioning. Increasing numbers are also driving electric vehicles, reducing one of the highest sources of household emissions in our state and, indeed, our country. Western Australia adds the equivalent capacity of a new power station every year in rooftop solar. This presents some challenges for the stability of the grid, but our investments in large battery storage will make this increasing renewable input manageable. I notice that the large battery in Kwinana is ready to go. Its operation will be augmented by a \$3.5 billion investment in this budget for the decarbonisation of the electricity grid. This will support the phasing out of coal-fired power generation by 2030, thereby setting us on the path to net zero emissions by 2050. This will mean that the electricity used in our households and businesses will be increasingly clean and green.

Included in this headline budget commitment is \$2.3 billion for Synergy to build a massive 500-megawatt battery energy storage system in Collie and a second 200-megawatt battery in Kwinana. There is also funding in the budget for Synergy to build a new wind farm at King Rocks, and an expansion of capacity at the Warradarge wind farm near Eneabba, which will generate a combined 210 megawatts at full capacity.

Last year Minister Bill Johnston was welcomed to a very well attended community sundowner in my electorate, focusing on the challenges and opportunities for the decarbonisation of the electricity grid. One of the issues flagged by the minister was the challenges to grid capacity as industrial users seek to decarbonise their operations through electrification. It was therefore pleasing to see that, to address these challenges, \$126 million has been allocated for early planning for the network upgrades necessary to support fast-tracking government and industry transition to net zero.

In that context, today, thanks to Floreat local Graeme Stanway of State of Play and his associate, Wembley resident Chris Nelson, the Parliamentary Friends of Clean Energy heard about the efforts of the Electric Mine Consortium participants to decarbonise their mining and industrial operations. This is an exciting consortium because it brings together a number of mining and industrial players to jointly problem-solve and find ways to accelerate the decarbonisation of their industries. I am proud that ours is a government that not only acknowledges the challenges of addressing climate, but also backs its policy with strong budgetary commitments.

Before I end this brief contribution, I want to add that ours is a community that cares for the dignity and wellbeing of its members, and as such, I expect that we will vote strongly in favour of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution through the Voice. A yes vote respects our First Nations peoples, whose long-overdue recognition in the Constitution will give them the voice they need to shape their futures to the benefit of all of us. With that, I commend the bills to the house.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale) [3.44 pm]: I commend all my colleagues for their very erudite and thoughtful reflections on the budget. I was heartened over the weekend to hear on the ABC's *Insiders* program the federal Treasurer Dr Jim Chalmers reiterate the commonwealth government's ongoing commitment to Western Australia to maintain the existing arrangements for the distribution of GST revenue to this state. I am told that the federal Treasurer made a similar commitment at this morning's breakfast at Crown Perth.

This budget, and particularly Premier McGowan's budget speech, reinforces that any diminution of the GST amount is not negotiable. As he rightly pointed out, our state has around 10 per cent of the nation's population but accounts for nearly half of its exports. We need to invest in infrastructure and our people to maintain that excellent outcome. We must, however, remain vigilant. It reminds us that the concessions the McGowan government finally secured in 2018 from the Morrison government, fully supported by the then federal Shorten opposition, were hard-fought and should not be lightly surrendered. In his budget speech, Premier McGowan observed –

Madam Speaker, our fight to maintain our fair share of the GST continues.

If not for the 2018 GST reforms that Western Australians secured, which provide a 70% floor to our GST share, our State would only receive about 10 cents in the dollar based on our population share.

I take comfort in the assurances from the Prime Minister and Federal Treasurer that the GST floor will be maintained. However, the calls from eastern State commentators—and Premiers—to unwind the 2018 reforms continue.

Since the Howard government introduced the GST in July 2000, WA Labor, on behalf of Western Australia, has fought a persistent and unflagging campaign for a better deal. Western Australia's position became progressively worse over the intervening years.

In response to a question in August 2016, the then Premier Hon Colin Barnett set out the dire situation. He stated —

Can I just briefly state the situation. Any fiscal measure should be judged on its fairness and its economics. In the matter of fairness, I think it is an overwhelming case. Western Australia, as everyone knows, gets back just 30 cents in the dollar. The big states—New South Wales and Victoria—both get back about 90 cents in the dollar, and Queensland, for some reason, gets \$1.17, South Australia \$1.41, Tasmania \$1.77 and the Northern Territory \$5.28. WA loses this financial year \$4.7 billion in GST. That should be of concern to every Western Australian. In dollar terms this is perhaps even more striking.

He went on to say —

In that first year, Western Australia received \$2.375 billion. Sixteen years later, we received \$2.035 billion—actually less in dollar terms. In the meantime, the GST pool of money had grown from \$24 billion to \$60 billion, and our dollars actually went down. In the meantime, the population of Western Australia —

...

Not only did the GST pool go up from \$24 billion to \$60 billion and the dollars WA received actually fall, at the same time the population of Western Australia rose from 1.87 million people to 2.6 million people—another 730 000 people to educate and look after their health. That is the outrage of it. That is the fairness case—overwhelmingly unfair to the people of this state.

The then Premier went on to say —

Under the GST from 2000 on, the lowest share was New South Wales at 84c in 2005. We are at 30c. There is no precedent either way for what has happened to Western Australia. Can I conclude: the fairness thing, the inequity and the breakdown of the GST in the Commonwealth Grants Commission process is self-evident. The decision on distribution is not up to the states. The states have a role. The states' approval, universal approval, is required to change the rate in the GST or the coverage of the GST—for example, to fresh food—but the distribution is the responsibility of the federal Treasurer alone on the advice of the grants commission.

There is one other point I want to make and that is the economic case. When the GST was introduced, it was because of tax reform—that Australia was too reliant on direct income taxes, a lack of incentive. The GST allowed an indirect tax to make us more internationally competitive in line with other OECD nations. John Howard had the inspiration to make that change to the tax system to allocate the revenues from the GST and give them to the states, and in return the states gave up their rightful share of income tax collections. It was a swap and it would give the states a stable growth source of revenue. It has not worked out that way; it has failed economically because of the grants commission process. Malcolm Turnbull recognises the tax is unfair and that it fails Australia economically. The commitment is that when Western Australia's share rises above a floor level—I have advocated 75c; it might be 70c—it will be implemented for all states; so Western Australia, and no other state, will face that.

That was from 16 August 2016. Despite fairly strident comments like that, former Premier Barnett proved incapable of persuading his Liberal colleagues of the need to remediate this very inequitable position. It was not until 2018, when Labor was in government, that former Treasurer Wyatt and Premier McGowan were able to get an undertaking from the federal government.

The other thing we need to remember about how federal–state financial relations evolved is to include consideration of special purpose payments from the commonwealth to the states, as well as agreements between governments on matters like housing and health. The Commonwealth Grants Commission advises the Australian government on how federal funding should be distributed between state and territories to ensure equal access to services. The formula that it has deployed from time to time has proved highly contentious. It has always been argued that special purpose payments, containing conditions as they often do about how that grant is to be spent, diminish the autonomy of the states and fail to address particular local conditions on needs, whilst being from time to time funded on ideology and not needs. The area that originally comes to mind is the federal government deserting the area of Aboriginal housing in remote communities.

As Premier Barnett noted in his comments, as part of the GST deal, the states were asked to abolish a number of state taxes on the understanding that revenue from these would be more than adequately replaced by the distribution of GST funds to the states. Given this complexity and the interaction of the components, in 2001, a review of commonwealth–state funding was commissioned by the governments of Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. The *Review of commonwealth–state funding: Final report* by Professor Ross Garnaut, of climate change fame, and Professor Vincent Fitzgerald was commissioned by what I call the three donor states. It proceeded on the basis —

New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia (the donor States) receive a share of GST revenue that is less than their share of the national population, while all other States (the recipient States) receive a greater than population share of GST revenues ...

That is set out in figure 3.3 on page 43. The final report concludes —

There are disincentives to adopting policies that encourage development for donor States and for States shifting from being a recipient to a donor State. Advantages a State enjoys from providing a service are effectively redistributed to supposedly disadvantaged States. Western Australia loses substantial revenues from mining royalties when these funds are shared between States with smaller resource sectors. Western Australia argues that while it has valuable natural resource endowments, revenue sharing is not based on the rents generated from these endowments (i.e. profits in excess of returns commensurate with capital invested in exploration and development). Moreover, the return of royalties to the State needs to be seen in relation to the State's extensive efforts to promote development and provide supporting infrastructure and services. This demonstrates the difficulty facing States that attempt to promote growth and reduce the cost of service delivery. Whatever other benefits might be derived by a State from successful, growth-oriented policies, fiscal benefits are largely redistributed.

Those observations are made on page 148.

This might seem like ancient history; however, it is only when we reflect upon why Western Australia finally got its rightful share that we can counter the growing chorus, especially from other states. It also has to be conceded that for many years, Western Australia was a mendicant state. Our opponents would readily remind us of that now that the tables have well and truly turned.

By way of an aside, the GST battles coincide with my experience in political life. As parliamentary secretary to former Premier Gallop, I participated in a committee that was formed with senior Treasury officials and policy advisers to address the inequities of GST and federal funding that prevailed following the implementation of the GST. As Minister Assisting the Minister for Federal Affairs, I travelled with Premiers Gallop and Carpenter to Council of Australian Governments meetings. I observed, even at that time, when many of the other states were also Labor, that when it came to funding, every state nevertheless put self-interest ahead of anything else, including the federalism model. It is not only with interest, but also my wholehearted approval that I noted this in the Treasurer's speech —

In this Budget, we are escalating our efforts to defend our fair share of the GST.

We have allocated funds to boost the dedicated team within Treasury to safeguard our fair share. Our very own GST fairness fighters.

This team will ensure we put forward our best evidence and best arguments to maintain a fair share of the GST for Western Australia.

Some might say it is *deja vu*, but, certainly, the sharks are circling.

With some prescience, when the Morrison government secured the latest GST arrangements in 2018, the erudite and wise economics writer Shane Wright, in his article in *The West Australian* of 4 October, made the following observations —

A solution to the decade-long injustice of WA's GST share is almost within reach.

...

... brewing since the State and Territory treasurers asked Scott Morrison, then the Federal treasurer, to model the details of his planned GST salve.

Morrison has promised \$9 billion extra, all out of Canberra's coffers, to fix the GST system even if that fix was a long way from what had been proposed by the Productivity Commission.

That solution came with a promise that no State or Territory would be worse off.

But State treasurers, never shy in trying to squeeze more money out of Canberra, wanted to be reassured that this no-worse-off clause was real.

That reassurance never came, delivering the sight yesterday of Liberal and Labor treasurers holding out their hands like a collection of Olivers pleading "please sir, can we have some more".

While the proposed legislation goes to the technicalities involved in the Government's plan, the accompanying explanatory memorandum of understanding only goes as far as saying that it "seeks" to leave no State worse off.

...

By topping up the GST pool to get every State and Territory on board, the Government has bought into every future GST bunfight ...

...

All of which ignores the most important issue—none of this matters until 2021–22 when the allocation system is supposed to start changing.

Between now and then about \$2 billion in cash will rain on the WA Budget.

The proposed 70¢ and then 75¢ floor, which the Productivity Commission also recommended against, won't be seen for at least two elections and many changes in the economy.

All the while, WA voters watch on and wonder.

As I said, those comments were quite prescient given they were made in 2018. Having said that, the argument continues. Mr Shane Wright has now decamped to the eastern states and he continues to write about this issue. In fact, he wrote another article in November 2022 headed —

Cost of Morrison's WA GST deal blows out by \$20 billion as debt hits record high

In those observations he states —

A deal put in place to placate Western Australia when its share of GST revenue was tumbling is on track to cost the nation's taxpayers 10 times more than originally forecast, helping drive up federal government debt and interest payments to record levels.

...

Morrison struck the deal at a time WA's share of the tax pool had fallen to an all-time low of 30 cents for every dollar of GST raised within the state. Its iron ore royalties were effectively being redistributed among the ... states and territories based on a Commonwealth Grants Commission formula that takes into account each state's revenue sources and expenses.

Under Morrison's deal, from 2022–23 WA must receive a minimum of 70 cents in the dollar before increasing to 75 cents in 2024–25.

Could I have an extension please? I should be able to finish in time.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The quote continues —

When the policy was put in place, it was expected iron ore prices would fall and WA's share of the GST pool would therefore rise. Instead, prices have soared.

He concludes by saying —

Any change to the GST deal would create enormous political problems in WA ...

Certainly, his early predictions were borne out. That article was taken up by *The Age* in its editorial on 16 March this year in which it noted —

It may have sounded a reasonable safety net at the time, yet thanks to Western Australia's unexpected good fortune the cost of making good the rest of the nation has snowballed out of control ... funded by yet more government borrowings. Senior economics correspondent Shane Wright ... calculates propping up WA's share of the GST in make-up payments will eventually cost taxpayers over \$25 billion.

The editorial concludes —

This week, meanwhile, Premier Daniel Andrews told his federal counterparts ... "So you want to keep WA better off. Then don't think that we are paying for it, because we are not. We are just not." It was, frankly, a largely hollow threat given how little say Victoria has over how the GST is distributed. But Andrews is right to push back.

Victoria, and the taxpayer, cannot afford to kick the can any further down the road. It is already clear the previous Coalition government left us in a mess. Budget forecasts need to be made that take account of future revenue predictions. It appears untenable to continue the "no worse off" stop-gap beyond 2027. Yet another rethink is called for that simplifies the increasingly byzantine —

I love that word —

distribution system of GST reimbursement.

Members can see from that that it is game on. In this context, the Treasurer's vow in his budget speech is not only timely, but a clear indication of WA's resolve to get and keep its fair share. The Premier; Treasurer made it clear to all those who were circling —

Make no mistake, anything less than the current 70 cent GST floor—rising to 75 cents in 2024–25—would be contemptible and offensive.

Not just to this Government, but to all Western Australians.

It's a red line that should not be crossed by any future Federal Government.

All States and the Commonwealth have benefitted from the efforts Western Australia has put in to grow our resources sector over decades.

Even with the GST floor, Western Australia still continues to receive the lowest GST share in the nation per capita, by a long, long way.

In 2023–24, we will provide a further \$2.8 billion GST subsidy to other States. In fact, higher than expected iron ore prices in WA since the reforms, are delivering an additional \$22 billion in GST to other States and Territories.

States like South Australia will receive \$8.4 billion in GST next year—compared to Western Australia’s \$6.5 billion.

Despite the fact we have about one million more residents than South Australia.

Or Tasmania, which will receive \$3.4 billion—more than half of Western Australia’s allotment.

Even though we have about five times Tasmania’s population.

Other States will attempt to erode Western Australia’s share of GST in upcoming reviews.

We cannot let that happen. We will not let that happen.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [4.06 pm]: As always, it is a bit of a tough act to follow the member for Landsdale, especially at the end of week in which we have had budget speeches all week and I happen to be the very last speaker. Nonetheless, I really want to take this opportunity to demonstrate how proud I am of this budget and the fiscal responsibility and restraint that the government has shown over the last six consecutive years. So much thought has been put into not only reducing debt—no-one wants to ponder that because the numbers really get quite big and it is hard to get your head around, but I will touch on the fact that we have a \$3.3 billion surplus. That is really commendable in light of what is going on across the globe with the terrible impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is still having on many sectors and the atrocities in Ukraine and the economic effect of that. In light of that, the Treasurer and his cabinet ministers have been able to steer us into an enviable position in terms of an Australian context.

We have achieved a surplus and we have also been able to pay down the debt that was left to us by the previous Liberal–National government by \$16 billion. To put that into context, paying down debt has resulted in a \$4.3 billion saving in interest, freeing up that money to be used for essential services. I wanted to acknowledge that because it is not something that is terribly exciting to talk about in the media. People tune out a little bit because they are such big numbers, but if a government does not have strong books, it is not well positioned to do really important things. That really boring argument that gets trotted out by the opposition all the time that Labor governments cannot manage money is just a load of rot and, once and for all, after six consecutive years of flawless financial management, we can all acknowledge and say thank goodness that we have this Labor government steering us through these times.

I am really proud of this Labor budget. It is clear that Western Australians are really at the forefront of this budget. The key area in the budget that impacts my constituency would be the cost-of-living measures, which are really fantastic. The big one is the \$400 electricity credit. This is the third type of electricity credit that the government will be giving to people, and the \$200 will be split over two cycles. This is a really important measure because we know that people are struggling. We have not only an increase in interest rates, which impacts home owners, but also the undeniable situation of rent increases, which is really impacting my electorate. Within the City of Belmont, 46 per cent of people are renters, which is a significant portion. Any measures that we take to the Western Australian public that help with those real struggles are absolutely fantastic and will be welcome. Therefore, those measures are in place. We are also looking at assisting small businesses to help them and to acknowledge that they are a critical part of our economy. There will be a \$650 electricity credit for eligible small businesses. I have a lot of small businesses in my electorate, and they do a great job. I am really pleased to see that they are well supported by lots of locals as well.

We are limiting the increase in fees and charges to just 2.5 per cent, which is well below inflation. We are also capping public transport fares, making travel across our suburbs really cheap, which is great. It will be free on the first Sunday of every month. We are also continuing with two free flu vaccinations this year as part of our cost-of-living package.

The other issue that I want to touch on is health because it impacts every single person in every single electorate across our state. At various times in our lives, we or our loved ones will have to utilise hospitals, and any investment that we can make into our public health system is fantastic. I would like to reiterate that we are in such a strong economic situation not by accident but because of the great planning done by this government. On top of our historical spending in health, we are investing an extra \$2.7 billion across the health and mental health sectors.

I want to highlight our track record and some of the things that we have done in health. It is really important to look at what we have done and that we continue to build on that investment. We are leading the nation in per capita spend on our hospitals, and I think that is phenomenal. We are increasing WA Health’s annual budget by 33 per cent.

We are increasing the Mental Health Commission's annual budget to 57.3 per cent. Over the last two years, we have added 547 new beds to the system, which is the equivalent of two tertiary hospitals. Over the last three years, we have increased WA Health's workforce by more than 22 per cent, which is an additional 1 784 nurses and 779 medical full-time equivalent staff. I think that is really commendable, and I wanted to highlight that that is what we have already done. In terms of what we are doing in this budget, an impressive \$2.7 billion is being invested in the health and mental health areas in our state.

I do not have a hospital in my electorate, but a lot of my constituents use Bentley Health Service. I was really pleased to see that that has received a \$150 million upgrade, which is a huge amount. It will help establish what is called a surgicentre, which will separate elective and emergency surgeries. That will have a really positive impact on not only my constituents, but also people right across the metro area because it will reduce wait times. There is an additional \$75 million to address emergency department pressure and ambulance ramping. I think this is a fantastic initiative, and it brings the total spend of ED-specific initiatives to over \$450 million. We will also put \$28.5 million towards attracting and retaining healthcare workers, which is a really important initiative. We can have all the hospitals and facilities, but it is crucial that we retain those qualified specialists in the medical sectors. We will spend nearly \$100 million to introduce an electronic medical record. This is a fantastic initiative that will move the health sector well and truly into the digital era, with better management of patient flow, which is fantastic. A lot is being done in that space. There will be \$544 million put towards establishing the women's and babies' hospital, which is also fantastic. I will not talk too much more about that.

I also want to highlight that we are taking mental health really seriously in this budget. One of the things that we are doing there is a \$219 million expansion to Graylands Hospital. All of us as members of Parliament not just in our work capacity, meeting with our constituents, but also in our private life know that mental health touches many people. It is very important that we make sure that facilities are available for people when they need to reach out for help and require assistance in a professional setting. We take that very seriously, and I commend the minister for her commitment to making sure that we are doing our bit to provide support when it is needed for people and their mental health.

The final point that I would like to highlight in relation to the budget is our approach to dealing with housing. Like many members have already mentioned, this issue comes up a lot in my electorate, and I think it is because 46 per cent of people in the City of Belmont are renters. They have come to me because they feel, particularly at the moment, that they are in a really precarious situation wherein their landlords pretty ruthlessly increase their rents and they are finding it incredibly difficult. Recently, one family raised with me that they had nowhere to go. They did not have family, they had a young son, and they were facing the prospect of having to stay on friends' couches because of the increase in rent. It is really quite shameful when we hear about that. These people had been long-term tenants in the same house, and they were devastated at how, overnight, their lives were suddenly turned upside down. We are making sure that we invest substantial and significant money in social housing, and I think it is at record levels. Our total investment in social housing and homelessness initiatives has grown to \$2.6 billion. That is quite a staggering investment. It will obviously enhance our social housing stock quite out of sight. I want to again point to what we have already done.

Our track record is really impressive. We have already delivered an additional 1 200 social housing homes and we are looking to increase that to 4 000 homes. We understand that that will not provide immediate support to people on the waiting list, but it is certainly an historic amount of money that is being dedicated to the housing situation at the moment. It is well and truly overdue. The minister has been doing a huge amount of work in the social housing space. There are also other measures he has committed to looking at. We are allocating \$33 million to extend the off-the-plan transfer duty rebate. We are lifting the threshold for exemptions and concessions. We are providing \$55 million for upgrades to water infrastructure. This will actually unlock housing and land supply right across the metropolitan area, including around the Metronet precincts. I have one of those in my electorate down in Redcliffe. They are a few points I wanted to discuss. I think they demonstrate how this budget really puts Western Australians at the forefront. We are looking at how we can help people manage their daily lives, including cost-of-living pressures, which are huge, certainly for people in my electorate. We are looking at what we can do to not only put more money into our health system to make sure we are giving patients the very best care and facilities, but also provide critical infrastructure for mental health patients. We are also investing record amounts of money to address homelessness and provide extra social housing opportunities for people. I am incredibly proud of the work that our government has done to get us to this point. There is much more contained in this budget and I would love to go on, but I am very aware that we have heard a lot of speeches about how wonderful this budget is and I am aware of the time. I really do commend these bills to the house.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [4.20 pm] — in reply: I am responding on behalf of the Treasurer. On behalf of the Treasurer, I thank members who have contributed to the debate as part of the budget consideration. Members have spoken on the impact in their electorates and the state more generally of the state budget handed down by the Treasurer last Thursday. I thank members for their contributions, research and for their passion for their individual communities. I acknowledge that the consideration in detail stage of the budget

is, of course, next week during the estimates debate. I am sure that many questions will be asked and line items interrogated very effectively by some great minds. With that, the Treasurer is very appreciative of the contributions of all the members to the debate on the 2023 budget.

I commend the bills to the house.

Questions put and passed.

Bills read a second time.

Pursuant to standing order 222, bills and estimates referred to Estimates Committees A and B.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Assent

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

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Special

On motion without notice by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That the house at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 13 June 2023, at 1.00 pm.

House adjourned at 4.24 pm
