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Tuesday, 10 August 2021

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 2.00 pm, acknowledged country and read prayers.

TOKYO OLYMPIC GAMES — WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATION

Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [2.03 pm]: With the Tokyo Olympic Games closing ceremony having taken place on Sunday night, it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge our local champions for their performances and representation of Australia on the world stage. A total of 54 athletes, 22 officials and five support staff from Western Australia represented the nation at the Tokyo Olympic Games. As the Minister for Sport and Recreation, I am pleased to acknowledge the podium finishes for Western Australian athletes. Zac Incerti won bronze medals as part of the men's 4 x 100 metre and 4 x 200 metre freestyle relay teams. Annabelle McIntyre became Western Australia's first gold medallist at an Olympics since 2008, and won Western Australia's first-ever rowing gold. Jack Cleary won a bronze medal for rowing. Brianna Throssell and Tamsin Cook competed in the women's 4 x 200 metre freestyle relay team that won a bronze medal. Brianna has become the third Western Australian to bring home three medals, winning gold and two bronze in the swimming relays. Matt Wearn won a gold medal in sailing. Tom Wickham, Trent Mitton and Aran Zalewski won silver medals with the Kookaburras hockey team. Sam Welsford won a bronze medal in cycling. Duop Reath won bronze with the Boomers in what was Australia's first-ever Olympic medal in basketball.

Of course, these home-grown heroes would not have been able to reach this elite level without the associations, clubs, staff and volunteers that make up each sport. I acknowledge the hard work of the team at the Western Australian Institute of Sport to prepare our athletes for a successful Olympics campaign in what was a challenging lead up to the Tokyo Games. The performances of our local athletes on the big stage were inspirational, and will have a ripple effect all the way through to grassroots sport, resonating with kids who will no doubt want to follow in the footsteps of their Olympic heroes. That is one of the fantastic things about the Olympics—not just the medal tallies, but the boost to participation at the community level.

Members of the house, please join me in congratulating all the Western Australian athletes who competed in the Olympic Games. Simply representing Australia in an Olympic Games is an incredible achievement and is the result of a great deal of hard work, sacrifice and determination. I would also like to congratulate the 24 inspiring Western Australian athletes who have been selected to represent Australia at the Tokyo Paralympics, which starts on 24 August. I look forward to providing a similar update on that later this month.

Members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Hear, hear and congratulations to all those athletes. We all look forward to the Paralympic Games.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LANGUAGE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [2.06 pm]: I would like to inform the house that on Wednesday, 4 August, I had the pleasure of presenting the Outstanding Community Language Teacher of the Year Award 2021. The award, now in its third year, celebrates excellence in teaching by community language teachers, and recognises their commitment to helping young students learn skills that broaden their horizons and will last them a lifetime. This year's award was won by Ms Anja Reid of the Goethe Society WA for her dedication to the school and teaching of the German language, as well as her outstanding skills in motivating and encouraging her students to learn.

This year, 11 strong nominations were received for the award from community language schools that teach German, Greek, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Sinhalese, Tamil and Vietnamese. Each school was entitled to nominate one teacher. The award presentation was hosted by Community Languages Western Australia, formerly the Ethnic Schools Association of WA, in partnership with the Office of Multicultural Interests, and was held at the new Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip. I was honoured to host the award presentation with Mr Enzo Sirna, AM, president of Community Languages WA.

It is well known that the McGowan government recognises the importance of supporting language learning and maintenance in Western Australia. In 2021, close to \$700 000 in funding has been provided to community language schools through the community languages program, administered by the Office of Multicultural Interests. This funding was provided to 46 community language schools to assist their teachers and administrators provide quality language teaching to thousands of students.

The importance of language learning and maintenance cannot be overestimated. Language abilities increase career opportunities, facilitate links with the rest of the world and increase intercultural understanding. I am sure members of the house will join me in commending teachers of community language schools, most of whom are volunteers, for their commitment to maintaining and extending Western Australia's linguistic diversity.

LEGAL AID — VIRTUAL OFFICES

Statement by Attorney General

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [2.08 pm]: I recently had the pleasure of opening Legal Aid Western Australia's sixteenth virtual office, located at Clarkson Library in my electorate of Butler. I shared that honour with Tracey Roberts, the Mayor of Wanneroo. The virtual offices are an initiative of Legal Aid's CEO, Dr Graham Hill. They use advanced technology and innovation to improve access to justice for people living in outer suburban and regional areas where there is limited access to physical Legal Aid offices. Each virtual office is fitted with a state-of-the-art video screen that connects to Legal Aid's head office for face-to-face appointments with a Legal Aid lawyer.

Virtual offices are located in community centres across Western Australia and are hosted by partner agencies, including the Citizens Advice Bureau of WA, community resource centres, Hope Community Services, Karrayili Adult Education Centre, youth justice services and now the City of Wanneroo. These organisations use their local knowledge and relationships to help community members identify legal issues and connect them with Legal Aid services. I understand that Legal Aid hopes to continue to open more virtual offices, with the next ones planned for Manjimup and Narrogin.

I launched Legal Aid's first virtual offices in 2019 in the outer suburban centres of Armadale, Joondalup and Midland, and in the regional centres of Esperance, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Karratha, Leonora, Mandurah and Meekatharra. Since then, further offices have opened in Fremantle, Kwinana, Rockingham, Busselton, Jurien Bay and now Clarkson. To date, more than 2 160 legal services have been delivered through those virtual offices. More than 68 per cent of people receiving assistance have been new clients accessing Legal Aid's help for the first time. This initiative is making it easier for these people to access legal information and advice at an early stage, helping them to resolve their matters quickly with improved outcomes.

I commend Legal Aid WA, the City of Wanneroo and Clarkson Library on their successful collaboration, which has delivered this important new service to the local community.

POLICE — SUICIDE PREVENTION FORUM

Statement by Minister for Police

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [2.10 pm]: Yesterday, I was privileged to attend the Western Australia Police Force suicide prevention forum held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. I would like to acknowledge the Commissioner of Police, Chris Dawson, and his team within the health, welfare and safety division for their efforts in planning and delivering this initiative.

Madam Speaker, you better than many of us in this chamber know the difficult and arduous job that our police officers do on a daily basis to keep the community safe. Tragically, sometimes the ongoing impact of the stresses that police face in carrying out their duties is not realised until it is too late. The recent loss of two serving police officers is a sobering reminder for us all that mental health is an issue that we need to better understand and work harder to identify the symptoms and ways in which we can better manage the causes.

The forum brought together representatives from all ranks within the WA Police Force, as well as subject matter experts and researchers, with a goal of raising awareness and identifying the challenges associated with mental health and suicide. A key point that I took from the forum, which I encourage all members in this chamber to promote, is that we must all speak up in an effort to remove the stigma that surrounds mental health and encourage anyone who feels they need help to seek it.

Under the McGowan government and Commissioner Dawson, there has been a significant boost in resources and services provided by the health, welfare and safety division; nevertheless, we must all constantly work to improve our support of police officers, who put themselves into harm's way on our behalf on a daily basis.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

362. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the minister's claim in question time last week in which he stated —

We have had a significant increase in demand—14 per cent in emergency department presentations this year alone ...

I also refer to the comments of Mr Mark Duncan-Smith, the president of the Australian Medical Association Western Australia, clarifying that, overall, there has been a three to four per cent increase, which is, in fact, consistent

with yearly trends across the minister's term in government. Given that COVID-19 has been the scapegoat for the government's failure to address the health crisis that has been worsening over the last four years, how does the minister respond to the president of the AMA Western Australia confirming that it is the government's neglect that has caused the crisis, not COVID-19?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

There are more parts to that question than an episode of *Home and Away*! Let me go through some of these things. The fact of the matter is that every health system in this nation and internationally is struggling with a spike in demand as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic—whether the member for Cottesloe likes it or not. I know that that does not fit his narrative, but that is tough. He cannot come into this place with his statistics to try to pretend otherwise.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected

The SPEAKER: Member, you have asked the question and you have held up your chart—if we could just have the answer from the minister, please.

Mr R.H. COOK: Let me take the member for Cottesloe through this very slowly because that is clearly the speed at which he learns. If we compare December 2020 with December 2019, we have had an increase in presentations of 11.6 per cent. If we compare January 2019 with January 2021, we have had an increase in presentations of 10 per cent, and there has been an increase of five per cent from March 2019 to March 2021, with an increase in April also. Importantly—I have been saying this now for weeks on end, but the member comes into this place with the same material and the same accusations and we beat them off day in day, day out—the fact of the matter is that compared with three years ago, in 2021, triage 1 is up 10 per cent and triage 2 is up 15 per cent. These are critically ill patients. These are the people who have an impact upon the patient flow in hospital EDs. I know it is true to say that if we take the numbers globally, that is the very high acuity and the very lowest, there has been a modest uptick of around five per cent between 2019 and 2021. But the fact of the matter remains, the people coming to our EDs are sicker, and those presenting with mental health issues are coming with more complex issues. That has led to the length of episode of care going up and increased the constraints sitting on our EDs at the moment. Unfortunately, the member for Vasse cannot be with us this week; we wish her all the very best in her struggles. Clearly on the weekend, she was able to undertake several work-related activities when she said that between the last six months of 2019, pre-COVID, the average number of presentations each month was 80 400, which, she said, is comparable with the first six months of 2021, in which there were 81 200. Madam Speaker, not only has she got it wrong—the average is 94 219—but she compared the first half of one year during the summer months with the second half of another year during the winter months!

Dr J. Krishnan: No homework!

Mr R.H. COOK: No homework at all—no accuracy and not even a pretence at prosecuting the truth in relation to this debate. If the member for Cottesloe wishes to stand up again, we will explain it to him again in very slow sentences, and perhaps we will produce some charts as well. Hopefully, at one point in the future, he will actually get it.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

363. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Given the amount of spin and selective information coming from the minister's office, how are Western Australians supposed to trust that the minister can deliver the health system they deserve?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

That is one of the longest supplementary questions I have ever heard, and it had a bigger preface than *War and Peace*. There is no spin here. We are being truthful with the people of Western Australia. This would be a great opportunity for the member for Cottesloe to learn the lessons of being truthful with the people of Western Australia. The fact of the matter is that our emergency departments are under intense pressure. Our doctors and nurses working on the frontline are working harder than ever, having come off the back of one of the most stressful periods of their careers, and that is why we are undertaking the most significant expansion of our hospital beds and workforce—but it is not easy. Thank goodness we have the McGowan Labor government, because at least we are dedicated to the hard work.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

364. Ms C.M. TONKIN to the Premier:

I refer to the announcement that the McGowan Labor government will invest an additional \$1.9 billion in health and mental health services across Western Australia. Can the Premier outline to the house how this significant boost in funding will address the unprecedented demand in WA's health system and support the delivery of high-quality care to Western Australians; and can the Premier advise the house whether he is aware of any threats to the health of Western Australians?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Churchlands for the question. I acknowledge former Deputy Premier Hon Eric Ripper, who is in the President's gallery today.

The SPEAKER: Even the Speaker's gallery! Yes, welcome!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, in the Speaker's gallery! Welcome, Eric.

Western Australia has the best-funded health system in Australia. We are spending per capita 18 per cent more than the national average on the health system in our state. But we are under heavy demand, as the Minister for Health outlined, with enormous increases in emergency department presentations, particularly people with complex mental health problems and a range of conditions, and that is placing pressure on our emergency departments.

On the weekend, the health minister and I announced significant funding in the coming state budget. It is a \$1.9 billion boost in health and mental health funding across Western Australia. That will mean more staff, more beds and more services. It is on top of our existing funding for our health system. On top of that, Madam Speaker, we will be putting in place \$1.8 billion for the new women's and babies' hospital at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site in Nedlands and, on top of that, \$1.3 billion over the next four years on important capital works improvements in both the city and the regions—all over the state. This will mean an additional 332 new beds across the health system, an additional 100 doctors and around 500 extra nurses. That is all on top of the already announced expansion in the number of beds, plus \$495 million in mental health spending across Western Australia, including \$129 million of that towards youth mental health.

The reason we can do that is that we have had strong financial management over the course of the last four and a half years, which has put the state in a strong financial position, certainly compared with the last government and any other government in Australia. That has allowed us to invest in important health initiatives all over the state.

The member asked me about threats. Yesterday or the day before, we received a letter from Mr Clive Palmer from Queensland. His letter demanded —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has the floor.

Mr M. McGOWAN: He is the Liberal and National Parties' friend. He does fund their election campaigns, Madam Speaker. Mr Palmer's letter from a lawyer basically threatened the Western Australian government with legal action if we do not suspend the vaccination program for COVID-19. It was shocking, appalling, disturbing and disgusting that Mr Palmer would do that. It shows an appalling degree of ignorance on his behalf, and it is an appalling misuse of his wealth that he is prepared to do that and threaten the health, wellbeing and lives of people, particularly older people, in this state. If he is successful in his action—he is threatening some sort of injunction against the state—it will damage the health of not just Western Australians, but all Australians, and people could potentially die. We will not give in to this bullying and bizarre behaviour by Mr Clive Palmer, once again, towards the people of this state. He has a record of doing that on multiple occasions. This is another example of that, but, I must say, this is a particularly disturbing example. It does not just threaten the finances of the state; it threatens the lives and health of people in this state.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATION CLINICS — SCHOOL HEALTH NURSES**365. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the state government's school student wellbeing study conducted by the DETECT WA program that found around 40 per cent of high school students are experiencing moderate to high levels of emotional distress, a threefold increase from 2014. Can the minister confirm that school nurses have been pulled out of Western Australian schools to staff state-run vaccine centres, leaving schools with diminished or no nursing staff?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

On the one hand, the member would have us be concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of our students. On the other hand, he wants us to tie our hands behind our back on how we fight COVID-19. I would have thought that the best way we can address the concerns that young people have around COVID-19 is to take the opportunity to get as many people as possible vaccinated. I am not quite sure where the member is coming from. Do you want us to solve the problem or don't you? At the last election we committed to an extra 100 school psychologists, which will go a long way to equipping our schools to provide a better environment for the kids they look after and to make sure that we can continue to respond to issues around mental health and wellbeing. Of course, as the Premier just said, we have also announced an increase of \$495 million in spending in the Mental Health Commission for a range of mental health services in our community.

The thing we must do now is get the community vaccinated. It is all hands on deck.

Dr D.J. Honey: Not at the expense of kids.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: I know where the member stands on vaccinations, because we have seen it from his mate Clive Palmer. We know what his position on vaccinations is.

Dr D.J. Honey: I'm fully vaccinated; are you?

Ms M.M. Quirk: You're full of something!

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: Once again, I concede to the member for Girrawheen in terms of the wit and wisdom in this place. She provides great insight into the offerings from the member for Cottesloe.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I do think you are referring to the member for Landsdale.

Mr R.H. COOK: My apologies, member for Landsdale.

The fact of the matter is that we have to get as many people as possible vaccinated. Today I announced that we have engaged a whole range of nurse graduates, who will now take up roles in our vaccination clinics. We have assistants in nursing at our vaccination clinics. We have asked 35 of our 300-odd school-based nurses to do some shifts in our vaccination clinics as well, because we want to make sure that we get as much of this stuff as possible into the arms of Western Australians. That is the only way we are going to get out of this, Madam Speaker, with all the impacts that it has on both the physical wellbeing of members of the Western Australian community and the mental health issues that they confront. We make no apologies for making sure that we have all hands on deck in our efforts to get people vaccinated.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATION CLINICS — SCHOOL HEALTH NURSES

366. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Can the Minister for Health confirm that those 35 nurses he has taken out of schools is the full extent of it, or will there be more on top of that?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I cannot give any guarantees that that is extent of it. What I can guarantee is that we will do everything possible to make sure that we can protect the people of Western Australia by getting them vaccinated as soon as possible.

HEALTH — WORKFORCE — RECRUITMENT

367. Ms E.L. HAMILTON to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's massive investment of \$1.9 billion into our health system. Can the minister outline to the house how this investment will help deliver more doctors, nurses and midwives for our health system, and advise the house on what strategies will be undertaken to recruit more health staff for our hospitals?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. It is a very important one. As members will be aware, the Premier and I committed to an extra 332 beds over the weekend as part of our significant expansion of the hospital system. It will require an extra 100 doctors and 500 nurses for that alone. But we have to recruit more. There is no point in having more beds unless we can have more doctors and nurses to stand by those beds to provide world-class health care for the people of Western Australia. When we came to office, there were 34 700 members of our health team. Today, there are over 39 000; that is a 14 per cent increase in just our first term. Forty-five per cent of all public sector jobs were created in the health system to continue to provide great health care. In just the first six months of this year, we have recruited more than 750 FTE nursing and midwifery staff into our health services, and there will be more. But the labour market for doctors and nurses is very tight. Because of the situation with our international borders, we cannot recruit as many overseas doctors and nurses who would usually come to this great state as part of their ongoing career opportunities.

Today we announced a significant investment in a campaign to ensure that we get more nurses in our health system. We are investing \$71.6 million into a health workforce attraction and retention strategy. The budget will commit an extra \$35.6 million for new workforce initiatives. That is on top of the \$36 million election commitment that focused on providing 600 more graduate nurses.

Let me start with the international and interstate strategy. As we speak, we are bringing in 209 junior doctors from the UK and Ireland to start work in the WA health system in the next few months. We are spending \$2 million on an even more targeted international, national and local advertising campaign. A key focus of the recruitment strategy to attract experienced nurses and midwives back into the workforce. We will provide refresher courses free of charge, which were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, for experienced nurses and midwives, to either bring them back into the system or to assist others to upgrade their skills. These refresher courses will provide for a smooth transition back into the health system. The McGowan government will fully fund the cost of online refresher training and facilitate paid clinical placements for those who have completed the training. In addition, we want to not only make

sure that we continue to engage as many experienced nurses and midwives as possible, but also make sure that they are supported by great nursing graduates. In a typical year, about 700 graduates will be offered places in the health system. As a result of this initiative, this will come on top of the 600 new graduates and nurses already promised. This year, 1 100 new graduates will receive jobs.

I draw this to your attention, Madam Speaker, because I think all members of the chamber should be concerned about this. It is important for an opposition to know that if it is going to make accusations against a government and its efforts to recruit, it should do so in a way that is truthful to the people of the Western Australian community. I was disturbed to see a tweet from the member for Cottesloe recently that said, “We were promised 1 000 new nurses. Cook delivered none.” Let me take the opportunity to explain, again in very slow English, to the member for Cottesloe that to date we have recruited 927 of those 1 100 nurse graduates—they are already in our system, working the wards of the WA health system and providing great support to our experienced doctors and nurses. By the end of the month, that will have increased to 949.

This is a tough job. The spike in demand in our hospitals is putting the hospital system under great pressure, but we are bringing the resources and extra doctors and nurses to bear. One thing that this health system should not have to bear is the untruthfulness of those opposite and their tweets in the community.

CYCLONE SEROJA — TEMPORARY HOUSING — CARAVANS

368. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the minister’s announcement of 11 caravans to be supplied to people seeking emergency and temporary accommodation in the midwest as a result of the devastation of cyclone Seroja.

- (1) Is the minister aware that five of those 11 caravans appear to have not been allocated to families in need and are currently parked at the Geraldton State Emergency Services headquarters? Here is a picture of them in all their glory; they do not seem to have left the yard.
- (2) How is this excusable when the minister announced this measure back on 21 July, which was already weeks late?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. The provision of caravans was part of a response to a request from the community directly. We consulted some—indeed, all—of the 16 local governments affected by cyclone Seroja. There was feedback from communities through local councils and local community outreach. The member should be reminded that a range of accommodation was offered to, given to and taken by people impacted by the cyclone.

It is not that all people wanted a caravan—indeed, some people were provided with accommodation in towns like Geraldton, some people had other sources of accommodation and other people made other arrangements. The number of caravans provided was as a result of direct contact with the community. Those caravans were taken to Geraldton, where they are being made good. The member would know that if he were to try to buy a caravan in Western Australia today, he would not get one. If he wanted to order a new one, it would take at least six months to get it. These caravans are second hand and were provided on the basis that they could be provided quickly to the people who needed them.

There are some issues with the caravans in terms of licensing—they have to be licensed. But for those people who will get those caravans, they are the right fix, because some people want to stay in their community in Northampton and some want to be on properties that were destroyed—they want to be close to animals and close to communities. The response we have provided for accommodation has been varied and bespoke according to need. The need, based on what the community told us, in terms of a small number of people, was the provision of caravans. They are being provided. I cannot give the exact reason why those caravans are there at the moment in Geraldton, but they are in the region ready to go. Obviously, most of those caravans have now been provided to the people who needed them. If it is an issue of putting a registration on a caravan and getting it on site, then that can be done quite quickly.

CYCLONE SEROJA — TEMPORARY HOUSING — CARAVANS

369. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I have a supplementary question. I am staggered by that response. Where in the minister’s press release does it outline that these caravans would not be fit for use when they were taken to the people in the Shire of Northampton, Shire of Chapman Valley and City of Greater Geraldton? That is staggering! You sent up caravans that are not fit for purpose.

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: This is an opportunity for a supplementary question, not a dialogue from the member.

The SPEAKER: That is right; it is not an opportunity for further arguments. You have asked your question. I would ask the minister to respond.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

Member, they are adequate caravans to be provided to people.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sorry. We are to just hear from the minister, thanks.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Quite frankly, the response of the Nationals WA to an issue that has impacted its own constituents has been woeful. I have been in the community in the midwest many times and have not seen the member there once.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: It is very easy to criticise from the cheap seats, but this is a huge disaster that has impacted many areas of our state—across 16 local government regions. We provided a massive response for the clean-up and in terms of ongoing support and emergency accommodation. We went to the community. We went to local governments. We asked, “What is it you need?” A range of requests came back. In terms of caravans, it was 11—that was from all the shire presidents and CEOs contacted. They said they wanted 11 caravans. Guess what they got, member? They got 11 caravans.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: If more caravans are needed, they will get them.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: It is not easy in the current market to walk into a shop and get a brand new caravan. The caravans are fit for purpose. They are late models. They are being provided and are being accepted gratefully by the people who need them. Instead of sitting there criticising and carping, I would rather the member get behind the effort that is being launched to support his own constituents.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That concludes that question.

BEELIAR WETLANDS — ROE 8

370. Mrs L.M. O’MALLEY to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s commitment to permanently protect the Beelihar wetlands, which was delivered last week with the passing of the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beelihar Wetlands) Bill 2021.

- (1) Can the minister remind the house how this government came to the decision to stop the destructive Roe 8 project and protect the wetlands?
- (2) Can the minister update the house on the work that is underway to deliver a long-term responsible solution to getting trucks off local roads in the southern suburbs?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Bicton for that question and, of course, for her work over many years to help to deliver this commitment. It was with great pride last week that we finally delivered the commitment that we gave to the people—that is, to save the Beelihar wetlands for future generations. Members will remember that we took that policy commitment to the 2017 election and, of course, the Liberal and National Parties frustrated it in the other place. We again took that policy to the 2021 election. I will refer to some of the comments and the attitudes of the Liberal and National Parties in a minute. What we have been able to do is to change the reservation from roads to parks and recreation and to extend the A-class reserve boundary to include the Beelihar wetlands.

This has been a fight over many decades, and people have been working very hard year in, year out to deliver it. I thank my parliamentary colleagues the member for Fremantle, the member for Bicton and the member for Willagee. I also thank the federal member for Fremantle, Josh Wilson, for all his work, too. I acknowledge all the work done by the general community and also some community leaders, in particular Kim Dravnieks, and Kate Kelly from the Save Beelihar Wetlands group. I acknowledge all the work they did over many years.

We have extended the A-class reserve. We are deleting the Roe 8 corridor. We are also building new infrastructure under the stewardship of the Minister for Environment—extended boardwalks and more infrastructure so more people can appreciate these beautiful wetlands. We are doing that and, at the same time, we are delivering the broader commitments of moving more freight onto rail, improving the roads leading to Fremantle, such as High Street, and developing intermodals. All those commitments are being delivered.

What is the attitude of the Liberal and National Parties? They still want to build Roe 8–Roe 9. We would think the Nationals WA would be more concerned about regional roads, but their commitment has always been to the Perth Freight Link. It is the only road project that I have heard their members talk about. In the other house, Hon Nick Goiran and his new apprentice, Neil Thomson, are talking about these projects. Nick Goiran —

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister should refer to members by their full title.

The SPEAKER: That is correct —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sorry; I am giving a ruling. If you refer to a member in another place, you need to refer to them appropriately.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry about that. They are Hon Nick Goiran and Hon Neil Thomson.

Hon Nick Goiran led the Liberal Party from a record, I think, six seats in the South Metropolitan Region to zero seats. “Honey, I shrunk the Liberal Party”—that is a description of Hon Nick Goiran! He shrunk the Liberal Party into oblivion and now he is still in the other place insulting our commitment and the people of Western Australia who have voted on this issue twice.

Let us look at that whole corridor. The member for Riverton, member for Jandakot, member for Bateman and member for Bicton all fought on this issue. Again, we delivered on the overwhelming response that people wanted to save Beelihar wetlands and an alternative freight and trade plan for Western Australia.

NURSES — RECRUITMENT

371. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the minister’s commitment to recruit an additional 1 000 nurses in April this year through a national and international advertising blitz. How many nurses has the government recruited from overseas as part of this advertising blitz?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I am not sure, but I am pretty sure that I answered this in response to the last question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, the Minister for Health is answering the question. I ask everyone else to listen to the answer.

Mr R.H. COOK: It is difficult to know where to start to address the incompetence, but let me explain. I promised the people of Western Australia that we would recruit through the nurse graduate intake program 1 000 nurses this year and 1 000 nurses next year. Normally, we take just over 700, so this is a significant increase. It not only takes account of our election commitment, but also goes beyond that, because the McGowan Labor government is investing in our health system to meet its demands. In addition to that, the Premier and I recently announced an expansion of the program, so we have 1 100 nurses this year and 1 200 next year. This has never been done in our health system before. It is an unprecedented level of expansion of the intake of nurse graduates. We want to blend them with experienced nurses, so—I will speak this point very slowly—we have recruited 750 experienced nurses so far this year. Although it was a long time ago—at least two questions ago—we have recruited 927 nurse graduates this year, and by the end of this month, that will have got to 949. That was our commitment: 1 000 nurse graduate places this year. We are at 927 and there will be 949 by the end of this month, so, member, do not bother asking a supplementary question.

NURSES — RECRUITMENT

372. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. The minister clearly does not listen to the questions asked of him, so I will ask this supplementary question slowly so he can understand!

The SPEAKER: No preamble; just a question.

Dr D.J. HONEY: How many nurses has the government recruited from overseas as a consequence of its advertising blitz?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I have just come from a press conference where we provided details about that, so maybe I will take up a little bit more of the opposition’s question time to explain that program. This is an exciting program whereby we are advertising in the United Kingdom, Ireland and other places to try to bring in nurses from overseas. They will be recruited via a program that will see them come to Western Australia over and above our cap. They will not have to pay their quarantine fees and we will provide them with a relocation allowance. The program has nothing to do with the

commitment of 1 000 nurse graduates that we made back in April this year. That is a completely separate commitment. As a result, we will hopefully have a great blend of nurse graduates and experienced nurses. As I said, we have already recruited 750 experienced nurses. Some will be locals, some will come from interstate and some will come from overseas, but we welcome them all, because they will provide great care for the people of Western Australia.

SYNERGY — HARDSHIP SUPPORT

373. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting Western Australians facing hardship, particularly as the state recovers from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how Synergy is supporting those Western Australians who are doing it tough and helping prevent them from being disconnected?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of anyone who believes the government should not support struggling Western Australians?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(2) I am very pleased to answer the question from the member for Belmont. I know her deep commitment to helping people in hardship. I know that is one of the motivations that led her to this place.

Synergy has been prioritising hardship support over the time that the McGowan government has been in power. Last year, we saw a range of COVID supports that helped people in hardship. We saw the \$600 account offset. We also saw the doubling of the energy assistance payment from \$305.25, which meant that the lowest income earners in Western Australia got \$1 210.50 worth of free electricity from the government of Western Australia during 2020. The government has reformed the hardship utility grant scheme program, so that rather than helping Synergy, it helps people in need. We have introduced a household energy efficiency scheme, which is mirrored on a program run by the former Gallop and Carpenter government, but it was abandoned by the Liberal Party when it was in power. We are also implementing the smart energy for social housing program, and that has seen significant bill reductions for people in social housing.

Synergy continues to work hard through the Keeping Connected program, which is in-person outreach to its customers. Synergy is now advertising, inviting customers who are having trouble with their bills to speak directly to it, so rather than the first problem being a bill that customers cannot handle, they are inbound to Synergy to get help from the range of assistance that it can provide. Synergy has been working with financial counsellors and it has created an online portal, which is a really major reform. It allows the financial counsellors to see exactly what is happening with the Synergy billing system. It has led to the Financial Counsellors' Association of Western Australia writing to me to congratulate Synergy on the work it is doing with financial counsellors to help people in hardship. We have seen the government fund additional case managers in Synergy starting in July last year. Seven of the 11 dedicated managers are already on board and we are already seeing excellent results. They have worked with the 1 600 people in most hardship and we have seen 430 of those—over a quarter—already graduate so that they can now support themselves without needing additional assistance. We have also seen Synergy focus on family violence. We know that one of the problems that many people in hardship have is that they are the victims of domestic violence; they have been subject to coercive control and have been left with debts. I am very proud of the work that Synergy is doing there to help people in that terrible situation who are suffering from family violence.

The member asks who is not supporting this action. I was very surprised on Friday to hear that the member for Cottesloe does not support this action. The member for Cottesloe went on radio and said that it was shocking that the Labor government is working with Synergy to do all these things. He said that it was shocking that we are not sending in the debt collectors, that we are not just taking a financial approach to this and that we are actually working with customers to make sure that their life can handle the situation that they are in, because we care for people in that situation. I do not go on radio saying that it is shocking that no debt collectors are being sent out to the people of this state. It is no wonder that that is the attitude of the member for Cottesloe, because the last time the Liberal Party was in government, disconnections went up by 86.2 per cent.

HOMELESSNESS — PREGNANT WOMEN

374. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to local support service providers in the south west reporting that there are approximately 100 pregnant women without a fixed address and a recent significant spike in demand for newborn packs for homeless mothers.

- (1) Can the minister guarantee that women giving birth at local hospitals and their newborns will be supported and provided with suitable and stable accommodation?
- (2) Is there any risk that mothers who do not have a fixed address at discharge would be separated from their children?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

(1)–(2) I actually have not heard the information that the member is referring to, and I would have appreciated her bringing that to the attention of my office before raising it in this place. It is not my understanding that children are ever taken into the care of child protection simply because there is no accommodation available for the mother. In fact, everything is done to make sure that people who need emergency accommodation are given emergency accommodation, and if there are any concerns about what would happen to someone who is facing a range of difficulties, whether they be domestic violence, mental health, drug and alcohol or housing insecurity issues—whatever they are—those issues are dealt with before the baby is born and supports are given to that family. In fact, we have put a record amount of investment into early intervention assistance for families to ensure that children do not come into the child protection system.

To answer the member's question, I am not aware of the circumstances that she is talking about. We are well aware that there are housing pressures throughout the state with the demands on private rentals as well as in the public system. However, I do also note that there has been a record number of building approvals. The Premier talked about this in question time last week. I think over the last year there has been an increase in building approvals of over 80 per cent. There have been a significant number of building approvals, and there has been quite a bit of commentary that once those buildings are built and people are able to move into them, that will in turn take the pressure off private rentals and get them into the public system. Of course, there has been significant investment by this government into public and social housing as well.

I would urge any individuals, families, community members or their representatives, if they know of people living in that sort of hardship, to get involved with services or the Department of Communities, because it certainly should not be the case that there are risks to families being kept together because of homelessness or the threat of homelessness.

HOMELESSNESS — PREGNANT WOMEN

375. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Community Services:

I have a supplementary question. I thank the minister. One hundred women without an address is seriously concerning. Is there a specific program or support service that the government offers that women can access, given their vulnerability as they go into hospital potentially with the risk of losing their child?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I note that the member has not referred to the authority for the information that she has given to us today, so I would urge her to come to the Department of Communities through my office to give that information so that we can give proper support to those women and their families as required. It is important to note that extensive services are available for people throughout the state, and that includes in regional areas. Whether those women are pregnant, or have or do not have children, quite a lot of work is done to ensure that there is stable accommodation and, importantly, proper supports. In fact, the Department of Communities is best placed to do that now, knowing that, together, child protection services and the Department of Housing give support to people who are in public housing or are looking for public housing. On behalf of both the Department of Communities and the Department of Health, I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition talks about those numbers and I would urge her to seek that those people get in touch with the Department of Communities district officers or to give me some of that detail through my office so that we can deal with those issues a bit more constructively than in the Parliament.

SENIORS — FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

376. Mr T.J. HEALY to the Minister for Seniors and Ageing:

Before I ask my question, on behalf of myself and the member for Jandakot, I acknowledge the students of Canning Vale College in the public gallery.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to continuing Labor's strong record on supporting our seniors, including the introduction of the WA Seniors Card by the Dowding Labor government 33 years ago. Can the minister update the house on how the McGowan Labor government is helping to ease the financial strain on Seniors Card holders, particularly those who are facing financial challenges as a result of COVID-19?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

I certainly can. I would like to thank the member for Southern River for his question and also acknowledge the tireless work that he does in connecting with his community and in particular bringing forward the issues that seniors face in his community. I thank him.

The McGowan government is a champion for seniors in Western Australia. The WA Seniors Card program was brought into being by a great Labor minister, Hon Kay Hallahan, in 1988. It was the first program of its kind in Australia and it was subsequently taken up right throughout Australia. That just goes to show what a great and innovative initiative it is. The WA program provides seniors across the state with access to, on average, \$650 annually in total value for state government concessions. That figure is higher if they hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health

Card or a Pensioner Concession Card. In July 2021, more than 312 000 Western Australian Seniors Card members received the cost-of-living rebate—in total, approximately \$25.5 million. Singles receive \$93.12 and couples receive \$139.64.

The WA Seniors Card program also provides members with access to over 900 business discounts, and I know that those are in great demand. Those discounts offer great savings every day, assisting seniors with the cost of living. What is more, Madam Speaker, the McGowan government will soon be reintroducing the safety and security rebate, and that will allow WA Seniors Card members to claim up to \$400 per household to go towards installing or buying home safety or security devices. We are able to deliver these concessions because of the strong and responsible budget management of the McGowan Labor government. I know they are going to be very well received by our seniors community.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition with the last question.

QUARANTINE ADVISORY PANEL — MEETINGS

377. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the state government's Quarantine Advisory Panel.

- (1) How many times has the Quarantine Advisory Panel met since its formation?
- (2) Will the minister table the minutes of these meetings; and, if not, why not?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) Madam Speaker, I do not have the answer to that. The Quarantine Advisory Panel is actually formed under the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Obviously, it is meeting on an ongoing basis. I had a meeting with the chair, so I know that it is meeting and considering items, and I spoke with the director general of Health yesterday, who I think has a meeting with the panel today. That provides the member with an idea of the level of activity, but, beyond that, I do not have any other details.

QUARANTINE ADVISORY PANEL — MEETINGS

378. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister confirm that all 16 recommendations of the Weeramanthri report, of which the formation of this panel was one, have been implemented?

The SPEAKER: I would suggest that you are vastly expanding your original question. It is not really a supplementary question, but I will allow the minister to respond on this occasion.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I do not have any more details to provide the chamber, Madam Speaker.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT — LGBTIQIA+ STUDENTS

Petition

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [3.00 pm]: I have a petition that reads as follows —

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

We, the undersigned, say LGBTIQIA+ students in WA public schools are not receiving the protections to which they are entitled under law, and are instead suffering from a culture that enables and perpetuates homophobia and transphobia. Currently, students in the LGBTIQIA+ community are being consistently demeaned and stigmatised by their peers, through actions such as: referring particular behaviours as gay and mimicking typical gay behaviour and attitudes- with the incentive to cause offence. As a direct result from this, LGBTIQIA+ students are being substantially affected with some of these harms being: having a feeling of shame, a rise in sleep disturbance, experience of social isolation, having low self-esteem, school avoidance, a loss in mental stability and having to stay hidden in the 'closet'.

The Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984, which has the key objective to promote the recognition and acceptance within the community regarding equality of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation, does not outline what is classified as intolerable student conduct. Despite the Act covering how LGBTIQIA+ individuals should be treated in schools by school administrators, there is nothing stating how students should treat each other.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, to take action on:

- a) Legislation to protect LGBTIQIA+ students from discrimination in our public schools, by other students.
- b) Acknowledge that LGBTIQIA+ students need special protection under law.
- c) Immediately investigate why this issue is still evolving despite societies shift in values and attitudes towards LGBTIQIA+ acceptance.

Additionally, will you integrate and update the current 2018 version of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984, to address:

- a) It is unlawful for students to bully, intimidate or discriminate an individual because of their sexual orientation.
- b) It is unlawful for students to use offensive slurs with the incentive to cause harm and offence to that individual.

Otherwise, will the State Government, produce a new Act to address these matters.

The total number of signatures is 91.

[See petition 9.]

PAPER TABLED

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

CRIMINAL APPEALS AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Notice of Motion to Introduce

Notice of motion given by **Mr J.R. Quigley (Attorney General)**.

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — HOUSING — PERFORMANCE

Notice of Motion

Mr V.A. Catania gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That this house condemns the Labor government for its failure to prioritise housing in the last five years of government, creating a housing crisis that the state has never seen before, triggering significant economic and social consequences.

METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME (BEELIAR WETLANDS) BILL 2021

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — HEALTH — PERFORMANCE

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) informed the Assembly that she was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Leader of the Liberal Party seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

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

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [3.05 pm]: Is it not interesting, members, that we go back to last week and there was not a health crisis —

The SPEAKER: Sorry, Leader of the Liberal Party!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will read the motion. I apologise.

The SPEAKER: If you could move the motion, that would be great.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I was almost off in flight. Thank you very much for bringing me back to the important task of reading the motion. I move —

That this house condemns the Labor government's inability to acknowledge the ongoing and deeply devastating health crisis and its impacts upon Western Australians.

As I say, is it not interesting how things change in a week? They say that a day is a long time in politics. A couple of days over the weekend is certainly a long time in politics because last week we did not have a health crisis in this place but all of a sudden over the weekend we have seen \$1.9 billion mysteriously appear to get out of the crisis. When we discussed this matter last week, I pointed out that it seemed that the Minister for Transport had the magic key when it came to getting money out of the Treasurer for the enormous blow-out in the Metronet project. I suggested that perhaps the Minister for Health could take some hints, and obviously the Minister for Health has. I imagine the Minister for Health has said, "Look, Minister for Transport, what's the magic, because I'm just not getting any traction to get the support that I need?" Good on the Minister for Health. I think admitting it is a crisis and putting up his hand and seeking the support from his colleagues for this is a good thing and we welcome that recognition that this is a health crisis.

However, the reason that we are here—I do not think we will see anything different going forward, to be quite frank—is the mismanagement of this portfolio under the part-time health minister. I do not blame the minister for that in the sense that the Premier has given him a whole range of portfolios. We have said for some time that that will be a real problem because it will be very hard for this minister to focus on the matters that need to be dealt with. We have seen that it has taken four and a half years for this government to recognise that there is a health crisis despite members on this side repeatedly telling the government it is a problem and that there are major problems in the health system.

At this point, I would especially like to recognise the excellent work done by the opposition health spokesperson, Libby Mettam, and all the work that she and my parliamentary colleagues have done to shine a light on this matter. I hope that has given the Minister for Health some assistance to get his support because finally the Treasurer has realised there is a crisis. It is a crisis that no-one could ignore. Everyone to whom I speak who goes into hospitals tells me about it. They tell me about the stress the staff are under and the time they have to wait to get services. I would also like to thank the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Nursing Federation. I assume that they have the minister on speed dial and the button is just about worn out. They are doing the excellent job of representing our healthcare workers in this state and recognising the enormous mental and physical stress that those members are under in trying to provide a good service to the people of Western Australia. Sometimes the government tries to make out that we on this side are somehow critical of those healthcare workers. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have deep empathy for what those healthcare workers are going through because of the inaction of this government.

The government is treating this health crisis as a political issue. All of a sudden, we hear that a great bucket of money is available. We saw the media statement announcing a \$1.9 billion boost in funding and 332 extra beds, comprising 223 general beds and 109 mental health beds, and so on. It went on to refer to the delivery of various services and investments in this particular area. I want to go into that in a little detail because it sounds like there is a significant investment. We do not know exactly how much of this is new funding because, like all funding announcements by this government, it wraps up old commitments with new commitments and presents it all as a new commitment. We are not sure whether the \$1.9 billion is additional funding or whether some old funding is wrapped up in that. We have a hint that a bit of it is old funding. The media announcement exposes itself as smoke and mirrors. It states —

... funding for 332 extra beds and more frontline staff at WA hospitals

Members would assume that that is 332 beds on top of whatever the government has already planned to do. We would welcome more beds; they are desperately needed. It is quite clear that hospitals are massively overstretched. The government made that announcement. What do we see when we go into the detail? It turns out that 158 of those beds have already been committed, so this is an old announcement. It is not 332 new beds; it is almost 160 beds fewer than that. Why spin it? Why does the government not say that it is committing an additional number of beds? Why does the government spin it as if it is adding 332 new beds on top of former commitments? That \$1.9 billion is a new commitment. If that money was well spent, we would say that that money allocated by this government is probably appropriate, but it is an old announcement.

We also see that Labor is being deliberately opaque about the timing of the implementation of these measures. We cannot wait four years for this crisis to be solved. We have seen a three to four per cent increase in demand for services year on year. There seems to be some desire to deny that that is the case. We need a solution now. We have a health system that is massively overstretched.

The minister promised 1 000 nurses back on 14 April and we saw the announcement about that then. It talked about 1 000 newly qualified nurses joining the health system this year. Today the minister said that the government is well on track to do that. It will be interesting to see what the net increase is. As the minister said, he gave a detailed press conference outlining all that. We will look at that and see whether the number of staff in the hospital system will be increased. The media announcement states —

... an extra 200 newly qualified nurses are in addition to the McGowan Government's election commitment ...

This announcement was made in April. During the election, the government said that there was no problem, no health crisis. In April, it already admitted that there was a crisis. Now we have seen an admission that there is an even greater crisis—a \$1.9 billion crisis in the health system. The minister has now said that there will be an advertising blitz. He stood up in this place and said that the government is undertaking a national and international advertising blitz. Just like the broader health announcements, the campaign sounds very glitzy—big on promise but extremely light on detail. No-one has seen the advertising blitz. The Australian Nursing Federation is certainly querying why it has not seen it. If we are fighting for nurses and advertising internationally, why have we not seen that advertising blitz? We have not seen it.

The minister cannot even tell us how many nurses have come in from overseas. We know the reality. Let us provide a bit of logic. We knew a year ago that there were shortages in the hospitals. When we talk about getting these extra nurses, we know that the government could not even fill current vacancies in the hospitals. The health system in

Western Australia has always been critically dependent on a steady stream of doctors, nurses and other health professionals coming from overseas, yet the minister cannot even tell us how many medical professionals we are getting in from overseas. We know there is competition for talent but the truth is that Western Australia and Australia are highly desirable locations for people from all over the world. Surely it cannot be beyond the wits of this government to have brought in people already. We should know how many have arrived. To be quite frank, I believe that the efforts to do so have been unsuccessful.

I have no faith whatsoever that in the future this minister will deliver health professionals as a result of those additional recruitment exercises. We do not have the details. What countries are we advertising in? How much money is being spent on the campaign? How many nurses do we expect to recruit? What is the target for overseas recruitment? We cannot fill all those places. It is all right for the government to say that it is getting in graduate nurses, but anyone who has been involved in the health industry would know that first-year graduate nurses consume the resources of a hospital. One of the problems in hospitals is that staff are taken off training because they cannot afford to spend the time to train the new nursing staff. Those new nurses will be extremely helpful in our medical system in four years, but right now we need experienced additional nurses in the health system. We are not seeing any detail on those targets. The minister gave a bit of detail today, saying that the government was going to bring in these nurses and they were going to be above the cap. I would be interested to know the details. How many nurses will be brought in above the cap?

Just as a little aside, on *Landline* on the weekend we heard about the dire straits that farmers will be in come the next harvest because they simply do not have the labour coming in. If it can be done for nursing, why can it not be done for other professions and other critical needs in this state? That is an aside. I am glad to see that additional nurses will be recruited and that the number is above the cap because that certainly answered some questions that we had on this side of the house.

What will we do when those new nurses are recruited? Where will they be housed? What accommodation is available for them? The other thing we have in parallel with the health crisis in this state is a housing crisis. When people try to get in workers, there is nowhere for them to live. I understand the situation if people are currently living in the state, such as trainees, but when new nurses and doctors are coming in from overseas and interstate, do we have any plan whatsoever for housing them? I know that regional communities have not been able to get workers because there is simply nowhere for them to live. That includes police and nurses. I understand that the government is availing itself of Airbnb accommodation in Geraldton to try to house government workers. That issue has to be dealt with in parallel if we are going to see a real solution to this problem.

I want to turn to the issue of nurses being used to administer COVID vaccinations. I was stunned by the minister's answer to a question asked in this place today. I know that a number of members in this place care about mental health issues in the community. Over about a year, we have seen a trebling of the most severe presentations in schools for students suffering from mental health problems. Overwhelmingly, about twice as many young women as men are affected. Members who have been to schools will know that self-harm is one of the major factors that presents itself with students in response to mental health issues. How can school nurses be taken out of schools? School nurses are the ones who see those students with mental health problems and injuries. School nurses are the canaries in the cage in their reporting and dealing with those issues. School nurses are not just some ancillary. It is not just the school psychologist, school counsellor or school chaplain. They may deal with parts of it but, in fact, school nurses are highly trained medical professionals who identify those key issues and can then refer those students. I really find it incomprehensible, given the enormous —

Mr P.J. Rundle: It's offensive.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is offensive given the enormous crisis we have in schools right across this state. We can all hypothesise about what we think the cause is—whether we think it is COVID or something else. Those frontline staff deal with the mental health of those students and this minister thinks, “No, no; we will pull them out.” The government's solution is to pull school nurses out of schools and put them into COVID vaccination centres. The truth is that if the government wants a priority, the mental health crisis is today. Today there are kids in those schools who are suffering enormous anguish and undertaking self-harm. They need treatment today.

Yes, we think the government should accelerate the vaccination program. I would be very surprised if other states have pulled their nurses out of schools. Western Australia is an absolute laggard in vaccinations. I think this should be a matter of shame for this government. As I said, I was shocked by the answer that the Minister for Health gave today in question time.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.21 pm]: I would like to also contribute to this excellent motion, brought to the house by the Leader of the Liberal Party. I call on the house to recognise the Labor government's inability to acknowledge the ongoing and deeply devastating health crisis.

Nowhere is that health crisis more evident than in the level of ambulance ramping in our hospital system. It is emblematic of the entire crisis. It went up to 5 000 hours of ramping in a month, which is a shocking statistic to see. We know that the minister has responded to this through the member of the other place who has brought about

an inquiry into St John Ambulance. Instead of looking at the reasons for the ambulance ramping, it appears that Labor wants to have a go at St John itself. We have raised this as a matter of concern before because we know how important St John Ambulance is to the communities that we represent right throughout Western Australia, in both city and country areas. Everybody knows that the issue of ambulance ramping is not down to St John; it is the mismanagement of the health system. Instead, we see this misguided approach by the minister to ensure that St John comes under some sort of review, led by the Standing Committee on Public Administration under Hon Pierre Yang. I would really think this was so bizarre and abnormal if it had not already happened before.

Back in 2008, a report from ABC news online was titled “Opposition wants to retain St John”. The opposition then was members of the Liberal and National Parties. There were looking to stop St John being stripped out because the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union was quite happy for the government to look at the situation with St John and it urged, back in 2008, the service to be taken over by the government. I quote the article —

The Opposition’s health spokesman Kim Hames says the proposal has not worked in other states and should not be introduced in Western Australia.

“My understanding is that it’s been far less than successful, that other states have ended up with services that are less efficient but cost a lot more,” ...

Dr Hames says he is concerned any change would result in a less efficient and more expensive service.

“The problem is not St John’s ambulance service but Jim McGinty and his mismanagement of emergency departments, so that ambulances are ramped for hours at a time.”

That was said long before we saw the 5 000 hours of ramping we have at the moment. We know that attacking St John seems to be in the DNA of this party, just as we know that attacking electoral representation for regional people is in the DNA of this party. Similarly, we see a process now being launched for reform in that area, even though misallocation of representation between the city and the bush is not a problem that needs to be addressed. The government is doing its best to make a problem, to publicise that there is a problem, and go out and find its own solution, which is in its existing policy from before the election. That is just as it is doing with St John here. There is apparently a long-held desire from the union movement for St John to be nationalised. It may well come to fruition as part of this review under the overwhelming majority that this government has in both houses of Parliament. That would allow it to achieve its long-held desire to rid itself of regional members of Parliament and St John Ambulance. It is a disgrace that it would even be contemplated at a time when we already have a crisis in our health system.

Very quickly, I want to turn to the breaches of protocol that took place recently on two vessels. The first one was in Geraldton where a person had COVID and was taken to Geraldton Health Campus. We have spoken before about the series of events that led to alarm and concern in the Geraldton community. Subsequently, a report was done. Last week, during private members’ business, a motion was moved on the health situation and I asked the Minister for Health about it. I asked whether he would outline to us when that report would be made available and when it would be completed so that we could all see what went wrong when that whole hospital was badly impacted and 50-odd people had to be put into a level of isolation for some time. There was a great deal of concern in the community. Only a few weeks later, the exact same thing happened at Fiona Stanley Hospital. Instead of getting an answer from the minister on why we had not seen the report and when we would see it, no answer was given because the minister failed to respond to the motion. He sat there throughout the whole motion, took notes, then set a whole coterie of backbenchers to stand up and talk about unrelated matters. I am sure they had very interesting topics to talk about, but none of them responded to the very cogent arguments put by the opposition.

Instead of an answer, we saw a minister who chose to hide behind his backbenchers. I thought that was quite unprecedented. I have never seen it before. Usually the minister sits through the opposition’s outline of the case and the minister chooses to respond. We have now got to the point at which the minister does not even respond. He just sits there and lets others stand up for him and make a response instead of himself. I think that is disgraceful. I asked some very relevant questions about Geraldton. I asked questions about the situation for regional people who were looking for their second dose of the vaccine, but found their local health centre had cancelled their appointments. We know that, to a certain degree, getting the second jab is time critical. I have been made aware that, in some circumstances, people have driven to Perth—several hours of travel—to ensure they could get their second jab at the appropriate time. I asked the minister about that and, again, there was no response. He just sat there and refused to respond. We are none the wiser about any of those issues. What happened in Geraldton? Why is it so important? It is because it threatened not only the staff in the hospital and the people in the community in the City of Greater Geraldton—as the case at Fiona Stanley Hospital threatened the wider metropolitan area here—but also the commerce between our state and the rest of the world.

This government has put out a notice to shippers about a range of procedures that it expects from what are known as high-risk countries or ports. The government’s response is, in a way, threatening the trade upon which we all rely. That led to a kneejerk reaction last week when an announcement was made for \$2 million in assistance to a particular country—Indonesia. I think the government knew that it went too far and was damaging the trade of

our country going forward because of its inability to handle a couple of cases of COVID that had appeared in the ports. I am told by shippers that plenty of processes can be put in place to ensure there is zero contact between the ship and any persons that could lead to any risk of COVID coming into the community. Instead of the government looking at its protocols and failings, it has chosen to blame the shippers. It is trying to put the heat back on an industry that is already struggling to get vessels over here because there is a shortage of ships right around the world. If the government is not clear about how it is going to treat industry and those ships when they come here, they will choose to go elsewhere and we will not be able to get our products overseas. We will then see that the government's failings have gone far beyond simply its inability to run a health system.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [3.29 pm]: I rise to support this very good motion moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party. I hope that the Minister for Health stands to respond today, because as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out, it was quite extraordinary that when we brought on for debate last week quite significant issues about the state of our health system, the minister chose not to stand. That was either arrogance or simply that he had no answers. I suspect that the Minister for Health was waiting for a good news opportunity. Over the weekend, we saw a big headline about some much-needed dollars being put into the health system, but it is almost too little, too late. The Minister for Health is now mopping up four and a half years of neglect. I truly hope that he stands to respond to this debate and does not avoid our questions.

During last week's debate, similar to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I asked questions about recruitment, which we asked again today. We asked how and from where nurses and other staff would be recruited, but we were not provided any answers because the Minister for Health did not stand to answer those questions, which he has a responsibility to do as the Minister for Health. For months and months, this government has been blaming the influx of people through our emergency department doors for the crisis that is happening in our health system, but the figures do not lie and, I suggest, neither does the president of the Australian Medical Association (WA). Yesterday, he was on record as saying that there absolutely has not been a massive increase in demand on the health system. The figures that we have referred to about the number of people walking into emergency departments come directly from the Department of Health. There has been a steady increase of three to four per cent year on year in ED presentations and a three per cent increase in mental health presentations over four years, and ramping has gone up 300 per cent. That is a summary of the commentary that the president of the AMA (WA) gave yesterday in response to the government's funding announcement.

The bit that goes to the heart of what the opposition has been raising in this house every day that Parliament sits was the comment that neglect and underfunding by the state Labor government is to blame. The government can deflect as much as it likes, but all the key stakeholders in the industry and all the key people who are impacted are suggesting that the reason that we have this rescue package on the deck right now is because this government has failed the people of Western Australia for the last four and a half years. The Minister for Health has been asleep at the wheel.

The president of the AMA (WA) made some other comments, including that the workforce in WA is the only one without job security for senior doctors. He suggested that it would not be possible to get 100 more doctors if there is no job security. He mentioned that there was a severe shortage of child psychiatrists in particular. I am interested to learn, from the minister's perspective, how the government will address those issues, given the suggestion that there has been a significant increase in mental health presentations.

I will talk about some of the presentations in our emergency departments over the last six months. The average number of presentations over the last six months of 2019, pre-COVID, was 80 400 people, with the average number of presentations in the first six months of 2021 being 81 200 people. That is not a significant difference. The graph that we have shows that the number of presentations has been increasing in a predictable manner and should have been planned for by this government. It is great to have the big announcement of extra funding and services, but the devil will be in the detail. From where exactly will the government get staff and when can we expect them on our doorstep? I do not think that the AMA believes that the government can do it. I know that the Australian Nursing Federation in WA has serious concerns about how the government will achieve that outcome, and certainly the opposition has not heard any detail today that gives it confidence that we will see an end to the crisis that we are experiencing today and that we will experience in the future.

In particular, the shortage of midwives has been a significant problem, with a loss of 40 midwives over the past year. There were 1 191 midwives in the first quarter of 2020–21 and just 1 151 in the last quarter to June. With 6 200 bubs forecast for delivery at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women alone, which is up from 5 800 in 2020, that is of serious concern. The minister will remember that some time ago—I think it was 2019—we referred to, from a regional perspective, some innovative solutions from the Geraldton Universities Centre and other industry-led solutions to get more midwives into Western Australia. The minister could not make it happen—there was no will. The red flags that the opposition keeps talking about—the code yellows and the ambulance ramping figures of the last four years—and the solutions that have been put forward by industry to train more staff have all been left to the last minute so that this government could sail in and provide a big chunk of money, with no details. That is absolutely not good enough. The government is failing the people of Western Australia and it

is failing the people who work in that system. I absolutely guarantee, as stated by the president of the AMA (WA), Mr Mark Duncan-Smith, that the neglect and underfunding comes from the state Labor government—it is to blame. It has nothing to do with the people going through our emergency departments. The government cannot deflect to COVID; it is simply not true. I hope the minister stands to provide a response in this debate.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [3.36 pm]: Mr Deputy Speaker —

Mr V.A. Catania: Jim McGinty, mark 2. He's going down the same path.

Mr R.H. COOK: Well, my friend, you're no chip off the block, I can tell you that much. If I can be compared with Jim McGinty, I certainly would not compare you with Hon Nick Catania. You are a disgrace to the name Catania, you really are. I think at times members of your family must watch your political career and shake their heads in disappointment at you betraying such a great family name with such disreputable conduct.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: This has no relevance to the motion whatsoever. I ask the minister to come back to the motion.

Mr R.H. Cook: I'm coming to you, sunshine, don't you worry about that!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. There is no point of order. Carry on, minister.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.J. Rundle: At least he's standing up for a change.

Mr R.H. COOK: Member for Roe, the opposition ran a matter of public interest last week in which it had the same arguments that it ran today, and then it ran the same arguments for three hours during private members' business, so I refer back to my arguments in last week's MPI. Quite frankly, other members of Parliament had the opposition's measure. The member for Cockburn mopped the floor with the opposition's arguments, which was a delight to see. We will entertain the same arguments that the opposition puts up. The Leader of the Opposition came into this place and peddled the same Liberal Party lies about ED presentations, which was disappointing. I thought she would do her own homework. I addressed that specific issue today in question time, and this is, in part, our frustration. We have said in this place on numerous occasions that there has been a change in the way people are presenting to EDs. They are presenting with greater acuity and more complex mental health issues. I hear the member for Cottesloe sighing, which means that he is obviously listening to me. Perhaps just for once this will sink in. The fact of the matter is that there has been a significant increase in the acuity of patients presenting at our hospital EDs. There has been a 10 per cent increase in triage 1 and a 15 per cent increase in triage 2. They are the people who have a significant impact on our EDs. We are not orphans in this; this is taking place right around Australia. I read an interesting article about South Australia the other day that stated that paramedics there are putting people into taxis and sending them to GP clinics so that they do not go to EDs, such is the pressure that they are under. That is being replicated elsewhere. What they are not doing elsewhere is responding in the same way that the McGowan government is responding, which is to oversee significant investment in the state's hospital system, and that is the reason why we say that the Western Australian community should have confidence.

The community understands that we have a plan to increase supply and that we will continue to invest in great health services so that we can provide world-class health care. The \$1.9 billion in funding that the Premier and I announced the other day was a budget announcement. Yes, it does include announcements already made, but that is the nature of budgets; it is a budget announcement. It is a 332-bed increase. If only the member for Cottesloe had bothered to read the press release! It says —

The 332 new beds comprise 223 general beds and 109 mental health beds, with the Budget including funding for 158 beds already announced.

We are being completely up-front; it is on page 1 of the press release. It is a public document that we would hope the member for Cottesloe would read. We do not expect him to understand it! But we do expect him to read it, particularly if he is going to come into this place with the accusations that he is making. I think it is important that the community understands the unprecedented level of investment that is going into our health system to make sure that we can respond to the current situation, and respond we are.

Yesterday, I followed up with an announcement that we will significantly increase support provided to our emergency departments, including a \$50 million package to make sure that staff in our EDs have the support they need. That includes investment for 50 new staff, which is part of the significant announcements we made at Perth Children's Hospital. It also includes funding for the virtual emergency management program, which will provide an opportunity for paramedics to liaise with ED consultants to ensure that patients do not necessarily come to the ED; they may be diverted to ambulatory care or to a diagnostic or medical-imaging facility, or referred directly to an inpatient facility. That is what we are doing to continue to make sure that we manage the system in a dynamic way.

The member for Moore seems to think that there is some sort of conspiracy with the attacks on St John Ambulance. Of course, the CEO of St John Ambulance was with us yesterday to talk about the great partnership between the McGowan Labor government and St John Ambulance. It is a relationship that continues to grow through the great

work we are doing not only with innovations in metropolitan ambulance services, but also with our country ambulance strategy, which will see a significant increase in the number of professional community paramedics. It is part of our, I think, 30—no, I will not mislead the house with a number, but there will be a significant increase in the number of professional paramedics practising in Western Australia.

Mr P.J. Rundle: What about the union takeover; how's that going?

Mr R.H. COOK: Is the member some sort of ambassador for the HR Nicholls Society? Really, the member for Roe cannot say the unions are taking over the ambulance service, because union members are already in the ambulance service! That is why they have an interest. It is the same reason the Australian Medical Association—the doctors' union—has an interest in public health; it is because its members are there. It is the same reason the nurses' union is interested in the public health system; it is because its nurse members are there. I am not sure why the member thinks there is some sort of union takeover, because union members are already in the ambulance services and are keen to see those ambulance services thrive, like any other union involved in the public health system does.

This morning, we made some significant announcements on the recruitment of nurses, including celebrating that we have recruited 750 new experienced nurses either into or back into the hospital system and 927 nurse graduates as part of our 1 100 graduate nurse intake this year, and launched a program to recruit doctors and nurses from overseas. It has not started today because the announcement today is another budget announcement, so it will be funded. It is part of an ongoing program.

The member for Swan Hills is getting really loud and it is getting difficult to compete against her.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members down the back, if you want to have a conversation, take it outside, thanks. Carry on, minister.

Mr R.H. COOK: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

It is part of an ongoing recruitment program to make sure that we have quality doctors and nurses standing next to patients, particularly in the new beds. That includes 209 doctors we have already secured the services of, who in coming weeks will be making their way to Western Australia to practise their craft in our hospitals and provide great care. Usually these doctors and nurses would come to Western Australia automatically—British, Irish and Indian doctors would come to Western Australia as part of their professional experience—but because the borders are closed, we have to actively recruit and bring them to Western Australia over and above the cap of returning Western Australians. It is an important part of the program. Today we announced that we will pay for their hotel quarantine and provide them with a relocation allowance, because we want to make sure that we bring them on board.

In addition to that, we have refresher courses. Nurses currently registered but who have spent some time out of the wards will be able to undertake an online refresher course, which we will pay for, and then be placed in a hospital to complete the refresher course in paid employment. We are undertaking a range of measures to make sure that we can meet the current spike in hospital demand.

I am sorry if the statistics do not meet the opposition's narrative; it is just unfortunate that we are seeing significant pressure on our hospitals. It is not because of a lack of resources. As I have already explained to this place on a number of occasions, we have increased hospital funding by 14 per cent since we came to office. We had 34 700 health workers in Western Australia; that figure is now at over 39 000. We have seen a significant increase in resources in the hospital system. Again, that does not meet the narrative of the AMA and the opposition, but they are the facts.

I want to turn momentarily to the issues raised by the member for Roe in question time and re-prosecuted as part of this debate today. School-based nurses do not undertake mental health care of kids. They might have those issues raised with them, but they will then refer them to a school psychologist. I am very proud of our election commitment, which we are currently implementing, to bring an extra 100 school-based nurses into our education system. It is a great initiative that will continue to make sure schools are a safe place for kids to come and where they can be cared for in that environment.

On the issues raised by the member for Moore, there is a review of what took place at Geraldton Health Campus. I think my response to the member is the same as my response last week: the member should put that question on notice. But when that information becomes available and the government is in a position to respond, I am sure that that will be undertaken. I think the premise of the member for Moore's comments was that we have done a bad job managing COVID and somehow Western Australia has not managed the COVID threat very well. The dominating narrative is the precise antithesis of what the member for Moore was trying to suggest; that is, even though no system is perfect at managing COVID, I think we have done a pretty good job! The people of Western Australia's response to COVID-19 has been outstanding. The Premier and I have been fortunate enough to have had the support of the people of Western Australia in guiding us through it. It is not perfect, but nothing in health care is perfect. What is important is that we learn from any clinical situation and make sure that we continue to improve, and we are.

The argument that somehow the whole system is broken because of one incident is just disgraceful but not unsurprising. Today, we saw dangerous commentary from Clive Palmer that vaccines are a threat.

Dr D.J. Honey: No-one supports that.

Mr R.H. COOK: We know that Clive Palmer is the member for Cottesloe's friend. We know that the member for Cottesloe jumped into bed with Clive Palmer as quickly as possible last year to undermine our strategy. We know that he quietly enjoys Clive Palmer's narrative and efforts.

Dr D.J. Honey: That is just offensive.

Mr R.H. COOK: I tell you what is offensive, member for Cottesloe: it is the way that the member for Cottesloe scampered behind Clive Palmer's coattails last year to try to tear down our borders.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe!

Mr R.H. COOK: I tell you what is offensive, member for Cottesloe: it is you continuing to try to detract from our great efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But I think the most damning effort by the member for Cottesloe over the last 74 hours has been his tweeting. His little activity on Twitter has suggested that we have not recruited as part of our 1 000 nurse graduate intake. I am very proud to say that today that stands at 927 and by the end of this month it will be 949 out of those 1 100. I am disappointed that the member for Cottesloe did not take the opportunity today when he was on his feet to apologise to the chamber and the government for trying to mislead the public. I am sorry that he was not respectful enough to the people whom he represents to say, "I got it wrong." But that is not surprising. It is what we have come to expect from the member for Cottesloe. Once again, in this motion, he has got it wrong.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [3.52 pm]: Imagine this? Imagine being an opposition so hopeless at its job that it chooses its time during a matter of public interest to give the government an opportunity to speak about its \$1.9 billion investment in the health system. But we do not need to imagine because it is happening right now.

Ms S.E. Winton: Inconceivable!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It is inconceivable. It is just a continuation of the brilliant strategy that the member for Cottesloe has rolled out in this place time and again. But it is all right—I will get out my mop, as the Minister for Health said, and follow his very good work and talk about the additional \$1.9 billion that this Labor government will be investing in our health system. It is easy to see how we arrived at today's MPI after the opposition's performance in question time. A staffer probably wrote this MPI on Friday afternoon and left it on the desk of the member for Cottesloe. He walked in this morning, having swanned around Cottesloe all weekend, and picked up this thing and said, "This looks good; I'll put this in," completely oblivious, seemingly, of the fact that in the interim the government had made a very significant announcement about funding for our health system.

It was good to hear the member for Cottesloe in his contribution to this place acknowledge that, because otherwise we would have had no idea that he was aware of it when he moved this motion. I looked on the member for Cottesloe's Facebook page—he has about 1 400 followers, which is about the same as I have after being in this place for a matter of months. He shared a WAtoday article about the health system on his Facebook page six hours ago that was from 5 August. It was not contemporaneous. It had nothing to do with the significant announcements that this government has made in the health space, but, look, it exposes a crisis in Western Australia—that is, the crisis that is engulfing the Liberal Party.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I have got him! I can reel him in.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: That is the crisis that the member for Cottesloe is presiding over—a Liberal Party that is not a serious opposition in this place.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: What do I want to say? Who am I to look a gift horse in the mouth?

Let us talk about what this government is doing in the health space. There will be an additional investment of \$1.9 billion in the health system. I am particularly proud of the investments in the mental health space, which is a very important area to me and something I spoke about in my first speech. It includes a record increase of \$495 million for the Mental Health Commission. A significant amount of that—\$129.9 million—will go to youth mental health services and initiatives. We know early intervention is critical in mental health and this investment shows that the government is serious about getting on with the job.

The government's commitments to mental health do not stop with extra funding for the Mental Health Commission; as the Minister for Health has repeatedly outlined in this place, mental health presentations are an issue for emergency

departments as well. Mental health presentations in emergency departments have been up by 11.4 per cent over the past three years and people are spending longer in emergency departments. That is why there will be an additional \$100 million spent in the mental health space on things such as extra beds.

The member for Cottesloe and the Leader of the Opposition referred to the Australian Medical Association. It is always good to hear members of the Liberal and National Parties endorse the position of a good union. I spoke with a member of the AMA's council on Friday, who said to me, "You know what we really need? We need dedicated mental health facilities in our emergency departments." Lo and behold, member for Cottesloe! Included in the \$100 million spend on our emergency departments is a \$61.6 million commitment for mental health to contrast two mental health emergency centres at Rockingham and Armadale hospitals. That is an excellent announcement. Dedicated mental health emergency department facilities have been working very well overseas in places like Toronto and it is a credit to this government to be pushing ahead with those facilities.

This government is making significant investments in health and mental health. It is getting on with the job. It would be nice, for once, for the Liberal Party to get on with its job and be a credible opposition in this place.

MS D.G. D'ANNA (Kimberley) [3.57 pm]: The McGowan government is a government that delivers for regional Western Australians. As the member for Kimberley, I see firsthand the importance of quality health care and services. Since coming to office, the government has made sure to provide funding to regional WA for better health services. This includes \$7.98 million for the planning and development of the Broome Health and Wellbeing Campus, a Nyamba Buru Yawuru project, as part of the WA recovery plan. This is an exciting project that I will be watching closely.

In the previous term of government, we funded and delivered step-up, step-down community mental health facilities in Albany, Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and Geraldton. The government will continue to progress the delivery of further step-up, step-down facilities in Broome and Karratha, as well as new step-up, step-down facilities for Port Hedland and a dedicated youth step-up, step-down facility. Additionally, the implementation of WA's first-ever country ambulance strategy was released in November 2019 by this Labor government after the most extensive community consultations ever undertaken on country ambulance services. Since last October, the strategy has committed \$9.2 million for three paid paramedics and six new ambulances in the Kimberley and there has been funding to enhance access to care and patient flow for patients across all of regional WA through improved patient coordination services. Also, a further boost of \$10 million was announced this year for country ambulance services. It includes funding for the recruitment of paid paramedics in nine regional locations, which will further strengthen country ambulances and provide better on-the-ground support for local volunteers. Recruitment is already underway for 25 additional paramedics to expand the current workforce and to support local volunteers.

Yesterday, I welcomed the incredible announcement by Ministers Cook and Dawson that the upcoming state budget will invest \$1.9 billion in health and mental health across WA. Our regional communities will benefit from this massive boost. It will include \$960 million for WA Health to address the unprecedented demand in the health system. There will be 332 extra beds and more frontline staff in hospitals across the state. In addition, there are hundreds of millions of dollars to boost the capacity of health services around the state and a number of region-specific initiatives are being delivered, including commitments made at the 2021 election. As you know, Acting Speaker, the Kimberley is an extremely large and remote electorate, with a lot of people living in remote and rural locations and communities—not settlements. This Labor government knows that and that is why it is funding different programs and schemes to create better access for regional rural people to get the health care that they need. There will be \$19.7 million invested to expand the eligibility of the patient assisted travel scheme for patient-support escorts for patients from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, as well as maternity patients.

I am pleased that this government will provide \$10.9 million to the Royal Flying Doctor Service to refurbish and replace aircraft engines, making sure that residents of the Kimberley can be taken to where they need to be in times of medical emergency. This is particularly sensitive for me. Just recently, in the winter break, my father's brother suffered a heart attack in a remote community. Thankfully, due to the RFDS, he was flown out from that remote community to the town base and then to Royal Perth Hospital, and he survived and is still recovering. It is a long recovery process, and my sisters and cousins are here. Through the help of PATS they were able to come down and make sure that he is supported through this process and can come out the other side.

I am also excited to see \$2.8 million to expand women's community health services in the Kimberley, which includes services for mental illness and family, domestic and sexual violence. This government is committed to responding to the mental health needs of all Western Australians. This includes improving support and services in the regions for people experiencing mental ill health or alcohol and other drug issues, as well as for their families, carers and support people. The new mental health services funded in the budget will make modern integrated care more accessible to people living in remote communities across the state. I would also like to mention that there was a concern about the mental health of students, and there is funding totalling \$42.4 million for the employment of 100 full-time equivalent psychologists, as well as additional supervising and lead psychologists, in public schools over four years. A commensurate increase in funding for non-government schools is also a commitment of this government.

Regional communities will benefit from the \$31.7 million invested to expand statewide eating disorder treatment programs. Eating disorders are a reality. I know this from my daughter's concerns for her friends who have shown signs of eating disorders. Our comprehensive health and mental health package for regional WA will ensure that all Western Australians will have access to quality health care no matter where they live.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.02 pm]: It is a great privilege for me to speak in opposition to this motion, and in particular to follow on from the member for Kimberley. Members take note: if you want to learn how to represent a regional constituency, listen to what the member for Kimberley has to say. She can speak up with passion, commitment and alacrity on what it takes to represent a regional community. She is a testament to her community and this chamber.

It is also a great privilege to follow the member for Cockburn's contribution. It struck me as well that this matter of public interest had the character of a Dorothy Dixier, and it was incredibly surprising. The member for Cockburn's explanation of how the member for Cottesloe arrived at moving this motion for debate this afternoon seemed all too accurate —

Ms S.E. Winton: Very plausible!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It was a very plausible proposition.

I suspect that we are coming towards the end of the time in which we talk about health. We will come towards the end of the time in which the state opposition continues to make the point that this government has not handled the health of Western Australians better than any previous government. I say that for a couple of reasons. I say that because the opposition's arguments today were completely paradoxical. For example, on the one hand, the member for Cottesloe said the minister did not listen to the workforce, but on the other, he said that the minister had the Australian Nursing Federation and the Australian Medical Association on speed dial. On the one hand, the Leader of the Opposition said this was too little too late, but on the other, we have a \$1.9 billion investment. On the one hand, the member for Moore said he did not agree with Clive Palmer and that the opposition was a safe pair of hands when it came to public health messages such as vaccination, but on the other, not one opposition member has publicly distanced themselves from their ideological bedfellows who are undermining public health in Australia, ideological bedfellows such as George Christensen, Craig Kelly and Barnaby Joyce. When will the members opposite say that they do not agree with anything those people are saying, that those people are wrong and they are concerned about the public health of Western Australia?

Several members interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: When are they going to apologise?

One fascinating thing the Leader of the Opposition brought up is the investment in midwives, and as a dad of two young kids, this is an issue close to my heart. I wondered what we could do as a state to encourage those perinatal and neonatal services, those birthing services—all those important services that are critical to the state of Western Australia. Most of my constituents in the electorate of Mount Lawley have the great opportunity to access the neonatal, obstetric and gynaecological services at Osborne Park Hospital. There are also incredible staff providing fantastic services to people across Western Australia at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Ms R.S. Stephens) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (5)

Mr V.A. Catania
Ms M.J. Davies

Dr D.J. Honey
Mr R.S. Love

Mr P.J. Rundle (*Teller*)

Noes (45)

Mr G. Baker
Ms L.L. Baker
Ms H.M. Beazley
Mr J.N. Carey
Ms C.M. Collins
Mr R.H. Cook
Ms L. Dalton
Ms D.G. D'Anna
Ms K.E. Giddens
Ms E.L. Hamilton
Ms M.J. Hammat
Ms J.L. Hanns

Mr T.J. Healy
Mr M. Hughes
Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr H.T. Jones
Mr D.J. Kelly
Ms E.J. Kelsbie
Ms A.E. Kent
Dr J. Krishnan
Mr P. Lilburne
Ms S.F. McGurk
Mr D.R. Michael
Mr K.J.J. Michel

Mr S.A. Millman
Mr Y. Mubarakai
Ms L.A. Munday
Mrs L.M. O'Malley
Mr P. Papalia
Mr S.J. Price
Mr D.T. Punch
Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Ms R. Saffioti
Ms A. Sanderson
Mr D.A.E. Scaife

Ms J.J. Shaw
Ms R.S. Stephens
Dr K. Stratton
Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr D.A. Templeman
Ms C.M. Tonkin
Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms S.E. Winton
Ms C.M. Rowe (*Teller*)

Question thus negatived.

ARTS AND CULTURE TRUST BILL 2021*Second Reading*

Resumed from 5 August.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.11 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. Members, despite some people's perception of me, I am not at all an extroverted person; in fact, I am rather shy, particularly when it comes to performing in front of an audience. I am sad to say that, unlike many other members who have made a contribution to the debate on this bill in recounting their own creative endeavours in years gone past—the members for Kingsley and Belmont come to mind—I certainly do not have anything to contribute in that regard. I cannot dance, I cannot sing, and I certainly cannot paint.

As good as some members in this place are, the most accomplished by way of public performance skills is surely our very own Minister for Culture and the Arts, the member for Mandurah, David Templeman. New members are most definitely in for a treat at the end of the year on the last sitting day, when our minister will, hopefully, again summarise 2021 in song for us. Incredible pressure must be on the minister to trump last year's performance of *Hallelujah*, which went viral.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It went to the top 10!

Ms S.E. WINTON: It went to the top 10! Of course, although our Minister for Culture and the Arts is himself an accomplished performer, his real talents come in his championing—I mean this most sincerely—of the arts and creative industries in this state. It is very much through his leadership and passion that the McGowan Labor government is investing more than ever before to support our creative community and to put arts and culture back front and centre on the agenda.

I will quickly highlight this bill. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 is a reform initiative to improve the governance of the state's arts and cultural assets. The new Arts and Culture Trust will be a contemporary statutory authority and will have broader powers than the Perth Theatre Trust. This bill passed through this place in the last Parliament, of course, and is another example of a bill that did not quite make it through the Legislative Council in the fortieth Parliament. I congratulate the minister for bringing it back to this place so soon in our forty-first Parliament.

During the election campaign, the McGowan Labor government announced that we would invest \$100 million to build a state-of-the-art film studio and screen production facility at Victoria Quay in Fremantle. This facility is the critical piece of infrastructure that is needed to take WA's film industry to the next level. The commitment includes an additional \$20 million for a screen production attraction fund that will potentially create 2 800 new and ongoing jobs in the film production and hospitality industry. It is a very exciting development.

I note that the bill has been amended from the previous bill to give effect to the State Solicitor's Office advice concerning the proposal that the state will require legislative authority to establish, own and operate the screen production facility business.

I take this opportunity to share with members two of the extraordinary things that happen in Wanneroo that contribute to the arts sector. Wanneroo is quite a vibrant and buzzing little local arts community. The first thing I want to mention is, of course, our beloved local theatre, the Limelight Theatre, which is located right in the heart of Wanneroo. This theatre is managed and operated by Wanneroo Repertory Inc, a not-for-profit organisation. The Limelight Theatre is in its forty-eighth year this year, having been first established in 1973. The theatre is governed by a 10-member executive committee that is elected by the repertory membership. Volunteers for all aspects of the operation, including production, front of house, theatre maintenance, properties, membership services and financial control, are all drawn from the repertory's membership. I want to take this moment to outline to the house the current executive committee, including the wonderful president, Shelley McGinn; vice president, Karen Murray; secretary, Richard Tudge; Treasurer, Mike Gibbs; maintenance manager, Julie Clark; social media, Kathleen Del Casale; technical manager, Paul King; publicity and marketing, Sandra Powell; volunteer coordinator and front of house, R.J. Smolders; social media, Ashlee Torrens; committee tech, Gordon Park; bookings and membership, Patrick McGinn; wardrobe, Joan Braskic; props, Lorraine Jones; newsletter, Ian Jones; and, of course, the dozens and dozens of wonderful volunteers who help make Limelight Theatre such a fantastic part of Wanneroo.

Each year, the Limelight Theatre presents six major productions. These are very well attended not only locally by people from Wanneroo, the City of Joondalup and, more broadly, the northern suburbs, but also by people coming from far and wide, including south of the river, to attend the very successful productions. I want to also take the opportunity, in case the minister is interested, to mention the performances that are on the schedule for 2022. We—not "we", I do not dare suggest that I am part of the wonderful work that Limelight Theatre does; I like supporting it, but I am certainly not going to take any credit for the wonderful work it does. My favourite upcoming production—I thought the minister might be interested in this one—is *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband*. That sounds an interesting production.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A tasteful production!

Ms S.E. WINTON: A tasteful one! Others are *Equally Divided*, *Dusty*, *The Full Monty*, *Pack of Lies* and *42nd Street*.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I won't audition for *The Full Monty*!

Ms S.E. WINTON: Well, the minister has been there before.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A couple of times!

Ms S.E. WINTON: The minister has been on the boards on the stage of the Limelight Theatre. It was only for a photo, but I reckon, if the minister is up for it, I could have a chat with the people at the Limelight Theatre to see whether he could get a cameo performance in *The Full Monty*. I would like to see that! I will see what I can do for you, minister!

The minister knows that in 2017 I was able to deliver \$93 000 to Limelight Theatre to purchase new stage curtains and upgrade its foyer furniture as part of my election commitments, and the minister helped to announce that at the wonderful theatre. Prior to the election in 2021, I was happy to be able to achieve a \$25 000 commitment to replace drapes, tiles in five bathrooms, backstage lighting and a prop ladder. I look forward to seeing those further upgrades to a fabulous local theatre that is doing fantastic work, and I urge people who want to see those productions that are being planned and will be performed later this year to get online as soon as they can, because the tickets do not last very long. Our ongoing commitment to and support of local theatre companies like Limelight Theatre is indicative of the support and priority that the McGowan government is giving to the arts, with unprecedented investment in a range of areas from the grassroots level right through to the new \$100 million state-of-the-art facility in Fremantle that I mentioned.

I would like to take a couple of moments to talk a little bit about the current president of Limelight Theatre, Shelley McGinn, and my connection with her. Members know that prior to the election we made a lot of phone calls to reach out to the residents of our communities to introduce ourselves and have a chat to gauge what people's issues were in the local community and to get our finger on the pulse. I certainly did that back in 2016. I was making a bunch of calls when a lady who answered the phone introduced herself as Shelley McGinn. I introduced myself as Sabine Winton and we had a lovely chat about Wanneroo. She is a long-term local. As we were chatting, I explained to her that I was a former student of Wanneroo Secondary College. When I said that to her, she said that was lovely and that she was a former teacher at Wanneroo Secondary College. There was silence on the line as we both connected the dots and I said, "Hang on a sec, did you used to be called Shelley Brown?" She said, "Hang on a sec, did you used to be call Sabine Fenn?" I said yes, and it turns out that Shelley McGinn was Shelley Brown, who was my year 9 English teacher back in 1979, whom I had not heard of since then. Of course, I went home that night and rifled through my old report cards to make sure that her impression of me back in those days matched the impression I was trying to build with her as the potential member for Wanneroo. I am delighted that it was. Since that time, I have had a wonderful relationship with her. As well as being the president and a life member of Limelight Theatre, she is a former treasurer and a current committee member of the Wanneroo Sports and Social Club, convener of the Wanneroo Online Community Engagement Network, and an EdConnect volunteer at Spring Hill Primary School and Wanneroo Secondary College. For a retired teacher, she is the kind of person I aspire to be. She stays connected to her community and gives back so selflessly and in such a fantastic way, whether it be with students, with the local social club or through her work over a significant time with her first passion, Limelight Theatre.

I have some memories of attending Wanneroo Secondary College, and particularly drama. I was no star. It was not really my forte, but I remember one particular drama production that I was part of called the *Seven Deadly Sins*. I had to do a bit of googling in preparation for this today. The seven deadly sins are lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride. As much as I try to reminisce and recollect, I cannot quite remember which of the seven I had to represent. Looking back now, I reckon maybe wrath would have suited me. There is a fair bit of sloth that comes in occasionally when we are in lockdown, and certainly occasionally I will accept that there is a little bit of lust that goes on! Maybe I need to go back to the school to go through the archives and see some of the old photographs and records of that production. I would be very interested to see which of those seven deadly sins I had to represent. I am sure that I did not do a very good job at the time.

Building and supporting our arts—I am talking in particular about performing arts as a theme throughout my speech—really starts in our schools. Wanneroo Secondary College has always had strong arts programs over the years, since I left back in 1982. In fact, Wanneroo Secondary College has a specialist performing arts program. This program specifically relates to dance, drama and instrumental and vocal music, with a strong focus on performance opportunities within the college, in the local community and nationally and internationally. It certainly is a highly sought after program and is widely known as the best specialist program of its type for students in the northern suburbs, and it has had much success. In July, it held a dance showcase called *Iridescent* at the Quinns Baptist College auditorium, which involved dancers from the years 7–10 SPA Dancers group as well as the years 11 and 12 ATAR and general dancers.

Of course, the success is really quite incredible when I think about it, given the current facilities. What was cutting edge nearly 40 years ago when I was a student performing the *Seven Deadly Sins* certainly is not good enough for the programs that the school offers now, but they are the current facilities under which the school operates. The same tiny stage on which I strutted my stuff very badly is exactly the same facility that the school has to work with,

despite the fact that it runs this most awesome specialist program. I am really delighted that as part of the election commitments, we are investing \$5 million for a state-of-the-art performing arts facility. That work is well underway and will allow the school to take its very popular and highly regarded performing arts program to the next level.

The brief to guide the architect includes a theatre with 250 retractable seats, a music and drama studio, green rooms, a bio box, a general learning area, a storeroom, a staff office and landscaping. Certainly, if I had some of those bells-and-whistles facilities available to me, who knows, I may have done better in my year 9 drama classes! But seriously, that school having its own purpose-built performing arts facility that can seat 250 guests to watch the performances will mean that the performers will not have to traipse to Quinns Rocks or other places to hold their functions. Work is well underway in the sense that the planning work is being done and construction is starting in October 2021, which is a couple of months away. We anticipate that the project will be completed in October 2022. This follows on from my 2017 election commitment, which has now been fully delivered; the school now also has a brand new state-of-the-art gymnasium, which means the school is able to do even better work in not just the general sports programs it runs, but also the highly regarded specialist sports programs.

I mentioned that Wanneroo Secondary College's performing arts program has a very strong focus on providing performance opportunities for the students not only at the college, but also out in the local community. That is nowhere better on display than the current performances this week. Last night was the opening night of a romantic comedy called *Crazy for You* performed by the year 10 specialist performing arts students. The nice segue from where I started speaking about Limelight Theatre is that that production is being held at Limelight Theatre. Hopefully, if I can get a leave pass out of here tomorrow night—hint, hint minister—I would love to see tomorrow night's performance!

I would like to give a special shout-out to Mr Matt Bell, who runs the entire specialist program at Wanneroo Secondary College. In particular, I thank the teachers who are involved in the year 10 production of *Crazy for You*, Mr John McPherson and Mrs Alysha Cheetham-Taylor. I wish all the best to all the students who are performing and participating in the various roles that are required to put on a production like this. I know that they will do a fantastic job.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms S.E. WINTON: Before I finish, I quickly want to move on to primary schools, as I always try to do whenever I get the opportunity. I am very proud of my local primary schools for encouraging, supporting and giving children the opportunity to strut their stuff in performances, productions and all sorts of things. In particular, I want to highlight Tapping Primary School, which is doing quite incredible stuff. Prior to the 2017 election, Cheryl Peak, the performing arts specialist at the school, advocated really strongly to me, saying that the undercover area was not large enough to house the entire school population for assemblies, nor was it ever contemplated that the space might be useful to perform productions. As a result, I was really happy to advocate and get funding of \$450 000, which resulted in a significant extension of the undercover area so that the entire school community of some 750 students can now participate in and be part of school assemblies. It has also given the school great scope because it does not need to spend lots of money offsite to host its yearly productions; it can hold them at the school. In 2018, it performed *Madagascar* in that new space; in 2020, it performed *Lion King*, and I am very much looking forward to its next production.

Finally, I want to highlight another local primary school that is doing fantastic things in the arts. I particularly want to highlight the Speak Out awards, which are coordinated by teacher Linda Gower. East Wanneroo Primary School has been hosting its annual Speak Out awards every year for a long period. It has been my great honour to be invited to be part of that process. The program essentially challenges and asks every single child in that school, from pre-primary all the way to year 6, to prepare and then perform a speech to their peers. Every single child in pre-primary has a go at getting up in front of their peers to speak. It is a highlight of the school calendar for all those students. Every single child does it. A school assembly is held, at which the winners are announced. The winner of each year gets to make a speech. Every year I attend, I am quite amazed by the quality and the standard of the work of these young people and their courage to get up and speak publicly in front of their peers. The standard gets higher and higher each year. The kids put expectations on themselves to do better each year. This year, the pre-primary, year 1 and year 2 winners are looking forward to next year to see whether they can back it up and be the year winner the following year. It is the most incredible program to be involved in. I commend not only Linda Gower, who coordinates it, but also every single classroom teacher who invests the time within their classroom to support the students to be involved in that program. I want to give a shout-out to the 2021 winners: in pre-primary, Zayna Loungani; in year 1, Flynn Eldridge; in year 2, Zayna's brother, Ruhaan Loungani; in year 3, Eleana Tsitiridou; in year 4, joint winners Sophie Rose and Chevelle Jones; in year 5, Llewellyn Daykin; and in year 6, Sol Richardson. I think Llewellyn has won it every year so far. He is quietly determined to pull out all stops in year 6. I look forward to his efforts next year.

I absolutely love being the member for Wanneroo. It is a thriving school-based creative environment, whether that be music, dance or the performing arts. I love being the member for Wanneroo as we have such a wonderful local arts scene, as I described before, including the wonderful Limelight Theatre. Lastly, I am absolutely very proud to be a member of the McGowan Labor government, which continues to value and invest significantly and without precedent in our arts sector. It has been fantastic to have the Minister for Culture and the Arts leading that charge on behalf of the McGowan government. I look forward to the next three years of much more.

MS D.G. D'ANNA (Kimberley) [4.35 pm]: I rise to speak on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. My electorate of the Kimberley contributes significant cultural, social and economic benefits to the state. A lot of amazing productions are held in the Kimberley every year, and there is the potential for so much more. When people think of productions in the Kimberley, they think of the wonderful *Bran Nue Dae*, a coming-of-age musical set in the 1960s, which was first written, produced and performed by talent from the Kimberley in 1990. Although the musical is at the apex of Kimberley performing arts talent, it is only one of the Kimberley's many successes in the performing arts. I was a boarding student down here in Perth when the production first came down. I was a 13-year-old kid from a small town who came down to watch people that I knew—my uncles, musicians and locals. Other school members and students from everywhere else came down to the Octagon Theatre to watch the show. I knew these songs and the people performing. I remember the pride I felt, thinking, “That’s my uncle”, “That mob is from Broome”, and, “That mob is from Fitzroy.” People were dancing and everyone was enjoying it. This was repeated. The production was so great. It was also felt by my children when it was revamped and then made into a movie.

The Kimberley supports a lot of screen activity that drives the industry, with outstanding works such as *Mystery Road* being filmed in the region a few years ago. Who can forget the flurry of Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman in Wyndham and Kununurra for the filming of *Australia*?

I welcome the McGowan government's election commitment of \$20 million for a screen production attraction fund and \$100 million to build a state-of-the-art studio production facility in Fremantle. This is a great commitment that I hope will support screen productions and performers from the Kimberley.

The Kimberley has many rich cultures across the region, from Broome to Kununurra. Indigenous people are inherent storytellers. We share our stories in many ways—orally, in film, in dance, in the theatre and in paintings. I do not have any of those skills, by the way! We are generous in sharing our stories with the world, but we need the support of facilities to do so in a culturally safe environment. Businesses such as Goolarri Media Enterprises are very important for telling these stories. Goolarri is a Broome-based multidimensional multimedia organisation that provides a unique, innovative and professional Indigenous service in all forms of media and communications to a wide multicultural audience in a culturally accepted way. Goolarri currently delivers television, radio and web-based media production and broadcasting, filmmaking, live performance productions and events and training in the performing arts and media, reaching out to mainstream audiences, as well as the Indigenous community throughout the Kimberley and beyond by using partner networks. Goolarri is 100 per cent owned by the Broome Aboriginal Media Association Aboriginal Corporation. Staging performing arts shows in the regions can be cost prohibitive for regional and remote artists as they often need to bring crew, sets and other equipment from Perth, and the small numbers of people who attend do not make it cost effective.

There are initiatives that help underwrite tour costs, which are great for the regions, but often it is about bringing a show from Perth out to the regions and they do not assist with staging home-grown shows. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill will establish the Arts and Culture Trust, which will have broad powers and flexibility to manage, care for and develop cultural assets for future generations. The Arts and Culture Trust will be a body that can not only manage theatres but also other cultural assets around the state that are entrusted to its care. It is exciting that the trust will provide help with managing venues in the regions in a more cost-effective way to help out emerging artists. The trust will have powers to manage all kinds of arts and cultural venues, including outdoor spaces. This body will have the capacity to optimise the potential of the assets it controls, creating flow-on benefits for local businesses. That will include state-owned assets assigned to the trust and, potentially, any privately owned assets that enter into partnership with it.

The trust will also have a greater power to engage in business arrangements that will help grow the local capacity of Kimberley-based organisations and performances. The state government supports many key arts and cultural projects in the Kimberley electorate. This includes funding for the Aboriginal arts commissioning fund to support senior cultural practitioners, including Tommy May and Tom Lawford's project to share the stories of Aboriginal trade networks through the development of a large-scale work embodied in the form of the Rainbow Serpent's belly—the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre's *Sovereign Systems* project. The Waringarri Arts Aboriginal Corporation's *Kimberley Art Centres Alliance x New York City* project gained funding through the Aboriginal arts commissioning fund to support the commissioning of 10 artists to create significant new work for international exhibitions with a focus on New York. Theatre Kimberley was allocated grant funding through the Creative Communities COVID-19 Recovery Program, which will support two artists-in-residence to create connections with the Broome community through rollerskating and beatboxing workshops.

Grant funding through the Arts 15k-plus program for *Splash Test Dummies* in Broome is a collaboration with Sandfly Circus, artists and Kimberley locals. Funding will allow Theatre Kimberley to work with Broome-born artists Crystal Stacey and Rowan Thomas and Theatre Kimberley's Broome-based production team to create an exciting and engaging performance, rich with mentorships and learning opportunities. The Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation Stompem Ground festival also has grant funding through the Arts 15k-plus program. Stompem Ground is a weekend of contemporary and traditional Aboriginal music, dance, culture, workshops, contact and experience that brings together the best cultural and contemporary performances for a music and culture festival to celebrate the spirit of Aboriginal peoples across the Kimberley.

Throughout my entire life, I have been privileged to see some great productions in the Kimberley. I mentioned *Bran Nue Dae*, which is the most memorable, as well as the Sandfly Circus. I have witnessed my sisters on the *Mystery Road* back scenes, fighting to try to get in front of the camera. Another incredible organisation in the Kimberley is Marrugeku, which is dedicated to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together to create new dance languages. It is working to build bridges and break down walls between urban and remote dance communities. Marrugeku creates many amazing opportunities for people across the Kimberley region to express their stories and culture through dance, allowing them to not only perform in the region but also travel across the country to perform for other audiences, too. Unfortunately, its 25-year celebration was recently cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but I look forward to attending the rescheduled event later in the year.

Recently, as the new member for Kimberley, I attended the 2021 Mowanjum culture and arts festival. This was hosted by the Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre. It celebrates the vibrant culture of three local tribes: the Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal peoples. It is one of Australia's longest-running festivals of Indigenous culture, having begun in 1997. It has become a roaring success, attracting visitors from all over Western Australia. Traditional song and dance, also known as junba, is a focal point for the festival, serving several important roles for the tribes, also educating and sharing their pride. As well as a form of storytelling, it is good for social and emotional wellbeing. This strengthens connections to country, as well as intergenerational bonds. In the lead-up to the festival, all the people in the tribes help young people to prepare totems and costumes and practise junba with them.

I am excited for the future of the arts in the Kimberley and I look forward to attending many more local performances in my electorate, as well as supporting people from our Kimberley region sharing with people everywhere else in the state and nation. I commend the bill to the house.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.45 pm]: I rise as the lead speaker for the opposition on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. The member for Vasse would normally be the lead speaker on this bill, but, as members may have heard, she has to deal with a serious health issue in her family so she cannot be in Parliament. I will soldier on. Hon Peter Collier is our shadow spokesperson in the other place. I will go through a little bit of analysis and discussion of the bill. I indicate at the outset that we support the bill. I might also say to members, in case they are worried about their health, that I had my second AstraZeneca COVID vaccination yesterday, so I am feeling somewhat less than average today. Anyway, I will soldier on.

The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 will rename the Perth Theatre Trust as the Arts and Culture Trust while expanding its functions and responsibilities for art and cultural venues beyond the theatres. The trust will be the new government arts entity, managed by a board and accountable to the Minister for Culture and the Arts, the government and Parliament. The most iconic theatres, such as His Majesty's Theatre, are managed by the Perth Theatre Trust under the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979. Over the years, various reviews have proposed to reform the trust to allow it to operate beyond its narrow role as a theatre manager. This bill will obviously achieve some of the outcomes of those various considerations. This bill will place more artistic and cultural venues under the control of the new trust, including the Perth Cultural Centre. The trust will have much broader responsibilities and powers, with more flexibility to manage our cultural assets. New responsibilities will include management of state-owned assets assigned to the trust and, potentially, any privately owned assets that enter a partnership with it. The trust board will consist of nine members, compared with the current eight, thus ensuring that there can be a majority position. The board members will be expected to have specific skills and experience that relate to the trust's operations.

Obviously, historically, the Perth Theatre Trust was focused mainly on Perth venues, hence most of its board members tended to be people with a central Perth-focus. We just heard from the member for Kimberley that, clearly, the scope of this bill will be much broader than simply metropolitan Perth. That is because the trust will have a statewide responsibility and broader membership. The bill will also expand the definition of an event, production or performance beyond immediate events to include performances that can be enjoyed at a later date, such as via streaming. The provision allows the trust to establish, own and operate the proposed \$100 million screen production facility, which I assume will be in Fremantle. It all seems fairly routine, although increased centralised control over government facilities may not always be the best way to do things. We need to be careful that bureaucracies do not become unresponsive to voices from further away, such as those in the regions, and even, can I say, from the suburbs of Perth.

I am going to try to be reasonably focused, but there are several parts of the bill that I want to discuss and I will cover them in the consideration in detail stage. Those are the declaration of places to be venues, declaring groups as resident companies, ministerial oversight of commercial contracts and permission for people to use trust property. Obviously, that last one was quite controversial a few weeks ago when a specific group was prevented from using the Albany Entertainment Centre.

Under part 1, clause 4, page 5, the minister may declare places to be venues. It is claimed that the current regime does not easily facilitate short-term events and opportunities. This clause will grant the minister the power to declare a place to be a venue used, or intended to be used, wholly or partly for cultural or artistic purposes. That is quite a broad power. I am interested to see whether there is any qualification on that power because as it sits, it does not appear that there are any restraints to what can be declared a venue. As it reads, the Minister for Culture and the

Arts can impinge upon any property or piece of land for the purpose of accommodating an artistic event. The question is: is it really the government's intent to empower the minister with such unprecedented power over essentially the whole state and every property therein? The essence of that is: does that go to private property as well as public property? It is not clear whether that is the case. The bill does not seem to provide any constraints on the minister in declaring a privately owned or leased property to be a venue. We assume that the minister would not simply collectivise someone's private property for the purpose of an artistic event without agreement of the property owner. Obviously, we know that the Minister for Culture and the Arts is a well-meaning minister who would try to do things in a cooperative way, but it may be that a future minister is not so kindly disposed and might seek to exercise broader power if that is possible, particularly over private land. Obviously we on this side of the house do not want to see the compulsory exercise of state power over private property for artistic purposes. Clearly, if a private property owner does not wish for their property to be used for that purpose, we would hope that that is the case. As I said, it would be good if the minister could enlighten me as to whether the minister's powers extend to private properties as well as public properties.

The same goes for local government property or land that the minister wants to declare a venue. There is nothing specific in the bill about consultation with local government or local community representatives to ensure that a minister's proposed declarations do not create local problems. Furthermore, if a declaration is opposed by the local community, what is the process by which the community can have its views heard? I am not sure whether that is possible or whether that is needed, and, as I said, I genuinely seek clarification about that. Does the bill need amendment to specify that the power applies only to state government-owned leased property or land or is it implicit in the bill? If the state government should want to use private or local government property or land, there must be a requirement that the minister gains agreement from the property owner or holder. As I have said, it would be good if the minister could clarify that and make it clear that the minister's powers apply only to state-owned land or facilities and that any place not owned or controlled by the state government cannot be declared a venue unless with the agreement of the owner or the leaseholder of the place.

Clause 4(2) on page 5 refers to the declaration of a place to be a venue for a period specified in the declaration. Again, without any qualification in this clause, the concern is how long that period will go for. Obviously, it would be of concern if a declaration could go for extended periods and prevent other uses of the land. That question comes back to whether, in fact, this covers private venues as well as government venues. The question is: should there be a limit on the period or a compulsory review after a period of time? Obviously, if it is for three or six months or something like that, that is fine, but if it is longer, maybe we need a review process. I note that the minister can change a declaration.

Clause 5(1) states that the minister may declare arts organisations to be resident companies. The bill will allow the minister to declare a state-funded arts organisation to be a resident company for the purposes of the bill, which will provide greater clarity and certainty for performing groups. The concern about this clause is whether there is a requirement for consultation with the groups or bodies already using a facility. Again, I do not make this assertion about the current minister, but a future minister may want to make friends with lots of organisations and may start to assign organisations to facilities that simply do not have the capacity to cope or that are incompatible with the groups that are using the facility. Is there a requirement for consultation with the groups that already utilise a facility before other groups come in and use that facility?

Part 2 of the bill deals with the establishment of the new Arts and Culture Trust and its functions and powers, including the ability to enter into commercial arrangements. The bill enables the trust to enter into commercial arrangements to stipulate commercial and tourism hubs. It is envisaged that the trust will attract activities and events to enliven the Perth Cultural Centre and residential cultural institutions, including the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the State Library of Western Australia, the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip and other facilities. The trust will need ministerial approval to exercise its powers to acquire or dispose of real property, to enter into contracts for the management of a venue and for ticketing services.

Part 2, clause 12, on page 11, refers to the general restrictions on the trust's powers. It states that approval will be needed from the minister before it can deal with real or personal property, as empowered by clause 11(3)(a) on page 9. Ministerial approval will also be required in the exercise of powers to enter into venue management arrangements given under part 2, clause 11(3)(d), on page 9. We obviously welcome the ministerial oversight; it is critically important and it will make sure that the minister will be held accountable for their decisions. There is a concern that this approach is not consistent throughout the bill. Although we recognise the role of the trust and like bodies, at the end of the day, the minister is the person who will always be accountable for what occurs on government property, entities and the like.

Part 2, clause 13, on page 12, deals with the requirement for approval to participate in business arrangements. The trust is empowered by part 2, clause 11(3)(f), to participate in business arrangements, including acquisition and disposal of interests in an arrangement. This is referred to on page 9. Clause 13 requires that such arrangements be approved by both the minister and the Treasurer. Again, that is very welcome because it will ensure robust ministerial control and, importantly, accountability. However, clause 13(2), page 12, states that the Treasurer can exempt trusts from these requirements. The concern here is that this may be a way for a minister to defer

accountability. If the minister defers authority to a subservient body, ultimately the minister can say, “I can’t be held accountable for the decisions that were made by that body because they had the power and I had no say in that matter.” We would prefer that, ultimately, the minister has authority and control over matters. It is worthwhile looking at that. I am not going to suggest any amendments in this place. I will leave any discussion of that to my lead in the other place. I am not foreshadowing amendments; I am just saying that these matters have been raised, and I am very interested in the minister’s response. The question is whether that exemption should be there at all or whether it should be limited? The opposition is concerned that perhaps it could be a way for government to distance itself from decisions it knows will be made. A similar situation exists in clause 14(1), on page 12, concerning ministerial approval required for the trust to provide ticketing services for a non-trust venue. Again, ministerial oversight is welcome but there is a provision for the minister to exempt the trust from this requirement. For the same reasons, it would be interesting to know what the minister sees as the scope of that provision. Obviously, again, the concern is that important decisions will be made that are at some distance from the minister.

Part 5, clause 70, “General regulations”, on page 36, refers to the regulations being made for various aspects of venue management. I will say that this section brings back memories of what happened recently with a group being banned from using the Albany Entertainment Centre. Clause 70 list examples of matters that will be subject to regulations. There are two matters that could be particularly sensitive. The first is clause 70(2)(b), which states —

the use and hiring out of Trust venues or any part of a Trust venue;

The second is clause 70(2)(g), which states —

the admission of persons, vehicles and animals to Trust venues;

These are sensitive matters and it concerns the opposition. We understand that there can be extremes, but banning the Australian Christian Lobby from the Albany Entertainment Centre was of enormous concern to a range of people. Members in this place may have different views about that group, and some people may have the view that they do not like or care about some of its views, but it is critically important in our society that we have as much tolerance as possible for groups with different views.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Member, they don’t espouse tolerance themselves.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Pardon?

Ms C.M. Rowe: The group that you’re referring to do not espouse tolerance themselves.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I guess, member, that is the issue; is it not? In a democracy, the member has the right to criticise but not to silence groups. My concern with this power is that we are seeing a narrowing of the opportunity for groups to use function venues. I support robust debate. There are people who I vehemently disagree with. There are people in this chamber who I vehemently disagree with, but, boy, do I respect and champion their right to have and state their opinions. People in this place say quite egregious things to me. I might not like it, but I respect that in this chamber people can say those things. Equally, members from time to time may not like things I say.

Ms H.M. Beazley: Never!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I know it is hard to believe, member, but I have heard that view expressed occasionally.

It is important that public venues are there. I appreciate that there are extremes in everything and that we need some capacity to have control over this. My concern is that there are differences that are not extreme in the views of the broader community, but because we have a particular view, we say, “We don’t ever want to hear that. We don’t want anyone to ever say that in a forum.” As I say, I champion the right of everyone here and in the community to criticise people when they do not agree with them in a respectful way and the like, but I am concerned this legislation is a mechanism that will stifle public debate, and that is highly egregious. I will use the example of climate change—this is not my view. On the issue of climate change, a significant percentage of the Australian population does not think that climate change is real —

Ms C.M. Rowe: They’d be wrong.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Hear me out, member.

The member might not agree with them, she may think they are misguided, but it would be egregious to say that they could not express those views. Equally, I am sure there would be a cavalcade of criticism from the media, from members opposite and others, and the community can form its own view. But I think it is dangerous for society when we start narrowing views, because that can become more extreme. I will say that I am a keen believer that the climate is changing but I am extremely dubious about some statements made by people around certain aspects of that debate.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Member, did you see the report that came out yesterday?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am, in fact, very aware of it, member. It sounded quite alarming. As the member would know, during the previous election campaign, I was at the forefront of a visionary policy to move the government to zero carbon emissions and to catalyse the transition of our economy away from fossil fuels. The member can guess

where I stand on all of this but, equally, I respect that very good people I know—fine people—do not share those views, and I would not seek to stop them expressing their view in a public forum, even though I think it is wrong and I may well use my opportunity to speak in a public forum to criticise them.

I know it is irksome but I worry that in public debate now things that are irksome suddenly become offensive, are banned and people are not allowed to say them. I do not think that helps. I appreciate there are extremes of everything. It is probably best not to give very extreme examples, but members can imagine what they may be. My concern about public debate is that the definition of what is an extreme view is actually what is irritating, irksome or, as members suggested earlier, something that may be wrong. I think it is a power that should be used very wisely and very sparsely in our community, and as much as possible we should let those debates occur. On university campuses when I was a student and on campuses now—for example, the University of Western Australia—there are people who are anarchists. There are people who have some quite offensive views to the Jewish community on campus. I profoundly disagree with those groups and in no way support the views that they espouse, but I think when we go down this path of banning groups, it drives debate underground and it does not help. As I said, I appreciate there are extremes and we need some capacity here to have some controls, but it should be an extreme, not for things that we just find irritating or irksome.

Mr D.T. Punch: How extreme is extreme?

Dr D.J. HONEY: Pardon?

Mr D.T. Punch: How extreme is extreme?

Dr D.J. HONEY: It really is a matter for assessment, is it not, member for Bunbury? For example, with the group that was banned from the Albany Entertainment Centre, I do not share its views on many things. Half of Australia's population is Christian, and have a range of Christian views. Clearly, some of the group's views offend people. I have not examined in detail the group's statements. But we should call out those things that people regard as extreme. We should criticise them. On debates around the LGBTQIA+ community and so on, the broader community find that what people thought was acceptable 20 years ago is not acceptable now, and that debate is out there. I think it is healthy when we have that debate. It helps to normalise people's views and recognises that the world has moved on from a world they knew years and years ago.

In any case, on that, minister, I will end my contribution. We on this side of the chamber support the bill. We see it as a culmination of an important effort to modernise the role of the Perth Theatre Trust and to make it more contemporary. Thank you.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [5.09 pm] — in reply: I thank all members who have contributed to the second reading debate of the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. It is very important to have the opportunity to debate the importance of culture and the arts to the Western Australian community and, indeed, the story of us as Western Australians. I am very proud and pleased that a number of members took the opportunity during the second reading debate on the bill to outline their strong support for the cultural industries, their local community arts organisations, artisans and artists, and why we need to continue to have a vibrant, robust creative community. It is always pleasing to hear members of Parliament highlight their own experiences in the arts. Many contributors today and on previous days highlighted the impact that the arts has had on them as children, in education and in the broader community.

It has always been my view, of course, that the arts is a great enabler. It is also an important contributor to our economy and essentially tells the stories of us. The arts, in all its genres, has done that for centuries if not thousands of years, particularly with our First Nations people. I am particularly proud to have heard the contribution of the member for Kimberley who outlined the importance of culture and the arts to the broader communities across the Kimberley. Other members talked about the richness within their own communities, be they in the metropolitan area or regional Western Australia. It is important for all of us to understand that the arts is not just about seeing a great dance or hearing or participating in a great song; the arts is much deeper than that. It is my firm view that all of us, in terms of our own characters, are shaped by the influences of culture and practice, and the arts more broadly.

It is pleasing that this bill has evoked in many members in this place an appreciation of what the arts does for their communities. We must also be very mindful, as I am sure members are, that many people in our community draw their incomes and livelihoods from the arts. Many of them supplement their livelihoods and incomes through artistic practice. Many of them, of course, have been doing it particularly hard during the COVID-19 pandemic, including many in the entertainment industry, the performing arts industry, the visual arts, dance genres and those who also provide the equipment, backup, sound engineering et cetera. It is important to acknowledge that during this interesting period over the past 18 months or so since COVID struck this country, that, as we speak, Western Australia is one of the few state or territory jurisdictions where we can have 100 per cent attendance at our performance venues, where we can move freely in festivals and events, and where we can participate in culture and the arts activities. We should feel privileged that not only we can do that, but also we have been able to do that, particularly in more recent times, more freely in many respects than is the case in any other place in our nation. The livelihoods, situation and circumstances of many people of all ages involved in the arts in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland have

been decimated. They are not able to practise in many respects their craft and art. In Western Australia, the impact was swift. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, venues, spaces and places, museums, libraries and cultural places where creatives do their magnificent work were closed and impacted. As we know, many of the institutions and industries that were impacted first will be the ones that will be impacted again when there are lockdowns and in terms of sustaining themselves coming out of that situation.

To members of Parliament who have made a contribution—to all of you—I thank you sincerely. But there are some things that I want you to do on behalf of your communities. I want you to encourage the broader community in whatever seat to continue to reach out to those creative people in their communities—that is, musicians who perform in live music venues, and community theatre people who, as a number of members highlighted, have been making a tremendous cultural contribution to the community for many, many decades. We need you to reach out to them and support them. Go to their shows and activities, involve yourself in their events and encourage others to do so. When a local gallery is having an exhibition of a local artist, go there, as I know many people do. Encourage people to purchase their work and celebrate their creativity. When there are events that bring people together that celebrate the unique stories of Western Australia, share that. Share it on social media and in any other way that members can. This underpins that we and the community value those people who are part of our creative people. There are many, many thousands of them.

I have to say that we should not value and talk about only those who create the work and produce the magic. Only last week the Premier in question time highlighted that it is important to remind people that, in fact, there is a vastly greater participation rate in cultural and artistic endeavours—this is not an attack on my very good friend the Minister for Sport and Recreation—than in sport. There is no doubt that sport is important, but attendance at culture and the arts events continue to outnumber attendance at or engagement in sporting venues. People in Western Australia are in love with some of the codes that exist, and they are important, but so, too, are our cultural and artistic performances, activities and events. That is one reason I am unashamedly very pleased that I have both the tourism portfolio and the culture and arts portfolio. If we are to tell our stories to the world—tell it well and tell unique stories like those embedded in our First Nations people, for example—they deserve to be shared with the rest of the world. They are unique. That is something that all of us in Western Australia and Australia more broadly can be proud of. Not only we are home to the oldest living culture on the planet, but also that culture is embedded with magnificent, special and unique stories. Those stories need to be told and our First Nations people are very eager to share them. That is unique to us in Australia, so why would we not do everything possible to support our First Nations people and all our creatives to tell their unique stories to the world? When we are able to welcome back visitors from overseas and interstate in the future, I think they will be the stories that they will seek. They will seek to engage with and participate in those stories. Western Australia is so well placed to do that because not only have we been fortunate enough to have a Premier, government and Western Australian community that has been focused on keeping people safe, but also this period has allowed us some time to hone those stories and their uniqueness. I am very, very positive about the future. When people visit Western Australia in the future, they will be enticed here to see not just great sporting events at the stadium, but also the world-class storytelling of our Indigenous and First Nations people. They will see world-class dancers, writers, performers and visual artists with work on display. They will also see and hear those unique Western Australian stories. They will hear them in all parts of Western Australia. They will hear them in the regional communities of Western Australia and, of course, in the suburbs and the spaces and places around the CBD and our institutions that the Perth Theatre Trust currently has carriage of.

All members of Parliament can play a key role in supporting our cultural industries. That is why I am very proud that the McGowan government has made the \$100 million commitment for sound and screen infrastructure for the screen industry, along with a \$20 million commitment that will involve enticement and investment in our industry. We already have a great story in the screen industry in Western Australia. I and the member for Warren–Blackwood and, I am sure, the member for Bunbury and other members in the south west will look forward with great anticipation in the next few weeks to CinefestOZ, which is magnificent. It is now probably the premier regional screen festival here in Western Australia. It will be celebrated through great support by the government and other entities, such as local governments. It will celebrate the fact that Western Australia has huge potential in the screen industry. We will see this government's \$100 000 prize offered to the best film, along with the ongoing commitment to support CinefestOZ. It helps add to the picture of a burgeoning screen industry in Western Australia. The commitment of \$100 million for infrastructure and the \$20 million for film incentives help to complete the picture and to set ourselves up to be a place where not only great blockbusters have the potential to be filmed, but also great stories in our regional communities can continue to be filmed. The member for Kimberley highlighted that the first two series of *Mystery Road* were filmed in the Kimberley. The third series, which has just been announced, will be filmed in Kalgoorlie, so the member for Kalgoorlie and the communities in the goldfields will be beneficiaries of that. This is all about the picture of how we position our culture and arts in the future.

This bill is a critical part of that, because it will enable a number of things. I will address some of the important questions that the member for Cottesloe asked. I will go through them and if we want to tease some more out in consideration in detail, I am happy to do that. This bill is essentially a reform bill that seeks to improve the governance structures of our arts and culture facilities or assets. As members are aware, the Perth Theatre Trust, as it currently

exists, is a trust with authority over our state assets, including, of course, a number of our state performing arts centres. That includes those in the regions such as the Goldfields Arts Centre in Kalgoorlie and the Albany Entertainment Centre. The trust also has authority over His Majesty's Theatre, the Perth Concert Hall and other venues in the CBD. The new trust will have powers to manage all kinds of arts and cultural venues, including outdoor spaces such as the Perth Cultural Centre, and this is an important concept. The Perth Cultural Centre has had huge investment in it, with the opening of Boola Bardip, our new Museum, on 21 November 2020, my birthday. Of course, the new Museum is part of a number of cultural institutions within the Perth Cultural Centre. The element of this bill that allows spaces and places to be included gives great opportunity.

The member for Cottesloe highlighted issues with clause 4 of this bill and the declaration of places. The thinking behind this is quite simple. By allowing through agreement a place or a space to be declared means that the pursuit of a cultural or artistic nature can take place there. An example of an event that would have been made much more seamless, albeit it was still very successful, was *Highway to Hell*, which the member for Bicton highlighted in her contribution to the second reading debate. If this legislation had been in place, the Perth Theatre Trust, as the organising or auspicing entity, could have sought through agreement to declare nine kilometres of Canning Highway as a space for an artistic endeavour, in this case for the Perth Festival event *Highway to Hell*. It would have allowed for that place to be designated a cultural or artistic venue for a period, and the arrangements to ensure the successful delivery of that event would have been able to take place. As we know in the case of *Highway to Hell*, the alternative way to do that is through a whole range of arrangements, memorandums of understanding and agreements with a whole range of parties. In my view, this bill would have allowed that process to be much smoother.

I need to highlight something, and I think it is one of the points that the member for Cottesloe raised about clause 4. There are a couple of important things that go to transparency. The minister would need to publish the intent to declare any place to be a venue in the *Government Gazette*, and the declaration would be in effect for the period specified in it. The reason it would not go for a determined time is that all cultural events are different. For example, from memory, *Highway to Hell* was held on 1 March 2020. Preparation would have been required on the Canning Highway, including venues along the way for the concert infrastructure, so the declared period would have been the couple of days needed to enable that space to be set up and the time of the event taking place on the Sunday. The time period will vary, because we might have situations in the future in which Langley Park, for example, might be utilised for a Perth Festival or Fringe World Festival event of a grand scale. Again, through agreement, that would be negotiated for a period of days, or possibly even for a couple of weeks, depending upon the event and the extent of the event.

I need to highlight that the minister of the day would be able to issue only temporary declarations, not declarations of a permanent nature. The minister would be able to issue only temporary declarations that would have effect for a defined period to enable that event to take place. The declaration issued by the minister must be published in the *Government Gazette*. It is important to note that, in clause 3, which I think the member highlighted, there is a definition of "venue", which is —

- (a) a place declared under section 4(1) to be a venue used, or intended to be used, wholly or partly for cultural or artistic purposes; or
- (b) any other place used, or intended to be used, wholly or partly for cultural or artistic purposes.

"Place" is defined as —

... any land, building or structure (whether permanent or temporary) or any part of any land, building or structure;

The motivation for the expansion of the definition to include "land" stems from the limitations that the government and the Perth Theatre Trust have faced in the past when wanting to utilise public spaces. The example I gave was the Perth Cultural Centre, where, in the past, because of the definitions in the current act, there have been restrictions on what has been able to be carried out. We want the Perth Cultural Centre to be an active space, and we want to ensure that those institutions that have a footprint on the Perth Cultural Centre—the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip, the State Library of Western Australia, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts and the State Theatre Centre of WA—have the capacity not only to be collaborative, but also for the spaces within and outside of those venues to be fully activated. That is why the definition has been expanded.

I think this is an important point. This was a good question. The member had a concern whether a future minister could simply say, "I'm taking that", and decree. I assure members that the minister cannot impose this power. A place can be declared a venue only if the venue is used or will be used for cultural or artistic purposes and with the agreement of all parties involved. That is a very important point. I think that the member raised a good concern.

Dr D.J. Honey: If the minister doesn't mind a question by way of interjection, just for the benefit of my colleagues in the upper house, where does that derive from in the bill, or is that sort of a statutory interpretation, if you like?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am sure that my advisers are listening to that. I will get a note from them to answer the member's question.

Dr D.J. Honey: Thank you.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I want to assure the member that that is a key consideration. He also mentioned clause 5, which particularly refers to the declaration of an arts organisation to be a resident company. This clause allows the minister of the day to declare an arts organisation to be a resident company for the purposes of the act. Clause 5(1) provides the criteria that an organisation must meet to be declared a resident company. Specifically, to fulfil the requirements, for the minister to declare an arts organisation a resident company, the arts organisation must satisfy the minister that the organisation conducts activities at one or more trust venues and that it receives funding from a state government department, agency or instrumentality. Some organisations are already regarded as resident companies and could be declared, including the Black Swan State Theatre Company of WA; the Barking Gecko Theatre; Co3 Contemporary Dance, which is a dance company, of course; the West Australian Ballet; the West Australian Opera; and Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. Essentially, this clause provides that an organisation must be a government-funded entity or receive government funding, and it will allow the organisation to be given some status because of that declaration. I am happy to go through it in a little bit more detail as we come to that.

The member for Cottesloe also mentioned clause 14, which specifically relates to—I am just turning to that—the ticketing services for activities not at trust venues. This clause provides that the trust cannot provide ticketing services for any activity outside a trust venue without the approval of the minister, so there is a ministerial approval requirement there. Clause 14(1) provides that the minister must approve the trust providing ticketing services for any activity outside of trust venues. Clause 14(2) and (3) provides that the minister may, in writing, exempt ticketing services for any activity or class of activities from the need for ministerial approval. An exemption can be unconditional or subject to conditions specified in the notice. Any notice issued by the minister may be revoked or amended by the minister at any time by sending written notice to the trust.

Clause 14(4) provides the minister with the power to give directions to the trust regarding how ticketing services may be provided. This ensures a layer of transparency with ticketing services; of course, that is through ultimate approval by the minister.

I want to highlight that a number of members talked about the importance of this bill and, essentially, the amendment that relates to the government’s screen production facility. I mentioned this earlier. This is very exciting and very important. This will be a game changer for the screen industry in Western Australia. This bill will essentially expand the use of trust venues and trust property to include production activity or any other activities of an artistic, recreational or educational nature, and include a definition of “production activity”. It is an enabling element of this bill. This is very important, because when the screen facility is constructed and the model of operation is finalised and determined, this legislation will enable that screen facility to operate. Of course, we are very keen for that screen facility to deliver to a whole range of screen industry outcomes—post-production, pre-production, smaller and larger scale production, production and filming—and that is one of the reasons that any build for screen facilities will include one, two or three sound stages and high-level production and technical resources on site. It is important to note that this screen facility is significant because it will complete the jigsaw. Some fantastic films, series and documentaries have been filmed in Western Australia. One of those series is *Outback Truckers*, as I think one member highlighted to us. It is a very successful streamed enterprise made in regional WA. We have these great entities that are filmed in the regions and in and around Perth, but we do not currently have the facilities for any major film activity that is required in a film share. With this initiative, we will have those facilities. It will complete that picture and also mean that post-production work, the creation of opportunities for digital screen technology, the ongoing development of virtual reality and other digital enterprises can be further encouraged. We want that to be seen as a creative hub, essentially, which, of course, not only provides and delivers outcomes for screen filming, but also nurtures and encourages activities in all the other genres including gaming, which is huge. Western Australia already has a number of independent and small entities that are delivering gaming and VR products to the world. We want to see more of that created and shared both creatively and economically throughout the world. An important component of this bill is that support for the establishment of our film infrastructure.

I might leave it there. I am sure that the member for Cottesloe may seek some clarification during the consideration in detail stage. Once again, I thank all the members. Some 15 or so members made a contribution to this bill through their comments, and I thank them because that was very enlightening for me and it gives me great faith that the arts are held in great esteem by so many members in this place. They will be great advocates and champions for the arts as they move about and celebrate the unique stories in the communities and the unique people who tell them.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Terms used —

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister talked about the definition of “venue”, which is at line 22 on page 4 of the bill. The question I asked earlier was whether some clarity could be provided on a venue being either public or private.

Also, in the minister's second reading reply, he mentioned that there would be some negotiation. Clearly, the state should have, and will have, control over public land. My question was whether that control would also apply to private land or a private venue if it were a venue for the arts. I might say that although the minister referred to "venue", I do not see in the definition of venue—I stand corrected, minister, as I stand here in my slightly post-injection haze; I see that the bill refers to a place used wholly or partly for cultural or artistic purposes. To get to the point, does that cover venues on private as well as public land, or is it somehow implicit in the bill that it covers only public land?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: First of all, the only time a private venue could be declared by the minister is with the agreement of the private landowner, but it is possible that in the future the Perth Theatre Trust might identify private land for an event to be overseen by the trust. However, that would have to be agreed to by the owner. If the owner said no, it could not be done. That is the issue around the private aspect.

The other elements, of course, relate to land, spaces or places vested in local government or that are overseen by government and other entities—for example, Main Roads in the case of *Highway to Hell*—but, again, agreement would be required. The key aspect is agreement. The definition of "venue" in this clause allows a place to be declared as a venue for an artistic pursuit. However, it is very specific and very clear about the need for that to be done through agreement. I could not go to the member's house and say that I will declare his house and land will be used for a hip-hop festival.

Dr D.J. Honey: If you tidied up my garden, minister, it would be a big help!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: If the member agreed, it would be an interesting hip-hop festival! I have not been to the member's house. I do not know whether the accommodation would allow for it.

I also need to highlight that this aspect of the clause is the same as is currently found in the Perth Theatre Trust Act at section 3(2), which states —

The Minister may from time to time declare by notice published in the *Government Gazette* any building or structure constructed or adapted or to be constructed or adapted and used or to be used for the public presentation of one or more of the performing arts to be a theatre for the purposes of this Act.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I thank the minister for that. Again, this is for the information of my colleagues in the upper house so that they do not go through the same line of inquiry and debate. The minister said it has to be done by negotiation, but I am still not clear where that is. I know that is logically what would happen, but where is it actually required? Is it in this bill, does the power derive from another act, or is it an accepted statutory construction? I am intrigued.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I refer the member to section 3(2) of the Land Administration Act. We are simply extending that aspect to land.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I did not want to labour the point. That is useful information.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4: Minister may declare places to be venues —

Dr D.J. HONEY: We have now covered the question of public and private land. Clause 4(2) states —

A declaration under this section may be expressed to have effect for a period specified in the declaration.

Does the minister think it would be better to state "must be expressed to have effect for a period specified in the declaration"? That time period may be indefinite. It may be two or three months. I fully understand the point that the minister made about different events. For example, *Highway to Hell* may last for a week. Other events may go for months or even years. I would have thought that making it time-bound would give a deal of certainty to everyone.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is a good question. I need to highlight that the current act does not have any requirement to set out a specified period. This bill essentially does. As I said, being too prescriptive would not allow the flexibility that would be required of a future event. It is important to consider that in 2026, we will acknowledge—it is still to be determined how—the bicentenary of Albany, followed by the bicentenary of the state in 2029. As we journey towards and beyond those dates, I envisage that a range of opportunities will be considered for celebration, commemoration and acknowledgement. They may be held for only a short time, be perhaps a one-off event, or be festival-based and go for several days. For example, some of the Perth Theatre Trust events can go on for two to three weeks. I do not want to constrain the capacity of events.

The important fact is that there is a commitment to determine a period. The artistic nature of an event or entity will determine how long the period of the declaration needs to be. It would be remiss of me to interfere in the creative juices of our creative people who come up with some magnificent ideas. For example, the previous government had the highly successful *The Giants* event, which was part of the Perth Festival. If this legislation had been in place at that time, with the capacity to declare in that case, the government would probably have declared several major sections of Perth CBD as the festival event, which would have resulted in a much more seamless collaboration capacity. I want to see more of those sorts of things happen. We have addressed the fact that there needs to be a specified period, but we have not determined exactly what it is because it is up to our creatives to essentially request that.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I understand that. I clearly understood the minister's point when he said that events will run for different periods. Subclause (2) states —

A declaration under this section may be expressed to have effect for a period specified in the declaration.

The minister indicated that the period will be variable. Would it not be better if a period were always specified— not that it is the same amount of time but only that a period is specified? Perhaps the word “must” rather than “may” should be used. It comes down to certainty. Everyone involved should clearly know what period of time the designation covers. I was really saying that “must” could be used. That would not alter the intent of the subclause but would say that we should do this all the time, as opposed to leaving it to someone's discretion.

I turn to the question of consultation, particularly for local communities and local government. For example, when a place is declared, such as the rugby playing fields in Cottesloe, will there be any requirement for consultation on public land to be used?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The key word in the bill is “intent”. The ultimate declaration by the minister of a place would obviously include a process that the minister has arrived at that, having satisfied a consultation process. That is how the clause relates to “intent”. There are safeguards in the bill about the elements of agreement, which are embedded. The minister of the day would arrive at the proclamation, if you like, of the intent to declare a place at the end of the process of consultation. The provision in the existing act is the same, so we are not doing anything different.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5: Minister may declare arts organisations to be resident companies —

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have a question along similar lines, to which the minister may provide a very quick answer. I appreciate that the minister may not often declare arts organisations to be resident companies. If groups are forced together and there is some incompatibility or otherwise, would that consultation requirement also go to this clause when an organisation is declared to be a resident company, whether it is His Majesty's Theatre or some other venue? Can the minister simply say, “Look, I don't care, I've got the power and you're all going to work together in here”, or will there be some consultation? I expect that bodies currently use all of those venues as their particular residences, if you like.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is important to highlight that declaring a resident company does not refer to a venue. There is the capacity to declare a company a resident company. The clause does not refer to a venue. It is not saying, “I am declaring you a resident company at His Majesty's Theatre.” They are separate; they are not one and the same.

Why is this clause needed? This clause recognises that publicly funded arts organisations are critical to the performing arts sector. It is important for the minister of the day to publicly recognise such an entity, and this underpins their importance to the sector. Specifically, state-funded resident companies use the trust venues that are publicly owned or leased as their principal place of performance. That exists now. Essentially, the principal place of performance for the Black Swan State Theatre Company of WA is the State Theatre Centre. It regularly holds productions. I went to one recently at His Majesty's. There are performances at other venues around the state, when and if one of the state theatre company's productions is touring. Essentially, that is why this element is needed. I highlighted in my second reading response examples of some of our existing companies that essentially are already regarded as resident companies, including the West Australian Ballet, the West Australian Opera, the Black Swan State Theatre Company and Barking Gecko Theatre. It is important to understand that it is about the capacity to declare a resident company. It does not refer to a venue. In fact, to be a resident company, the organisation already needs to be an existing user of a trust venue. I refer the member to clause 5(1) of part 1.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister was just warming to completing his answer to my query on clause 5.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: In concluding my comments, declaring a resident company does not refer to a venue. Ultimately, a declaration protects companies from future government decisions that may wish to put commercial interests ahead of state-funded arts organisations. This is important because we need to be reminded that the primary purpose of venues such as His Majesty's Theatre, the Perth Concert Hall and others is arts and culture.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is fine. The next clause I want to talk on is clause 11, “Trust's powers”.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 10 put and passed.

Clause 11: Trust's powers —

Dr D.J. HONEY: Subclause (3) states —

The Trust may, for the purposes of performing any of its functions, do all or any of the following —

It lists a range of things that the trust can do. What ministerial oversight will exist over the trust on those matters, and what limit will there be on the trust in those transactions? My concern is whether the trust could enter into

arrangements which ultimately bind the state and lead to financial stress because of the magnitude of the arrangement. At what point will the minister intercede to make sure the trust does not go too far or do things that the government would not approve of?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is a good question, and I thank the member. As the member highlighted, this clause talks about the powers of the trust. Although clause 11 outlines those powers, clause 12 talks about the general restrictions on the trust's powers. I refer the member to clause 12(3), which states —

The Trust must not exercise the following powers without the Minister's written approval —

That obviously relates to disposal of property et cetera, which will allay the member's concern.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It does, minister.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12 put and passed.

Clause 13: Requirement for approval to participate in business arrangements —

Dr D.J. HONEY: Subclause (2) states —

The Treasurer may, by written notice given to the Trust, exempt any business arrangement, or class of business arrangement, from the operation of subsection (1) —

Which says that the minister has to approve those things —

either unconditionally or on conditions specified in the notice.

I wonder whether there is a risk with those arrangements and that the trust will be able to do things because the minister has exempted it from ministerial control; or is the minister satisfied the minister will always have the ability to exercise control over the trust?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Again, it is a good question. I refer the member to the current act, the Perth Theatre Trust Act, which, of course, will carry over in this bill. Section 16(3) states —

The Trust must not exercise a power conferred by subsection (2)(da) in relation to a business arrangement unless the terms and conditions of that business arrangement are terms and conditions approved by the Minister and the Treasurer in respect of —

- (a) that business arrangement; or
- (b) business arrangements of that class; or
- (c) business arrangements generally.

Again, the oversight is prescribed.

Dr D.J. HONEY: In relation to that, does the minister think there should be some time aspect so that arrangement is reviewed? Clause 13(2) exempts the trust. Should that be time bound in some way or are we adequately protected?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is important to highlight that, essentially, it is the Treasurer who gives approval, and there is a process, obviously, for any business case that might be presented. That oversight provision essentially lies with the Treasurer.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 14 to 69 put and passed.

Clause 70: General regulations —

Dr D.J. HONEY: Minister, this is perhaps a general comment in relation to the comment I made in my contribution to the second reading debate. It is around how we make sure that we do not end up stifling public debate, whether or not we find it irksome. I appreciate that there are extremes in everything and, typically, we do not want to see those extremes, but whether or not we find the normal set of views in the community irksome, we do not want to overly restrict them. It may be hard for the minister to give a specific answer on that, but I am interested in his view.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for the question. The important aspect is that under section 16(1)(d) of the Perth Theatre Trust Act, there is a requirement to recommend to the minister policies for the letting and operation of trust facilities and spaces. With the Australian Christian Lobby issue, the policy is currently under review, and for good reason. It needs to be a robust policy that reflects the values of the organisation and the primary purpose of our state-run venues. They have always primarily focused on events of an artistic and cultural nature. The trust made the decision to rescind the non-approval of the application by the ACL to hire the venue in Albany. It rescinded that decision and, consequently, it decided to set a course for review of the policy. Ultimately, any policy will be subject to approval by the minister of the day. However, this is an interesting case because the member for Cottesloe has already referred to circumstances in which there may be consideration for venue hire to not be allowed.

The first important aspect to consider is the purpose of our state-run entities. It is embedded in the act that they are places of cultural and artistic endeavour. That is one important element of consideration. Secondly, the arts, in its own history, pushes boundaries and explores a range of issues. That is an important aspect of the arts more broadly. The arts is a place where ideas and issues are explored and, in many respects, become controversial. It is the very nature of exploring human endeavour and ideas. We know that there have been occasions in history when entities of an extreme nature have challenged policies. For example, some of our Australian institutions, like the Sydney Opera House, have quite a flexible hire policy that is particularly focused on it being an institution of artistic and cultural significance; therefore, that is its primary purpose or usage. We also know that a number of entities—the member for Cottesloe highlighted universities in his contribution—have policies about hiring their venues. Remember that those universities are publicly funded. Only recently, the University of Western Australia refused a person considered to have far-right views on the Muslim faith. That person was refused. Ultimately, this legislation will continue to embed that any policy that is developed will be subject to ministerial approval. That will not change. As we know, the current status is that the policy is being reviewed by the trust.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 71 to 96 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [7.17 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [7.17 pm]: I want to make a very brief contribution to the third reading debate on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. I would like to thank the minister for entertaining my questions and, in particular, to thank the minister's staff and departmental staff for coming here today. This is the culmination. As the minister knows, there have been discussions about this over a long period during this government and the last government. It is pleasing to see the bill come before the house. Overall, the bill reflects what the community wants out of the Perth Theatre Trust, as it was. It reflects a modernisation. There were some concerns, which I think the minister has largely answered. My colleagues in the other place will almost certainly interrogate them a little more. I still think there is a little bit of uncertainty about the formal requirements for private venues, but I think the minister has made every endeavour to try to answer that question. We just need to make sure that all the requirements for consultation and agreement have been retained from the existing act. Otherwise, I thank the minister and commend the bill to the house.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [7.18 pm] — in reply: In closing the debate on the third reading, I thank the member for Cottesloe for his cooperation during the consideration in detail stage, and the other members who spoke during the second reading debate on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021.

I also thank Caroline O'Neill, my policy adviser from the department of culture and the arts; Ms Sarah Rizk, legal counsel—I wish her the very best for the birth of her second child coming up in November; and Margaret Butcher, from the Perth Theatre Trust and the department. Can I also place on the record my appreciation of Morgan Solomon and the existing Perth Theatre Trust members for their stewardship of the trust over the period that I have been Minister for Culture and the Arts. I reflect also on the late Max Kay, who was —

Dr D.J. Honey: An institution.

Mr D.A. Templeman: He was. He was a former member of the Perth Theatre Trust. I knew Max from earlier times. In many ways, Max epitomised the spirit of theatre in Western Australia. Many people will remember going to his Civic Theatre shows in North Perth. To all the trust representatives who were on the trust board, both past and present, I thank them for their contribution, in particular the chair, Morgan Solomon.

I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 5 August.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [7.21 pm]: I have to give a caveat to my presentation to say that this will not be the scintillating contribution that the member for Vasse would have given to this Children and Community Services Amendment Bill. However, in order to allow the government to conduct its

business, I am the lead in this debate in the absence of the excellent member for Vasse. Obviously, Hon Nick Goiran is our shadow spokesperson for this issue in the other place and he will contribute to debate there. I indicate at the outset that the opposition will support this. I will make a brief contribution to the debate. I will not seek to go into consideration in detail unless any of the minister's members wish to do so, but I will leave any detailed examination of particular issues to the other place.

This is a very important bill to come before Parliament. As all members here know, this came out of the 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the recommendation that state and territory governments enact legislation. I will say that at a personal level, I am disappointed that this bill has made way in this place for other bills—for example, the Beeliar wetlands bill. I cannot understand how the government prioritised that bill before this one. This bill goes to the core of safety of children in our community. I think this bill went through the fortieth Parliament with our support. I had hoped it would come forward earlier. I am not trying to blame the minister in any sense for that. I appreciate there is a legislative time frame, but given the Beeliar wetlands matter is completely within the hands of the government for the next four years, why the government is pushing that bill before this one is beyond me. In any case, I guess the important thing is that the bill is before the house. As I say, it is a very important matter to protect from predatory sexual abuse one of the most vulnerable groups in our community—that is, children.

This bill will amend the Children and Community Services Act 2004 and will implement the recommendations of the 2017 statutory review of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 and the 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. A large proportion of the bill mirrors the 2019 bill that was passed in the Assembly but was not prioritised in the Council in the last Parliament. I ask, minister, not for me and not for this Parliament whether it is possible for the minister to show any differences between the 2019 bill and this bill. Given it has been well debated in this place, it will short-circuit some of the debate for my colleagues in the other place if the minister or her officers could produce any differences between the 2019 bill and this bill that members may wish to be aware of when it gets to the other place.

I note that subsequent to the 2019 bill, the Standing Committee on Legislation undertook a review of this and made a number of recommendations. Recognising the strong support for the bill on all sides, I will not go through that in detail. However, concern was expressed in the last Parliament about why the only group that was identified for the mandatory reporting were people in the religious ministry, which was the fifth of the categories of the five groups identified by the royal commission on whom mandatory reporting should be required in relation to any suspicion or knowledge of child sex abuse matters. My understanding is that this bill has amended that and now all five categories are included in the bill—and I will talk a little about that further on. It is certainly very appropriate that that should occur.

There has been discussion in other places about issues around the confessional in the church. This is my personal view: I do not think it is an excuse, which I think is a view that was broadly expressed by members here. If people, in whatever guise, are aware of child sex abuse, they must report it to the police. That is an unequivocal point. I understand that for religious reasons some people believe that if people in religious ministry are required to report issues revealed in the confessional, it may undermine that process and undermine the rehabilitation. I understand those arguments but I do not accept them. It is no different from any group, but I respect that people might have a different opinion for good reasons—not that they want to protect sexual predators but they see there is some greater good in that.

Once again, I clarify that I think the direction the government has taken on this is entirely appropriate. It is good to see that the government has taken on the recommendations. I am happy to stand corrected, minister, because, as I say, I am certain the member for Vasse would not need this clarification, but my understanding is that all but one of the recommendations from the Standing Committee on Legislation was adopted and I congratulate the minister for taking cognisance of that committee's good work.

In relation to the proposed extraordinary powers of investigation designated to officers by the CEO of the department, clause 69 will delete over a page of powers, but clause 71 will replace them in the legislation with 10 pages of powers to investigate any offence. The bill also provides for out-of-home care workers to be mandatory reporters. That very much aligns with my view that anyone in a formal role who is aware of the abuse of children—in fact, anyone who is aware of the abuse of children—should report the matter so that we are protecting our youth.

Some people I have spoken to expressed some resourcing concerns given the extra work required and the likely extra support to be accessed by caregivers. Extra components will be required in care plans, such as cultural support plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and leaving care plans from age 15 to consider the child's participation and wishes.

There is a concern that the government has previously underspent on care leavers support available until the age of 25 years, so the budget has not been fully utilised in that area, yet waiting lists were cited as an issue in the Auditor General's report. The question is: are extra resources being provided to assist with the preparation of those more detailed plans?

This is a broader issue, but will the department have the required resources for the implementation/enforcement of this bill? I ask because there will be a larger compliance component, if you like, for the department. Obviously, it is very important work. Once there are these extra categories, there will have to be an audit and follow-up to make sure that this new law is complied with appropriately.

I will finish on this point. Will there be separate proclamations for the five nominated groups or will they be done together? I understand that there had been some discussion or some debate on it and a view was expressed that the other four groups needed to be consulted. The point was made to me that religious leaders were not afforded that level of consultation, so is there really a requirement for the government to undertake that detailed consultation, or should the government proclaim this for all groups at the same time? I know the minister's genuine intent in relation to this matter, but these groups should be proclaimed as soon as possible so that we ensure that children get the best protection they can possibly get as soon as possible. I would be grateful if the minister could answer those queries; otherwise, the bill has the support of the opposition.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [7.32 pm]: I am very pleased to rise to speak on this bill and offer my full support for the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. I note that I last had the chance to present to the minister about the circumstances behind the justification for this kind of legislation in a grievance late last year. In that grievance I mentioned a matter that occurred at my old school, Trinity College, which I left 41 years ago. The event happened relatively recently, in 2017, on a school rugby trip to Japan, where a young fellow was sexually assaulted by his peers. It was terrible. My heart goes out to the young fellow for the pain that he suffered, physical and emotional, the bullying that occurred in the lead-up to that event and then the subsequent events. It just got worse because the court found that two teachers who were on that trip were aware of what happened, yet they did not report it. I think any public discussion about this area to make it clear to people that they have this reporting duty is absolutely vital. We all in our communities need to realise that when we see these sorts of offences, we have an obligation to report. One of the things that becomes very apparent in this legislation—the minister expressed it well when she introduced this legislation into Parliament—is that ministers of religion also have an absolute responsibility to report. I believe that in the rollout of targeted training of different groups, we will start with the ministers of religion, which I think is very well justified.

Members will know that I was born in the UK and indeed spent the first four and a half years of my life in the UK. At that time, my parents were wondering which school they would send their eldest son to. They were very excited, although I think they were only just beginning to realise the financial stress that they might have been about to place themselves under, and they put my name down for a school called Ampleforth. I think I am very relieved I never went to Ampleforth, but Ampleforth had all sorts of cachet around it; beautiful grounds in North Yorkshire and wonderful sporting traditions; and a whole lot of alumni who had achieved all sorts of remarkable things. But in recent times, it has come out that some terrible sexual abuses occurred at that school. I know that at the time the abbot of the school, Basil Hume—who then later went on to be the Archbishop of Westminster, a cardinal in the Catholic Church, and a very respected man—was aware of some of the sexual offending that occurred by a particular monk. Ampleforth is a school that is run by the Benedictine monks. Basil Hume was aware of the offences and decided to shift this offender along. Instead of acting on the offences and reprimanding the offender and instead of reporting the matter to the police, he decided to shift the fellow along.

I heard the comments from the Minister for Water, the member for Bassendean, and he addressed the problems that have been so apparent in the Christian Brothers order, in which I think the same thing has occurred. Problems would arise; people in the hierarchy of the brothers in the Catholic Church in all sorts of institutions would hear about problems and then just quietly move people on. They would not report them to police. One can only speculate why they did not report to the police. Perhaps it was a bit of public relations management. Perhaps there was a genuine view that if we gave Brother So-and-so or Father So-and-so a fresh start, they might be a reformed character. Perhaps they felt that matters could be dealt with internally. The evidence does not say so though. The evidence does not support this. In fact, the evidence says very clearly that when we move these people on, they will just start again.

There are some really heart-wrenching documentaries about the awful things that have occurred in various religious orders around the world. I do say around the world—not only in Australia and the UK. These things have tragically occurred in many countries. It seems to be a problem in religious institutions where there is a culture that allows this secrecy to develop and ferment. This secrecy culture is also backed up with a degree of arrogance that says, “We know best, we can move things on and we can solve the problem.” These problems just do not get dealt with at all and are allowed to proliferate and carry on. I think the legislation is very appropriate. I noted the comments from the member for Cottesloe that we will tackle this by first rolling out the training to ministers of religion and targeting that group. I think we have gone so far beyond the issue of what is said in the confessional should stay in the confessional. We have seen too many of these tragically damaging errors occur that we just cannot tolerate that approach. There has to be a recognition that the law of the land must stand and be respected. We should not leave that open to the interpretation of those in various religious orders.

Over the weekend I read a very interesting article that was published in *The Observer* in the UK titled “Why public schoolboys like me and Boris Johnson aren't fit to run our country”. The article develops the theme of the

institutionalised ideas of grandeur and sanctity that exist in some of the UK's public schools, as they are quite confusingly known; that is all part of the confusing use of language that develops a sort of code of brotherhood, I suppose. These are private schools, but they are known as public schools. I believe the history behind it is that the exam results are publicly available, or something like that.

Public schoolboys, as they are known, encounter strange goings-on and are subjected to the deforming experience of being sent as very young boys to a boarding school where they are forced to behave like little men, but at night they are still crying for their mum, their brothers and sisters and their pets at home. It is deforming of their character, and this article by Richard Beard expresses that experience very well. He highlights that that experience actually entrenches a culture in which the students do anything to conform. The last thing anyone wants at schools like Eton or Ampleforth College in the UK or at similar schools elsewhere, including in this country, is to stand out too much. If a student lets it be known to their peers that they have, for example, a hobby like collecting butterflies, others will seek to belittle them, to poke fun at them and mock them. That is the experience of many at such schools, and they end up being the sort of people who take nothing seriously and are very cold.

Mahatma Gandhi observed the “hardness of heart of the educated”; that was his feeling about those who had received the public school education that was so treasured by the English ruling classes. They developed a hardness of heart in those schools because it was the only way they could survive. It is a bit of an extension of the idea of the “stiff upper lip”—a belief that is still held by many in the UK, including many of a social standing that would never have afforded them the opportunity to attend one of these schools. Their belief is that it is the perfect training for leadership. In fact, two-thirds of cabinet ministers in the UK were educated at these expensive public schools. Parents send their kids to these schools because they believe they are a ticket to success for their kids. They believe it is a way of ensuring that they become cabinet ministers or captains of industry; it will guarantee that they have a certain income level.

Thank goodness our Australian society has moved on from that, but I am always nervous when I hear people making strong references to how the UK operates. I think there are so many areas where we really have to watch out, because the UK has got it wrong in so many areas and on so many levels.

Dr D.J. Honey: Their COVID response hasn't been too flash, either.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Indeed, that is a good example. In fact, it is an interesting example, in many ways. I know the UK government is very proud of its success rate with vaccination, but when there is a death rate of 130 000 people, it suggests that there has been some mishandling and mixed messaging. It perhaps comes back to the point that Richard Beard makes in his article—that these people do not take things too seriously. He also makes a point about the idea of “Well, we can live with this. Social injustice? We'll just live with it. COVID? We'll just live with it.” It is a continuation of that mentality—the idea that they can have these things for their own personal gain and do whatever it takes, and the culture of secrecy. That is all acceptable, but they must fit in, show no weakness and make sure they are not ridiculed for anything. They must have very strong ideas about their role in society and their social rank, making sure that those below them are well and truly aware of it. They have an almost coded language, such as referring to a private school as a public school—all that sort of thing is part of it, and Richard Beard comes back again to the idea of conformity with a coldness of heart.

I am very pleased that we are seeing some real meat on the bones in this legislation in respect of the expectation that people in positions of responsibility who are in a position to report will be obliged to do so. That is something that teachers are now well and truly aware of. I had lunch with some school principals from my electorate on Friday and this topic came up. They are well and truly aware of their reporting responsibilities, and they see it as part of their role to be on the lookout for this sort of thing and to understand what the procedures are. It is really important that we back up the human desire for reporting with a good legislative framework and good administrative process that will allow teachers to do that, knowing that they are doing the right thing, that it is what society expects of them, and that they are doing what the law requires. That all makes perfect sense.

I am very pleased to support the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. I am somewhat surprised that it did not make it through the last Parliament, but that is something that only those who sought to impede its passage can account for. I am very pleased to note that there is support for the legislation on all sides in this forty-first Parliament. That is a good thing. I think it is exactly what the community expects of us. I commend the bill to the house.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [7.47 pm] — in reply: I take this opportunity to address some of the issues that have been raised in this important debate on the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021. I start by thanking all members who contributed to the debate. Yes, it is frustrating that we got so far with this bill in the last Parliament. In fact, it had gone to a committee of the upper house. We had accepted all but one of the recommendations of the committee and were ready to proceed when, unfortunately, debate was cut short. That was frustrating for everyone, but it gave us an opportunity to work through some of the issues that were raised in debate and, as a result, I think we have a better bill today. I will go through that in a bit of detail this evening.

I will again acknowledge the important issues that are being addressed by this bill. There are a few different issues, but at the core is the principle that child safety and consideration of the best interests of children should be at the centre of the Children and Community Services Act and all our deliberations and actions. An expectation of the community and this government is that child safety should be central to everything that we do. Changes to expand mandatory reporting reinforce that children's right to safety and protection from harm is paramount.

The second consideration that the bill addresses is the issue of promoting stability and continuity for children in care. This is crucial because a child's significant relationships and the stability of their placement is central to their wellbeing. This bill will implement recommendations from the review of the act that took place in 2016–17—a process that we largely inherited from the previous government. The lion's share of the work was done by the department under the last government. This bill will implement recommendations from that review to prioritise a child's significant relationships and stability of their placement.

The third objective of the bill is to make positive changes to cultural connection and safety. These changes are so important because, shamefully, over half the children in our child protection system in WA are Aboriginal. Connection to community and culture is essential for those children. The evidence tells us that connection to culture for Aboriginal children is a protective factor. That point was made very clearly by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. That connection to culture is also associated with better outcomes across emotional, social and physical health.

The McGowan government remains committed to the best interests of children and young people in WA. I hope we are demonstrating that through the comprehensive bill we are now debating. We will not shy away from the work needed to be done to protect children from harm, particularly sexual abuse. This bill clearly demonstrates that commitment.

I want to address some of the issues that were raised by various members. I will work through them. We have flagged two proposed amendments. I understand the member for Cottesloe, as the lead speaker for the Liberal Party, has indicated that he does not want to go into consideration in detail, but we may need to do that to pass these amendments. They are relatively minor technical amendments. One relates to clause 38 and will relocate the requirement in proposed section 89A(2) into a standalone clause—a new clause 38A. Proposed section 89A(2) requires an Aboriginal representative organisation to be given an opportunity to participate in preparing a cultural support plan for an Aboriginal child. This amendment is needed so that the ARO requirement can be brought into effect at a later date than the other provisions relating to AROs in clause 38. The other provision in clause 38 defines the terms “cultural support plan” and “leaving care plan” and are necessary to support the operation of other amendments in the bill that will commence operation before the AROs will. It is therefore necessary that they become separate clauses in the bill.

The participation by Aboriginal representative organisations in cultural support planning can commence operation only once the Department of Communities and AROs are ready. This will require the development of operational models, regulation and the procurement of organisations that will become AROs for the purposes of the act. Essentially, we will be requiring Aboriginal representative organisations to do a number of things. We are not ready for some of them to do that; we will need time. We want to separate those two provisions in the bill so that one can take effect straightaway and the other will take more time.

The second proposed amendment relates to clause 39. It will address a drafting oversight by removing the word “approved” from proposed section 90(2A). This is consistent with amendments in the bill that now refer to Aboriginal representative organisations rather than “approved” Aboriginal representative organisations. This will correct a minor drafting error.

I would like to address a couple of issues that were raised during the debate. Again, I thank those members who spoke. I will refer firstly to the member for Riverton. A common theme was that a number of members talked about their professional lives before coming into this place and their interactions with some of the issues that have arisen in the bill. That was certainly the case for the member for Riverton in his extensive experience as a GP. He talked about his shock as a young doctor, when he was first in Australia, of seeing that someone had been prepared to use a child to assist in masking drug use, but in the process of uncovering that issue it was discovered that the child had drugs in their system. So began his interaction with child protection and other authorities that are tasked with investigating and, if necessary, acting on those concerns. As mandatory reporters, doctors understand full well their obligations. A number of members spoke about their own experience as mandatory reporters—namely, teachers—particularly the members for Bateman and Collie–Preston, and the process in place to ensure that mandatory reporters are not required to make any decisions. They are not required to know what happens after a report is made. A process is undertaken. People will be trained and capacity will be built by those professionals, as occurs now with mandatory reporters, and supports will be in place. In fact, that really goes to the issue raised by the member for Cottesloe about why the previous bill concentrated on only one occupation—ministers of religion—rather than expanding it to the other four or five professions that were recommended by the royal commission. We had always committed to expand it to all of those occupations; however, we understood that we need to make sure we have the systems in place and proper training amongst those occupations to ensure the job is done properly.

We prioritised ministers of religion for a couple of reasons, including the fact that as a broad occupational group, they are one of the least regulated, unlike school psychologists, youth justice workers or out-of-home care workers, who are already used to operating within a regulatory environment. That is one of the reasons we prioritised ministers of religion. We understood that caused some concern. It was one of the recommendations we picked up when the previous bill was reviewed by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Legislation in the previous Parliament. We were happy to pick up that recommendation and the bill now includes all the other occupations the royal commission recommended as mandatory reporters.

Having said that, we will phase in the implementation of those occupations. The member for Cottesloe asked about the implementation. I may have said this in my second reading speech: ministers of religion will commence six months after the provisions of the bill are proclaimed; out-of-home care workers and associated officers from the Department of Communities will commence one and a half years after the bill's commencement; school counsellors and registered psychologists will commence two years after the bill's commencement; early childhood workers will commence two and a half years after the bill's commencement; and youth justice workers will commence three years after the bill's commencement. The Department of Communities has already been working with those broad occupational groups to understand the processes for capacity building within those areas. Despite having our differences in some areas, it has been a very positive engagement from all the churches, including the Catholic Church, about ensuring that frameworks and the like are set up for that training. I was referring to the member for Riverton's contribution and the importance of mandatory reporting and his experience in that.

The member for Riverton also spoke about the central tenets of the bill regarding the need to have cultural supports and planning and a revision of the hierarchy of placement for Aboriginal children. These amendments have arisen from the review of the act in 2016–17 and they go to the heart of our commitment to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children in care. Obviously, we want to prevent those children coming into care; that is always our priority. But should there be a need to bring those children into care, the provisions contained in the bill will give a more fulsome requirement of all parties, enshrined in legislation, to improve cultural outcomes for Aboriginal children and improve their connection to their family, country and kin.

The member for Riverton also spoke about the investigative powers being modernised. Members may be aware that investigative powers are in the act now and there is a proposal to pick up the investigative powers that exist in the early childhood regulatory area, which will mirror those provisions by and large. This will modernise the capacity of the Department of Communities when looking at the issues of not just child safety, but also employment of children and the like.

The member for Collie–Preston spoke about her experience as a teacher and a mandatory reporter. It has been an absolute privilege to get to know some of the new members in this Parliament. We have to only listen to any of the second reading speeches on a number of bills to be heartened by the diversity and depth of experience across life, as well as in their professional lives, that we now have across the Parliament. I acknowledge the work of the member for Collie–Preston as a dedicated education professional in her community and for understanding the real challenges facing families that have entrenched disadvantage. It is not enough for us just to talk about doing something or to say that something needs to be done about it. The member for Collie–Preston has been working very hard, as I know other members of this chamber have—I am looking across the chamber. The member for Collie–Preston—and other members who have contributed—has committed much of her professional life to trying to make a difference for those families, and I commend her for that. The member for Collie–Preston spoke about her experiences as a mandatory reporter, interacting with child protection staff, as a teacher and deputy principal. She understood the challenges that face the Department of Communities, school community and broader community as they come together to ensure a safe environment for children.

The member for Collie–Preston also made the point that the earlier we can intervene when children have experienced any form of sexual abuse, the better placed we are to get good outcomes. Again, of course our goal is to prevent abuse and to do everything we can to send every legal signal that that abuse should not occur; and, if abuse is uncovered, the perpetrators will be brought to account. We also understand that it is not enough just to have those laws written in our statute books; we have to build the capacity amongst our community and around institutions and everyone who has interactions with children, including families and individuals, to ensure that they are safe. We have this framework available to us in the royal commission's recommendations, and we as a state have committed to implement all those that are relevant to Western Australia, and many of them are contained in this bill.

I wanted to mention, while I am speaking on that issue—members would think that after having been here for a while, I would get used to putting my notes in a way that I could find them when I am on my feet! The member for Collie–Preston made the point that the earlier we can intervene the better when children have experienced trauma or sexual abuse. Western Australia has some very good practices—in fact, some of the best practices in the country if not the western world. We have child advocacy centres and the co-location of services so that children give their evidence and tell their story once. Then, if it is non-familial abuse, the family is supported in one place to work through that process so that it not only minimises any re-traumatisation of the child through retelling the event; but therapeutic and supportive environments are in place while not compromising criminal investigations. We have that strong and good model now in Western Australia. This is a model of the co-location of different

disciplines—police are co-located with child protection and therapists and the like. Everyone has their job to do and they understand that at the centre of it is the child who has been impacted by this and they need their support people—whether it is family or other people—around them.

Similarly, as a government, we have committed to better understanding childhood trauma and adverse events experienced by children. I am very pleased that in responding to child abuse and neglect we as a government have established the WA Centre for the Pursuit of Excellence. We have supported the establishment of this centre initially through Lotterywest money and then with an additional \$4.3 million towards both the WA Centre and the national centre, which was a recommendation of the royal commission. This centre was brought together by the Australian Centre for Child Protection, which runs out of the University of South Australia but is a national body, and Parkerville Children and Youth Care, which members here would be aware of, as the founding partner. The centre's job is to bring together clinical and research specialists from across Australia. It has initially been focused on the research and development of therapeutic models designed for Western Australia, looking at our service needs, what and which client populations need work and the creation of a high-quality workforce with specialist child trauma communities of practice linked to tertiary qualifications.

The centre's initial piece of work was prioritising some training around responding to childhood trauma. To date, 300 professionals working in child protection—they might be police or education or child protection staff—have completed the first online training on understanding childhood trauma. Of these people, 60 will have completed an advanced unit in assessing childhood trauma, and next year this cohort will also complete the third university accredited program on responding to childhood trauma. This is actually quite significant and I know that the member for Bateman is interested in this as well. Unfortunately, we see childhood trauma manifest in many different behaviours in young people, which we mistakenly believe to be bad behaviour, wilfulness or a lack of discipline or whatever. However, if we want to address trauma, we need people who understand children a little bit more and have a more sophisticated understanding of how trauma manifests. Therefore, I am very pleased that the Western Australian government was able to support that centre. The centre has made a bid to become the national centre that was recommended by the royal commission.

The member for Collie—Preston also made the point that there are modern, emerging forms of abuse such as sexting or the electronic transfer of images and the like, and the challenges that can bring to a child's supervisors or families when young people do that to each other and what that means. This is about supporting young people, and mandatory reporters will need to have the capacity to understand their obligations around that. The member for Collie—Preston also spoke about successful placements that have been done in her community, in which Aboriginal children who have been placed with non-Aboriginal carers have been able to engage with their local Aboriginal community and understand their local Aboriginal culture to get the best outcomes possible. The priority under the child placement principle is to place children with their Aboriginal extended family and Aboriginal community. We have amended that placement principle to provide that it is preferable that a child stay within their community, even if that is with a non-Aboriginal carer, to ensure that they can stay connected to their extended family and their country and community.

The member for Kimberley spoke next. It was great to hear her contribution. The member goes back a long way with this bill. In fact, the member for Kimberley helped facilitate the review of the act early on, before she came into Parliament, I think back in 2016–17, when she was involved in some of the consultation. The member for Kimberley knows these issues very well. In the seat of Kimberley, 98 or 99 per cent of the children in care are Aboriginal. She pointed out to us when she made her address that it was National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, and the theme was "Proud in Culture, Strong in Spirit". That is a very fitting theme for what we are endeavouring to do through this bill.

I thank the member for her work in her community. There are some very complex issues in her very broad community—it is not one community; it is a large seat with a lot of different communities in it. The challenges are to keep children safe and culture strong, to understand how we can work with mainstream services to draw on the best of them, and to maintain cultural credibility and connection and do what we can to feed that identity, particularly for some of the more vulnerable members of the community.

Rightly, the member for Kimberley pointed out that although we no longer have a stolen generation, there is a gross over-representation of Aboriginal children in care. We need to do more to reduce that number. The child placement principle recommended by Bringing Them Home Committee WA Inc is important. In fact, a number of amendments in the bill refer to the Aboriginal child placement principle. I have spoken to my ministerial equivalent and departmental representatives in Queensland. In the equivalent Queensland legislation, the Aboriginal child placement principle explicitly spells out the five cornerstone elements of prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection. We were called on by Aboriginal advocates to make sure that those principles were firmly articulated in the new act. Although they are not explicitly spelt out, I want to assure members that they inform a number of the amendments that are contained in this bill. The proposed amendments to sections 9, 12, 13, 14, 61, 81, 89 and 143, and proposed new section 89A, are particularly relevant to the Aboriginal child placement principle. That was considered by many to be the cornerstone or founding principle of establishing a good quality child protection system that would give better outcomes for Aboriginal children.

Again, I thank the member for her contribution to how the issues that are proposed in the bill will make a difference to members of her community. I look forward to the member meeting her commitment that she will continue to advocate for children in the Kimberley. I have no doubt about that at all. I hope that we can work in partnership to get good outcomes.

The member for Belmont spoke very passionately about mandatory reporting, as did a number of members. We need only read any section of the report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to be reminded of people's bravery—I do not know whether "bravery" is the right word; I know that some get a bit affronted by that. It is very difficult for victims and survivors to come forward, and we are indebted to them for telling their stories. We would not have had this body of work, and the royal commission would not have had the very clear path that it has laid out for us for improving systems to prevent child sexual abuse, if people had not come forward. The member for Belmont spoke about her passion in this area and her frustration with some institutions, particularly some of the church institutions, including the Catholics, that have allowed perpetrators over time to continue to abuse, if not in the same environment, by simply getting moved. The research tells us that they only go on to abuse again. Fundamentally, it is about not only the sexual assault and the bullying, but also the betrayal of trust and of the obligations that adults should have for the children in their care. The member also spoke about some of the other cultural protections provided for in the bill and how important they will be.

The member for Kingsley spoke about her experience as a member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the work of the committee in its report *From words to action: Fulfilling the obligation to be child safe* in understanding how other jurisdictions comparable with our own have dealt with these issues. They have made a choice, and they have made a statement that they understand that people have their religious views, but those views will not override the laws of this land and our determination that children's safety be given priority. I am confident that this Parliament will do that as well. I cannot do justice to the *Words to action* report here; that is for another time, and we will get an opportunity through other bills to talk about that. We are putting in place various levels of accountability, with independent oversight of institutions that have a lot to do with children and reportable conduct, for instance. The independent oversight of out-of-home care and child safe principles is another strong recommendation of the royal commission that we are working on. I can assure members that we are continuing to work on all those recommendations, and we are committed to report annually, and have been reporting annually, on the implementation of the royal commission recommendations.

The member for Kingsley was brought up with foster siblings, so she knows firsthand the commitment that a family makes when it takes on a foster child. One of the great pleasures of holding this portfolio is to see the fantastic outcomes that can be achieved when children are nurtured and cared for. I thank her parents, both of whom I have known for a long time, for their dedication to having a broader family. It is great to see.

Finally, I want to acknowledge our Home Stretch election commitment. The member for Cottesloe referred to this a little during his speech. We made a commitment in the 2021 election campaign that we would allow support for children in out-of-home care until the age of 21, rather than the current mandated age of 18. Some supports can now be put in and are legally available after a child ages out of out-of-home care at 18. Our election commitment to implement the Home Stretch program will be a lot more fulsome, and we will back that up with dollars in the election campaign. I thank the member for her contribution.

The member for Cockburn spoke, again very passionately, about the failures of some religious institutions in the past, particularly the Catholic Church. But as an institution it was not alone in how it failed children in the past. Some improvements have been made. I see some of those improvements in the safety officers that have been put in place in parishes and churches. I have been to some of those presentations and met some of the staff, and I have no doubt that they are committed to improving child safety in their communities. However, we do not back away from saying that those professions that have been recommended to us by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse have particular obligations. This bill will mandate those obligations in law. As the member for Cockburn said, when we hear about victims of child sex abuse, these are not abstract concepts, they are children who have been deprived of their dignity and safety. He talked about the importance not only of the provisions the government is putting in place, but also to continue to challenge some of those very powerful institutions in our community that are not meeting modern expectations of the primacy of child safety.

The member for Nedlands also has a strong professional background in social work. She was not only a social worker for many years but she trained many social workers and taught them at university. She was working as a social worker when mandatory reporting was introduced, so understands the principles and the operation of that system. She also spoke about being a member of the board of Tuart Place, for Forgotten Australians, a support organisation in my electorate that I am well aware of. She made the point that people with lived experience of abuse are highly privileged in the organisation and comprise over half of the board. It has been a great organisation to be a part of and to see their work, and also to get along to their Christmas parties and other events. I was very pleased to be in this Parliament in June 2018 when the Premier apologised on behalf of the state for child sex abuse to children in state care. The member referred to being present at that apology, along with a number of members of Tuart Place.

The member for Bassendean spoke again in this place in support of mandatory reporting and his experiences as a student at CBC Fremantle and then realising that one of the brothers who taught him and who he had a bad experience with had in fact been a paedophile. He referred to his work, since discovering that, in calling for his school and other Christian Brothers schools, and other schools, to do their bit in the current-day, modern world not only to uncover abuse as it may occur now but also to right the wrongs of the past, which might mean taking a proactive approach to contacting past students. As the member was speaking, I was thinking of the example in the High Court when former Justice Dyson Heydon was accused of sexual harassment and the new head of the High Court took matters into her hands and wrote to current and previous staff outlining very simply that there had been allegations of sexual harassment. She was proactive and clear to make sure that there was no hiding behind that. I thought that was a good model that other organisations should seek to adopt.

The member for Bateman spoke about her experiences at different points in life of seeing children who had been very terribly impacted. She referred to the funeral of a 12-year-old girl who had suicided. She said that throughout her professional life she had been motivated partly by this and also by coming up against these issues as a teacher and a community member. I acknowledge the member's passion and understanding of these issues. I thank her for that and look forward to the contributions I know she will make in this place. The member made a good point that there is still a level of shame for victims to talk about these issues, particularly for boys to talk about abuse that may have occurred, and that we need to do everything we can to provide comfortable and therapeutic environments to deal with children when abuse takes place. She referred to the WA centre that I spoke about before and all of the work within the department and with community sector organisations to ensure we have good professional practice drawing on the best supports that we can for victims and their families. I see that every day in the work of the Department of Communities, which works in the child protection system.

The member for Victoria Park is a very comprehensive and articulate advocate for mandatory reporting. Those of us who were brought up Catholic—I think the member is still Catholic—understand the dilemmas in matters of arcane canon law. Notwithstanding all of that, in the twenty-first century, things are changing and the world is expecting, and certainly Australia is expecting, that these institutions will change as well. I thank the member for her contribution. I know the member will see these issues come up in her community, as she has already as a member of the public and as a parent.

The member for Dawesville has a different professional background. She spoke about working as a paramedic and first responder. Although that is not a mandatory reporting occupation, it is an occupation that deals with victims and they understand the need to be sensitive to what is occurring around them. I thank the member for her contribution. She spoke about an organisation we both care about, the Foster Share Shed and referred to Mandy Bishop and Karen Kujawski. I think Mandy Bishop was the founder of Foster Share Shed. Her foster daughter, Chloe, won two awards at the Rotary Achiever Awards last week, and it was lovely to see. I saw on social media that there were something like 400 comments on her post, which is really great. When I see what Mandy, Karen and others have been able to achieve with children they have taken in and fostered, I realise that whole community is very powerful. I know that the member for Dawesville sees this and wants to support them, as does the member for Murray—Wellington.

I am quite impressed at my ability to talk, Madam Acting Speaker. I have been going for quite a long time, but I will try and wrap it up soon.

I thank the member for Cottesloe for his contribution. I know he was a late sub in this area. I think the member asked some questions about the differences between the 2019 bill and this bill. A table has been given to the member for Vasse and Hon Nick Goiran, and I have a table here I can give the member, if he is interested. Essentially, the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Legislation looked at this in the last Parliament. We adopted all but one of its recommendations. We were happy to do that. A lot of the recommendations related to the implementation of mandatory reporting, but other issues were causing some angst, including the extent of consultation with Aboriginal families and Aboriginal representative organisations et cetera. We accepted some amendments to try to clarify and appease some concerns. I referred to the commencement dates for mandatory reporting earlier.

Finally, I thank the member for Thornlie very much for his contribution. We both left school 41 years ago. We are both the same vintage. It is staggering really. We are not dealing with issues of the distant past; we are still dealing with some of the schools and religious orders referred to in the royal commission. The member spoke about the case of some teachers at Trinity College. I understand that some teachers were prosecuted for failing to mandatorily report abuse. I understand that is still before the courts, so I will not say much more about it. The member spoke about some of the distortions and toxic culture in some of the private all boys schools, although there are also problems at all girls schools. I thank everyone for giving their attention to these important matters.

I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 37 put and passed.

Clause 38: Sections 89A and 89B inserted —

Ms S.F. McGURK: I move —

Page 30, lines 1 to 5 — To delete the lines.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

New clause 38A —

Ms S.F. McGURK: I move —

Page 30, after line 15 — To insert —

38A. Section 89C inserted

Before section 90 insert:

89C. Participation in cultural support plan for Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child

If a cultural support plan is required for an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child, the CEO must, subject to the regulations, give an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representative organisation an opportunity to participate in the preparation of the cultural support plan for the child.

New clause put and passed.

Clause 39: Section 90 amended —

Ms S.F. McGURK: I move —

Page 30, line 21 — To delete “approved”.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 40 to 75 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.36 pm
