



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2021

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 26 May 2021

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 12 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

PIGS — FARROWING AND GESTATION ENCLOSURES

Petition

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [12.02 pm]: I have a petition that has been certified by the clerks as conforming with the standing orders of the house. It contains 796 signatures—there are 6 335 online signatures as well—and is couched in the following terms —

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

We, the undersigned, say

The use of farrowing crates and sow/gestation stalls is no longer necessary, and should be banned throughout the state. Numerous viable alternatives to traditional farrowing and gestation enclosures exist, and a switch to sow-/gestation-stall-free farming has already been openly supported by the RSPCA, Animals Australia, and Australian Pork Limited, among other bodies. An industry-wide transition to more welfare-friendly gestation housing is already in progress, but legislation is needed to guarantee consistent and appropriate welfare standards, and to ensure that the welfare issues surrounding the use of farrowing crates are also adequately addressed.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly

To legislate a total ban on the use of farrowing crates and sow/gestation stalls in Western Australia.

[See petition 3.]

CITY OF GOSNELLS — CHICANES

Petition

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.04 pm]: I have a petition containing six signatures that has been certified by the clerks and is couched in the following terms —

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

We, the undersigned, support Terry Healy's campaign for Gosnells Council to build chicanes instead of speed bumps in our community (like the successful Gay St chicanes in Huntingdale)

We now ask the Legislative Assembly to request the City of Gosnells to adopt the construction of chicanes instead of speed bumps to manage speed in our community.

[See petition 4.]

Nonconforming Petition

Mr T.J. HEALY: I have a number of nonconforming petitions signed by many petitioners that I will hand directly to the minister. I would also like to acknowledge the members of my community in the gallery today.

ORD VALLEY MUSTER

Statement by Minister for Tourism

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Tourism) [12.05 pm]: I am delighted to inform members that I had the pleasure of visiting Kununurra last Friday and Saturday to attend part of the annual Argyle Diamonds Ord Valley Muster. The Ord Valley Muster is a nine-day cultural event that celebrates and showcases the East Kimberley region through food, art, music, tours, comedy and Aboriginal culture. Owned by Ord Valley Events Inc, it was established in 2001 by the then Kununurra Chamber of Commerce as a one-night event with the objective of bringing together community and industry participants, and drawing attention to the East Kimberley region. Over the past 21 years, the Ord Valley Muster has expanded to feature more than 30 events over nine days showcasing entertainment and cultural and culinary experiences specific to the East Kimberley. It is a great example of a homegrown event. One of its principal objectives is to extend the tourism season for the region that traditionally commences in June. The Ord Valley Muster continues to grow and now attracts thousands of people and generates statewide and national media coverage.

The state government has been a sponsor through Tourism Western Australia since 2004. Since 2012, the event has been funded through Tourism WA's regional events program, supported by royalties for regions. The current

three-year sponsorship contract provides funding to 2023. The Ord Valley Muster has been the winner and finalist in 17 major awards, culminating in it being inducted into the 2017 Hall of Fame for the Western Australian Tourism Awards.

I, together with the member for Kimberley, attended the Ord Valley Muster's flagship event, "Kimberley Moon Experience", which has become one of WA's pre-eminent concert and dining events, featuring nationally renowned performers. It typically attracts over 3 000 attendees. Other Ord Valley Muster events included: Comedy in the Park; Corroboree Under the Stars; Art in the Park; the Muster Rodeo; The Flaming Galahs—Great Australian Songbook; the Waringarri Art Centre Experience; and Storytelling Night. Independent research conducted in 2017 showed that 1 470 people from outside the Kimberley region attended the event, generating \$1.69 million in direct expenditure.

The 2020 event was the Ord Valley Muster's twentieth anniversary, but it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The twentieth anniversary was therefore celebrated this year and I congratulate Mr Beau Robinson, chair; Ms Sophie Cooke, vice-chair; Ms Jo-Anne Ellis, treasurer; Ms Rachel Fewster, secretary; and the directors, Ms Justine deCandia, Mr Pauric Keown, Mr Shaun Fowler, Ms Cally Bugg and Ms Rowena Alexander. I would also like to mention Narelle Brook, who was made life member of the Ord Valley Events board for her significant contribution over the last 20 years.

The Ord Valley Muster is important to the region's economy, attracting people to the area, boosting the economy, supporting local businesses and jobs, shining a light on the destination and adding vibrancy. I was pleased to see that accommodation was at capacity over the main event weekend. The McGowan government is committed to assisting regional communities by sponsoring events like the Ord Valley Muster.

LAND FORCES 2021 EXPO

Statement by Minister for Defence Industry

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Defence Industry) [12.08 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I advise that next week I will lead a delegation at the 2021 Land Forces International Land Defence Exposition, being held in Brisbane from 1 to 3 June. Land Forces is the region's premier international land defence exposition, showcasing equipment, technology and services for the armies of Australia and the Indo-Pacific. As Western Australia's Minister for Defence Industry, I am keen to represent our local small and medium enterprises to the largest possible audience and capitalise on opportunities for the state during Land Forces. I am proud to promote Western Australia's innovative local industry and work with them to attract new defence contracts in the national interest. Defence West first attended Land Forces in 2018 with four local SMEs. This year, our delegation has increased to 22 organisations, which represent an impressive array of Western Australian knowledge, skills and experience. The businesses on the Western Australian stand are active in a wide range of areas, from developing systems for unmanned aerial vehicles and minor vessel construction to communication and cybersecurity applications. I will advocate on behalf of these companies and the wider Western Australian defence industry at meetings, including those with BAE Systems Australia; Hanwha; Rheinmetall; Northrop Grumman; Deputy Chief of Army Major General Anthony Rawlins; and Special Operations Commander Major General Paul Kenny.

The Western Australian defence industry has a long history of working in the maritime sector and there are also opportunities in the land domain. Our industry's knowledge and experience gained from maritime and offshore oil and gas activities can be leveraged to contribute to the Australian Army's multi-domain warfare activities and to maintain security and stability in the region. Western Australia has an increasingly stronger, smarter and more integrated defence industry sector and we are strengthening our close connections with government, the Australian Defence Force, business, universities and training providers. Attendance at Land Forces provides another opportunity to continue to grow the defence industry, increase economic development and create jobs for Western Australia.

NICK AGOCS — TRIBUTE

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.10 pm]: It is with deep sadness that I wish to inform the house of the passing of Mr Nick Agocs, JP, one of Western Australia's most dedicated and committed ethnic community leaders. Born in July 1938, Mr Agocs passed away peacefully on Thursday, 27 April 2021 surrounded by his family.

Mr Agocs was a passionate advocate of multiculturalism and equality in Western Australia. As a leader in the Hungarian community, he dedicated much of his life to representing Western Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities of all backgrounds and contributed significantly to improved service delivery to migrant groups through more than 40 years of tireless service. He served in various senior capacities on many community and advocacy organisations, including the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia, the Multicultural Services Centre of Western Australia and the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia.

A teacher by profession, Mr Agocs was also active in the education sector through the Western Australian Multicultural Education Advisory Committee, the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, the Multicultural Education Council of WA, and the Edith Cowan University intercultural studies advisory committee, among others.

Through his extensive community work, he was instrumental in initiating and providing high-level input to multicultural policies and programs at local, state and national levels. As a champion of multiculturalism, he was part of WA Labor's community and multicultural policy committee and contributed to many of the principles that the McGowan government has now embedded in the *Western Australian multicultural policy framework*. Most recently, Mr Agocs was a member of the Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council providing trusted and invaluable advice on issues of significance to WA's CALD communities. Through his work on the MMAC and a number of other state and Australian government committees, Mr Agocs developed a reputation for his forthright and determined pursuit of equality in Western Australia. His passing is a great loss to Western Australia and I am privileged to have the opportunity to honour such a hardworking, inspiring and high-achieving member of our community today. I acknowledge the presence of his wife, Barbara, and their daughters, Andrea, Carolyn and Daniella, in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon. On behalf of the state government, I offer our sincere condolences to Mr Nick Agocs' family, colleagues and friends.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I, too, would like to acknowledge the presence of Mr Nick Agocs' family in the gallery and acknowledge his contribution to the state of Western Australia, which was a fantastic one. I pass on my condolences to all his family and friends and to those in the multicultural communities that have been impacted by his passing.

WA DISABILITY SUPPORT AWARDS 2021

Statement by Minister for Disability Services

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Disability Services) [12.13 pm]: I rise today to inform the house that nominations are now open for the prestigious WA Disability Support Awards 2021. The WA Disability Support Awards are in their thirteenth year and recognise and celebrate the contribution of Western Australians who demonstrate excellence, passion and commitment in supporting people with disability. A high-quality workforce that strengthens, safeguards and provides greater choice for people with disability is a vital part of building quality disability services throughout Western Australia.

The awards showcase the very best approaches and help the disability sector attract, recruit and retain a capable and committed workforce. The awards recognise those who go beyond ordinary standards of service and provide the highest standard of individualised support. They provide an opportunity to celebrate the significant contribution of individual workers and teams who support people with disability to achieve their goals and to exercise real choice and control.

This year the seven award categories are: Emerging Leader; Excellence in Home and Family Support; Excellence in Innovation; Excellence in Regional Support; Excellence in Rights Promotion—Supporting Choice, Control and Capacity Building; Excellence in Supporting Employment Outcomes; and Excellence in Supporting Inclusion and Citizenship.

In 2020, more than 160 nominations were received, but due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately the annual gala dinner was cancelled. This year, with Western Australia bouncing back from the impact of COVID-19, there will once again be an opportunity for the disability sector to come together and celebrate our dedicated and committed disability support workers and teams. I am very much looking forward to my first WA Disability Support Awards as Minister for Disability Services. I encourage members to promote these important awards in their electorates and, of course, to nominate individual workers or teams who they know are making a real difference in the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. Nominations can be made by going to www.dswa.org.au.

CURTIN 5G LAB

Statement by Minister for Innovation and ICT

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Innovation and ICT) [12.16 pm]: In my capacity as Minister for Innovation and ICT, I had the opportunity recently to officially open the Curtin 5G lab, powered by Optus. It was an absolute pleasure to see the partnership between Curtin University and Optus come to fruition, as they come together to leverage Curtin University research and teaching capabilities with the tech infrastructure provided by Optus. The opening of the 5G lab is but a small taste of the great innovative work happening here in Western Australia. Every day, new technology is being created, giving us a glimpse into the jobs of tomorrow that will be created today. The Curtin–Optus alliance showcases the advancement in technology in our state, but also serves to encourage local entrepreneurship and prepare Curtin students for the digital economy. Accomplishments like this will highlight how a digital economy can broadly enhance our daily lives and enable government and industry to better respond to emerging challenges.

We have seen firsthand the critical role a digital economy has played in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and helping our communities remain connected while physical distancing restrictions have been in place. The McGowan government understands the critical role innovation and ICT play in Western Australia and we see the transformative possibilities that 5G technology will bring to government and industry. 5G technology will also lead to the creation of new industries and the development of applications that we are only just starting to grasp. Augmented reality, artificial intelligence and hyper-connected spaces are only a few of the future-shaping opportunities 5G presents.

The opening of the Optus and Curtin 5G lab is a major step in cementing WA as a leader in innovative technology with life-changing impacts. 5G can transform industries across the country, including mining, oil, gas, agriculture and health, by powering new technologies and jobs for the future. I look forward to seeing the great advances emerging from the Curtin–Optus alliance and the innovative work produced for the benefit of our entire state.

WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY

Statement by Minister for Emergency Services

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Emergency Services) [12.18 pm]: I take this opportunity to inform the house about Wear Orange Wednesday or, as it is more commonly known, WOW Day. WOW Day was celebrated last Wednesday, 19 May to recognise Western Australia’s 2 000 State Emergency Service volunteers. The celebration turns our state brilliant orange to remind us of the highly skilled work of our SES volunteers. Sometimes referred to as the “orange angels”, SES volunteers dedicate their time, day and night, to help the community during natural hazards and other emergencies.

It has been a busy time for the SES. Over the past 12 months, our state’s SES volunteers have gone above and beyond to help communities during their time of need. They deserve our acknowledgement and thanks. I proudly wore an orange ribbon on Wear Orange Wednesday while travelling to Kalbarri last week and, indeed, I have one on today.

When tropical cyclone Seroja left a trail of destruction through the midwest–Gascoyne and the goldfields–midlands, State Emergency Service units from across the state were deployed to the impacted areas. They worked alongside other volunteers, government agencies and career firefighters from WA and across the nation. Volunteers were among the first on the scene following the cyclone. They responded to more than 1 600 calls for assistance, secured roofs, removed debris and began the massive clean-up effort. SES volunteers continue to assist the affected communities on the ground, having travelled from as far as Kununurra and the south west to help cyclone-affected communities.

During the Wooroloo bushfire, the SES provided communications support on the ground, assisting with crew changes and traffic management, and ensuring operational readiness. Busselton SES played an important role refilling the large air tanker with retardant to help contain the fire and protect areas, such as Shady Hills.

During the devastating February floods in Carnarvon and the series of tropical lows that swept through the north of the state over the wet season, SES volunteers sandbagged homes and businesses. During a large-scale land search near the remote Warakurna community earlier this year, crews assisted on foot and in the air under very harsh conditions. Since July last year, SES volunteers have committed almost 16 000 hours to helping the people of Western Australia, putting their lives on hold to respond to requests for assistance.

Landmarks and buildings in Perth—including Elizabeth Quay, the Bell Tower, Yagan Square, Perth Concert Hall and Matagarup Bridge—and in the Cities of Karratha, Busselton and Greater Geraldton shone orange to recognise our SES volunteers.

On behalf of all Western Australians, I would like to say thank you to all our SES volunteers for their dedication and commitment to helping keep the community safe.

The SPEAKER: Hear, hear!

PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (SAFE ACCESS ZONES) BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr R.H. Cook (Minister for Health)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [12.21 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Public Health Amendment (Safe Access Zones) Bill 2021 aims to deal with ongoing instances of women being confronted by protesters when accessing abortion services in Western Australia. These confrontations cause anxiety and distress for both patients and staff.

Except for a few minor changes, the bill before us is identical to the bill that was debated and passed by this house late last year. However, due to the prorogation of Parliament, the bill needs to be reintroduced. Today, we are fulfilling the McGowan government’s commitment to reintroduce the bill as early as possible in 2021, and we will ensure that it be made law.

Two years ago, during April and May 2019, a significant public consultation process was undertaken in which the Department of Health sought community feedback on the value of introducing safe access zone legislation in Western Australia and on key considerations in the design of a new legislative framework. We received an extraordinary level of community and industry engagement, with 4 000 responses from individuals and organisations,

including support from the Australian Medical Association, the Public Health Association of Australia, and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Seventy per cent of respondents supported the introduction of new legislation to provide safe access zones. Approximately 50 submissions provided reports from patients and staff regarding interactions with demonstrators outside abortion clinics. Of these submissions, the majority described the experience as traumatic, stressful, overwhelming, awful, horrible, painful, hard, scary and hurtful.

Since the legalisation of abortion in WA, protesters have regularly gathered outside termination clinics. Over the past five years, the following behaviours have been observed by patients and staff outside the Marie Stopes Midland clinic: patients and staff being asked whether they were having an abortion; being approached and followed; being confronted with banners displaying emotive language and disturbing imagery; having their cars obstructed and car windows tapped on; being forcefully provided with pamphlets and brochures; and being provided with bags containing baby items and rosary beads. All these things were done in an attempt to deter women from accessing the clinic and discourage staff from working there.

The consultation process illustrated that our existing laws are unsatisfactory and that women and staff are not adequately protected from harassment. Protests and gatherings outside abortion clinics are currently being managed by the Western Australia Police Force through the permit system under the Public Order in Streets Act 1984 and existing criminal and civil courses of action. The Western Australia Police Force issues up to 40 permits a year for the express purposes of procession to prayer vigil and peaceful prayer vigil for locations in front of the two main private abortion clinics in WA. These permits are issued to one person on behalf of a group. Although conditions may apply to these permits, there is currently no offence for breaching the conditions. Breaches are dealt with by police officers as they see fit when they attend.

It is evident from the reports of private abortion providers in WA and the number of personal accounts in submissions that there have been a number of harrowing incidents. WA's existing laws do not adequately address the full range of behaviours engaged in by people who demonstrate at or near premises at which abortions are provided. This may be explained by the nature of the demonstrations outside these premises and the unique effect on the target audience. The vulnerable nature of the audience means that they are likely to be particularly affected by the presence and behaviour of demonstrators.

In February 2020, the Department of Health, in its final report following the consultation process, recommended tailoring a specific regulatory approach to address the problem—that is, to create safe access zones around abortion services, a measure that is consistent with the approach taken around the country. All Australian jurisdictions have already introduced safe access zone legislation, except for WA. It is time to bring WA into line with the rest of the country.

Research from around the nation supports safe access zones as a way to protect the privacy and dignity of both staff and patients and protect them from harassment, obstruction and intimidation. The Castan Centre for Human Rights Law at Monash University, the University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre, the South Australian Law Reform Institute and many other organisations have all recommended that governments progress similar legislation.

The bill before us today, which adds new provisions to the Public Health Act 2016, has been modelled on the equivalent legislation in Victoria, which withstood a challenge in the High Court in *Clubb v Edwards*. The High Court decided that safe access zones do not impermissibly infringe the implied freedom of political communication and that such legislation is constitutionally valid. In addition, reports from clinics indicate that the Victorian model works in achieving the objectives of the legislation in facilitating a safe environment for women to access abortion services.

I now turn to the provisions of the bill. The bill stipulates safe access zones around premises at which abortions are provided, which may include abortion clinics, public and private hospitals and outpatient services such as general practitioners. However, it will not cover pharmacies that supply drugs that may induce an abortion. To date, there has been no evidence of regular protests outside pharmacies that provide this medication. The zones will ensure that anyone who wants to access abortion services, including employees working in those premises, can do so in a safe and private manner.

The bill will create a new offence of engaging in prohibited behaviour within a safe access zone, which would mean the area within 150 metres outside the boundary of the premises at which abortions are provided, including the area within the boundary of those premises. The offence will specify the circumstances in which a person is considered to have engaged in prohibited behaviour, including intimidating or obstructing another person accessing premises at which abortions are provided; communicating by any means in relation to abortion in a manner that is able to be seen or heard by another person accessing premises at which abortions are provided and is reasonably likely to cause distress or anxiety; impeding a footpath, road or vehicle, without reasonable excuse, in relation to abortion; recording by any means, without reasonable excuse, another person accessing premises at which abortions are provided without the person's consent; and any other behaviour prescribed by the regulations.

There is an exception for communication that applies to all employees and contractors who provide services to the premises. This will ensure that employees and contractors who may need to communicate with a patient or other staff

about abortion inside the safe access zone will not be committing an offence. Some elements of the offence will also not capture law enforcement officers acting reasonably in the performance of their duties; journalists reporting on a matter of public interest outside abortion clinics; security or construction services working at or near the premises; staff engaged in lawful industrial action; and other similar situations for which a “reasonable excuse” is evident.

The bill will also prohibit someone from publishing or distributing a recording of another person accessing or leaving premises at which abortions are provided if the recording contains particulars that are likely to lead to the identification of that other person as someone who accessed those premises. The prohibition against publishing or distributing recordings extends to recordings taken from outside the safe access zone. The prohibition applies only to recordings made or published without the person’s consent, and also provides for an exception of reasonable excuse. The intention of the prohibition is to protect the privacy of those accessing premises at which abortions are provided and to protect them from the intimidatory conduct of taking photos, videos or other recordings with the explicit or implicit threat of publicly exposing individuals who access lawful abortion clinics or provide those health services. The Western Australia Police Force will be the agency responsible for enforcing the new offences and for prosecuting any breaches, using their ordinary powers.

A review clause has been included in the bill that will require the Minister for Health to assess the operation and effectiveness of the amendments five years after they come into force. I would like to clarify what should be obvious to everyone: this bill is not about legalising abortions. That issue was discussed and resolved by this Parliament more than 22 years ago, in 1998. The scope of the bill before us involves only one aspect: ensuring safe and private access to legal abortion clinics.

I will finish by stressing that the proposed safe access zones do not prohibit protests in relation to abortions. The bill only creates a safe buffer to move protesters away from the immediate vicinity of premises that provide abortion services. Anyone who wishes to will still be able to protest 150 metres outside the boundary of the premises, subject to the usual protest permit requirements. By creating such a buffer, we will prevent most harm to patients or staff, as well as largely avoid the current need for police officers to respond only after inappropriate conduct has occurred.

The McGowan government believes that the right to safety, privacy, dignity and respect for women accessing health care, especially during what is a very difficult time, should be protected by this Parliament. I commend the bill to the house.

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

ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr J.R. Quigley (Attorney General)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Attorney General.

Second Reading

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [12.33 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to reintroduce this bill. A version of this bill, the Administration Amendment Bill 2018, was passed in the Legislative Assembly and transmitted to the Legislative Council on 3 April 2019. However, the bill lapsed with the proroguing of Parliament in 2020. This bill will increase the current amounts of the statutory legacies payable on intestacy. These amounts were last adjusted in 1982 and are now grossly inadequate. It also provides a formula for calculating the amount of the statutory legacies in the future.

The process for reforming the law relating to succession began in 1991 when the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General of Australia resolved to develop uniform succession laws across all Australian states and territories. The project was coordinated by the Queensland Law Reform Commission, with a national committee comprising representatives from each jurisdiction preparing a report and proposed model bills for adoption by the states and territories.

In late 2003, Western Australia established a working group to examine the law of succession in Western Australia and made recommendations for legislative reform for consideration by the government. The working group was constituted by experts in the area and drawn from the Supreme Court of Western Australia, the legal profession, academia, the Public Trustee and the independent bar. The model bills, together with reports of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, have informed the process of the working group’s review of the law of succession in Western Australia. However, there have been significant differences in the proposed reforms and the model bills. Although the working group is aware of the rationale for uniformity, it does not consider that the benefits contained in the Administration Act 1903 of Western Australia should be surrendered for that purpose alone. From the work done by the working group, there have been reforms to the law relating to wills and family and dependants’ inheritance provisions. The working group continued with the above review process when considering the reform of intestacy law in Western Australia.

The bill deals with entitlements arising upon an intestacy as presently contained in sections 14 and 15 of the Administration Act 1903 of Western Australia. Intestacy occurs when the whole or part of the estate of a deceased person is not disposed of by a will. The property that has not been dealt with effectively by will is usually distributed according to a regime established by statute. A partner's legacy is the fixed net sum to which the deceased's surviving spouse and/or de facto partner is entitled from the estate when the deceased died intestate and in circumstances in which there are surviving family members.

The most significant of the proposed reforms is to increase the statutory legacy from the intestate estate passing to the surviving spouse or de facto partner. Currently, a partner's legacy in Western Australia is as low as \$50 000 when the intestate dies leaving issue—a person's children or other lineal descendants—and as high as \$75 000 when the intestate dies leaving no issue. The statutory legacy aims to remove financial hardship for the surviving spouse or de facto partner and tries to ensure that he or she can live in the manner to which he or she had become accustomed. The bill amends the Administration Act 1903 to set the amount of the partner's statutory legacy at \$472 000 when the intestate dies leaving issue and \$705 000 when the intestate dies leaving no issue. The lapsed bill contained lump sum amounts that had been determined when that bill was drafted—namely, in 2017. Given the time that has elapsed since then, this bill contains lump sum amounts that are up to date. Those amounts have been calculated by applying the formula contained in clause 5 of the lapsed bill.

The parental statutory legacy applies when the deceased has living parents and/or siblings or siblings' issue but does not have a surviving husband, wife, partner or issue. The parental statutory legacy was last reviewed prior to 1982 and is currently \$6 000. Consideration has been given to whether to increase the \$6 000 to a sum that is financially beneficial or to abolish this statutory legacy.

The reasons for preferring to increase the parental statutory legacy include that the \$6 000 has little beneficial financial impact; it makes the distribution of an intestate estate more complicated than this small amount warrants; and it is appropriate that the deceased parents participate in the distribution of their child's intestate estate because the death of a child is a very tragic event for parents, and money, though it cannot compensate for the loss, may provide some help to those parents. The bill amends the Administration Act 1903 to set the amount of the parental statutory legacy at \$56 500.

In 1973, the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia noted that fixing the statutory legacy by legislation had proved unsuccessful, given that Parliament had adjusted the statutory legacy on only three occasions in the preceding 25 years. The bill inserts a new provision into the Administration Act 1903, setting out a formula for calculating the amount of statutory legacies from time to time in the future.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

TRANSFER OF LAND AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Lands)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Lands) [12.42 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill will improve and streamline conveyancing in Western Australia, further enabling the Western Australian land titles register to operate in an electronic environment, providing greater speed, certainty and security and simplifying handling procedures for the property industry. The implementation of electronic conveyancing in Western Australia and the amendments outlined in this bill affirm the state government's commitment to the Council of Australian Governments' reform agenda. The amendments proposed under this bill support electronic conveyancing processes and will further enable the benefits of electronic conveyancing to be realised. They will deliver greater procedural and administrative efficiencies in the lodgements and registration of documents relating to land transactions and related land dealings across Western Australia.

These amendments will reduce reliance on paper documentation, bringing conveyancing processes into the twenty-first century, meeting public expectations regarding modern business practices. The Transfer of Land Amendment Bill 2021 makes changes to three key areas of the current Transfer of Land Act 1893. The bill modifies the definition of "counterpart documents" to improve the processing of mortgages electronically. It enables notices served under the current Transfer of Land Act to be done so electronically and it removes the requirement to issue and produce duplicate certificates, resulting in greater ability to conduct land transactions in a fully electronic environment.

The current definition of "counterpart" in relation to mortgage documents under the existing legislation is an impediment to signing mortgages in an electronic format. The bill proposes to modify the description of counterpart

documents to reference the document being substantially the same, in line with other participating jurisdictions. The proposed amendments regarding counterpart documents better account for minor differences in a document that has been created in both a paper and a digital version.

Under the existing legislation, there is a lack of clarity about the types of notices that may be served on registered owners electronically and the processes for doing so. Certainly, notices necessary under the TLA are currently required to be served formally, creating additional administrative burden and resulting in time delays. With advancements in technology and a reduction in paper-based mail as a method of service, the current notice provisions of the TLA do not sufficiently provide for the modern operation of the land registry. This can result in an inability to serve notices, a lack of clarity about when a notice has been delivered and extended delays in processing documents. The proposed amendments introduce general provisions for electronic service of notice when customers have provided their details for electronic service. This amendment will streamline processes for formal and informal notices served under the TLA.

The current act also provides for the issuing of duplicate certificates of title, which are certified duplicates of the title held on the register. Whenever a mortgage is registered, the mortgagee is entitled to a duplicate certificate of title. In practice, the vast majority of mortgagees no longer require a duplicate certificate of title and instruct the Registrar of Titles that no duplicate is issued. Banks and other financial institutions now actively discourage the issue of duplicate certificates of title as security against a mortgage and other jurisdictions such as Queensland and South Australia have already removed duplicate certificates of title. Amendments proposed under this bill remove the requirement to issue and produce duplicate certificates of title under the Transfer of Land Act 1893 and other state legislation. Copies of certificates of title will still be made available, providing an accurate copy of the current ownership information as it is recorded on the Western Australian register of titles. All existing duplicate certificates of title currently issued will also have no legal effect from the date of proclamation of this bill.

It is intended that Landgate will run a community awareness campaign to prepare the industry and community for the change of proclamation. Electronic conveyancing is a progressive initiative that will increase productivity, improve the security and integrity of land tenure information and bring the conveyancing industry into the digital age.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

SUPPLY BILL 2021

Remaining Stages — Standing Orders Suspension — Withdrawal of Notice

Notice of motion, given Thursday, 13 May, withdrawn by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.

Second Reading

Resumed from 5 May.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [12.48 pm]: I rise on behalf of the opposition to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Supply Bill. I thank the Treasurer and his staff, and the Department of Treasury, for the briefing that was provided to me and the shadow Treasurer a few weeks back.

This is not an unusual bill. We have seen a Supply Bill introduced in May each year, particularly in years in which we have had an election. A Supply Bill was introduced last year around COVID, to ensure the continuation of supply and therefore government services. Due to the election this year and the budget being pushed back to September, the automatic two months of supply is deemed insufficient, and this bill has been brought forward to allow the continuation of government services until the budget is passed in Parliament, which is anticipated to be in late 2021. As I have noted, the same approach was used by the Labor government post the 2017 election, and again because of the COVID pandemic in 2020.

The basic position of the bill is that it seeks an additional appropriation of \$15.1 billion to see the government through to the September budget. It is based on 50 per cent of the appropriations approved by Parliament for the 2020–21 financial year. On this occasion, the bill requests a bigger drawdown amount. My understanding is that it is split into two different funding streams, \$12.692 billion for recurrent services and \$2.414 billion for capital expenditure. No details are attached to those two figures, and I am sure that the Treasurer, or perhaps some of his advisers, will be able to provide us with a greater understanding of where that capital expenditure will go. Of course we understand, particularly in light of some of the challenges the government is facing at the moment around the crisis in both health and housing, and skill shortages, the need for recurrent expenditure to continue. We would argue that perhaps there needs to be some prioritisation to ensure the uninterrupted provision of health care, public education, police and child protection. This bill will allow the government to do that before we get to the budget and are able to provide scrutiny as an opposition.

We certainly look forward to being able to provide that scrutiny in this Parliament. Last year was an unusual year for everyone. The ability for us as an opposition to have people in the chamber to provide scrutiny was severely limited, and we understand why. We have now come through that period and have returned to some degree of normality, and we are looking forward to the opportunity through the budget estimates process, and of course through questions and the mechanisms that are afforded to us as the opposition, to make sure that scrutiny is underway.

Supply Bills also provide us with an opportunity to touch on some of the things that are important from both an opposition and a local member perspective. The government is asking for this considerable amount of money to allow it to continue to provide very important services. However, it would be remiss of me as Leader of the Opposition not to point out and put on the record that this government has overseen some very challenging issues. The government is continuing to push those issues aside and point the finger of blame at others, saying that it is beyond its control and that COVID has created some of these issues. COVID has no doubt exacerbated these issues, but we are seeing many red flags, including in the health system, that point to a system that has been in crisis for some time, and to the under-resourcing and lack of prioritisation of what Western Australians would consider to be the most important things that a government should do, which is to provide safe and efficient health services.

We also see issues in the housing sector. That is right across the board. No matter where I travel in Western Australia, people raise these issues, whether it is in the social housing sector with massive waiting lists for people who need a roof over their head, or the inability to house key workers in areas on which our state relies to generate the state's and the nation's economy. I go back to what I can remember from the construction boom between 2006 and 2008 when we had land shortages. The Liberal–National government inherited chronic housing shortages in the Pilbara in particular, which limited the ability for that community to grow and be a normalised community that would encourage people to choose to live residentially. We needed to take swift action to enable those communities to provide some degree of normality and to ensure that the small businesses in those areas—the cafes, bars and shops—could attract and retain staff and provide the normal services that we would expect on the doorstep of the generator of wealth for our state's and nation's economy. In places like Karratha, people were living in caravans and double-bunking in rooms in houses. It was an appalling situation. I have to say, having recently been back to the Pilbara, that those conversations have started all over again. We wonder how we could have got there again. After four years and the experience of everyone living through that construction boom, we now see once again land and housing shortages all along the continuum of the housing sector. It is very distressing to see that that is impeding the ability of our state to grow, and also that we are letting down the most vulnerable in our communities. To me, that is completely unacceptable.

The skill shortages that are emerging, and have been emerging for some time, are undoubtedly impacted by COVID and the inability of people to come into this state from overseas. Regional Western Australia relies particularly heavily on overseas workers in both the agricultural and horticultural sectors. However, it is not only those industries that are being impacted. Towards the end of my contribution I will note, from a wheatbelt perspective, as the member for Central Wheatbelt, that people are starting to miss out on great opportunities at a business level because of the impact of the skills shortage. I am talking about people like accountants and other qualified, skilled workers, and not just the unskilled workers our state has traditionally relied upon for some of those jobs that are seasonal and more challenging to fill from the local population.

This government came into office in 2017 with great fanfare about its plan to diversify our state's economy. If we look at what has happened over the last four years, we can say with great confidence that we are still significantly reliant on the fortunes of the mining sector, and that there has been a failure to diversify the state's economy to soften the blows of the great peaks and troughs. Not for one moment would I criticise our mining sector. It creates jobs and provides an enormous amount of opportunity for people in this state. It has really carried our nation through the very difficult past 14 months that we have seen. However, for us to be so reliant on the fortunes of this sector is letting our communities down. There are opportunities for the taking if funding is provided to remove some of the blockages that are impeding small businesses from reaching their full potential and the ability of new and emerging industries to grow. The failure to diversify means that when the next trough comes along—which inevitably it will, because we have all been here long enough to understand that these things move in cycles—we will see the devastation and the impact, with a shrinkage in our regional communities because people will be afraid to shift and invest and commit to living regionally. It will also resound through the outer suburbs of the Perth metropolitan area, because people make investments and build a life for themselves based on a mining sector wage that may not continue. We certainly saw that off the back of the last construction boom. I think people are suffering the hangover from that to a large degree.

Our message is that although the government talks about providing ongoing funding, and it has come back for a second term, its focus on diversifying our economy must be redoubled. This focus needs to stretch beyond the Perth metropolitan area and the industrial parks and industrial strips of Kwinana and into the regions. There are wonderful opportunities out there. I think people feel that they have not been given options to pursue or grow their own individual businesses that will create jobs and help reduce the reliance on government intervention with things like housing shortages. It would be true to say that it is very hard for a government to focus on those longer term plans when it has bushfires raging in a number of portfolios. There has been no shortage of that in the two weeks that we have been back in Parliament, and certainly prior to that. It would not have been the return to government that the Premier was anticipating off the back of such a strong election result. It would not have anticipated being thrown into a mire of chaos and crisis, even though the government will not admit to or use that word. Even blind Freddy can see that the health system is in crisis, and that must be acknowledged.

We have received advice from people working in the child protection sector that the workers are feeling just as angry, anxious, under-resourced and concerned about their work. There are real concerns about vulnerable children

right across Western Australia who are being left exposed because we do not have the resources to support either them or their families. We will continue to highlight and investigate that because we cannot let those children and families down. The more remote from the Perth metropolitan area, the harder it is to put those resources into play and the harder the government has to work to attract people into those positions. That also comes back to, as we have just been touching on, the provision of appropriate housing and incentives to attract people into these very hard jobs. No-one is denying that the child protection sector is a considerably hard sector to work in. Unfortunately, we make it harder by not providing the support, funding, resources and people that the sector needs to keep those children safe. Similar challenges and similar issues have been raised with us about corrective services, which we will explore in coming weeks. Government workers are feeling exposed and under-resourced, they do not feel as though they are being listened to and they do not feel safe in their workplace. Corrective services deals with some very vulnerable individuals who need to be looked after, particularly in places such as Banksia Hill Detention Centre or anywhere in the corrective services structure that has an intersection of children. We need to make sure that we are providing support for those staff.

We have seen mass resignations from the Tourism WA board and shuffling of the deckchairs in these mega-departments, all hot on the heels of an election. We have had some discussions in this house already about the impact of the machinery-of-government changes and how they have flowed right through to every worker in those departments. Newer members to this house may not remember, but at one stage the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development reached a crisis to the point at which intervention and support needed to be provided to staff who were feeling exposed, under-resourced and anxious about those changes. Psychological support needed to be brought in over and above the normal supports offered to the public sector. That was a direct result of the ongoing and continuous changes made by the creation of these mega-departments. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development in particular took an enormous amount of time to settle on its structure. I think it took until almost the completion of the first term of government before we saw an organisational chart and people being offered permanent jobs and an understanding of whom they reported to. I have to say that we still get consistent reports that there are very unclear lines of reporting and duties of responsibility and that people within that department are feeling stretched. That continues right across all those departments. Now we have seen a shifting of directors general. I am not so naive to suggest that there are not different ways of managing our public service. In fact, when I was a minister, my chief of staff used to work in the commonwealth public service. The commonwealth public service prides itself on being able to shift senior executives around the public service to use their skills so people are not employed in only one individual role. The shadow Minister for Racing and Gaming, the member for Roe, has raised the issue that some areas of government require specific expertise, particularly in racing and gaming. Quite clearly, as a result of these machinery-of-government changes, a lack of attention has been paid to those very important areas that require specific skill sets. I think we are now seeing the chickens coming home to roost. The daily revelations coming out of the royal commission—we congratulate the government on calling for the royal commission because it needed to be dealt with—are quite horrifying. I think that the evidence provided by the director general to point out that he had no specific expertise in the areas that he had been afforded, not in his role as the director general, but as the chair of the—help me, shadow minister —

Mr P.J. Rundle: Gaming and wagering.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes. He was responsible for a specific board as a result of being appointed to the role of director general, and that required expertise. Certainly, that lets down the person who was appointed to that role and it also puts them in a position in which things are occurring that I do not think any Western Australian would agree are appropriate.

We see these cracks showing up in the public service because of the machinery-of-government changes. When I had a briefing on the financial legislation bill—it is called the FLAB bill; I cannot remember the name, but that is the acronym and it caught my attention more than the full name—I was told about the proposed changes to financial reporting across government. We do not oppose that legislation, but one of the comments from those who provided the briefing to us was that as a result of the machinery-of-government changes it has been very hard to delve into the detail of organisations like Tourism Western Australia and that there was no requirement to provide specific budgets or expenditure or to allocate things against KPIs because it was rolled up into the department's broader budget. That cannot possibly be consistent with the government's rolled-gold promise of accountability. We certainly noticed it as part of the estimates process, not that we had an estimates process last year, but in the preceding three years we certainly noticed a distinct change in the opposition's ability to be able to delve into the detail of line items in individual budgets because there was utter confusion in some cases about who was responsible for answering the questions. We did not get the opportunity, at least not in the Legislative Assembly, I feel, to do the job of the opposition appropriately. The financial management bill that is coming through will be welcome because it will create greater transparency. With that will come an expectation that we can look at those real impacts and measure the accountability against what each of those mega-departments is responsible for delivering.

It would be remiss of me not to mention royalties for regions. Royalties for regions was one of the key tenets of the alliance we formed in opposition with the Liberal Party. Both our organisations have committed to returning integrity to the royalties for regions program. What the government has done to this program over the last four years

is utterly outrageous. People in regional Western Australia and, I would say, in the metropolitan area, understand the need for the program and the unique challenges in regional communities. They understand that it is fair and reasonable to ensure that 25 per cent of all the royalties generated are quarantined and returned to those communities where the royalties were generated. It is not just the dollars that go with it, but the plan that goes alongside it. The royalties for regions program indicated that the government had turned its mind to the needs of the regions and that the government acknowledged the challenges in delivering services and infrastructure outside the Perth metropolitan area. It incentivised every department to think differently about how they might do that more efficiently and how they might innovate to fill some of those gaps.

It is challenging to be able to achieve that in a state the size of Western Australia when we have an Expenditure Review Committee process, with Treasury looking at the cost-benefit analysis. I have certainly been through that in my time. Sometimes those projects that make the greatest difference do not stack up on that register. They need the intervention of a program that allows us to fill that gap or for cabinet to say it believes it is important. That is what royalties for regions did. Certainly, when we were in government, it went through cabinet and Treasury. I know that accusations are regularly made that it was misused by our government, but it was all reported in full in our state budgets because we were proud of that expenditure. We were proud to see the changes that royalties for regions allowed us to leverage, alongside local governments, the private sector and the federal government.

I can absolutely say that when I reflect on that time, there was a real spring in the step of people who had an aspiration to make regional communities better. They were not just there to survive; they wanted to thrive. Royalties for regions gave them an avenue into government that allowed them to sit down with the development commission at a local level or the minister at the next level up and say, "I've got this great plan; where can I park it?" Not all of them got through, but for a long time before we came to government in 2008, a lot of those plans sat in the bottom drawer. The moment we gave people an avenue and empowered them at a local level to start thinking differently about how they might change their community for the better in the long term, it made a fundamental difference in the number of people who saw living, working and investing in regional Western Australia as a viable option. But it does not happen overnight.

I get very upset when I hear people asking about the population differences over an eight-year period. I can point to things in my home town of Northam that have probably taken 12 years to really start to emerge as a result of infrastructure and spend that occurred in the very early days of royalties for regions. The program that was initiated for our regional centres in the very early days was called SuperTowns—the member for Roe is nodding behind me—and was mocked heavily by the then opposition. It inserted not the regional cities, because they were already recognised in the hierarchy of our state planning system, but the next communities down—smaller communities such as Katanning, Esperance, Northam, Collie, Morawa and Manjimup—into the state planning map, and the program also gave them an opportunity to implement a longer term plan. If there was growth, those communities could meet that growth but there was also a push factor—what did we need to do to drive that growth? Funding was provided to incentivise them to leverage those projects once they had been prioritised. From a wheatbelt perspective, we identified that aged care was a growth opportunity. Our problem in the wheatbelt is that we do not have enough people. The size of our towns is shrinking, or they are shrinking back into bigger regional centres. The growth plans allowed us to say to communities such as Northam and Katanning that they were allowed to grow and provide that regional service, much like our regional cities should have a plan to grow. We have created a regional cities portfolio because we think they deserve attention, given some of the challenges they face, so that we can have a plan to grow our whole state.

When I look at the eastern states and communities such as Bendigo and Ballarat in Victoria, and others in New South Wales and Queensland, I see that they are true regional centres. They have major hospitals, particularly the ones close to Sydney. Some of them have specialist services that people prefer to use rather than using some of the very congested Sydney hospitals. They provide educational opportunities for the people who seek to go through their higher education or even complete their secondary education or trade training. We still have a little way to go.

The University of Western Australia has a footprint in Albany, Geraldton has its universities centre, and there are the beginnings of a university centre in the Pilbara. Royalties for regions assisted the Geraldton Universities Centre to grow from an idea into something that can actually work and sustain and support student education close to home. Surely that should be an aspiration for every government, state or federal—that we grow our own so when nurses are required to support our health system, they come from a local area. We need a pathway that comes through from the school to the university centre and directly into that region. Whether they stay in Geraldton or move somewhere else, if someone completes their education and training in a regional centre, particularly in the health area, we know that they are more likely to return. It is a major issue.

I keep coming back to health because I fundamentally believe that if we get the health and education systems right in most of our communities, people will continue to invest. If people cannot educate their kids and access health care or aged care close to home, they will make a decision to move because parents and families will not compromise on those things for their families or for themselves.

Again, I look down the pathway of utilising royalties for regions, not just to fill the gaps, where there are absolutely gaps, but to innovate that service delivery. I look at the things that we did in telehealth and the changes to some of the smaller regional centres. Instead of maintaining a pile of bricks in Cunderdin, as we did for many years, with one person admitted to hospital, we gave the community a primary healthcare centre and said that we would rather fund the staff who are matched to the community's health needs to proactively be out in the community doing preventive health care, provide the community with an emergency department and a short-stay facility, and support it with a regional centre hospital model such as the one in Northam. Instead of the government continuing to fund an outdated old surgery, theatre, laundry and kitchen in a hospital that was built in Cunderdin in the 1970s, which it currently has—Pingelly was the same—and which had one long-term aged-care patient, why not do something different?

That is what royalties for regions allowed us to do—go to the Department of Health and use those really bright and innovative people to ask what they would do differently if they did not have to go down the model of what we have always done. How can we apply that in the Department of Education so that we can offer greater secondary education options right across regional Western Australia, so people have real choice and they do not feel like they need to leave their communities to finish their education? How can we apply that to any number of different portfolios? I think it is a loss where we see royalties for regions being used as it is now. I say that because at the moment an enormous percentage of it is going into things that the government has always done. It is not innovative; it is essential, but it should be funded from consolidated revenue or the department's portfolio main budget. I look at things like the subsidy that is paid to the Water Corporation, which is quite significant, that is chewing up a significant amount of royalties for regions funding that could otherwise be used for innovation, development and service delivery. It is simply going to the Water Corporation. I am not discounting the fact that it is doing a very important job, but it was always paid out of consolidated revenue. It is an utter travesty given that we have a surplus of \$4 billion to \$5 billion. It is hard to keep up with the changes in the iron ore price these days, but it is significant.

Surely we should be looking at washing out all those things that have been put in there so that we can have a true regional development program and people can have confidence that this government is thinking about things beyond the Perth metropolitan area. We need a plan not just to develop our city through deals like the Perth City Deal, which is one of the first things the state government did when it came to government. I do not begrudge the Perth metropolitan area having a plan to ensure that there are topnotch university education precincts and upgrades to public transport. I begrudge that we do not see that similar thinking being applied in regional Western Australia, and that disappoints me greatly.

The royalties for regions program is capped at a billion dollars a year, but the significant amount of money that is coming through the state's coffers at the moment could be offered to it. We cannot discount that people looked to royalties for regions as an avenue to make their community and region a better place to live, work and invest in. There are plenty of challenges to be taken up and I, for one, would like to see those funds that have been put in there, taking up those resources, shifted back into consolidated revenue. Surely if we get to the end of this year with the projected surplus and there has not been any shift, we can confidently say that this government does not have any intention of utilising that opportunity, it is not committed to royalties for regions and anything it says in relation to that program is mere lip-service. It will be truly disappointing.

I want to touch briefly on something that is happening from a local electorate point of view. As the Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Nationals WA, I travel around this state and, obviously, some of the themes that I have touched on today are prevalent everywhere. Housing shortages and skills shortages come up in every conversation no matter where I am. I have been in Carnarvon and the Pilbara over the last two weeks. I have had discussions with people in Albany and we receive feedback from people in Geraldton and Kalgoorlie on a regular basis.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Esperance.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: And from Esperance, too, member for Roe. This state is crying out for some solutions. Again, I point to the fact that if there were real intent to try to address some of these things at a regional level, there would at least be a program that was dedicated to trying to address some of the challenges blocking that growth.

The Wheatbelt Business Network sent me a position paper that it released today. The Wheatbelt Business Network is essentially a chamber of commerce for our wheatbelt communities. There is a chamber of commerce in Northam and we do have individual chambers that are associated with the regional chambers in the state. The WBN covers the member for Roe's electorate and parts of the member for Moore's electorate. We have lots of small communities. The communities I represent range from 200 people to 7 000 people in Northam, and this paper covers off some of those smaller communities, where there are not significant numbers of people, and aggregates them. Those communities have been struggling with the skills shortage factor for some time, not only from an agricultural perspective. I think it is a misunderstanding that although ag underpins many of the jobs in the economy of the electorate of the Central Wheatbelt, many others contribute to the economy and the majority of them are small businesses. Some small businesses have aspirations to grow into medium or large businesses, and we do have some very significant businesses. A quote that struck me the most was in this paper titled *Wheatbelt jobs: Position paper* and it is written by the Wheatbelt Business Network. It starts by asking —

What do you see when someone asks you to picture regional Western Australia?

I have highlighted a few sections because they are very useful in making the point that the Wheatbelt Business Network is crying out for assistance to deal with the skills shortage that is costing it and the community not only cold, hard cash, but also the ability to grow and support the growth of our entire state. Caroline Robinson, the CEO, makes very astute points. She stated —

Not only do our regions make a disproportionately large contribution to our nation's economic wealth, rural Australia is also a powerful incubator for new businesses.

...

Regional Development Australia ... Wheatbelt reviewed nine job sites and surveyed a database of regional organisations and businesses in November 2020. They registered a total of 464 vacancies across the Wheatbelt, with this list not including the multitude of positions that are now only advertised on social media sites. The situation has worsened significantly since then.

The paper then lists examples of what that looks like, because statistics are stark and a little bit dry sometimes. It refers to Bruce Turton of Rural Traffic Services and Maarli Bidli Traffic Services, whose head office is in Corrigin. For those who do not know where Corrigin is, it is about 220 kilometres south-east of Perth. That business also has branches in Esperance, Kalgoorlie, Northam and Narrogin. Bruce is quoted as saying —

“People want to use us because we're a local traffic management company but we just can't get enough staff to satisfy demand.

Since December 2020 we've missed out on projects totalling \$2.5 million, if not more. There's not a single day that goes by when I'm not turning work down. Prior to Covid-19 we had backpackers and transient people coming over from the east on a 12 month to three year working holiday around Australia. Some would stay a month but some people really liked what we had to offer and they'd stay for six or 12 months. But we're not getting these people anymore. We're now relying on locals and we just don't have enough of them.”

The paper continues —

The lack of recognition of this problem at State and Federal Government levels —

Because there is an intersection here of both —

is ... resulting in a lost opportunity to build economic strength and diversity, and represents a huge lost opportunity ...

A number of businesses are highlighted throughout this position paper. Andrew Mead of The Ag Shop states —

“Failure to grow and diversify is our biggest issue.

It has a debilitating effect on regional business —

Our business is currently experiencing a growth and transition period. We are aggressively exploring new opportunities for business sustainability. The landscape in the agricultural sector has seen enormous change in recent years. This has forced our business to diversify product and service offerings in order to remain viable. We have been quite successful in this endeavour, however, our vision for the future is being stemmed due to an inability to recruit staff. Not just staff with the necessary level of experience or qualifications, but staff in general who want to be here. We have a number of other avenues that we would like to explore and expand into, but we physically cannot service these areas with our current staffing levels.”

The Wheatbelt Business Network also states that the footprint of state government-owned enterprises, like Western Power and Water Corporation, is slowly creeping back into the Perth metropolitan area and that has been seen again and again. As an opposition, we have previously highlighted over the last four years our disappointment that although there was great glee when the department of agriculture and food's site at South Perth was upgraded and finally received a facelift, there is an intent to shift the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's headquarters into the city centre. I find that amazing and a missed opportunity given that in all our regional centres there would be a place for staff and support staff to be present in the areas that they service. Although it is important that we have a centre for some senior executives—I can understand that—I am not sure that we need to have all of them based in the Perth metro area. This is, to me, a missed opportunity by this government to demonstrate that there was a commitment to decentralise, but it appears that that opportunity has been missed.

I quote again from the Wheatbelt Business Network position paper —

Governments have also made it hard for rural businesses to keep skilled overseas immigrants who want to work in rural Australia —

That is a federal government issue and we have been working with our federal colleagues to try to address that — and have manipulated and drained funding programs like Royalties for Regions that supported regional growth.

...

Matt Woodhouse of Yilgarn Plumbing and Gas in Southern Cross echoes these sentiments, “The Western Australian Government has made the mistake of being Perth-centric. Everything is Perth oriented, everyone is supposed to live in Perth and fly out to jobs. The fly in fly out mentality in Western Australia has killed a lot of regional towns. The government currently doesn’t offer any incentive or benefit to actually have people live in regional towns when they could easily give the mines a tax break for housing half their workforce in the town they are operating from. . . . If Royalties for regions hadn’t been around, how many things wouldn’t have been built? And Royalties for Regions is all but wiped out now. The money isn’t spent out there, all they spend it on is roads.”

I am from the central wheatbelt and I welcome investment in roads. I have no question about that, but I think there is, very clearly, an understanding in our communities that expenditure on roads is not the only thing that the government should be doing to drive regional development, whether it is Andrew Mead from The Ag Shop; Dannelle Foley from Bencubbin Truck N Autos; Matt Woodhouse from Yilgarn Plumbing and Gas; Ley Webster, who owns an agricultural labour supply business named 2WorkinOz, who is constantly trying to source people to support our agricultural sector; or John Trunfio of Hutton and Northey Sales, who is tearing his hair out trying to ensure that training is available so he has heavy diesel mechanics, only to see them sucked into the mining sector at the end of that process. His business has been operating for more than 40 years and has branches in Merredin, Mukinbudin, Cunderdin and Corrigin. He has plenty of ideas about how these challenges could be addressed. He wants to employ apprentices and trainees and he wants to employ locals. He actually employs people out of Perth. They come to him because they know that they are going to be provided with those opportunities, but he cannot get enough of them and he has not been able to get the support of the TAFE system to really meet the needs of his growing and expanding business. These businesses feel like they have nowhere to turn because the regional development commissions have been neutered. There is no longer any local strength in any of the nine regional development commissions. That is not a criticism of the individuals who work there; they are all very passionate people who are dedicated to regional development. But they have no access to funding or decision-making, and they have been absorbed into the very centralised format that was created by this state government.

I will forward this document to the Premier to ensure he has a copy of the concerns that have been raised by these businesses about the impact of skills shortages. They are willing to work with government to try to address these challenges. This is just from a wheatbelt perspective. I could not let it go through, because I opened it and I saw that they remain incredibly positive about their future, but they feel they are being hamstrung by a lack of investment in, understanding of and attention to the things that matter to them most. I have to say, that experience is reflected no matter where I am in regional Western Australia.

The government would do well to reconsider how it has used royalties for regions over the last four years. It would get huge kudos if it were to use the surplus that it is undeniably going to have. Firstly, the Premier has a few bushfires to sort out in respect of the issues we have in health. He will get no argument from the opposition if he makes sure that that money is prioritised to deal with the most fundamental issues. The long-term view for the development of our state should not be lost; the diversification of our state’s economy should not be lost. It is important to have programs like royalties for regions and avenues for the people who live and work at the coalface in regional Western Australia to be able to access those funds.

We do not want to see those funds chewed up by normal, everyday government expenditure. The government can surely afford to shift that money back into consolidated revenue and allow the aspirational royalties for regions to return with the integrity it once had. I know that the criticism will be that the government thinks the opposition wants royalties for regions to go back to what it was like in 2008. We have never said that. We have always said that royalties for regions should continue to evolve and grow, and that as the challenges we face as a state evolve and grow, that funding should be used to meet those challenges head-on. If there are better ways of doing things and more effective ways of delivering that funding, we are open to that, but the government is filling royalties for regions with ordinary, everyday government expenditure and then saying it is delivering on its promises and commitments to royalties for regions. I think that is duplicitous, and I think people see through it. That is certainly the feedback I get. The government has a real opportunity here to make sure that, over the course of the next few months after we approve the Supply Bill 2021 and the government gets on with business before its first budget of the new term, it makes some decisions to actually give regional Western Australians some confidence.

Regional Western Australians were rattled, I have to say, by one of the first things to come through the new Parliament, which was an announcement by the Attorney General that the government was going to pursue electoral reform. Once again, I put it on the record that the opposition is not opposed to sensible reforms that deal with the preference harvesting issues that have arisen. That could have been dealt with over the last four years, but it was not. We have no problem dealing with sensible reform on that front. However, we have serious issues and concerns about reducing representation for regional people in this state Parliament, because that is certainly where we are going to end up. We are resigned to that fact because the government has an enormous majority and can do what it likes, regardless of the so-called independent committee and inquiry it has established. That is a farce; there is no other way to describe it. It is a complete farce. We will, no doubt, see a reduction in the number of members

from regional Western Australia and a reduction in the number of people in this Parliament who have lived, worked or invested in the regions and who understand and can access the far-flung areas of the state to bring their issues back to Parliament and raise them with the government.

I have serious concerns about being constantly told that we now have far better travel and communication connections that allow us to represent our constituents. To my mind, nothing replaces face-to-face contact with members' constituencies. My constituency covers more than 100 000 square kilometres, and it is not the largest in this state Parliament. It is difficult to get across an electorate that large, with many population centres of very small numbers, but it is probably equally challenging for members who live in a regional centre like Geraldton or Kalgoorlie and balance that with being in this place, carrying out their duties. It is frivolous to suggest that all these meetings can be conducted via the use of Zoom. We have lived through a pandemic and we are all far more connected, but the conversations that matter are face-to-face, and the way that members demonstrate to people that they care and understand is by turning up. That is why it has always been a priority of mine, as a local member, to make sure that I am present. That is more challenging when a member becomes a minister, leader of a party or Leader of the Opposition, but I can tell members that it is still very much front-of-mind for me. There are things that happen when members meet with people or visit their communities that allow them to join the dots between the things that are important to them and should be raised. That is something that will not happen with someone making an appointment to see a member in their electorate office, assuming constituents can make an appointment to see their member in their electorate office. I inherited two electorate offices, one at each end of my electorate—one in Northam and one in Merredin. The southernmost part of my electorate is at Kulin and it extends across to Boddington and north to Mukinbudin. There are members of my constituency who would find it almost impossible to come into my electorate office. I make the commitment to go to those communities.

There are no changes proposed in the Legislative Assembly; I understand that. But the state government is proposing to reduce the number of members in the Legislative Council who have an opportunity to travel and visit and work in the regions, no matter what party they come from. I am struggling to understand this notion of mathematical equality that the Premier keeps putting forward as the reason why there must be change. That certainly was not on the agenda prior to the election in a public sense, although it has always been part of the Labor Party's agenda. It was thwarted in the run-up to the 2008 election. It could not get the full changes it wanted, so it is coming back now. It did not have that conversation with the community and I do not think people are engaged on this issue.

That will be brought into sharp relief when we see a reduction in the number of regional members in the house of review of a state the size of Western Australia. That representation should reflect the complexities, diversity and balance that we need to find across both houses of Parliament. One vote, one value exists, to a degree, in this place; there is still vote weighting in seats with large area allowances, particularly in the mining and pastoral regions. The Westminster system never, ever anticipated that that would be applied equally across both houses of Parliament. I find it disingenuous for the government to advance some notion that inequality exists. I think the way we have the Parliament set up at the moment actually allows for equality. It is very disappointing to me.

To come back to the Supply Bill 2021, if we are talking about the priorities we should be dealing with and the money that this government is asking for, we should be focusing on the challenges across our health system; housing issues across the continuum of the housing portfolio; and issues in the child protection sector. These are the most vulnerable people, and we have a responsibility to look after them. There are so many issues that should be on the agenda before we get to electoral reform. I am not naive; I think that absolutely this has been rushed through because the Premier is banking on the fact that the people of Western Australia will have well and truly forgotten what Labor decided to do to regional Western Australia by the time we get to the next poll. I can assure members that the opposition will not let that happen, because it will be on the record that Labor has sought, not once but twice, to reduce representation in regional WA. I say to the regional members in this chamber and those members who will vote for it in the other chamber, "Shame on you for coming to this place and purporting to stand up for people who live in regional Western Australia and who drive this nation's economy. You are doing that on the pretence that you want equality for everyone, when all you will be doing is increasing the city-country divide by reducing the number of people who can bring their expertise to this Parliament."

Obviously, we have every intention of providing support for the Supply Bill. I have indicated that the opposition will do that. I have thanked the Treasurer for the briefing from his Treasury officials and office. Thank you very much; that was done in a very timely fashion. However, there are a number of issues for which we could be using the funds that will be brought forward as a result of the Supply Bill and the Treasurer's advance, which we have already debated, to ensure that we are focused on the priorities that the people of Western Australia expect. As the government was elected on the basis of keeping people safe, I would think that a vast majority of that money would go towards our health system and provide some level of confidence to the people of WA that resources will be provided to support those people on the front line—our doctors, nurses, clinicians and all the administrative support workers. All the angst and the outpouring of anger that we saw at the rally yesterday needs to be acknowledged as a crisis. Some of these funds need to be directed towards making sure that we see an immediate improvement. The only way to do that is to acknowledge that there is a crisis in the first instance, but this government seems reluctant to do that and that is very disappointing.

With that, we will allow the bill to proceed and look forward to seeing it progress through both houses of Parliament.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [1.42 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak for the first time in the forty-first Parliament, along with so many who have preceded me since the opening of Parliament. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate all the new members in this place and in the other place. In doing so, I also acknowledge the 11 members of this place who did not retire at the last election but did not return; they are the fallen in political terms. It highlights for all of us the fickle nature of both politics and this place. Giving a valedictory speech is indeed a privilege and never guaranteed, and there are members who never had that opportunity, even those who had significant years of service in this Parliament, so I acknowledge them and honour their service to this place and to their communities.

I would also like to take the opportunity in this general debate on the Supply Bill to thank my constituents who have again returned me in greater numbers than in previous elections. I am deeply grateful for and, as is so often said in this place, humbled by the support I have been given in my community, even in my absences when I was a minister of the government and was basically missing in action during those periods because of the commitments that are made when a member joins cabinet. I would also like to thank my electorate staff, particularly Peter Feasey, who has been with me for over 10 years now—the curmudgeon of the south, as he is called. He is deeply loyal to the party and to the outputs of this government and the labour movement.

I also note the quality of speeches in this place by the new members who have joined this chamber. They were singularly very impressive. When I was talking to the member for Forrestfield, we both reflected on the various cohorts. I came in 2009, relevant to the 2008 cohort, and he came in the 2017 cohort. I have to say that the quality of the contributions of the new members and the life experiences that they are prepared to deliver for the people of their communities and the whole state leave those of our two cohorts for dead.

As I have said and will continue to say, being in this place is a deep privilege. There are approximately 2.6 million people in the state of Western Australia, yet only 59 of us sit in this place. That of itself is an honour that I will never ever forget. That of itself is a call to service that none of us should ever ignore. Even further than that, 17 members of both chambers get to serve in cabinet, and that is a singular honour that I am proud to have shared in. To serve in cabinet, and serve beyond just my electorate, from 2.6 million people is an immense experience that I will never forget and will be grateful for for the rest of my days.

If nothing else, as members might have detected, we are leaseholders of these seats. In fact, in heritage terms, we often talk about bricks and mortar as being the foundations of the natural heritage or the natural environment, but there is another heritage—that is, the lived heritage. This building, which was opened in 1904, has been continuously occupied by the very people it was designed for—us, as members of Parliament and representatives of our electorates. We are sitting in seats that have been continuously occupied for all that time since that period. That of itself is a deeply grounding thing for me. Somebody has been sitting in our seats, representing these electorates, for that entire time. Each member is but one person passing through that heritage, so members will come and go. In that time, I have paid very careful regard to the sorts of things I want to achieve in this place, and some of those have in part been achieved, but there is yet more to do.

If I could give some gratuitous advice to new members, it would be that they are entitled to, and, in fact, are expected to, have an agenda for the sorts of things that they want to achieve. Members may not yet know what that is. They may be working that out, but it will come to them, if it has not already. Some people may have been thinking about politics and about the change that they want to create in their community and in their life and have come here with a very well formed set of ideas that they want to pursue. If members do not have an agenda, they are going to have an empty time, and the emptiness will come in reflection in the years after they leave this place. Several members in the other place had only one term; they had only four years as a member of Parliament and they had the balance of power. They needed only one vote to move to the government benches and they could have created all sorts of outcomes from their ambitions, but not one of them took the opportunity to seize the moment and achieve a certain outcome or a change for their community from their agenda that would have delivered a better Western Australia. Instead, in robotic fashion, they just followed like zombies, voting with the government in some misbelief that they were going to get—I do not know what—some trinket in the cargo cult context fall out of the sky for them.

That is a salient experience for each and every one of us. We are leaseholders; we are temporary occupants of these seats, so we need to have an agenda. But where do we get our agenda from? I was given cause to re-read my inaugural speech, which I have not done for 10 years, and in it are the seeds of the sorts of things that formed my agenda. It is quite interesting that that insight in my own inaugural speech has actually played out for me in those 10 years.

As I say by way of advice to new members in this place, they should look at what they said in their inaugural speech and from that they will find the kernel of opportunity for themselves and they can pursue that agenda through many devices. They do not need to be a cabinet minister to achieve the objectives that they might set for themselves. They can do it through the very seats that they occupy. There will be an opportunity to, and an expectation that they will, make spoken contributions in this place, which is of itself a method for change. Our ministerial colleagues are first among equals in that context. They occupy a seat just like other members and they occupy a cabinet chair in addition to that. They are our colleagues and they are, like each and every one of us, approachable and ready to

serve all of the constituency that comes with being a minister. Obviously, it goes well beyond the geography of their seat to an extended version of a constituency, which comes under the portfolios they hold. Ministers are extremely open to approaches from members about the sorts of things they want to achieve.

The other area is the committees. We have installed today across the road the committees for the lower house. They are ready to go and they will start cranking out the sorts of things they have done for time immemorial. There is an opportunity for members, even if they are not a member of a particular committee, to take an interest in the things that any one of those committees might be inquiring into. Members can approach their colleagues, particularly the committee chairs and deputy chairs, to see whether they can join the committee for a specific hearing. Members can attend a committee hearing and listen in. In fact, they can even be co-opted by a motion in this place to be a member of a committee for a particular part of an inquiry, so devices are available to do that. Members can lobby to have their particular issue investigated and considered by a committee. They do not always conduct a yearlong inquiry. In fact, there are many short inquiries and committees can look into several issues at the same time. I implore members to consider the committee system. It provides a wealth of experience, advice and opportunity to have one's agenda heard and articulated and, in fact, improved upon.

When I reflected on my own experiences in the past 10 years, I realised that the only true opposition to us is time—time to get things done, time to get an agenda together, and time to lobby and deliver it. As the man Keating himself said, “We all go out in a box.” That is no different for any of us. In electoral terms, we will go out in a box and we do not necessarily get to choose the timing of that.

I have already noted from some new members how boring this place is and how hard it is to sit here in the worst economy class seats you will ever sit in. It is a difficult place to sit and hear the drudgery of the daily routine as it flicks past in a cadence that is like watching grass grow. But I will tell members this now: the days are long but the years are short. It will be the 2025 election before any of us knows it. That was said in the last caucus after the 2017 election. The Premier was at pains and is continuously at pains—he is like a cracked record—telling people that the campaigning, activity and action starts the day after we are elected. I completely endorse the point he makes that we will be at the next election before we know it. Those with children of a senior age, particularly those in their 20s, will reflect at their next birthday party and ask, “Where did that time go?” It is very much like that. We foster a child of ideas, if you like. It will grow and graduate before we know it. We do not want a stunted growth, that is for sure!

As I reflected on my inaugural speech, I noted that I made a great feast of talking about the bedrock of the economy of Western Australia entrenched in the resources sector—entrenched generally in the natural endowment of the state of Western Australia in all its forms. I am not talking just about the resources of the rocks and crops—the things we take off and out of the land—but about the living heritage, what a wonderful place it is, and the liveability of this great place and, quite frankly, its gift from a mystical body that gave us this opportunity to be here in Western Australia in our time zone, at this time, when the greatest economic opportunity exists three to four hours' flight time to our north. It is not on the east coast, not anywhere else, but directly to our north. I commented in my inaugural speech about the cultural impact of the greatest of those resources that we extract, and that is iron ore. The cultural overhang and penetration that that red rock has on our community never ceases to amaze me. Like everyone here, I do street corner meetings from time to time. It has become a bit of a plaything of mine to introduce iron ore as a concept when talking to the group of six or so who turn up for the meeting. When I raise the idea of iron ore, it never ceases to amaze me how somebody in that pack of five to seven people know the exact price of iron ore. Where else in Australia can we gather citizens on any spot in any place on a street corner and they would naturally know the price of iron ore? We are inextricably linked to the red rock. It has created the greatest single transformation in two generations of wealth for us and our children as they come after us.

That also has a downside. The expectation that this behemoth that is the resources sector, particularly iron ore, will deliver forever and ever the quantum of profit and dividend in all its forms, in both jobs and cash in kind, as they say, is a fallacy. In large part, we have been sucked in silently, walking towards the idea that it will forever be the goose that lays the golden egg. I am here to tell you that that is not the case and that is something to which we need to give absolute regard. We in this place—not just those in cabinet, but all of us—need to understand not only the cultural connection that everybody in Western Australia has to iron ore particularly, and the resources sector generally, but also where it will take us if we do not consider the possibilities that one day it will end. Yes, I am talking about the end of iron ore. I know that might sound a bit controversial and a little precipitous, but it is the kind of thing we should be talking about in order to alert people to the two stems of resistance. One is the embedded cultural belief that it will be forever—not by us who think and look at these things, but by those in our electorates who go about their lives and try to improve their lot, looking after their families and participating in this great economic opportunity.

Mr V.A. Catania: Member, do you think we should be charging more for our iron ore?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I have many, many views, member for North West Central, but some that I will articulate in my own words in my own way. We extract enormous dividend from both iron ore and all the other extractive industries. It is incumbent on us to look over the horizon at what change and disruptors are coming.

The second thing I am talking about is the structural changes that will happen in the global supply of iron ore to which we have to give regard. I am not able to put here in exact detail when and where and what the circumstances will be for that. However, if people think the state is extracting an infinite resource and it will go on forever, they are delusional. It will end. How it ends and the circumstances of its change is something that we need to be focused on because we need to be able to create a circumstance that allows us to transition. The things that do and will influence the nature of the change in our largest extractive industries are manyfold. They are sometimes accelerators and complementary.

A lot has been made about the advent of Simandou, which is a 110-kilometre iron ore range in the West African country of Guinea. It has some of the richest deposits of iron ore ever seen on the planet. It is something like 65 to 66 per cent Fe. It represents a singular ore body that is quite a disruptor. In its mature state it could account for as much as seven per cent of global supply. The problems with getting Simandou to market are manyfold, not the least of which is the 600-kilometre rail line that will have to go through Guinea to the proposed port, Matakong. The other issue is the \$18 billion it will take to produce the port, rail and mine infrastructure required. They are not insurmountable issues because they are simply engineering issues. There is also the issue of sovereign risk that is resident in some African countries; again, that is not insurmountable. Where desire meets capacity, it has found it in the partners between Rio Tinto and Chinalco, which own two of the lots in that Simandou project. They will invariably link up with the other two lots and collaborate in a joint venture for the construction and delivery of the infrastructure. The other two lots are owned by the Singaporean conglomerate of investors. At some point in the future, it is going to represent an enormous opportunity for us.

We can look at what we can do to create a set of circumstances that will provide a future for our kids and their kids. It is incumbent on every one of us in here and on every individual in Western Australia to become alive to the issue—not to panic or worry about things too much, but to have a weather eye on it. We have the opportunity to create the alternative—it is not an “either/or” conversation; it is an “and” conversation. It is not just a counterpoise industry for the resources sector; that is irrational. The resources sector is a \$115 billion behemoth. The next biggest industry sector for Western Australia is agriculture, at \$9 billion or \$10 billion. There is a triple-digit international business next door to an industry worth \$9 billion or \$10 billion. It has inherent risk. There are 2.6 million people in the state and we do not need too much whiplash in the resources sector to create the discomfort in the unemployment figures that we see from time to time in the commodity cycle. We have lived it. Basically, every seven years or so there is a commodity cycle. The property cycle follows it and employment naturally moves with it. We are not talking about making a counterpoise industry to the resources sector; we are talking about taking what has been good and extracting a dividend. Again, that can transition us to a diversified economy. Essential and central to that is ensuring that that diversified economy gives regard to what I refer to as the miracle of the time zone that we have been gifted in Western Australia. Between three and five-hour flights from Western Australia is the single largest growing consumer class in the world. Somebody is added to the genuine middle class of the world every five minutes in Asia. That is the opportunity that we need to hook up to, and we cannot diversify our economy without diversifying our markets.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 799.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR — HER EXCELLENCY MS ALICIA MORAL REVILLA

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.01 pm]: I would like to acknowledge in the Speaker’s gallery Her Excellency Ms Alicia Moral Revilla, Ambassador of Spain, and guests. Welcome to the Western Australian Parliament. It is a privilege to have you here.

VISITORS — CAREY BAPTIST COLLEGE

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.01 pm]: On behalf of the members for Southern River and Jandakot, I welcome in the public gallery the year 9 students from Carey Baptist College with their teacher Michael Scaddan, who is the great-grandnephew of John “Happy Jack” Scaddan, who was Premier of Western Australia between 1911 and 1916—the good old days!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

QUARANTINE ADVISORY PANEL

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

I refer to questions regarding the government’s intent to form a quarantine advisory panel asked in this house on 5 May and again on notice on 6 May and 12 May. I ask again —

- (1) Who is the chair of the advisory panel?
- (2) Who will be on the advisory panel?

- (3) What are the terms of reference?
- (4) How often will the panel meet and report to the minister?
- (5) Will the panel's progress in assuring the implementation of the improvements to the quarantine system be published and made public?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(5) I do not have any additional information to provide the member, but I am happy, if the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to put the question on notice, to get the full details for her.

QUARANTINE ADVISORY PANEL

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

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister clarify that for the fourth time he is unable to answer a question on the Quarantine Advisory Panel that he advised he would form in response to the Weeramanthri report in relation to the most important part of protecting Western Australians as part of our COVID response?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Just to clarify, and I think I have made this statement in the past, when I referred to the Quarantine Advisory Panel, I was really talking about the Weeramanthri report and not the Quarantine Advisory Panel. That is why the Premier provided further information in relation to the Quarantine Advisory Panel, which is in the process of being established. This is under the guise of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I am sure that the information with regard to the operations of the Quarantine Advisory Panel will be announced in due course.

PLANNING REFORM

122. Ms S.E. WINTON to the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's historic reform of Western Australian planning laws. Can the minister update the house on how these reforms have not only supported sensible development, but also helped create local jobs and drive economic activity; and can the minister advise whether she is aware of any attempts to oppose this government's responsible, fair and sustainable approach to the planning system?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for the question. Of course, today is a momentous day.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Happy birthday!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you. Of course that is true, too.

A year ago, we sat in this chamber debating planning laws until 12 o'clock at night. We were debating once-in-a-lifetime planning changes to streamline the system and support the economic recovery from COVID. These reforms are working. I acknowledge and thank the now Minister for Local Government for his help in bringing in those planning changes. We created the new state development assessment pathway. There are 48 projects worth more than \$4 billion currently under discussion. Six projects worth more than \$200 million have already been approved. We have reduced red tape. Now, people undertaking a minor backyard modification—a cubbyhouse or a pergola—do not need planning approval. We abolished change-of-use applications —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We abolished change-of-use applications for a series of small businesses wanting to change the use of their premises to adapt to the local economic environment. We have reduced the number of development assessment panels from nine to five, to improve consistency, governance and transparency. We have also improved and made more consistent the level of community engagement and discussion.

Of course, members on the other side—or in the other corner!—opposed it. The person leading the charge, as we have heard today, was the Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Cottesloe. The sky did not fall in, member for Cottesloe! The reforms are supporting economic recovery. We know that the Leader of the Liberal Party wants his policies and the planning system to be stuck in the 1960s. Some of the announcements made recently about the chairs of the Liberal Party's policy subcommittees to take new ideas to the next election should not surprise anyone. We have a chair of the planning, transport and infrastructure committee who, among other things, was a member of the Liberal government that shut down the Fremantle rail line and who opposes all density in the suburbs. We have a chair of the law and intergovernmental committee who has opposed every single COVID measure introduced by this government —

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That was an unexpected contribution from the gallery—not a supporter of planning reform! We have a chair who compared the Premier to the president of Palestine and argued for the borders to come down. The chair of the foreign affairs and defence subcommittee opposed John Howard’s gun control laws and believed public schools —

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: I believe that the minister is well off the topic of planning laws.

The SPEAKER: Thanks for your suggestion. I will ask the minister to bring her answer to a conclusion, but there is no point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The chair of that committee opposed John Howard’s gun control laws and believed public schools were brainwashing kids into being gay. These are the representatives of the modern Liberal Party! These are the people entrusted by the Liberal Party to bring forward new policies to take to the election! They are stuck in the 1960s, just like the Leader of the Liberal Party in this chamber.

PINDAN GROUP — GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

123. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the \$35 million regional maintenance program awarded to Pindan and reports the company was trading insolvent before administrators took it on.

- (1) When did the department become aware that Pindan may have been trading insolvent?
- (2) Does trading insolvent constitute a breach of a contract held by Pindan with the Department of Housing; and, if not, why not?
- (3) Does the minister consider the state government liable to pay subcontractors for the work they have undertaken for the department?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

(1)–(3) I thank the member for the question. I think everyone in this chamber is acutely aware of the current plight of subcontractors in relation to Pindan. All of us are sympathetic to their cause, contrary to what the member said in Parliament last night. The reality is that we still have a contract in place with Pindan under the EY administrators and that is our key focus. That contract is in place right now and operating. Our key focus is to ensure that works continue for those homes across the Pilbara, the midwest and the member for North West Central’s region. I think everyone agrees that the critical aspect is that we ensure that we continue those works. Some of those works are emergency works that are required within eight hours or there will potentially be a threat to a tenant’s life. My agency has established a dedicated team, with Finance, to first of all ensure that continued delivery. We have obligations under this current contract in regard to completed works.

I want to be clear on the checks and balances. This contract was inherited from the former government in 2014 and —

Mr V.A. Catania: Renewed under your government.

Mr J.N. CAREY: It was inherited, I think, from a Nationals WA minister, by the way. Checks and balances were put in place in regard to this matter. First of all, there was a requirement to pay subcontractors strictly within 14 days of receipt. There was a requirement, as is standard across many industries, to submit a stat dec with supporting evidence. The agency would go out and check that works had been completed. Pindan submitted its stat dec for the work in March, but, of course, by the time it got to April, we were then notified by EY regarding the administration. We are doing everything within our capacity as an agency, as a government, to ensure that those works continue. Of course, creditors’ outstanding payments are governed by commonwealth insolvency laws and that will see that process through.

PINDAN GROUP — GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

124. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Housing:

I have a supplementary question. Does not trading while insolvent constitute a breach of the contract held by Pindan with the Department of Housing; and will the minister instruct the department to urgently re-tender asset management contracts held by Pindan to ensure that tradies and subcontractors have the confidence to continue taking on government work?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

The member appears to have asked that I reveal legal advice. We have an existing contract still remaining with Pindan. The member is asking me to now go out and breach that contract and be subject to potential legal action, to solicitors —

Mr V.A. Catania: What about subcontractors? Does no-one care about them?

Several members interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I do not have the time or the crayons to explain this for the member. The member clearly does not understand that we are bound by commonwealth insolvency laws that are in place and that will deal with outstanding payments to creditors.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE — COUNTRY AMBULANCE SERVICE

125. Ms A.E. KENT to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor's government \$10 million investment announced last week to support local paramedic teams and volunteers across regional Western Australia. Can the minister outline to the house what the investment will mean for our Country Ambulance Service and the important work it does in putting patients first?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. It is a very good question. As the member knows, our Country Ambulance Service is one of the great parts of our regional healthcare system. Volunteers right across this great state who provide a vital service for everyone in the community deserve to be supported, and the McGowan government is seeking to support them further. I was very proud that last week I was able to announce a \$10 million boost for ambulance services, which includes money to recruit paid paramedics in nine regional centres to further strengthen country ambulances and provide better on-the-ground support for local volunteers. Recruitment is underway for 25 additional paramedics to expand the current workforce and support local volunteers. I am very happy to tell the member for Kalgoorlie that of the 25 new recruits, five will be located in Kalgoorlie, another five have been allocated to Bunbury and the balance is allocated across Laverton, Meekatharra, Karratha, Newman, Merredin and Narrogin.

This \$10 million investment also will be used to develop new solutions to improve how non-urgent patients are transferred between hospitals. As we know, one of the difficulties with volunteer services is that they will often be called out for an emergency and will take that patient to a regional hospital and then, after they have returned home and got their kid off to sleep and are about to go bed to get some well-earned rest, they will be called out once again to undertake a hospital transfer. To support them with these non-emergency transfers is an important aspect of this well-earned investment.

This announcement is in addition to \$9.2 million that we committed last October for three paid paramedics and six new ambulances in the Kimberley. This funding will help enhance access to care and patient flow across all regional Western Australia through the improved coordination of services. These commitments come from *The Country Ambulance Strategy: Driving equity for country WA*, which we released in November 2019. This was the most extensive community consultation process in the development of new strategies for the Country Ambulance Service. It is a great piece of work and one that I was very privileged to be involved with.

An election commitment that will be progressed in this term of government is for a further \$30 million to be used to provide additional paramedics in regional WA. That is expected to build upon the work already undertaken to date to provide further support to regions, where it is most needed. Collectively, these investments include a significant increase in the number of paramedics in regional areas. These investments will strengthen ambulance services, provide greater support to our valued volunteers and contribute to a sustained and innovative future for our country communities.

Our vullie ambulance drivers and paramedics do an incredible service on behalf of everyone in the community. They deserve our backing. These really important investments will make sure that we not only implement the country ambulance strategy but also continue to support our vullie paramedics.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH SERVICE — AISHWARYA ASWATH

126. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the *SAC 1 incident investigation report* into Aishwarya Aswath's death, and I quote from page 11 —

... concerns regarding workforce shortages, acuity and increasing patient presentation numbers had been formally and specifically presented to the Medical and Nursing stream leadership group and members of the Executive team on a number of occasions from October 2020.

It also states —

... data was presented to illustrate the concerns, specifically concerns around the safety of children in the waiting room.

Will the minister now commit to tabling all those presentations, meeting notes and data?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I am advised that the Child and Adolescent Health Service is unable to identify a presentation or report given at a meeting in October.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH SERVICE — AISHWARYA ASWATH

127. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. How is it possible that the minister is unable to find the presentation and data provided to the executive given that they are specifically provided in the root-cause analysis that was presented to the panel?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I know that the root-cause analysis made an observation about team meetings that occurred since October 2020. I do not doubt that those team meetings occurred. I know that a lot of work was undertaken to make sure that we continue to build the amount of resources available right across our hospital system. These meetings would have been going on in hospitals right across Western Australia. I do not know of the actual data or presentations to which that report refers and neither does the Child and Adolescent Health Service. I do not doubt that some of the team leaders have probably done some work on this stuff and the development of their ideas, but there is not a formal Child and Adolescent Health Service document to which the root-cause analysis panel referred.

TOURISM — STAY, PLAY AND SAVE CAMPAIGN

128. Mr S.N. AUBREY to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant support for the WA tourism industry throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, which has included incentives and discounts for Western Australians. Can the minister outline to the house what the government's significant support package, including its Stay, Play and Save program will mean for businesses and jobs in Western Australia's tourism industry?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for Scarborough. Many people would not know that the member for Scarborough spent most of his childhood in Mandurah, so he is a Mandurah boy. Now he is the champion of Scarborough.

It is great to have a question from the member for Scarborough because this is an important program. As we are aware, COVID-19 has impacted on tourism in Western Australia, as it has across the world. Of course, we are doing so very well in many parts of our tourism sector, including, of course, in the regions with the Wander Out Yonder campaign, which the former Minister for Tourism launched last year and which has been an outstanding success. One thing that we have found in Perth in particular is that many of our hotels have midweek occupancy rates that are lower than we would want. Yesterday, I launched on the back of a trike, with a couple of likely looking "trikists"—for want of a better word—the Stay, Play and Save campaign. I do not know whether "trikists" was the correct word! I launched the second phase of the State, Play and Save campaign, which is focused very much on enticing people to book a midweek stay for two or more nights in hotels in metropolitan Perth and its surrounds. That will support not only those hotels with bed numbers, but also, through this second phase of the campaign, a number of our tourism operators who operate within the Perth CBD and its environs. In addition to the two nights, people will get \$200 off their booking. They will also get two vouchers that allow them to have a mystery experience. I can tell members that there are some great experiences as part of this package.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I seek protection from my own side!

People can have a great experience on the trikes that I rode yesterday or go on a segway tour.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am from Northam, so I pronounce things differently!

Segway tours. They can go on an Eat the Street walking tour. That is a great tour. I talked yesterday with the young lady who explained that. It was a great experience. People will also get a meal at each of the 40 participating hotels, including in the member for Scarborough's electorate at the Ramada By Wyndham VetroBlu Scarborough Beach, which is a great hotel.

Mr V.A. Catania: You're struggling with this portfolio as well, aren't you?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Pronunciation was never my greatest strength.

This is a very important initiative for the tourism industry and for Perth in particular. Weekend bookings in our Perth hotels are going well, but we want to get people out into our city hotels midweek, and the Stay, Play and Save campaign is focused on doing that. The first phase of the campaign was very successful. We saw an increase in bed numbers of several thousand as part of that program and we want to keep doing that. I ask the member for Scarborough to entice all his friends and family from the great regional City of Mandurah to make a midweek booking. I ask all members to do that because that will support our hotel industry in the Perth CBD and its environs, our excellent experienced tourism operators who operate in Perth and the Western Australian economy.

CORONAVIRUS — AGED-CARE FACILITIES

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

I refer to the health direction issued on 27 April 2021 that enabled union officials access to aged-care facilities but kept family members of residents locked out of the same facilities during the Anzac weekend COVID-19 lockdown.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that he is a member of the United Workers Union, as identified in his annual parliamentary return?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please. Members, we would like to be able to hear the questions and I would also like Hansard to be able to transcribe them. If I could hear the remainder of the question in silence, please.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Speaker.

- (2) Did the minister declare a potential conflict of interest when engaging the Chief Health Officer on this matter?
- (3) Does allowing entry of non-essential workers such as union officials who can meet members outside the facility increase the risk of COVID-19 spreading to highly vulnerable residents in aged-care facilities?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1) In answer to the member's first question, I am a proud member of the United Workers Union, and I admire the great work that it does.
- (2)–(3) In answer to the other aspects of the member's question, for the purposes of all the directions, family members were allowed to attend, as were advocacy services. That was entirely consistent with the directions that were put in place. I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party is prone to accusing various unions of being radicals and of taking on extreme policies and things of that nature, but the United Workers Union pales into insignificance compared with the extremism and the ridiculousness of the policy stance of the Liberal Party of Western Australia. Do not forget that this is the same political party that supported Clive Palmer when it came to tearing down our borders and trying to compromise the health and wellbeing of Western Australians. I think that the member for Cottesloe, the Leader of the Liberal Party, should reflect on the fact that nearly every advocacy organisation in this state was doing the right thing during the pandemic by making sure that they got behind the government, and in particular the Chief Health Officer, to make sure that we could chart a course out of this global pandemic. The one organisation that was out there pronouncing extreme views and actually compromising the health of Western Australians was the Liberal Party. I will stand behind any moderate organisation like the United Workers Union any day, particularly when it makes you guys look like a bunch of ridiculous fools.

CORONAVIRUS — AGED-CARE FACILITIES

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

I have a supplementary question.

Is this not proof that the minister placed his union alliance above the safety of aged-care residents?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! It seems that about 50 people can answer this question, but I would just like the Minister for Health to answer it.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I said, it was entirely consistent with the directions to make aged-care facilities available for advocacy services. From that perspective, there was nothing about the decision that the Chief Health Officer made that was inappropriate. As I said, I will stand behind any organisation that will actually propose responsible advocacy and put forward ideas that are consistent with and are an appropriate way of moving forward.

I note that the member for Cottesloe has been on the record fairly recently because of his extremist views around safe access zones and the idea that it is okay to intimidate people who are accessing legal medical services. Quite frankly, it exposes just how out of touch the member for Cottesloe is, which is the reason why it is just you and your mate who are sitting on the opposition benches.

POLICE — RECRUITS — KIMBERLEY

131. Ms D.G. D'ANNA to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to keeping Western Australians safe through the delivery of the single biggest recruitment of police officers in the state's history. Can the minister outline to the house how this unprecedented increase in police numbers will support communities right across the Kimberley, particularly in Broome, Kununurra, Halls Creek and Derby?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for Kimberley for her question and for her advocacy for her constituency. It is extraordinary to see the amount of energy she has already demonstrated in her role, and the incredible pressure she is applying to my office to ensure that she gets everything her constituents need. The member for Kimberley would already be aware that the previous Minister for Police delivered an incredible reduction in crime right across the Kimberley, from the time it peaked under the former government in 2016, of 8.5 per cent in Broome, 3.5 per cent in Kununurra, 17 per cent in Halls Creek and 7.7 per cent in Derby. That aside, the really interesting fact is that there are now 136 more police officers in the Kimberley than when the other side was in office. That is partly, but mostly, before the current commitment that we are delivering right now from this election: 950 additional police officers during this term of office; a 15 per cent increase in the police force in one term of government. That is extraordinary. It has never been seen before in Western Australia.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will result in better services to the entire state, including Carnarvon, when throughout the entire term of the previous government, when the very poor representative for Carnarvon was in office, not one single additional police officer was added to the region during eight and a half years. We have delivered an additional 6.5 FTEs since we came to office, which is part of the 950, if we include Carnarvon. The member for North West Central knows that. He was embarrassed by that fact, but he did not deliver.

There is more to come for the Kimberley. As part of the 950 police officers, there will be an additional 21 officers across the Kimberley, 10 additional officers in Kununurra, six additional officers in Derby, and three in Broome, including two youth policing officers, which is very important, and an additional two youth policing officers in Halls Creek. Our focus is on the concerns of reaching out to young people and ensuring that we keep them on the right path.

All that is great, but the member would be aware of one other factor that she has going for her in the Kimberley, particularly in Broome, because her office was a very avid advocate for this particular policing initiative. There was some concern a little while ago that police dog Hank may be required to come back to Perth for a little bit of retraining. I can confirm that Hank will remain in the Kimberley as a consequence of popular demand. The community of Broome in particular is very supportive of Hank and appreciates the contribution he makes.

The McGowan government has not only already delivered for the Kimberley, but we will also be delivering a lot more unbelievable, never-seen-before increases in police resources right across the state, including all across the Kimberley.

CORONAVIRUS — HOTEL QUARANTINE

132. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the minister's commitment to implement by mid-May all the recommendations of the Glossop Consultancy ventilation review regarding COVID-19 spread in the Mercure hotel. Can the minister confirm whether all seven recommendations have been implemented; and, if not, why not?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

First of all, the member for Vasse has got it wrong again. We did not commit to implement all the recommendations of the Glossop report; we committed to implement all the recommendations of the Weeramanthri report, which is based on the Glossop report, but that is a small matter of technicality.

In relation to the Mercure hotel, I can confirm that we have not undertaken all that work because we are no longer in the Mercure hotel.

CORONAVIRUS — HOTEL QUARANTINE

133. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member has a right to ask a supplementary. Can we just hear that.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister table the advice relating to the recommendations in relation to the Mercure hotel?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: No commentary is required, just the Minister for Health.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I am trying to explain this in the most basic possible terms so that those opposite can understand what we are trying to say. The Mercure hotel was identified as the hotel that was least able to be mitigated in relation to the recommendations of the Weeramanthri review. As a result of that, the Premier and I decided, in conjunction with the Chief Health Officer, that we should vacate the Mercure hotel. It is no longer being used to quarantine international arrivals.

CHILD PROTECTION — ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN CARE

134. Ms M.J. HAMMAT to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's ongoing commitment to keeping Western Australian children safe and supporting WA families. Can the minister advise the house how work underway in the child protection system is delivering new ways of working to empower Aboriginal families to stay safe and together, and to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I thank the member for the question. I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge that today is National Sorry Day. On the eve of Reconciliation Week, and as the Minister for Child Protection, I am acutely aware of the impact of the forced removal of children from their families during the stolen generation, and the ongoing trauma that this has caused many Aboriginal families. It is fitting that this year, on the eve of Reconciliation Week, the theme is more than a word. Reconciliation requires action and, as a government, that is what we are committed to do.

Today, I was pleased to join the member for Mirrabooka, along with representatives from the Department of Communities and key stakeholders in Aboriginal services, to announce that Mirrabooka is the metropolitan site for extending our Aboriginal family-led decision-making pilot. That pilot is designed to strengthen Aboriginal self-determination. It will help address the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care. Members might be aware and remember that we announced that Geraldton will be the regional pilot site for this new way of working in child protection. The program is designed to provide a culturally safe place for families at risk of child protection intervention or help reunite children who are in care by working with their families to provide solutions. Under the pilot, independent Aboriginal convenors facilitate conferences and discuss with Aboriginal families how they can not only keep children safe, but also support the families to make sure that those children stay connected with their families. Hopefully, that will avoid the need to come into care, but if children continue to come into care, they will keep the relationship with their immediate family as well as their extended family.

I want to make it clear that we will not compromise child safety; that is always our central priority. We know that we can make inroads to reduce the number of children in care if we involve Aboriginal families and their representatives in better decision-making processes in child protection. It takes concerted effort, and, to that end, we are committed to doing the hard yards with Aboriginal people, communities and their organisations.

I was also pleased to complement this announcement today with a \$10.3 million commitment to extend for two years the Aboriginal in-home support service program delivered by a consortium of Aboriginal organisations, led by the Wungening Aboriginal Corporation. This service provides intensive in-home practical support to Aboriginal families to address safety issues, to keep children safely at home and, if necessary, to reunite them if they have been brought into the child protection system. It has been a very successful model. Early indications are that we are getting some really good results from that program as part of our overall effort to work stronger in partnership with Aboriginal families and their representative organisations. We have seen the lowest rates of growth in child protection for over 20 years, and in regard to Aboriginal families since 2004. In fact, for the first time in many decades, in the March quarter this year we saw a decline in the number of children coming into care, including Aboriginal children.

These are the early signs and reasons for optimism. As I said, we will not compromise child safety, but when we can work in partnership with Aboriginal families and their representatives, that is our commitment. It is a practical application of reconciliation that this government is committed to. It takes a village to raise a child and that is what this government is determined to do—work with the Aboriginal community and their representatives to get better outcomes for some of the state's most vulnerable families.

CYCLONE SEROJA — WESTERN POWER — INDUSTRIAL ACTION

135. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the recent strike action by Western Power employees that threatened energy stability and the recovery efforts of midwest and northern wheatbelt communities impacted by cyclone Seroja.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that 55 per cent of reconnection works in parts of the midwest, such as Eradu and Wicherina, are still incomplete?
- (2) Given that it has now been six weeks since the tropical cyclone devastated these communities, does the minister concede that any additional delays caused by strike action will directly impact family livelihoods and safety and place them in further jeopardy through inappropriate union action?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(2) No. I cannot confirm that figure. That is not correct. Over 90 per cent of houses affected by cyclone Seroja have been reconnected.

CYCLONE SEROJA — WESTERN POWER — INDUSTRIAL ACTION

136. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Energy:

Thank you, minister. That information comes direct from Western Power and I can provide the minister with that information if he wants to keep abreast of what is actually happening in the area. I am only too pleased to keep him up to date with what is actually happening!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, it is not an opportunity to have commentary; it is an opportunity to ask a supplementary question, so I will ask you to do that.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have a supplementary question. What is the minister doing to speed up reconnection works and to ensure that no further industrial action disrupts the resupply to farmers in these communities, some of whom are still not able to access their properties to finish seeding?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

Again, I do not understand why the member has the wrong information. It is not true to say that the member got that information from Western Power because that is absolute rubbish! Member, you have an obligation to come into this chamber and tell the truth and I suggest you do that!

There were 31 500 houses out of power at the height of the damage from cyclone Seroja. Let us understand what happened. An area the size of Tasmania was taken out by cyclone Seroja. It was 150 kilometres across and 700 kilometres long. It is a remarkable effort that over 90 per cent of those houses have now been reconnected, not 45 per cent like the member claimed. It is just dishonest! It is dishonest to come into this chamber and say that only 45 per cent of houses have been reconnected. That is a dishonest claim, and the member will have to explain why he has taken that action.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister is claiming that I am dishonest. I offered to provide him with the information direct from his own agency, that being Western Power. I am happy to present or to lay on the table a document from Western Power that outlines exactly the state of play in those areas in the midwest.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: There is no need for a further point of order because I am not upholding that point of order. Minister, I just ask you to draw your answer to a conclusion in a less controversial way.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No wonder only four per cent of Western Australians support the Nationals WA when it has such appalling representation! If a person comes in here and does not know that what he is saying is wrong, that is worse! The connection points of 31 500 houses were affected by the cyclone. Over 90 per cent—not 45 per cent—have been reconnected. Many of the ones that remain outstanding have had extensive damage. In that one area, we are putting in a year's worth of work to get them reconnected. There has been no impact by the Electrical Trades Union dispute and I applaud the ETU's decision today not to proceed with strike action. Western Power tells me the truth. I do not know where you get your information from, but it is not from Western Power!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you! I would like to be able to give the member for Kimberley the call.

BANNED DRINKERS REGISTER TRIAL — KIMBERLEY

137. Ms D.G. D'ANNA to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to reducing alcohol-related harm, particularly in regional Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the rollout of the banned drinkers register, including the trial in Broome and Derby?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house what the banned drinkers register will mean for those communities in the Kimberley?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

I would dearly love to respond to the member for Kimberley and I applaud her compassion and energy in representing her community. This question is another example of that.

- (1)–(2) On Saturday, 1 May, the member and I were in Broome for the soft launch of the banned drinkers register and the takeaway management system. The rollout begins in Broome and Derby, and, of course, in

subsequent weeks, it will be rolled out across the Kimberley in its entirety. This is a very effective way of tailoring a process that addresses alcohol harm without impacting on responsible drinkers across the community. It is important to know that this initiative has come from the ground up. It has actually been encouraged by the community, local governments, liquor industry, hospitality industry and sellers of packaged alcohol who wanted a system that protects people who are vulnerable to harm and their families, but also balances that against a legitimate industry that supplies alcohol to people who consume it responsibly. Therefore, it is a very important initiative.

As the member will know, it is a very simple system in which someone supplies their identity, usually in the form of a driver's licence, at the point of sale. If they are on the banned drinkers register, a red light will appear and they will not be able to take away that alcohol for consumption. It has worked very well in the Pilbara where it is being trialled and we are going to have an independent assessment through the University of Western Australia to ensure that it is working well, but all indications are that it has been successful in the Pilbara and it will be successful in the Kimberley.

I would like to congratulate my predecessor, the former minister, for playing a leading role in this initiative. We are also going to—in time, member for Kalgoorlie—turn our attention, as we have committed to do, to the goldfields because the community in the goldfields has been very keen on the application of this system there. Again, it is a system that allows people to consume alcohol responsibly, but it is a way of stopping access to people who are vulnerable to the abuse of alcohol and their families, so it is a very important initiative.

I would like to thank Bradley Woods of the Australian Hotels Association and Peter Peck of the Liquor Stores Association of Western Australia for their support of this very important initiative. It is crucial that it has received industry support. I also thank the hardworking people at the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries who have put in a lot of time to get the system working. It is using Western Australian technology, which is the best in the country, and I understand that this technology is being applied in other states as well. Not only is it a great initiative for the Kimberley, the Pilbara and soon to be the goldfields; it is also resulting in a new industry for Western Australia that is employing Western Australians and developing Western Australian technology.

PINDAN GROUP — GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

138. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Finance:

I refer to the \$481 million worth of contracts awarded by the state government to the Pindan Group since 2010. Of these contracts, how many and what collective value are likely to be impacted by Pindan's insolvency, roughly?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I am waiting to give the call. Minister for Finance.

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I think that by the end of the member's question he understood that maybe he should have given us some notice with regard to the details. Therefore, if the member maybe wants to give me some notice, I will provide him with the details to that question.

PINDAN GROUP — GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

139. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Finance:

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister assure the communities of Port Hedland, Peel, Kwinana, Northam and others throughout the state that projects awarded to Pindan will be completed, given the company has collapsed?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I can assure the member that this government is working as hard as it can to ensure that the situation that has been brought about by Pindan being put into administration is alleviated as much as possible. As the member knows, last night, we introduced groundbreaking legislation in Australia. I know the member supported it, so I am sure he agrees with that. That is one avenue. As the member knows, the Department of Finance has project bank accounts for many of the projects with Pindan, to ensure that we can honour the contracts as much as possible with regard to the separate bank accounts.

As the member also knows, this is a difficult situation. The Minister for Housing is also working as hard as he possibly can to ensure that the contracts we have with Pindan for housing maintenance continue. Whether they continue in their current format, with the administration active in respect of Pindan, or we find alternative sources of labour from other subcontractors et cetera, those are matters that we are investigating. I can assure the member that he can be confident that this government is doing everything it possibly can with regard to this matter.

CYCLONE SEROJA — WESTERN POWER — INDUSTRIAL ACTION*Question without Notice 135 — Supplementary Information*

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [2.50 pm]: I rise under standing order 82A to provide additional information to the answer I gave. I am advised by Western Power that as of 24 May, the majority of homes and businesses had their power restored, with around 280 homes and businesses still awaiting connection in the area affected by cyclone Seroja. That is less than one per cent of houses that were disconnected at the height of the damage.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION*Council's Resolution*

Message from the Council received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution —

That the Legislative Assembly be invited to agree to the rules and orders of the Legislative Council contained in the schedule for the constitution, powers and procedure of a Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation.

SCHEDULE**10. Joint Delegated Legislation Committee**

- 10.1 A *Joint Delegated Legislation Committee* is established.
- 10.2 The Committee consists of 8 Members, 4 of whom are appointed from each House. The Chair must be a Member of the Committee who supports the Government.
- 10.3 A quorum is 4 Members of whom at least one is a Member of the Council and one a Member of the Assembly.
- 10.4 (a) A report of the Committee is to be presented to each House by a Member of each House appointed for the purpose by the Committee.
- (b) Where a notice of motion to disallow an instrument has been given in either House pursuant to recommendation of the Committee, the Committee shall present a report to both Houses in relation to that instrument prior to the House's consideration of that notice of motion. If the Committee is unable to report a majority position in regards to the instrument, the Committee shall report the contrary arguments.
- 10.5 Upon its publication, whether under section 41(1)(a) of the *Interpretation Act 1984* or another written law, an instrument stands referred to the Committee for consideration.
- 10.6 In its consideration of an instrument, the Committee is to inquire whether the instrument —
- (a) is within power;
- (b) has no unintended effect on any person's existing rights or interests;
- (c) provides an effective mechanism for the review of administrative decisions; and
- (d) contains only matter that is appropriate for subsidiary legislation.
- 10.7 It is also a function of the Committee to inquire into and report on —
- (a) any proposed or existing template, *pro forma* or model local law;
- (b) any systemic issue identified in 2 or more instruments of subsidiary legislation; and
- (c) the statutory and administrative procedures for the making of subsidiary legislation generally, but not so as to inquire into any specific proposed instrument of subsidiary legislation that has yet to be published.
- 10.8 The Standing Orders of the Legislative Council relating to Standing Committees will be followed as far as they can be applied.
- 10.9 In this order —
- “instrument” means —
- (a) subsidiary legislation in the form in which, and with the content it has, when it is published;
- (b) an instrument, not being subsidiary legislation, that is made subject to disallowance by either House under a written law;
- “subsidiary legislation” has the meaning given to it by section 5 of the *Interpretation Act 1984*.

[Leave granted for Legislative Council message 1 to be considered in detail forthwith.]

Consideration in Detail — Motion to Concur

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I move —

- (1) That —
 - (a) the terms contained in Legislative Council message 1 for the establishment of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation be agreed to; and
 - (b) the members for South Perth, Scarborough, Churchlands and Nedlands be appointed as members of the committee.
- (2) That the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly.

This formally establishes the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, with us answering the other place's message and appointing our members. The committee will be able to commence its functions as a result of this motion.

Question put and passed.

The Council acquainted accordingly.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AUDIT

Council's Resolution

Message from the Council received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution —

That the Legislative Assembly be invited to agree to the rules and orders of the Legislative Council contained in the schedule for the constitution, powers and procedure of a Joint Standing Committee on Audit.

SCHEDULE

7. Joint Audit Committee

- 7.1 *A Joint Audit Committee* is established.
- 7.2 The Committee consists of the Members of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations and the Members of the Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee.
- 7.3 The Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations will be the Chair of the Joint Audit Committee.
- 7.4 The Standing Orders of the Legislative Council relating to Standing Committees will be followed as far as they can be applied.

[Leave granted for Legislative Council message 2 to be considered in detail forthwith.]

Consideration in Detail — Motion to Concur

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I move —

- (1) That the terms contained in Legislative Council message 2 for the establishment of the Joint Standing Committee on Audit be agreed to; and
- (2) That the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly.

The audit committee is an important committee and it is constituted by determination of the members, and I wish them well.

Question put and passed.

The Council acquainted accordingly.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION

Assembly's Resolution — Council's Concurrence

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had concurred with the Assembly's resolution, and had appointed as members Hon Klara Andric and Hon Dr Steve Thomas.

[Leave granted for Legislative Council message 3 to be considered in detail forthwith.]

Consideration in Detail — Appointment of Members

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I move —

That the member for Moore and the member for Kalamunda be appointed as members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission and that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly.

Again, this is an important joint standing committee of both houses and through this motion we are appointing the member for Moore and the member for Kalamunda as the Legislative Assembly's representatives on that joint standing committee.

MR R.S. LOVE: I thank the Leader of the House for that motion and for the nomination of the member for Moore to the committee. I note also that the member for Kalamunda has been nominated to serve on that particular committee. I know that the member for Kalamunda served on that committee in the fortieth Parliament, and I made my feelings known on 12 May in this place about my concerns about the behaviour of the member for Kalamunda at times on that committee. I want to put on record my concern about his previous disposition to appear to wish to reveal in public the deliberations of that committee. That committee deals with some very, very important matters, for which it is vital that the committee's deliberations are respected and treated in the accepted manner of committees in this place, and that no information is given out from that committee other than what the committee itself, as a majority, authorises to occur.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I can assure the house that the government has absolute confidence in the member for Kalamunda to carry out his duties as a member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission.

Question put and passed.

The Council acquainted accordingly.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Assembly's Resolution — Council's Concurrence

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had concurred with the Assembly's resolution, and had appointed as members Hon Klara Andric and Hon Neil Thomson.

[Leave granted for Legislative Council message 4 to be considered in detail forthwith.]

Consideration in Detail — Appointment of Members

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I move —

That the member for Murray–Wellington and the member for Albany be appointed as members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People and that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly.

Very briefly, this, again, is another important joint standing committee that reports on issues regarding the Commissioner for Children and Young People. It is a very important joint standing committee and I am very confident that we have some excellent representation from the member for Murray–Wellington and the member for Albany as the Legislative Assembly's representatives.

Question put and passed.

The Council acquainted accordingly.

SUPPLY BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [3.00 pm]: I seek an extension.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: In concluding my remarks in my contribution on the Supply Bill, I want to tease out some of the challenges that are facing the iron ore industry on both the supply side and the demand side. Of course, on the demand side, Australia represents about 68 per cent of China's supply of iron ore. It is very clear in its strategic ambition that it wants to find alternative sources of supply of that most important commodity. On the demand side, there are varying numbers for the sort of steel production that China needs to undertake to meet the demands of its growing ambitions for its continuing urbanisation program. The tonnage of iron ore is expected to continue at its current rate and, in potential terms, to increase over the next 20 years. That obviously puts pressure on a couple of things, not the least of which is the price that China will pay for that iron ore. We can see that in the latest iteration of the cycle whereby prices have got to an all-time high. We have also seen that impacted by the inability of Vale in Brazil to supply at proper production rates. Of course, that will rebalance in the fullness of time and Brazil will rejoin Australia in providing most of the iron ore that China needs. The domestic supply of iron ore in China has a very low iron content, so it is a poor contributor. China is increasingly searching for iron ore with a higher Fe content, which again highlights the attraction of Simandou, with its 65 per cent-plus Fe content. It will blend that iron ore with the suboptimal Fe product from Simandou and, ironically, from Fortescue Metals Group to ensure that it achieves the inputs.

The other thing to note that will increasingly affect demand over time is China's uptake of scrap metal. It is not often talked about, but there is a growth in electric arc furnaces in China. In its latest five-year plan, it has an ambition

to contribute 15 per cent of supply into the steel market, so scrap metal and recycled material both in the domestic supply and from overseas will be a continuing feature of the Chinese steel market, and the impacts on iron ore are going to be obvious and continuous. Members might remember that in 2019, China banned the importation of waste from other countries, and scrap metal was caught up in that. It redefined that term last year to allow for the importation of ferrous metals to include in its expansion of the EAF capacity and convertors, which are a really important aspect. The reason it is important is that the other growing pressure is the impact on its climate commitments around targets. EAFs have a lower full-cycle impact on carbon emissions, as they reduce the reliance on thermal coal-fired furnaces. The demand side aspect will be impacted. That will have an outlet in providing an increased incentive to look for new areas of supply, and Simandou is one of the prospective suppliers.

We should also note and keep a weathered eye on the total global production, which is currently over 2.2 billion tonnes. Simandou is estimated to produce only about 150 million tonnes of that a year, if it hits its mature state, which is, as I said earlier in my comments, contingent on a range of issues, not the least of which is the cost of between \$12 billion and \$18 billion for the infrastructure for the 650-kilometre rail line to the port and the construction of the port. But the will is there. Rio Tinto, as a 45 per cent holder of blocks 3 and 4 in the Simandou range, expended \$2.5 billion in 2018–19, so there is a commitment to making sure that, at the appropriate point, it is ready to participate, probably in a joint venture with a Singaporean conglomerate, along with Chinalco and the Guinea government, to bring those four blocks to market. The Guinea government has repeatedly shown its commitment to it in the way it has reissued those blocks, particularly to Rio and Chinalco. It is also adamant that it will not go through Liberia or a third country to reach a seaport; it will have to go through those 650 kilometres. But there is a will and it will find a way to do it.

The best research that has come from various bodies identifies Australia as having an inferred asset of about 52 billion tonnes, and we are taking out in the order of 800 or 900 million tonnes a year. If we follow that bouncing ball alone, there will be increased pressure on the supply for Australia to continue to open new mines. Rio has an ambition to open a mine every two years. No doubt the investment in infrastructure in the Pilbara will continue in the short to medium term, but at some point it will be looking over the horizon at a price point that has an entrenched ceiling in relation to the ongoing potential supply from places such as Simandou, which could have an impact of as much as \$11 a tonne. I am putting it in double digits, not the triple digits that we are seeing now for a tonne of iron ore. That will impact on and stem new investment in the industry in the sector and it will look for alternatives.

These are the sorts of pressures that we, as parliamentarians, and certainly the government, need to have regard for when we look over the horizon. I can see a parallel, funnily enough, with other disruptors like Uber. Ridesharing technology has been around for seven or eight years now. When there is a regulated plate industry, as we had with the taxi industry, there is a conferred moral obligation to look over the horizon to see what is coming that would impact on that regulated industry. Members will have seen the rise of the rideshare industry in San Francisco and, as a result, they will understand the impact of its disruptive influence on our little market here, just as it has had in the gig economy through the different sharing platforms.

These are the sorts of things that we need to be alive to. The alternatives to these things are not business as usual. The alternatives and responses to these things are the responsibility of each and every one of us. We need to understand which of the various areas that we already have a competitive advantage in we need to take a good, hard look at and invest in now to ensure that we are good and ready to transition, if you like.

As I say, with 2.6 million people, we do not need a lot to make a difference. We can improve employment rates and improve a lot of people's lives by finding those sorts of industries that are either tangential to, aligned with or wholly separate from the resources sector. Aquaculture is a good example of a previous responsibility I had in the fisheries portfolio. Again, we have that natural endowment of 12 500 kilometres of coastline, with some of the most pristine waters and the best growing conditions for certain species of fish and shellfish. We have identified that in Albany alone, in its mature state, there will be potentially 1 000 hectares of commercial grade grow-out beds for oysters. That represents the largest single production site in the Southern Hemisphere, and it will deliver 1 200 jobs—not just jobs for the life of a project like a mine, but jobs that will be intergenerationally transferred over a thousand years. Long after the last red rock has gone over the horizon, we will still be drinking wine and eating oysters, and that is not a bad ambition.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Speaking for yourself, are you?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes. It is not a bad ambition. Self-interest is always the best course, comrade!

These are the sorts of things that we need to turn our mind to. They take effort and they take will. The various governments in the 1960s that moved the regulation away to allow the opening of the Pilbara had the sort of intensity that we need to bring to bear on something that is far more nuanced and difficult. Iron ore happened because global capital found us. We did not go asking for it or looking for it; the opportunity came knocking. It was always going to come. As a result, we have increased the culture of price taking. We are seeing ourselves as supplicants to the global markets that will just take the price that we are given. We are not activists. Victoria is an example. As an alternative, it had to get past the resources boom of the 1800s a long time ago. Its single biggest industry is education

and international education, and it has a service economy that supports it. It has had to invent and seek the opportunities for that state that are represented around the globe. We, too, need to go forward and seek, because asking gets the money. We have to get out of Western Australia into those new markets and state the case for the competitive advantage that Western Australia has, not just for outbound supply, if you like, but also for foreign direct investment, going to places such as the traditional economies of Europe and North America to find those businesses that want to take advantage of the opportunity that exists right here, in one of the most livable cities in the world and one of the safest jurisdictions in the world. That is the sort of ambition and agenda that I want to pursue as a parliamentarian and I will continue to do so for the next four years.

MS D.G. D'ANNA (Kimberley) [3.10 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I rise today to make my first contribution on legislation in this house and to speak in support of the Supply Bill 2021. First, I would like to again thank the people of the Kimberley for giving me their trust to represent them in the Western Australian Parliament. It is one of the greatest honours of my life and I will work hard every day to ensure that I do not let them down.

This bill will allow the continued expenditure of the money of the state on items that have already been authorised by Parliament, and there is a lot of good news for the Kimberley electorate in that expenditure. This government has made a significant investment in the Kimberley to create local jobs, support the local economy and improve services such as health and education. A number of major projects are underway around the Kimberley, including \$98.1 million for the Great Northern Highway—Ord River North project; \$36 million for upgrades to Gibb River Road; \$20 million for Aboriginal short-stay accommodation in Kununurra; \$12 million for battery energy storage systems; and \$10 million for the Broome TAFE hospitality and student services centre. Most importantly, we are making sure that local jobs are created as part of these projects.

As we all know, the past year has been a challenging time, but we have managed to keep our state safe from COVID-19. This is particularly important for the Kimberley region, an area that has many vulnerable populations of people living in remote communities. Keeping the state safe also means we have been able to open our economy faster than anywhere in the world, protecting thousands of jobs. This is evident across the Kimberley as we head into the tourism season. We have seen a record investment in regional WA by this government. Creating jobs and training opportunities for Western Australians will always be this government's priority. Now that the McGowan government has been re-elected, I look forward to the commitments outlined in our Kimberley plan coming to fruition. This means there will be further upgrades to local schools and TAFEs, new tourism infrastructure and initiatives, improved health services, a significant investment in local roads, and much more.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that today is Sorry Day and we are about to head into National Reconciliation Week. This is a time for everyone in this chamber to reflect on the hurt and suffering experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities, which we now know as the stolen generations. This is a time to recall the awful policy that took children away and placed them in institutions where horrible things were done to them. It is also a time to acknowledge that justice has still not been fully met, as we see people still living with the legacy of the abuse that occurred in those places and the denial of their own culture and connections to their people and country. Today I ask everyone to commit to continue to work towards reconciliation and healing for the stolen generations, their families and communities.

Tomorrow we enter National Reconciliation Week, and the theme for this year is a sentiment that I carry everyday as I represent the people of the Kimberley: "More than a word. Reconciliation takes action." Reconciliation is a journey of all Australians and relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia. As stated by Reconciliation Australia —

We all have a role to play when it comes to reconciliation, and in playing our part we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples histories, cultures, and futures.

2021 marks twenty years of Reconciliation Australia and almost three decades of Australia's formal reconciliation process.

What is that action? One way for us to see reconciliation achieved is the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Today is the fourth anniversary of the Uluru Statement. I was lucky enough to join more than 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates at Uluru for historic talks about changing Australia's founding document, the Constitution. It was wonderful to hear the federal Labor Party today reaffirm its commitment to the three elements of a route to a constitutionally enshrined voice to Parliament, back in self-determination and listen to what First Nations people have told us. It was four years ago today, and this country is a poorer country for not having listened to what people said.

Although I am new to this place, the government has invested record levels of funding into the Kimberley electorate. This can be seen in the 2020–21 state budget and in the budgets we have seen since the McGowan government came to office, which have all benefited greatly the people of the Kimberley. I would like to acknowledge my predecessor, Josie Farrer, who was a great advocate for the Kimberley and made sure we never missed out on funding and were always moving forward.

There has been great news for TAFEs around the Kimberley over the past four years. An amount of \$10 million was invested in the North Regional TAFE's Broome campus for a new hospitality and student services centre to expand training in hospitality and tourism, with a particular focus on supporting Aboriginal businesses. In the East Kimberley, the government invested \$6 million in the North Regional TAFE's Kununurra campus for a new health and hospitality trade training centre to deliver specialist training facilities for National Disability Insurance Scheme-related courses and hospitality training.

It is also important to fund early childhood education. This government allocated \$3 million to Wyndham District High School to rebuild the early childhood education centre. Over \$8.5 million was injected for maintenance at Kimberley schools as part of the government's maintenance blitz. Our kids in the Kimberley deserve to have high-quality education close to home. This government invested \$19.3 million towards upgrades, and in the election campaign I committed \$2.5 million for Broome Senior High School to upgrade its canteen and \$1.9 million for a brand new science, technology, engineering and mathematics classroom. Another great commitment from my campaign was \$10 million for Halls Creek District High School to build new classroom blocks and a new food and textiles classroom.

As I travel around the Kimberley speaking to educators, I hear time and again how successful the Kimberley schools program has been. This government invested \$25 million towards the Kimberley schools program to drive better education outcomes in the region, and from what I am hearing on the ground, it is welcomed.

We Kimberley people know that hitting the road and driving the long stretches between communities and towns is a lot easier and safer when the roads are sealed. That is why it is so important that government invests in our roads. That is exactly what the McGowan government has done. Since coming to office, the McGowan government has funded a record number of road upgrades and has sealed roads across the Kimberley, including \$12 million through the regional road safety program to upgrade 100 kilometres of roads with shoulder sealing and the installation of audible lines, creating 55 local jobs; \$51.5 million for the upgrade of Duncan Road and Gordon Downs Road; \$25.8 million to upgrade Great Northern Highway from Broome to Kununurra; \$42.7 million to upgrade Tanami Road; \$68.5 million for the Great Northern Highway upgrade at Bow River and Maggi's Jump Up; \$36 million to continue improvements of Gibb River Road; \$4 million to complete the sealing of internal roads in Bidadanga and the community airstrip; and \$65.7 million to continue work on upgrades to Broome-Cape Leveque Road, which created 290 jobs with nearly two-thirds of the total project hours on site completed by Aboriginal people.

Listing millions and millions of dollars of investment might just sound like words and numbers, but these road upgrades change people's lives. There are many flow-on effects from making sure that people in remote communities can travel to see family and friends or for work, education and important health services.

With the sealing of Broome-Cape Leveque Road, we now see the Dampier Peninsula thriving with visitors as well. This has been great for tourism operators. There are many unique and beautiful places on the Dampier Peninsula, and \$4.2 million has been invested to activate tourism opportunities on the Dampier Peninsula. If members are planning to come up for a visit this season, as the minister said earlier, get in quick before there are no spots left!

COVID-19 obviously affected our tourism industry in the Kimberley, but the McGowan government has committed to a range of measures to help keep as many businesses alive as possible during the pandemic.

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Up in the gallery, can you keep the noise down a bit, please.

Ms D.G. D'ANNA: This includes the 101 Kimberley and Pilbara businesses that secured funding from the McGowan government's \$8.7 million tourism business survival grants program. North-west tourism operators secured more than one-third of the 266 grants allocated to Western Australian businesses, recognising the particular challenges that the Kimberley and Pilbara tourism sectors have faced during COVID-19. This initiative complemented a range of other measures to boost local visitation to the Kimberley, including the Wander Out Yonder campaign, regional flight deals to Broome and Kununurra, and the tour and experiences voucher program. I am proud to be part of a government that is continuing to work on further initiatives to support the Kimberley and Pilbara tourism sectors as they look to recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

Last week, I was lucky enough to attend the Kimberley Moon Experience in Kununurra, the biggest annual event in the Kimberley. I saw many locals and tourists at the events I attended across the weekend, and it was wonderful to be back in the East Kimberley. There was an amazing welcome by the Mirima Dancers and I got to see some great talent in Jessica Mauboy, Busby Marou and Emily Wurramara. Events like this remind me of how much the Kimberley has to offer. On my travels, I passed a lot of caravans and four-wheel drives full of visitors ticking off their Kimberley trip on their bucket lists!

I am really proud of our commitment to expand the Aboriginal ranger program, with an investment of \$50 million. Since 2017, the \$20 million program has supported 35 projects, the employment of over 370 Aboriginal people—53 per cent women—and 390 training opportunities. The program has also made an important contribution to Aboriginal wellbeing and culture, along with improved environmental management and land restoration. Since

2017 in the Kimberley, the program has supported seven projects, injected \$3.628 million into Indigenous communities and delivered 55 jobs and 45 training opportunities. The program has been significantly oversubscribed, with demand from around the state. The re-elected McGowan government will invest \$50 million in the groundbreaking Aboriginal ranger program to create jobs and training opportunities across the regions. The ranger program has had significant community development outcomes for Aboriginal people across Western Australia and this will be continued under this government. Under the program, Aboriginal organisations that support existing and emerging ranger teams can employ and train rangers to carry out land and sea management, as well as cultural and tourism activities. It has been designed to operate across a range of tenures in remote and regional Western Australia.

This is a program I am very proud of. It is delivering economic and social benefits for the Kimberley by providing job and training opportunities for Aboriginal people, which in turn helps build community resilience and leadership. This program is another element of this government's continued commitment to the self-determination of Aboriginal people and their communities. The funding delivered under this program is already having positive social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes.

I will now speak about investment in something that is so important for individuals, families and communities across the region, and that is social and emotional wellbeing. As we all know, the suicide rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Kimberley has remained disproportionately high over the last decade. A study by the Graduate School of Education and the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia at the University of Western Australia found that approximately 70 per cent of people who died by suicide in the Kimberley were Indigenous people. The study also showed that the suicide rate among Indigenous people in the Kimberley is twice as high as the suicide rate among Indigenous Australians overall. On top of that, it showed the total suicide rate in the Kimberley—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—is more than three times higher than in the rest of Australia. These statistics are harrowing, and completely unacceptable. This is why the investment in mental health by this government is so important.

Since the McGowan government was elected, there has been a focus on these issues, including \$32.3 million towards the implementation of a new state suicide prevention action plan; \$9.77 million for Aboriginal regional suicide prevention plans; \$2.7 million for a foetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevention package; \$3 million for expanded and more accessible clinical mental health services in the Kimberley; and a \$266.7 million commitment to the Aboriginal youth wellbeing package, which includes measures to support health and mental health issues in the Kimberley. This funding makes sure that Aboriginal-led and locally endorsed initiatives that accommodate a culturally informed social and emotional wellbeing approach to suicide prevention are prioritised.

As I stand in this place, I look forward to the election commitment made by this government to invest \$29.5 million in Aboriginal health and mental health programs. This includes a \$17.6 million investment into social and emotional wellbeing at five Aboriginal community-controlled health services sites, including in the Kimberley. I could speak for a lot longer on the investment that has been injected into the Kimberley by the McGowan government, and what is to come. I am excited and humbled to be here to advocate every day to make sure that the Kimberley never falls behind and that our standard of living, access to services and opportunities are the same as those for anyone else in the state.

MS E.J. KELSBIE (Warren–Blackwood) [3.26 pm]: I would like to contribute to the debate on the Supply Bill 2021. As the member for Warren–Blackwood, I am pleased to support this bill and will detail some of the important projects the McGowan Labor government has delivered for Warren–Blackwood over the last four years and what it will deliver over the next four.

Students in Western Australia should have access to quality education and modern facilities no matter where they live, and I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to investing in our region and our kids' futures. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, is one of the emerging drivers of innovation across Warren–Blackwood. The McGowan Labor government has prioritised investment in STEM facilities and equipment in schools across our region, including \$400 000 to Bridgetown High School, \$1 million to Manjimup Senior High School, and \$1.5 million to Denmark Senior High School. Our government is also focused on transforming existing primary school classrooms into science labs, including at Boyup Brook District High School, Nannup District High School and Northcliffe District High School.

The government also recognises the importance sport plays in our school communities and that students should have access to first-rate facilities. As part of the McGowan Labor government's commitment to this, \$6.27 million was dedicated to the Margaret River Senior High School to construct a new sports oval. I look forward to working with Nannup District High School as part of my election commitment to provide \$20 000 for a water bore for irrigation of the school oval. This will mean that the gardener will not have to hike one kilometre to the creek to turn the pump on to fill the water tank at the school to water the lawns—lawns that die each year and have to be revitalised!

Like many other electorates, Warren–Blackwood relies on our volunteer firefighters to keep us safe. They do an amazing job. I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to supporting local volunteer firefighters and prioritises investment in fire and emergency services. This week I have to congratulate John Jonker from

Manjimup Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services on receiving the 2021 volunteer service award for providing 25 years or more of voluntary service. He is to be commended. Special mention also goes to Denmark local Roger Seeny who earlier this year received commendation for 45 years of service to local bush fire brigades.

In addition to the \$2 million committed to provide water tanks to volunteer bush fire brigades across WA, the McGowan Labor government is funding upgrades across Warren–Blackwood, including \$690 000 for the Augusta Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, \$230 000 for the Boyup Brook Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and \$20 000 for the Hester Brook Bush Fire Brigade. This investment ensures our local brigades will thrive and grow into the future.

Safety on our regional roads is a key priority for the government, with \$15 million being allocated through the regional road safety program to upgrade south west roads with shoulder sealing and the installation of audible lines. The \$24 million upgrade of South Western Highway between Donnybrook and Greenbushes will contribute to a safer, more reliable drive, supporting the community, freight drivers and tourists in our region. We put safety first and we will continue to deliver key infrastructure projects that will continue to help grow our economy.

As part of the COVID WA recovery plan, the McGowan Labor government created a pipeline of work to deliver infrastructure and economic stimulus projects across WA, with significant investment in infrastructure to drive tourism and create jobs. The WA government's revamped Buy Local policy ensures that local businesses benefit from a large number of infrastructure projects across my electorate. In Warren–Blackwood, we committed just over \$3 million, on top of the \$5.5 million already invested, to fast-track the third and final stage of the Margaret River main street redevelopment project. We have also committed \$12.78 million to establish trail towns and centres to service existing and new trails in the great southern region, including the realignment of the Munda Biddi Trail through William Bay National Park, to Denmark, and new trails in the Valley of the Giants, to Walpole. The government has committed \$411 000 for the development of the Blackwood River foreshore tourism precinct in Bridgetown to improve access to the Blackwood River, provide a new shelter and a viewing platform and upgrade the art and heritage walk trail. The government has committed \$231 000 for the Bridgetown Town Hall and civic centre redevelopment to enable it to become a hub for creative industry and art events and to expand the annual Blues at Bridgetown festival.

There is \$450 000 for Pemberton attraction projects, including replacing viewing decks at both the Gloucester Tree and the Bicentennial Tree sites; connecting a power supply from Pemberton town to the Gloucester Tree to service a commercial operator; and completing the replacement of the boardwalk at Beedelup Falls. There is \$350 000 to commence rebuilding the Pines mountain bike trails in Margaret River and \$40 000 for mountain bike trails planning and redesign. There was also \$3 million committed towards the Margaret River HEART multipurpose centre. These projects provide much-needed upgrades to tourism infrastructure and will continue to increase job opportunities and have a positive impact on local economies throughout my electorate. I encourage members to visit these towns and see for themselves the significant investments being made by this government in our tourism infrastructure and the creation of local jobs. Members will find that Warren–Blackwood is a thriving and vibrant electorate with many different experiences to offer.

In addition to investments being made into tourism infrastructure, I am pleased that our government continues to invest in festivals and events across the region. The government recently announced funding towards the Nannup Flower and Garden Festival, the Wadandi Surf Classic in Margaret River, the Nannup Music Festival, the Karri Valley Triathlon in Pemberton and the Margaret River Ultra Marathon. These are just some of the many positive initiatives the McGowan Labor government is rolling out to improve services and facilities and create jobs in Warren–Blackwood.

The McGowan Labor government is also committed to putting patients first in regional WA and to ensuring regional patients have access to quality health care closer to home. The opening of the \$37.6 million Warren Health Service has brought modern health care and facilities to Manjimup. Through this project, emergency inpatient and outpatient services were brought together under one roof with upgraded medical imaging and improved technology support for clinicians and patients. This project has ensured that we are delivering twenty-first century health care to the residents of Manjimup and surrounding districts. Our continued investment in the patient assisted travel scheme will also ensure residents in Warren–Blackwood are able to access an increased accommodation subsidy of up to \$100 a night if they need to travel to a major centre to seek treatment. Changes to the escort eligibility criteria mean more people are also able to access the service.

During campaigning, I met many inspiring people and organisations, including Jasmine Meagher and Kylie Lucas. These two women were juggling little kids, jobs and relationships, all while trying to secure regulatory approval and funding to set up Augusta and Districts Community Childcare. I know personally how important it is to have access to quality, affordable child care locally. As someone who had to return to work when my two kids were small, both under three months old, I was lucky enough to have these services available locally. Currently, families in Augusta and surrounding areas travel to Margaret River or Cowaramup to access child care. Some are waiting for the not-for-profit centre to open so that they can start work. Others are waiting for it to open so that they can increase their hours at work, while others are waiting for it to open so that they can get some rest or go to the gym.

I look forward to delivering my election commitment of \$100 000 to Augusta and Districts Community Childcare and seeing the centre support locals in the community. There are already over 80 children on the waitlist.

On the other side of my electorate, I met Joy Ugle from the Mount Barker Aboriginal Progress Association, who talked to me about the great work of the Mt Barker Aboriginal Community Centre. We talked about how the centre could be better utilised if the heating, cooling and roof could be sorted out. It is pretty cold down our way in winter. The centre has only a wood fire for heating and no roof lining for insulation. People are less inclined to sit in the centre for longer periods. I look forward to seeing the centre's climate control being sorted out with my \$23 000 election commitment.

I am proud beyond words to represent the communities in my electorate and be part of the team that consistently delivers for regional WA, and I support this bill.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.37 pm]: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Speaker, and a fine one you will make.

I also rise to make a contribution to the Supply Bill 2021. The bill is administrative in nature and is required because the budget process, which would normally happen in May, is delayed every four years, after a state election, until about September. The expectation is that the budget will be introduced in September. New members will not know this, but they will experience it for the first time this year; that process takes about two months, as the estimates hearings progress in both houses before finally the appropriation bills can be passed. This bill allows Treasury to charge things to the consolidated account when the appropriation bills have not yet passed for the new financial year. It is an important bill because whilst we are waiting for this year's budget process, we still need to pay for the delivery of educational services, health services, police and the public sector. To do that, we need to access the appropriation funds, and this bill allows the government to do that. As has been said before, this bill is not unusual and it has been the norm since 2013; it also happened after the state election in 2017. Of course, last year was slightly different; because of COVID, the budget was delayed in not only this state but also other states, and the federal government also delayed its budget.

In speaking to this bill, I want to take the opportunity to again highlight the sound economic management of the McGowan Labor government. The Premier mentioned yesterday that Western Australia's unemployment rate is 4.9 per cent, which is the lowest in Australia. The Premier also recently tabled the 2020–21 *Pre-election financial projections statement*. That is Treasury's independent outlook for the state's finances and its economy. It clearly shows that Treasury is projecting a strong operating surplus over each of the next four years, totalling \$8.7 billion. We put the finances back on track in our first term of government, which we will continue in the second term. We have been a responsible and stable government, and that has allowed us to respond strongly during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that we keep Western Australia safe and have a strong local economy. A big part of that was our recovery plan of more than \$7 billion and the record \$28.9 billion that we put towards infrastructure investment. If I have time, I might go into that.

In talking on the Supply Bill, I take this opportunity to talk about education. Labor always does education better than the opposition. I am proud to take a few minutes to explain how that plays out, particularly in my electorate. Since I was elected as the member for Wanneroo in 2017, I have been very proud that the McGowan Labor government has invested over \$27 million in my local schools. I take the opportunity to highlight some of the commitments and investments that have been made to my local schools. I will also take the opportunity while I can to highlight National Volunteer Week and give a shout-out to the important people in our schools' parents and citizens associations. I will start with Spring Hill Primary School. It is a fantastic local school. As part of the recovery project, it was allocated \$2 million for a new early childhood education centre for its kindergarten and pre-primary students. I look forward to going and seeing the progress of those works that are happening right now. That facility will provide three purpose-built classrooms to cater for up to 90 children. Additionally, as part of my re-election commitments, I have committed to giving \$75 000 to Spring Hill Primary School and its P&C to provide shade for the large sandpit and to support the reconfiguration of Crimson Way car park, which is a really big issue at that local school in terms of being able to safely park and collect children after school. I acknowledge the school's principal, Steve Routledge; P&C president Laura Goodall, who is also from the canteen; vice-president Aaron Veaney; treasurer Sheena Fitzgerald; secretary Kerryn McGirr; fundraising and grants coordinators Melanie Vote and Charissa Saenz; and Zoe Clune, uniform liaison coordinator.

Last week I visited East Wanneroo Primary School and met with principal Dorothy Mckee. I am really happy to see that the \$2 million that was also announced as part of the recovery package is being used to build a new early childhood and education centre for kindy students right now. That is important because it replaces a tired and ugly transportable classroom and it will make East Wanneroo Primary School a much more attractive school for new families in the area to want to send their kids to. I look forward to that kindy facility being opened later in the year to cater for 90 students at the school. In addition, I am pleased to say that the McGowan government is supporting the school with \$25 000 to provide large shade infrastructure for the school's B block. I acknowledge principal Dorothy Mckee, president Catherine McCracken, vice-president Bron Mills, treasurer Kylie Dougall and secretary Sarah Woods. They do an incredible job.

I had the great privilege of attending Wanneroo Primary School's Anzac Day dawn service, which was a real highlight. It was an incredible experience for the parents, children and families to come together before school for the Anzac Day dawn service. I acknowledge principal Terri Reid, long-serving president Jaylene Palmer, vice-president Kelly Carew, secretary Sue Cowpe, treasurer Tarryn Smyth, and fundraising coordinator Alison Grose. I am really delighted that as a result of being re-elected we were able to support the school by providing \$82 000 for Bali huts, shade sail and, very importantly, a Colorbond structure for its after-school kiss-and-drive routines.

Banksia Grove Primary School is a new school that I will be very happy to represent as part of the redistribution. It is a fantastic local school. As part of my re-election commitment, I am happy for the state government to provide it with \$27 000 for shade sails and a mobile kitchen. National Volunteer Week has just finished. I acknowledge principal David Drabble, president Lauren Denny, vice-president Samantha Hutton, secretary Amber Hodgson and treasurer Jessica Daniels.

Carramar Primary School is another of my great local primary schools. I am happy that we have been able to support the school with \$90 000 to progress its vision for the school, including extensions to the verandah for the assembly area, and play equipment and gardening upgrades. I acknowledge principal Maree James—she and her staff do an incredible job; P&C president Simone West; vice-president Louise Graham; treasurer and uniform subcommittee coordinator Andrea Cassar; secretary Stephanie Williamson; the fundraising coordinator and her team, Rochelle Breeze, Rachael Woodfield, Beth Barnes and Amanda Joseph. Amanda is also on the fundraising subcommittee and is the canteen subcommittee coordinator. They do a fantastic job and I cannot wait to get back to see them all and support them some more.

Grandis Primary School is a new school in my electorate, located in Banksia Grove. I am happy that I am now officially its local member after the redistribution. I am happy that the McGowan Labor government is supporting it with \$42 000 for a new playground and for upgrades to the nature play area. I acknowledge principal Stephen Bevan, who is also the founding principal of that fantastic school; the president of the P&C Kylie Birch; vice-president Amanda McLaren; secretary Jasmin Woodhall; treasurer Krishna Ramani; and executive members Robbie Macleod, Bronwyn Granger and Anne-Marie Pattinson.

I would like to acknowledge the principal of Tapping Primary School, Bill Boylan, who is truly a local legend among not only the teaching fraternity, but also his local community of Tapping. I also acknowledge P&C president Michelle Schneeberger, P&C treasurer Danielle Poppas and secretary Pippa Gale. I am happy that the McGowan government is supporting the school by providing \$17 000 to build an outdoor classroom and to provide more storage.

That leaves me with two of my secondary schools, which, of course, are the feeder high schools for all the primary schools that I just mentioned. I have spoken in this place many times about Wanneroo Secondary College. Members know that I am a former student of Wanneroo Secondary College, having graduated there in 1982. I am very happy that in my first term as the local member I was able to see that school receive a brand-new gymnasium, which is a fantastic facility, particularly for its specialist programs. The school runs a great specialist AFL program. I recently met with the new principal, Justine McNaught-Conroy, to get an update. As part of the recovery package, we announced \$5 million for a new performing arts theatre. The works are well underway on that facility, which will really complement that school and allow it to go even further with the specialist performing arts programs that it runs. I also acknowledge P&C president Richard Moore, secretary Jacquie Sargent, treasurer Emma Lamancusa and vice-president AnnMaree Miller.

Joseph Banks Secondary College is the second state high school in my patch. Like Banksia Grove Primary School and Grandis Primary School, Joseph Banks is now officially one of the schools in my electorate. I have really enjoyed working with the school over the last four years and I have already paid it a couple of visits since being re-elected in March. Back in August, the Premier came out to the school to announce that \$16.1 million would be provided to build a student classroom block because of an increase in enrolments, replace the transportable classrooms and deliver better teaching facilities. I would like to say a bit more about that but before I do, I want to publicly acknowledge principal Eleanor Hughes and associate principal Liz Smith, as well as the P&C—its president Adene Rikert, vice-president Jane Tempest, treasurer Jennine Woodham and secretary Lisa Castellas.

As I said, Joseph Banks Secondary College received \$16.1 million as part of the recovery plan. This is not just for any old classrooms; this funding will provide for the building of general classrooms and specialised classrooms for science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and allow the school to finally realise its long-held aspirations to create an exciting space academy at the school. We are talking about the space science education centre. It is pretty exciting. Joseph Banks has long been driving the focus in science, technology, engineering and maths. Over the past four years, it has been my great pleasure to see the innovative and amazing programs that this school runs for our young people, including the introduction of SCIScope and after-school programs with the feeder primary schools to get primary school children to come to the high school and engage in science and STEM activities. The school has also introduced a centre of resource excellence program and a pathways in technology program. It also has a great focus on cybersecurity. In 2020, the college established the Cheryl Praeger mathematics academy for girls. It not only places a high priority on ensuring that young women contemplate STEM, but also supports them in trying to navigate a pathway through ATAR subjects. A number of young women are doing mathematics specialist and mathematics methods at that school. It is fantastic to see how the school supports those girls in those endeavours.

The school offers a number of STEM programs. One in particular that I wanted to give a quick shout-out to is the F1 in Schools STEM challenge program. The school nominated a number of teams in this national competition. The supersonic racing team, made up of Maddie Loft, Zed McKenna, Richa Prajapati, Isobel Cubong and Ashton Bliss, were recent finalists in the national championships. They did not win, but I visited them a couple of times and saw their work. It just blows my mind to see what kids in years 9 and 10 are doing in technology these days. It is just staggering. I would like to publicly say that although they did not win this time, I spoke to their teacher, Michael, when I visited the other day and he assured me that they have been energised and want to go one better next year. They are already planning to enter the competition again, hopefully with even more success.

Joseph Banks Secondary College has really set the scene for a long period to take its programs to the next level. The \$16.1 million investment that was announced by the Premier in August will allow it to do that. It will help set up a space, science and education centre that will include a purpose-built facility to provide students with a simulated Mars surface and access to technology that will provide a mission control experience, as well as access to specialist technology and science facilities to undertake space science experiments, and, of course, support its incredible STEM programs, some of which I mentioned. The space science education centre will provide learning opportunities for the students at Joseph Banks while also servicing and providing access for other Western Australian schools, teachers and students to the program. The school is a true leader in this field. The space centre will provide professional learning in the sciences and best practice instructional strategies for remote and regional schools to outreach learning opportunities through the use of technology and innovative programs, and of course community education opportunities, creating viable links to the space science industry. The school is very much about developing innovative and authentic curriculum through partnerships and collaboration.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms S.E. WINTON: When I first talked to the principal and the associate principal a few weeks ago about how construction was going, it was great to hear that it was progressing well. Of course, we can have the best buildings and facilities in the world, but it is what we do inside those buildings that really counts. I was delighted to represent the Minister for Education and Training on 20 May at the school's next steps in this project. It held a design thinking forum in the development of its space science education centre. I was a bit intimidated and blown away when I turned up to this event. The purpose of the design thinking forum was to gain insight from industry, research bodies, government and tertiary sectors into the future of space science to guide how the space centre is going to look and ensure that the curriculum that it will develop for the students who will use this space science centre is responsive to the needs of industry and aligned with tertiary pathways. I was seriously blown away by the people I met that day and the people who had invested their time and energy to join Joseph Banks to formulate the way forward for the space centre. I am talking about people and organisations within the industry, such as Australian Remote Operations for Space and Earth; the Australian Space Automation AI and Robotics Control Complex; the Victorian Space Science Education Centre; Curtin University's Space Science and Technology Centre; the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation; the Western Australian Defence Industry Workforce Office; the Gravity Discovery Centre; INSEAD; Exodus Space Systems; North Metropolitan TAFE; Curtin University's Australian Space Data Analysis Facility; UWA; CSIRO—it was geek city—the Skilling Australia Foundation; Atomic Sky; a representative from the Department of Education's statewide support services' teaching and learning services; Innovate Australia; and Airbus. I am looking forward to getting feedback from the school principal and the associate principal on the outcomes of that day. I am very confident that what will come out of that session will beautifully blend with this physical facility and capital infrastructure that the McGowan government has invested in that school.

I quickly want to note that although the initial commitment was for \$16.1 million, I am really delighted that the Department of Education has funded a further \$1.3 million to ensure that the building is fit for purpose as both a secondary teaching facility and a specialist space science education centre. The additional funding provided by the department will essentially fund the infrastructure costs, including the additional scope to accommodate the Mars landscape room. This includes additional works required to facilitate the fit-out of the room, including additional structure steel, slab thickening, insulation under the slab, wall insulation, a double volume room, an additional mechanical plant room and mechanical equipment. It is quite clear that this is no big cutter learning block; this facility at Joseph Banks Secondary College will be state of the art, and will support our local students to take up the jobs of the future and provide pathways for them to go to not only university, but also TAFE. It is very important that we provide our young people with the opportunity to develop skills for the jobs of the future in this workforce.

Education has always been a very important part of my life, from when I first graduated from high school to being a schoolteacher. I am really happy that in my role as a member of Parliament, that can continue. Although I do not get to teach as often as I would like, I enjoy the opportunity to not only advocate for, but also promote, my local schools. Whenever I get the opportunity, I will seek additional support and funding for them so they can do the important work of making sure that we provide the best educational opportunities at our local public schools.

Joseph Banks Secondary College and Wanneroo Secondary College are the secondary schools of choice in my electorate, and I am very proud that people in my electorate have the opportunity to send their students to high schools of such high calibre in the public education system.

How am I going? If I had another 10 minutes, I would have a whole lot to talk about transport, particularly about what is happening in Wanneroo, but I am happy to let members know that I have a grievance tomorrow so I can give members a bit of a taste of that.

Mr V.A. Catania: You're not going to whinge are you?

Ms S.E. WINTON: No, I am not going to whinge. We tend to be positive on this side of the chamber. The member is the biggest underachiever in this place; he has been here since 2005. I am quite happy to take every opportunity that I can to stand on my feet to sing the praises of this government and how it puts education front and centre. We are able to do that because of the strong financial management that we have had over the last four years—it continues—as we prioritise the key things that Labor does well, which is education and health, and, as members will find out in my grievance tomorrow, that is how we do transport in the northern suburbs as well.

I am still looking at that clock, but it is not moving!

Mr D.A. Templeman: How's that theatre repertory club going?

Ms S.E. WINTON: The Limelight Theatre is doing very well.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I haven't asked them for a role yet.

Ms S.E. WINTON: I have suggested it a couple of times.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH — PERFORMANCE

Motion

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.01 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Minister for Health for his failure to deliver the required level of leadership and management across his current portfolios, resulting in a litany of failures that have placed and continue to place the lives of Western Australians at risk, including —

- (1) failure to address record ambulance ramping;
- (2) failure to implement “Malakai’s Rule” as promised in 2016;
- (3) failure to build three medihotels as promised in 2017;
- (4) overseeing a series of failures in Western Australia’s hotel quarantine system, culminating in the resignation of hotel quarantine chief Robyn Lawrence;
- (5) presiding over cultural and resourcing issues at Perth Children’s Hospital, culminating in the resignation of Child and Adolescent Health Service chair, Debbie Karasinski, and the attempted resignation of PCH chief, Dr Aresh Anwar;
- (6) failure to secure proper resourcing for the WA health system more broadly; and
- (7) failure to earn and maintain the respect and confidence of healthcare workers to properly lead and manage our important public health system.

Obviously, the motion today is made up of quite a comprehensive list that is supported by the opposition. The comprehensive list and the number of concerns have been raised by not only the opposition, but also the public of Western Australia. This certainly underlines the real concerns that we, in this corner of the house, have regarding the health portfolio. This has sent shockwaves and has been felt throughout the Western Australian community. It is extraordinary that in a state as prosperous as ours, which has a projected surplus of \$5 billion, we have to debate the ongoing failings in WA’s health system. This state has enjoyed very little spread of COVID-19, but concerns continue regarding ambulance ramping and a range of other issues in our health system. This year we have yet to experience a flu season, and we last year had some of the most damning statistics in this regard.

This system is under-resourced and is at breaking point. We saw yesterday the level of concern of health workers at Perth Children’s Hospital where over 1 000 people protested and underlined real concerns about a system in crisis. The McGowan Labor government promised four years ago that it would deliver a commitment for gold-standard transparency, but all we have seen since is spin. In the most recent election campaign, we heard a commitment to keep Western Australia safe. Unfortunately, in relation to that commitment, all we have seen is spin. How the unravelling healthcare system has come to light in recent times, particularly since late last year, illustrates the incompetence of the McGowan government in an area that should be one of the most important priorities of any government. The minister cannot continue to blame the previous government for issues that obviously have happened under this government’s watch.

The Minister for Health has had four years in this very important role, and eight years before that as the shadow Minister for Health, to improve what he called, when shadow minister, “a crisis”. I spoke earlier this week during

a matter of public interest and referred to some comments that the minister made as the shadow Minister for Health; namely, he called the statistics under the previous Liberal government a horror story. I also pointed to the fact that current statistics, in comparison, are quite damning, particularly ambulance ramping figures, which earlier this year were the highest ever on record in Western Australia at 4 111 hours. Those are damning figures. The elective surgery list has grown by 40 per cent. That should not be seen in a health system in a state as prosperous as ours.

In the first two years of the McGowan Labor government, cuts were made to the overall health budget. Overall, a decline in funding has occurred when the pace of inflation is taken into account. The level of investment has not met health system demands or matched the inflation experienced across this state. We have one of the lowest number of beds per 1 000 people in the country. The McGowan government has failed to meet its own objectives in respect of ambulance ramping. The government had committed to gold-standard transparency, but its response has been to stop reporting the figures. Fortunately, St John Ambulance does provide these figures, which, as I stated earlier, illustrate that this government does not have health under control. This government fails to acknowledge that we have a crisis. It has overseen some very concerning statistics in this space. It has failed to meet its own objectives relating to ambulance ramping. While in opposition, the now health minister stated that 1 500 hours of ramping was a crisis level, but the numbers now are significantly greater. As I stated earlier, there have been 4 111 hours of ramping just earlier this year without any community spread or other significant issues regarding COVID or a flu season.

The budget is under extreme pressure even when dealing only with bed block, ambulance ramping and issues that present at emergency departments. In addition to playing catch-up on these issues, there is a lack of focus on drivers of health issues. This is particularly so in mental health prevention, which I understand from the Labor government's commitment for health prevention this year is sitting at about five per cent of the total service mix, which is well below the national average.

What we saw yesterday at the joint Australian Nursing Federation and Australian Medical Association rally was unprecedented. There were 1 000 healthcare workers, doctors and nurses, shoulder-to-shoulder, all in support of and calling for change, and a line in the sand. We saw some members of the health profession travelling from as far as Albany for that event. I understand the last time such a rally was called was about eight years ago. As Mark Olson from the ANF said, politicians respond to two things: bad press and rallies, although that is not always the case; I have a lot of confidence in members on both sides of this chamber and I certainly hope that we start to see some significant change in the approach to the health portfolio. That has to start with an acknowledgement that we are at a crisis level in terms of health, and backing that up with significant investment in the portfolio and looking at some real systemic change.

Doctors and nurses were united in their plea to be heard when voicing concerns about potentially life-threatening situations in our emergency departments. They want to be heard; when warning that staffing is dangerously low and will lead to serious and potentially tragic outcomes, these health professionals do want to be heard. When they are telling executives that they are burnt out and there is not enough staff, they want to be heard as well.

I have been contacted by a number of healthcare workers in recent months and they are frankly exhausted. I received a letter just recently in follow-up to a meeting I had with a nurse of over 30 years' experience. For obvious reasons, I can provide the details to Hansard, but she would prefer her name not to be used, but she is at a metropolitan hospital. She wrote, according to my notes —

In the past, if staff numbers were down, beds had to be closed so that the nurse to/patient ratio was not exceeded, thus ensuring safe care; we are now instructed that there are to be no empty beds regardless of staff numbers; this is unsafe both for patients and for nurses.

In all my years of nursing I have never seen such high levels of absenteeism among nurses, and this is due to exhaustion and burnout. With all the pressures put on nurses, including being bullied into complying with what they know is a situation which could result in a dangerous situation, staff know that if anything goes wrong they will be the ones who will be blamed, as in the junior nurses at PCH. In such cases they elect not to work in certain hospitals; such is the case at KEMH because it is too dangerous.

We now have a system in which nurses are refusing to work in certain hospitals because it is too dangerous. Yesterday, in the face of hundreds of nurses and doctors, the minister offered a commitment to fix the culture, fix the relationship between staff and executives and build trust. We really want to see what that commitment will be on the ground. We also want an acknowledgement that we have a health system in crisis, and we want a significant investment in beds—not just 117 in the short-term, but a significant investment, and not only at Perth Children's Hospital, but in hospitals across the state.

Healthcare workers say that they raised questions 12 times with hospital executives before Aishwarya's death. This is of significant concern. We asked some questions in Parliament today about the root-cause analysis, and it was concerning that the minister was unable to provide information about the presentations that were made in relation to the root-cause analysis and what was presented from last October to April this year.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes, it is extraordinary. As the Leader of the Opposition points out, the fact that information has not been recorded and is not available is quite extraordinary, given the information that we are talking about. What we are talking about relates to lives. We are talking about staffing shortage issues that are having a direct impact on patient care. Those are the very grave and serious issues that have been raised by senior clinicians, and it defies belief that that information is now not available.

We have also asked questions in this place in relation to staffing, because it defies belief. The recommendations of the report highlight those concerns about staffing and the comments made by the Australian Nursing Federation. I refer to an ABC online article from April which quotes ANF state secretary Mark Olson as having stated in December that it would take —

... a catastrophic incident to occur before something changed —

In relation to staffing policy. They felt they would be thrown under the bus when this happened. The article also goes into all the warnings that were raised at Perth Children's Hospital. We still take the position that it defies belief that there is somehow a divide between what was highlighted in the internal review of staffing and the fact that the government has since made a commitment to additional staff. There is an additional 16 dedicated staff to resuscitation and triage support, but at the same time the government is still saying that there was no issue on the evening of 3 April. In response to questions I asked yesterday on this point, the minister made a mockery of my supplementary question and went back to his original point that staffing was not an issue, while at the same time highlighting the fact that staffing is an issue not only at Perth Children's Hospital but also in emergency departments in hospitals across the state.

That is exactly our point. Our point is that staffing was an issue at Perth Children's Hospital; it quite obviously is an issue. That is key to one of the reasons why there were so many health workers protesting yesterday. It is also an issue not just at Perth Children's Hospital but at many hospitals around the state. That is a key concern of not only our healthcare workers and the ANF and the AMA, but also the people of Western Australia. It raises concerns about how we got to this point.

I touched on the fact that the government has run down the health portfolio since coming to office four years ago. I will now touch on Aishwarya Aswath. It was obviously a devastating incident for a child to have to wait for two hours in our state's flagship hospital to receive care. There are some key issues that relate to how the system can be improved, and we certainly look forward to an independent external inquiry and the progress of that in relation to that tragic incident. I know each member of the house supports such an inquiry into the devastation that that has caused to that family. It raises the question of why there was not an independent inquiry into the tragedy in the first place, because since that incident we and the public have seen the bungling of the inquiry report—it has been there for all to see. In May this year, these comments were reported —

“The report represents a significant volume of investigation, however, it is the opinion of the CAHS executive that there are a number of elements that require further exploration.

“The additional independent external review must be completed before we can, in good conscience, consider this investigation to be finalised.

“This additional targeted review will ensure we fully understand the opportunities for systemic change.

“While we await the additional independent external review, we are not in a position to endorse this root cause analysis report.

I should note that those were not comments from the minister; they were comments made by the Child and Adolescent Health Service chief executive, Aresh Anwar. It is extraordinary that the government's own report was not endorsed by the chief executive of CAHS. If executives will not endorse the report, what is the point of it? We have certainly raised the need for an independent review, and there is some concern about why one was not initiated in the first place. The family obviously wants some answers, and the fact that they have raised some issues about the consistency of the report is certainly a significant concern.

Earlier this week, I had the privilege of meeting with Prasitha and Aswath, at their invitation. They are obviously experiencing grief, but they would like to see, and it is fair to say that they are certainly supportive of, the commitment to “Aishwarya's Care”, but they have asked whether it will experience the same fate as “Malakai's Rule”. Some concern has been raised independently from the family. They have obviously been in contact with Malakai's grandmother, but they are concerned that the comments made by the then shadow Minister for Health back in 2016 about “Malakai's Rule” did not amount to anything substantial when he came to government.

We add that to our list of concerns about things that we feel could have been done better to ensure that there was a better level of care. We will wait to see the outcome of the independent inquiry. This illustrates that there is a significant difference between what the then shadow Minister for Health stated pre-2017 and what the now Minister for Health is committing to and is seeing as acceptable after the re-election of the McGowan government. It is not just the fact that the now minister has dropped the commitment for “Malakai's Rule” or something similar;

we also know that when Perth Children's Hospital was opened in 2018, there was supposed to be a triage support nurse to check vital signs, but this was never implemented. We certainly support the fact that, more recently, in the wake of the 3 April tragedy, the minister has made a commitment to implement that support.

There has also been some concern about the level of staffing at Perth Children's Hospital and the fact that the waiting room was left unattended for half an hour and staff were stretched between performing resuscitation and working in the waiting room. We certainly welcome a commitment for dedicated staff for resuscitation, as well as triage support, which I have touched on already.

There is also some concern about education for our junior staff. The Australian Nursing Federation and the Australian Medical Association have certainly been calling for this. The feedback that I had from the rally yesterday was that staff development officers no longer have the opportunity to undertake staff development; they are too busy being stretched and pulled onto the floor. They are not working to improve staff skills and to encourage a better culture within the staff workforce, but instead are being stretched to fill in the gaps in an overworked workplace.

I have already touched on the bungling of the report. One of the most obvious reasons for the protest at Perth Children's Hospital was that two nurses and one junior doctor were referred to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, based on a report that the government has refused to endorse. A *WAtoday* article states —

“You may be aware that two of our colleagues and as well as a junior doctor have been referred to APHRA based solely on the SAC 1 report that the government executive have now rejected because they said it was flawed,” Mr Olson said.

“We know the family deserves answers but this does not happen by concentrating the blame on a few junior staff and denying there are significant failures in the system.

This is another attempt by the minister to deflect blame. The AMA, as many people know, has taken an unprecedented step of referring the director general of Health and the CEO of CAHS to AHPRA as well. We know that the family, in their grief, has also referred the whole of Perth Children's Hospital.

The bungling of the internal report and the refusal to undertake an independent inquiry until that internal report had been completed illustrate a significant level of incompetence in the health portfolio and a lack of leadership in this area. I also have a quote from the panel, which was certainly taken aback by the comments of the CEO of the Child and Adolescent Health Service that the report would not be endorsed. The fact that recommendations were tabled in this place as part of a report that was not even endorsed by the CEO is, quite frankly, gobsmacking. It raises real questions about people's faith in the health system. It obviously illustrates another attempt by the government not to take proper responsibility and see this important portfolio as a priority.

I would now like to touch on the fact that what we are seeing in the health portfolio are concerns not only at Perth Children's Hospital, but also right across the health system. As I stated earlier, that is highlighted by the fact that we had 4 111 hours of ambulance ramping earlier this year, the highest number ever on record and certainly more than triple what we had at the peak under the previous government. Western Australia has one of the lowest rates of beds per capita in the country and for a state as prosperous as ours, they are damning statistics, particularly when we are hearing real concerns from health workers on the ground. However, the toxic work culture is also concerning—a work culture that is not supporting our junior staff. I note the Premier stated there was a concern regarding the culture at Perth Children's Hospital. We believe that culture comes from the top. We heard at the Perth Children's Hospital rally that there has been concern about the level of support needed by health workers. The root-cause analysis highlighted some of those concerns. Health workers did not feel that they were able to raise genuine issues of concern that they had around patient safety, work numbers or staffing numbers in their workplace. We know that is not the case at just Perth Children's Hospital. We know that is happening elsewhere, and those stories are coming across the board. I referred earlier to concerns raised by one worker about staff being stretched.

I point now to the situation in Bunbury. Of the doctors surveyed by the Western Australian branch of the Australian Medical Association, 80 per cent were worried about staff morale. That is concerning. We know that the government has a habit of providing scapegoats or throwing people under the bus when things go wrong. There has been real concern at the South West Health Campus about the emergency department's specialists. I quote from *Medicus* —

They acknowledged ... that improvements were needed in communication between consultants and junior doctors, the payment of overtime and provision of formal teaching.

They also pointed to the ED as a particular minefield. “A number of consultants have handed in their notice because they're unhappy with the loss of a great head of department in Adam Coulson, or their contracts haven't been renewed. This seems absurd given the department is permanently short-staffed, reliant on locum registrars and consultants to fill a deficit. No help from WACHS with new contracts or a staff drive appears to be at hand.”

The report goes on to state —

No less than 43 staff specialists engaged at BRH contacted the AMA (WA) independently to express their profound lack of trust and confidence in WACHS Executive as a result of Dr Coulson's experience.

That is an emergency department specialist who effectively was dumped without any explanation and had raised a lot of concerns among his peers as well. I spoke only yesterday in this place about this. I referred to some feedback that I had from a staff member on the ward about Dr Coulson's departure, and certainly the amount of stress and anxiety that had caused fellow workers at Bunbury Regional Hospital as well. They saw Dr Coulson as someone who was an advocate for patient safety. He was very supportive of junior staff and training and education, but also was not afraid to speak up. It is very disappointing. It is important to note that the AMA has backed and shared those concerns and, in fact, underlined them. The fact that 43 staff have said the same things about that senior consultant points to an underlying issue and perhaps one of the reasons health workers do not feel they have the ability to speak up. These are real concerns. A number of issues have been raised at Bunbury hospital in relation to medical errors. A recent case involved 35-year-old Melody Taripe who died in childbirth in July at Bunbury hospital. It was a tragic medical bungle that points to a system in crisis.

Budget cuts have occurred at other hospitals as well. There has been a \$10 million budget cut to St John of God Midland Public Hospital. It is concerning to hear the government's explanation for why this is happening. We have heard doctors and health workers on the ground also raising concern about the impact this would have on patient care—that lives would be lost. The minister's response to that was that it was because of a contract that was signed under the previous government. We do not believe that is good enough. The minister cannot continue to blame the previous government for failings and a lack of commitment in the health space. If the funding is not enough, if a decision is made to cut funding and that impacts patient care, surely a Minister for Health should take responsibility, listen to those concerns in the interests of the patients in the east metropolitan area and reconsider such a cruel cut, which, as I stated, would have an impact on patients' lives. That is not a comment from the opposition; it is a comment raised by the opposition in response to what we have heard directly on the ground in the east metro area.

We know that staff across the board are struggling. We hear that morale is down and that the system is under extreme pressure. In March this year there were significant issues with code yellows. What used to be the exception, in the words of the AMA, is becoming more and more common. In March this year we saw the health system under significant pressure. Again, code yellows were called at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital and Fiona Stanley Hospital. Earlier this month, three code yellows were called in one week. This should not be business as usual. This is not acceptable. Unfortunately, we are seeing a system that is at crisis level, with bed block and ambulance ramping in hospitals around the state. Last week alone, ambulances were ramped for 238 hours outside Royal Perth Hospital, 218 hours outside Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and 144 hours outside Fiona Stanley Hospital. That is 600 hours in one week outside three hospitals. So far this financial year, ambulances have spent 21 126 hours ramping at all three metro hospitals. That figure does not include other hospitals around the state. As I stated earlier, it was 4 111 hours in January, which is certainly a state record. By the minister's own definition, what we are experiencing now must be a crisis. It can no longer be called a challenge. The system is under intense pressure. We know that staff are struggling. We know that morale is down. We know it is a system under intense pressure. They are the words the minister stated. This corner of the house asks that the minister backs this up with a clear commitment to address the critical issues that we are seeing in our prosperous state. We want a real commitment, not to just Perth Children's Hospital and the external inquiry and implementing the recommendations into Aishwarya Aswath's death, which includes "Aishwarya's Care" and a time line for that as well, but also a clear commitment to ensure that we do not see more rallies and that we do not see our healthcare workers wanting. We want them to feel that they are in a safe workplace. To know that health workers do not feel safe at work and feel that they cannot speak up about patient safety and care is a damning indictment on this government.

The minister has stated that quite obviously there has been a failure to implement key policies, such as "Malakai's Rule". That could have made a significant difference across the health system. We have also seen a failure in the aftermath of what happened in early April this year, with junior staff as well as representatives within the health portfolio, including Debbie Karasinski, being made scapegoats. She was in an impossible position, managing a portfolio that has not been supported as it should have been and with a very restricted budget. Instead of providing support, this government has deflected blame and thrown under the bus important and respected people in the health sector. We have seen the minister fail to deliver the required level of leadership and management. Opposition members condemn the government for its failings. We also, once again, are putting a line in the sand and will support the government to change the way that it is doing things, because the status quo at the moment is certainly unacceptable. It is putting lives at risk. In a state as prosperous as ours, we can certainly do a lot better.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [4.41 pm]: I rise to support this motion very eloquently put by the shadow Minister for Health. I think it is comprehensive. It would surprise no-one that we are continuing to raise these issues in Parliament on behalf of the people of Western Australia and, very importantly, the people who work in the health system.

The shadow Minister for Health spoke at length about the distress that was on display yesterday at the rally. It is hard to bring that colour and movement into this place. I was at the rally, along with the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, talking to people and listening to the stories that nurses, clinicians and

parents had to share. I think people have got past the point of being uncomfortable about sharing their stories. It was very clear that they were ready to let their stories spill out in anger against this government. As people quite rightly said, health workers had the government's back during COVID. I have with me some photos that were taken yesterday. One is of a poster that stated "We had your back". It has a picture of the Minister for Health and the Premier. Under the picture, it states "Do you have ours?" These are the people the Premier and the Minister for Health repeatedly stood up to praise and thank—quite rightly—for their work during the COVID pandemic, holding our hospital systems together. These are the people who stepped up to the plate when everybody was seriously concerned about a major outbreak of COVID across our state and nation. These are the people we relied on to upskill and keep us safe in the event of an outbreak. They have been under enormous pressure and really feel that they have done their bit and quite rightly earned the praise of both sides of the house and the community. But they feel so utterly let down.

As the shadow Minister for Health said, it was not just Perth Children's Hospital staff at the rally yesterday; there were workers from different health services, including from as far away as Albany. This was in their own time. They feel so passionate about the issue that they jumped in a car and came up to join in solidarity with their colleagues to make sure that the government understands that what is happening is not good enough. People articulated their concerns on posters at the rally, including "Are you listening now?" Quite clearly, there is a belief within the health system that these issues have been escalated. They had been raised. This has not emerged overnight. They have felt ignored. A common phrase on posters being held up was "Please don't throw me under the bus". People feel as though they have been let down. As the Leader of the Liberal Party said in the debate yesterday, people who feel the least empowered in the system have the least opportunity to express their views within the system, but they are the ones who we sometimes rely on the most. They felt utterly betrayed. I saw a poster stating "I know my hospital executive will throw me", with the checkboxes: "to the dogs", "to the wolves" or "under the bus". There is not one good or positive choice—that is anger. The colour and movement at the rally was an expression of people's concern, anxiety and utter frustration.

There was some commentary in response to the opposition's matter of public interest motion yesterday that it was not that unusual for the Australian Nursing Federation and the Australian Medical Association to stand together and hold a rally. It was confirmed by both the ANF and the AMA that this was unusual and that it was quite a big deal for people to come together and stand shoulder to shoulder. They did that because they share the concern that the government and the people in charge are not listening.

I will move on to some of the issues we raised during the MPI motion that I want to expand on. We spoke about the text messages that were being sent after the minister had assured the public that there was appropriate staffing and that it was not an issue and we need to move past talking about our emergency departments being understaffed. The article "Health system at breaking point" by Peter Law and Briana Fiore in today's *The West Australian* reads —

PCH intensive care nurse Jessica Swanson said there were nurses working 18-hour shifts without breaks because management was approving elective surgeries to go ahead without suitable staffing levels.

The clinical nurse told *The West Australian* she was this week left to care for critically ill patients alongside only junior nurses and put in charge of staffing the unit.

This is not the emergency department; it is another section of the hospital. The article continues —

"We cannot continue like this," she said. "(It was) the most understaffed and under skilled shift of my career."

Ms Swanson said she felt pressured to personally send a text message to 29 nurses who were rostered on for eight-hour shifts to work an extra four hours to cover the deficit.

"I felt alone, under-supported and stressed ... I am very concerned and feel like each day things are getting worse and fear it is only a matter of time before patient safety is compromised," she said.

Even yesterday hospitals—including PCH—were still short-staffed, with casuals sent an SOS, according to 7NEWS.

We were absolutely right to raise that this cannot be a normal way to staff our hospitals—ED or not. Surely, we cannot be relying on nurses working shifts to send out personal SOS texts to staff and provide support to their colleagues so that they are not putting their colleagues and themselves in a precarious position. The nurses and clinicians we spoke to were scared to respond to those text messages, because if they turn up and they are understaffed and something happens, they are nervous that they will be referred to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and might lose their registration. That is their concern. Whether or not that is correct and can happen, that is what these nurses were saying to us. That is what they are worried about. That is the perception and that is the concern.

Yesterday, I very briefly raised that it is not new that nurses and staff in our health system feel less than supported, and I congratulated the minister that the government had introduced an independent survey that went out to every staff member across the state. The survey has a number of questions. A breakdown is then produced of how different

demographics and parts of the health system responded to the consistent questions. An overview and a detailed report are then produced. The survey was undertaken in 2019 and 2020. Issues of concern were raised in both surveys. An analysis of the responses is provided that outlines the overall positives and then there is always a section on areas for improvement. “Areas for Improvement” as identified in 2019 included —

- Creating a safer working environment to assist employees to identify risks; raise concerns; and create opportunities for innovation.
- Increase engagement across all Mental Health areas in all services.
- Employees across all levels and HSPs reported needing more support, tools and resources to assist them to do their jobs well.
- Address communication between teams and managers across the health service.
- Eliminate unacceptable behaviours.
- Increase staff recognition and explore staff work load concerns.

I emphasise “work load concerns”. This has been flagged. This is the voice of those who worked in the health system in 2019.

When we go to the 2020 survey results, we see that the “Top Qualitative Themes” that were raised were grouped into three different subheadings of “Wellbeing”, “My organisation” and “Communication”. The findings were —

Wellbeing

- Perception that staffing levels are inadequate, having a detrimental impact on work life balance and emotional wellbeing.
- Perception that more support is required for employees.

This is from 2019; the findings were released in July 2020. Under the subheading “Communication”, it states —

- When issues or concerns are raised, they are not genuinely listened to, considered or acted upon.

I am seeing some red flags come up. I imagine that if I were the minister and I had feedback such as this directly from a survey that I had asked to be set up, I would be taking that very seriously. I would provide a response or at least ask my executive why these consistent themes are coming out across the Department of Health. The “Focus Areas” are categorised as “Celebrate”, “Investigate” and “Opportunities”. Under “Investigate”, it states —

- Only 50% agree that “teams are recognised for coming up with new and innovative ways of working.”
- 27% disagreed that “I feel valued and recognised for the work I do”.

Close to 30 per cent of the staff felt like they were not valued or recognised for the work that they do. They identify the “Opportunities”, for whoever reads the results of these surveys, as —

- Respondents still do not feel “it is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done”.
- Respondents identified support and wellbeing as an area for improvement.

The findings overview refers to health service providers, including the Child and Adolescent Health Service, the Department of Health, the East Metropolitan Health Service, the North Metropolitan Health Service, PathWest, the Quadriplegic Centre, the South Metropolitan Health Service and the WA Country Health Service and lists two dot points under each, so the feedback has been consolidated. Under East Metro, North Metro, PathWest, South Metro, and WACHS—all those areas—it states “Improve staffing levels”, “Improve work/life balance and staffing levels”, “Improve staffing levels” again, and “Increase staffing levels”. There are so many red flags. There is so much feedback for the executive and the government to be saying that we need to do something about this.

It is good to be open and honest and I think it is courageous when ministers decide to seek feedback directly from the department and also make it public. I have no criticism of that. My criticism is what do they do with that information when they have it in their hands? I go back to the very concise signs and the expressions that were made at the rally yesterday that aligned completely with the information that staff had already provided. The Australian Nursing Federation and Mark Olson has raised again and again that they were aware that issues had been raised or tried to be escalated in December. Staff tried to raise various issues around under-resourcing and staffing 12 times, I think it was, only to be ignored or not given an adequate response. We start to understand why the first rally in eight years was held and why the Australian Medical Association and the ANF have felt compelled to come out and make the very strong statements against the minister and his government.

I read quite often, and I hear in the commentary as I travel around the state, that people wonder why it has come to a head right now and why this was not raised or covered over the last four years. After having sat in this chamber for the last four years, I know that the opposition raised the issue on many occasions and ran private members’ business and matters of public interest and asked question after question. Ambulance ramping was on the agenda.

Ambulance ramping is quite often referred to as the canary in the coalmine. It is one of those signals and something that should send up red flags. If the minister were on his game, watching his brief and across his portfolio, he would look at this and ask how to address it. Then he would add to that the feedback that he is receiving from staff from a survey that he asked for and introduced and seemed to have ignored, I would say, given that we are now at this point.

The debates in this place were lengthy. I can assure anyone who cares to follow the record that the matter was raised and the opposition was doing its duty. On 12 June 2019—we are talking two years ago, at least—an MPI was moved to condemn the minister for his management of the health system, citing a number of distressing incidents in hospitals across the state. I referred to one yesterday—an 84-year-old grandmother who was left on a hospital floor in Geraldton. The shadow Minister for Health at the time ran through a whole raft of incidents. For example, a patient was put in with equipment being stored because they had run out of space. Incidentally, one of the stories I was told yesterday was that regularly in the high-dependency unit—the shadow Minister for Health was standing with me —

Ms L. Mettam: Yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This person was in the neurological ward and said that patients who had come out from neurosurgery were in the corridors. Goodness me. We can imagine the anxiety of the nurse who is responsible for managing the post-operative care of someone who has had brain surgery. It beggars belief that in a state awash with funds we have this occurring on a regular basis.

We go back to 2019, when a series of issues were raised. Claire Fisher at Fiona Stanley Hospital was told she needed urgent surgery after being bitten or stung on the finger, and was also told she would have to sleep in a fitness storeroom full of trolleys, stools and an exercise bike. She was given a bell to ring if she needed to, which she did when she began vomiting. However, the nurses could not hear the bell, so Ms Fisher had to get up and search for pain medication herself.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: There were stories about Kalgoorlie. A story from 7 June reported in *The West Australian*, “Gran ‘left in storage’” states —

A Warnbro family are furious over the treatment of their mother, who was left in a storage area for hours at Mandurah's Peel Health Campus—twice in 24 hours.

There were stories about Joondalup Health Campus. There were stories and incidents relating to the significant increase in the number of assaults on nurses. There was a 55 per cent increase in assaults on nurses between January and June 2018, and the number of code blacks that resulted from those reported incidents. On 13 May, there were reports about a nurse being attacked while on duty at Royal Perth Hospital. We understand that nurses and clinicians take on challenging roles, but no-one should go to work fearing that they might not come home in a fit and healthy state. We are seeing that they are fearing for not only their physical safety, but also their mental safety as a result of working under such pressure for so long. The opposition at the time went through a number of incidents that made your hair stand on end. In the end, the minister's response—I am paraphrasing, but I will get to a specific quote—was that he was expecting an exposition of facts and he was expecting that the opposition would have brought real concerns to the chamber. He said that of course it was not an exposition of the facts; it was an occasional headline that impacts every state minister from time to time. That sums up how dismissive the minister was at the time. The opposition at the time raised at least 10 separate incidents, as well as ongoing systemic issues around ambulance ramping, code blacks, and issues of violence in hospitals. The minister's response to that was that it was the kind of occasional headline that impacts every state health minister from time to time. That is utterly dismissive and goes to the fact that two years on, these concerns are still being raised, but they are absolutely well and truly at crisis point.

Before my time finishes, I want to talk about hotel quarantine and touch very briefly on the minister's inability in the management of hotel quarantine to provide the house with information that I think is very relevant. Four times the opposition has asked a question about the Quarantine Advisory Panel. That was a recommendation of the Weeramanthri report, and it was agreed to and accepted by the government in its own document of April 2021, “Review of Western Australia's Hotel Quarantine Arrangements: WA Government Response”. The government said that it would form a quarantine advisory panel. I will read members what the role of that was to be. The quarantine advisory panel was to —

... provide strategic oversight of WA's hotel quarantine program. This will support the State Emergency Coordinator and the Department of Health in their roles under the State Emergency Management Framework. The Panel will also play an important role in assuring the implementation of improvements to the hotel quarantine system in line with the review's findings.

We have asked four times: What are the terms of reference? Who is the chair? Who is on the panel, what will they be doing and when will it be formed? When we first asked those questions, some vague reference was given to the government taking advice from the panel all the time. However, the next day when we asked another question, it became evident that the panel was not actually in existence. We took the advice that the minister rather unkindly

offered to put the question on notice and we proceeded to not get an answer to that. Two weeks later, we asked the exact same question, and we still have no answer. I have to ask, and I have to wonder: what is the minister doing to progress all these recommendations? It is an incredibly vague document, I might add, with no time lines for implementation or KPIs or expectations. It is a nicely laid out document, but it does nothing more than pay lip-service.

I think that some politics is at play, given that the state continues to prefer to point the finger at the feds on quarantining instead of accepting responsibility for what the state government took on and agreed to do 14 months ago in relation to hotel quarantine. There has been complete inaction on looking at alternatives and providing support and advice and working with national cabinet around how we can make sure that our hotel system is as safe as possible and what the alternatives might be and which hotels have been investigated in case we need to expand our capacity and what will happen if we need to build a new facility. Is any of that work being done? We cannot get an answer on that from the government. I think that the government is choosing to ignore it because it wants to point the finger at the federal government. I do not think that is acceptable and I do not think anyone in Western Australia thinks that is acceptable. We need to be able to repatriate Australians who are stuck in countries. They must be allowed to come home. We must make sure that we have the safest hotel quarantine system possible. We need a plan to ensure that we have an adequate workforce. Right across Western Australia, skilled worker shortages are impacting every sector, yet we do not have a hotel quarantine system that can be appropriately expanded. If we are to be in this position for a long time and to continue with business as usual, I find it extraordinary that this government cannot provide the most basic detail on the most simple points that the government committed to. Either the minister's office is not providing briefing notes, the minister is ignoring them or the information simply does not exist because the minister's office has not been instructed to do anything about it. It is virtually impossible to find out that information. After four goes at asking that question, we have to ask what the minister is playing at. I simply do not understand it. People have an interest in it and we should understand what the role of the advisory panel will be and what role it will play. If it was just a case of padding for a report or the padding of recommendations for the government to look like it was acting swiftly and responding, stand up and tell us. However, if there is substance to what the minister put in this document and committed to, how about we have some time lines and a commitment to provide it in a transparent manner. I cannot think why in the world it is appropriate for the opposition to ask a very clear and simple question and for the minister to refuse to provide that information four times. I think that highlights that the minister's focus is elsewhere.

Again, I think this goes to the notion that we have heard the Australian Nursing Federation request for the need to have a single health portfolio that the minister can give his sole attention to. If the situation does not improve, we need to think about whether the minister should be the Minister for Health in the long term, because there are some serious issues facing this government. I find the journey to get the government's response on hotel quarantine extraordinary. After every report that was written by Professor Weeramanthri, all the information that was created and provided had to be dragged out of the government piece by piece. The government was never going to provide it or make it public. It does not stack up. This minister is facing extraordinary issues. I do not know what work is being done in his other portfolios, but I suspect that they are not getting much of a look-in in terms of face time with the minister. I think that the Leader of the Liberal Party, who holds some of those shadow portfolios, can comment on that. The Deputy Premier holds weighty portfolios. In Health, we have every right to expect that the government is putting all its focus on this. No-one would judge the government if there were a single health portfolio with a single minister in light of the issues that have been raised again and again and that are only escalating.

With that, I look forward to the minister's response on these very serious and weighty matters that we have raised and I thank the shadow Minister for Health bringing this motion to Parliament.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [5.08 pm]: It is a shame that the Minister for Health has had to pop out for a bit because he might have enjoyed the first part of my contribution to the debate. There is one important thing in life when organisations or individuals make mistakes, and that is to own them. They work out why the mistake was made and move on. Yesterday, I contributed to a vigorous debate on this topic during the matter of public interest. In that debate I said that the Minister for Health and the Premier had viewed footage of an incident that had contributed to some of the outcomes. I did that because I was informed by a person whom I believed to have accurate information that was true, but I checked it afterwards because the Minister for Health rejected that and said that it had not happened. I checked it, and the minister was right, so I was incorrect to say that. That was wrong. As I say, I do not come in here to say the wrong thing, but when I say things that are wrong and it is pointed out to me or I discover it, I will own up to it and make improvements. Hopefully, I have made an improvement in this contribution by going through and making sure that I have a source and information for all of that. I think that is important. It is important for a government to be able to say, "We haven't got this right. There are things we could have done better. There are changes we could have made." I know the old New South Wales right mantra of "never explain, never complain, never resign". That is a very unhealthy approach to take as an individual. It is a very unhealthy approach to take as a government. When we make mistakes, we should own up to them, admit them, make the appropriate changes and move on. We have continually seen denial in this whole debate from the government, the minister and the Premier. All the focus is on the staff and the hospital. None of the focus is on the actions of this government.

I wanted to take members through root-cause analysis, which is interesting. We have heard that term used a lot. Yesterday in her contribution to a debate, the member for Churchlands used it when discussing her expertise in the area of procurement and those matters. Some members may not know but I am a Six Sigma Black Belt in process improvement. That is a fact. That was part of my life before I came in here. A key part of improvement is root-cause analysis. Root-cause analysis is something that is rarely done well. When people talk about the root cause, they often go to the point. I will give a simple example, not a medical example. For example, after a car crash, the examiners who examine the car see that a tyre has blown out on the vehicle. Therefore, the root cause is the tyre blowing out on the vehicle. That is just the point. That is the thing that caused the initial incident.

Some pejorative comments were made in the chamber today about my regard for the union movement in general. As the Minister for Mines and Petroleum would know, because we have had this debate here, I hold union stewards in high regard. In my previous life, I typically found that they were very bright, keen people who cared about their fellow workmates and they were in there, doing their job. Many of the ex-stewards or convenors in this place would have participated in workplace incidents in which workers were blamed for an incident. I am sure that they pointed out to the managers that that was just the point. But let us go to the root cause. The root cause is almost always a process or people or there is some fundamental flaw in design. We need to go through the five whys. Why did it happen? In that case, why did the tyre blow out? It may be that the tyre was worn. Why was the tyre worn? There was no maintenance schedule for the tyre. Why was there no maintenance schedule? Perhaps people were busy or whatever. When we go back through that cascading analysis, we get to the root cause and we find out why that occurred.

I think that is critically important in this incident because it seems to me that there has been a focus on the point of cause, which are the issues around whether people did or did not do their job as was perceived to be correct on the night. It is eminently clear that that is not the root cause of the issues that face health in this state. As the minister is at pains to point out, we all understand and accept that what happened to young Aishwarya was an absolute tragedy. My colleagues and I do not do anything in this chamber that seeks to add any more grief or distress to that family. That is why we have focused on the issues around how the staff have been treated, how the government has approached health and how the government has funded health because they are the root causes when we go through this analysis.

It seems that there was convenience in blaming the staff. I read an ABC news report of Tuesday, 18 May 2021, which relates to Aishwarya's death and the Premier's comments. The report states —

It comes in the wake of a minute-by-minute internal report revealing a “cascade of missed opportunities” may have contributed to her death at Perth Children’s Hospital (PCH) on Saturday April 3.

...

Key points:

- Staffing levels were high the night the girl died, the Premier says

We will go to the facts of the investigation and explore that in some detail. It continues —

- But he says more answers are needed about what happened
- Nurses and doctors say junior staff are being “hung out to dry”

But Premier Mark McGowan said the report affirmed the emergency department (ED) was “staffed above its complement” on the evening in question.

That is a direct quote from the Premier in a report as late as 18 May. Further, the article states —

Mr McGowan confirmed two nurses who were on shift on the night of Aishwarya’s death had since taken leave, but that it was not his responsibility to determine whether they should return.

...

The report’s panel noted, as was seen in footage from the ED, “that there appears to be a culture of staff not engaging with waiting patients and their families”.

“Most obviously evidenced on the footage by avoidance of eye contact with families and patients when walking through the waiting room,” it said.

Mr McGowan said “obviously that concerns us all”.

“Clearly, that’s something that further inquiries will need to look into why that is occurring,” ...

The Premier confirmed that. I will not go through it all, but, as I said yesterday, I would be absolutely fascinated to see how many members here generally, particularly those members who have been senior union officials—as I said, I respect the role of those people—would have accepted managers interpreting video footage of staff and then attributing blame to staff on that basis. I honestly find that dumbfounding. It has all the hallmarks of people grabbing at straws to blame anyone but themselves for that particular terrible incident.

On a number of occasions, the Minister for Health has been at pains to point out that there were adequate staff in the ward on the night of the incident. I will read a question asked of the minister. I have an extract from the finalised version of *Hansard* from Thursday, 13 May 2021. The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party stated —

I have a supplementary question. Given the minister's response to the Australian Nursing Federation, does he now admit that Perth Children's Hospital has been chronically understaffed, and what is the time line to implement additional staffing and much-needed resources?

I turn to the end of the minister's response to that question, when he said —

As I said in my earlier remarks, the advice we have is that on that evening a staffing shortage was not a contributing factor in that incident, —

So, a staffing shortage was not a contributing factor in that incident —

but we acknowledge that there continues to be staffing pressures. That is why we have been undertaking this work for some time now and why we will continue to do that work.

Later that day, on 13 May, on pages 595 to 599, Mr Cook responded to a motion, again with the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party as the lead speaker on that motion. I will obviously leave most of it out, but he refers to the fact that the government dramatically increased resources in the children's hospital. The *Hansard* states —

In the PCH emergency department, the strategies and implementation underway included a total increase of an extra 16.1 FTE nurses. That enables two additional registered nurses to be rostered for the emergency department across all shifts, for a total of 11.1 full-time equivalents, and an increased allocation for leave provisions across the nursing establishment, enabling permanent recruitment of an additional five FTEs. As I said, getting these staff to take leave in order for them to recharge their batteries is an important element of this. The increased number of FTEs also includes an additional nurse allocated to monitor patients in the ED waiting areas and an additional nurse allocated to work across the emergency department supporting areas with higher levels of activity. An administration officer has been assigned also to the triage desk; a designated ED resuscitation team will be on every shift, supported by senior medical and nursing staff from within the hospital attending every resuscitation in the ED; and there has been an increase in the allocation of staff development nurses in the emergency department ...

That is an issue that I will talk a little bit about.

I will contrast that with the response earlier in the day. We have all those additional staff that, can I say, minister, we welcome. Perhaps the world does not care whether I welcome them or we welcome them, but the staff in the Perth Children's Hospital emergency department welcome those staff when they arrive because there is an issue, more generally, of getting more nurses. I will go through the issues of the report because I think it is worthwhile for members. A lot of people clearly have not read the investigation report, but I will go through it and talk about the adequacy of staffing. But how does the comment earlier in the day on 13 May that originally said staffing was adequate reconcile with all those additional staff who have been put into the hospital? Were they put in there just as a sop to community or medical staff outrage or is it, in fact, the truth—we know it is the truth—that that area has been desperately short of staff? Those staff have been overwhelmed.

High-dependency patients, such as that resuscitation patient, require a higher level of staffing. In the high-dependency unit there is at least one staff member per patient. Therefore, what is the situation with the high-dependency unit in Perth Children's Hospital? It is closed. It has never been commissioned. Half of the intensive care unit floor is for a high-dependency unit that has never been commissioned. That means that patients who have a higher level of need—perhaps patients on the verge of dying or who need constant medical care—are being cared for in a general hospital ward or in the emergency department. That is one of the key contributors to bed blockage in that area. That is one of the reasons that patients are not being seen in time in that area. The Minister for Health was very proud of the role that he played in getting this hospital open, and I heard lots of talk about that in this chamber. That the high-dependency unit has never been opened is one of the core problems in that hospital. It can have all the staff it likes, but if that unit is not open, high-dependency patients will take away critically needed staff from the emergency department and other wards in that hospital. Those high-dependency patients are not adequately resourced.

This next issue is something that has perhaps caused more distress and more upset amongst all health practitioners than any other single issue—that is, the referral of those junior medical personnel to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, or AHPRA. I asked the minister a question on Tuesday, 25 May, and in his answer he made light of the fact that those staff had been referred to AHPRA. He said, "Oh, it's just something that happens. It's something that the board is required to do in incidents like this." I thought, "Well, the minister has said that in this chamber and I think that I should investigate whether that is in fact true." When I spoke to medical personnel at the rally yesterday, they said that in their knowledge this had only ever happened as a result of a coronial investigation. New members would know that when there is gross negligence or gross misconduct and someone's registration is reviewed, that is a very important thing. When a dedicated health professional loses their registration, they cannot work as a health professional; moreover, that is something that stays with them for the rest of their career. That

is something they carry forever as a black mark on their name. Referring staff to AHPRA, I would have thought, had a very high threshold. Indeed, that is true! The minister referred to this as being an obligation under the Health Services Act 2016. In light of my learning from yesterday, I thought I would review the Health Services Act to see what it says about this.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: Part 10 of the Health Services Act, “Criminal and misconduct matters concerning employees”, contains sections 144 and 145, which are about criminal matters. Section 146, “Further reporting and notification”, states —

- (1) A staff member's responsible authority must report any conduct of the staff member that the responsible authority suspects on reasonable grounds constitutes or may constitute professional misconduct or unsatisfactory professional performance under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Western Australia)* to —
 - (a) the professional board ...
- (2) A staff member's responsible authority must, on becoming aware that the staff member has been charged with having committed, or has been convicted or found guilty of, a serious offence, report the staff member's charge, conviction or the finding of guilt to the Department CEO.

The definition of a “serious offence” is found in the Public Sector Management Act 1994 under section 80A. I thought it would be prudent to look at that because here we read the magnitude of the sorts of offences. A “serious offence” is an indictable offence against a law of the state, an offence against a law of another state or a territory, an offence against the law of a foreign country, or an offence of a class, prescribed under section 108.

If members actually read those acts, they will clearly understand that a referral to AHPRA is not just some idle thing. It is not about saying, “Look, we've just got some general concerns about this. We think something might have gone awry in all this. We're referring this off to AHPRA.” No! Incidents are referred to AHPRA only when a person believes that they have sound evidence that those staff members have been guilty of serious misconduct or serious negligence. It is not just a slip or that they did not look someone in the eye properly, but that they have been guilty of serious misconduct.

I am certain that the minister may be able to tell me or can find out what other cases have been referred to AHPRA, but I think that we will find that these cases are unique. Remember, members, that yesterday we discussed that the chief executive officer is not even satisfied with that investigation and will not sign off on that investigation because they do not believe that it has been done thoroughly enough. Further analysis needs to be done to determine the root cause. But those staff members have been referred to AHPRA. Many of us, including a great majority of staff at all hospitals, believe that those staff have been made to be sacrificial lambs, that they have been thrown under a bus and it has been done to take the heat off others' negligence that has led to the problems we have across our hospital system, not only at Perth Children's Hospital.

As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, these issues have been reported to us and we have been bringing those concerns to Parliament for well over a year during the life of the previous Parliament. We have been raising those concerns and saying that there are bells ringing. I have spoken to medical staff who have said that there are major problems in the system. As I said, we had those reports from the north to the south of the state.

I turn to the issue of the Premier's statement and the Minister for Health's statements, saying that we had adequate staffing on the night. Let us have a look at what the investigation actually says. I will quote excerpts from the actual investigation. This is the investigation the minister and the Premier used as part of the basis for saying there were adequate numbers of staff on the night, despite the fact that we then heard the minister announce a very welcome massive increase in staff in that area. Clearly, the minister knows it is needed, and I am glad he did that; it was the responsible thing to do. I turn to page 11 of the document and the review findings background, which states, in part —

The panel noted that concerns regarding workforce shortages, acuity and increasing patient presentation numbers had been formally and specifically communicated to the Medical and Nursing stream leadership group and members of the Executive team on a number of occasions from October 2020. The panel further notes that meetings had occurred between the ED staff and the Executive, and data was presented to illustrate the concerns ...

That is the data we have been asking the minister to provide in this chamber. If this report can be released to the parents, subsequently find its way to the media and be released at that level, surely this Parliament can see that data. I think that is fair. It was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition that we have asked for that information four times now. I think it is reasonable for us to get that information.

I now quote from page 12 of the report, which states, in part —

The panel discussed the nursing staffing and education time and concluded that the lack of clinical supervision and lapsed education program for nursing staff may have influenced the care of the patient.

Again, not only do we have an inadequate number of staff, we have inadequately trained staff. I spoke to nurses at the rally yesterday, and that is what they told me. They said that on most shifts they worked on, it was difficult to have three-quarters of the staff they actually required. What does that mean? There is nursing staff currently allocated to training nurses on-shift. As many members know, there are parts of nursing that have to be trained at university, but a lot of nursing is trained in the hospital, on the shift, especially since we have moved to university-only education for a number of nurses before they go into the hospitals.

They told me that more often than not, the nurses dedicated to training were working on the shift because there were constant staff shortages on the shift. The nurses are very distressed about it because they are not getting the training they need. That is true of Perth Children's Hospital as well. Not only are they short-staffed, but those staff are not receiving the training that they need to do their job properly. Again, we will come back to that.

Anyone who has been involved in root-cause investigation of workplace incidents will know about the failure of an employer to train their staff properly. In fact, if I were in the mining sector and I failed to train my staff properly and someone was injured, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum or his department would appropriately prosecute me, because I did not do my job as a manager to ensure that my staff were properly trained. This report states that those staff have not been properly trained because staff shortages are taking training nurses away from the training role and putting them into operational roles within the area.

The report refers to related workforce activity in the emergency department on 3 April. It states, in part —

Three Resident Medical Officers called in sick; none were replaced due to the lack of available staff.

How can that be reconciled with the minister's and the Premier's statements that there were adequate staff numbers on that shift? The report continues —

There were 15 nurses rostered on in the ED on the afternoon of the 03.04.2021. 2 rostered staff had called in sick for the afternoon shift and was replaced with two casual pool nurses.

I do not know their situation; these are nurses who may not be necessary, but they certainly are not the full-time nurses working on that shift. The report continues —

One nurse went home sick at 1745 hrs. Which left the ED one nurse down, 4 of the 14 nurses attended the resuscitation of a trauma patient at 1809 hrs. this was reduced to 2 nurses after 30 minutes ...

Just think about that, members. Those nurses had to go from their normal duties to save the life of someone who was dying—or, in fact, possibly clinically dead. They had to go and resuscitate that person on top of all the other things they were doing, and come back in and do that work. I will not go through the statistics, but the statistics are damning.

I met some of those staff at the rally and they are the kindest, most caring people. No-one works in child medicine because it is something on their career ladder. They all know that, as they say, children go down quickly and come up quickly. It is very, very difficult to discern what is a life-threatening or fatal illness from a minor flu or cold. It is no trivial thing whatsoever and no easy thing. They do it because they care about children and the health and wellbeing of children.

I turn to page 16, which talks about the causes or inputs. Under the heading "Knowledge/Skills/Competence", staff training and skills were identified as an issue. Shortages of beds, rooms and resources were also identified as issues, as was staff timetabling. It is extremely difficult to reconcile the statements made by the Premier and the Minister for Health that we had adequate staffing on that ward. These are not anecdotes or recollections by other people; those are the facts that were produced in this preliminary, unendorsed investigation report that was used as the basis for public comments that were made in relation to these staff.

I will say one thing about root-cause analyses. One of the things to worry about is the safety of the people giving evidence and advice. No-one is going to participate in a root-cause analysis if they believe they are going to go to jail. I believe next time there is a root-cause analysis at any hospital, there will be one medical person and one lawyer, and they will say nothing. Why would they, when we see the way these young people have been treated?

The government needs to own up on this. We need to understand what the government is doing—not what the hospital is doing, but what the government is doing. Why was the minister unaware of the outcomes of the Your Voice in Health survey results? Why were reports on this issue ignored? I will not repeat anecdotal comments, but it seems clear that concerns were raised by the minister. We have heard that the minister himself may have raised concerns with his cabinet colleagues about the level of resourcing. We need real answers from the government on these questions.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [5.38 pm]: I will also add to the motion from the member for Vasse and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. I have to say I am also very concerned about the current state of the health system. To be honest, I cannot believe how the McGowan government did such a fabulous job of hiding the chaos in our health system before the election. We heard nothing about it before 13 March, and then, funnily enough, straight after that, out came the media. That is my first question. It is no wonder that the Premier kept the Minister for Health away from the microphone. I congratulate the government on how it managed to keep this real issue away from the media. It is quite concerning when we look at the developments since the election.

The Minister for Health needs to have the portfolio on its own. The Minister for Education and Training has that portfolio on its own. I am sure that while the health minister is putting out fires in the health system, the people working in the areas of state development, jobs and trade; medical research; and science are sitting there, waiting and thinking: “When is the minister going to turn up?” He has all these portfolios, but he is out there putting out fires in the health portfolio. If the Premier will not take these portfolios away from the minister, maybe he should hand them across to one of his other capable ministers, because there is too much on the minister’s plate. Health deserves a minister who can focus on that one portfolio. Health is certainly not a nine-to-five issue. Staffing needs to be consistent across weekends and at night. I believe that the minister needs to pay the staff the appropriate rates for overtime and double time. No doubt we will see a \$5 billion surplus in the budget. It is particularly concerning when the wages of our health workers have basically been frozen over the last four years. This upcoming surplus will be the government’s opportunity.

There are a couple of other points that I would like to mention. A question was asked today during question time about how union delegates can be allowed to go into aged-care homes and the like when fathers cannot even see their newborn children. During the COVID situation, after a baby was born, the mother and baby would be transferred to the ward, but the father was not allowed to go to the ward with them, but, lo and behold, member for Cottesloe, there was not a problem for union delegates. They could wander in and advocate during the lockdown—no problem at all. Even though the health minister proudly stated his union membership today during question time, I think it is deplorable that we are seeing these double standards. Forcing the birthing partners to leave the hospital after the birth, often with no warning, has caused an incredible amount of trauma to families. In another example, photographers could go around the hospital and take photos of the babies, but quite often the father was not allowed to join their partner and baby in the ward after the birth. That is a real weakness.

The tragedy of the death of Aishwarya Aswath is that she and her family have become the face of the health crisis, and behind that face are the faces of many other families who have experienced grief and terrible trauma. Families are asking for answers and often they have to wait for up to two years for the coroner’s report. I am glad that the Attorney General is in the chamber, because this is a real issue that is starting to cause concern for many families in both regional and metropolitan areas. The delay in coroner’s reports is causing trauma for many families. I believe some more resources are needed there as well. I am glad that the Attorney General is here at this time.

During the COVID pandemic and the lockdowns, category 2 and 3 surgeries were just put off. Basically, many of our hospitals were like ghost towns. There was no-one there from April to December. All the category 2 and 3 surgeries were put off and many of the doctors, nurses, students and the like had no patients because these surgeries were cancelled. I think I heard the other day that the figure for category 2 and 3 surgeries has now blown out from 19 000 to 29 000. This is a scenario that has developed. Extra pressure is now being put on the system. I believe that the minister and his staff forgot to employ people for the following year. That is what happened. The hospitals were empty, but there was no need to worry about employing people as there were no patients because they had all been sent home. Now we are facing shortages. That is a real concern.

In an article on WAtoday on 24 May 2021, Deakin University chair in epidemiology, Catherine Bennett, is reported to have said —

“[WA Premier] Mark McGowan’s comments after the latest Perth lockdown worried me because he was saying it was absolutely what we needed, and it’s this implication that the lockdown had succeeded and he said in three days we had crushed the virus when the reality is the lockdown didn’t do anything probably,” ...

Several members interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We are getting into a scenario in which there is a one-trick pony. We have inconsistencies between the government and the Australian Medical Association and between the government and the Australian Nursing Federation. We saw the photos of many of the health workers the Leader of the Opposition spoke about. They were out there basically saying that they are the ones getting thrown under the bus. That was evident at the rally yesterday.

I will move on to the vaccination situation. Vaccinations are critically important to our freedom. Once again, I am concerned about the way it is playing out. The Claremont vaccination centre gives AstraZeneca vaccinations three days a week and Pfizer vaccinations four days a week. Apparently, this is due to the increase in the supply of Pfizer vaccinations coming in during the week. However, many people in their 70s, 80s and 90s who have medical conditions still cannot seem to get access to the Pfizer vaccination. That is a real concern to me.

Mr P. Papalia: Which vaccination?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Sorry, minister? No; I want to continue if I can.

That is a weakness in the system that I have identified and I look forward to some action being taken on that.

Obviously, ambulance ramping is not confined to metropolitan hospitals. Our regional ambulance volunteers have reported multiple times that they have had to ramp at regional hospitals.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to one survey. I have another survey called the “AMA (WA) Doctors in Training Hospital Health Check 2021”, which was filled out by 952 junior doctors. There are some quite concerning results here. King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women has a 40 per cent score for morale, which is very disappointing. Doctors and nurses say that King Edward, Perth’s main women’s and babies’ hospital, is on the brink of collapse because of a midwife shortage. That is what this survey is pointing out. Some insiders say they are so short-staffed that the internal collapse of King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women is imminent. This survey of 952 junior doctors points to some real issues. However, the Minister for Health, Roger Cook, denies the claims. He was quoted a couple of weeks ago saying that quite frankly the claims that were being made were outrageous and that WA was simply experiencing a post-COVID-19 baby boom—so nothing to see here. I suspect that the staff, the doctors and nurses, who are doing a fantastic job at King Edward Memorial Hospital would disagree on that.

Another matter that really worries me relates to Midland St John of God Public Hospital. It has warned that patients will die as a result of a multimillion-dollar cut to its budget. The Minister for Health’s response to the \$10 million cut to the funding was that the WA government was not to blame for a pending multimillion-dollar budget cut. I cannot understand that response: “It is not our fault.” The hospital’s chief executive officer, Michael Hogan, has also had to tell a number of the frontline workers that they would be made redundant, despite efforts from management to keep those costs down. In summary, I do not believe that doctors should be told to calm down, as they have been. We have a real problem with access to GPs, in both metropolitan and regional areas. Attracting and retaining GPs and specialists in regional areas is still an issue.

I want to mention some of the quotes and phrases that have been used recently by the Australian Medical Association, health professionals and health staff to describe the WA health system: “imminent collapse”; “on the brink of collapse”; “patients will die”; “we will have tragic events”; “action is needed from the state’s leaders”; “metropolitan health hospital system at breaking point”; “junior nurses and doctors are being used as a scapegoat”; “a whole system issue, not an individual practitioner issue”.

Now I turn to the phrases used by the health minister: “not to blame”; “it’s not our fault”; “outrageous claims”. That is the issue we have here. When the minister returns to the chamber, I will go on to a couple of —

Mr W.J. Johnston: He’s here, in the chamber.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: There he is; he is up the back. I would like to add a few concerns about some of the regional health services, which are under incredible strain. As we all know, internal tourism in Western Australia has put extra stress on regional hospitals. The state government has committed \$150 million to tourism in WA to improve tracks and trails and other infrastructure, but has left the health system lagging and trying to cope with a surge in visitors. I point out that St John Ambulance and the Royal Flying Doctor Service, two incredible volunteer organisations that we rely on to evacuate patients from our regional hospitals, are under serious strain and there has been an increase of over 10 per cent of patient retrievals by the RFDS during this recent period. It provides a fantastic service. All of our regional communities are indebted to it.

I would like to point out a couple of places. My favourite subject—the minister knows I will always raise this—is the maternity ward in Katanning, which remains unstaffed and empty. I am concerned because we have a rising number of immigrants and a multicultural community in Katanning, with 14 per cent of residents born overseas. They expect the local hospital, which we spent \$32 million on to upgrade, would offer a maternity service. Sometimes they cannot get to Narrogin or Albany in the midst of their labour and I am concerned that issues may result from that. Of course, we know that when the minister was the shadow health minister he was down there saying, “We’ll get this maternity hospital up and running. Don’t worry about that. When I’m the Minister for Health, it’ll be up and running, not a problem.”

Mr R.H. Cook: I don’t think I did. That doesn’t sound like me.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It was \$32 million down there.

Mr R.H. Cook: I remember Kim Hames said to me at the time, “Mate, the only way you’re going to get obstetric services at Katanning is to get Katanning on the coast.”

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I remember the minister and Hon Darren West in the cafe at Katanning saying, “We’re going to get this sorted out.” If I stay here long enough, I know the minister will be able to deliver on his promise.

Mr R.H. Cook: We did for a smidge. The idea at Katanning is to get GP–obstetricians practising out there. We had some GP–obs practising there but unfortunately the practice fell apart a bit. That is the challenge.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I look forward to the minister making some other arrangements.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Another matter I want to mention is Livingston Medical and the amazing efforts of Dr Michael Livingston, who is located in Ravensthorpe with his wife, Rachel, and their children. He covers Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun, Lake Varley and at times Lake Grace and several of the surrounding communities. He often does hundreds of kilometres in return trips. He is working hard to promote the benefits of being a rural GP and trying

to attract other doctors to rural areas. As I said, attracting and retaining GPs remains a real issue. We want to see our regional doctors live and work in our towns instead of locums who come in from large regional centres and drive in and drive out. That is something I would love to see a little more attention given to in the years ahead.

Some immigrant and new doctors in regional areas are having difficulty with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency process. They are struggling to get registered, even though sometimes they have been supervised for 12 or 18 months. I believe our state government and the state health minister would be able to provide the extra support to get those extra doctors up and about.

On a positive note, the South West Aboriginal Medical Service launched its service delivery to Katanning and Narrogin this month. I applaud those local communities for striving to bring a necessary service to their communities. Through federal funding, those projects can deliver culturally appropriate medical care and health services to the people in Roe and especially to the communities of Katanning and Narrogin. I encourage the state government to work closely with those organisations and develop strong relationships to secure premises and build a sustainable service for the benefit of those communities into the future.

In wrapping up, I want to share my concern about mental health services. I believe they will be a real issue in times to come. They already are, but they will continue to be. When trying to make an appointment in my electorate with a visiting health professional, if someone can get an appointment, they are not guaranteed to see that person again and will potentially see a locum or someone else who might drift in, have a few appointments, and drift out again. More continuity is required for the great southern mental health services and a specialist service that provides acute mental health care.

The Narrogin oncology unit was part of the \$55.9 million upgrade to Narrogin Hospital, which opened in October 2019. Unfortunately, the unit has been unable to attract an oncologist. The WA Country Health Service has done its best to train nurses and offer telechemotherapy; however, I am still concerned that we have a new oncology ward—the chairs are there—but there is no doctor or specialist attached to it. Getting a specialist attached to what is an excellent facility at Narrogin Hospital is another thing the minister can add to his list. I want to remind the minister about the government's *WA recovery plan*, which states —

... protecting the mental and physical health of people in regional communities, especially the most vulnerable, remains critical. The Government will expand access to mental health care as well as improve digital connection so more people in regions can access telehealth services.

The minister has promised to clear the waiting lists for elective surgery to pre-COVID levels by 2021. We are into 2021 now. The plan continues —

Included is \$24.4 million for an additional 20 mental health beds at Fremantle Hospital, transforming the hospital into a mental health hub with expert care and treatment for patients with mental illness.

Finally —

A \$25 million investment will create a 16-bed mental health, and alcohol and other drugs homelessness service in the metropolitan area for young people aged 16 to 24 years.

That is the government's recovery plan and I certainly look forward to the minister delivering on some of those promises to the Narrogin oncology and Katanning maternity units and the like. Of course, I look forward to the minister delivering on the real issue in the metropolitan area—at the moment that is Perth Children's Hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, Midland Public Hospital and the list goes on. I look forward to the minister's response.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.01 pm]: It is, as always, my great pleasure to stand and speak on behalf of the people of Mount Lawley as their representative, because one of their central concerns is the provision of an outstanding public health service. We have an outstanding public health service in Western Australia. It is a world-class health service, in fact. I refer to a media release issued by the Deputy Premier; Minister for Health in September 2019, "WA setting world benchmark in cancer survival", which states —

- WA part of international cancer survival study

The McGowan Government has welcomed new research findings that show survival rates for Western Australian cancer patients are among the best in the developed world.

This world-leading, world-class health service is a testament to the McGowan Labor government and in particular this minister. It is being delivered in the context of a global pandemic the likes of which we have never seen before. Last Friday, 12 457 people died from COVID-19 and there were 607 681 new cases. In the United States alone, 515 151 deaths have been recorded. One thing that this debate cannot ignore is the context in which the provision of health services by our world-leading practitioners is taking place. It does opposition members no good to ignore that context to try to alleviate the impact that that must have on the provision of health services in Western Australia. What is even worse is that so much of the abrogation of responsibility lies at the feet of their commonwealth counterparts. We talk about the vaccine rollout, which some speakers have mentioned, hotel quarantine, and the pressure on our public health system in Western Australia because people are unable to access an emasculated

NDIS, but what is the commonwealth government's responsibility? Opposition members are members of the party of the commonwealth government, and yet they do not have the strength of character and honesty to say that they recognise that there have been so many failings —

Several members interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: None of that makes any sense.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Mount Lawley is on his feet.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Thank you.

The provision of hotel quarantine, as everyone knows, was supposed to be a short-term measure. If members look at the legal and constitutional responsibility for quarantine in this nation, it resides with the commonwealth government. Members need look no further than section 51(ix) of the commonwealth Constitution where it is quite clearly articulated that the commonwealth shall have responsibility for quarantine.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I am not taking interjections. I did not interject.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has responsibility for the vaccine rollout, and it has gone atrociously. Compared with other developed nations, we are doing a shocking job. The commonwealth government is doing a shocking job of vaccinating the population. Looking at what has just happened in Victoria, we can see why it is so important to expedite the vaccine rollout. The trouble with the conservative parties in Australian politics is this: they do not believe in the public provision of these essential services. When Gough Whitlam introduced Medibank, the Liberal Party could not get rid of it quickly enough. The Hawke government had to reintroduce Medicare. Finally, 30 years down the track, it has overwhelming public support and the Liberal and National Parties have finally arrived at the position that they know it would be political poison to undo Medicare despite the fact they are philosophically fundamentally opposed to it.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I am not taking interjections. The member will have his turn.

The same thing happened with the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Nadia Mitsopoulos ran a fantastic forum this morning on ABC radio with recipients of services provided under the NDIS. This was supposed to be a world-leading provision of services for people with disabilities. It was an incredible initiative introduced by a Labor government that was going to serve the whole community, yet the conservative forces took government in Australia and, once again, could not wait to cut and undermine it and make it so much harder to operate.

What do we see? We see the abrogation of a commonwealth responsibility in hotel quarantining, in the vaccine rollout —
[Quorum formed.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I am incredibly grateful for the member of the Nationals WA for making that quorum call because it just highlighted the fact that their counterparts in alliance are not even present in the chamber. Much to my dismay, members of the Labor Party have all turned up to satisfy quorum in this house.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I believe it is not appropriate to reflect upon a member's absence from the chamber.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): There is no point of order. Member for Mount Lawley, continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I will keep going nonetheless.

The point is that the abrogation of commonwealth responsibility has imposed a massive burden on the WA health system. The WA health system has responded to the global pandemic like no other jurisdiction anywhere in the world. Do not take my word for it. Read *The Economist* from 1 May. In fact, read *Der Spiegel*, which referenced McGowan's response.

Mr R.S. Love: I cannot read German.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I will give the member for Moore the translation. It says that the response of the German government pales in comparison to the excellent work that McGowan had done. *Der Spiegel* is an eminent journal of record. If that was not enough of an endorsement of the way in which the McGowan government and the Minister for Health handled the COVID pandemic, look at the numbers in the chamber because we live in a democracy. The member for Southern River has just strolled back into the chamber. The member for Southern River ran against a Liberal Party candidate who failed to crack 3 000 primary votes. The member for Southern River had an incredible swing towards him.

Mr P. Papalia: He's a machine.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: He is a machine. His opponent could barely crack 11 per cent —

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I question the relevance of this contribution from this member who comes from an electorate the size of a postage stamp explaining about services and pretending to be making some sort of contribution on this matter.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: If the member for Moore will allow me to finish the point, he will see exactly what the relevance is.

The election result was a resounding public endorsement for the way in which the McGowan government and the Minister for Health handled the global COVID pandemic. The member for Southern River provides a shining example of that.

Everything that I have mentioned so far is subsequent to COVID. Let us look at what the McGowan government was able to achieve even before the onset of the COVID pandemic. The minister recognised that the health portfolio is one of the most demanding on the state's budget. The minister came into office with all the experience he had built up as the shadow Minister for Health but also with the knowledge that he had a deep fiduciary obligation to the people of Western Australia to do what he could as part of a responsible cabinet to make sure that we brought the spiralling debt and deficit disaster that we had inherited from the Liberal Party back under control. So what did he do? He did the right, the appropriate and the responsible thing by instituting the sustainable health review. But in addition, we got on with the work, as the member for Cottesloe said, and it is mentioned often in this place. We were the party of government that opened the Perth Children's Hospital. We resolved all the outstanding issues and made sure that the Perth Children's Hospital opened. To this day it remains a testament to this minister that that hospital is a shining light in our health system. I stand with the doctors and the nurses and all the health workers and staff at that hospital. Unlike others here, I will not lay blame for what has transpired at the hospital.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr R.H. Cook: Don't let him bully you!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: There is no chance of that, minister. In addition, prior to COVID, in the context of balancing the state's finances and getting the budget back on track, we made sure that we were able to deliver on all our election commitments. I am reminded of the election commitments that we made in the seat of Mount Lawley to hospitals, such as the Osborne Park Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital, to ensure that they had the requisite investment to get them back up to speed. In the pre-COVID environment it was about not only investing in infrastructure, but also making sure that we had the jobs and the professionals, the clinicians, the nurses, the health support workers and the allied health workers that we needed to maintain what everyone should agree is a world-class health system. I have already referenced it as a world-class health system.

I ask members to turn their minds back to 11 February 2020, when the Minister for Health and then Minister for Water; Forestry; Youth, Dave Kelly, released their plan to support WA's emerging health and life sciences industry to focus on innovations and commercialisation in biotechnology, medical technology, digital health, pharmaceuticals and health and wellness. They recognised that the life sciences sector is important to WA's economic development and jobs growth. In addition to both those elements—economic development and jobs growth—the life sciences sector is incredibly important in making sure that we are at the cutting edge of research that delivers and maintains our world-class health system. That was announced back in February 2020 in the pre-COVID days. The health minister in those times focused on the importance of doing the work necessary to keep us at the cutting edge and providing jobs and opportunities for people into the future.

But that is not all, because now we look at the challenges that are presented to the WA health system as a result of the COVID pandemic. In that context, what did the health minister do? The minister formulated a platform of election commitments that he could then take to the people of Western Australia as the government's plan for the Western Australian health system. Before I get to that, I want to mention that before the election there was a \$9.6 billion health investment in last year's budget for 2020–21. The \$9.6 billion built on the \$453 million investment in health that was part of the WA recovery plan. People in our community knew that as Western Australia was coming out of COVID, we needed to provide the economic stimulus to keep the economy growing, to provide people with opportunity and jobs and to provide the critical and essential services that the people of Western Australia rely on.

General health and hospital services will benefit from \$168.6 million to continue to meet an increase in public demand, which will be combined with an additional \$68.9 million for mental health hospitals to provide an overall investment of \$237.5 million for hospitals. Investments are focused on high-quality and sustainable health care for all Western Australians. There is another \$21 million for the continued COVID response, which includes the coordination of the State Health Incident Coordination Centre and the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre—the SHICC and the PHEOC. There is the other \$453 million, as I said. When I looked at the money that is being

invested by the Minister for Health, I was fascinated to hear the comments of many members of the National Party, who represent rural and regional electorates. When I looked at some of these investments, I saw Bunbury hospital was listed. Money was allocated for Broome Health and Wellbeing Campus and volunteer ambulances in country areas. That is in addition to all the statewide services that have been invested in, such as \$22.6 million for a new laboratory at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and \$22 million to replace medical equipment across the whole system. There is \$35.8 million for an elective surgery blitz to enable more than 6 000 patients to have their treatment and return the elective waiting lists to the pre-pandemic levels that the member for Roe talked about. A whole raft of funding allocations was made as part of last year's budget that address precisely all the concerns that it seems the Liberal Party and the National Party have only just woken up to.

The trouble is that the health system is under incredible pressure as a result of the global pandemic. What do we need to do? We need to make the necessary investments to face the workload that is now coming into our public health system. I am sure the minister can talk in more detail about the source of those pressures. He mentioned in answers during question time yesterday the low uptake in private health insurance as another example.

Many of our clinicians and nurses come to Western Australia from overseas. Members know this because when we rock up at an ED or a hospital, we speak to that many people with an Irish accent it is not funny. People come here from all over the world and gain valuable experience and knowledge and networks, and they are able to go back to where they have come from and share that in their own countries, which is brilliant. It works to everyone's benefit. When we shut the borders, as we have had to do in the midst of a global pandemic that has taken hundreds of thousands of lives, it is impossible for these people to come in. So what did we do? We made a commitment to hire hundreds upon hundreds of new nurses, but we also made a commitment to provide the capacity for them to take the training that they need. How embarrassing for the Liberal members who spoke in support of this motion to have been part of the opposition of the former member for Scarborough, who was responsible for 500 per cent increases in TAFE fees, making it impossible for people to access the TAFE courses necessary to become contributing members of our health service. How much better is it now? How much more proud should we be as members of this place to know that this government has frozen TAFE fees and made TAFE more accessible so that people can undertake the requisite training to become participants in our world-class health system? We are hiring more nurses because we cannot recruit them from overseas, we are freezing TAFE fees and we are building infrastructure. I looked at the number of new emergency departments that we are working on. I spoke about the important staffing boost for WA hospitals. A media statement of 19 January 2021 headed "Armadale Hospital emergency department upgrade starts in latest expansion for WA public hospitals" states —

More than \$900,000 worth of upgrades to Armadale Hospital's emergency department has started

There is an issue; our emergency departments need increased capacity. What did we do? We spent \$900 000 upgrading the Armadale Health Service emergency department. A media statement of 12 January headed "Peel Health Campus gets new upgrade to emergency department" states —

- Upgraded Peel emergency department prepares to open in February
- Upgrades provide a new fast-track triage area and expanded short stay unit
- Improved facilities part of new future for Peel Health Campus

The problem is not that this system is under pressure; there would be a problem only if the minister was not aware of the sources of that pressure and of the mechanisms that could be put in place to alleviate that pressure by building the infrastructure and hiring the workers and making sure that everything is targeted and appropriate and focused and reasonable.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I would have a problem if the minister did not have the foresight or was not given the advice that there would be a staffing problem, an infrastructure problem or any of the other issues that confront the system and the minister had no plan to fix those problems. However, what gives me great comfort, certainty and confidence is that the minister has seen exactly what is coming over the horizon in the context of the global pandemic and has said that we need to invest in infrastructure, recruit more staff and put more emphasis on helping those who help us deliver our world-class health system.

I now come to the position of the opposition parties. I seriously cannot understand what is going on. Given there are so few of them, I thought they would be able to get together and figure out a unifying theme. On the one hand, the opposition says that this minister does not listen to the unions, yet on the other hand it says that this minister is too close to the unions. It has to be one or the other. We heard an incredible contribution from the member for Cottesloe yesterday on behalf of the workers—the comrade from Cottesloe, the Bolshevik from the beaches, Vladimir Lenin from Vans Cafe—telling us all about the workers and the unions. I thought, "Great! This is what I can get around. This is what I know. This is what I like and what I understand. I know where he is coming from." But the sting in the tail was today when he resiled entirely from that position and asked a ridiculous question about the minister's union membership. I wondered what was going on and what had happened to my comrade. He disappeared. The

member for Cottesloe flip-flopped all over the place, because he is entirely inconsistent. It is that inconsistency that is proving such a problem for the alliance. It has not figured out exactly what it stands for or how it will land a blow on this government.

Mr P.J. Rundle: So you're happy for the union delegates to walk through all the aged-care facilities?

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Mate! Honestly! The problem the lot opposite has is that it has a *Magic Pudding* view of politics. It wants to throw money at it. It is the Bunyip Bluegum and the Sam Sawnoff of Australian politics. The opposition thinks there is a magic pudding or an endless pot of money. They say that the Western Australian economy is doing well, so let us get out the firehose and start spraying money all over the place. This minister understands that that would be irresponsible. If we want a committed, conscientious and reasonable minister in charge of the health portfolio, which I do and I know that the people in my electorate of Mount Lawley do, we need to take appropriate, measured and reasonable decisions. We cannot just spend hand over fist. That is what the opposition says on the one hand while on the other it says that it will cut taxes. The opposition does not know whether it is coming or going.

A member interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Most of them are gone, member for Wanneroo.

This motion was moved by people who could not handle the COVID-19 pandemic. They had no plan to tackle the challenges in Health and they are not prepared to do the hard work. They would rather come in here and recite the speaking notes from the Australian Medical Association. Even if we were to accept the premise of the opposition's argument, which I do not, there is only one person who is capable of rising to the challenges presented by the circumstances in which we find ourselves, and that is the Minister for Health, who has done an outstanding job for eight years as the opposition spokesperson and four years as the Minister for Health. The longer he is in the job, the better the consequences will be for Western Australians.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Roe—Moore, sorry.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [6.25 pm]: I would like to hear from the member for Roe again. He is an eloquent speaker who makes far more sense than the member for Mount Lawley.

The motion we are debating today has many elements within it highlighting the failures of the Minister for Health, such as his failure of leadership and his inability to take responsibility for the portfolio that he purports to lead. I will go through question time today to provide some examples. The Leader of the Opposition again asked a question about the Quarantine Advisory Panel. We had been assured by the minister's answer on 5 May that the panel had been talking to the minister and was providing him with all sorts of in-depth advice. We know that on 6 and 12 May there were still no details about the Quarantine Advisory Panel. I doubt whether the Quarantine Advisory Panel will ever be formed. I doubt that it has a role. I do not think that the government wants to hear from anybody that is independent from its own group of mates. It is clear from the answer that we got today that there will never be an advisory panel and there will never be a purpose for it. That yet again highlights the failure of this minister.

The third question on this issue today from the member for Vasse to the minister asked about the *SAC 1 clinical incident investigation report* into Aishwarya Aswath's death and the meetings and series of discussions that took place. Incredibly, the minister said that there were no notes from that meeting. The Department of Health does not have a meeting and not take notes. There would be notes. The minister really needs to be assured that there will be notes. Sooner or later those notes will be found. I think it would be better if the minister came clean and provided the notes rather than wait for them to come to him through some other forum in the future.

The fourth question on this matter today was from the member for Cottesloe who asked the Minister for Health about union officials being able to access aged-care facilities. In the original directions that were given, there is a place for advocates to be admitted to the aged-care sector. I think that the minister and everyone in Western Australia knows that an advocate in the aged-care setting is a particular thing. It is not a union official. I will read from an official federal government aged-care website talking about advocacy in aged care.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Excuse me, I have the floor. The website states —

An advocate is an impartial person who can help you understand and stand up for your rights in the aged care system.

Not in the industrial system; in the aged-care system.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: An advocate in an aged care-facility has a specific role that is well known to anybody who has had anything to do with the health system.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The member for Wanneroo is unable to call out comments when she is not in her chair.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens): That is a valid point of order. Thank you, member for Wanneroo.

Mr S.J. PRICE: What you are going on about is irrelevant, mate, when you look at the motion that we are talking about here. The role of advocacy is not mentioned anywhere within that.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Further to the point of order, calling a member of Parliament “mate” is not on, for a start. Certainly, the motion is about the failures of the health minister. I am highlighting, once again, the failures of the health minister.

Have I got the call to move forward? We are going to run out of time to hear from the minister.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Moore has the floor.

Debate Resumed

Ms S.E. Winton: You can finish.

Mr R.S. LOVE: You could be quiet. That would help us all.

As I pointed out, the role of an advocate in aged care is well known. When those health directions were first written, there was no doubt in my mind what the Chief Health Officer was referring to when he referred to advocacy. He was not referring to union officials entering those workplaces. They could have that advocacy, that discussion, in a coffee shop down the road. He was talking about an advocate in the aged-care system. The Chief Health Officer is not a union person. He does not come from a union background. He had no idea that the government was going to construe this in some obscure way as being an advocate for a union delegate. An advocate in health and aged care is a well-accepted role; it is not a union official. The question that was asked today was entirely appropriate. The answer was rank hypocrisy. It is absolutely wrong to claim that that health direction was ever meant to cover union officials.

Ms A. Sanderson interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The member knows it and I know it. She can sit there and shout out all she likes, but she knows that that was wrong.

The first point in this motion is about the “failure to address record ambulance ramping”. I remember sitting in this chamber during the previous Liberal–National government’s time when the current Minister for Health was the shadow Minister for Health. In 2014, I think, he made a great deal of the fact that about 1 500 hours of ambulance ramping were recorded in a particular month. He went on to say, “If that’s not a crisis, I don’t know what is.” We know that ambulance ramping has grown exponentially since then. Each month, 4 000 or 5 000 hours of ambulance ramping are recorded. These figures are well above what the minister quoted as being a crisis back in 2014. Today’s figures are double and triple the number of hours of ramping that were taking place then, yet we are told that that is not something to be concerned about. It is something to be concerned about. Patients should not be left in those conditions for that length of time. Ambulances are a scarce commodity. They need to be going around the suburbs of Perth and the towns in regional WA helping people in need and bringing them to a place where they can be dealt with. People should not be sitting in a quasi–hospital room in a carpark somewhere tying up resources. As a person who represents an area where there is an awful lot of ambulance transfers to metropolitan hospitals, I know that St John Ambulance WA tries to use a paid person in an ambulance or in a position where they are looking after patients so that volunteers can go home, but it does not always happen. Volunteers have reported to me that they have been ramped at Joondalup and other places for considerable lengths of time. We cannot treat volunteers like that.

I know the minister made an announcement about support for St John Ambulance recently. That is a good thing. We have been advocating for similar support but at a much greater level. The Nationals WA made a pledge that we took to the last election. One of the other things we took to the election was a pledge to set up an independent advocacy group for the volunteers. If volunteers find themselves in a distressing situation, they need a group that they can turn to that has their back. I am not saying anything negative about St John, but the volunteers who are working for that organisation do not have the advocacy that unions provide employees; they do not have anyone to stand up for them when they have a dispute with a more senior member in that organisation or some sort of falling out about something that has occurred. I know that that has caused distress to people over the years. I have met those people when they have been in that situation. There are real needs in further resourcing the ambulance sector.

We have seen the ridiculous situation of the hotel quarantine system, with yet another person thrown under the bus. Robyn Lawrence resigned from her role. She took responsibility for some breakdowns in the hotel quarantine situation. We have seen young nurses and doctors being sent off for questioning before professional bodies. We have seen the resignation of the chair of the Child and Adolescent Health Service. We have not seen the Minister for Health taking responsibility for his own department. We have not seen the Minister for Health standing in this Parliament saying, “I understand that things are not perfect. I take responsibility for my department. I take responsibility for the failings in my department. I know that I am the person who leads the culture of that organisation.” We have not seen the minister do that.

I will sit down because I am aware that only 25 minutes are left. I know that the minister has a lot of ground to cover. I also know that one or two other members would probably like to make a contribution. I will just say how disappointed I was with the contribution of the member for Mount Lawley, a person who comes from a very privileged area, with great access to health services.

Ms A. Sanderson: You don't know anything about his life.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do know something about the area. People in my electorate have a much more challenged access to health services than people in Mt Lawley. I have highlighted to the minister on a number of occasions in this place my concerns about particular situations. He says nice things but nothing has changed. When I look at the situation in the Mullewa area, I see that it has a hospital which is now a disgrace. It has been allowed to run down through the entire time he has been a minister. We are waiting for a decision to be made about the implementation of a program that was announced in the previous budget. Funding has been in the budget for at least five years, yet still nothing is happening. Given the building boom and the escalation in costs, there is probably not enough money now to fix the situation in Mullewa. This is a really important issue for people in that area who do not have the privilege of being able to take a five-minute taxi ride to Royal Perth Hospital or to any number of public or private hospitals and health centres within their immediate area.

I will sit down and allow the minister some time. Another member wishes to make a contribution. We need a significant amount of time for the minister to answer these charges because very serious charges are mentioned in the motion.

Ms A. Sanderson interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: There are very serious failures listed—seven failures listed in seven points. The minister needs to address these in detail so we know that he at least understands the seriousness of the situation, if not accepts responsibility himself.

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [6.39 pm]: Good evening, Madam Acting Speaker. Before I start, may I plead and request that opposition members join hands with the only opportunity they have to work together to provide the best health care for every Western Australian. The whingeing that is going on day in and day out is not bringing about any better health outcomes. When the COVID-19 pandemic started, I recall the day when I was practising, wearing personal protective equipment about three to four times the previous night before my first shift.

I was under immense pressure—first, for putting my life at risk going forward and, second, for the fear of carrying the disease from one patient to the other, which I could not have lived the rest of my life with. The healthcare workers, the doctors and nurses, are under immense pressure in extreme circumstances and doing their best to provide the best health care in the world here in Western Australia. People around the world envy us for the position that we are in. That is because this Minister for Health has been the architect of the plan to manage the pandemic. For the opposition to ignore that and pick on political points is truly pathetic.

The emergency load is not something that can be controlled by one solution. There is a huge amount of primary care, which means that general practitioners are providing healthcare services day in and day out. The current federal Liberal–National government brought in a new regulation called DPA—distribution priority area—which literally shut doors to overseas doctors. Forty per cent of GPs working in Western Australia are qualified overseas. Those doors were shut. What happens as a result of that? The GPs are not able to accommodate the load because they need to give two extra appointments for the first and second COVID vaccinations, which is on top of the workload that they already have. I plead with the Liberal members of this chamber to talk to their federal colleagues to ease the pressure on primary care, which will result in easing the pressure on the emergency departments.

This minister is investing in infrastructure and workforce, and he is working really hard on bringing resources back under the government. Fiona Stanley Hospital has a transition plan to bring the cleaning and catering services, internal logistics, workforce models, service delivery models, equipment, IT and consumables back into the government. This will bring about better health outcomes. It is going to be under the care of the South Metropolitan Health Service, which is on schedule to be transitioned on 2 August 2021.

Without doubt, the whole world recognises that this health minister and this government have managed the pandemic the best in the world, except for the six opposition members who day in and day out try to pick on political points.

This health minister is the minister for the healthcare workers, and he proved it by standing with them when they were in trouble, assuring them that he is with them not only during bad times and good times, but at all times. We cannot get a better minister than him to manage health services, and it is a shame that the opposition is trying to bring such a motion in this chamber. Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I kindly request the opposition to be constructive and join hands. On this health issue, without any differences, we could work together to deliver better health outcomes to every Western Australian.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health) [6.43 pm]: Thank you to all the members for their contributions today on this motion. The member for Moore has invited me to respond to the accusations or the points

made in this motion, and I would dearly love to provide my points of difference to the member for Vasse, the mover of this motion. The difficulty is, of course, that the member for Vasse does not even have the respect to hang around in this debate.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: It would have been perfectly appropriate for —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The Minister for Health has the floor, thank you!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! The Minister for Health has the floor.

Mr R.H. COOK: I appreciate that if the member for Vasse had something come up urgently, we could have deferred this debate until next week. That would have been fine. But I have never come across a situation in which someone comes in, lobs these falsehoods and accusations, spends 60 minutes on their feet making these accusations and then just scarpers. I notice that even the Leader of the Liberal Party is not here tonight. I appreciate that the opposition is more than just the Nationals WA, but it would not be unfair to think it is, looking across at the opposition benches. This is private members' business. This is the opposition's moment—its time to prosecute its arguments—yet there are three of them in the chamber. The other opportunity, of course, is the matter of public importance, which the opposition moved yesterday as well, which substantially covered all these points. These are points that I addressed in great detail in yesterday's debate. The opposition essentially moved the same motion today, but did not have the respect or the decency to hang around to hear my response.

I accept the Leader of the Opposition's proposition that the member for Vasse had to leave quickly, but it would be a courtesy to come across and say, "My apologies, minister; I've been called away quickly. I'm sorry I won't be here for the rest of this debate." I would accept that apology and understand that sometimes we are called from this place at a moment's notice. However, to come in here and move a motion to be carried through three hours of debate that is essentially the same motion moved yesterday and spread the usual poison it has now become quite renowned for and then to leave really underscores the lack of integrity in the opposition's arguments.

I had the respect to be here for all the Leader of the Opposition's contribution, although I must confess I think I had to duck out in the last two minutes to get something from my office. But for the member for Vasse to not even be respectful enough to participate in a debate on a motion that she actually moved I think shows quite poor form, and I think it is fair to make that observation. As I said, if something came up this afternoon, we could have deferred this debate and suspended standing orders to consider any of the other motions the opposition has, such as the royalties for regions program motion or the tourism, festival and events industry motion. The member for Roe has a motion on the notice paper about the Minister for Agriculture and Food's policy direction. We could have considered those today and we could have deferred this debate to another day.

But the opposition did not do that. The member did not even have the respect to say, "My apologies; I have to leave the chamber." Quite frankly, I think that says more about the opposition's approach to this debate than any of the arguments it has raised.

I am going to quickly go through some of the points raised in this motion. I assume the member for Vasse is an avid reader of *Hansard* because, as the mover of the motion, she will be very keen and interested to read what I had to say in response.

With regard to failure to address record ambulance ramping, I have already provided, in great detail, information on what we are doing to address these issues. There was a meeting of the health leaders in December last year to address ambulance ramping. A whole bunch of programs were put in place. I participated in a meeting of all the health leaders last week or the week before on how we can continue to put downward pressure on ramping. The single biggest thing that will stop ramping is capacity, notwithstanding the point very eloquently made by the member for Riverton about the important role that primary care plays in making sure that people's acuity does not get to the point where they have to go to an emergency department, because they have access to a well-resourced general practitioner.

One of the single biggest things that we can do is increase capacity in our emergency departments and in our patient beds to make sure we have better patient flow. That is why we are overseeing one of the biggest growths of our emergency departments in the state's history. In the coming years, 95 beds or chairs will be created to make sure that we can continue to grow the capacity of our EDs. That includes a \$19 million redevelopment at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital alone to make sure that we have better capacity to meet the new demand on our hospitals. That is all around the acuity, the volumes and the level of mental health conditions, and the fact that so many people are presenting with acute conditions requiring surgery. As well as those 95 beds that we are creating across our EDs, we are creating 500 extra beds, including 300 inpatient beds and 100 mental health beds. We are bringing on 117 of those beds, with 81 now in service, and another 34 to come into service between now and August, continuing to grow our capacity.

Our hospital system, like any other hospital system in Australia, has been struck down by the changes in demand in terms of volume, acuity and mental health, and the impact of long-stay patients on our system. I am very thankful

to the member for Mount Lawley for his contribution around patients who are awaiting National Disability Insurance Scheme assessment or aged-care assessment and are simply languishing in our hospitals because the commonwealth government—the federal government led by the Liberals and the Nationals—simply has not put into those sectors the resources that they need. Notwithstanding the burden that we have to bear, which is the commonwealth’s responsibility in relation to health care, we are growing our hospitals, and we will continue to do so.

In particular, we are bringing a significant number of resources to bear around Perth Children’s Hospital. That is part of a piece of work that has been ongoing since about December last year and is being put together with the leadership of the emergency department and the hospital, to put things in place to try to meet this demand. That includes an extra 16 full-time equivalent nurses in the ED, and boosting triage nursing staff, as well as triage admin staff. In particular, we are appointing a separate resuscitation team to be brought to bear in case it is needed. Just as importantly, we are bringing on an extra 20 beds in PCH to make sure that we can continue to grow the number of beds in that facility. That is made up of 10 inpatient beds and utilising 10 high-dependency unit beds that were part of the overall hospital footprint.

This goes to the point of the motion, which is the Minister for Health’s failure to act on record ambulance ramping. This is all about making sure we have those extra resources and can continue to get on top of these things.

As I have explained in great detail, I was the one who actually drove the Department of Health to implement the measures around “CARE call”, which is essentially “Malakai’s Rule”. We did not call it “Malakai’s Rule”. I had lost touch with Malakai’s family by the time we came to government, but I did overhaul the entire system. The entire system was made uniform, at my insistence. So do not come into this place and say that we are not implementing these things, because that is a complete untruth. The fact is that we are putting these things in place.

Medihotels are another place where the opposition often goes. It likes to point to the fact that we are building an 80-bed medihotel at Fiona Stanley Hospital, but it always seems to overlook the work that has been done. Of course, we have already implemented a medihotel at Royal Perth Hospital. Today, it has had over 100 guests—people who are either coming into the hospital, or need to depart the hospital but are not yet ready for discharge or cannot get home because they are country patients and do not have the transport needed. That medihotel is working well. I think it is fair to say that I struggled to convince the clinical teams that medihotels can be an important part of a hospital system, but now that they see how successfully the beds at Royal Perth are going, they are being warmly embraced by the clinicians. They now know that it is a great place to send people, particularly those who are convalescing after surgery or something of that nature.

Another accusation in this motion is about overseeing a series of failures in Western Australia’s hotel quarantine system. Quite frankly, our hotel quarantine system is as good as any in the country. The situation in Victoria at the moment is a direct result of quarantine outbreaks that have occurred in other states, so members should not come into this place with these falsehoods that somehow there is a failure in our system. Almost 45 000 people have come into this state; Australians have been welcomed home and brought safely back into the country because of the great work that has been done.

How dare you come into this place and suggest that these failures are the result of the resignation of Dr Robyn Lawrence—she has done an outstanding job in that role—because she is tired, has worked nonstop for 15 months and needs a change and a rest! Where do you come from! What are you about when you attack these public servants who have dedicated their life to the public health system!

Mr R.S. Love: We haven’t attacked public servants. That’s ridiculous.

Mr R.H. COOK: Yes, you have; that is exactly what you have done!

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: The motion states “overseeing a series of failures in Western Australia’s hotel quarantine system, culminating in the resignation of hotel quarantine chief Robyn Lawrence”. It is a direct reflection on Robyn Lawrence, who is a great public servant, a terrific doctor and an amazing leader in our health system, and we should be absolutely grateful for the work she has done throughout her career on behalf of the people of Western Australia. How dare you come in here and attack these people and slur their reputations with these sorts of motions—motions that you do not even have the guts to defend! You come in here, spray this rubbish around and then leave the chamber. You are a complete disgrace, you mob!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! The Minister for Health has the call.

Mr R.H. COOK: Another accusation that has been made is that we are presiding over cultural and resourcing issues at Perth Children’s Hospital.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, you may be interested in the Minister for Health's comments.

Mr R.H. COOK: As I have explained in great detail, we have been working with the staff in the emergency department to increase the resources that are available. Many of the measures that we are looking at implementing are part of the 10-point plan from the Australian Nursing Federation. I am just trying to work out whether I am in lock step with the Australian Nursing Federation as a member of the Labor Party or I am opposed to it. I can never quite work out which way you guys are going on this stuff. Suffice to say, I have been working with the ANF on this 10-point plan and we are implementing the 10-point plan. Some of those things are ideas that the ANF has come up with and some are ideas that were already being worked on, but it is great to put those things in place.

We all know that it is tough in our health system at the moment. We know that our staff are fatigued. We know that they are exhausted. People in our health system have had a really hard time in 2020, and it is just as hard in 2021, because now that we have come out of the COVID period, we are in a period of extraordinary pressure and demand in our hospitals. As a result, people are really tired. That is being felt right throughout the health system. We acknowledge that.

Mr P. Papalia: All around the country.

Mr R.H. COOK: Yes, all around the country. We are trying to build our health workforce to make sure that we have the nurses and doctors so that people can take leave and recharge and can continue to provide great health services for the people of Western Australia. One thousand nurses will be recruited this year and 1 000 will be recruited next year. That is 600 extra nurses we are bringing into the system to make sure that we can respond to the system.

There is an accusation about the failure to secure proper resourcing for the WA health system more broadly, which I will ignore because it is rubbish, and an accusation about a failure to earn and maintain the respect and confidence of health workers properly. I have told those healthcare workers that I will be there in good times and bad. That is the reason I was there the week of 3 April with respect to Aishwarya Aswath. That is the reason I was at a meeting last week with a lot of the emergency department staff—to take the brunt of their criticisms. It is the reason I was there yesterday at the rally, when they needed to vent their anger and frustration about how tired and fatigued they are. That is what you have to do. You have to face up and you have to be there, which is more than I can say for the member for Vasse. We will continue to stand by the people of Western Australia.

The fact that Aishwarya died at Perth Children's Hospital—we do not know the reason she died; that will hopefully be discovered in the coming weeks and months—is incredibly tragic. It is horrible. All our hearts go out to that poor family and the staff who were there that night and who are hurting as a result of this experience. But we need to continue to make sure that we steel ourselves for the long haul. It is the same fight that health systems right around the country are in, whether it is the ambulance ramping in Queensland or the struggles that ambulance services in Victoria are facing or the overcrowding in hospitals in South Australia. We need to continue to make sure that we respond to these challenges. That is why it is on the agenda of the national cabinet next Friday. All leaders around the country recognise that this is a challenge we have to take on nationally. We have the resources in Western Australia to take it on and we are bringing those resources to bear. They are the resources I talked about tonight, and that is why the WA health system will get through this difficult period. We will get through it, but we will get through it together and not with the assistance of the harping, criticism and undermining of those on the other side.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
